Title

A LACANIAN STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF CREATIVE WRITING EXERCISES:
WRITING FANTASIES AND THE CONSTITUTION OF WRITER SUBJECTIVITY

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Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Zoe Charalambous

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This thesis, not including acknowledgements, bibliography and appendices is 93,335 words

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the effects of Creative Writing exercises on student writer subjectivities. It explores the hypothesis that an encounter with enigmatic Creative Writing exercises can facilitate a shift in students' relation to their writing, or their writer subjectivity.

The study used a methodology informed by Lacanian psychoanalytic ideas. Data was generated through an "experiment" course: an intervention of six sessions especially for this research with five volunteer participants, Creative Writing students from a UK higher institution. In addition, free-associative one-to-one interviews were carried out before and after the intervention. Lacanian theory informed the attempt to maintain ambiguity in both the exercises and in the researcher's enigmatic stance throughout the intervention.

The analysis proposes the concept of *writing fantasy* as a formalized structure that orients a writer's spoken and written discourse about her writing. Using the (emergent) structure of fantasy in the participants' texts and interviews, the analysis chapters explore the participants' writing fantasies and how the research project shifted or added to their fantasy, thus affecting the structure of their writer subjectivity. The outcome of the analysis suggests that writing fantasies can be shifted, at least momentarily, through the exercises. The analysis, however, also indicates that fantasies do not shift easily; the interpretation of the setting and/or the exercises' instructions as threatening to a participant's writer subjectivity seemed to impede the shift.

The design of the research with pre and post interviews and an intervention aimed at disrupting or shifting *fantasmatic* attachments constitutes an approach to exploring fantasy that has not previously been explored in the field of Psychosocial Studies. The thesis also constitutes an original contribution to the field of Creative Writing Studies in the way it conceptualizes learning in relation to the inherent assumptions in writer-students' spoken and written discourse. More specifically, it provides an initial knowledge-base for the pedagogical and psychosocial function of Creative Writing exercises used in Creative Writing pedagogy.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Acknowledgements

[O]nly that [wo]man can be called a poet who invents, who creates insofar as a [wo]man can create. The poet is [s]he who discovers new joys, even if they are hard to bear. One can be a poet in any field: it is enough that one be adventuresome and pursue any new discovery.

Guillaume Apollinaire quote (1971) re-invented by Zoe Charalambous

Chapter 1

A Writer's Fantasy of Unbecoming Writing

1.1 My writing/teaching fantasy

Other than themselves

In 2008, I started teaching a Creative Writing workshop for a local Women's Organization in Thessaloniki, Greece. The workshop was conducted in Greek and all of my students were female, aged from 30 to 60, some without any formal university education.

Being a graduate of the Warwick Writing Programme in the UK and a poet-writer[1], I had already had the opportunity to witness and practise a variety of Creative Writing teaching styles or pedagogies. In the Creative Writing workshops in Thessaloniki, I used some Creative Writing exercises or games, not entirely aware of their purpose, because I had enjoyed them myself as a writer and because my previous mentors had recommended them. For example, I presented my students with an exercise "Write about this." The "this" would be an object, which I would usually place in the middle of the group of students; e.g. the object could be a candle. In class, I would write along with my students. After the writing session we would all read and comment on each other's work. The aim of the discussion was not to make our writing "better"[2] but with a view to get reactions and comments, to see what "effect" what we wrote had on each other in terms of the interpretation of the exercise's request. As classes went by some of my students were surprised with themselves and with the fact that they could write in ways they thought were closed or blocked to them, in ways that were 'other than myself' or 'not like myself' – this being a repeated phraseology in what they said. They seemed to think this writing was *unbecoming* of or unsuited to the writer identity they thought had. I am aware

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[1] I am a writer if I may pronounce and therefore by enunciation *make myself*, or through my fellow students' and tutors' confirmations and via a publication in one literary magazine to that date...

[2] Throughout the thesis, I use double quotes for highlighting or defining words by me, and single quotes for words/phrases used by other authors and my participants.

here that writing *with* them might have helped them feel different about how they wrote too.

This "not writing like oneself," that is like *not* the writer one expects oneself to be, made me very curious about the use of such "ambiguous" Creative Writing exercises, and by extension, about the act and process of writing in the Creative Writing classroom.

Considering that I was not directing the students to particular assumptions about what they should write, we might call this pedagogy an ambiguous pedagogy of writing. I call such a pedagogy "ambiguous" because it does not exactly dictate what is supposed to be written or learnt – yet for each individual, depending on the interpretation of the exercise or my stance, there is an element which guides what they write or what they say about what they write. One cannot separate teacher-stance from the tool of the pedagogy: the Creative Writing exercise. An ideology of writing is always embodied in the praxis of writing and in its pedagogy as a stance.

Another factor in this setting is that I did not evaluate my students' writing as good or bad at the time. I must admit that sometimes I thought it might have been considered 'bad,' according to some, perhaps elitist, aesthetic norms or standards. I tried to keep such opinions to myself and work with how they developed their writing in different avenues that they had not tried. For example, if someone tried to write in description for the first time after writing always in monologues, I would not comment on how they would be able to further improve their description. I would ask them to talk about the experience of trying this method out and tell me about it in general.

My interest in the students' responses about their feeling of "Otherness" led me to the decision to do a PhD. I became very curious about Creative Writing exercises and began to look for relevant reading on their use in the pedagogy of Creative Writing. I did not find any research that confirmed or discussed such experiences of feeling "Other than oneself" or "Unlike Oneself" in relation to engaging with exercises in the literature back in 2010. The more I read about Creative Writing pedagogies the more curious I became about exploring the operation of these seemingly famous and yet so under-researched pedagogic tools: the Creative Writing exercises.

On a reflexive note, I am aware that wanting to research about "writing exercises," might represent my desire to write, (if that desire can ever be articulated), to become other than my(that)self. *I* heard my students' comments and focused on that particular aspect of what they told me about their engagement with the exercises. I cannot say I knew who I was to *be-come* at the start of this journey, nor will *this* self attempt to put in words here how it has changed *that* self personally, (if the past and the present subjctivities we think we have can be thought of as separate!) as I do not believe in linear narratives when it comes to (writer) subjectivity. In fact, the narratives of change/shift in writer subjectivity about my participants provided in this thesis are only partial narratives of the represented shift or of the subjectivity of my students, as I do not think that it is possible to represent the *Real*[3] complexity of the (writer) psyche into a thesis[4]; My hope is that this thesis will provide a new way of understanding aspects of this complexity from a psychosocial point of view, not in a psychopathological sense.

In the rest of the chapter I will present an initial discussion of the context and debates of Creative Writing in higher education (1.2), a more specific context for the approach I have adopted in this research, which can be positioned within Lacanian conceptions of Creative Writing pedagogy (1.3), a summary of this research and its argument (1.4), a note on researcher stance (1.5) and an overview of the structure of the thesis (1.6).

1.2 Creative Writing in Higher Education: context and debates

The issue of pedagogy in Creative Writing is important beyond my own teaching. Accounts in the Creative Writing Studies literature about the historical emergence of Creative Writing as a subject in Higher Education in the UK, the US and

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[3] By "*Real*" here I refer to Lacan's register of the *Real*, a psychic platform to describe our experience of the world before using language, and beyond language, put simply here. The *Real* signifies what cannot be represented by language and also what has not yet been verbalized. I explain this term in Chapter 4.

[4] One might approximate it; for that I have poetry; or maybe the latter statement is a defense for not being a "traditional" academic writer; or the academic writer is the part I no longer exclude from my writer subjectivity.

Australia are interlocked with conceptions of Literature[5] or Literary Studies and understandings of the writer's position in society and the academy. These understandings influence how Creative Writing has been conceived, how it has been taught and the type of research that constitutes its relevant knowledge. I argue here that examining accounts of the historical emergence of Creative Writing reveals the interweaving of social, economical and political factors in the complex frame that has given rise to practices of Creative Writing pedagogy. In spite of the variety of conceptualizations of its pedagogies, Creative Writing's inherent assumptions are still a largely unexplored area.

In the UK Creative Writing has been presented as a practice alongside university Literary Studies, linked to cultures of writing outside the university and as a continuation of a subject taught since antiquity. Creative Writing has been linked to literary study in some accounts of its emergence; for instance, according to Wandor (2008), the purpose of the MA at the University of East Anglia founded by Malcolm Bradbury in 1970 was to 'combine the reading and study of literature with its writing' (p.9). The undergraduate degree at the University of Middlesex under the title 'Writing and Publishing' in 1991-92 (ibid, p. 8-9) was based on Susana Gladwin's opinion that the students were distant from the authors in literature they were studying (ibid, p. 9).

On another level, Harper (2012, p.10-1), referring to records of poets and writers studying at the University of Oxford from 1500 to 1600, has emphasized that Creative Writing may have been something learnt through the study of grammar or history in British Universities, even before it was named 'Creative Writing.' O'Rourke (2005) and Wandor (2008) have also brought attention to practices of writing as an activity that was already happening in community groups but which later became institutionalized. Moreover, Creative Writing has been linked historically to the Classical times, when writing was taught. Morley (2007) has argued that Creative Writing is a practice that was taught even before it was named 'Creative Writing' (e.g. by the Classics, Aristotle's *Poetics*). These brief examples of accounts of Creative

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[5]The term "Literature" with a capital "L" is used here to denote works of Literature – as art, and with a lower case "l" literature will denote papers written in the field about its practice and theory.

Writing's historical emergence already indicate that the understanding of the subject is dependent on the values *privileged* in the study of writing, e.g. literary study, language and rhetoric or contribution to the community.

Narratives about the historical emergence of Creative Writing in the US also indirectly contain political undertones about the role of the writer in society and the academy. For example, Dawson (2005, p.48) argues the emergence of Creative Writing was the result of the struggle 'between scholars and critics in the early part of the twentieth century.' Dewitt (2012, p.17) argues that Creative Writing as a taught subject arose from 'an American "school without walls,"' which comprised writers getting together discussing their work and the characteristics of work they admired. He explains that the subject arose from an interest to establish the short story as a genre by critics and to create 'how-to' handbooks in order to develop a consensus on the short story by writers (ibid, p.18).

Creative Writing's appearance as a taught subject has also been linked to the teaching of composition at US universities and to the influence of Progressive Education. Myers (1996) has argued that the first origins of Creative Writing came in the 1880s at Harvard where an advanced composition course run by Barret Wendell had elements that are considered to belong to Creative Writing (in Wandor 2008, p.36). This similarity of elements is traced by Wandor (2008) to the 'technical study of language' (ibid, p.36). She links this to 'argumentation, rhetoric, etymology [...] logic, elocution, etc.' (ibid, p.35). She explains that the common elements taught in Composition and in Creative Writing may be due to the teaching of rhetoric, and the emphasis given to the Classics in the 1880s in the US universities (ibid, p.35). This affected the way in which Literature was taught (p.35). Similar to the argument posed by Harper in the UK, in US literature Creative Writing has been recognized as something that existed before it was named as such in the universities also. For example, 'The Art of the Short Story' was offered at the University of Chicago, the exact course is not mentioned (DeWitt 2012, p. 18).

There are also debates about whether Creative Writing is more indebted to 'self-expression' or to literary criticism. Wandor (2008, p.36) notes links between the emergence of Creative Writing and the Progressive Education Foundation, a movement that focused on children's self-expression as a way to learn. Myers (2012)

criticizes Creative Writing's subjectivist ethos whilst Dawson (2005) has highlighted Creative Writing's indebtedness to literary and cultural theory. The arguments by Myers and Dawson reflect the blurred boundaries between "self-expression" and "canonical influence," dependent on the conceptions of these terms and their relation to the histories of Creative Writing.

Creative Writing might be seen as a reaction of individuals and groups to political and social events, and more specifically-locally as both a troubling and enhancement of the practice of Literary Studies and criticism. For instance, in initiating a historical narrative about Creative Writing as a subject in higher education in Australia, Dawson (2005) lists various reasons why Creative Writing after the 1960s especially proliferated in the US. One of these reasons is, for instance, a disappointment of writers in the community by the movement of writers into the university: the 'disenchantment of writers' mass movement into university' (ibid, p.121). Relating, thus, the rise of Creative Writing in Australia to multiple groups of people in social, commercial and educational institutions, Dawson (2005, p.125) argues that the rise of Creative Writing in Australia has been less homogenous than in the US and the UK. He attributes this to the variety and inter-disciplinarity that characterizes Creative Writing degrees in Australia. The wide range of disciplinary connections presented in the well-known journal for Creative Writing studies *TEXT*, based in Australia, is a testament to this aspect of Creative Writing in Australia.

This complex frame of Creative Writing's historical development is linked with how it has been taught. Internationally and in the UK, the conceptualization of Creative Writing knowledge and skills has been the focus of debate, especially during the last decade. For example, in the UK, during the period of 2000-2013, Creative Writing in Higher Education, has been presented as an ambivalently distinct discipline from Literary Studies in educational reports by the English Subject Centre, the Committee of Higher Education and The National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE). It has been presented as both accepting its links to the Literature and language departments and recognizing its potential to branch out individually and into other disciplines (Holland et al 2003; NAWE and Higher Education Committee 2008; Munden 2013). The form of delivery that has remained dominant,

presented as both progressive and traditional in its conception, is the 'workshop': the preferred methodology of teaching Creative Writing (ibid). Finally, the discipline's understanding of its research (e.g. Munden 2013) and its relation to the market economy has recently begun to acquire more systematic attention (Hecq 2012a), examining the intersections of Creative Writing practice with: research methods, other disciplines such as dance, visual arts, neuroscience (Donnelly 2012; Kroll and Harper 2013; Donnelly and Harper 2013), and the shifting values of creativity in the economy (Hecq 2012a).

The continuously evolving and multi-faceted conception of Creative Writing both as a practice and as a subject in Higher Education is evident in the different ways in which major proponents in the field have defined it. For example, Harper (2008, p.1) has likened Creative Writing to its sibling arts: studio art, music, drama, dance, visual arts implying that, like the other arts, it can be taught. Dawson (2005), in proposing a rethinking of Creative Writing pedagogy, has also been concerned with legitimising Creative Writing as a discipline with establishing a method of teaching that is more engaged with social problems, rather than art for art's sake. Wandor (2008, p.7) has proposed that 'Creative Writing is a mode of imaginative thought,' in line with her argument that Creative Writing must be paired with the study of literature and should not just be practice-based. Finally, Morley and Brophy refer to Creative Writing as:

> "a pursuit of creativity," which can free writers from the traditional and established genres of the "recent modernist literary canon" – novels, plays and poems – and thus from concepts of authorship as an elitist and solitary practice (Brophy 1998, p.34).

Both authors suggest there is an aim to go beyond what is already established: 'an act of stripping familiarity from the world about us, allowing us to see what custom has blinded us to' (Morley 2007, p.9).

This perspective is supported by Pelletier and Jarvis' analysis of the 'paradoxical pedagogy of Creative Writing' (2013, p.1-4). They have argued that Creative Writing in principle can be an emancipating practice, as it is based on the knowledge of the students, not on what the teacher knows, but that the current

pedagogies used to teach it have inherent assumptions, which 'stultify' the potency of emancipatory potential of Creative Writing (ibid).

As a writer, I have been interested in practicing and teaching Creative Writing in all of the above ways. However, I am mostly interested in the definition provided by Morley and Brophy, and the "critique" provided by Pelletier and Jarvis. As a writer-teacher and writer-student I think it allows the possibility for an expanded horizon of conceptions of Creative Writing. Their definitions of the study, practice and act of Creative Writing acquire a political tone, in terms of art *effecting* a shift in ways of thinking about the world, the society and ourselves. Consequently, then, if an art is supposed to go beyond established traditions, and help us question and be "aware" of our being in the day-to-day society, its pedagogy must allow for such art to emerge.

1.3. Lacanian Conceptions of Creative Writing Pedagogy

A specific mode of awareness is produced in the symbolic space of a Lacanian psychoanalytic session in a way that can also be productive for thinking about writing and its pedagogies. Lacanian theory has been used to explore writing and its pedagogies in in terms of: a) its common stance with Surrealism as a practice of creativity (Brophy 1998); and b) its model of subjectivity as a platform for teaching writing that is emancipatory or *ethical* (Bracher 1999; Harris 2003, Hecq 2009, 2013). The former way of thinking about Creative Writing constructs an argument that Creative Writing constitutes a form of study or social activity that goes against intellectual complacency (Brophy 1998, p.207). It seeks to construct a re-conceptualization of creativity as resistance in relation Creative Writing as a practice (ibid, p.206-239). The latter way of using Lacanian theory and pedagogies of writing is focused more on the ways in which a shift of self and/or practice of writing might emerge though use of Lacanian theory in the pedagogy of writing.

