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**Selected Techniques of Teaching Creative Writing**

Master Thesis

**Vybrané techniky výuky tvůrčího psaní**

Diplomová práce

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## Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Research

#### 1.1.1 An Introduction to Teaching Creative Writing

The most straightforward manner in which creative writing can be defined is that it is an artistic process of writing, which features the simultaneous recovery from conventional writing and the simple representation of incidents. In other words, the distinctive aspect of creative writing is the fresh engagement of the writer with the geography and literature connected with the literary work, along with inventive engagement with other works of creative writings for providing new insight on the work to be produced<sup>1</sup>. To explain the term in a more fine-tuned manner– it can be said that creative writing belongs to the genre of literary writing, which features the simultaneous involvement of the personal and social activities of the writer for the purpose of producing a work of art and the establishment of communication with the audience, inspired by his/her ideals of democratisation<sup>2</sup>. Unlike the academic counterpart of teaching conventional literary writing based on rules of language, the major thrust exerted by teachers while teaching creative writing is on the power of self-expression of individual students<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, teachers of creative writing have a significant role to play when teaching this form of writing, as creative writing demands a more independent approach on behalf of the students. The vitality of teachers of creative writing lies in assisting students with vocabulary development so that the students’ methods of sentence construction echo elements like innovation, liberal ideals, out-of-the-box thinking, and expression<sup>4</sup>. Contextuality of the procedure can be understood from Engle’s description, “For the first time in the sad and enchanting history of literature, for the first time in the glorious and

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<sup>1</sup> C. Brace and A. Johns-Putra, “Recovering Inspiration in the Spaces of Creative Writing,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35, no. 3 (2010): 399–413.

<sup>2</sup> Graeme Harper, *On Creative Writing* (Multilingual Matters, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> S. Stillar, “Raising Critical Consciousness via Creative Writing in the EFL Classroom,” *TESOL Journal* 4, no. 1 (2013).

<sup>4</sup> A. Mansoor, “Teaching Creative Writing to University Level Second Language Learners in Pakistan,” *The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing* 7, no. 3 (2007).

dreadful history of the world, the writer was welcome in the academic place. If the mind could be honored there, why not the imagination?<sup>5</sup>”

### 1.1.2 Comparison of Creative Writing in Different Segments

The term creative writing is considered to be an umbrella comprising of different forms and styles of writing under it. One of the prominent forms of creative writing is autobiographical writing— a form of literary writing where the personal life experiences of the writer, which are sometimes enchanting and sometimes frightening, are revealed. Delving deeper into the format of autobiographical writing reveals the necessity for the writer to fully emerge as his or her own-self to enhance the expression that gets portrayed in the writing medium<sup>6</sup>. Creative autobiographies of Virginia Woolf serve as appropriate in describing how this form of writing is distinctive from totally traditional autobiographies. Woolf, one of the forerunners of the modern period in English Literature, was among the creative writers who were inspired by new way of understanding the world. Deeper analysis of the writings of Woolf reveals that they feature self-reflexivity and were sharply opposed to the traditional form of writing where writers were mere spectators instead of being a part of the process and making dynamic representations of self-observations and retrospections. The characters Woolf created in her works also draw special attention because they could be considered more as thinking individuals submerged within a continuous evolutionary process, instead of being mere spectators as is common in traditional writings<sup>7</sup>. Even appreciable is that the creative elements in the writings of Woolf were shaped in such a manner that they would provide her female readers with the necessary feminist tools that would inspire them to reevaluate and rethink about their societal positions and persistent sexual differences<sup>8</sup>. For instance, the autobiographical writing of Woolf, ‘*Together and Apart*,’ is a classic example of a break from traditional writing and the infusion of creative elements due to the unique depiction of the self-identity of the author. Here, Woolf describes herself as an

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Engle, “The Writer and the Place,” in *A Community of Writers: Paul Engle and the Iowa Writers’ Workshop*, ed. Robert Dana, 2nd ed. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999).

<sup>6</sup> Steve Phelan, *Song of Wekiva: Florida’s Wild River and Its Democratic Vista* (Faculty Publications, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Minodora Otilia Simion, *MODERNISM AND VIRGINIA WOOLF’S NOVEL MRS.DALLOWAY*, *Annals of the „Constantin Brâncuși”: Letter and Social Science Series*, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Tegan. Zimmerman, “The Politics of Writing, Writing Politics: Virginia Woolf’s A [Virtual] Room of One’s Own,” *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* 3 (2012): 35–55.

individual arising from the dichotomy of ‘true and ‘false’ selves, which is largely analogous to the public and private sphere.

Miss Arming felt that she had struck accidentally the **true** man, upon whom the **false** man was built. Under the influence of the moon (the moon which symbolized man to her, she could see it through a chink of the curtain, and she took dips of the moon) she was capable of saying almost anything and she settled in to disinter the **true** man who was buried under the **false**, saying to herself...<sup>9</sup>  
(Emphasis inserted by researcher)

Equally praiseworthy are the creative autobiographies of Katherine Mansfield, another eminent personality representing the genre. Reading Mansfield evokes sensation among readers as the writer pushes the concept of self-identity even further by indicating that a person’s identity is a conglomerate of many different parts. Instances can be cited from Mansfield’s ‘*Prelude*,’ where the writer introduces numerous characters, encountering different tensions between different aspects of the self. Analysis of this creative autobiography shows that Mansfield explores the coping mechanism of human beings and presents how they develop themselves in response to a fragmented self-identity by means of role-playing<sup>10</sup>. The discussion of creative autobiographies also demands mentioning of the classic, ‘*Song of Myself*’ of Walt Whitman. Reading Whitman shows how this creative writer of the modern English period presents the core of his poetic vision through autobiographical description of his life experiences. In ‘*Song of Myself*,’ as a replica of self-identity, an all-powerful ‘I’ is represented as the narrator. This narrator is neither limited to nor concerned with the person of the historical Walt Whitman because the ‘I’ has been artistically empowered to transcend the conventional boundaries of self, that are established by the conventional society<sup>[11][12]</sup>.

As important as autobiography, flash fiction is another distinctive genre of creative writing. The comparative element of flash fiction with that of autobiographical writings is that the writing pieces of this genre usually range from 250 to 1000 words and the subject matter revolves around the concept of variety in life. The most essential aspect of this fictional work of brevity is that the caliber of the writer holds the most significance for his or her outstanding skill set of setting up a

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<sup>9</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Together and Apart* (Bookclassic, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Harriett Feenstra, “Circling the Self: Shprt Story Innovations of Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf,” *Leadiing Unergraduate Work in English Studies 2* (2010).

<sup>11</sup> Walt Whitman and E. Greenspan, *Walt Whitman’s“ Song of Myself”’: A Sourcebook and Critical Edition* (Psychology Press, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself: With a Complete Commentary* (University of Iowa Press, 2016).



coherent story with properly distinguished characters within space constraint<sup>[13] [14]</sup>. For instance, ‘*for sale: baby shoes, never worn*’ is a strong example of the flash fiction of Earnest Hemingway and is considered as specifically distinctive for its construction of only six words<sup>15</sup>. Through this creative work of extreme brevity, Hemingway stresses upon the extreme terseness of a situation. Here the mastery of the writer was to engage his readers by creating an opened outline of a narrative construct. In order to do this, the writer designs the situations in a chronological plot design, with the purpose of reflecting on what had happened, what is happening, what will happen and who might be involved in this situation<sup>16</sup>. Similar characteristics are visible in the flash fiction of Russian literary genius Anton Chekhov’s, ‘*A Blunder.*’ Analytical reading of this short literary work shows that flash fiction focuses upon themes, such as aspirations, desperation, marriage, tradition and independence. Set in a fictional background, the story of Chekhov exploits the-then relationship that existed between the Church and the State through careful portrayal of plot and characterization. The creativity of the writer is expressed by the manner in which he wisely reveals the significance of the separation of Church and State as independent institutions to achieve a truly independent Russia as the moral of the fictional short<sup>17</sup>. Likewise, the 850-word flash fiction of O’Henry, ‘*Hearts and Hands*’ also follows the tradition of this genre of creative writing by commencing with the meeting of two acquaintances on a train and which then ends with a surprise<sup>18</sup>.

....Among the newcomers were two young men, one of handsome presence with a bold, frank countenance and manner; the other a ruffled, glum-faced person, heavily built and roughly dressed. The two were handcuffed together. As they passed down the aisle of the coach the only vacant seat offered was a reversed one facing the attractive young woman. The young woman’s glance fell upon them with a distant, swift disinterest; then with a lovely smile brightening her countenance and a tender pink tingeing her rounded cheeks, she held out a little gray-gloved hand. When she spoke her voice, full, sweet, and deliberate, proclaimed that its owner was accustomed to speak and be heard.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Jason Gurley, *Flash What? A Quick Look at Flash Fiction*, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> and Tom Hazuka Thomas, Denise, *Flash Fiction: 72 Very Short Stories* (Norton & Company, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> F. A. Wright, “The Short Story Just Got Shorter: Hemingway, Narrative, and the Six-Word Urban Legend,” *Journal of Popular Culture* 47, no. 2 (2014): 327–340.

<sup>16</sup> A. Sriastuti, “Creative Writings: Six-Word Short Stories Behind the Tailgates of Trucks,” in *Proceedings The 8th International Seminar : Engaging with Literature Creatively*, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Anton Chekhov, *The Essential Tales of Chekhov* (Granta Books, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> O Henry, *100 Selected Stories* (Wordsworth Editions, 1995).

<sup>19</sup> O. Henry, “Hearts and Hands,” in *Selected Stories*, ed. Guy Davenport (Penguin Group US, 2006), 519.

It is remarkable to note that through the effective use of irony and the incorporation of minute details in this short-sized story, O’Henry shows how people tend to misjudge fact for fiction when they allow their hearts to rule over their heads. The noteworthy attribute of this flash fiction is that it depicts the mastery of the writer in projecting the variety of life.

Another important category of creative writing is poetry, which features the skillful interplay between aesthetics and rhythms, in order to present differential interpretations of commonplace words so that they evoke emotional responses among readers<sup>[20] [21]</sup>. Poetry is considered to be an essential category of creative writing because while it revolves around a central theme, the mastery of the poet is reflected in the manner in which the specific selection of words and dictions, and the arrangements of lines, verses, rhythms and other poetic elements are made to create a mental image of the theme in the minds of the readers<sup>22</sup>. Ezra Pound can be considered as a controversial poet, who would display his distinctive creative ingenuity through his poems. Specifically, Pound’s poem “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley” shows how the literary genius instills a creative element into his poetry by breaking away from the style of traditional poetry through depiction of his disgust about massive loss in World War I and the meaninglessness of the life of a poet in such situations<sup>[23] [24]</sup>.

Similarly, gothic fiction should also be considered as an important genre of creative writing because of the creative skill of the authors to instill a sense of fear and suspense in readers by means of the skillful interplay of gothic elements, such as horror, death, gloom as well as romantic elements, such as nature and emotion<sup>[25] [26] [27]</sup>. Gothic literature belongs to the category of creative writing due to the presence of a sense of mystery and melodrama throughout the work. The settings used for this kind of literature are also unique in that they feature a sense of thrill and high drama. From this perspective, if *Wuthering Heights* of Emily Bronte is

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<sup>20</sup> X. J. Kennedy and D. Gioia, *An Introduction to Poetry* (Longman, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> M. Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Cornell University Press, 2010).

<sup>22</sup> Kennedy and Gioia, *An Introduction to Poetry*.

<sup>23</sup> Ezra Pound, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (Quality Classics, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> N. Baym and R. S. Levine, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature: Eighth International Student Edition* (WW Norton & Company, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> Fred. Botting, *Limits of Horror: Technology, Bodies, Gothic* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> A Stiles, *Popular Fiction and Brain Science in the Late Nineteenth Century*, vol. 78 (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> K. J. Winter, *Subjects of Slavery, Agents of Change: Women and Power in Gothic Novels and Slave Narratives, 1790-1865* (University of Georgia Press, 2010).

considered, then it is evident that the romantic-tragic theme of this fictional work is entwined with a sense of horror. The creative mastery of Bronte is clearly visible in this work, where the author's attempt to go beyond the boundaries of mere romanticism is reflected through her depiction of grotesque imagery, dark scenes, and ominous mansions and landscapes <sup>[28]</sup> <sup>[29]</sup>. Similarly, in the romantic gothic fiction *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, Victor Hugo uses the specialized creative technique of incorporating Gothic elements in characterization, settings and the overall theme of this fictional work. Thus, deeper reading of this genre of fiction introduces readers to mysterious characters who have murky pasts <sup>[30]</sup> <sup>[31]</sup>.

Science fiction writing must be considered as yet other category of creative writing, where elements of creativity and the mastery of the writer to incorporate innovative techniques to accomplish certain purposes are clearly visible. Deeper analysis of any science fiction will reveal that the writers use virtual subject matters and deal with imaginative concepts in science and technology <sup>[32]</sup> <sup>[33]</sup> <sup>[34]</sup>. Through specialized plot design and characterization technique, the authors help the readers to critique and re-imagine paradigms that shape the world<sup>35</sup>. Similarly, when analyzing *1984* by George Orwell, the authorship of this novel dates back to 1949<sup>36</sup>. Nevertheless, the creativity of the writer lies in the fact that he envisioned a world that was four decades in advance of the time when he wrote the novel. Hence, by implementing the technique of applying prophetic vision to the novel, Orwell projects the dangers of totalitarianism in a creative manner<sup>37</sup>.

To conclude, creative writing over the period of time since literature developed within the domain of writing in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, has witnessed gradual democratisation. Ranging from

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<sup>28</sup> Y. A. N. G. Li-xin, "A Book About Heaven and Hell: A Further Study of the Theme of *Wuthering Heights* [J]," *Journal of Nanjing Normal University (Social Science Edition)* 2, no. 022 (2008).

<sup>29</sup> R. P. Wasowski, *CliffsNotes on Bronte's Wuthering Heights* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011).

<sup>30</sup> Craig Andrew Hammond, "A Mysterious Jewel of Hope, Part-Formed Possibility & Future Redemption: The Hunchback of Notre-Dame as Homo-Absconditus," in *Paper Presented at the 5th Global Conference: 'Hope: Probing the Boundaries'*, vol. 10, 2013.

<sup>31</sup> L. L. Szwydky, "Victor Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris on the Nineteenth-Century London Stage," *European Romantic Review* 21, no. 4 (2010): 469–487.

<sup>32</sup> Elana. Gomel, *Postmodern Science Fiction and Temporal Imagination* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010).

<sup>33</sup> Ericka Hoagland and Reema Sarwal, *Science Fiction, Imperialism and the Third World: Essays on Postcolonial Literature and Film* (McFarland, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Patricia Melzer, *Alien Constructions: Science Fiction and Feminist Thought* (University of Texas Press, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> G. Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four. 1949. The Complete Works of George Orwell*, ed. Peter Davison, 1990.

<sup>37</sup> James A. Tyner, "Self and Space, Resistance and Discipline: A Foucauldian Reading of George Orwell's 1984," *Social & Cultural Geography* 5, no. 1 (2004): 129–149.

the religious and heroic poems/prose of the Anglo-Saxon period (e.g. Beowulf) to the societal fiction, gothic fiction, autobiography and science fiction of the contemporary age. This democratisation of creative writing owing to various technological, individual, cognitive, socio-environmental and other associated factors has led to the adoption of a multitude of techniques in teaching within the University domain. The later chapters will deal with these intricacies, which eventually contributed to the democratisation of creative writing and consequently the techniques of teaching creative writing, by critically exploring various eminent literary works.

### **1.1.3 New Age Creative Writing Pedagogies of Twenty-First Century**

In order to implement various techniques of creative writing into a work, meticulous adherence to certain regulations is essential. When viewed as the technique of learning how to write creatively, the process of teaching creative writing has massively evolved over the years. Use of innovation is at the forefront when it comes to teaching creative writing to students. At the initial stage, teachers inspire students to take an interest in creative writing by exploring the fun aspects of the activity. The usage of memoirs or biography-based assignments, in combination with interactive elements, such as photographs, drawings, etc. is encouraged during the process of the construction of a plot. Humorous prompts are often used by teachers of creative writing as inspiration to help students to progress forward with their story construction. Additionally, six traits, such as Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency and Conventions, are analyzed for accessing the writing skills of each student.<sup>38</sup> One of the most widely used techniques by teachers of creative writing today is the implementation of a specific compositional strategy in the classroom environment. For instance, more emphasis is placed on specific usage of grammar. More specifically, an analysis of a twenty-first century literary work on creative writing reveals that writers optimally make use of the past tense. In addition, more emphasis is placed on the use of the passive voice in sentence construction so that it generates a sense of active engagement and personalized feeling among the readers. The choice of vocabulary is also different in this category of writing, where words and terms that are easily and understood and accessible to the masses are usually used.<sup>[39] [40]</sup> Above all, a specific approach is followed where teachers inspire students to become expert readers first, before becoming

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<sup>38</sup> Creative Writing Workshop, *HOW TO TEACH CREATIVE WRITING*, 2017.

<sup>39</sup> Mansoor, "Teaching Creative Writing to University Level Second Language Learners in Pakistan."

<sup>40</sup> Teaching Creative Writing, *Teaching Creative Writing*, 2017.

expert writers. This can be seen in an analysis of any work of creative writing of the twenty-first century, where the awareness of the writer about basic techniques of literary expression, such as narrative strategies, genres and aesthetics are evident. However, the most significant aspect of teaching creative writing in the twenty-first century is that students are asked to constantly self-evaluate and re-assess a work. The evidence that this technique is given importance in creative writing programs is evident from the self-critical, self-aware and craft conscious approach of students and writers of creative writing that is found in their work <sup>[41]</sup> <sup>[42]</sup>.