Brophy (1998) in his exploration of notions of creativity and their relation to particular influential discourses has traced common ground between principles of Surrealism and Lacanian theory. He has argued that there are resonances between the ways in which the Surrealists conceptualized the writer and the process of

writing *and* the way Lacan conceptualized the analysand and the process of free-association in analysis (ibid, p.99 and p.169). 'Free-association' is defined in Brophy (1998, p.99) as 'thoughts [spoken] […] in an uncritical flow' (Freud 1900 in Brophy, p.169). Lacanian analysis, in particular, foregrounds the significance of the analyst's focus on ambiguities in the analysand's speech, to support the production of free associations. Brophy (ibid, p.169) argues that the experience of language produced in this approach to psychoanalysis is similar to the experience of automatic writing invented by the Surrealist movement in Literature. Automatic writing in the Surrealist movement constituted one of the main anchors to produce "surrealist writing" (ibid, p.143) as it was based on producing an artwork on an 'arbitrary impetus' – something that would initiate the production of something 'surreal' or 'outlandish' (ibid, p.143-4). Both of these processes, free-association, facilitated through a focus on ambiguity, and automatic writing, facilitated by an arbitrary impetus, might be understood as 'a Creative Writing exercise' that supports the production of spontaneous associations (ibid, p.168). In a similar way, this research emerges from my interest in the ambiguity of the instructions of Creative Writing exercises and what might be produced out of it.

Lacanian theory has also been used to inform pedagogical endeavours in writing. It has been employed in attempts to conceptualize a pedagogy that does not suppress students' desires and is emancipating (e.g. Bracher 1999, Berman 1996; Felman 1982; Hecq 2009; 2013). For example, Bracher (1999) has constructed a possible articulation of a Lacanian psychoanalytic pedagogy for writing at college or graduate level (in the US). He has suggested that a psychoanalytic understanding of the writing subject (referring to the "person" as a construct here) may help in identifying 'writing problems' related to 'unconscious hidden forces,' suggesting the sources of these problems and ways in which these conflicts of identity may be resolved (1999, p1). Bracher (ibid, p.25) bases this explanation of the writing subject on a model of the 'conflicted subject.' His basic proposition drawn from Lacanian theory is that the subject is divided. He explains that what we think are our "own" intentions and how we relate to the intentions that we 'misrecognize' and consider Other (ibid, p.24) represents an invisible discrepancy between what we "truly desire" and what we think we desire.

Based on this model of subjectivity, there is an incongruence between what we truly desire and what we "do." Put simply, Bracher (ibid, p.24) argues that we can identify in students' texts ways in which these conflicts of identity may produce problems in writing assignments. He has suggested, in line with rules for composition writing, a series of forms of defenses that might appear in the writings of students (p.68-124). Bracher extends a model of 'writing cure' drawn from the model of 'talking cure' in psychoanalysis (ibid, p.188). The model's main principle is promoting an 'avowal of unconscious desire' (ibid, p.188) using aspects from a Lacanian psychoanalyst's stance towards the person in analysis. An understanding of these unacknowledged elements of identity may bring about new ways of writing about a subject.

Partially drawing on some aspects of Bracher's Lacanian inspired pedagogy and Lacanian theory more broadly, Dominique Hecq (2009; 2013) has also suggested a model of pedagogy and a particular use of psychoanalytic theory to enhance students' Creative Writing practice. She reviews, for instance, Bracher's suggestions for an ethical pedagogy (2009). This pedagogy is not based on providing 'master signifiers,' key identifications for the student to use (ibid). She has proposed, instead, a model of 'interactive narrative pedagogy' (2009) – promoting 'a methodology of active consciousness' (2013a, p.185), highlighting an active engagement with being reflexive about one's writing practice. This pedagogy is linked to the 'discourse of the analyst'– a stance that aims not to impose the teacher's (the analyst's) desire on the student (analysand) (2009). In her course 'Writing the Unconscious' she explored 'immersion' in theory about the unconscious and subjectivity along with speed-writing exercises to explore students' assumptions about writing and subjectivity (2013, p.187). Hecq (2013) has found that this method of free-association through 'speed-writing' along with an active engagement with theory, and 'the conscious analysis of the creative process' has shifted the style of some students, 'sometimes in quite dramatic ways' (Ibid, p.190). Her analysis of this pedagogic approach resonates with my own experience with my students in Thessaloniki, and thus with the focus of this research.

All of the above authors have taken up the metaphor of the Lacanian analytic space and considered its productivity in relation to thinking about the process of

writing and its pedagogies. Brophy (1998) has considered the similarity of the experience of language by the analysand in the case of free-association in analysis and in free-associating in automatic writing. Bracher (1999) has suggested the use of a Lacanian psychoanalytic pedagogy, which draws its potential of emancipating influence from an analyst's stance (p.152, and p.192) in order to help writing students recognize and overcome obstacles in their writing. Hecq (2009; 2013) has extended Bracher's ideas into the pedagogy of Creative Writing both on undergraduate and postgraduate teaching by suggesting 'an interactive narrative model of pedagogy' and 'active consciousness' of the teacher-writer in order to help students learn *ethically*, trying to avoid eliciting in them the desire to please their writer-teachers.

The exploration of this thesis is interested in considering the ambiguity of "aesthetic" experiences of Creative Writing exercises, their relation to an enigmatic setting such as the space of a Lacanian analysis, and the possibility that they might bring about shifts in students' writer subjectivities. I am also interested in exploring these exercises to attempt to conceptualize moments of Otherness, or repudiated elements in students' writing practice, relevant to Bracher's work (1999). Furthermore, I hope that this exploration will contribute to the new space that Hecq has opened up (2009; 2013; 2014) of an *ethical* pedagogy of writing.

1.4 A summary of this Research and Argument

This research was designed to investigate the effects of Creative Writing exercises on students' writer subjectivities/identities. In order to do this, a six-week experiment course was constructed in which participants, five students on an undergraduate Creative Writing degree, were presented with six consecutive Creative Writing exercises. In each class, students were presented with one exercise and given a set time to write to the exercise. At the end of the set time, they were given the opportunity to read and discuss their texts. Each participant was interviewed before the course started and again at the end of the course. The initial, unstructured interviews were intended to elicit their views about writing in general, and about their own writing practice. In the final interview, participants were asked about their

experience of the research setting, their engagement with the experiment course, and their feelings about the texts that they had produced. Additionally, the interviews provided a basis for comparison of students' accounts of their practice with their actual practice/engagement with the exercises.

The thesis also contains an inherent methodological exploration into the use of some aspects of a Lacanian analyst's stance within the interviews, in the facilitation of the experiment course and in the analysis of participants' spoken and written discourse about writing.

The main research question from which this research began was: What are the effects, if any, of Creative Writing exercises on students' writer subjectivities?

This main question generated the following question about Creative Writing exercises:

- What Creative Writing (knowledge) is taught through the use of Creative Writing exercises (ambiguous writing instructions in class) in the teaching of Creative Writing?

An inherent research question related to the wider field of social science was also later produced:

- How might we transfer the relation of communication between (Lacanian) analyst and analysand to the construction of psychosocial research interviews, to the facilitation of Creative Writing pedagogies, and to the analysis of data arising from this researcher stance?

The argument of this thesis relates to both Creative Writing Studies and Psychosocial Studies. Firstly, I argue that it is possible to trace a writing fantasy in the spoken and written discourse of writer-students. A *writing fantasy* is a fantasmatic scenario followed in how students talk about their writing practice and how they symbolically articulate this fantasy in the composition of their texts, thus unconsciously enacting their writer subjectivity. This argument relates to my initial interest in exploring the kinds of knowledge about the writing that might limit writers to a specific remit of writing, thus setting a limit on their writer subjectivity.

Therefore, the concept of *writing fantasy* might be thought of as a pedagogical and methodological tool with which to explore the kinds of knowledge internalized and assumed by writer-students.

Secondly, the analysis of the texts, produced by the participants of this research, and of their interviews, seemed to indicate that the sequence of these six exercises, potentially in combination with the ambiguity of the research setting's stance might provide a space where writer-students can explore, disrupt and/or expand their writing fantasies, and thus their writer subjectivity. This may be possible as they elicit their identifications and repudiations of elements in their practice of Creative Writing, which obstruct and/or facilitate their learning of Creative Writing. At the same time, the analysis of the participants' responses to the experiment course specifically set up to enable a shift in the students' subjectivities also indicated how difficult it is to shift writing fantasies. This thesis suggests particular directions with regards how Creative Writing knowledge is produced depending on the stance of the pedagogue-writer and the writer subjectivity espoused-constructed by the writer-student.

Thirdly, constructing a relation to the field of Psychosocial Studies[6], this thesis builds an inherent argument for an exploration of the research process through using aspects from the position of Lacanian analyst in the clinic. This position has engaged a specific mode of reflexivity in terms of interacting with the research participants, producing an *Other* kind of data; using a diary as a repository for the researcher's responses and affects that might otherwise have been imposed either in the conduct of the course or in the analysis of the data. By "reflexivity," then, I mean the particular focus which Lacanian theory places on working with the *Symbolic* register (explained further in Chapter 4), which is a platform of understanding/experiencing the world through a focus on the materiality of language, the *Law of the Letter*. Put simply here, considering the *Law of the Letter* means considering the symbolic relations of linguistic signifiers, not interpreting the motivations or meanings behind these signifiers. This thesis provides an inherent

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[6] The field of Psychosocial Studies contains a niche concerned with the use of psychoanalytic theory in the process of social research. I review this field in chapter 3.

additional insight into the use of psychoanalysis in social research, by exploring the use of Lacanian psychoanalytic techniques for the construction of an open, unstructured interview, the facilitation of a Creative Writing class and the suggestion of interpretations about the data.

The particular use of the Lacanian analyst stance in this thesis provides methodological (in terms of research) and pedagogical (in terms of teaching) suggestions, wondering about the ways in which the desire of the Other, as researcher or pedagogue, might avoid placing its demand on the research participant or writer-student. This notion of not placing one's demand on the writer-student has further ethical and political implications in terms of teaching one how to create art. This will be addressed further in the conclusion.

1.5 Note on researcher stance

In this thesis, I have attempted to construct and explore a Lacanian researcher stance, using some of the psychoanalytic techniques a Lacanian analyst uses with their analysand in clinic, to research the knowledge productions produced in this particular Creative Writing pedagogy context. The fixing of such a stance, from a Lacanian viewpoint, might be thought to assume some sort of faith in a symbolic guarantee of meaning. By symbolic guarantee of meaning, I mean, for instance, placing a faith in the Lacanian vocabulary for explaining (away) the complexities of (creative) writing and writers' processes.

For this reason, throughout this thesis, I attempt to maintain a playful stance with regards the knowledge this thesis has produced, attempting not to speak the discourse of the Master, (or University … as much as that is possible in a PhD thesis). Briefly, the Master's or the University's discourse are Lacanian conceptions of the social bond that texts/articulations (either via speech or actions) produce in their act of communication (Bracher 1994). On a reductive note, the Master's discourse is a specific condition of communication: assuming to speak from a place of absolute authority and expertise. The university discourse also contains the place of absolute authority, though it is different from the Master's discourse, because it implies an illusionary leeway that its authority is not absolute (Fink, 2004). An example of this

illusionary leeway is that for example a PhD is an *original* contribution to knowledge, which, however, must be articulated in rigid, already established regulations, so as not to risk its misrecognition and failure.

I maintain a Lacanian stance when it comes to the lack of words signifying the *Real* of our existence; that there is always a gap between what is represented and what is felt or invoked, either written or read. The lack in the Other in Lacanian terms *lies* in the scenario that the Other is not really what forms our desire but our own imagined sense of what the Other might request from us. Whether this Other is language or academic writing, recognizing its lack might present a good opportunity to explore our need for the Other to be a symbolic guarantee of meaning. This recognition maybe gives us or I the opportunity to stand on "myself" beyond the phallic *jouissance* in a *jouissance* that rests beyond the law of the letter.[7]

I construct this playfulness in two ways: by punctuating the narrative of this thesis (not systematically) with Ettinger's vocabulary (2002; 2006) (a contemporary post-Lacanian psychoanalyst and theorist) and by maintaining a speculative stance towards my arguments in the analyses of the data, thus troubling and enhancing my Lacanian-adopted researcher stance.

In addition, even though I use Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to describe the operation via which writer subjectivity is constituted in spoken and written discourse, this does not preclude that this operation can be described in other substituting terms. Both loosening and enhancing the fantasy of Creative Writing education and Psychosocial Studies' research objectives, what remains is the quotient of viewing the particular pedagogy of Creative Writing exercises and the frame of the project as an Other way to describe the processes of knowledge production in research and in Creative Writing pedagogy.

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[7] I am hinting at *feminine jouissance* here, which has been formulated by Lacan as a pleasure that is beyond pursuing a fantasy, beyond *objet a,* (the relic that reminds us of *phallic jouissance* and fuels our pursuit of fantasy, fantasy forming who we think we are put very simply here) (Fink 2004, p.159).

Moreover, from my own *Imaginary* [8] understanding of what researcher identity I want to construct in this thesis, even though I recognize that a PhD thesis is meant to exemplify expertise within a small field of new knowledge, I wish to fix and unfix, to play with my positioning through my thesis creation, embracing my hybrid identity of creative writer and social scientist. This identity is also a statement about the potency of recognizing the insecure edifices of knowledge.

1.6 Overview of the Structure of the thesis

This chapter began with the personal scenario that produced the research interest of this thesis. I continued with a broader rationale of the study in relation to the context of Creative Writing in higher education. I then referred to other authors in the field of Creative Writing or Composition Studies, who have used Lacanian theory to conceptualize the act of writing and its pedagogies, to begin to contextualize my interest in taking a Lacanian perspective in this study. I finished with introducing briefly an account of this research, its questions, argument and a note on researcher stance.

Chapters 2 and 3 present the two fields of research that provide a context for this research, and to which it aims to contribute. Chapter 2 is a review of Creative Writing Studies. It presents the three strands within the literature on the learning/practicing of Creative Writing. Creative Writing defined in relation to Literature, Creative Writing defined in relation to a shift in self or Creative Writing, and Creative Writing as an object of research. Chapter 3 is a review of the use of psychoanalysis in psychosocial studies. To make this exploration possible, the third chapter considers the ways in which psychoanalytic theory has been used in the domain of social studies, either in the process of data generation or analysis, constructing the rationale for using Lacanian theory in the process of data generation, as well as the process of data analysis.

Chapter 4 presents an architecture of the concept of Lacanian fantasy and research questions are multiplied. It develops this architecture through an account

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[8] This term is elaborated in Chapter 4. Put very simply here, by *Imaginary* I refer to Lacan's register of *Imaginary,* a psychic platform of the subject's experience of reality, which uniquely colours the way in which we associate meanings to things.

of the Lacanian registers of *Real, Symbolic and Imaginary,* Lacan's conceptualisation of desire as Other and language in the processes of separation and alienation, the production of the Master Signifier and *objet a* and how these relate to the concept of fantasy, its formation and potential for shift. The research questions are formulated at the end of this chapter using conceptual vocabulary drawn from the previous theoretical exposition.

Chapter 5 is an account of the research design and methods used to investigate the research questions with a methodological theoretical discussion. Its first part presents the descriptive account of the research process. The second part provides a theoretical explanation of the ways in which the stance of the Lacanian analyst was explored and employed in the interviews, the facilitation of classes and the analysis of the data *and* a discussion of the emergent ethical implications.

The sixth, seventh and eighth chapters present the analysis of the data produced, (the texts produced and submitted to the exercises, the interviews of the participants and their overall engagement with the setting). In summary, the analysis chapters trace the operation of the Lacanian fantasy as an organizing principle represented by *master signifiers*, (nodal points around which meaning is organized) within the spoken and written discourse of creative writers. For each student participant in this study, a specific formula of fantasy, a fantasmatic scenario, which makes their identification with a particular writer subjectivity possible, has been traced in their spoken (interview) and written (texts) discourse. This scenario is representative of internalized techniques or ideas that the research participants have about Creative Writing and themselves as creative writers.

More specifically, chapter 6 is a presentation of three case studies foregrounding the operation of Lacanian fantasy in writer subjectivity using instances from the participants' in texts and interviews.   Chapter 7 is a methodological exploration of the Lacanian concept of *jouissance*[9] in relation to writer subjectivity enunciated in speech and in writing, looking at spaces of

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[9] Defined here minimally as the primordial experience of an enjoyment before entering language and becoming subjects, in the "creation myth" provided in Lacanian theory as to how we begin to understand ourselves as separate individuals with an identity.

disarticulation in the participants' interviews or texts, insinuating a momentary *aphanisis* (disappearance) of their writer subjectivity in speech, pointing to excluded aspects of their self, which make their *writerly* identifications tenable.

Chapter 8 is an overview of the engagement of all of the participants with each exercise. An exploration of the instructions of these six exercises and an overview of the participants' overall engagement with each exercise are presented. I explain how each of the exercises' instructions may have produced stylistical/compositional features in the participants' writing unrelated to their fantasy and/or particular features of collective writer fantasies, with which the exercises seem to have interfered or constructed.

Chapter 9, the concluding chapter, draws out the major contributions of this thesis to the fields of Creative Writing and Psychosocial Studies, recapitulating and expanding the main argument of this research.

Note on the writing of this thesis:

This thesis is inter-disciplinary, drawing from the fields of Creative Writing and Psychosocial Studies. Thus, the writing of the analysis chapters also proposes inherently a new space of writing about the knowledge produced through Creative Writing pedagogies and in the research process in social sciences. Keeping a balance between the social or academic genre and the more playful aspects in my style of writing throughout this thesis has been a demanding task for me as my writing education came from an English Literature and Creative Writing (B.A.) and Classics (M.A) background. My own writer subjectivity may have shifted to contain unknown *Other* parts in the writing of this thesis too.

n.b. I privilege the use of "her" and "she" in my references to subjects in this thesis in general. At times, I break this custom with a rare "he." Also, I often use the singular "they" or plural "their" to avoid using "he" or "she."