## 1.2 Research Aim & Questions

The aim of this research is to identify the selected techniques of teaching creative writing. The objectives of the research in correspondence to the aim are as follows:

- To recognize the specific techniques used by teachers for teaching new age creative writing, democratised over the period of time.
- To determine the creative writing pedagogies of twenty first century.

Having explored the domain of creative writing across various segments and associated pedagogies of teaching creative writing styles, along with establishment of the study aim, it is imperative to state the research question, which will shape the course of this study.

Q: In what way has the writing and teaching style of creative writing democratised with the literary evolution of English language?

## 1.3 Materials Used in the Study

The materials that have been used for the study are scholarly researches of eminent scholars that are related to the topic of discussion, along with textbooks of teachers of creative writing from various genres and ages. The rationale for choosing these materials is that the scholarly sources are already established and provide researched feedback on the topic of discussion. In addition, the significance of choosing creative works of eminent literary personalities from different genres is to develop greater insight on the array of techniques that teachers should use today to teach creative writing of different categories.

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<sup>41</sup> Bronwyn Law-Viljoen, "Teaching Creative Writing," *Scrutiny* 2 17, no. 2 (2012): 132–137.

<sup>42</sup> Teaching Creative Writing, *Teaching Creative Writing*.

## 1.4 Summary

Having established an overview of the varied creative writing approaches as well as different techniques applied by teachers within their classroom contexts, this chapter has highlighted its aim and objectives. The background being a miniature of the entire study explored, purporting to record the democratisation of creative writing, the following chapter examines the status of writers and their writing since the evolution of script. Democratisation, within the writing domain, has been understood from the emergence of non-fiction, fiction, poetry, plays, television and virtual media scripts, memoirs, speeches, personal essays, since the evolution of writing as merely a record-keeping activity within the societies of the early Sumerians and Egyptians of 9000 BC. Later on, the study delves into exploring the emergence of teaching of creative writing within a formalised set up, taking into perspective the significance of rhetorical pedagogy, owing to democratisation of writing. The process of democratisation has further been understood from identified themes within creative works of writers of varying ages– Romantic, Victorian, Modern, Post-Modern and Contemporary (21<sup>st</sup> century). After presenting the democratisation of creative writing and teaching techniques through the critical evaluation of creative writing theorists and works of eminent creative writers, it is imperative to understand the difference between the approach of natural and skilled creative writer. This urgency can be necessary to understand the influence exerted by democratisation on students to emerge as efficient creative writers by knowing the techniques, along with developing a personal likeness towards penning down their thoughts creatively. Lastly, having discussed the findings on the basis of the research question, certain recommendations to improve the domain of creative writing, especially that of the skilled writers, have been presented.

## Chapter 2: STATUS OF WRITING AND WRITER OVER TIME

### 2

#### 2.1 Introduction to Chapter

Creativity forms an essential part of humanity, leading individual to progress and develop in the varied spheres of technology and science, art, music and poetry, agriculture and such others. It is in essence an art of living metaphorically, by individuals observing their surroundings through an imaginative prism, as is evident from Leonardo Da Vinci's 'seeing' his paintings on the damp stains of walls before lifting his brush<sup>43</sup>. Besides, creativity also stems from a strong dissatisfaction developed from the usual social affairs and activities surrounding individuals and their resultant reactions. Such creative products are essentially consequences of individuals trying to bring about change in the state of affairs through creating something new or through the moulding of public opinion and attitude. They achieve this by their expressive writing using skilful words, but in an original style i.e. drifting away from old connotations. Instances can be taken from Byron, Keats, Wordsworth, and Shelley, who gave rise to the *Romantic era* by moving away from the *form dominated* creations of *Restoration Period* writers like *Pope* and *Dryden*<sup>44</sup>. This creative writing in turn significantly impacted the humans' lives in general, by forming their view on an object or incident, or developing their attitude towards processes, which was until then absent. In such a scenario, it therefore becomes necessary to understand the evolution of writing, coming through the various techniques used in writing to decipher the mystery shrouding the creative writing process. This chapter hence, deals with the evolution of writing, followed by the exploration of the various types of writing since ancient era. A critical assessment has been undertaken on the various techniques of writing used through the ages, highlighting the democratisation of writing, owing to the rapid advancement of technology and establishing the way it has influenced both the writer and writing in the past century. This

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<sup>43</sup> Jonathan Jones, "The Virgin of the Rocks: Da Vinci Decoded," *The Guardian* (London, July 13, 2010), <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/jul/13/the-virgin-of-the-rocks-leonardo-restoration>.

<sup>44</sup> Marie J.C. Forgeard, Scott Barry Kaufman, and James C. Kaufman, "The Psychology of Creative Writing," in *A Companion to Creative Writing*, ed. Graeme Harper, First. (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2013), 320–333.

exploration of democratisation further highlights its role on teaching of creative writing, taking other forms of art into consideration.

## 2.2 Evolution of Writing and its Techniques since Ancient Times

Before exploring the evolution of writing, it is important to understand the term ‘writing’ through its meaning. Despite living in a literate society with writing forming an innate part of our communication, it is not a universal concept. The reason behind its non-universalism is credited to a plethora of writing systems and their working in different ways, one instances being the fundamental difference between the Latin alphabetic system and the syllabic and logographic system prevalent in China, irrespective of the consideration of both of them as writing<sup>45</sup>. Furthermore, the constant evolution of writing style across different ages makes it difficult to bind the term within a single definition. The definition provided by the Oxford Dictionary however, attains certain proximity to a modern understanding of the term. It defines writing as, “The action of one who writes, in various senses; the penning or forming of letters or words; the using of written characters for purposes of record, transmission of ideas, etc.”<sup>46</sup> Jack Goody in his *Literacy in Traditional Societies* captured the symbols as well, in saying, “[Writing’s] essential service is to objectify speech, to provide language with a material correlative, a set of visible signs.”<sup>47</sup>

Although there is no evidence to prove that writing emerged as a system to record oral communication, the evolution of writing dates back to the time when human beings became civilized— during pre-historic Mesopotamia of 9000 BCE, in the form of the accounts or records used to keep track of traded goods— fruits of their agriculture. The medium of writing at that time was small marked clay tokens, representing quantities of different products like, sheep, loaves of bread, bags of grain and such others.<sup>48</sup> However, evidence of the clay tokens of 9000 BCE is absent, hence putting the period under pre-history— period before writing or recording— marking the beginning of the historical period around 3000 BCE, with the Sumerians making a leap to writing. Christopher Woods, in his book *Visible Language*, provides a timeline recording the

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<sup>45</sup> Mary Elizabeth Bywater, “The Impact of Writing: Ancient and Modern Views on the Role of Early Writing Systems Within Society and as a Part of ‘Civilisation’” (University College of London, 2013).

<sup>46</sup> Angus Stevenson, *Oxford Dictionary of English.*, ed. Angus. Stevenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Jack. Goody, *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody, Reprint. (Cambridge University Press, 1968),p.1.

<sup>48</sup> Harry Ransom Center, “Early Writing,” *The University of Texas at Austin*, last modified 2016, accessed February 15, 2017, <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/educator/modules/gutenberg/books/early/>.



development of writing from 9000 BCE to 800 AD with late classical Mayan writing. Originally initiated in the Middle East with the Sumerians, independent inventions in writing spread to Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, and Mesoamerica.<sup>49</sup>

Gelb, while providing an extensive view of writing in his influential *Study of Writing*, interestingly noted that writing originated only once, with the Sumerian invention in Mesopotamia. After this, it was only the spread of the idea and technology of writing to Egypt<sup>50</sup> and China during epochs of sturdy cultural influence at the beginning of the third and end of the second millennium, rather than a birth of real writing.<sup>51</sup> Initiating writing systems as a method of account<sup>52</sup> keeping during 9000-3000 BCE, on clay tokens, seals, pottery marks and such others in cuneiform texts, early Egyptians and Mesopotamians considered writing as a resolution to everyday bureaucratic glitches. Later, with the emergence of vast territorial, state and socio-political complexities, writing developed a social component<sup>53</sup> and took the form of glyphs and symbols in the Olmec, Mayan and other Mesoamerican cultures (600-500 BC and 250-900 AD, respectively). In between the Mesopotamian (cuneiform) and Olmec-Maya (glyphs) invention of writing, writing took the form of oracle texts, as well engravings on animal bones and turtle shells.<sup>54</sup> These various techniques of writing evolving in the Chinese and Mesoamerican traditions were largely utilitarian, resembling royal divinations (of Shang state- c. 1200 BC) and theological components. These theological components, in the form of glyphs developed by the Mayans, are essentially based on “long-established iconographic traditions and a calendrical system of great cultural significance.”<sup>55</sup> Woods however has questioned the utilitarian perspective of these ancient writings of Chinese and Mesoamericans and the assumption of the

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<sup>49</sup> Christopher Woods, “Visible Language: The Earliest Writing Systems,” in *Visible Language: Inventions of Writing in the Ancient Middle East and Beyond*, ed. Christopher Woods, Geoff Emberling, and Emily Teeter, 2nd ed. (Chicago, Illinois: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2015), 15–28.

<sup>50</sup> However, recent findings at Abydos have made the writing initiation date in Egypt contemporaneous to the Mesopotamian invention, undermining the Sumerian influence in writing in Egypt (Michael Dee et al., “An Absolute Chronology for Early Egypt Using Radiocarbon Dating and Bayesian Statistical Modelling,” *Proceedings of the Royal Society A* 469, no. 2159 (2013): 10.).

<sup>51</sup> Ignace Jay Gelb, *A Study of Writing: The Foundations of Grammatology*, 1st ed. (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1952).

<sup>52</sup> Records included detailed transactions of property, labour, materials which were essentially administrative in nature.

<sup>53</sup> J. Baines, *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>54</sup> D. Schmandt-Besserat, *The Evolution of Writing* (Texas, 2014).

<sup>55</sup> Stephen D. Houston, “Writing in Early Mesoamerica,” in *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*, ed. Stephen D. Houston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 274–309.

universal nature of writing. According to him,<sup>56</sup> writing, rather than being a solution to bureaucratic complexities, was its end result, since complex structures of state could be managed well without writing. Instances can be seen in the complex cultures of West African civilizations, the Aztecs prior to the Spanish invasion, and the Incas who managed to function without writing records or royal decrees. Such a view of Woods can be understood from the modern system of writing, which is carried out largely as a response to bureaucratic and socio-political complexities, instead of being cause of it. As Piotr Michalowski (p.56) noted in reference to this idea, "...actuaries have their place in the world, but even the administrative use of writing involves complex psychological, ideological, and social issues that cannot be accounted for by purely utilitarian explanations."<sup>57</sup>

The modern form of writing through alphabets was a much later creation, evolving from tokens (8000-3000 BC) to pictography (3000 BC) and consequently to logography, or the creation of phonetic signs (3000-2500 BC), which finally gave rise to syllabary– phonetic signs expressing syllables (2500-1200 BC). Syllabary consequently became the base of the origin of alphabets– the segmentation of sounds (1500 BC), although the early alphabet evidently differed from the former. This early alphabet system evolved over some centuries of time, giving rise to the modern alphabet<sup>58</sup>, which derives its source from Proto-Sinaitic, owing to its invention only for a single time<sup>59</sup>. Latin alphabets used in the West descended directly from Etruscans– the occupants of the region comprising present day Tuscany in Italy– who in turn, adopted the Greek alphabet. Romans too credit Etruscans for their alphabet development, after they acquired the region in the first century AD, eventually spreading to Angles, Gauls, Saxons, Germans and Franks, forming the present day France, Germany and England. Despite the various techniques of writing that evolved over the period of years, in diverse regions and cultures, largely distant from each other, their uncanny endurance forms a striking and unique feature among all of human creations. Also, among all these techniques of writing, starting from the cuneiform to pictographic and later

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<sup>56</sup> Woods, "Visible Language: The Earliest Writing Systems."

<sup>57</sup> Piotr Michalowski, "Writing and Literacy in Early States: A Mesopotamianist Perspective," in *Literacy: Interdisciplinary Conversations*, ed. Deborah Keller-Cohen (Cresskill: Hampton, 1994), 49–70.

<sup>58</sup> Modern Alphabet used across all the nations like Latin, Arabic, Amharic, Hebrew, Cyrillic, and Brahmani has only one source of Proto-Sinaitic. Latin alphabets used in the West descended directly from Etruscans– occupants of the region comprising of present day Tuscany in Italy– who in turn, adopted the Greek alphabet. Romans too credit Etruscans for their alphabet development after they acquired the region in the first century AD, eventually spreading to Angles, Gauls, Saxons, Germans and Franks, forming the present day France, Germany and England.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

locographic and glyphs of the Maya-Mesoamerican culture, it is only the Chinese script, which needed negligible decipherment. This is because Chinese script remained unaltered over the period of 3400 years, being largely ideographic in nature, “inserting rebus-like phonetic complements in some characters.”<sup>60</sup>

After exploring the evolution of writing since ancient times, it is imperative to note the evolution of the modern English orthography, in light of this study’s purpose to understand the techniques of creative writing in the English language. English orthography primarily owes its origin to morphophonemic alternations practiced by the Mayans and the Sumerians, where a morpheme, despite having different pronunciations<sup>61</sup>, has a single spelling. For instance, the past tense suffix of *–ed*, consists of different pronunciations (or allomorphs) with one invariant spelling—*added/visited* (pronounced as *id*), *mobbed/booed* (pronounced after voiced consonants and vowels), and *mopped/kissed* (pronounced as voiceless consonants like *t*)<sup>62</sup>. At the end, it is important to note here that, writing, being considerably influenced by social, psycho-linguistic processes and economic motivation, is developed through the common orthographic foundations of common historical stages and dialects of a language<sup>63</sup>.

### **2.3 Democratisation of Writing due to Rapid Advancement of Technology and its Impact on Writing**

Democratisation—essentially a political term, has also been used in other subjective areas to mean, “...the action of making something accessible to everyone.”<sup>64</sup> Although there are innumerable attempts to define the term democratisation, these are mostly in political perspectives, having very little progress in linguistic terms. Democratisation in this section brings out the changes occurring in the field of writing, owing to rapid technological development post-Industrial Revolution, especially in the contemporary era, with the emergence of the virtual platform of social networking<sup>65</sup>. Democratisation in technological innovation over the years has changed the pattern in which writing is designed, “practiced, produced, made,

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p.13.

<sup>61</sup> Different pronunciations of a morpheme despite of its single spelling is credited to its phonological environment.

<sup>62</sup> Woods, “Visible Language: The Earliest Writing Systems.”

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Stevenson, *Oxford Dictionary of English*.

<sup>65</sup> Maggie Inchley, *Voice and New Writing, 1997-2007 : Articulating the Demos* (Springer, 2015).

accessed, traded and how the design is taught and learned.”<sup>66</sup>. Instances can be observed of the technological advancements made over the years since the past century, with the invention of the printing press playing a key role in the development of numeracy, appearance of business education and the rise of innovations in bookkeeping and accounting. In essence, the printing press emerged as a magnanimous innovative technology in the field of writing replacing scribed papyrus scripts with the publication of large volumes of books and making it affordable and accessible<sup>67</sup>. Similarly, technological innovations in the form of digitalisation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century have further widened the scope of writing and reading through the supply of a plethora of information from various corners of the world. Furthermore, through the rise and wide usage of social media and blogging in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, self-expression in the form of writing got a better platform, influencing even non-writers to pen down their ideas and feelings. The democratisation of writing has further been aggravated through the technological innovation of the book reader. The book reader computer technology as pointed out by Dr. Jyoti Sheoran,<sup>68</sup> has been devised “...to scan the printed language material by recognizing the characters and later by using text-to-speech software, converts it on the user’s computer or mobile into audio version through audio player.” This technology has largely influenced the reading process, helping individuals who are not interested in reading large documents or books, or who are engaged with busy schedules, to gain knowledge of the concerned content<sup>69</sup>. To sum up, technological innovation has evidently led up to the democratisation of communication through writing, as is observed from the above enlisted technologies that have emerged in the past and present century. It is now important to understand their impact on writers, owing to the change in the reading and learning style of individuals, the sudden upsurge in the flow of information and the rise of expressing feelings and ideas by non-writers as well.

There exists an inherent relationship between science and literature— an effective teacher of developing creative writing<sup>70</sup>, as highlighted by eminent novelists and critics of the past such as

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<sup>66</sup> Katja Fleischmann, “The Democratisation of Design and Design Learning: How Do We Educate the Next-Generation Designer,” *International Journal of Arts and Sciences* 8, no. 6 (2015): 101–108.

<sup>67</sup> Jeremiah Dittmar, “Information Technology and Economic Change: The Impact of the Printing Press,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126, no. 3 (2011): 1133–1172.

<sup>68</sup> Dr. Jyoti Sheoran, “Technological Advancement and Changing Paradigm of Organisational Communication,” *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications* 2, no. 12 (2012): 6.

<sup>69</sup> Eric Von Hippel, *Democratizing Innovation* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005).

<sup>70</sup> Ahmed Abdalla Saeed Adam and Yousif Omer Babiker, “The Role of Literature in Enhancing Creative Writing from Teachers’ Perspectives,” *English Language and Literature Studies* 5, no. 1 (2015): 109–118.

Matthew Arnold and D.H. Lawrence. According to them, literature forms the basis of, “knowing ourselves and the world,”<sup>71</sup> and studies individuals in their ‘full form’, while science forms a part of literature, studying individuals in their ‘partial form’.<sup>72</sup> This inherent relationship between the two disciplines has profoundly impacted the form of written literature or simply put, the writing process, altering individuals’ ways of living and thinking. Writers over the period of years have made technology a part of their environments, using it for their creation of ideas or making it as their subject matter of creation. From Chaucer to the post-modernist writers of today, writers have been benefiting from democratisation led by science and technology, since writing and the publication of literature was never an easy endeavour<sup>73</sup>. Hence, the instant and trenchant communication through modern digitalised technology proved as a reward to the writers, by enabling the publication of books online and thus catering to a vast base of readers. The availability of online books through e-readers and mobiles are in turn influencing individuals who, until digitalisation, did not prefer to read, by attracting them with the presentation of written content<sup>74</sup>. The mass production and circulation of books by players in the technological sphere, such as, Amazon, Google, Barnes & Noble, Apple and others, renders instant recognition and popularity of books, worldwide, making them bestsellers and leading authors to earn handsome amounts<sup>75</sup>. Besides authors, technology has led democratisation through enabling common people and famous celebrities to share their views and communicate with each other through writing<sup>[76] [77]</sup>. Another important aspect within the impact of the technological domain and resultant democratisation is the translation of eminent works of old and new. Owing to the spread of information of profound scholarly works across countries, writers are taking initiatives to translate these major works, increasing their access to readers of various nationalities and languages. Besides, the availability of online thesauruses, dictionaries, reference books and

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<sup>71</sup> Fred G. Walcott, “Matthew Arnold on the Teaching of Science,” *Educational Theory* 7, no. 4 (October 1957): 252–262, accessed February 17, 2017, <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/j.1741-5446.1957.tb01204.x>.

<sup>72</sup> Jeff Wallace, *D.H. Lawrence, Science and the Posthuman* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>73</sup> Bharat R. Gugane, “Impact of Technological Advancement on Literature,” *New Man International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 1, no. 1 (2014): 9.

<sup>74</sup> Brian Sutton, “The Effects of Technology in Society and Education” (State University of New York, 2013).

<sup>75</sup> Gugane, “Impact of Technological Advancement on Literature.”

<sup>76</sup> Adilia Maria Pires Sciarra et al., “Technological Devices Improve System of Translating Languages: What About Their Usefulness on the Applicability in Medicine and Health Sciences?,” *Revista Brasileira de Cirurgia Cardiovascular* 30, no. 6 (2015): 664–667, accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.gnresearch.org/doi/10.5935/1678-9741.20150087>.

<sup>77</sup> Filip Bacalu, “The Reconfiguration of Translation in the Digital Age,” *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations* 12 (2013): 156.

software have made translation a somewhat simpler effort, reducing the painstaking job of editors and writers<sup>78</sup>.

However, when understanding technology as a part of literature and creative writing, the view of the former among creative writers as a contrasting force to the latter is imperative to highlight. Several creative writers of the Victorian, Modern and Post-Modern ages have made technology their subject matter and some of them have termed it as sinister, such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which talk about a creature— a consequence of a scientific experiment<sup>[79] [80]</sup>. On the other hand, developments in science and technology have influenced other modernist and post-modernist writers to experiment in their creative writing process<sup>[81] [82] [83]</sup>. For instance, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Samuel Beckett and Franz Kafka, changed their approach of writing novels and drama, respectively, by changing the set concepts of culture, society, self-hood and such others. Thus, amidst this diverse lookout and opinion of the impact of technology and democratisation on writing and literature, building an in-depth understanding on their influence on creative writing is important. Such an understanding has assisted the author of this paper in predicting the future course of creative writing, and therefore, has been undertaken in the later chapters of the study.

### **The democratisation of writing and consequent teaching style of creative writing over the years, the**

in the concerned chapter thus placed credibility on technological advancement, which influenced non-writers such as politicians, professionals, celebrities and other ordinary individuals when penning down their thoughts. Through the emergence and availability of online books, digital libraries, e-books readers and such others, individuals, having a knack for creative writing or naturally creative writers are getting millions of ideas and information to channel their thoughts and articulate them to an audience.

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<sup>78</sup> Stephen Doherty, "The Impact of Translation Technologies on the Process and Product of Translation," *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 947–969.

<sup>79</sup> D. (Don) McCloy, *Technology : Made Simple*. (Heinemann, 1984).

<sup>80</sup> Richard Holmes, "Science Fiction: The Science That Fed Frankenstein," *Nature* 535, no. 7613 (July 27, 2016): 490–492, accessed February 17, 2017, <http://www.nature.com/doi/10.1038/535490a>.

<sup>81</sup> Leo Marx, "'The Idea of 'Technology' and Postmodern Pessimism,'" in *Does Technology Drive History? The Dilemma of Technological Determinism*, ed. M.R. Smith and L. Marx (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 237–57.

<sup>82</sup> Terry Barrett, "Modernism and Postmodernism: An Overview with Art Examples," in *Art Education: Content and Practice in a Postmodern Era*, ed. James Hutchens and Marianne Suggs (Washington: NAEA, 1997), 17–30.

<sup>83</sup> T. Meenakshi, "Modernism and Its Application in Robert Frost's Poems 'After Apple Picking', 'The Road Not Taken' and 'Mending Wall,'" *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translation Studies* 3, no. 1 (2016): 670–673.

Technology has influenced the reading process, assisting individuals not interested in reading large documents or books to gain knowledge of the concerned content through excerpts. This democratisation in terms of spread information and that of writing ideas has contributed to make students of creative writing knowledgeable, and to influence its techniques of teaching. Furthermore, there has been change in the approach of creative writers towards penning their thoughts from religious and heroic fictional stories in the Anglo Saxon age to science fiction and playfulness in memoirs and stories in the post-modernist era. This change was a reflection of the change within the socio-political and environmental surroundings, thereby influencing individuals as well students in their approach towards creative writing. To sum up, gradual change in the writing pattern since its evolution in the 9000 BC and the evolution of creative writing in 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, still today have influenced the teaching techniques of creative writing. The birth of creative writing as a separate discipline of English, was also the fruit of democratisation process. The following chapter elaborating on the democratisation of writing therefore travels through the emergence of the teaching of creative writing, followed by the various techniques that evolved over the period of time, as a result.

## **2.4 Summary**

Overall the chapter exhibited the development of writing from its evolution until the formation of alphabets. From a cuneiform script, developed as a mode of keeping accounts of transactions by the ancient Sumerians and Egyptians, writing went through various other script forms, such as glyphs, pictography, locography, and, syllabary. This syllabary consequently gave rise to modern alphabets, although the latter significantly differed from the former. Birth of English orthography is credited to the early Etruscans, who spread the techniques to the Angles, Gauls, Saxons, Germans and Franks— constituting the present day France, Germany and England. Upon understanding the evolution of writing, it was imperative to understand the present day form of writing, the changes that it experienced over the period of years through democratisation led by technological innovation since its birth. Technological innovations, such as the inventions of pen, ink, paper, printing press, typewriters, computers, internet, social media, digitalisation and the recent emergence of book readers have significantly changed the course of writing, along with the writers' perspective. This gradual change in perspective and the demand of reading has

consequently shaped the teaching and learning of creative writing as well, which will be understood in the following chapters.



## Chapter 3: EMERGENCE OF TEACHING OF CREATIVE WRITING

### 3

#### 3.1 Introduction to Chapter

The preceding chapter helped the researcher to gauge the evolution of writing since the ancient times of Neolithic period (9000 BCE), with the extensive spread of agriculture and pottery across civilizations, and to understand the impact of technological democratisation on writing. This chapter therefore, focuses essentially on the concept of creative writing– the central theme of the study. The process of creative writing is, “more than just words on a page; it’s freedom,”<sup>84</sup> and hence, within the teaching-learning domain, this process might deem to be substantial in determining, “how the creative and expressive arts are positioned within existing knowledge economies.”<sup>85</sup> Furthering the understanding of creative writing within the teaching-learning context, the present chapter therefore delves into the rhetorical pedagogy of creative writing and the establishment of schools as a consequence. Later, again the concept of democratisation will be discussed from the perspective of creative writing, as was noted in the last chapter, followed by creative writing techniques used in higher education, such as at universities. The chapter, in its conclusion will critically examine the various creative writing techniques, their outcomes, a comparison between natural and learnt creative writers, and finally the phenomenon of writers in academia and vice versa.

#### 3.2 Rhetorical Pedagogy of Creative Writing– Necessity

Before approaching the concept of rhetorical pedagogy, it’s important to understand the meaning of the terms rhetoric and pedagogy. Originating from the Old French *rethorique*, Greek *rhētorikē*, and, Latin *rhetor*, Merriam Webster defines rhetoric as, “the art of speaking or writing effectively” or the “skill in the effective use of speech.”<sup>86</sup> *The Cambridge Dictionary*, pulling

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<sup>84</sup> N. Anae, “‘Creative Writing as Freedom, Education as Exploration’: Creative Writing as Literary and Visual Arts Pedagogy in the First Year Teacher-Education Experience,” *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 39, no. 8 (2014): 123–142.

<sup>85</sup> Dominique. Hecq, *The Creativity Market : Creative Writing in the 21st Century* (Multilingual Matters, 2012). p.2

<sup>86</sup> Merriam-Webster, *The Merriam Webster Dictionary*, ed. Merriam-Webster (Demco Media, 1994).

from the above definition, further defines it as, “speech or writing intended to be effective and influence people.”<sup>87</sup> Oxford amalgamates the above two definitions and forms its own by explaining the term as “the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the exploitation of figures of speech and other compositional techniques.”<sup>88</sup> Pedagogy originated in a much a later period from the former, during the late 16<sup>th</sup> century from French *pédagogie* and Greek *paidagōgia*. Oxford defines it in a broader perspective as, “the method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept,”<sup>89</sup> while Merriam Webster précises it as, “the art, science, or profession of teaching.”<sup>90</sup> Cambridge provides a similar view of the term by defining it as, “the study of the methods and activities of teaching.”<sup>91</sup> This from the above definitions of the two terms, rhetoric pedagogy can be understood as the teaching practice of the art of speaking and writing effectively so as to influence readers. However, the pedagogical approach, defined by scholars across the ages, refers to the teaching of the art of persuasion over effective speaking and writing.<sup>[92] [93]</sup> This can be understood from the explanation posed by Kenneth Burke’s commentary,

Wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is “meaning,” there is “persuasion.” Food, eaten and digested, is not rhetorical. But in the meaning of food there is much rhetoric, the meaning being persuasive enough for the idea of food to be used, like the ideas of religion, as a rhetorical device for statesmen<sup>94</sup>.

According to DeWitt Henry, the discipline of creative writing as it is currently known began in 1940 with most of the foundational principles and rationales emerging from the Iowa’s Writers’ Workshop<sup>95</sup>. Even so, Sarah Cohen<sup>96</sup> points out that there is a higher possibility that even the

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<sup>87</sup> Sidney I. Landau, *Cambridge Dictionary of American English* (Cambridge Univ. Press [u.a.], 2000).

<sup>88</sup> Stevenson, *Oxford Dictionary of English*.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Merriam-Webster, *The Merriam Webster Dictionary*.

<sup>91</sup> Landau, *Cambridge Dictionary of American English*.

<sup>92</sup> Tom C. Hunley and Sandra Giles in their article in “Creative Writing Pedagogies for the Twenty-First Century,” point out the differences of opinion among ancient scholars over the definition of rhetoric, with some like Aristotle and Cicero going with the art of persuasion and others like Quintilian understood it under the broader view of speaking well.

<sup>93</sup> Alexandria Peary and Tom C. Hunley, *Creative Writing Pedagogies for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Alexandria Peary and Tom C. Hunley (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 2015).

<sup>94</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969).

<sup>95</sup> DeWitt Henry, “A Short History of Creative Writing in America,” in *Teaching Creative Writing* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012), 17–24.

<sup>96</sup> Sarah Cohen, “School of Unlikeness: The Creative Writing Workshop and American Poetry” (University of Washington, 2012).

principles developed in the Iowa's Writers' Workshop could be borrowed from precursors, such as George Baker's 47 Workshop hosted at Harvard University in the period between 1906 and 1925. This way, it is evident that it is highly challenging to pinpoint the exact point in time that the art of creative writing was developed. However, a deeper look into the practice as it is suggested in the modern-day era shows that there is an extensive level of similarity between what is known as creative writing and what was known as rhetoric. Modern-day creative writing seems to be a reinvention of two major historic disciplines namely "the ancient dramatic teaching and the renaissance rhetorical exercises in composition."<sup>97</sup>

Teachers within the university domain, made a rhetorical move in designing an English course by dividing it into various subfields like creative writing, literature, cultural studies, and, composition and rhetoric. Such a move was designed with the purpose of, "reaching a depth of development in each area the kind of depth that specialization does foster."<sup>98</sup> However, this design has experienced major negative responses from certain creative teachers and students alike, who think learning all these segments has nothing to do with creative writing— which in actuality is expressing ones ideas and feeling about the 'truth'. The need for rhetorical pedagogy (taking the work of Greco-Roman rhetoric and recent rhetoricians) is grounded in its approach to provide teachers and students with a framework for in-depth and rich training and the comprehension of the "tools, the messages and methods and media, of their chosen art."<sup>99</sup>

However, the merging of rhetoric has been largely limited to composition, keeping it peripheral to creative writing. Despite the emergence of both creative writing and composition together in academia, as noted by D.G. Myers, author of the book, *The Elephants Teach: Creative Writing Since 1880*, both soon parted ways, having separate goals and pedagogies<sup>100</sup>. The pedagogical approach to integrate creative writing with rhetoric has been widely worked upon by recent scholars namely, Tim Mayers, Gerald Graff, Douglas Hesse, Jeri Kroll and Graeme Harper and, Lindsey Gendke. All these scholars project the lack of creative writing pedagogies to infuse rhetoric within higher education, thereby fails to shape writing-disposed students with the ability

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<sup>97</sup> David Morley, *The Cambridge Introduction to Creative Writing*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2007). p. 16

<sup>98</sup> Tom C. Hunley and Sandra Giles, "Rhetorical Pedagogy," in *Creative Writing Pedagogies for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Alexandria Peary and Tom C. Hunley (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 2015), 7–29. p. 7

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> D. G. Myers, *The Elephants Teach : Creative Writing since 1880* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Prentice Hall, 1996).

to become an efficient writer, as well as a critic. These students are barely capable of writing outside their university assignments or tasks and it is here that the pedagogical approach of integrating creative writing with rhetoric— as termed as ‘Creative Rhetoric’ by Lindsey Gendke<sup>101</sup>— serves as an antidote to the problem. Such an approach equips students efficiently for the twenty-first century by developing them not only as a writer but also as a critic, along with a ‘rhetor’<sup>102</sup>.

Gerald Graff<sup>103</sup> has pointed out the major existing difference between creative writing and literature theories followed within institutions. There seldom lies any path of confluence between the two. Kimberly Andrews<sup>104</sup> on the other hand, while explaining these differences, has noted a third division of rhetoric and composition, metaphorically identifying their relationship as oil and water. Douglas Hesse,<sup>105</sup> further acknowledging the related fields of the above two disciplines, has highlighted the ‘contempt’ and ‘wariness’ towards each other. Lindsey Gendke’s<sup>106</sup> explanation of the differences between the above two disciplines through her personal experience has clearly reflected the lacunae existing within the universities’ curriculum and teaching methods of English (major) students. Often, students of literature are occupied with studying and developing assignments on literary interpretation, ignoring expressive writing through rhetoric and composition pedagogy or simply put, rhetorical writing. Such practice rendered the degree attained by students redundant, owing to the conspicuous gaps between teaching (literature) and the practical need of the knowledge (writing skills).

In terms of teaching, as reflected by Donald Stewart, “the single greatest deficiency [...] (is) English teachers’ lack of knowledge” of their professional history, precisely on the “history of writing instructions.”<sup>107</sup> A similar perspective on the lack of appropriate pedagogy in graduate schools and universities on teaching creative writing by creative writers themselves has been

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<sup>101</sup> Lindsey Gendke, “A Graduate English Major’s Search for Meaning: Toward a Pedagogy of Creative Rhetoric” (The University of Texas at Arlington, 2012).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, p. IV.

<sup>103</sup> Gerald Graff, *Beyond the Culture Wars: How Teaching the Conflicts Can Revitalize American Education* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992).

<sup>104</sup> Kimberly Andrews, “A House Divided: On the Future of Creative Writing.,” *College English* 71, no. 3 (2009): 242–255.

<sup>105</sup> Douglas Hesse, “The Place of Creative Writing in Composition Studies,” *College Composition and Communication* 62, no. 1 (2010): 31–52.

<sup>106</sup> Gendke, “A Graduate English Major’s Search for Meaning: Toward a Pedagogy of Creative Rhetoric.”

<sup>107</sup> James A. Berlin, *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985*. (Southern Illinois University Press, 1987).

pointed out by Hal Blythe and Charlie Sweet. They highlighted the significant lack of an appropriate discipline of creative writing, let alone having a distinct pedagogy, which in turn was “too geared toward packaging for [the] market place.”<sup>108</sup> In the early twentieth century, it was the atelier approach,<sup>109</sup> which formed the prominent pedagogy of teaching creative writing and through which Gertrude Stein mentored the Lost Generation writers. However, this approach was significantly limited by the possibility of turning a student into a clone of the master’s works or wasting his/her time by repetitive or rote practice. In the later part of the twentieth century, the dominant pedagogy within the university curriculum— a consequence of such ignorance— was the Current-Traditional Rhetoric. As per this pedagogical approach, creative writing was bound within a positivistic and scientific enterprise, and involves a “rational, logical activity [...] merely recording ‘sense impressions’ or already objective, external truths.”<sup>110</sup> Consequently, the student or writer learns little about ‘inventing’ his or her own truth through in-depth engagement with the topic of writing. Rather, they are more engaged in recording information, organising and editing it— a formalist and discipline-centered approach—instead of creating their own personalised accounts and expressing their own thought process.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has been prominently marked by two approaches—which stemmed from the 20<sup>th</sup> century itself— the workshop approach and the feminist approach. Owing to the lack of appropriate teaching mechanisms for creative writing in the seat of learning, at graduate schools and universities, both teachers and students of creative writing gain knowledge of the process through various workshops carried out by prominent creative writers of the age. The workshop approach— led by the master with a collection of apprentices, is defined as, “The workshop is a doorway for you to get criticism and motivation for you to write because of the deadlines that are imposed.”<sup>111</sup> Although an ideal workshop facilitates a perfect environment, positively charged with commentary by the facilitator and the apprentices and thereby giving way to growth of personal writing and a community, it has its own set of limitations. Most workshops, laden with a huge proportion of apprentices, leave little scope for facilitators to provide equal attention to

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<sup>108</sup> Hal Blythe and Charlie Sweet, “The Writing Community: A New Model for the Creative Writing Classroom,” *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 8, no. 2 (2008): 305–25. p. 306

<sup>109</sup> Originated from prominent French painters and sculptors’ approach of teaching promising students one-on-one basis for a long period of time.