I reiterate here that I use double quote ("") to refer to my own words or to put words in "question," and single quotes ('') for the words of other authors and my participants.

Chapter 2

Conceptions of Creative Writing Studies in the literature

2.1 Creative Writing today

Conceptions of Creative Writing and its pedagogies are shaped by understandings of Literature and conceptions of the writer and the act of writing, and their function in society. Literature and works of literary value have increasingly been affected by their commodity function, their "literariness" assessed by a combination of "experts" in the publishing industry and the "literary culture" (denoting both writers within and outside the academy).

Hecq (2012a, p.24-39) has pointed out that 'creativity' has now become a term used by political rhetoric as the new resource to save the economic market, thus putting 'Creative Writing' on the radar of 'creative economy.' Dawson (2006, p.29) suggests:

> …there is an uneasy synergy between the language of the corporate university and the rhetoric of "praxis" commonly adopted to distinguish Creative Writing from Literary Studies, a rhetoric which emphasizes the ability to do something rather than simply to know something. This synergy is particularly manifested in the enterprise of the Creative Industries, where creativity itself is understood as a form of cultural capital in the national economy.

This uneasy synergy is suggestive of the ways in which Creative Writing, like any subject in the creative arts industry today, both clashes and fits with the interests of a variety of inter-related groups of people: artists, academics, publishers, government, etc. The picture of teaching Creative Writing in Higher Education is complex, to say the least.

Different assumptions about what Creative Writing is and its function construct different ideological and epistemological pictures of Creative Writing (Studies) as an academic discipline in Higher Education. The aim of this chapter is to present three distinct strands in the Creative Writing literature: the relation of

Creative Writing (Subject or Studies)[10] with Literature and with the self, which are the two main ideological nexuses around which Creative Writing pedagogies have been constituted, and the relation of Creative Writing to research.

The literature assuming the relationship of Creative Writing with Literature constructs Creative Writing as a practice that can be learnt symbiotically with or isolated from the study of Literature and Literary Criticism (e.g. Wandor 2008). The literature concerning Creative Writing's relation with the self has two sub-strands. One establishes a relation to political theoretical frames of thinking, which are said to enable a re-defining of writer-self and Creative Writing Studies (e.g. Haake 2012). The other establishes a relation between the psychic self and its development through writing, assuming a therapeutic potential in the process of writing (e.g. Hunt 2013). Moreover, Creative Writing has also been posited as an act of research in itself (e.g. Kroll and Harper 2013), and as a discipline to be charted and explored (e.g. May 2012).

The review of these three strands in the Creative Writing literature aims to point to the margins of these areas, which my research hopes to address. These margins are:

1) The Creative Writing knowledge produced through writing to Creative Writing exercises in Creative Writing pedagogies,

2) The specificity of the shift in modes of writing in students' texts linked with their writer identity, and

3) Qualitative research about students' Creative Writing *texts*.

2.2 Conceptual Bases of Creative Writing: Theories and Spaces of Literature and Writers

It is possible to argue that theories and spaces of Literature and writers have ultimately been concerned with evolving conceptions of "self-expression." Theories

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[10] The study of Creative Writing as subject is interlinked with its scholarship and the ideologies espoused about writing (studies). By "writing ideologies," I mean here a particular line of logic followed with regards the function of writing: e.g. we might say that our practice is informed by the ideology that writing is an art-form that can be used for raising political awareness or writing is an art that does not have to have a specific purpose.

of Literature construct the function of the literary works. They exemplify particular characteristics of the writer's relation to society (and to the academy). Romanticism and New Criticism, two theories of Literature, which emerged as reactions to Literature by writers, along with the development of Theory, texts from Cultural Studies concerned with the politics of expression, are conceptual platforms from which Creative Writing has drawn its influences. Equally influencing spaces of Literature are the physical and conceptual topoi containing and expressing power relations in the making of Literature. In Creative Writing Studies, the most discussed space has been the workshop, a space created by writers for writers; it has become the hallmark of Creative Writing, characterized by a love/hate relationship with the academy (e.g. Ritter & Vanderslice 2007; Donnelly 2010), being the space of critics-writers yet having originated as a space of writers (e.g. Dawson 2005).

The notion of self-expression, from a Romantic perspective, is connected with writing as an expression of one's imagination, and the writer's inspiration by nature. Romantic writing deals with a naturalized conception of the relation between writer and nature.

Romanticism, an 18th century movement in Europe, has been linked to the notions of genius and creative power accessible to anyone (Dawson 2005, p.28-29). These notions have been associated with a conception of the writer being in touch with her sensory experience, this experience being at one with expression through language[11]. Dawson (2005, p.29) explains that Romanticism's 'agenda' was with reconceiving 'imagination as creative faculty […] superior to that of reason.' This was part of an attack on the 'mechanized and scientific view of society,'(ibid, p. 29), shifting the conception of art as 'mimesis'[12] (imitation) to art as 're-creation,' concerned with the writer's unique views of the world (ibid, p.29).

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[11] Interestingly, the concept of 'creativity accessible to all' became the symbol for democracy *and 'capitalist productivity',* during the 1920s and 30s. Similarly, in a post-industrial narrative, the ethos of a Creative Class, is an argued 'force for economic growth' (Dawson, 2005, p. 46, see also Webb 2012 on a further critique). This aspect of "artistic spirit," then, by the name of "creativity" might be perceived both as a mode of social expression *and* suppression.

[12] The Ancient Greek connotations to 'mimesis' are a matter of debate, however.

In the 1930s, self-expression became part of the Progressive Education movement in America, which argued hat Creative Writing is a means of self-expression for its own sake (Dawson 2005, p.40). In the Creative Writing literature, the interpretations of 'Romanticism' provide varied understandings of the Romantic notion of a writer, and therefore varied emphases on pedagogies, either embracing the facilitating of talent (a term subject to interpretation) (e.g. Hawkins 2012) or rejecting it as an illegitimate myth that confounds the purposes and the 'seriousness' of Creative Writing as an academic discipline (e.g. Wandor 2008). In the field of Literary theory, Romanticism has been considered as an antecedent to New Criticism (Waugh, 2006, p.168-9).

From a New Criticism perspective, "self-expression" is about usurping the agency/capability of a writer to be also a critic, focusing on the inherent values of the text (i.e. the elements of grammar, syntax, vocabulary) rather than historical or social understandings of the text (i.e. biographical or social perspectives about the creation of the text), thereby initiating a shift in the status of the writer as a professional, and the status of the critic as an artist (Dawson 2005; Wandor 2008).

In the Creative Writing field, the movement of New Critics around the 20th century, constructed and promoted by writers in the US, has sometimes been interpreted as opposite to the principles of Romanticism and a reaction to English philology (Cowan 2012 about Wandor 2008). Yet, Waugh (2006, p.168) pinpoints that New Criticism's origins have been drawn from romantic influences. For instance, 'John Keats' description of "negative capability" and T.S. Eliot's notion of the 'objective correlative' (ibid, p.168) emphasise Coleridge's conviction that 'poetry brings the whole soul of man into activity' (ibid, p.168). Cowan (2011, online no pages) suggests that New Criticism brought attention back to the 'authority of authorship.' Dawson (2005, p.84) agrees on this matter with Cowan. He explains that the writers attempted to attain a more professional grounding as critics, formalizing their expertise as practitioners. Dawson (2005, p.3) has written New Criticism initiated the evaluation of Literature 'in terms of its aesthetic qualities and enabl[ed] the academic study of contemporary (Modernist) literature.' He explains that it emerged as 'an argument about the nature of poetry [...] and as an conservative resistance to values associated with science, industrialization and

urbanization' (Culler in Dawson 2005, p. 75).   Additionally then, this 'professionalization' of the writers produced another kind of a thematic focus in Literature.

In the Creative Writing literature, this critical attention has been interpreted by some as not paying attention to the "external" influences on a text (e.g. Myers 1995 in Dawson 2005, p.85) and thus *not* qualifying as a study of Literature, but more as a way to train writers. To state the obvious, New Criticism is a social and historical product stemming from the interest at the time with the agency of the writer to professionalize his or her method of craft. Different conceptions of the agency of the writer in relation to language are posited in New Criticism and Romanticism. Their common ground, however, lies in the opposition between poetry and science, and anti-industrialism sentiments[13].

Around the 1960s, the emergence of 'writings from outside the field of Literary Studies' (Wandor 2008, p.168) were appropriated from people within Literary Studies, because they offered 'new and persuasive accounts of textual and cultural matters.' These approaches came to be referred to as "Theory" with capital "T." With the development of Theory, self-expression becomes contested. Hecq (2013, ps.176-7) also explains that 'Theory' with a capital 'T' refers to a period of time during the 1960s and 70s, when disenchantment with how society was affected by the Enlightenment started to produce 'grand narratives' about how the world might be viewed. Theory has been associated with a number of approaches: the Anglo-American academy, Critical theory (Frankfurt School), the 'varieties of structuralism and poststructuralism' and 'the work of linguists' (i.e. Saussure) and 'French theory' (i.e. 'Barthes, Cixous') (ibid, p.179). Wandor (2008, p.170) argues that Theory brought an emphasis on the 'constructedness' of meaning, going beyond a 'synchronic study of language', towards a 'diachronic study of language,' (i.e. what are the conventions operating now that 'make possible the forms and meanings of

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[13] Attesting to the complex interstices of links in literary theory, New Criticism is connected to Formalism, defined as the study of the literary text concerned with the purposes of the text focusing on form, not external influences (Waugh, 2006, see pps 212- 222, and pp. 165-175). It arose as a reaction to Romanticist theories of the individual writer and genius, originating from Russian formalism, and afterwards Anglo-American *New Criticism* (Ibid).

language'? p. 170). Dawson (2008) and Mayers (2005) have argued that Theory affected the development of 'craft criticism' literature in Creative Writing studies (Dawson 2008; Mayers 2005), via an impetus, since the 1990s, for scholarly interrogation in Creative Writing. Mayers (2005, p.34) defines 'craft criticism' as 'critical prose,' by creative writers, which discusses the process of writing. Therefore, Theory according to the Creative Writing literature initiated a questioning of the assumed innocent *status quo* of the writer and self-expression *within* Creative Writing literature.

Finally, the workshop is an influential space of Literature and for Creative Writing's institutional base. Installed by writers (New Critics) for writers, reacting to industrialism, it was the originating space outside the academy, where writers met up to discuss their work and share feedback[14]. It gained its well-known status due to its first, officially named emergence, first at Harvard and then the famous IOWA Writers Workshop Program in the US, the first famous established Creative Writing Program (Donnelly 2010, Vanderslice 2006).

Both during the Romanticism and New Criticism period writers met up to discuss their writings and processes. In the US, DeWitt (2012, p.17) explains that just as mutual feedback about each other's work was exemplified by the Romantics Wordsworth and Coleridge, there was an 'American school "without walls," where writers talked back to writers about vision and craft.' Wandor (2008, p.37) explains that at 'the turn of 20th century' writers' colonies, (defined as 'ideal working environments for artists') influenced the later emergence of the workshop in the university. O'Rourke (2005) has charted the cultures of writing during the 1970s and 80s existent in Britain before its appearance at the University. In courses at London's City Literary Institute for example, the combination of 'training and practice in craft' *and* 'a facilitating of that self-discovery implicit in all self-expression' were part of the Creative Writing pedagogy (ibid, p. 48).

Operationally, the workshop is conceptualized as a forum for sharing and commenting on writing by teachers and student readers (Donnelly 2010, p.3; Coles 2006), containing writing done in the class, which is then commented upon, or

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[14] It is (ironically) defined as 'a building in which manual labour took place' (Dawson 2005, p. 81).

writing brought into the class and then commented upon, or 'exemplary writing'; currently, it is the most common approach among others taken, e.g. one-on-one tutorials, lectures, etc. (2008 Creative Writing Benchmark report, p.8). The term's connotation of labour is evident in the organization of learning activities for the study of Creative Writing. For example, Dawson (2006, p.28) explains that pedagogical strategies in Creative Writing include:

- 'generative techniques to stimulate creativity or to produce material,' e.g. automatic writing
- 'exercises in form to develop technical proficiency,' e.g. writing in genres, for instance the form of a sonnet
- 'critical reading of published material' exemplifying 'certain devices' e.g. the use of imagery in writing
- 'editorial annotations and workshop discussion of student manuscript'
- 'general reading and discussion about literature and writing' and 'journals' for critical statements for their own work

All of the above pedagogical strategies employed in the workshop concern the study of writing as a study of labour for the writing process and product, as if to get rid of associations of writing being a hobby or a pleasure.

In the Creative Writing literature, the term "workshop" has progressively become a placeholder for almost any approach of teaching Creative Writing, foregrounding its use, depending on the literary ideology espoused by the writer-teacher and university course/program running it.

Considering the above, it is possible to discern that debates about theory and practice of writing are about different ways of understanding the writer's (self)-expression, which inform Creative Writing's pedagogical relation to Literature, the self and research.

I have minimally introduced the theories of Literature and spaces of writing, which have played a role in Creative Writing's constitutional values, in order to provide a theoretical backdrop for the conceptions of Creative Writing, which I present next.

2.3 Literary conceptions: The relation to Literature

A significant strand in the literature assumes that Creative Writing studies must establish a relation to existing "canonical" literary works. In some cases, they argue that this relation is different from that of a literary critic (e.g. Bunn 2011). The main debate in this strand of literature, key to the relation between Creative Writing Studies and Literary Studies, is whether "reading as a writer" is the same as or different from reading as a literary critic or scholar, in relation to how "canonical works" are used/read. The understanding of writing and reading as integral or separate from one another has also fed this debate. This issue has partially arisen from the (contested) use of the workshop as a form of delivery of teaching Creative Writing. The workshop, originating from writers' workshops outside university walls transferred into the academy *and* the development of the movement of New Criticism generated from writers in the US New Criticism, became a part of Literary Studies, and its influence has been conceived as being a formalist criticism practice. The interpretive equation formalism makes is 'form equals content,' assuming that the technical features of a text directly produce the meaning intended in the text.

However, the precise articulation of the necessary relation between learning to be a creative writer and canonical literature varies. The conception of the relation to "canonical" existing literary works constitutes the approach to pedagogy, how Creative Writing is taught. Broadly, "canonical" literature might be defined as the (published) works of authors, which are exemplary of dealing with specific themes or stories content-wise or particular methods of writing/composing technique-wise. The 'canon' according to the Oxford English Dictionary is thought to be 'the rule' or the 'law' by which something is judged (Oxford Dictionaries, Online, no pages). Waugh (2006, p.70) explains that the 'canon' is derived etymologically 'from the Greek word for rod or reed, an instrument for measurement.' [In Modern Greek, it means 'rule' – my translation]. Its origin of use in Literature comes from debates in Christianity about the 'authenticity of the Hebrew Bible and the books of the New Testament' (ibid, p.70). The issue of the canon in literary study is an ongoing debate. For example, on the one hand, Harold Bloom has written an entire "bible" of great works to be admired for their aesthetic value (ibid, p.71). On the other hand, Eagleton highlights that the concept of a canon is an 'ideological construct' that

assumes there is 'autonomous aesthetic value' (ibid, p.71). Waugh suggests that 'canonicity' is linked to issues of 'philosophical aesthetics and the more historicist and politicized insights of contemporary literary criticism' (ibid, p72). It is possible to argue, then, that the texts used for discussion of exemplary features of composition *become* canonical in the pedagogy of Creative Writing. However, we must also remember that we cannot anticipate or *know* how works are received.

A dichotomized identity of writer-critic or a fused identity of writer-academic-critic and thus a corresponding conception of Creative Writing is constructed depending on how a writer "reads" a literary or Creative Writing text, and whether the statuses of the two readings and texts can be collapsed. Key to these pedagogies is that learning is attributed mainly to the critique of texts, discussion and re-writing of creative, reflective and literary texts. For example, Wandor (2008) has argued that Literary Studies function as a necessary compass to guide the learning of Creative Writing. Dismissing the Romantic conception of writing, which she defines as involving invisible inspiration or the 'muse,' she argues that 'there can be no understanding of [literary conventions (with which Creative Writing students work)] without engaging with the field of exegesis as applied to literature: criticism and theory' (ibid, p.221). Wandor's (2008) approach is not informed by a reading methodology *per se* in conducting the teaching. Instead, she suggests a seminar, not sharing writing, but teaching concepts (i.e. understanding of differences between genres, poetry, short-story, etc., p.212) in class through writing. This method still implies a relation to canonical texts, and a way of reading them with historical and social meaning in mind, thus a focus on producing a specifically prescribed Literature.

In the US Creative Writing has had a close relationship with Composition Studies, the field of studying writing at college level, because of its emergence within and in proximity to spaces of teaching composition writing in the academy. Influenced by Composition pedagogy, the focus on the exegesis of Creative Writing texts has been supplemented by reflective written critiques of students' texts. These have arisen also from a need to provide tangible evidence of learning for assessment of Creative Writing texts in the UK (Boulter 2009). Vanderslice (2012, p.116) has strongly argued that the 'development of students as critics and reflective writers

usually goes hand in hand with their development as creative writers.' This assumes that one's narrative of learning confirms one has *learnt* in practice.