<sup>110</sup> Gendke, “A Graduate English Major’s Search for Meaning: Toward a Pedagogy of Creative Rhetoric.” p. 7

<sup>111</sup> Stephen Minot, *Three Genres*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003).

each of the students. Further, alpha apprentices dominate conversations, shy students drift away and ‘negative comments rip apart works and souls’<sup>112</sup>, having no meaningful work to discuss. This leads to intellectual bias and thus gives rise to clones with restricted vision. The feminist approach on the other hand, fuelled by prominent works of creative writers like Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own*, distances itself from masculine methodologies and authoritarian approaches by asking students, mostly women, to discover their true feelings and adopt their voices. Placing students in peer groups, facilitators of the feminist approach instruct them in encouraging tones<sup>113</sup>. Such a collaborative approach and open-ended space provide women the ability to develop their own language, expressing their uniqueness. However, the very collaborative approach through the creation of dialogue and the absence of an authoritarian figure (with the facilitator and the students teaching learning each other) also forms this approach’s greatest limitation. Within the formal educational structure, with a vast number of students, the absence of authoritarian figure according to Blythe and Sweet<sup>114</sup> would practically lead to a chaotic situation, since there would be no one to ascertain students’ strengths and weaknesses and to articulate ways to maximise the former and minimise the latter. Several other critics <sup>[115] [116]</sup> have viewed the approach applicable more as therapy over instruction of creative writing in universities.

Alexandria Peary and Tom C. Hunley in their edited book *Creative Writing Pedagogies for the Twenty-First Century* have further pointed out two more pedagogical techniques appropriate for the present day teaching of creative writing— digital pedagogy and ecological creative writing. With the increasing dependency on digitalisation, the former approach enables teachers to shape students’ writing through, “collaboration, multimodality, publishing, and sampling and remixing.”<sup>117</sup> Further, with the rising awareness of environmental sustainability, the latter approach enables both teachers and students to, “understand the ways our lives and writing

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<sup>112</sup> Blythe and Sweet, “The Writing Community: A New Model for the Creative Writing Classroom.” p. 314

<sup>113</sup> Pamela Annas and Joyce Peseroff, “A Feminist Approach to Creative Writing Pedagogy,” in *Creative Writing Pedagogies for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Alexandria Peary and Tom C. Hunley (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 2015), 78–101.

<sup>114</sup> Blythe and Sweet, “The Writing Community: A New Model for the Creative Writing Classroom.”

<sup>115</sup> Joshua M. Lobb, “‘They Don’t Flinch’: Creative Writing/Critical Theory, Pedagogy/Students” (University of Wollongong, 2012).

<sup>116</sup> Danielle L. Iamarino, “Codifying the Creative Self: Conflicts of Theory and Content in Creative Writing,” *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 5, no. 6 (2015): 1123–1128.

<sup>117</sup> Peary and Hunley, *Creative Writing Pedagogies for the Twenty-First Century*. p. 244

practices are interconnected with other lives and other writers, with books and culture, with the many (obvious and not so obvious) ways the world and history inform our existence.”<sup>118</sup> But significantly, being part of the larger pedagogical approach of creative writing, rather than being independent approaches, limits both.

### 3.3 Rhetorical Pedagogy- Concept and Practice

All the above techniques of pedagogical approaches to creative writing followed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century barely show any importance for the building of rhetoric among students, making them more of a clone of the master, including the “workshop method”– creative writing’s signature pedagogy<sup>119</sup>. Interestingly the recent approaches devised, such as the feminist approach, digital pedagogy and ecological creative writing emphasise the scope of developing students into critics and rhetors. This is understood from the emphasis given to students’ comprehension of the, “politics of identity and representation and the social-theoretical analyses of literature,”<sup>120</sup> the main component of rhetoric creative writing in the three recent theories. While the feminist approach solely encourages its (female) students to defy the existing masculine and authoritarian approaches and own their voice when expressing ideas, the ecological approach reflects the intermingled lives of human beings and relationships with nature <sup>[121] [122]</sup>. Hence, both expand upon the identity and social-theoretical perspectives. The digital approach to rhetoric lies in its connection between computer-mediated communication and rhetoric. This refers to “the computer often (turning) out to be a rhetorical device as well as a logical one, that it derives its aesthetic from philosophy’s great historical opposite in Western thought and education, the world of rhetoric.”<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, the emergence of democratisation in creative writing through art and theory, and implementation of STEAM education (emphasis on science, technology, engineering, arts and math) has further made the computer or digital networks the, “fulfilment of

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<sup>119</sup> University of Pennsylvania, “Perspectives on Creative Writing from Outside the Field,” *Department of English, The University of Pennsylvania*, last modified 2016, accessed February 18, 2017, <https://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/cfp/2016/12/16/povs-perspectives-on-creative-writing-from-outside-the-field>.

<sup>120</sup> Jen Webb and Kevin Brophy in Lobb's, “‘They Don’t Flinch’: Creative Writing/Critical Theory, Pedagogy/Students.”

<sup>121</sup> Blythe and Sweet, “The Writing Community: A New Model for the Creative Writing Classroom.”

<sup>122</sup> James Engelhardt and Jeremy Schraffenberger, “Ecological Creative Writing,” in *Creative Writing Pedagogies for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Alexandria Peary and Tom C Hunley (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 2015), 269–288.

<sup>123</sup> Richard A. Lanham, *The Electronic Word: Democracy, Technology, and the Arts* (University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 221

social thought,” requiring explication<sup>124</sup>. Here, the considerable influence exerted by democratisation on creative writing through technological innovation in the present age, such as digitalization, has given rise to digital rhetoric— an emergent pedagogical approach. Within this approach, the hypertext reifies the linkage between works, fundamentally connecting each of the creative works with others, contrasting to print technology, which largely isolates the works<sup>125</sup>. This process of the insertion of individual text into the grid of other texts “creates a new kind of textual entity—a meta-text or hypermedia corpus.”<sup>126</sup> Further, the process of democratisation in creative writing is aggravated by the renovation of the old rhetoric of persuasion into a novel digital rhetoric, thus encouraging participation, self-expression and creative collaboration<sup>127</sup>. Digital images within the domain of the digital approach are another mode of persuasion, leading to the further democratisation of creative writing, which was rendered significant by the classical rhetoricians like Aristotle, by emphasising subjects presenting individuals with alternate probabilities. Instances can be seen in the vivacious and active public discourse in the form of social activism and confrontation, occurring online following digital texts and videos, which exerted a noticeable influence on society, hence forming worthwhile subject of study by creative rhetoricians<sup>128</sup>. Overall, the emergence of the democratisation of creative writing in the modern era is established and further encouraged largely by the digital pedagogical approach or digital rhetoric, which turns the Web into a medium of persuasive communication. This communication, based on five elements— reception, source, message, time, and space<sup>129</sup> -- raises public awareness, thereby leading to ethos, interactivity and intertextuality of creative writings.<sup>130</sup>

Besides, digital rhetoric, which forms a significant part of teaching creative writing, there are four other forms of the rhetoric pedagogical approach model, which take care of enhancing students as critics and rhetors: the provoking approach, tacit approach, conversational approach and hybrid approach, which depends on the fluidity of theories i.e. the borrowing of ideas from theories and incorporating them into writing. The provoking approach asks students to challenge

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid. p. 243

<sup>125</sup> Douglas Eyman, *Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Method, Practice, Digital Humanities* (University of Michigan Press, 2015)

<sup>126</sup> George P. Landow, *Hyper/text/theory* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

<sup>127</sup> Jim Ridolfo and William Hart-Davidson, *Rhetoric and the Digital Humanities*, ed. Jim Ridolfo and William Hart-Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

<sup>128</sup> Barbara Warnick, *Rhetoric Online : Persuasion and Politics on the World Wide Web* (Peter Lang, 2007).

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. p. 27

<sup>130</sup> Eyman, *Digital Rhetoric: Theory, Method, Practice*.



their conventional assumptions of writing and to imagine things not only from a philosophical perspective but also rendering them as textual practices. In a way this approach activates theoretical ideas among students' writing and denotes an affirmative effect on the ways these students represent their characters, produce dialogues or structure narratives.<sup>131</sup> The tacit approach on the other hand, reduces the theoretical presence within teaching to subterranean i.e. having an underlying appearance in the teaching process. This saves the classroom from turning into a philosophical one, keeping course design content-driven, instead of theory-driven and a real world context in the writing interaction. Since students 'experience' theories, rather than observing them, "a dialectic between practice and theory," would keep students engaged at an unconscious level, simultaneously keeping them actively conscious of the dialectic<sup>132</sup>. On the other hand, the conversational approach engages with theory in an additionally visible way by conducting a dialogue between reading and writing through post-structuralism. Here, theory is incorporated within writing in an informal way, where the former exists as a part or topic among the other contents of the creative writing. The unique feature of this approach lies in encouraging students to be, "creative and critical" simultaneously."<sup>133</sup> Lastly, the hybrid approach deals in encouraging communication between theory and writing, thereby increasing a student's idea of writing. Through this approach, the blurring of the distinction between 'theoretical' and 'creative' thereby synthesises them equally in writing. Such synthesising of the two leads to the gained insights of the theories, integrating them into the work of writing without overwhelming it in, "*an organic use of Theory.*"<sup>134</sup>

Despite the effort put in by rhetoricians, thinkers and teachers of creative writing to develop students' creative writing abilities through teaching them various nodes of theory and practice, some critics are of the opinion that there lies a significant difference between 'natural' and 'learnt' writers. Learnt writers essentially develop the ability to produce work faster through the methods s/he learnt through the various techniques discussed above. On the other hand, natural writers are more efficient in drawing their own creativity in their writing and articulating their knowledge of particular theoretical ideas, and integrating them with their imagination in their

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<sup>131</sup> Lobb, "They Don't Flinch': Creative Writing/Critical Theory, Pedagogy/Students." p. 6

<sup>132</sup> D. Hecq, "Creative Writing and Theory/Theory without Credentials," in *Research Methods in Creative Writing*, ed. J. Kroll and G. Harper (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

<sup>133</sup> Lobb, "They Don't Flinch': Creative Writing/Critical Theory, Pedagogy/Students." p. 10

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. p. 10

works. The difference between the two has been explicitly explained by Maria Antoniou and Jessica Moriarty,<sup>135</sup> who define writing as, “emotional and identity related activity, as well as a technical, craft-based one.” Writing is essentially linked with a sense of self and thus is a way of expressing the self. Therefore, the sole development of a writer through technical guidance, without his or her possession of any personal experience or emotional processes, is not possible. In short, writing is both a personal and professional activity and writers who do not possess a natural inclination, lacking a personal element, seldom develop to become efficient creative writers. However, Lee and Boud opined on the importance of a change in strategy by creative writing teachers to manage the fears of students who lack this natural inclination, to develop their desires productively<sup>136</sup>. Nevertheless, as observed by Maria Antoniou and Jessica Moriarty, natural creative writers “hold knowledge and experience about the writing process,” which can be extended to the others (learnt), benefitting them immensely helping them to understand the utilisation of time and space in writing, with the mediation of the teachers.<sup>137</sup> A detailed analysis of the difference between the two categories of writers will be discussed in chapter five, through the understanding of the various creative writing techniques that are effective enough to enable the learnt writer to outdo the naturally creative ones.

### 3.4 Summary

**The democratisation of writing, especially that of creative writing and its teaching techniques, which the study majorly aims to explore,** has led to signifying the domain as a separate discipline of study during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the Iowa Writers’ Workshop in 1940. This was essentially a formalized version of teaching creative writing, establishing its foundational principles and rationales, which later gave way to universities and schools adopting the discipline within their curriculums. However, teaching creative writing in an informal setup was present beforehand, with no universally accepted date for the same. But, its presence can be

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<sup>135</sup> Maria Antoniou and Jessica Moriarty, “What Can Academic Writers Learn from Creative Writers? Developing Guidance and Support for Lecturers in Higher Education,” *Teaching in Higher Education* 13, no. 2 (2008): 157–167.

<sup>136</sup> A. Lee and D. Boud, “Writing Groups, Change and Academic Identity: Research Development as Local Practice,” *Studies in Higher Education* 28, no. 2 (2003): 187–200.

<sup>137</sup> Antoniou and Moriarty, “What Can Academic Writers Learn from Creative Writers? Developing Guidance and Support for Lecturers in Higher Education.”

ascertained from the emergence of various techniques of the period of time, such as the atelier method, current-traditional rhetoric, workshop approach and feminist approach. Both the atelier and current-traditional rhetoric were largely criticised for making the students ‘clones’ of their masters, leaving them little scope to ‘invent their own truth’ through deep engagement with the topic of writing. Here, the democratisation of writing has led to the emergence of the workshop technique, which acts as a doorway for students to get criticism and motivate them to write because of the deadlines that are imposed. But, even the workshop method, one of the popularly followed techniques within the University domain is criticized for leaving little scope for facilitators to provide equal attention to each student. With the rise of the feminist disposition, through the emergence of strong female writers, such as Jeanette Winterson, Virginia Woolf, Susan Sontag and others, the above three techniques were further criticized for infusing masculine methodologies and authoritarian approaches. This democratisation in writing, through the emergence of self-critical autobiographies and feminist identities of the female writers, gave rise to the feminist teaching technique. Here, students, mostly women were asked to discover their true feelings and adopt their voice through the creation of dialogue, sans authoritarian figures. Another lacunae within the domain of teaching creating writing was in separating creative writing from rhetoric. Rhetoric enables students to comprehend politics of identity and representation and the social-theoretical analyses of literature. However, ignorance on the part of teachers towards knowing the importance of mixing the discipline of rhetoric with creative writing and enabling students to learn to articulate their ideas to an audience and prepare themselves to receive criticism has led students to lag in developing their creative skills. Interestingly democratisation, through virtual platforms, as well as informal workshops conducted by creative writers, has educated students about the gap and also enabled them to emerge with an innovative approach. Over the period of time, various other approaches have come into being, infusing a rhetorical pedagogic tactic with the digital and ecological techniques, besides the presence of the workshop and feminist approaches. These teaching techniques have encouraged democratisation in creative writing through art and theory, and have made the computer or digital networks examples of the fulfilment of social thought, requiring explication. Additionally, the democratisation of creative writing in the modern era is established and further encouraged largely through the digital pedagogical approach or digital rhetoric, which turns the Web into a medium of persuasive communication. This communication based on five elements—

reception, source, message, time, and space<sup>138</sup> -- raises public awareness, thereby leading to the ethos, interactivity and intertextuality of creative writings. The democratisation of creative writing is further understood from the proficiency attained by 'learnt' creative writers. Despite lacking the natural element of sensing the self and expressing the self, learnt writers, through learning technicalities and considerable practice, develop to become efficient creative writers. Emphasis is placed in the fifth chapter on the difference between the two and the role of democratisation in building the skills of a learnt writer. However, the following chapter is significant in highlighting the gradual democratisation of writing with the changing socio-political and environmental set up from the Romantic era to the contemporary through a discussion of eminent works of renowned writers.

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid. p. 27

## Chapter 4: IDENTIFIED THEMES IN CREATIVE WRITING WRITERS' WORKS

### 4

#### 4.1 Introduction to Chapter

The two preceding chapters explored the way technological innovation has led to democratisation in the creative writing domain across the ages and has impacted writing, as well as the style of teaching creative writers. Democratisation within society in terms of opinion and intellect is evident from Gramsci's revelation that all, "men and women are intellectuals," as understood from the ordinary pursuits taken up by them, so as to consciously or unconsciously recompense, "for their alienated function in the capitalist mode of production."<sup>139</sup> This democratisation of existing conceptions of philosophical underpinnings, as put forward by Gramsci, can be credited to the democratisation of writing. Since the period of democratisation of thinking, pointed out by Gramsci, coincides with Christopher Hilliard's age of democratisation of writing<sup>140</sup> in England (1920-30), such an observation can be established. The advent of modernism through technological innovation, historical, geographical and socio-political democratisation through the rise of mass media, such as radio and cinema and the mobilisation of labour movement, has considerably influenced creative writing. Instances can be seen in Gramsci's work, when he wrote significant essays on the political situation in his *Prison Notebooks*, or that of Hilliard, who recorded the spectacular and subterranean explosion in creative writing in the inter-war period in *To Exercise Our Talents*<sup>141</sup>. Having understood the influential role of democratisation (technological, socio-political, historical, geographical and such others) on the creative writing process, the concerned study purports to explore the same through the works of five eminent creative writers-teachers. Later, upon identifying the key

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<sup>139</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, Reprint. (Lawrence and Wishart, 1982). p. 9

<sup>140</sup> Christopher Hilliard, "To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain.," in *Harvard Historical Studies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 390.

<sup>141</sup> Matthew Beaumont, "To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratisation of Writing in Britain by Christopher Hilliard," *Journal of British Studies* 46, no. 1 (2007): 234–235.

themes within their works, a critical assessment has been conducted of the effectiveness of these materials in learning creative writing.

## **4.2 Introduction to Chosen Authors and their Works**

Since its evolution, creative writing was not fixed within a particular paradigm, rather it was present in every genre of writing: fiction, nonfiction, children and young adult literature, novels and novellas, fantasy and humorous fiction, autobiographies and memoirs and such others. Taking from the contemporary age of varied modes of the expression of ideas, creative writing extended to critical essays, drama, scriptwriting and poetry, as well. This section therefore, explores such eminent creative works across literary ages, initiating from the Romantic era to the post-modernist contemporary 21<sup>st</sup> century, gauging the changes accompanying writing and teaching methods.

### **4.2.1 Washington Irving (*Rip Van Winkle*)**

The story *Rip Van Winkle*, published in the Romantic era of English literature was set out in the years before and after the American Revolution. The story moves around the protagonist, Rip van Winkle, a Dutch villager who enjoys his solitude in the wilderness, sometimes hanging out with his friends at the local inn and his idleness. One sudden day, while following a man wearing antiquated Dutch clothes, Rip discovers a group playing nine-pin and falls asleep after drinking their Hollands. He experiences shocking changes in his socio-political surroundings upon waking up, such as the change of America from a colony to an independent country. Also, his personal surroundings have changed tremendously, with most of his friends being dead after fighting in the revolution and also with his wife dead and children grown up.

The story of Rip van Winkle reflects the heightened imaginary prowess of Washington Irving, since he claimed to have never visited the Dutch village to which the protagonist belonged. However, he provides a vivid picture of the place, emphasising the antiquity of the place founded by Dutch colonists, unscathed by the external world. Works belonging to the Romantic era of English literature, based in America, were heavily influenced by the sentiment of the European Romances, with the lack of formation of the ‘American identity’ prior and during the Age of Revolution. Romanticism, originating in Germany, later flourished in America during its national expansion, formation of national identity and discovery of voice. This surge in national identity,

idealism and the passion of Romanticism gave birth to nurture Romantic masterpieces through Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* and Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle*. However, Figun Dincer noted the former two— that of Hawthorne and Poe-- as dark romantic works while Irving's as a light romantic work.<sup>142</sup> The scholar interpreted Light Romanticism as optimistic, since they tended to turn to the past to check the mistakes done in the past and solve them by searching for values from the past itself. In the work of Irving, Rip emerges as an ideal romantic hero, who escapes from materialism by climbing mountains. Dincer, further describes Rip Van as being, "...in touch with nature. He very often goes into the forest. His wife, Dame, [...] reminds him his responsibilities of home and children. Rip represents the solution for the dissatisfaction of materialism by going to nature." Besides, through Rip Van Winkle, Irving projects the perfect past, where everything was fine and at peace (the time before Rip goes to sleep). Also, through the character, Irving emphasises the carrying of the past along with the present when Rip talks about his past, "If we want to live in a modern society, we must carry values in the past to the present." Although radical changes are necessary for the growth of the society, traditions and old values should not be compromised at the expense of such changes. Such an ideal is evident from the emergence of Rip II (son of Rip) as an idler, looking similar to his father and Rip's daughter, who mirrors her mother as hard working. Butler has interpreted this moment as,

...thus, though the change has come to the village, their remains link with the past; there is continuity. New generations come along that bring change, but old values and traditions—as well as family lines—remain alive and thriving. And, every now and then, thunder rumbles in the Catskills when Hudson and his crew play ninepins.<sup>143</sup>

In terms of rhetoric, Irving not only reflects a philosophical and idealist stand in his Rip Van Winkle but also, through the character, Irving tacitly criticises the developments that followed industrial revolution and modern technology. The major ideal post-industrial revolution lay in earning more money through working hard, saving and spending more, as exists in the contemporary era as well. The Industrial Revolution gave birth to individualism and capitalism,

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<sup>142</sup> Dincer, "The Light and Dark Romantic Features in Irving, Hawthorne and Poe."

Ibid. p. 221

<sup>143</sup> Dori Hillestad Butler, *Washington Irving's Rip Van Winkle: The 13th: A Play Adaptation* (Benchmark Education Co, 2007).

forcing people to survive in a competitive sphere, of which Rip is the complete opposite<sup>144</sup>. But, despite being idle and different from the existing ideals of individualism and capitalism, he is loved by children and is always helping his neighbours. Therefore, according to Zhu Xin-fu, Irving's ecological rhetoric, through his depiction of wilderness as more anthropocentric than ecocentric, helps to establish a sense of place and a national (American) consciousness among his readers.<sup>145</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Virginia Woolf (*A Writer's Diary*)

Virginia Woolf's *A Writer's Diary* reflects her work in the Modernist era of English Literature, when she penned down her ideas and the experiences she gained in her brief lifetime and novels. Though published a dozen years later after her death in 1952 by her husband, Woolf's writings depict the work of the Modern era of American literature, rather way ahead of the time of other modern writers. Her diary contains a vivid description of her feelings, thoughts and the flux of time, which Woolf tackled innovatively, freely experimenting throughout her diary. Anita Sethi describes her *Writer's Diary* as a,

...rapid haphazard gallop" sweeps[-ing] up "the diamonds of the dustheap" of daily life, sketching with sparkling insights the external world: meetings with the Bloomsbury group; "owling through the streets" in her night walks; sheltering from air raids as the war begins, leaving her unmoored as she sees "tortured London" become "a desolate ruin."<sup>146</sup>

Unity in Woolf's writing is reflected in her writing against the current, thus withholding her courage as a woman, talking freely about the homosexual lifestyle of her novelist friend Hugh Walpole<sup>147</sup>, which was a taboo in society then in legal terms. However, queer identities veritably formed a significant part of the art and cultural world, including Modernist literature. This is further evident in the words of George Chauncey, although such a revolution was largely restricted to the cosmopolitan society of New York,

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<sup>144</sup> Christina Gieseller, "Romantic Elements in Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle*" (University of Wuppertal, 2007).

<sup>145</sup> Zhu Xin-fu, "The Ecological Significance of the Wilderness Writing in American Literature," *Foreign Language and Literature* 3 (2009), [http://en.cnki.com.cn/Article\\_en/CJFDTotat-SCWY200903001.htm](http://en.cnki.com.cn/Article_en/CJFDTotat-SCWY200903001.htm).

<sup>146</sup> Anita Sethi, "*A Writer's Diary* by Virginia Woolf – Review," *The Guardian* (London, December 30, 2012), <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/dec/30/writers-diary-virginia-woolf-review>.

<sup>147</sup> Maggie Gee, "Book Of A Lifetime: *A Writer's Diary*, By Virginia Woolf," *The Independent* (London, 2010).



In the 1920's and early 30's, gay impresarios organized drag balls attracting thousands of gay dancers and straight spectators. Gay writers, actors and musicians produced a distinctive gay literature and performance style. This cultural outpouring was so popular by the late 20's that gay performers moved from the margins of the city and briefly became the darlings of Broadway.<sup>148</sup>

Despite such huge cultural outpourings on queer identities, breaking all the taboos, the public discussion of the same was highly restricted in New York. A similar condition prevailed in the United Kingdom as well, where a particular ideal of masculinity prevailed.<sup>149</sup> Woolf's heightened creative imagination is glimpsed from the symbolism presented in the moth while describing her prolonged illness in essay, *The Waves*. She describes The Moth as, "... A man and a woman, night, the arrival of the bright moths, and the women letting in the last great moth." She uses the moth as a metaphor for her mind, her sensory impressions, and describes it as, "*the most capricious of insects—flirting, fluttering [...] some nervous fibre, or fanlike membrane in my species.*"<sup>150</sup> Overall, in *A Writer's Diary*, Woolf has sharply etched her well-wrought prose, delicately displaying the interior lives of her characters. Of the very many popular modernist writers, such as, Wordsworth, Milton, Yeats, Eliot, Joyce, Pound and such others, whose works have either been reinterpreted or have been dismissed by the fresh generations, Woolf's works have been reconsidered, owing to the relevance of her reassessment of contemporary social and political life. Her feminist establishment and radical perspective (although some thought her to be fairly conservative) have further led to her re-evaluation, reflecting the influence of democratisation in leading to a change in vision and critical sensibility across various ages and temperaments.<sup>151</sup>

### 4.2.3 EB White (*Charlotte's Web*)

An excellent piece of creative writing is witnessed in E.B White's *Charlotte's Web*, providing a vivid picture of the lives of animals surrounding humans in their everyday lives. In providing fictional stories to children, White, an ardent lover of animals, purported to take animals as they

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<sup>148</sup>George Chauncey, "A Gay World, Vibrant and Forgotten," *The New York Times* (New York, June 1994).

<sup>149</sup>Nicholas L. Syrett, "The Boys of Beaver Meadow: A Homosexual Community at 1920s Dartmouth College," *American Studies* 48, no. 2 (2007): 9–18.

<sup>150</sup>Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1954). p. 131

<sup>151</sup>Ralph Freedman, *Virginia Woolf, Revaluation and Continuity: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Ralph Freedman (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980).

naturally are, without making them unnecessarily cute and attractive as is evident from the following excerpt, “Then she [Fern] lifted the lid of the carton. There, inside, looking up at her, was the newborn pig. It was a white one. The morning light shone through its ears, turning them pink.”<sup>152</sup> Through his writing, White broke away from the primary inhibitions about ‘ugly’ animals that children learn from their parents. In his letter to the PR representatives and the editor of Harper & Row, Ursula Nordstorm, he wrote, “...I think it is too bad that children are often corrupted by their elders in this hate campaign [against spiders].<sup>153</sup>”

The above response was given as an answer to the objections posed by critics, librarians, teachers and parents along with the PR personnel of the publishing house, for which he had little patience and regarded as an infringement on his integrity as a writer and his creative vision. In terms of creative writing, White maintained the long-standing tradition of tales with intellectual animals having conversations with humans. The particular tradition is evident within the Aesop’s Fables (Ungrateful Eagle) and Reynard the Fox in the middle ages, the autobiography of the Black Beauty in the nineteenth century and most recently in the quest of Despereaux, in the twenty-first century. All these fables and stories lament about the loss of the Golden Age, when humanity could establish conversation with animals, and this Golden Age, according to White is childhood, which he upheld in *Charlotte’s Web*<sup>154</sup>. Childhood is an age of imagination, curiosity and empathy, which gets lost as individuals age older and reason and practicality take over them. However, creative writing is all about empathy, which in turn is entering into another’s reality, and it is when a writer’s “passions and contradictions” and “delights and fears” are translated through empathy and the usage of imagination, that a work of creative writing is born. This is evident from White’s view as well, when he suggested the same to one of his students, “Remember that writing is translation, and the opus to be translated is yourself.”<sup>155</sup>

He realised the same when he constructed *Charlotte’s Web* after studying spiders for a year.

One cold October evening I was lucky enough to see *Aranea Cavatica* spin her egg sac and deposit her eggs. When I saw that she was fixing to become a mother,

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<sup>152</sup> E. B. White, *Charlotte’s Web*, ed. Garth Williams (New York: Scholastic, 1952). p. 4

<sup>153</sup> Steven D. Price, *The Little Black Book of Writers’ Wisdom*, ed. Steven D. Price (Skyhorse Publishing, Inc, 2013).

<sup>154</sup> Maureen Corrigan, “How E.B. White Spun ‘Charlotte’s Web’,” *NPR* (Washington, July 5, 2011), <http://www.npr.org/2011/07/05/137452030/how-e-b-white-spun-charlottes-web>.

<sup>155</sup> Michael Sims, *The Story of Charlotte’s Web: E.B. White and the Birth of a Children’s Classic*, 1st ed. (A&C Black, 2011).

I got a stepladder and an extension light and had an excellent view of the whole business. A few days later, when it was time to return to New York, not wishing to part with my spider, I took a razor blade, cut the sac adrift from the underside of the shed roof, put spider and sac in a candy box, and carried them to town. I tossed the box on my dresser. Some weeks later I was surprised and pleased to find that Charlotte's daughters were emerging from the air holes in the cover of the box. They strung tiny lines from my comb to my brush, from my brush to my mirror, and from my mirror to my nail scissors. They were very busy and almost invisible, they were so small. We all lived together happily for a couple of weeks, and then somebody whose duty it was to dust my dresser balked, and I broke up the show.<sup>156</sup>

Writing from real life characters is not new in the creative world, including the children's and fantasy arenas as well. Apart from Charlotte and Wilbur, a real spider and pig, with whom White actually spent most of his time in his barn in Maine and later New York, Alice and Dodo from *Alice in Wonderland* were created from young Miss Liddell and Lewis Carroll's trouble to pronounce his surname, Dodgson, respectively. Similarly, Christopher Robin from *Winnie the Pooh* was in reality, the child of A.A. Milne and played inside a large hollow tree on the author's family property. White's work as the 'juvenile-fantasy writer,' a term coined by American critic and essayist, Clifton Fadiman, solved the question posed by the latter of, "how to find, not another Alice, but another rabbit hole" through the ignition of smouldering memories of childhood. Further, his work has elements of adulthood as well, through the presence of the "unblinking response to the inevitability of death", striking as "realistically hard-headed despite being wrapped in anthropomorphism."<sup>157</sup>

#### **4.2.4 Annie Dillard (*The Writing Life*)**

Annie Dillard, who is popular as a nature writer (although not an appreciator of nature), surrounds her works with notions of self-sacrifice and the reconciliation of life beauty with horror. She focuses on understanding the human mind and its perception of the world. In her *The Writing Life*, she explores the lives of other artistes to gain a deeper understanding of life and suffering. Explaining Dillard's *The Writing Life*, Sanae Kumamoto highlighted,

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<sup>156</sup> Maria Popova, "E. B. White on Why He Wrote Charlotte's Web, Plus His Rare Illustrated Manuscripts," *Brain Pickings*, last modified 2013, accessed February 21, 2017, <https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/10/15/e-b-white-on-charlottes-web/>.

<sup>157</sup> Corrigan, "How E.B. White Spun 'Charlotte's Web'."

In this book, Dillard actually takes a huge step from what she did in her previous works, and deals with, what is ultimately, a false sense of seclusion from society, as if to say artists are fundamentally different from the public. It is clear that Dillard feels isolated from society and desperately longs to find others with whom she can identify. She seeks out the views of her neighbours and at some point reluctantly acknowledges that however noble her work might be, writing in the end is just a job.<sup>158</sup>

The core theme surrounding *The Writing Life* is Dillard's search for artistic authenticity through creative non-fiction. The naturalists find Dillard's book interesting through her usage of metaphors of wilderness, which were deemed relevant to the life of wood carver. Reflecting on this, Bob Matherne wrote, "She writes beautifully crafted metaphors, and the very first lines of the book grabbed me in two ways: as a writer and as a woodcarver."<sup>159</sup>

However, there were a significant amount of critics, as well, criticising her way of writing through fragmented structures and unnecessarily knotty metaphors, blatantly short anecdotes and abrupt changes in settings. Kumamoto, while defending Dillard's stand, explained the probable reasons for her criticisms. The scholar noted the failure of her critics to understand *The Writing Life* in the context of Dillard's previous works. It is the specialty of the author to write about stories and characters that were never complete in themselves, but rather, "relied on the development of her themes through her stories to add our understanding of each of her stories."<sup>160</sup> The story in *The Writing Life* surrounds a stunt pilot, Dave Rahm, whose love for the mountains leads him to become an expert on mountains, exploring them from every point of view. This love for mountains encouraged him to study geography and eventually to become a geology professor. But, looking towards both geography and geology as 'too pedestrian,' Rahm finally took up piloting, since he understood the significance of flying in understanding mountains more. This is evident through his words, "I used to climb mountains. But you know, you can get a better feel for a mountain's power flying around it, flying all around it, than you can from climbing it tied to its side like a flea."<sup>161</sup>

Dillard's *The Writing Life* draws a parallel between a pilot and a writer's lives through the sensation of writing with that of spinning reflects Dillard's seriousness towards the art of writing,

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<sup>158</sup> Sanae Kumamoto, "Writing as Life and Art : Annie Dillard's View of the World," *Ronshu* 45, no. 12 (2004): 8, [www.intcul.tohoku.ac.jp/ronshu/vol12/12kumamoto.pdf](http://www.intcul.tohoku.ac.jp/ronshu/vol12/12kumamoto.pdf). p. 1

<sup>159</sup> Bobby Matherne, "The Living by Annie Dillard, An On Writing: Book Review," *A Reader's Journal* 2 (2013): 8.

<sup>160</sup> Kumamoto, "Writing as Life and Art : Annie Dillard's View of the World." p. 2

<sup>161</sup> Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life* (Picador, 1990).

gauging the challenges associated with the same. As a similarity between the two professions, Dillard notes the inability of both to witness each other, while performing the acts, “he could not see himself.” Nor, do both of them have the awareness of the development of their work, their art, in between carrying out the task at hand<sup>162</sup>. Comparing the pilot to writers and poets, Dillard deepens the image of a pilot as a definitive envoy of artistes. Through her commenting on Rahm’s ability to control his aberrance and tension simultaneously, delivering satisfaction to his audience while risking his life, she reflects on the life writers should ponder upon to engross their readers through their works.

#### 4.2.5 David Sedaris (“The Learning Curve”)

Last but not the least comes David Sedaris, with his memoir *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, where one chapter, “The Learning Curve”, relates events from his initial phase of teaching, which were stunted at the graduate school. From the beginning of the chapter, David conveys his experience as a teacher at the writing workshop of the graduate school and his ideas on making the class interactive and worthwhile, by avoiding practices, which he himself hated as student. This can be understood from the following excerpt,

I guess I’d been thinking that, without provocation, my students would talk, offering their thoughts and opinions on the issues of the day. I’d imagined myself sitting at the edge of the desk, overlooking a forest of raised hands. The students would simultaneously shout to be heard, and I’d found on something in order to silence them. [...] The error of my thinking yawned before me. [...] I’d always hated it when a teacher forced us to invent something on the spot. Aside from the obvious pressure, it seemed that everyone had his or her own little way of doing things, especially when it came to writing.<sup>163</sup>

Two major elements are noticed from the above excerpt. Firstly, Sedaris as a teacher, provides importance to self-learning and invention among students, rather than teachers forcing them to invent. This is in stark contrast to the negativity associated with the workshop techniques of creative writing teaching, where masters often create clones and unconsciously develop a domination of the ‘bright’ students over the shy, introverted ones<sup>164</sup>. Secondly, the use of

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> David Sedaris, “The Learning Curve,” in *Me Talk Pretty One Day* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2000), 288.