Moreover, the relation to literary canonical texts has been accompanied by written accounts of writers about the process of writing. Cowan (2011) thinks that Creative Writing should be in conversation with Literary Studies. He suggests using the contextual and formal understanding of Literature for the study of Creative Writing, *and* the use of other canonical texts, such as accounts of writers, about the process of writing (2011, online no pages). He also argues that the process of writing contains an 'unknowing' aspect to it – referring to the feeling of no purpose when one begins to write – arguing that writing is a creative-critical exploration of 'the limits of literary language' (2011, online no pages). So, in teaching writing it is not necessary to discuss their *post-facto* containment of social discourses (an approach recommended by Dawson and his point of disagreement with Cowan) (2011, online, no pages). Therefore, Cowan draws both from formalist and romantic conceptions of the writer. This relation of Creative Writing with literary canonical texts is characterized by the positioning of Creative Writing institutionally as a subsidiary subject in conjunction with the study of Literature at the University of East Anglia, where he teaches[15] (Cowan 2012, online, no pages). This pedagogical approach is similar to some aspects of my undergraduate study at Warwick University (2002-2005), where Creative Writing is part of the English Literature and Creative Writing undergraduate degree the workshop is slowly introduced, and collections of essays by writers are studied, such as *Strong Words*: *modern poets on modern poetry* (2000), as supplementary knowledge about the writing process.

Drawing both from romanticism as self-expression and the conceived isolationism of formalist craft, Dawson (2005; 2008) has identified the academic creative writer as isolated from society, because of the way in which Creative Writing is taught as a formalist craft-based poetics. For this reason, he has argued that creative writers must take up the identity of 'a literary intellectual'– an artist

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[15] At the same time, an assumed mastery of this exploration of the limits of language (bestowed by the publishing industry) is implied by his claim that the authority of the tutor is derived from having proven to have successfully negotiated these 'evidenced by his or her publications' (2011).

who knows the social and political meaning of his artwork – and explains that the 'cultural, institutional and political questions' about how to teach and practice writing, are not an 'eclectic approach' but part of an 'ineradicable *structural* presence of other 'disciplines,'(2008, online no pages). Therefore, Creative Writing keeps the question of 'disciplinarity perpetually open' (ibid).

Differentiating between the processes of reading and writing has been a central issue in Creative Writing studies. Jarvis (2011, online no pages) associating the experience of the pleasure of writing with the complex and paradoxical experience of sexual pleasure, refers to the writer's eroticism to approximate the entanglement of reading and writing together in the act of writing. The desire of the writer at the moment of writing as being both his or her reader but also 'the desired but repressed other of his own eroticism,' informs Jarvis' (2011) theory of progressive reading praxis in Creative Writing pedagogy, positing writing and reading as a fluid performance. He argues that different models of composition, suggested by various approaches in Creative Writing pedagogies, construct 'composition as a divided performance – separated into writing (unconscious) and reading (conscious) and claim a spurious special status for the readings of writers' (2011, online no pages). Drawing insight from 'antic poststructural positions for Creative Writing' (ibid) as challenges 'to epistemological issues and piercing literary conventions,'(ibid) Jarvis suggests a pedagogy that includes any type of reading lists, (he provides his own list as well), reading/interpreting as making strange to explore textual effect, the practice of exercises with an awareness of the writer's alienation from the text, and the emphasis on composition being a 'unified performance' (ibid). Jarvis' proposed approach, even though called a progressive *reading* praxis, begins to open up the space for pedagogies that focus on the *writing* of discursive relations, rather than the *talking about* discursive relations as learning.

Working with the binary of reading and writing, student writing has been used as another mode of "canonical" writing, to learn the Creative Writing process. I use "canonical" here associating it with regulation. Indirectly, an invisible canon is assumed when a student's text is scrutinized in discussing what works and what does not in its composition. Epstein-Jannai (2010) suggests the use of semi-automatic writing as a point of departure for a discussion of layers of creative

endeavor. In other cases, the relation to canonical literary texts begins to experiment with their literary basis. For example, in Pope's (2012) original approach of learning through writing, students explore literary canonical texts by re-writing them, thus exploring their composition conventions through the act of writing, with reflective critique as well, writing about what they have learnt through this exercise. Pope calls his approach 'artisanal' because the learning takes place through crafting and re-crafting (Woods 2006, p. 129). Woods (ibid) has compared Pope's approach to learning through 'lived textuality,' reminiscent of ethnography, taking into account how lived experience affects textuality and vice-versa.

To sum up, Creative Writing's relation to literary canonical texts is described as dependent on, or in conversation and alliance with the study of literary theory and criticism, with some supporting the focus on craft (the practical skills of writing) more than others. The main method of learning Creative Writing is based on discussion of exemplary features of texts with varied criteria of interpretation dependent on the relation of Creative Writing to Literature, however that may be understood/constructed by teachers and students. Creative Writing exercises have been used to exemplify the processes of writing, and to generate more material for discussion or writing. The potential of the writing process for learning Creative Writing has begun to be considered via experiments with the "literariness" of canonical literary texts, thus beginning to articulate a more expanded notion of a theory of writing, moving towards a shift in understanding Creative Writing as merely the production of Literature.

2.4 Creative Writing and the self: political and therapeutic conceptions

Another strand of literature in Creative Writing assumes the discipline must explore a shift of self to facilitate learning of Creative Writing. This strand assumes Creative Writing is learnt through a re-defining of (writer) self and of Creative Writing Studies, by establishing a relation to a frame of thinking drawn from political theories or psychodynamic theories. Brophy (1998, p.32) has pointed out that 'this recent annexing of the creative function to a widening range of discourses seems to breathe a paradoxical life back into the author as creative origin' indicating the

inherent shift that happens with engaging with Theory in Creative Writing. The articulation and construction of ideologies of Creative Writing, arising from political and psychodynamic theories, include literary criticism devices brought to bear on the processes of writing to indicate learning through discussion and/or re-writing.

There are two subgroups in this strand of literature: a group which constructs the pedagogy of Creative Writing in relation to political theories or ideologies, assuming a shift in self and/or writing, and a group which argues for and researches the therapeutic potential of Creative Writing.

2.4.1. Political conceptions: shift through engagement with theory and practice

Political conceptions of Creative Writing practice constitute one sub-group in the strand of Creative Writing's relation to the development of self. I call them "political" because of their interest with questioning the *status quo* of Creative Writing. There are two categories in this subgroup: interdisciplinary conceptions, using resources from Theory to engage with Creative Writing, and hybrid conceptions, using other disciplines and theories in conjunction with Creative Writing practice.

2.4.1. a) Interdisciplinary conceptions

Interdisciplinary conceptions of Creative Writing propose that learning to be a creative writer is produced out of a shift of writer self, arising from questioning how one "chooses" to write, sometimes challenging literary conventions. The basis of these discussions of literary conventions brings the issue of learning Creative Writing through writing closer to its source, (e.g. meaning-making conventions which operate in the writing), and the tracing of the shifts is argued on a macro-level in the texts written, (i.e. a writer changes genre of writing because of a shift in understanding what writing represents for them).

The shift, that produces learning, has been conceptualized in terms of adjustments made to one's authority in the Creative Writing classroom, enabling students to think differently about their writer self. For example, Ostrom (2012), whilst recognizing the importance of craft-based pedagogy, departs from Foucault's

theory about the space located among 'power, self and knowledge' (p. 81), reporting the case of a student, who was encouraged to write about stories arising from her upbringing after discussing them in class. She was no longer just the 'vampire stories girl' in class, but wrote in a different genre more effectively (ibid, p.83). What is 'effective' writing is not spelled out in this case. Haake (2012, p.133) suggests that looking at different theorists (Barthes, Derrida, Lacan, Foucault) and 'feminist principles' can help construct our own poetics and understanding of writing. She recommends using the concept of the element of surprise or wonder to structure classes (2005), or particular theories to create a hybrid classroom, based on 'topics that challenge student ideas about what literature is and can do' (2010, p.187). On a similar wavelength, Cain (2010, p.222) has argued that there is a dominant discourse in the Creative Writing workshop which is about 'what works and what does not work.' She thinks that going beyond these questions, 'enquiring about the spaces of writing' (p.218) helps students think about writer's identity as a 'revising and re-visioning writer,' yet at the same time with a deconstructive stance, so as not to become 'too socially adapted' (ibid p. 224). For instance, she uses a theory of spatiality to explore what 'radical openness' might mean in the context of writing influenced by the theory of Edward Soja (1996 in Cain 2010). She suggests that the embracing of an observation of an Otherness or excess in her students' texts can help students further their understanding of social identifications. She identifies Otherness, however, in her examples of students' texts as that which is not supposed to appear and which produces an imbalance in the composition of a text. Questioning formalist or humanistic practices of learning writing, Smith (2005; 2006a,b) has proposed the use of algorithms for experimental manipulations of writing linked with post-human conceptions of a writer. For example, she provides exercises playing mechanically with the linearity or variations in the syntax of a poem in her book 'The Writing Experiment' (2005). Linking psychoanalysis with writing, Brophy's account of Lacan and his relationship to writing and the surrealist movement is a thought-provoking narrative of the shared elements between the practice of Lacanian psychoanalysis and the art of writing *surrealistically* (1998; 2006 about Freud; 2009 about consciousness in writing). All of the above authors suggest

ways in which Creative Writing teaching might support students to challenge or subvert conventions in the constitution of their own writer identity.

Hecq is a major proponent in the field of Creative Writing Studies and its connection to psychoanalysis, also assuming a shift in the learning of Creative Writing. Positioning herself in the debate about using 'Theory' in the teaching of Creative Writing, Hecq (2013) has argued that Lacanian psychoanalysis is suitable for the practice and the pedagogy of Creative Writing (and simultaneously explores Lacanian theory itself *through* writing) as its theoretical basis is such that never privileges any *one* theory, arising from its clinical origin of continuous expansion through clinical material in analysis sessions (2013, p.175-200). She has also argued that we have been taught 'linearity and coherence' (2005, online no pages) from histories of 'modern poetry' (ibid) and that writing has the power to allow us to investigate the assumptions behind the *status quo* of Literature in combination with what exists 'outside the text' (Hecq, 2005, online no pages), considering writing and reading as integral with each other (2010, 2013). Thus, she uses psychoanalytic concepts as a tool to inspire writing (e.g. speed-writing, free-association exercises, and psychoanalytic concepts used as inspiration-to-write [2013]) and as a teacher stance to facilitate the teaching of Creative Writing (i.e. adopting a subject-not-supposed- to-know' stance towards her students (2009, 2013) supporting an *ethical* pedagogy. This pedagogy allows self-awareness of both student and teacher to inform their interaction and what is being learnt (Hecq 2009). Hecq (2013, p.188) also argues that this kind of pedagogy, 'immersion in theory,' 'speed-writing,' 'free-association' exercises, changes the students' style of writing.

To summarize, through the use of different political theoretical perspectives, this group in the literature identifies a necessary relation with theory for learning Creative Writing. This engagement produces a shift traced up to this point on a macro-level. The specificity of the change in the students' texts or reactions to how they write has not yet been described.

2.4.1 b) Hybrid conceptions

Institutionally, a strand in the literature describes Creative Writing as coupled with the study of other creative and even scientific disciplines. This strand does not directly assume a shift of self, but it implies a shift of writer identity through its enmeshing with other disciplines. Donnelly (2013, p.5), explains that this hybridization constitutes a re-negotiation of 'spaces of Creative Writing, its boundaries, and its power.' She notes the 'crossover possibilities' (ibid, p.9). For example, the incorporation of technological literacy skills (e.g. literary hypertext, digital narratives) or other prompts from cultural and creative industries, such as visual arts (Leahy et al 2014) or dance (Perry 2007, Midgelow 2013), along with multi-lingual literary criticism theory, experimenting with multiple languages in Creative Writing are all pairings presented as windows to creative practice (Donnelly 2013, p.9). Referring to the new relation of writing online and social interactivity, Swiss and Damon (2006, p. 68-9) claim that the 'internet, with its strong horizontality and generatively rhizomatic qualities' lends itself to another conception of writing as 'output,' enabling a 'breakdown of authorial investment in 'Creative Writing's systems of discipline and reward: print publications'[16]. Donnelly (2013, p.9) concludes that the combination of Creative Writing with other disciplines engenders a 'both-and mentality' that encourages border-crossing and cultural exchanges.

Moreover, Creative Writing practice and pedagogy have been progressively organized in institutions through participations in 'community outreach programs' (ibid, p.17). This has added a more practical aspect to students' engagement with Creative Writing, moving its pedagogies beyond discussions about what a text might mean socially, towards actualizations of the meanings of writing in the community.

In summary, the political interdisciplinary and hybrid conceptions of Creative Writing place emphasis on an active engagement with the practice of writing, resulting in the learning produced out of a shift in the definition of writer-self and Creative Writing itself. These multiple orientations and collaborations are moving Creative Writing towards what Woods (2006, p. 133) describes as a discipline of

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[16] The authors also recognize that this is a 'murky utopia' as 'radical' becomes mainstream also in online communities through recognition (ibid).

Writing which has a focused orientation to 'communication cultures/ textual cultures in which ethics, aesthetics and ecology frame the scholarly and pedagogical activity.' Such emerging conceptions of writing branching out to previously un-thought of partnerships begin to articulate a need for Creative Writing to be more than Literature, or for an ideology of aesthetics and creativity and thus of particular politics to spread beyond strictly artistic practices.

2.4.2 Therapeutic conceptions of Creative Writing

Another sub-group in the strand about the relation of Creative Writing and the self assumes that Creative Writing must engage a negotiation of the conflicts of the psyche through Creative Writing. 'The psyche' is understood by this group as an internal essence operating through balancing different ego conflicts. This engagement is said to have therapeutic potential, allowing for a discharge of emotion or experience, which brings about healing of past experiences via their reworking. This shift is traced through accounts of students about what they wrote, or interpretations of their writing using literary criticism resources to bear, thus employing a theory of reading as well. Moreover, in some cases a relation to canonical (not literary) theoretical texts relating to the development of self is considered necessary (e.g. readings on psychodynamic, cultural, neuroscientific understandings of subjectivity, Hunt 2013, p.3). Therefore, a particular interpretation of their writing is implicitly encouraged, influenced by these texts.

Harris' (2003) general argument is useful in suggesting that writing can be a means of self-exploration as well as self-expression (2003, p.197). She interprets the act of writing as a process of revision of the self, and reviews Bracher's (1999) and Berman's (1996) theories of using Lacanian theory in writing instruction to further her argument about the benefits of applying such a theory to Creative Writing instruction also. Though Bracher's argument (1999) that students' writing contains their intra-psychic conflict and the students' way of writing might represent blockages or articulations of desire is very useful, Harris' interpretive approach is largely literary. Her approach to applying a Lacanian interpretation is overly confident and more emancipatory than my reading of Lacan. For instance, she "reads" – interprets one of her students' texts suggesting that this student's

'memory of a painful absence of her father' (ibid, p.211) is being worked through in the poem she has written with direct reference to this absence. Harris (2003, p.211) explains:

> Thus, she must work the poem, as one works a machine that simulates one's action, to restore him through the subtending image:
> > "Six years old when the picture was snapped
> > Tiny, tanned arms and legs wrapped
> > Around my dad"

Harris' (2003, p.208-214) interpretive strategies assume that the aesthetic symbols used by writers in their writing provide direct access to their unconscious conflicts and resolutions. In contrast to her approach, the analysis chapters in this thesis do not relate the participants' psychic traumas to the composition of their writing, and do not assume there is a direct connection of the substantive content of their stories with the author's lives and shifts of subjectivity.

Creative life writing has been used as a method for transformative learning. Creative life writing, as the name might reveal, is Creative Writing done whereby the writer-student draws from their autobiographical experiences as material for stories. For example, Hunt (2013) has uniquely explored transformative change drawing from empirical research through the Creative Writing for Personal Development (CWPD) MA Program she ran for four years in the UK. She argues that a shift 'towards a more spontaneous and bodily self-experience brings new and more authentic conceptualizations of [students] of themselves as learners and writers' (ibid, p.16). In her psychosocial research project, she used creative life writing exercises, collaborative experiential groups and reflective writing with the use of theoretical texts about the self to engage with the conceptions of the students' psyche. She maintains that a shift between thinking and feeling mode is required in order to become a creative writer. This shift was traced in the different attitudes towards writing that were expressed by the students in their interviews before, during and after their engagements with this course.

In this sub-group, the focus is on (transformative) personal change, not on "Creative Writing" as an end-goal. *Holding up* this approach, is a theory of reading

the poetics of a text assuming that via 'knowing/discovering oneself' (however that is theorized or articulated), one may access creativity. Even though their analysis refers to autobiographical writing, all of these authors have begun, in my view, to articulate a *repression* at large about learning: its regulation by *emotion.*

Political and therapeutic conceptions of Creative Writing contain a modernized Romantic notion of a writer, focusing on a redefined self-expression and interaction with the 'nature' of writing, in a move away from the *status quo* of Creative Writing's literary conventions back to the "nature" of the writer's interactive idiosyncrasy, an idiosyncrasy that is rapidly and continuously reformulated today from moment to moment.