<sup>164</sup> Lobb, “‘They Don’t Flinch’: Creative Writing/Critical Theory, Pedagogy/Students.”

punctuation is greater than its utilitarian purpose. He uses it as “one of the arrows” in his works besides, nouns, adjectives and verbs<sup>165</sup>.

Also, the entire memoir, including the chapter of “The Learning Curve” is accompanied by subtle comedy, using a humorous tone with his experiences to provide amusement, as well as attraction to his readers, while discussing his experience as an amateur teacher. As is evident from the incident where, although he thought of smoking cigarettes while taking classes despite the ‘no smoking sign’ and thought of making a ‘major breakthrough,’ he was stopped midway by his student. Another example when, as a creative writer, his students assumed him to have read and known all the Classics, which was not actually case and thus, he had to bluff all these challenges during his teaching period.

I thought I’d make a real breakthrough until the class asthmatic raised his hand, saying that [...] Aristophanes had never smoked a cigarette in his life. “Neither did Jane Austen,” he said. “Or the Brontes.” [...] I jotted these names into my notebook alongside the word Troublemaker, and said I’d look into it. Because I was the writing teacher, it was automatically assumed that I had read every leather-bound volume in the Library of Classics. The truth was that I had read none of those books, nor did I intend to.<sup>166</sup>

Overall, through the essay, Sedaris projects the multiple personae he owns— writer, teacher, child who only desires to be loved, and as a self-deprecating, self-proclaimed and low esteemed fraud. He sincerely and honestly brings out his experiences (for instance feeling like an imposter during his joining as teacher), while adding gritty, realistic feelings with the incidents, with which his readers can relate. As a post-modern writer, Sedaris truly exhibits the exploration of subjectivism by examining the inner state of consciousness and turning away from external reality to “explore fragmentariness in narrative— and character-construction.”<sup>167</sup> Unlike the modernists, who emphasise solving problems, Sedaris, just like his fellow post-modernists, demonstrates the impossible nature of chaos and to ability to play within this chaos<sup>168</sup>. For instance, the way he changes the course of challenges faced while teaching students when they asked random questions about Classical writers, by asking the students about them in turn. Thus, playfulness, a

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<sup>165</sup> Richard Goodman and Chong Hannah Goodman, *The Soul of Creative Writing* (Transaction Publishers, 2009). p. 87

<sup>166</sup> David Sedaris, “The Learning Curve.”

<sup>167</sup> Ramen Sharma and Dr. Preety Chaudhary, “Common Themes and Techniques of Postmodern Literature of Shakespeare,” *International Journal of Educational Planning & Administration* 1, no. 2 (2011): 189–198. p. 190

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

major element within Post-modernist literature, becomes evident throughout Sedaris' work on "The Learning Curve."

### **4.3 A Critical Assessment of Effectiveness of these Materials in Learning Creative Writing**

Exploring the five eminent works of creative writers, belonging to different ages and decades of English Literature, provided an impetus for the change of writing style with the change in socio-political, environmental and cultural surroundings. All based in America, the above works, both fiction and non-fiction, projected change in the perspectives and ideologies, ranging from nationalism and collectivism to individualism, meta-fiction and surrealism. Constructed in the Romantic Period, Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* presented a perfect past with a mystical village, mountain setting and a simple life, far away from the materialistic and competitive world experienced post Industrial Revolution. Romantics, starkly different from the contemporary writers, were marked with strong reaction towards science and theology and favoured the free human spirit. This is understandable, witnessing the free-spirited, helpful, imaginative and carefree Rip who dreaded taking any kind of responsibility. Furthermore, this age is also marked by the presence of a surrealist past, the Golden Age, where everything was perfect, was in peace and humanity and natural treasure were supreme compared to the realist and individualist age of the present. The democratisation of writing in the concerned age commenced with the writings of medieval literary heroes, such as Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, who inspired the romantic revival. This led to the ideological shift within writers, who placed greater emphasis on liberalism than conservatism, thus leading to the Age of Reason and Enlightenment. These humanitarian ideas, encouraging free spirits and the striving for economic and political freedom, influenced the later writers of early 20<sup>th</sup> century of the Modern era, giving rise to exploration of the self. However, Modernists did not necessarily focus on national identity, rather they withheld individual identity by breaking out from the social and political taboos. For instance, Virginia Woolf's position as a strong woman with feminist consciousness led to a revival and reevaluation in the contemporary period, among both middle-aged critics of both genders, as well as young scholars/writers in their twenties and thirties. As teaching material, the close relationship between her books and biographical sources have attracted readers and students,

leading to their discoveries of “new dimensions,” underscoring “the predisposition to identify them with the figures in their works.”<sup>169</sup>

The writing style of the next two creative writers, E.B. White and Annie Dillard, both belonged to the post-modernist era of English literature. E.B. White belonged to the children and young adult genre, constructing juvenile fiction taking real relationships, social perspectives and parent-child conversation into perspective. His writing was able to capture the changing attitude of young readers of the time. The period ranging from 1940 to 1960 was marked by wartime and the post-war economy in the United States and United Kingdom, with socio-political turmoil cropping up through integration of schools, racial unrest and civil rights. This twenty-year period was therefore largely separated by gaps of various kinds— racial, generational, technological, cultural and economic. Such gaps had a huge effect on children’s choice of reading, which was in turn influenced by their reassurance to themselves of their normality and their image as human beings. Role-playing would usually follow this. In the mid-1950s, G. Robert Carlson, while summarizing the published survey findings on young reading interests noted,

With the developing of their personality through adolescence, they come to a partially integrated picture of themselves as human beings. They want to test this picture of themselves in the many kinds of roles that it is possible for a human being to play and through testing to see what roles they may fit into and what roles are uncongenial.<sup>170</sup>

*Charlotte’s Web* provides its children readers with a definitive role of authority and friendship through Fern’s character, as she questions social norms (believed & imposed by her parents) when she feels injustice (the killing of the pig) and befriends a runty pig, which was generally perceived as ‘ugly’. The development of the children’s fixed role through questioning the social norms and emergence of self-consciousness within them is definitely a reflection of post-modernist characteristics within White’s work, owing to his concern towards ontological questions. This can be understood from Geoff Moss’ explanation of post-modernist characteristics, “The result of this shift from the ways of modernism to postmodernism is an increased self-consciousness in art and writing, an exploration of the limits and possibilities in

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<sup>169</sup> Freedman, *Virginia Woolf, Revaluation and Continuity: A Collection of Essays*.

<sup>170</sup> G. Robert Carlsen, “Behind Reading Interests,” *English Journal* 43, no. January (1954): 7–10.



art and of the past which informs it"<sup>171</sup> Dillard on the other hand reflects a modernist belonging through her works, despite writing in the post-modernist era and considers herself as a 'contemporary modernist'. This self-perception of Dillard leaves the researcher to question if there was any transformation at all in her writing from modernism to post-modernism. Reflections on her writing style (from *The Writing Life*) exhibit a middle ground with the large presence of plain prose over fine prose, which is an essential characteristic of the post-modernist approach. "When you write, you lay out a line or words. The line of words is a miner's pick, a wood-carver's gouge, a surgeon's probe. You wield it, and it digs a path you follow. Soon you find yourself deep in a new territory. Is it dead end, or have you located the real subject? You will know tomorrow, or this time next year."<sup>172</sup>

This plain prose writing style, according to Dillard is, "purified by its submission to the world," representing a "new morality" of literature and hence it is courteous and mature in nature. Such an approach respects readers' intelligence, permitting, "scenes to be effective on their narrative virtues, not on the overwrought insistence of their author's prose."<sup>173</sup> Another postmodernist transformation evident within the writings of Dillard is the presence of intertextuality or the, "relationship between and another or one text within the interwoven fabric of literary history."<sup>174</sup> Post-modernists do not perceive their works as individual, isolated creations, but rather they indulge in taking references from a pre-existing work or adapting their style. In her poignant and timeless insight on creative writing style and procedures within *The Writing Life*, she often has reflected on past eminent writers like, David Foster Wallace, George Orwell, Mary Carr and such others, and echoes Tchaikovsky's wisdom on work ethic, while admonishing against the precious solipsism of a writer's universe.

The writing style of post-modernists, giving way to 21<sup>st</sup> century contemporary writers like David Sedaris, has transformed into a self-deprecating humour, inviting its readers to experience, "truth, pain and a good laugh."<sup>175</sup> Some 21<sup>st</sup> century essayists and memoirists

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<sup>171</sup> Geoff Moss, "Metafiction, Illustration, and the Poetics of Children's Literature," in *Literature For Children: Contemporary Criticisms*, ed. Peter Hunt, 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2003), 41–51.

<sup>172</sup> Dillard, *The Writing Life*.

<sup>173</sup> Annie Dillard, *Living by Fiction*, 1st ed. (Harper Collins, 2009).

<sup>174</sup> Sharma and Chaudhary, "Common Themes and Techniques of Postmodern Literature of Shakespeare."

<sup>175</sup> Andy Harper, "The Joke's on Me: The Role of Self-Deprecating Humor in Personal Narrative," *Assay: A Journal of Non-fiction Studies* 1, no. 1 (2014): 18.

like David Sedaris draw their readers through their uproarious personal incidents and observations. The plain writing style of the later post-modernist era gave rise to humour writing, especially humorous non-fiction in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world. According to Andy Harper, this development of humour writing comprises many shades of grey, producing the ‘hybrid genre,’ where along with writers, stand-up comedians, memoirists, sitcom writers and essayists are also involved.<sup>176</sup> Through “The Learning Curve,” Sedaris portrays himself as, “the world’s most ineffectual patsy, doormat to the world,”<sup>177</sup> and brings out the difficulties he faced in establishing authority within the writing workshop and thus gaining his students’ respect.

“Whenever I felt in danger of losing my authority, I would cross the room and either open or close the door. A student needed to ask permission before regulating the temperature or noise level, but I could do so whenever I liked. It was the only activity sure to remind me that I was in charge, and I took full advantage of it.

‘There he goes again,’ my students would whisper. ‘What’s up with him and that door?’”<sup>178</sup>

Hence, through his narrative, Sedaris presents an endearing and funny element, because he is well aware and thus presents his doubts and anxieties, flaws and failures, right in front of his readers, they can then relate their lives to him. As explained by Harper, “His humor (sic) functions similarly to the ubiquitous comic banana peel, relying prominently upon his consistently getting tripped up on his inadequacies and falling flat.”<sup>179</sup>

To conclude, the significant transformation and democratisation in creative writing style is witnessed by exploring eminent works of writers belonging to various English literary ages. From a liberalised perspective of the Romantics at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, who propagated a free spirit and emphasised the perfect past owing to the socio-political turmoil of the present, writing emerged as tool of individualism. The early modernists, especially Woolf (who differed significantly from her fellow contemporaries), reflected on the rise of identity consciousness– be

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Marge Piercy and Ira Wood, “Writing Humor: Learning Survival Techniques,” in *So You Want to Write: How to Master the Craft of Fiction and the Personal Narrative.*, 2nd ed. (New York: Leapfrog Press, 2010), 197–216. p. 202

<sup>178</sup> David Sedaris, “The Learning Curve,” in *Me Talk Pretty One Day* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2000), 288. p. 86-7

<sup>179</sup> Harper, “The Joke’s on Me: The Role of Self-Deprecating Humor in Personal Narrative.” p. 3

it sexual (queer identity) or gendered (feminist identity). Writing style became democratised into plain prose in the post-modernist era, intertextuality becoming a major influence on composition. However, the writing style in the post-modernist era is difficult to associate with a particular domain and is hard to define universally. This is further evident from the starkly different approaches of E.B. White and Annie Dillard. Finally, democratisation in 21<sup>st</sup>-century creative writing is characterized by the presence of playfulness and self-deprecating humour, with writing becoming diversified by authors from stand-up comedians to comedy scriptwriters (of television and internet), as well as memoirists and essayists. This democratised version of self-deprecating writing has the power to attract its readers, by building character instead of avoiding arrogance and self-pity.

#### 4.4 Summary

**The democratisation of creative writing and consequent teaching styles of creative writing—majorly forming the aim of this study aim** is evident in the development of the form of writing since its evolution and that of creative writing in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC. This chapter, through the exploration of five eminent litterateurs, belonging to varied ages of English Literature, has vividly depicted this gradual democratisation of the form of creative writing. Washington Irving, through his *Rip Van Winkle*, shows how writers of the Romantic era projected a tendency to turn backwards to check the mistakes done in the past and to solve them by searching for values from the past itself. A critique of the present industrial and materialistic society is found within the story— a commonality among Romantic writers, who emphasize the national consciousness and carry the values of the past to the present over individualistic tendencies. Virginia Woolf as a Modernist writer, nearly a century later presents not only an individualistic, but a feminist stance through her metaphorical autobiography, *A Writer's Diary*. Hence a stark democratisation is found within the domain of English literature within a span of 100 years, leading to a change in the vision and critical sensibility across various ages and temperament. E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*, belonging to the post-modernist era, provides a different view of beauty, shedding away from the stereotyped beautification of animals and providing their natural appearance in his fiction. For instance, Charlotte the spider, Wilbur the pig, Stuart the rat, and such others, were until then considered to be ugly creatures and children were forbade by parents to go near them. Besides the characteristic of igniting the smouldering memories of childhood, White has also

projected the inevitability of death, an element of adulthood, striking a mature concept despite being wrapped in anthropomorphism. It is interesting to also note here the democratisation of writing within a particular era as well, through the difference in approach of E.B. White and Annie Dillard's writing, despite both being post-modernists. Dillard, twenty years later after White's era, emphasises an in-depth artistic authenticity through creative non-fiction, exhibiting a middle ground with the large presence of plain prose over fine, which is an essential characteristic of the post-modernist approach. This emergence of plain writing in the later post-modernist era gave way to the emergence of self-deprecating humour and playfulness in the writings of contemporary litterateurs like David Sedaris. Through this approach of playfulness, David Sedaris, like his fellow memoirists and essayists, invited his readers to "truth, pain and a good laugh." Democratisation in writing thus has witnessed the rise of the 'hybrid genre', where along with writers, stand-up comedians, memoirists, sitcom writers and essayists are also involved in the development of humour writing, comprising of many shades of grey. Hence these writers help readers to relate themselves with the doubts and anxieties, flaws and failures of the writer, put forward in a funny way. This change in the approach of writing through democratisation, one of the significant aims of the study, has led the researcher to explore in the next chapter the necessary difference between natural and leant writers. Such an exploration will enable the consideration of the democratic process as either restrictive or broad in nature, influencing students to pen down their opinions and experiences in a creative way for their readers. Later, the issue of writer's block will also be explored to understand the efficacy of creative writing teaching to help students to overcome this phenomenon. In addition, the intensity of democratisation and its impact on other forms of art will also be explored.

## **Chapter 5: CREATIVE WRITING 'NATURALLY' VERSUS CREATIVE WRITING TEACHING**

### **5**

#### **5.1 Introduction to Chapter**

Scholars from various decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have attempted to understand if writing is essentially the domain of natural and talented writers, or if it is a process of acquiring skills and learning. While some believe in the latter process, that individuals can acquire creative writing skills if their skills are developed effectively, there are others who separate skill from talent by linking the former with technique and the latter with linguistic and aesthetic sensitivity. With the preceding chapter bringing forth the effectiveness of selected creative works of various literary periods and teaching methods, this chapter delves into understanding the basic difference between natural creative writers and learnt writers. A short version of the same was highlighted in chapter three of this study, where, a significant difference between naturally gifted creative writers and skilled or learnt creative writers was established. This chapter will present more expanded examples of the difference in writing style between the two types of writers to critically examine the views of critics and theorists that argue for and against the assumption. Further, the chapter focuses on the issue of writer's block among learnt creative writers and other barriers that impede the improvement in creative writing through teaching. Later, having examining the democratisation of other forms of art, such as, game design, music, acting and fine art, the role of technology will be established, to highlight the likely improvements in the future of creative writing teaching.

#### **5.2 'Learnt' & 'Natural' Creative Writers– Comparative Performance and Writers' Block**

Talented writing makes things happen in the reader's mind — vividly, forcefully — that good writing, which stops with clarity and logic, doesn't.

–Samuel Delany<sup>180</sup>

A natural creative writer, a term coined by the researcher, is a person who is naturally talented since birth and has a natural inclination towards expressing his or her ideas through creative and sophisticated sensitivity and seldom takes the assistance of learnt techniques to pen down their ideas. These natural creative writers, described as the ‘talented’ by scholars and litterateurs have a certain commonality with that of the ‘learnt’ or skilled writers, however, the end product differs in quality— one being a logical expression, while the other being engaged, talented outpouring. As described by Delany, “If you start with a confused, unclear, and badly written story, and apply the rules of good writing to it, you can probably turn it into a simple, logical, clearly written story. It will still not be a good one. The major fault of eighty-five to ninety-five percent of all fiction is that it is banal and dull.” By good writing, Delany meant that of ‘learnt’ or skilled writers who acquired the techniques over years of learning, while by talented writing he meant the natural ones, whom he considered energetic with the ability to capture readers’ minds. Readers of talented or natural writers are always able to relate themselves to the ideas expressed. Delany’s perspective suggests,

Talented writing is, however, something else. You need talent to write fiction. Good writing is clear. Talented writing is energetic. Good writing avoids errors. Talented writing makes things happen in the reader’s mind — vividly, forcefully — that good writing, which stops with clarity and logic, doesn’t.” (Emphasis given originally)<sup>181</sup>

In terms of the effectiveness of talented writing, Susan Sontag made a reflection in her diary, “words have their own firmness,”<sup>182</sup> to which Mark Twain’s advised, “use the right word, and not its second cousin.”<sup>183</sup> However, Maria Popova, an interpreter of literary works noted that concision is not the only requirement for natural and talented writing,<sup>184</sup> since, as put by E.B. White, “writing is not an exercise in excision, it’s a journey into sound.”<sup>185</sup> Delany further amalgamates the above requirements to establish, “The talented writer often uses rhetorically

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<sup>180</sup> Samuel R. Delany, *About Writing : Seven Essays, Four Letters, and Five Interviews* (Wesleyan University Press, 2005).