2.5 Creative Writing as Research

A field's research nowadays, more than ever, constitutes its *raison d'être* in the academy and society, foregrounding and continuously said to be expanding its knowledge base. Creative Writing's relation to research has been conceptualized and explored through three perspectives/purposes: a) practice-based b) charting the trends and practices of Creative Writing and c) qualitative research about Creative Writing conceptions or pedagogies. In the first category, Creative Writing constitutes both the object and the methodology for research, whereas in the last two, Creative Writing is the object of research and research methodologies from other disciplines are used to generate and analyze the data.

2.5.1 Creative Writing as object and methodology of research

Creative Writing has been posited as an inherent methodology and object for Creative Writing research. On a basic level, Creative Writing research has been said to involve research that is done in order to gather information which helps write a piece of Creative Writing. Rein (2011, p. 96-102) explains that research for Creative Writing can be experiential and traditional. He defines 'experiential' as the act of a writer going somewhere to learn more about the place or the experience she will write about, whereas 'traditional' is bibliographic, finding more information about one's subject in one's piece of writing. Another example of the notion of Creative

Writing as research is 'fictocriticism.' Gibbs (2006, p.131), for instance, argues that fictocriticism is writing that has no blueprint and it represents/is the process as research, not an outcome, a textual intervention.

Creative Writing has also been frequently posited as a process that intrinsically always creates something new. For instance, Harper (2013, p.107-8) argues that:

> …while Creative Writing might not always be investigating current public knowledge or not be producing new public knowledge it is always producing some form of personal, and situational human knowledge, which an individual writer possesses and seeks to possess, sometimes challenges, maybe sometimes laments in its absence and sometimes celebrates.

This understanding of Creative Writing knowledge expands its conception as an artistic practice to a research practice, as well a methodology. This is exemplified by the recent publication of *Research Methods in Creative Writing,* which deals mainly with 'Creative Writing' as a methodology for exploring itself and other practices too. PhDs in Creative Writing, a relatively recent degree addition in higher education are the ultimate use of Creative Writing as methodology to further the knowledge of Creative Writing practice and research.

2.5.2 Creative Writing as an object of research

2.5.2 a) Charting of trends

Creative Writing research has also been concerned with charting trends, uses of practices, teachers and students profiles generated by surveys and questionnaires. This group has collected data in the form of interviews, questionnaires and surveys, which have been analyzed statistically and thematically. For example, Donnelly (2010) has surveyed the workshop's functions using questionnaires asking Creative Writing practitioners across the US a number of questions about their use of the workshop. May (2012, p. 69) reports on his research project, for instance, that from his own institution the surveys suggest that '35-40 percent of those doing Creative Writing want to be professional writers.' This type of research acts as a semi-quantitative informational base for Creative Writing maps of knowledge practice and organization.

2.5.2 b) Qualitative research about conceptions and pedagogies

Finally, research about Creative Writing, utilizing other research methodologies (e.g. social, linguistic frames) than Creative Writing itself, has focused to a large extent on eliciting conceptions of Creative Writing and writer identities. The main data in these studies has been interview transcripts, *narrative* accounts of writers' practices. The analysis has been mostly thematic that is, identifying common themes across the data and categorizing them either in the form of typologies, metaphors, or core meta-themes (in physical settings of Creative Writing) (e.g. Light 1995; MacRobert 2013; Sarrimo 2010; Ben-Shir 2007, 2009; Magee 2009). I have not included Hunt's (2013) research in this particular strand about Creative Writing research, as its main research purpose seems to be aligned with transformative learning of self, rather than of Creative Writing.

There is a small amount of qualitative research underlining the significant aspect of students' experiences in relation to their learning in Creative Writing. Light (1995) in his doctoral research, investigated undergraduate Creative Writing students' conceptions of Creative Writing in three UK higher education institutions through conducting 40 in-depth, semi-structured interviews[17]. His doctoral thesis is wide-ranging in its focus both in terms of outlining previous literature, philosophical perspectives and data description and analysis, and is an attempt to provide an all-encompassing learning theory about Creative Writing. I will only touch upon some aspects here. He argues that his research provides:

> an 'inter-subjective' paradigm situated and grounded in the students' active, socio-cultural understanding, experience and practice of writing. […] [throwing] light on learning theory in general.[…] It has furthermore important socio-cultural implications […] for concepts like 'creative,' 'literary' […] products of influential, but socially constructed authority discourses[…] and learning conflicts [resulting] […] [from these cultural conditions] (1995, p. 43-44).

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[17] In his thesis, he provides a rationale for not examining the conceptions of students with their texts/compositions, as he considers that these texts/compositions cannot be considered through the 'criteria' of conceptions generated in the inter-subjective space of the research interviews (Light, 1995, Chapter 5)

Light brings attention to factors arising from students' conceptions of Creative Writing both linked to their own socio-cultural background, but also to their understanding of what 'literary authority,' the rules and regulations mean. To do this, six typologies of learning Creative Writing processes were derived from the data and compared with current models of learning. For example, the analysis of the students' accounts of composing writing produced three categories to describe the activities of Creative Writing; according to Light's interpretation of the data: the genesis of writing (i.e. why or how writers begin to write), the acts of writing (processes of writing i.e. re-writing), the social ground of writing (i.e. feedback). Light argues that these three categories make up the 'compositional core' of writing, being parts of the 'Anatomy of Writing,' which he invented in his thesis (ibid, Chapter 7- The Vocabulary and Anatomy of Creative Writing). These six typologies were 'differing conceptions of student understanding and practice of Creative Writing' and were described as similar to learning styles in other more 'traditional disciplines' in higher education. For instance, he also distinguished from students' interviews between 'transcribing' and 'composing' conceptions of writing, and concluded these are similar to the 'non-reflective' and 'reflective' learning responses in Jarvis' (1987) theory of adult and experiential learning (ibid, p.284-5).

A few studies have explored writer identities through the use of interviews with writers. Some focus on writer students and teachers, and some exclusively focus on published writers' identities and processes. Sarrimo (2010) has researched students' and teachers' perspectives on Creative Writing in a higher education institution in Sweden. The theoretical underpinning of the group interviews she constructed was based on a Habermasian theoretical model of communication assuming that the act of creation is strongly 'communicative and inter-subjective' (ibid, p.186). She conducted two group interviews repeated nine times, one with two students, *and* one with three teachers and two students over the course of two years. Her analysis was oriented on the metaphors of 'inner' and 'outer' spaces of writing drawing from the substantive content of what the students and teachers talked about in their group interviews.

Sarrimo (2010) refers to Ben-Shir's research (2007) as contributing to research about conceptions of writer identity. Ben-Shir's (2007, 2008) exploratory

phenomenological study investigated well-known published Israeli writers' conceptions of their writer identities. She conducted 16 open in–depth interviews. With a phenomenological-interpretative approach, the study used a personal history methodology, attempting to extrapolate 'tacit knowledge' from the participants' narrated experiences (ibid, p.22). The method of analysis focused on 'recurring patterns' (ibid, p.23) and resulted in the identification of two meta-themes: narratives of self-creation and of self-discovery. Ben-Shir (2008) has discussed the theme of 'self-discovery' as involving a notion of going beyond oneself in parallel operation with the theme of 'self-creation' which presents narratives of writers 'consciously' choosing ways in which they practice their art. She concludes that this intense tension between these two thematic narratives is formative of the experience of being a writer. MacRobert (2013) conducted a similar research design and content analysis with successful novelists in South Africa.

Magee (2008) interviewed Australian poets to find out more about their knowledge processes in their writing. He reported that the common element of all the poets he has interviewed is that their writing process at the start is sometimes too fast to think through all of the aesthetic choices consciously as they are writing. Based on this information from the study, Magee (2008, online no pages) drew analogies mainly from neurology and initiated connections with psychoanalysis. More specifically, he has speculated an analogy between the neurologically described process of pre-conscious thinking and the accounts of the poets' experience of when they first begin to compose. Magee (ibid) also concluded with some suggested connections drawn from Lacan's theory about desire and affect in speech. He briefly mentions Lacan's theorization that language might be thought of as a 'veneer,' and Magee wonders what the difference might be between that of a poetic utterance, however, and any utterance if language colours everything anyway?

There is also a slowly emergent strand beginning to look at online settings/deliveries of Creative Writing in higher education. Andrew and Arnold (2011, online no pages) have reported on their research conducted through 'autoethnography and subjective narrative enquiry' discussing their insights on the teaching of an online Writing MA of Swinburne University of Technology, drawing on

a study of free-flow reflection of nine tutors teaching this course on the themes of collaboration and community. Their main research question was not about conceptions of Creative Writing *per se*; they wanted to research the 'quality [of] online programs and consider what theoretical structures inform them and their pedagogies' (ibid) in conjunction with the concept of online communities in general affecting Creative Writing teaching and the identities of the students (ibid).

All of the above writers/researchers have been interested in narrative accounts of writers' practices. The only research that has analyzed student-writers' actual texts is in the field of linguistics, investigating second-language speakers studying Creative Writing. I have not included Harris (2003) and Hunt (2013) in this section, who, indeed, have analyzed students' texts, as their analysis is not concerned with the learning of the students' in terms of Creative Writing *per se*, but with a transformation of self, which occurs through engagement with Creative Writing courses. Yan (2011) in her PhD thesis explored the relation between second language learner-students' autobiographical narratives and their written material from a linguistic perspective. The data generation consisted of two phases: a) through life-history accounts from in-depth interviews with 15 L2 (second-language learners) Creative Writing students, b) two think-aloud story-writing sessions in order to capture the emergent writer identities 'instantiated in their cognitive writing processes' (Yan 2011). Through quantitative data coding of all 15 participants and qualitative discussions of five participants, Yan concluded that there is an inter-connectedness between the engagement of participants in the writing and the range of discourses they are engaged in their social worlds. She suggests that second language learners do not pick Creative Writing only for literacy or language acquisition purposes but also as a 'self-empowering tool for social positioning' (2011, abstract).

All of the above research has opened up a space for understanding the act of writing through: a) the lens of Creative Writing productions using Creative Writing as methodology, b) a map of practices and trends providing an informational base for Creative Writing practitioners and students, and c) the use of other research methodologies constructing new knowledge connections about Creative Writing.

2.6 Conclusion

To conclude, in this chapter, my aim has been to provide an overview of the main conceptions of Creative Writing in relation to key debates in the field. On the one hand, Creative Writing has deep-rooted affiliations to Literature and literary canonical texts, thus orienting itself in terms of literary criticism and theories of reading to varying degrees. On the other hand, Creative Writing has emerged as an active engagement with cultural and social interests beyond literary criticism. Thus, its engagement with Theory, has rendered its conceptions political, due to such theorizations effecting a simultaneous shift both in the writer(-student) self and more widely in Creative Writing studies connections. These political conceptions communicate both a very individual and collective need for the writer to express herself and transgress the *status quo*, sharing partial agendas with theories of Literature, such as Romanticism, and New Criticism and moving beyond being defined by them. The therapeutic strand in this literature indirectly begins to hint at the regulatory role of emotion in learning, which has been an educational repression at large, and a contradictory practice in the teaching of Creative Writing; it is the very presence of "emotion" and its production of conflict that begins any sentence, and leaves incomplete any type of writing. Finally, thinking through Creative Writing as both the object and the methodology of research opens up new angles for exploring how writing is taught through what it "does" in praxis.

The research interest of this thesis draws from all three strands in the literature. I seek to explore Creative Writing exercises in Creative Writing pedagogy as learning through writing. Secondly, I wish to trace the shift, if there is any shift at all, necessitated in the learning of Creative Writing in students' texts on a micro-level looking at the specificity of the change combined with their narratives of practice. Thirdly, I hope to contribute to a psychosocial conception of the knowledge and practice of Creative Writing, providing new insight into the operation of affect within the practice of (learning) writing.

Key to this exploration has been my choice of methodological orientation, a Lacanian psychoanalytic researcher stance. Next, I go on to link the field of Creative Writing studies with the research focus of Psychosocial Studies and then review the

ways in which psychoanalysis has been used in psychosocial studies for data generation and analysis.

-borderspace

Ettinger (2002) uses the term 'matrixial borderspace' to symbolize the originary space of our existence: the womb, which she calls a corpo-reality. The conceiving of the link between Creative Writing and psychosocial methodologies, that I initiate, I am initiating, will be initiating here, has created my thesis.

Creative Writing denotes the practice of Creative Writing, the producing of works of Literature and also the (not published) Creative Writing texts by students created within writing programs in higher education. It might be thought of as a discursive practice that is based on the production of symbolic associations, which, in part, enact conceptions of an aesthetic. I think this aesthetic is constituted by psychosocial factors, because it emerges from the writer and influences the writer, with and without the writer's intention at the same time.

Creative Writing operates on the paradox of "Literature," a paradox because it is both a tradition and a progression, both a revelation and a repression. It is a shifting concept of (our) culture that is determined by the psychosocial amalgamations of the individual and society. Creative Writing, in this sense, is constituted by psychosocial amalgamations. Thus, the knowledge produced by Creative Writing pedagogies has a psychosocial aspect to it.

Pedagogy is linked with knowledge production. Researching about it is a social action that has a political dimension. Therefore, considering that "Creative Writing teaching" is based on a specific shifting mode of hermeneutics, what "hermeneutics" could research beyond hermeneutics? What if theory was not called in to 'reinforce the interpretations of the (Creative Writing) researcher' (Clarke and Hogget 2009, p. 45). Psychosocial research, according to Clarke and Hogget (2009, p.47), might be 'defined as triple hermeneutics,' since it aims for an interpretation of both those in the field of study and the frame of interaction with the researcher. Another question that arises is what "psychosocial" methodology might be "appropriate" to explore this "writing" aspect of the teaching of Creative Writing? To indicate my choice of methodological orientation and exploration in researching the function of Creative Writing exercises, I move to the review of the use of psychoanalysis in psychosocial studies in the processes of data collection and analysis.

Chapter 3

The use of psychoanalysis in psychosocial studies

-the Thing[18]

This section reviews a specific niche in the field of psychosocial studies: literature about the use of psychoanalysis focusing on data generation and analysis. This literature is implicitly and at times explicitly concerned with how different types of psychosocial knowledge, linked with a conception of subjectivity, are produced in research. The particular conception of subjectivity determines the conception of psychosocial knowledge explored, generated, and analyzed in this type of research, which is constantly re-making the boundaries of the psychosocial terrain.

By reviewing this niche of literature, I point to the new questions my research poses, in order to explore a "new" psychosocial methodology, contributing to the field of psychosocial studies, via my research interest in Creative Writing pedagogies.

So, I begin with an explanation of the problematic that my research interest belongs to and explores: the uses of psychoanalysis in the research process. I then refer to the main theoretical debate transferred from psychoanalysis into psychosocial studies, present a broad definition of the field of psychosocial studies, and finally move to a review of three strands in this body of literature.

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[18] I use the heading '*The Thing*' for three reasons. First, I use it metaphorically here to indicate that this section is pointing to a lack, which I hope to point to. Freud originally referred to "the Thing" in relation to the experience of the feeling of "uncanny" in his essay "The Uncanny" (Freud, 1995). Ettinger takes up this feeling of familiar/unfamiliar strangeness to discuss different ways (phallic/matrixial) of experiencing it in art. 'The Thing' is that which may be invoked through art, a belonging and a separateness together and apart, inducing in us the feeling of 'uncanny' – a sense of overwhelming helplessness. I also allude to what Ettinger calls 'the Thing' which is the mode of relating/unrelation of pre-symbolic existence. This mode of relating is an alternative mode of thinking about "literature reviews" too. This is also a feeling I have experienced in creating this review. I explored this feeling through Ettinger's concept of differentiating borderlinking (broadly defined in Ettinger's work as representing the simultaneous ways in which the baby and the mother both relate to each and marginally differentiate themselves – being together and apart (2006)).

3.1 -relations-without relating[19]

The relationship between psychoanalysis and psychosocial studies is complicated with regards the processes of data analysis and data generation. This is a live issue, but it is possible to trace three strands in the literature: first, the use of psychoanalytic concepts in the process of data analysis; second, the use of psychosocial methods, which do not attempt to mimic psychoanalysis in any consistent way in the process of data generation and data analysis; and third, a strand which explores the adoption of explicitly psychoanalytically derived approaches in the process of data collection and analysis. The methodological exploration of this thesis belongs to the third emerging strand, but has obviously drawn resources also from the first two strands.

These three strands in the literature construct different conceptions of what it means to translate psychoanalytic concepts from the position of the psychoanalyst into the research process, either in data generation or data analysis or both. This translation is not unproblematic, as concepts are not reified entities but are transformed when transferred to other contexts (Lapping 2011, p.6-7). The specific constructed position of the analyst and specific analytic resources that are drawn from this position are dependent on the conception of the subject (referring to both the research subject and the researcher subject).

One theoretical distinction that traverses all three strands is the manner in which they conceptualize the relationship between affect and language in terms of tracing the "unconscious," which is essentially the key element brought into psychosocial research with the use of psychoanalysis (Frosh 2010, p.2). The "unconscious," generally, is the inaccessible psychic material or aspect of subjectivity that is being "worked with" in analysis in the clinic. It is the common key element in the conception of the subject in psychoanalysis in all psychoanalytic theory schools. The different ways that it is accounted for also relate to conceptions of language and affect, and the psychic operations that are derived from it, which are then said to be

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[19] Marginally, through these footnotes, I wish to attempt to visually embody the *severality* (plethora) of references going on, that I have excluded on the one hand, and included via Ettinger's (2006) vocabulary, an ironic appearance and disappearance of symbolic and *several* references.

manifest or explored or constructed in the research process (Lapping, 2011, p.2-3). This is also a complex and ongoing discussion in the field. I will attempt to sketch its outline, in order to provide a theoretical backdrop to the uses of psychoanalysis in the three strands presented below and to draw out some key differences between two main psychoanalytic theories.

3.1.1 The issue of the relationship between affect and language and psychoanalytic schools

Psychoanalysis in the clinic operates on the principle of a relation between the analyst and the analysand. Frosh (2010, p.3) describes psychoanalysis as a 'kind of microscopic examination of patterns of speech enacted in a relationship of often long duration […] and hence of considerable depth.' This relationship is a transaction which allows for the development or production of a listening awareness on the side of the analyst and the analysand; in other words, a mode of attending to one's own reflections and narrative about oneself on the part of the analysand.

Psychoanalysis, however, is not *one* theory exactly. Different directions have been taken since the time of Freud. It is accepted, in the British context at least, that psychoanalysis in social research has originated from two particularly distinct schools of psychoanalysis: the Kleinian/object-relations and the Lacanian (Glynos 2010; Frosh 2008, 2010; Lapping 2011). These two approaches appear on spectra and there are variations within each field.

Arising from the key difference of these two psychoanalytic schools about the definition and use of interpretation in the clinic, one of the main debates, in the psychosocial studies field is about the nature of the analytic relationship traced to the use of transference and countertransference (for a more analytical exposition see Lapping 2011). Lapping (2011, p.3) explains that transference might be defined as the manner in which emotions, patterns of interaction, themes 'signifiers or discursive categories' become repeated in the present. In the context of this research, for instance, I look at repeated emergent *master signifiers*, simply defined here as repeated words or phrases, which construct the inherent assumptions in the making of meaning for my participants' discourses of writing (spoken and written). 'Counter-transference is the term used to refer to emotions invoked in the analyst or

other person arising from the patient or subject's transference/ behavior towards them' (ibid, p. 3). In using a Lacanian approach, I did not *trust* and use my emotional reactions to my participants' responses to construct my interpretations. [I explain my exploration of a Lacanian stance in chapter 5 on methodology].

In a clinical context, depending on the orientation of the psychoanalytic school, the mode of attending to what is said by the analysand on the part of the analyst is based on a specific understanding-inducing of transference and countertransference and is used accordingly for interpretation. Free-association, is one of the techniques used for the eliciting of transference (ibid, p.4). Lapping (ibid, p.4) explains that free-association is a psychoanalytic technique whereby the analyst is asking the patient to speak as ideas come to mind without censorship, which is arguably difficult, as it depends on how the analyst is perceived. She suggests that a distinct space is created by the analyst, in order to bring out the transference and work on it in all approaches. Nonetheless, there are contrasting ways in which different features are emphasized to create this space (ibid, p.4).

Lapping (2011, p.4) explains that different techniques are used depending on the 'epistemological status of language and affect.' In Lacanian theory, the psychoanalyst must operate as a 'pure function' (ibid, p.5) putting aside her own affective reactions to the speech of the analysand and focusing only on the 'linguistic or symbolic aspects of the interaction with the analysand' (ibid, p.5). This particular stance begins to produce transference as the analysand begins to understand that they are not judged as they would expect (ibid, p.5) and thus their inherent assumptions about themselves begin to unravel. This relates to the particular Lacanian conception of the subject in relation to language and desire. This conception is explained analytically in chapter 4 of this thesis.

There are other ways in which the free-association of the analysand is facilitated (Lapping, 2011, p.5). Interpretations are often offered in 'the Kleinian way of listening' (ibid, p.5) because it is assumed that the analysand might interpret the analyst's silences wrongly (ibid, p.5). Additionally, the analyst uses their affective responses to the analysand as countertransference to provide interpretations to the analysand about themselves (ibid, p.5). This is one of the points of debate between these two distinct approaches, as pointed out earlier. The possibility of knowing the

Other is radically 'suspect' (ibid, p5) in Lacanian theory, whereas in object-relations, while this possibility needs to be treated with care, it is considered possible, yet requiring the subtle training and expertise to enable this to happen. This is a simplified account of some of the main differences between psychoanalytic schools in terms of how they construct the relationship between analysand and analyst in the clinic.

In summary, Frosh (2010) and Lapping (2011) have both pointed out that psychosocial approaches inspired from Kleinian or object-relations psychoanalytic theory embrace the use of countertransference, whereas those who use aspects of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory in psychosocial studies "reject" countertransference in its application to the researcher–researched relationship as a fantasy produced within the analytic setting. On a reductive note, the former theory considers the emotions of the analyst, and thus of the researcher, useful for the process of data generation and analysis. This is reflected in the second strand of the literature using psychoanalytic concepts for data collection and analysis (apart from the research with reflective writing). The latter theory adopts a position of analyst, which considers the emotions of the analyst potentially dangerous or suspect if afforded inappropriate weight in the interpretation of social data. This latter approach is reflected in the first strand of the literature, using psychoanalysis for textual analysis and explored in the latter strand of the literature, researching the use of psychoanalysis methodologically in the research process. In this sense, the first two strands employ psychoanalysis as a lens, whereas in the latter strand psychoanalysis is employed both as lens but also as an object of research.

In relation to conducting research, in psychosocial studies, Frosh (2010, p.209-16) explains that the issue of transference and countertransference, has been positioned within the larger context of 'reflexivity' in social science research practice. Different uses of the researcher's emotions posit different conceptions of reflexivity, and affect the processes of data generation and analysis correspondingly. Blackman et al (2007) write that considering the relatively recent reflexive turn, challenging the notion of 'objectivity' in qualitative work in social sciences, the presence of the researcher is now considered part and parcel of a new objectivity in the research practice, exposing her research bias, background etc. In fact, at the center of this

debate might seem to be an issue of different attitudes to the uncovering psychosocial meaning (Frosh 2010, p.206). Alternatively, Lapping (2011, p.2-5) traces this issue as different conceptualizations of whether or not affect is directly accessible via language both in processes of data generation and analysis. This review is concerned with presenting conceptions of purpose of the use of psychoanalysis in psychosocial studies in terms of its relation to the processes of data collection and analysis. I point to these different attitudes to knowledge-productions of the psychosocial, and therefore gradually draw from these to construct my own knowledge-production stance in this research.

3.1.2 Psychosocial Studies: definition and context

Psychosocial studies, referred to here, is a distinct field from the field which employs the term 'psychosocial' to refer to the addition of layers of analysis in a research structure and dealing with 'social adjustment or interpersonal relations' (Frosh 2010, p.195). Rustin (2008) explains that the development of psychosocial studies, referred to here, arose as a field of studies from a concern to create 'an educational and academic' space where the 'psychological and the sociological' might work together as a critical approach that engages and articulates elements of the human subject, which were considered separate (quoted in Frosh 2010, p.195). Frosh (2010) has argued that psychosocial studies are concerned with researching both the subject's social formation and his/her relation to 'agency and internality' (p.195).

The origins of Psychosocial studies have been traced in psychoanalysis, sociology, applied social studies and social work, critical social psychology, poststructuralist theory, social constructionism, queer theory and feminist social research (e.g. discussed in Frosh 2010 and Clarke and Hogget 2009). Frosh (2010) and Parker (2010), from the field of psychology, have significantly contributed to the strand of psychosocial studies. Clarke and Hogget (2009) have elaborated on strands of psychosocial studies traced to sociology, whilst Lapping (2011) has also pointed out the psychosocial strands arising from the interest of the field of psychoanalysis in social practices.

Frosh (2010, p.194) has suggested that psychosocial studies have a 'trans-disciplinary' lens as they negotiate, conceptualize and disturb the boundaries and the overlaps constructed in terms of inner and outer realities, depending on its conceptualization of the unconscious. Hollway and Jefferson (2000), Frosh (2010) and Lapping (2011) have all argued that the overarching characteristic of psychoanalytic psychosocial approaches is the recognition that there is an unconscious. This means that the human subject is understood as not totally rational, but as having unconscious motivations, which are not always known to him or her as such.

As pointed out earlier, the conception of the unconscious and the ways in which it is invoked, produced or analyzed in the clinic, is the point of difference in the various psychoanalytic schools (different uses of transference and countertransference), and thus, in the various psychoanalytic psychosocial approaches, transferred onto various stages of the research.

Next, I go on to map the three different strands in the literature where the relationship between data analysis and data generation has been conceptualized depending on a particular adoption of the position of the analyst, reflective also of the various psychoanalytically derived influences from the schools of Lacanian or object-relations, and thus of the conception of the subject psychically. This adoption of the position of the analyst is shaped by how the research subject is conceived in the process of research in each strand, as I pointed out earlier. From a point of view of hermeneutics (conditions upon which interpretation is constructed), all three strands adopt different ways in which a particular kind of hermeneutics is advanced. The first is concerned with challenging the provision of holistic interpretations of the subject, the second with unearthing hidden aspects of the subject drawn from the relation between researcher and researched, in some cases focusing on affects, whereas the third is interested in exploring the hermeneutics in themselves as potentially transforming our knowledge about research and psychoanalytic practice itself when practiced.

3.2 Psychoanalysis applied onto data analysis

Much work uses psychoanalytic concepts to analyze textual data. A strand in the literature about the use of psychoanalysis in psychosocial studies takes an interest in ways in which the position of the analyst might be produced in the process of textual analysis. The 'unconscious' in this approach, transferred from tracing it from analysand's speech to text, is constructed out of the *absences* in the text. The main goal of this group is to challenge the position that the hermeneutics of reading a text must construct a coherent and fixed interpretation, answering recent calls to 'disintegrate research' and 'disturb meaning' according to Saville-Young and Frosh (2010, p.515). Therefore, this strand assumes that psychoanalysis can be used as a critical method to trouble understandings of hermeneutics (ways in which interpretation is conducted) in social research.

This approach has emerged partially from a criticism directed towards psychosocial methods of data generation (e.g. a critique of Hollway & Jefferson's methods 2000 by Frosh 2008), which attempt to present a coherent story of the subject drawn from their discourse (presented in the next section). These critiqued approaches have been influenced by object-relations theory, which has an integrative orientation in terms of the function of the analyst's interpretations of the analysand's narrative in analysis. Briefly, in Lacanian psychoanalysis, the focus is on bringing attention to the fragmented nature of the analysand's discourse and coming to terms with such a relation to language (called in Lacanian theory: the '*Imaginary* nature of understanding' (Saville-Young& Frosh 2010, p. 515), whereas in Kleinian psychoanalysis, the focus is on providing a repairing and integrative narrative of the analysand's traumas (Frosh 2010).

In the emerging field of Psychosocial Studies, a major proponent is Parker. Drawing from the turn to language and the use of discourse-analysis in psychology, he has argued that an analysis of discourse can be an analysis of ideology, seeing 'discourse' as an 'organization of language,' constituting certain 'social bonds' (2005, p. 165). His work has initiated and is positioned in the newly emerging field of Lacanian Discourse Analysis (for a full exposition of this field see Parker and Pavón-Cuéllar 2014). Parker and Pavón-Cuéllar (2014) have recently argued that Lacanian Discourse Analysis is a way of interpreting or disrupting discourse, not limited to

empirical social research *per se* though discourse analysis is used in the social sciences as a method of analysis. They argue that the common interest of those who are involved in this domain is the 'Lacanian referent, and their interest in discourse or discourse analysis' (ibid, p. 1)[20].

Parker (2014, p.52) has advocated that the goal of Lacanian textual analysis is to show how the 'surface of a text – the text as a kind of Moebius strip' both reveals and conceals objects, subjects, and relationships between them (ibid, p.52). He bases this understanding of textual analysis on three principles from Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, proposing how the principles of the process of the analyst with the analysand's speech might be transferred to the principles of textual analysis and production of interpretations for social research data. For instance, transferring the notion of attending to the 'structuring effect of the signifier in the speech of the analysand' (Parker 2005, p.166) in the clinic, he explains that Lacanian Discourse analysis privileges 'form over content' (ibid, p.167), exploring the formal qualities of a text, the organization of signifiers (not their signified content) in it and pointing to places where meaning is disrupted, irreducible or non-sensical in the signifying relations of the structures in the discourse. Secondly, such an analysis takes into account ethical questions about the status of textual interpretations in academic practice, considering that in Lacanian theory every communication has an appeal to an Other, and thus there is no space of 'meta-language' (2005, p.168). Thirdly, Parker has pointed out that any psychoanalytic discourse analysis both reproduces and transforms the object of analysis, rather than finding something that is already there (p.178). Thus, the interpretation of a discourse analyst is more like an analysand's interpretation of signifiers in a text that are not their own (ibid, p.178).

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[20] They also position themselves in relation to discourse analysis perspectives in relation to ideology (Marx, Althusser, Pecheux, literary criticism (Jameson), archaeology (Foucault), deconstruction (Derrida), political theory (Laclau and Mouffe) and finally discursive analysis by the name of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough) (Parker and Pavón-Cuéllar 2014, p.1). The authors trace the employment of critical discourse analysis within the British critical psychology and its development as a form of 'critical discursive psychology' (Parker 2002 quoted in ibid, p. 3).

Overall, Parker (2005) has argued that a Lacanian textual analysis can disrupt notions of coherence of the psychosocial subject, allowing for the multiplicity of narratives in a text and constitutive of the emerging subject[21].

Taking a similar approach to Parker's, another major proponent in this field is Frosh, also coming from within the domain of psychology. Frosh highlights the difference between what happens in the clinic in analysis, and how psychoanalysis might be used outside of the clinic (2010). For instance, 'engaging in a largely uninterrupted flow of talk with an attentive listener,' (ibid, p.1) describing the condition of the transaction in the clinic, he argues, is not a common situation. His orientation towards using psychoanalysis outside the clinic in social research is aligned with the belief that psychoanalysis' main goal has been to unsettle social understandings (ibid, p.11-2).

Starting from a Lacanian position, he explains that providing an interpretation that is a coherent narrative of the research participants' data 'can be seen as a *defensive* process' (Frosh 2014, p.19). Narratives can be both 'emancipatory' and 'alienating' (Saville-Young & Frosh 2010, p.515). Transferring from the methods of the clinic, drawing from how interpretation takes place in that setting, Saville-Young and Frosh (2010) argue that the properly 'analytic' vector is that of 'de-translation and questioning of narrative structures and the ideas connected to them' rather than focusing on the 'reconstructive, synthesizing narrative vector' (ibid, 515). For example, in a study about brothers, they state that troubling the narrative is an ethical necessity (ibid).

Also, Saville-Young and Frosh (2010) consider the acknowledgment of fragmentation as central to the construction of the subject in proceeding with an analysis of interviews of middle class men about being a brother or 'doing' brothering. In their analysis, they propose concentric reflexive moves, each layer of analysis sharing the same axis in the text analyzed, drawn from the 'talk' in the interview, the text being itself an analytic unit. They begin with a reading of the text

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[21] This is because in Lacanian theory the subject is not conceived as unitary, but as fragmented, constantly attempting to evoke unity in enunciating his or her subjectivity in speech (Parker 2005).

that does not offer a logical or redemptive narrative of the incoherencies in the text. They ground their analysis in the narrative or linguistic moves of the text linked to each concentric layer of analysis. The first layer refers to the discursive positions taken up in talk or resisted with regards to masculinity. For example, they describe how 'Brett,' a participant who talks about his brothering experience, provides a narrative which both enacts and resists a hegemonic masculine position, moving from being a guy who got into fights, towards being more 'authentic' to himself, becoming punk. Another discussed layer is how the discourse of this transcribed talk might be representative of or repressive of theories of sibling relationships, for example talking about 'being seen or not seen by his brothers when he was 'punk,' and therefore how discursive positions are marked by 'Otherness,' defining it by the fact that one's discursive positions are formed by our relations with others (ibid, p.519). For instance, they point out that Brett's positioning of himself as the 'unconventional man' stands in the text alongside aspects of his brothering identity, that 'fragment' this very 'coherence' of being an unconventional man, e.g. being a loving caring brother in contrast to being 'horrible' and 'trying to be cool' (ibid, p. 526). Therefore, this approach challenges notions of research hermeneutics by not providing a fixed interpretation of their participants' narratives and allowing for the complexity of occupying synchronous ambiguous positions of subjectivity in one's speech. This is based on an understanding of the subject being enmeshed with her use of language, and, therefore, this not allowing for any space (outside language) to provide a 'final pronouncement' (ibid, p.515) on it (language).