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Susan Sontag, *At the Same Time : Essays and Speeches*, ed. Paolo. Dilonardo and Anne. Jump (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007).

<sup>183</sup> Maria Popova, “Good Writing vs. Talented Writing,” *Brain Pickings*, last modified 2013, accessed January 1, 2017, <https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/05/20/good-writing-vs-talented-writing/>.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> E. B. White, *Letters of E.B. White*, ed. Dorothy Lobrano. Guth and Martha White, 3rd ed. (Harper Perennial, 2007).

interesting, musical, or lyrical phrases that are briefer than the pedestrian way of saying “the same thing.”

Jane Piirto, a creative teacher herself, has highlighted the essential difference between the learnt and natural creative writer, highlighting the necessary changes required in curriculum to develop the learning capacities of students void of the natural inclination.<sup>186</sup> According to her, a naturally talented writer will explode using a verbal microscope, exhibiting fleeting sensation, teasing out insights and describing subsensations to which all its readers can relate to, even those who are not considered in advance. The basic difference underlying learnt and natural writers is that the latter will be able to describe an issue or sensation in such detail as to provide the readers with a greater insight than the former. Further, the natural writer possesses the artistic ability to arrange multiple clauses related to each other in complex ways, within a complex sentence, in chronological order as per the occurrences of the referents, irrespective of the logical relations imposed by grammatical technicalities.<sup>187</sup> Hence, from the exploration of ideas of eminent creative writers as well as scholars, it is imperative to understand that natural writers far held the sway of unveiling talented writing over learnt writers. To quote Wordsworth as he described the talents of creative writing, a creative writer is one who is, “endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind.” Beyond the sensibility aspect, a natural writer is also bestowed with information and technique as well, as Delany points forth,

Talented writing tends to contain more information, sentence for sentence, clause for clause, than merely good writing. . . . It also employs rhetorical parallels and differences. . . . It pays attention to the sounds and rhythms of its sentences. . . . Much of the information it proffers is implied. . . . These are among the things that indicate talent.<sup>188</sup>

Nonetheless, having discussed the benefits of talented and natural writers over skilled or learnt writers, the importance of acquisition of skills cannot be belittled. As the old saying goes, practice makes perfect; perfection and initial deficits, inabilities and handicaps can be overcome

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<sup>186</sup> Jane Piirto, *Creativity for 21st Century Skills: How to Embed Creativity into the Curriculum* (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2011).

<sup>187</sup> Steven Earnshaw, *The Handbook of Creative Writing*, ed. Steven Earnshaw (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

<sup>188</sup> Delany, *About Writing : Seven Essays, Four Letters, and Five Interviews*.

by constant practice, persistence and guidance from peers and mentors. Herbert J. Walberg, while defining creativity, “as a constellation of attributes,” has attributed the Human Capital Theory, referring to the national welfare, cognitive development strategies, and performance distribution, along with educational practices to be influential.<sup>189</sup> All these efforts play a crucial role in developing efficient creative writing talent among learnt individuals, as well. Teresa M. Amabile has laid down a similar proposition.<sup>190</sup> Through the example of John Irving, she illustrates the eminence of non-talent (learnt) constituents in the componential model of creativity. Refuting the largely established assumption of creativity theorists and scholars on the dependency of individual creativity on talent, considerable evidence has been presented by Teresa concluding that “hard work and intrinsic motivation— supported or undermined by the social environment— play central roles too”<sup>191</sup>. Instances have been cited of John Irving who achieved popularity as a bestselling novelist and screenwriter, after undergoing the creative writing course at the University of Iowa Writers’ Workshop in the 1960s. Despite the failure of his first three novels<sup>192</sup> to gain readership, he eventually attained popularity and success through his fourth novel in 1978, which became international best seller.

Having understood the difference between talented and learnt writers in their approach towards creative writing, one significant phenomenon affecting their work extensively is the occurrence of writer’s block. “You don’t know what it is to stay a whole day with your head in your hands trying to squeeze your unfortunate brain so as to find a word.” The feeling depicted by Gustave Flaubert (1866) effectively defines the phenomenon of writer’s block, which is hindered mainly by a variety of causes, perfectionism and procrastination being foremost among them. This phenomenon, commonly affecting both natural and learnt writer as well as academic writers too, is present despite teaching creative writing technicalities to students. Robert Boice, researching extensively on the phenomenon of writer’s block, has emphasised the teaching and learning of the tacit knowledge of fluent writing, which enables writers to acquire proficiency, “in other

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<sup>189</sup> Herbert J. Walberg, “Creativity and Talent as Learning,” in *The Nature of Creativity: Contemporary Psychological Perspectives*, ed. Robert J. Sternberg (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 454.

<sup>190</sup> Teresa M. Amabile, “Beyond Talent: John Irving and the Passionate Craft of Creativity.,” *American Psychologist* 56, no. 4 (2001): 333–336, accessed February 21, 2017, <http://doi.apa.org/getdoi.cfm?doi=10.1037/0003-066X.56.4.333>.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> Irving’s *Setting Free the Bears* (1968), *The Water-Method Man* (1972) and *The 158-Pound Marriage* (1974) failed to gain readership consequetively. He gainedf hois popularity through his fourth best selling novel— *The World According to Garp* (1978).



implicit skills essential to thriving in academe.”<sup>193</sup> However, he highlighted that this tacit knowledge is often neglected in creative writing teaching within universities. Tacit knowledge refers to the practical intellect used by students to manage their time, which teachers often expect to be known by students beforehand. Hence students remain, “disorganised and relatively inaccessible, making it potentially ill-suited for direct instruction.”<sup>194</sup> Furthermore, the attitude of teachers to highlight the brilliant students, who already are blessed with tacit knowledge, denies a realistic chance to the other students to become comfortable and successful<sup>195</sup>. The assumption of teachers about the productivity (or rather the lack of it) of silent writers coupled with keeping the scope of writing and publishing tacit activity on campuses leads to the students (except the brightest) be less equipped with the tacit skills to deal with writer’s block. As described by Boice,

While there is a growing body of information on how to write and publish, these sources rarely provide tutoring on the most basic of tacit skills such as finding ideas, motivation, and momentum. We have already seen one reason: tacit knowledge is generally untaught and difficult to find in written and substantive form. In the next section, I examine the limitations and benefits of organizing a literature on writing blocks that is usually kept tacit.<sup>196</sup>

Besides, procrastination and perfectionism, work apprehension, rising competitiveness with fellow classmates, rigid rule and computer anxiety (as part of digital rhetoric), along with depression and mental health also are significant causes of writer’s block.<sup>197</sup> Here, apart from teaching, the cooperation and understanding of teachers, fellow classmates and the exposure to other victims of writer’s block all might boost confidence and motivation among the victims. Besides, these, reduced awareness of the content of writing (automatic), regular practice of writing (regimen), enhancement of mental imagery, inner speech and stylistic considerations

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<sup>193</sup> Robert Boice, “Writer’s Block and Tacit Knowledge,” *The Journal of Higher Education* 64, no. 1 (1993): 19–54. p. 20

<sup>194</sup> Robert J. Sternberg, *Beyond IQ: A Triarchic Theory of Human Intelligence* (Cambridge University Press, 1985). p. 213

<sup>195</sup> Boice, “Writer’s Block and Tacit Knowledge.”

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.* p. 22

<sup>197</sup> Alice Flaherty, *The Midnight Disease: The Drive to Write, Writer’s Block, and the Creative Brain* (Houghton Mifflin, 2005).

(cognitions) are some of the pedagogical therapies that can be applied to cure writer's block.<sup>[198]</sup>  
<sup>[199]</sup>

### 5.3 Barriers to Improvement in Creative Writing Through Teaching

The difference between a naturally talented creative writer's work and that of a skilled or learnt creative writer, along with the difficulty faced by the latter in dealing with the phenomenon of writers' block leads the researcher to understand the potential barriers existing within the domain of creative writing pedagogy. One of the considerable barriers impeding the improvement of creative writing teaching within seats of higher education is time. Creative writing teachers, despite being a precious resource for developing writing skills among students, are often burdened with pressures and competing priorities and hence seldom find time to provide extra instructions apart from curriculum.<sup>200</sup> Further, as observed by Antoniou and Moriarty, the mere view of teachers as resources, without including the scope of any personal or professional development, demotivates them to participate extensively and to provide feedback to shy and lagging students.<sup>201</sup> The lack of positive interaction in writing sessions, workshops and such others, with the propensity of teachers to put forward 'bright' students in leading class discussion, further hampers the improvement planned in creative writing teaching for the less talented students. As noted by Prof. G. Anburaj and Prof. G. Christopher, the lack of expression of one's own ideas through speech, the writing prose and poetry, or participating in debate sessions and role plays, often leaves students with a confused perception of their identities, a lack of ownership of their voices and lack of creativity.<sup>202</sup> One of the foremost barriers in the contemporary period lies in the separation of rhetoric from creative writing curriculum, as explored in the preceding chapters, which leaves students to develop only course-based assignments that are devoid of any 'real' work. Students of English creative writing are seldom prepared for their future careers and thus the courses focus on practical needs, the development of rhetoric within course work; helping them personally relate with education; and cultivating curiosity in creating 'real' works. As explained by Gendke, who experienced these barriers as a

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Boice, "Writer's Block and Tacit Knowledge."

<sup>200</sup> Elizabeth A. Rice, "Teacher Training: Creative Writing Instruction" (Cedarville University, 2008).

<sup>201</sup> Antoniou and Moriarty, "What Can Academic Writers Learn from Creative Writers? Developing Guidance and Support for Lecturers in Higher Education."

<sup>202</sup> Prof. G. Anburaj and Prof. G. Christopher, "Barriers in Teaching English," *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* 20, no. 9 (2015): 67–70.

creative writing student herself, “In my ideal, students would approach rhetorical situations with curiosity, creativity, and personal investment, crafting responses that not only allow them to better understand their subjects, or ‘themes,’ but that resonate with their audiences as well.”<sup>203</sup> Nevertheless, it is imperative to mention that creative writing teachers often try to develop their students as thoughtful and reflective individuals with problem-solving prowess, however, their pedagogical lacunae lies in limited attention to rhetorical situations.

#### 5.4 Reflections on Democratisation in Other Forms of Art

It would be partial to establish democratisation only in the domain of creative writing and not to mention the occurrence of the phenomenon in other forms of art, such as music, fine art, game design and acting. The inception of post-modernism within art, replacing the modernist ethos in the contemporary period, was marked by a radical reaction to the modernist ideals of forward-thinking, technological positivity, and the ostentatious histories of Western domination and growth<sup>204</sup>. Such marked radical reactions can be credited to the arrival of Pop and Neo-Dada art in the post-war American market, combining varied artistic forms through Conceptual Art, Performance Art, Video Art, and Installation Art. Graffiti, which emerged in 79 AD at the burial site of Pompeii, continued to be an important medium of expression of reaction to the present century as well, taking the form of an Art movement in the 1970s and 80s<sup>205</sup>. In the recent era, democratisation in art is seen in the form of graffiti evolving as street art, as Ganz described,

Over the past few years, graffiti artists have been using a wider scope of expression. Personal style is free to develop without any constraints, and stickers, posters, stencils, airbrush, oil-based chalk, all varieties of paint and even sculpture are used. Most artists have been liberated from relying solely on the spraycan.<sup>206</sup>

The evolution of street art eventually became an innovative technique of communication with the passer-by, shaping the environs without any constrictions.

Music too transformed magnanimously, largely due to the advent and adoption of internet and digital media, as put forward by Jeff Price,

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<sup>203</sup> Gendke, “A Graduate English Major’s Search for Meaning: Toward a Pedagogy of Creative Rhetoric.”

<sup>204</sup> Sarah Jenkins, “Postmodern Art,” *The Art Story: Modern Art Insight*, last modified 2017, accessed February 22, 2017, <http://www.theartstory.org/definition-postmodernism.htm>.

<sup>205</sup> Kristina Marie Gleaton, “Power to the People: Street Art as an Agency for Change” (University of Minnesota, 2012).

<sup>206</sup> Nicholas Ganz, *Graffiti Women: Street Art from Five Continents*. (New York: Abrams, 2006).

The advent and general adoption of the Internet, digital media and hardware took control of the global music industry away from the record labels and media outlets and handed it to the masses. For the first time in history, through sites like TuneCore, all music creators can choose to be their own record label. There are no longer subjective gatekeepers controlling who gets let “in,” promoted and exposed. The choice is ours. Now, anyone can be famous.<sup>207</sup>

The 1990s was the era of CD and cassette compilations, which were considerably popular among teenagers compared to albums, record labels, wax spools and 8 tracks and such others, which were available in physical music stores. Apart from these, there were also streaming radio stations, which presently gave way to Internet-based stations, which can be adjusted using cellular phones. Likewise, print magazines were replaced by MP3 blogs, such as Gorilla vs. Bear, Stereogum, My Old Kentucky Blog and Pitchfork Media, to name a few, and popular television channels, namely, MTV, VH1 and others were taken over by YouTube<sup>208</sup>. Besides, with the rise and spread of digitalisation and the population of netizens,

...social networking sites like iLike, MySpace and more, have limitless circulation and the ability to allow readers and users to form a community that listens to, shares, rates, comments on and in some cases, even buys music. Everyone can become their own commercial radio station, magazine and/or TV network, reaching tens of millions of people.<sup>209</sup>

A similar democratisation has been observed in the field of theatre and acting as well, where drama has been used as a means of change and renewal within society. With the spread of technological innovations, acting, as a form of expression by budding actors, scriptwriters and associates, actors, writers, directors and others, now enables them to indulge in reflexive practices, projecting their ideas as well as talent to general masses. Additionally, encouragement provided by organisations, workplaces, universities have further led to the democratisation of acting and theatre, making it a device of social change<sup>210</sup>.

From the above exploration of the gradual democratisation of various other forms of art, the imperativeness of technology in their development is evident. Technology plays an important role in contemporary creative writing as well. The interactivity with peers, coupled with

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<sup>207</sup> Jeff Price, “The Democratization of the Music Industry,” *The Huffington Post* (New York, May 25, 2011), [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeff-price/the-democratization-of-th\\_b\\_93065.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeff-price/the-democratization-of-th_b_93065.html).

<sup>208</sup> David Looseley, “Cultural Democratisation and Popular Music,” *Modern & Contemporary France* 11, no. 1 (2010): 45–55.

<sup>209</sup> Price, “The Democratization of the Music Industry.”

<sup>210</sup> Jeff Adams and Allan Owens, *Creativity and Democracy in Education: Practices and Politics of Learning Through the Arts*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2015).

creativity and technology, has evidently changed pedagogic spaces, thereby changing learning practices for teachers, as well as students. Changing pedagogic practices enable teachers to expand the gamut of literacy practices and collective interactions with students. Further, a critical engagement is also established with multimodal discourses, as learners improve through fresh learning and documented discourses<sup>211</sup>. To sum up, technology has changed creative writing pedagogies along with learning practices, transforming the face of classroom design and curriculum.

## 5.5 Observing Democratisation

A plethora of scholars over the period of time have put forward the significant difference in the quality of writing between a natural and learnt writer– **which assumes the major aim of the study– gradual development or democratisation of writing and teaching styles of creative writing**. Naturally gifted creative writers exhibit a natural inclination towards expressing his or her ideas through creative and sophisticated sensitivity and seldom take the assistance of learnt techniques to pen down their ideas. Natural writers, according to these theorists are always able to capture readers’ minds, while learnt writers are confined to only using rules of good writing and thereby turning them into a simple, logical, clearly written story. Resultantly, owing to the major emphasis on techniques to capture readers’ minds, these writings often turn out to be banal and dull. It is here that the democratisation of writing comes into the forefront, rescuing the learnt writer, who is enthusiastic about developing oneself into a creative writer. Prospective writers can acquire efficient creative writing talent through strategies of national welfare, cognitive development and performance distribution, along with educational practices. This is shown in the instance of John Irving, who despite being a learnt writer and experienced failure in his early years of writing, eventually attained popularity and success with his fourth novel in 1978, which became an international best seller. This success is credited to the dedication and practice Irving exercised and his writings presented a new democratisation of writing, by recycling portions of the novels, even those, which are not significantly important in the story.

Democratisation has not been limited to the domain of creative writing. Other forms of art, such as music, art, theatre and acting have also experienced their gradual democratisation over time,

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<sup>211</sup> Christine Edwards-Groves, “Interactive Creative Technologies: Changing Learning Practices and Pedagogies in the Writing Classroom,” *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy* 35, no. 1 (2012): 99–113.

detail exploration of which is the subject of another study. This gradual democratisation of other forms of art, along with the art of creative writing, evidently presents the imperativeness of technology in their development. The interactivity with peers, coupled with creativity and technology has evidently changed the nature of pedagogic spaces, thereby changing learning practices for teachers, as well as students. Having explored all the associated contours of creating writing approaches and teaching techniques, discussing the overall stages of development since the evolution of writing is imperative. This discussion of the stages will be presented in the following concluding chapter, highlighting the recommendations needed to strengthen the teaching techniques that align with the further democratisation of creative writing, as well as the teaching style of the skill.

## **5.6 Summary**

To summarize the chapter, the researcher established the lacunae existing with the learnt creative writer, specifically in terms of his/her personal engagement and focusing only on the techniques. This leads the natural writer to outdo the former in terms of quality, effective expression of ideas and hence attract readers through the relatable position of the work within the readers' lives. However, with concentrated practice on acquiring the skill, a learnt writer can overcome all these glitches, outshining a naturally talented creative writer. Interestingly, this lacunae within the pedagogical approaches of creative writing teachers by providing attention only the bright students over the shy and introverted ones, fails to develop within the latter the tacit knowledge to tackle writers' block. Furthermore, there are other barriers to creative writing teaching as well, such as the limited time teachers have to individually take care of each student and listen to their voice, the lack of understanding of the necessity to combine rhetoric with creative writing and such others. This often leaves students with minimal knowledge of the practical needs of creative writing, hence affecting the quality of their work. Lastly, through understanding the democratisation of other forms of art over time, the imperativeness of technology and digitalisation has been established.

## Chapter 6: FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6

#### 6.1 Introduction to Chapter

Creative writing, evolving with the birth of literature in approximately 2000 BC, is devoid of any universal and authoritarian definitions. Within the domain of art and literature, creativity is habitually associated with inspiration.<sup>212</sup> Instances can be cited from Coleridge's poetry, which drew divine inspiration and that of Wordsworth, whose inspiration was drawn from nature. Contemporary poets often draw their inspiration from self-reflection, as is seen in Wallace Stevens' *Of Modern Poetry*. A similar notion prevailed among prose writers as well, for example, D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* expressed the issue of the Oedipus complex, which can be understood as part of his subconscious motivation. Given the vastness within creative writing, with areas diversified into fiction, non-fiction, playwriting, scriptwriting, novel, poetry and media writing, an appropriate pedagogy for teaching has become imperative<sup>213</sup>. Besides, gradual democratisation within the domain of creative writing, which forms one of the major aim of the study, has furthered the need to understand the teaching techniques used by contemporary universities. Having explored and examined the various segments associated with creative writing and creative writing teaching within universities, this chapter discusses the findings based on the central research question. Later, certain recommendations, based on the lacunae identified are presented, followed by a proposed scope for future research on the issue at hand.

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<sup>212</sup>Harper, *On Creative Writing*.

<sup>213</sup> Graeme Harper, *Teaching Creative Writing*, ed. Graeme Harper (Continuum, 2006).

## 6.2 Discussion

### 6.2.1 In What Way has the Writing and Teaching Style of Creative Writing Democratised with the Literary Evolution of English Language?

Creative writing technique and consequently the field's teaching techniques, which evolved after a long time, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (informally), have experienced a gradual transformation and democratisation, taking recent surroundings and environmental changes into consideration. The evolution of writing in the 90th century BC as record-keeping accounts gradually transpired into literature, when it was used for utilitarian purposes, as divine intervention through the king (Chinese glyphs) or as chronicles of death (Egyptian Book of the Dead). However, considering these pieces as creative products is not justified, since it served as a record-keeping medium. Nevertheless, these practices of record keeping spread over thousands of centuries and regions, from the 90th century BC to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC, after which literature was more of an expression of ideas rather than record-keeping, as is evident from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and eventually gave birth to modern alphabets. However, as identified earlier, modern alphabets differ gigantically from its predecessor, syllabary, which in turn was the outcome of varied forms of writing emerging across varied regions and time spans. English alphabets owe their birth to the morphophonemic alternations practiced by the Mayans and the Sumerians and later from Latin, after it spread to the Anglo Saxon lands of England, France and Germany.

After the birth of literature with Greek philosophers and scholars of the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, Homer being prominent among them, creative writing has witnessed its gradual democratisation, owing to technological innovation over the period and increasing communication information among individuals. This rise in communication and information among individuals helped them to gain knowledge about their past and present, as well as their natural, political and social environments. Knowledge influenced not only the prowess of thinking and the articulation of ideas but also the way they are expressed through writing. Simply put, knowledge enabled individuals to innovate and change the way writing is designed, produced, accessed and the way that it is learned and taught. This thereby led to the democratisation of ideas and creative writing. The democratisation of creative writing occurred from the invention of paper and ink to digitalisation in the contemporary period, providing individuals with a tsunami of information



and a plethora of mediums of expression, such as blogging, commenting on social media, and others. As a result, along with writers, several non-writers, including both general masses and popular figures (politicians, sportsman, journalists, film personalities, etc.) have come forth to articulate their thoughts. Besides, the emergence of instant and trenchant communication through the online publication of books, both original and translated works, the emergence of digital libraries and e-readers has brought the author and its readers closer. In such a scenario, responsibility lies with the seats of higher English education and their faculties to channel this democratisation of information within creative writing and make their pedagogies more pragmatic.

In terms of creative writing pedagogies, there have been several techniques or approaches devised and followed by creative writer-teachers and universities over time. The discipline of creative writing is considered to have emerged from the Iowa's Writer's Workshop in 1940, although several disagreements prevail over that too, as some mark its emergence from George Baker's 47 Workshop hosted between 1906 and 1925 by Harvard University. Since then, several techniques, namely, the atelier approach, cultural-traditional rhetoric, the workshop approach, the feminist approach and such others, have emerged. In the present age, owing to a significant dependence on digitalisation and rise of awareness on environment sustainability, two new approaches were devised by creative writer-teachers, the digital rhetoric and ecological approaches, however, their implementation as part of existing pedagogy is highly disputed. Despite these plethora of pedagogical techniques surfacing within the creative writing discipline, the workshop techniques being the most common and influential amongst them, there lies limitations in each of them, which affects the development of students as creative writers. While in some, students end up as clones of their masters, in the others the bright and dominant students overpower the shy and introverted. Also, in other techniques, owing to its defiance of authoritarianism, students are often left with their own decision-making, leading to a chaotic situation, since there is no one to ascertain students' strengths and weaknesses.

Besides these individual limitations within each of the techniques, the major distinguished gap within the creative writing discipline lies in the separation of rhetoric from the former and the inability of teachers to shape students as per practical market needs. Often universities and faculties engage English language students with studying and developing assignments on literary

interpretation, ignoring expressive writing through rhetoric, composition pedagogy or simply put, rhetorical writing. Consequently, students lack the ability to become efficient writers, as well as critics. Creative writing theorists, such as Tim Mayers, Gerald Graff, Douglas Hesse, Jeri Kroll and Graeme Harper have therefore signified the development and implementation of rhetoric pedagogy. Rhetorical pedagogy, based on amalgamating creative writing with rhetoric, is grounded in providing teachers and students with a framework for in-depth and rich training and a comprehension of the tools, messages, methods and media of their chosen art.

Another important segment within teaching of creative writing lies in the difference between naturally talented writers and learnt ones. Creative writer-teachers and scholars<sup>214</sup>, have noted the significant difference in the writing approach and quality between naturally gifted writers, possessing a natural inclination towards creative writing and those who have learnt writing as part of a course. Despite the administration of various pedagogical approaches, this difference is difficult to deal with, with the learnt ones developing to produce work much faster, instead of producing work that can attract attention and the loyalty of its readers. Naturally talented writers on the other hand, possess the artistic ability to arrange multiple clauses related to each other in complex ways within a complex sentence, in a chronological order as per the occurrences of the referents and irrespective of the logical relations imposed by grammatical technicalities. Additionally, natural writers will be able to describe an issue or sensation at such a length as to provide readers with greater insight than the former. However, it is highly insensible to belittle effort and practice, since they play a significant role in developing an individual to attain perfectionism. Scholars like Herbert J. Walberg and Teresa M. Amabile have critically viewed the above assumption of theorists and have responded with the eminence of educational practices and the role of national policies in developing a learnt writer. John Irving, who achieved popularity as bestselling novelist and screenwriter after undergoing a creative writing course at the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop in the 1960s, has become the role model for learnt writers.

The inability to deal with the phenomenon of Writer's Block shows another lacunae within the domain of creative writing pedagogy. Tacit knowledge, enabling writers to acquire proficiency in

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<sup>214</sup> Maria Antoniou and Jessica Moriarty, A. Lee and D. Boud, Samuel Delany, Susan Sontag, Jane Piirto and such others.

other implicit skills, is essential to thriving in academe and is often neglected in creative writing teaching within universities. Teachers often expect their students to be knowledgeable in tacit knowledge and thus have a bias toward brilliant students, who have already acquired these skills, while denying a realistic chance to other students to become comfortable and successful. Scholars here opine on the enhanced cooperation and understanding of teachers and peers on this phenomenon, thereby encouraging students to overcome the same.

Lastly, as part of growing understanding of the democratisation of creative writing and its teaching techniques within a formalized set-up over time, various literary works belonging to different literary ages and genres were explored. Works of Washington Irving (fiction), Virginia Woolf (autobiography/non-fiction), E.B. White (juvenile fiction), Annie Dillard (fiction) and David Sedaris (memoir/non-fiction) were significant in gauging the developing impact of democratisation. From the liberalised perspective of the Romantics at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, propagating a free spirit and emphasising the perfect past owing to the socio-political turmoil of the present, writing styles have now evolved to be a tool of self-deprecating humour in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In between, the creative writing style took on the ideology of individualism, expressing its ideas through the domain of meta-fiction and metaphors using fine writing style during the Modernist era. This again was replaced by plain writing, involving the intertextuality of the modernist writing, in the Post-modernist era. In the contemporary age, the democratised version of self-deprecating writing has the power to attract its readers, by avoiding arrogance and self-pity, and instead building character.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

The study aims to understand and explore the various teaching techniques within the discipline of creative writing in universities, recommendations are presented, keeping pedagogical improvements in perspective.

Irrespective of the pedagogical techniques applied—workshop, atelier, feminist, digital, ecological, and, such others—a creative writing classroom must be active and cooperative. Dividing the class population into varied groups, time (30seconds to 5 mins) can be allotted to each group and groups must present a solution to a problem statement that is related to some real context of writing. After this, the instructor, by randomly calling representatives of each group, can ask them to explain the solution to the entire class. By keeping each of the groups diverse,

this technique will render the abilities and competencies of every student to share their ideas and develop their voices. Other advantages likely to be gained are the ability to recall prior material (since the issue of discussion will be related to course work itself), each of them responding to questions (even the shy ones), problem solving, the explanation of written material, critical-analytical and creative thinking and also the ability to generate questions. Positive interdependence, due to working in a group, along with individual accountability, adequate usage of teamwork skills and regular self-assessment of team operations will be other developments as part of the academic domain.

Boosting creative writing through the infusion of rhetoric will further help students to understand the practical requirements of the course. As established earlier, students often fail to personally relate themselves to the course, owing to a larger prevalence of university assignments over real creative writing in the form of scriptwriting, playwriting, short stories or poems and publishing them. However, such an approach will enable the writer to understand his or her strengths and weaknesses in attracting readership through feedback provided by teachers, peers, younger students and others. This approach will not only strengthen their confidence but will also help them to gather the practical technicalities associated with writing; for instance, the shaping of actions, characters, dialogue and scenes; the visualisation of a scene and then, its plain and simple articulation, while respecting the intellect of diverse readers.

The introduction of various activities namely, the sharing of speech among students, asking students to draw circles depicting the three most important events or people in their lives and share the reason with the entire class, serve as a good way of opening them up not only to the class but also mainly to themselves. Other activities include drawing and speaking, for example a student will explain their drawing on the board through creation of a story. This story-making through drawing will be further stretched by asking other students to join one by one, making a chain and thus eventually completing the story by the entire class. Additionally, students can also be asked to devise activities and implement them within the classroom. This approach will not only motivate the students to get involved in the course but will also help them to gain autonomy in the class, although for a specified period of time. Overall, all these creative strategies will enable students to understand their peers' personalities, gain confidence, and develop oral skills.

This in turn will enable them to ponder on these essentials while developing a story, script or poetry, making it more creative than laden with only information.

#### **6.4 Chapter Summary & Future Scope**

Despite exploring the issue at hand encompassing selected techniques of teaching creative writing, the various segments associated with creative writing, and the concept and evolution of democratisation through the ages, teaching techniques and such others, the study is not without limitations. Owing to the limited word count scope, a deeper examination of the evolution of writing and creative writing, initiating from the Hellenic period of 10<sup>th</sup> century BC to the present 21<sup>st</sup> century, was not possible. Besides, various forms of creative writing across different literary eras, such as poetry, drama, prose, fiction, commentaries, scriptwriting and their comparative analysis exhibiting the gradual democratisation were left unexplored. Such a comparative study would have depicted the state of creative writing teaching before it formally became a discipline in 1940, predicting the future requisite development in the same way. Also, the study was restricted in terms of exploring different forms of creative writing within the eras mentioned— Romantic, Victorian, Modern and Post-modern and eventually, Contemporary— exploring instances of only individual writers of those time periods. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies expand the scope of the above stated areas, thereby diversifying and strengthening the academe of creative writing and its teaching. In addition, future studies of a similar issue can reflect deeper on the development of literary writing over time, without restriction to creative writing, in particular. The creative writing pedagogies, forming the background of the study were also limited in projecting the actual perception of teachers and students in reality. The scope was restricted to analyzing only secondary literature. Therefore, a separate study of the perception of faculty and students on the contemporary mode of teaching techniques, the reasons and challenges behind the segregation of rhetoric from creative writing and the eventual outcome would be academically fruitful. The scope of such a study will be impactful when exploring the in-depth perception of the stakeholders through a qualitative approach, involving primary research, as well validating the secondary strain. Such a scope will also present a novel perspective of the present condition of the university sphere and its teaching approach— if it has developed taking into account the existing constraints faced by creative writers or if it still continues with the age old practices. A future scope of studies also could examine the extent of

the effectiveness of the contemporary approach of digital along with the ecological and feminist approaches to develop efficient creative writers. Lastly, real case studies of learnt creative writers, as well as natural creative writers would shed some concrete light on the development of the skill of creative writing, and would break the stereotyped notion of dominance of natural creative writers over learnt.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Surname and Name: Kaspar Jiří

Department: Department of English and American Studies

Title of the thesis: Selected Techniques of Teaching Creative Writing

Thesis supervisor: Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

Number of pages: 87

Key Words: Creative Writing, Rhetoric, Democratisation, Techniques of writing, teaching of creative writing

Aiming to understand the various techniques of teaching creative writing in universities and graduate schools, the following study was initiated to analyze the evolution of writing upon establishing its background. Creativity forms an essential part of humanity, leading individuals to progress and develop in the varied spheres of technology and science, art, music and poetry, agriculture and such others. Creative products are essentially the consequences of individuals trying to bring about a change in the state of affairs through creating something new or through the molding of public opinion and attitude. This is achieved by their expressive writing using skilful words, but in an original style i.e. drifting away from old connotations. Evolving first in the 90<sup>th</sup> century BC as a record-keeping mode for various transactions, writing then evolved as a creative facet approximately in the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC, within the Greek society through Homer's Iliad, Odyssey and other writings.

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, creative writing further emerged as a separate discipline through the gradual democratisation of the process, only to be integrated within the English discipline.

However, despite the emergence of various techniques within creative writing teaching since its inception as a discipline of study, there lies significant difference between a natural creative writer and one who acquires the skill. Although often the natural creative writer dominates over the learnt writer in terms of readership, quality and technique, the learnt writer, through persistent training, practice and guidance eventually emerges as successful. Also, due to democratisation owing to technological innovation, a non-writer too learns the technicalities of writing through the online publishing of books, virtual coaching and the expression of their ideas through blogs and comments on social networks.

Capturing the democratisation phenomenon within the creative writing sphere, teachers are now developing and implementing various new age techniques, like digital rhetoric and the ecological approach, alongside reforming the old ones like the workshop and feminist approaches. It has been recommended to infuse activities, interaction and cooperation within the classroom environment to improve the discipline, taking into the fold both the natural and the learnt writer together.

## ABSTRAKT

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Název práce: Vybrané techniky výuky tvůrčího psaní

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Tato diplomová práce se zabývá technikami výuky tvůrčího psaní na univerzitách a vysokých školách, tato práce se zabývá analýzou vývoje tvůrčího psaní od doby kdy získalo uznání jako takové. Kreativita tvoří zásadní součást lidství, vede jednotlivce k pokroku a vývoji různých oblastí technologie a vědy, umění, hudby a poezie, zemědělství a dalších. Produkty kreativity jsou v podstatě následky jednotlivců snažících se změnit status quo buďto prostřednictvím vytvoření něčeho nového nebo utvářením veřejného mínění a přístupu. Autoři tohoto dosahují sebevyjadřování v textu uměnými slovy, ale i originálním stylem, tedy vzdalováním se starým významům. Psaní se vyvinulo v devedesátém století př. n. l. jako systém zaznamenávání různých transakcí, poté se vyvinulo v kreativní médium asi v desátém století př. n. l. v Řecku díky Homérově Íliadě, Odysseje a dalším dílům.

Ve dvacátém století, se tvůrčí psaní dále projevovalo jako samostatná disciplína skrze postupnou demokratizaci, jen aby se stala součástí Angličtiny. Nicméně, i přes objevy různých technik v rámci učení tvůrčího psaní je významný rozdíl mezi přirozeně tvůrčím autorem a autorem, který

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Zachycení demokratizace v oblasti tvůrčího psaní učitelé dnes vzvíjejí a uplatňují nové techniky jako digitální rétorika a ekologický přístup spolu s přetvářením starých technik jako workshop a feministické přístupy. Doporučuje se přidávat aktivity, interakce a spolupráci v prostředí třídy kvůli zlepšení disciplíny a braní v potaz jak přirozené tak naučené spisovatele.