Lacanian discourse analysis has also been described by Hook (2008) as looking at the 'libidinal economy of a discourse,' rather than of a subject's. Libido, in psychoanalytic theory, might be defined as the unspoken of or unconscious psychic excitement that is drawn from and pursued via our identifications and dis-identifications (Lapping 2011, p.27). Identifying the meaning-making nodal points of a text, which are called *master signifiers* in Lacanian theory, is key in this kind of data analysis. Hook (2014, p.224) explains that: 'unconscious desire is not deeply concealed within manifest contents' but that it is 'more on the surface,' consisting entirely of the signifier's mechanisms' (ibid, p.224). Hook explains this principle by looking at an example from a text drawn from the Apartheid Archive Project, an

ongoing research study collecting written 'narrative accounts from ordinary South Africans about their experiences of racism during apartheid' (ibid, p.228-9). Looking at the reference to 'animal,' a common repetition across these texts, and its relation to racism, Hook speculates about the link between the relationship the narrator of the text has with a chicken pet and with her black South African nanny (ibid). She was a servant at their house, with whom the author had a contradictory relationship, as she was both her maid and her nanny. The text written by the research participant indicates that the chicken's death and consumption by the family at the end of the story created the basis for the author's ideological attachment to vegetarianism. Hook (ibid, p. 231) speculates that there might be a metonymical link between the relationship to the chicken and the author's relationship with the black maid, who had died young, like the chicken. He writes that 'Phyllis, [the black maid], provides the imaginative basis for the narrator's story about herself' (ibid). He further explains that this could be a case of 'disguise-of-substitution' – a 'way of telling us something about Phyllis that cannot otherwise be admitted' (ibid, p. 231). Hook (ibid, p.231-2) acknowledges that this association of the pet and Phyllis, both owned and dying young, (and the author admitting not knowing about why Phyllis died, she never knew her story), might be a disturbing association, which also remains speculative, 'based on a provisional reading of the "unconscious" of the text.' All of the authors above have suggested using a Lacanian discourse analysis asking the same question about the use of "applied" psychoanalysis to social data: how might we use psychoanalysis in a manner that does not "pathologize" the subject when this is done outside the clinic? We might conclude that the use of Lacanian theory for textual analysis is concerned with the action or effect of interpretation and how interpretation itself can be a mode of repressing the fragmented "nature" of the subject in research.

On a final note, the data subjected to Lacanian textual analysis usually comes from focus groups, field notes, interviews, and written texts – processes of data generation that do not have an explicit Lacanian theoretical framework. For example, Saville-Young (2011, p.49), in her study about race in South Africa, describes herself as an active interviewer, paraphrasing and clarifying what participants said, and at times questioning their motives whilst also drawing from

her background as a therapist to 'hold' the participants in 'times of vulnerability' but also 'probing and questioning them' 'in moments of 'ego-strength.' Even though Saville-Young (2011) recognized in this study the ambivalent relationship of the subject to language from a Lacanian view, she did not adopt a Lacanian orientation in her approach as interviewer.

Thus, Lacanian textual analysis focuses on interpreting elements from the data which operate as nodal points to produce particular meanings. This focus is shaped by the Lacanian conception of the subject's relation to language. This analysis maps the relationship of the analyst-analysand to the data analysis process, not the data generation process. Lacan's theory emphasizes the impossibility of knowing the other (Lacan 2006, 793-827 numbering of lines in text, not pages). So, from a Lacanian perspective, writing about how the participant 'feels' might be considered as coming from one's *Imaginary* (an "individual" way of seeing the world "coloured" by one's traumas, experiences, one of the dimensions which make up our understanding of the world). This group of scholars with focus on Lacanian discourse analysis concentrates on the disruptive objective of Lacanian psychoanalysis in the clinic linking it with textual analysis in order to challenge the ideology of hermeneutics of a coherent research subject constructed out of data in psychosocial studies.

3.3 Psychoanalytic concepts used for data generation in psychosocial approaches

Within empirical psychosocial studies, there is also a range of suggested approaches to interview data, which do not attempt to mimic psychoanalysis in any consistent way. In this strand of literature, the interest is with using aspects from the relationship developed between analyst and analysand to expand methods of data generation and analysis. The "unconscious" in this approach is seen to be affecting the research participants' and the researcher's responses, assuming that unconscious threats to their identity are perceived in the context of the interview. In other words, this group of scholars (e.g. Hollway and Jefferson 2000; Clarke and Hoggett 2009) is interested in the unconscious communications within the research process – affecting and producing the research process – and the material produced

and analyzed out of it. This particular employment of psychoanalysis is concerned with uncovering hidden meanings latent in the relation between the researcher and the researched.

The 'Free Association Narrative Interview' (FANI) coined by Hollway and Jefferson (2000) is an interview method, which uses aspects of psychoanalytic theory as its basis. They are concerned with the kind of knowledge produced within the interview space, and how this knowledge might then be analysed. This "new" interview method is based on the conception that the subject is 'defended' and that interpretation of this subject can 'best be interpreted holistically' (Hollway and Jefferson 2008, p.15). This conception has been drawn from the psychoanalytic theory proposed by the object-relations school with major theoretical sources in Klein and Bion. Hollway and Jefferson (2000, p. 19) argue that 'the self is forged out of unconscious defenses against anxiety,' therefore the self is not transparent *to* the self, and language is a mediation of this psychic reality. The formation of defenses arises at the beginning of the baby's ego formation, when it is completely dependent at the start of its existence, experiencing extreme positive or negative emotion, when satiated or hungry respectively (ibid, p.19).

The development of the free-association interview by Hollway and Jefferson (2000) also has links to the biographical interpretative method (Rosenthal 1990). The main principle of this interpretative method is that there is a common gestalt, an individual meaning-frame for each interviewee. They link this gestalt with free-association and the eliciting of a person's concerns, therefore providing the unconscious frame or gestalt to the person's motivations (ibid). So, for instance, in their research about 'crime' and 'fear of crime,' they generally asked their interviewees to narrate their experiencing of these, and followed their associations, supposing that these associations would be revealing further unconscious material in terms of their beliefs about the object of the study (Hollway & Jefferson 2008, p. 309).

This method is also based on picking up incoherencies (for instance 'elisions, avoidances, contradictions') and placing them within an interpretive frame (Hollway & Jefferson 2000, p. 37). In this approach, this method of eliciting a story has been argued to help with using projection and projective identification in the research

process. The terms 'projection' and 'projective identification' have been developed from the positions of splitting or integrating of ego in object-relations psychoanalytic theory. These two terms have been used to refer to defenses for separating from oneself (splitting) or integrating within oneself what is perceived as 'good' or 'bad' objects (whether introspectively or perceived as external). These terms are linked with the use of countertransference in the practice of this strand of psychoanalysis in the clinic. In the context of research, this is translated as considering the researcher's 'felt' affects (countertransference) as arising from the researched's projective identification towards the researcher. In very simple terms, according to Clarke (2002, p.180) projection is a term used to denote our 'attributing our 'affective state to others.' (For example, if one feels depressed, one thinks that the person one is speaking to is depressed. Projective identification occurs when we feel so intensely the projection for another person that we manage to behave in such a manner that our projection "enters" them and they feel what we think they feel, like a self-fulfilling prophecy (Clarke 2002, p.180-1). It should be noted here that projection and projective identification are theorized in various ways (for example intra-psychic and inter-subjective, Clarke 2003[22]) and are not completely linear and concrete processes. Projection and projective identification are employed in analysis with the patient or analysand in relation to transference and countertransference. For example, in a study about racism, Clarke (2002) has explained how he used inspiration from Hollway and Jefferson's free association interview to adapt to the open ethnographic interview, coming from a psychoanalytic sociologist perspective. In a study about racism in higher education, Clarke (2002 p.184) has proposed that projective identification is a useful term to describe the 'psychodynamic communication between researcher and researched.' For instance, he refers to an interviewee who made him feel 'bad' as a researcher, by recounting his very intense

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[22] To pinpoint to the variety of approaches taken within this theoretical element: For example: Bion (1962) a psychoanalyst, who further developed and influenced object-relations theory, Klein's work, has provided spectrums for projective identifications, these being both intrapsychic (when there is no external Other that causes the projection) and intersubjective, and also including the possibility that projective identification does not only happen with negative feelings but also with feelings such as love (Clarke 2003, p.146-168).

experience of racism, which was an example of projective identification. He writes that:

> If we take Bion's model of 'container' and 'contained' then, projective identification is a way of transmitting meaning in the form of empathy. The recipient of the projection, the container, can reprocess the feeling evoked and return it to the projector in a more manageable form. In Mark's case, it felt as if I were the container, he told me his life story, his experience of racism at school and work, he made me feel bad, in fact he made me worry about him, want to support him, and at the same time I felt controlled myself – I felt traumatized. Mark, however, seemed confident. (Clarke 2002, p.185)

Clarke develops a psychosocial understanding of the interview context by describing the kinds of feelings experienced by him as a researcher in the interview setting. His focus is on thinking through the various unconscious communications going on in the research setting and how these might affect the interpretations and the constructed material, thereby pointing to other ways of looking at the 'knowledge' produced via the interaction of researcher and researched.

Another method which has used psychoanalytic concepts as inspiration to construct a psychosocial method of data generation is BNIM, standing for The Biographic Narrative Interview Method (Wengraf 2001). Starting with the assumption that any narrative has both conscious and unconscious articulations (Wengraf, 2006 online guide), this approach has both psychodynamic and socio-biographic orientations. The procedure of the interview is organized in three sub-sessions: first, one where the interviewer asks the interviewee to say anything they wish in relation to their life, (or subject matter researched more widely applied); then, a second phase where the topics which have been discussed are clarified; and finally a session where non-narrative questions are posed (Wengraf 2001, chapter 6), which are clarifying questions to ideas, stories the participant has already referred to (so no 'narrative' is elicited as such). Wengraf (2001, p. 159) argues that it is important to integrate the model of the 'anxious defended subject' into the design of the research interview, as a 'powerful tool for understanding interaction.'

Within psychosocial methods of data generation using psychoanalytic concepts, opinion is divided as to whether interpretation can be adopted in the

research interview setting, (as in the setting of Kleinian psychoanalysis in the clinic) or only after the data is generated in research. This aspect concerns the use of the 'analyst's emotions (countertransference) invoked by the analysand for interpretation, and how this scenario in the clinic might be transferred in the research interview setting, either in the generation and/ or in the analysis. Clarke (2002, p.187) explains that in this case interpretation is kept for the analysis stage, as he is not a psychoanalyst but a psychoanalytic sociologist. Holmes (2013), on the other hand, has argued that using interpretation within the research interview approximates the nature of the relationship between analyst and analysand in a Kleinian analytic setting, thus allowing for transference and countertransference to emerge through this particular relation. To illustrate the usefulness of considering transference and countertransference in research settings, Holmes narrates an incident from his research when he was interviewing a participant about depression. The participant did not have answers for his questions. Holmes (2013, p.1195) felt that the participant had been asked these questions 'hundred times before.' He verbalized this 'feeling' he had by asking her whether that was the case and she replied 'that was true.' This supposes that the participant's affirmative response may be taken as direct confirmation and representation of how she feels and that participants may not attempt to please researcher's interpretive interventions. Cartwright (2004) has suggested, on the other hand, that the motivations of the researcher and researched are different from those of the analyst and the analysand. He explains for instance, that unexplored issues on the part of the researcher (e.g. researching about physical abuse and having some personal history with this matter) may affect the interview setting and turn it into a 'self-fulfilling prophecy,' (ibid, p.222) as one might ask questions affected by one's 'personal and societal prejudices.' Indeed, the researcher has individual agendas in comparison to the awareness of individual agendas a psychoanalyst has due to their training. Thus, the eliciting of transference and counter-transference is not the same as a clinical setting.

Additionally, the research process carries an amount of emotional work, which may require untangling in the process of interpretation. Bringing attention to the highly intense emotional work of research interviewing, measures such as non-

clinical supervision for the researcher addressing the reflexive field notes and the emotional use of self in the conduct and interpretation of interview encounters have been introduced. In Elliot et al (2013, p. 436), with the help of the supervisor's clinical experience, researcher and supervisor speculate whether the researcher's feeling of un-engagement with a research participant has to do with resisting to 'do' the worrying for the participant, and her own worry as a mother about how the mothers whom she is interviewing will cope. Elliot et al (2013) have argued that this process of supervision allowed them to consider the participant with more 'objectivity' by separating which parts of unconscious communication related to what was researched and which were not.

Furthermore, studies using both of these approaches (BNIM or FANI) commonly draw on psychoanalytic concepts at various stages in the analysis. For example, a characteristic concern in qualitative research, using an object-relations perspective in psychosocial approaches, is the use of the researcher's emotions or affects to interpret the research situation and data based on an understanding of transference and countertransference. We might distinguish between two largely overlapping approaches to data analysis. The first one is collaborations in research groups to extract projections out of interpretations. The second method proposed is the review of interview material by panels.

Referring to triangulating the use of affect for interpretation in data analysis, Thomson et al (2012), in a study re-analyzing infant-mother observations (a method used in training psychoanalysts based on tuning into the unspoken communication between mother and infant through the use of projection and projective identification) advocate for greater 'validity' of interpretations by suggesting group seminars discussing and reading aloud data and taking time and distance from the data gathered.

Vis-à-vis the stance for data analysis, referring to qualitative interviewing, Holmes (2013, p.1188) argues the concept of 'negative capability' or 'reverie' coined by Keats is frequently quoted in psychosocial analyses. Bion, (a key psychoanalyst and theorist in the object-relations psychoanalytic school), quotes Keat's negative

capability[23] in *Attention and Interpretation* – 'when a man [*sic*] is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason' (definition from Morley 2007, p.21), (Bion 1970 cited in Holmes, p. 1195) as an analogy to use when attempting to link psychoanalytic concepts to observations. However, this stance does not consistently mimic what is happening in the clinical setting, as the clinical setting does include some interpretation and the researched is not in the position of an analysand.

A final strand in the literature maps the analytic relationship to both data generation and the analysis processes through a double positioning of the researcher as both analysand and analyst. Again, this group is not attempting to consistently mimic the psychoanalytic technique used by the analyst within the clinic; however, it is inspired from analyzing discourse and Lacanian analysis in the clinic, so as to inform research practitioner research. This subgroup uses reflexive writing or field notes to research and reshape practitioner research. For example, in Brown (2008) the aim is to indicate how the narrative about one's research – and thus researcher identity – affects researcher subjectivity, mapping the process of "the analysand talking in analysis" to the process of "the research practitioner writing about his practice" in a research setting. By considering two accounts of practitioners' reflective writing within research reports, it is argued that this reflective writing process both helps and deceives practitioners about their identity. For instance, Brown and England (2005) use reflective writing or journal entries about their practice as teachers/researcher practitioners thinking through how Lacanian psychoanalytic concepts about the ego and ideal ego might be applied. This is a different perspective, in terms of applying psychoanalysis, but also complementary in terms of using Lacanian theory, to those who are concerned with Lacanian textual analysis. Brown and England (2005) argue that the ideological apparatus behind the narrative a researcher constructs for herself (Brown & McNamara, 2005; Brown and England 2005; Brown 2008) has come from an action

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[23] Keat's negative capability is often quoted to aspiring writers as the kind of state that one must maintain when writing, see e.g. Morley 2007 p. 21, 106. This comparison is useful in terms of thinking about the "state of mind" one inhabits when "interpreting" or writing.

research intervention background (involving a cycle of data generation which in itself is meant to produce a change in the practice). The analyses of the reflective writings of the research practitioner usually focus on the practitioner's discursive self-identifications. They have argued that this allows for a dismantling and deconstruction of practitioner identities and discourses through the process of this reflective writing.

So, the difference with textual analysis using Lacanian theory lies in the fact that textual analysis targets its shift in the knowledge of hermeneutics, and this approach targets its shift in the knowledge of hermeneutics in direct relation with one's professional practice.

In this section, I have attempted to sketch out ways in which psychoanalytic concepts have informed methods of data generation and/or analysis without any attempt to consistently mimic the process of analysis in the clinic onto the research setting. The conception of the subject as 'defended', has been used to create methods of interview data generation such as FANI or BNIM. In addition, in the research above, the terms 'projection' and 'projective identification' have also been used within the process of data generation and analysis, harnessing the researcher's feelings as a potential clues for the researched's feelings and motivations behind their replies.

There is an ongoing debate about the consideration of emotion on the part of the researcher within the research interview, and how to "triangulate" in the process of analysis with panels or clinical supervisors. Finally, reflective writing has been used as a method for data generation and analysis together, inserting Lacanian theory about discourse, placing a self-researcher analytical lens onto the researcher. All of the above ways in which psychoanalytical concepts have been used have had the purpose of expanding ways of being reflexive about research, and unearthing knowledge that has not previously been explored in the research process. These uses of psychoanalysis in social research mainly orient themselves towards producing and explaining knowledge that is relational and intersubjective, conceiving the relation between the researcher and researched as a resource for psychosocial knowledge.

The following strand is concerned with exploring the transfer of the analytic

setting to a research setting, its implications, and the new knowledge connections created about psychoanalysis and the setting themselves.

3.4 Psychoanalytically derived approaches for data generation and analysis

Some studies have tried more explicitly to explore what it might mean for the research to adopt directly psychoanalytic derived approaches in the process of data collection. In this newly emerging strand of literature, the methodology of data generation is infused with the investigation of the assumptions of the methodology of its data generation. The "unconscious" in this approach is speculated and explored, considering contrasting methods of its conceptions and looking at the research material produced out of these apparently contrasting applications.

Lapping (2013a) has explored, for instance, the "nature" of the research interview and the process of interpretation within interviews when psychoanalytic concepts are applied to it. She has used the psychoanalytic process of the analyst's interpretation (from a Lacanian perspective) to explore such an application in a research interview (e.g. the relevance or irrelevance of the researcher's affective reactions to the interviewee's narrative). At the same time, via this application, she has attempted to reveal the assumptions of her interpretive strategies in conducting research, using instances from interview encounters with participants in an interview research with academics. Lapping's (2013a) methodology for data generation asked for an open narrative about the participants' disciplinary identities. The research participants were interviewed eight times and asked each time to bring in a text representative of their field. Exploring the use of psychoanalytic methods within the interview setting, she also shared her interpretations in the interview, in order to 'elicit additional meanings or associations' and also sometimes to draw attention to the ways in which participants might be 'idealizing, objectifying, or identifying with aspects of their practice, and to provide opportunities for them to elaborate, correct or refine these interpretations' (ibid, p.371).

In terms of presenting interpretations and discussions of her research, Lapping punctuates her own discourse like an analyst in Lacanian psychoanalysis, piercing through the layers of assumptions constituting her research design and

analysis, keeping her 'researcher desire in flow,' instead of leading to a specific 'claim to know' about what she is exploring in the end. The conception of subject (both researcher and research participant) is explored by looking at the relation of 'subject and other.' This relation is discussed using examples from moments in Lapping's research project. In one of the instances presented, she considers her own reaction to a participant recorded in her field notes: feeling a sense of 'dislocation' (ibid, p.372). She discusses through different conceptualizations of affect and language to indicate the different interpretive processes that might be derived. She explains, for instance, how her specific relation to what the participant was talking about – Literary Studies – might have induced her dislocated reaction. In her discussion about this incident, she suggests that from a Lacanian perspective:

> Benjamin's (2004) suggestion that the analyst might share vulnerabilities with the patient in order to 'experience mutual recognition' constitutes an imposition of the analyst's demand onto the patient (2013a, p. 380)

Although there are other ways this interaction could have been interpreted, this particular explanation opens up a different pathway of looking at research material field notes. This pathway indicates to us that, from a Lacanian perspective, the interviewee with whom we are interacting as researchers should not be held responsible for the reactions invoked in us (by us) necessarily, (as these are situated on the *Imaginary* level, which relates to our own personalized way of associating signifiers with affect). Lapping elaborates that her ambivalence about her meeting with her participant might have had to do with her 'position in/outside the contrasting disciplinary discourse of social science and the humanities' (ibid, p.381). Lapping further analyzes the theories of the encounter with the Other posited by Butler (2005), a more humanistic perspective, and Žižek (2005), a more 'theologically humble' perspective, that the Other cannot be known and how this affects our constitution of self as a relation to Other [24].

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[24] Using Žižek (2005) as a resource, Lapping (2013a, p.375-8) explains that our 'castration' (the psychoanalytic milestone in the development of becoming subject and separated as a desiring human being from mother and father), as subjects is not complete, since we sometimes encounter aspects of our excluded parts of subjectivity at times, which disrupt our narratives (of self).

Drawing from this incident's analysis, Lapping (2013a) suggests that we must aim for that 'specificity of ignorance' since research is about what is yet to be articulated and constructed; in other words whatever is "new," waiting to be verbalized as knowledge. Elsewhere, Lapping (2011, p.174) has highlighted that we should not have faith in particular master signifiers such as 'Lacan' or 'psychoanalysis,' which guarantee particular 'knowledgeable identities' instantiating a crucial differentiation between the ontic and the ontological space upon which psychoanalytic concepts are applied (ibid, p.178). This latter statement, I think, succinctly summarizes her stance towards the use of psychoanalytic concepts in research, rigorously thinking about their effects and transformations within the settings they are applied to.

To sum up, a newly emergent approach in psychosocial studies has begun to consider explicitly derived approaches from psychoanalysis, using them as tools both to generate data but also as research objects contributing simultaneously to the study of psychoanalysis and the study of conducting research in psychosocial studies. This strand is not concerned with necessarily challenging or expanding hermeneutics but rather with analyzing different instantiations of hermeneutics and their inherent assumptions about knowledge productions.

3.5 The Thing(s)

In this section, I have presented three different ways in which the relation of psychoanalysis to research has been conceptualized as:

- A mode of textual analysis, representative of an argument for disrupting current trends of hermeneutics in research, or
- A mode of expanding understandings of data generation, and furthering their implications for data analysis producing new hermeneutics of communication within the research relation, or
- A parallel object of research itself through the processes of data generation and analysis.

I position the research reported in this thesis in the third strand of this

literature review. However, my interest would not have "been" without the work of all the above scholars, therefore I remain wit(h)ness and without them as I proceed in the field(s), "aligning" myself with Ettinger's thinking about relating to an Other. "Aligning" itself, *spatially* is not symbolically representative of the relation I am attempting to construct, however. A more suitable word might be 'borderlinking' or 'swerving,' also borrowed from Ettinger (2006).

In the current studies in the psychosocial field, with some exceptions (e.g. Lapping 2013a,b), there is not much research engaging the *Symbolic* (the linguistic choices and their relation to the researcher's unconscious to put simply here) of the researcher's desire within data generation. The researcher's desire, from a Lacanian perspective as I interpret it, has not yet been taken into account in the phraseology of the research questions, in the way the interview or data are generated and in the manner in which "interpretations" are produced in the data analysis at the level of signifier, which is attended to in the discourse of Lacanian analyst in the clinic. Thus, I have found it useful to pair my research about Creative Writing exercises and their interpretation with a methodology that sets out to explore interpretation, in a manner that has not yet been attempted in the current literature. This thesis suggests that it might be productive to explore a Lacanian position as methodological research orientation, informing both the process of data generation and analysis and also informing a pedagogy for Creative Writing.

In this section, my purpose, then, has been to bring attention to an alternative absent (in the available research literature) manner of "doing" the Lacanian stance, which involves immersing the researcher's discourse into that of an analyst, to invoke a presence out of an absence within data generation and analysis. I wish to argue that this manner of exploring and producing research knowledge might provide further insights into the dialectics of interpretation and bring attention to the insecure edifices of knowledge in terms of the desire of the researcher from the "beginning" to the very "end" of conducting a research project[25].

I should note here that I do not consider using different psychoanalytic

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[25] Not assuming that the "beginnings" and "ends" can be clearly demarcated.

concepts in different stages of research as invalid or unreliable. To the contrary, I think it can be creative and transformative to do so, as long as this is accounted for in terms of how it affects the negotiation of these theoretical elements in each stage, as a practice always implicitly constructs a(n) (invisible) theory. In this sense, I proceed, with what might be thought of as a conservative *and* progressive conception of infusing/re-fusing[26] Lacanian theory, to introduce the basic elements of my theoretical framework drawn from Lacan's theory.

On a transitional note, Wengraf (2001, p.51) suggested that any assertion about a "reality," is a theoretical proposition, which is an answer to a question. *Swerving* with those in the field before me, I find this statement useful in framing and developing my understanding of the methodological lens, which I have used to research the function of Creative Writing exercises on students' writer subjectivity. The new question I am posing in the psychosocial studies field is:

What might constitute a Lacanian researcher stance in terms of generating and interpreting data, which can provide new knowledge about the function of Creative Writing exercises in relation to students' writer subjectivities? I go on to answer/explore this question and multiply it (my research questions), by setting out some Lacanian aspects of the framework of this study.

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[26] Using Ettinger's (2006) theory-mentality to think about applying Lacanian theory.

Chapter 4

An Architecture of Lacanian fantasy

4.1 Introduction to Theory

The previous two chapters foregrounded my interest in the exploration of Creative Writing exercises and the use of explicitly psychoanalytically derived approaches for data generation. Hecq (2013, p.182), in writing about using ideas from psychoanalytic theory in Creative Writing pedagogy, has argued that Lacan's conception of the unconscious 'as the driving force of language' is especially pertinent to the practice of writers, because it shows that language has a significant role in moulding culture and consciousness. Connectedly, the pairing of this exploration about writing with Lacanian theory is potentially productive because of the theory's specific interest in the hermeneutics of language in relation to the construction of subjectivity.

The aspects of Lacanian theory I have used are mainly focused around the concept of fantasy as an organizing structure of the subject's discourse *and* of the subject's constitution of subjectivity. By "discourse," I refer to any spoken or written articulation of a subject. By "subjectivity" I refer loosely to the concept of ego or identity. Discourse and subjectivity are considered linked because language is attributed the role of mediating and transforming the experience of being a subject/person by Lacan. Drawing from this theory, I have attempted to investigate how the exploration of unconscious assumptions (using the structure of fantasy) in an analysand's (person in analysis) speech might be transferred to exploring unconscious assumptions about one's writing practice, using the participants' writing and their speech about their writing.

Both my methodology for constructing the data (in interviews and in an experiment course) and my analysis of the emerging data (interview transcripts and participants' texts) were informed by some aspects of Lacanian theory. The first part of this chapter introduces these aspects, building up an introductory account of Lacanian fantasy, in order to support my account of the methodology and analysis in the subsequent chapters. The key concepts I explain are the following:

1. The Registers of *Real, Symbolic,* and *Imaginary*

2. Desire and the Other in Alienation and Separation

3. *Master Signifier*, *objet a* and note on phallic and feminine *jouissance*

4. *Fantasy* a) Structure b) Shift

The second part of this chapter will use the conceptual vocabulary to formulate the research questions of the thesis.

I begin here with a very brief account of the story of Lacan's advent of the subject as a context for my explanation of the above listed concepts. Put simply, one of the main ideas in Lacanian theory behind the conception of subjectivity is that at the beginning of the existence of the subject, after birth, the symbolic interaction the child has with the Other (the Other is understood as language and as the mOther[27]) begins to produce the child's subjectivity or ego.

This encounter is traumatic as the child/infant has to "relinquish" his/her mode of being in the *Real* (the *Real* being a state before language) enter the *Imaginary* realm (using language) *and* separate from the mother – through the introduction of a third term – the father (who also stands for the *Symbolic* order – the signifier – the entering into language and becoming a social being). An existential question ("what does my mother want (of/from me)?") is produced out of this encounter to which, an *Imaginary* (because the child cannot know his/her mother's desire) answer is produced by the child. This answer is represented by a Master Signifier, which structures the discourse and the subjectivity of the child (Lacan 2007, p.671-702). The child identifies with the master signifier in the ways in which her speech as a subject is structured, producing secondary symbolic identifications, which then constitute her subjectivity (ibid, p.671-702). This master signifier, however, in producing these secondary symbolic identifications produces a scenario of prohibition (Glynos 2008, p.10). Something is repressed: in order to be 'a,' I must/cannot not be 'b.' An either/or assumption is made in the translation of these identifications as a scenario. Therefore, an automatic existential fantasy is constructed by the subject, which is a fantasmatic scenario (Glynos 2008). This scenario *lies* in the nature of the articulation; in order to say some things, their opposites are excluded (Bracher 1994, p.113).

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[27] In some Lacanian texts, this way of writing the 'mOther' is usually used to signify that the mother is the Other.

In the next sections, I attempt to gradually build an architecture of Lacanian fantasy gradually weaving it into the context of writing.

4.2 *"Lacan's" Fantasy*

This chapter is not by any means a scholarly exhaustive account of Lacan's theory. It is intended rather as an architecture for understanding the analysis chapters. Before coming to the exposition of concepts, I set out four important qualifications about interpretations using Lacan's theory of the subject.

First of all, I am interpreting Lacan's theory mainly using the English version of his texts and seminars (though not ignoring or being unaware of their French "counterparts"), most of which are transcriptions of his lectures.

Second, when I refer to Lacanian theory, I accept that in itself this is a compilation of many theoretical discourses and interpretations. Apart from the French language "barrier" and at the same time "frontier" that is itself unstable, as there is no one Lacanian theory, there are divergences in how Lacan's texts are interpreted as much as there are common points of interest among its scholars. I will attempt to provide a theoretical picture by including Lacan's "original" texts (in English) and will also draw from scholars who have provided particularly accessible expositions of Lacan's ideas (e.g. Fink 2014; Evans 1996)[28].

Thirdly, Lacan himself expressed his disagreement with providing a system of his theory, giving the example of Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe's reading of his 'Instance of the Letter,' commending them on the first half of the book and stating that they erred in the second half by giving a system of his theory (Fink 2004, p.67). Considering also his approach to Freud's writing, wanting to consider both early and

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[28] The first mention of fantasy in Lacan's work is in Seminar I, *Freud's Papers on Technique (1953-1954)* (Fink 2014, p.39-41). Fink (2014, vol2, p. 39) suggests that it seems that Lacan has borrowed it from Klein. He suggests that Lacan develops his own formulation of the term four years later in Seminar V *Les formations de l'inconscient* [Unconscious Formations] (1957-58) and that the fundamental fantasy is elaborated 'extensively' in Seminar VI, *Le désir et son interpretation* ['Desire and its Interpretation'] (1958-59) and in later seminars (1958 'Direction of the Treatment' Fink, ibid). There is also the Seminar on 'The Logic of Phantasy.' I have mostly used 'Desire and Its Interpretation' and 'The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire' (Lacan 2006).

late works together (ibid, p. 67-8), I think that his point about *not* providing a system is to do with Lacan's conception of psychoanalysis as an always expanding and developing elliptical field, thus not amenable to compartmentalization. This can be related to his understanding of the lack in the Other, (the Other being here the system of psychoanalysis), which implies the impossibility of depending on the Other for a symbolic guarantee of meaning. Connectedly, I am trying to use concepts here as a springboard for exploration of the psychosocial context of Creative Writing pedagogy and the written and spoken discourse of my participants, not as a system externally imposed onto this project; although this is always a risk.

Fourthly, constructing my theoretical explication of Lacanian concepts, I use excerpts from Lacan's work "supported" by other scholars' explication, to develop a description of the structure of fantasy on a theoretical level. I underline the particular weight and insight which language and articulation of signifiers have for Lacan, these being significant aspects of his "method" or approach, which might be used to construct possible interpretations of symbolic articulations in Creative Writing. These emphases help me build a rationale for my use of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory for the generation and analysis of my data (this "application" of the theory will be elaborated in chapter 5). At the same time, I punctuate the theoretical narrative of this chapter with Ettinger's theory (2006) in order to provide an alternative or supplementary perspective. This is afforded with her theory because of the pre-symbolic state she has proposed, which refers to a mode of 'trans-subjectivity' in the late intrauterine stage of gestation, before subjection. This introduces a supplementary way of thinking through the relation of "subject and other," which is the key relation in the constitution of subjectivity for Lacan. I keep my commentary about Ettinger mostly on the margins of this text, attempting to maintain an authorial tension both embracing a Lacanian perspective and implying "new" supplementary formulations.

4.3 The Architecture of Lacanian Fantasy

4.3.1 The three registers: Real, Symbolic, Imaginary

The three registers in Lacanian theory are, in a sense, building blocks, to understand how desire and the structure of fantasy are produced and their relation to language or the signifier.

As I indicated in the introduction, Lacan formulates the advent of the subject (after birth) as the traumatic encounter with the Other's desire. The Other's desire is both the system of symbolic representations that exists in society (e.g. language) *and* one's imagined understanding or non-understanding of one's parent's desire (Fink 1995, p.xii). This traumatic encounter forms the scenario that triggers the desire – the wish (in very simple terms) to be a particular kind of subject or – to articulate a particular kind of subjectivity. The subject becomes subject through experiencing "reality" (her being-ness/ her existence) in three ways: the *Real*, the *Symbolic* and the *Imaginary*. These three ways of experiencing one's "being" a subject become knotted together through the process of subjection. They produce a particular subjectivity that the subject takes up "unconsciously," because a repression of a particular aspect of self takes place in order to become subject (I explain this further in the next section). These three ways might be considered psychic platforms, which feed into each other to construct the subjectivity of the subject.

The *Real,* as all of Lacan's concepts can be thought of in several ways. Fink (1995, p.24) offers one account of the *Real* as the name we have given to the time that language did not exist to signify our existence; it is a pre-symbolic place. Evans (1996, p.1) distinguishes the *Real* from the *Symbolic* order explaining that in the *Real* 'there is no absence,' whilst the *Symbolic* is constituted in the binary between presence and absence. Fink (1995, p.24) gives the example of an infant's body before it is toilet-trained, before it is inscribed with pleasure. He invokes the conception of erogenous zones proposed by Freud, which allegorizes the body of the infant as one unbroken erogenous zone (ibid, p.24), and analogously extends this conception to the *Real* that Lacan proposes:

> … the *Real* is a sort of unrent, undifferentiated fabric, woven in such a way to be full everywhere, there being no space between its threads, which are its "staff." (Fink 1995, p.24)

This suggests that the state of the *Real* is a state before and beyond

symbolization. Once the body of the infant is symbolized – the *Real* is cut, killed (symbolically) but this symbolization has implications for how the infant begins to perceive her body (Fink 1995, p.24). Fink (1995,p. 25) explains the *Real* is cancelled out. Language constructs reality; therefore, what exists outside language does not exist. The *Real* is outside of language, it 'ex-sists' (ibid, p.25).

Although it can be thought of as, in a sense, pre-language, the *Real* is not to be thought merely chronologically, but also as that which has not yet been symbolized, remains to be symbolized, or resists symbolization (ibid, p.25). This is where the psychoanalyst helps the analysand to articulate what has not yet been verbalized. In this line of thinking, Lacan theorizes that the *Symbolic* (the signs that exist to represent the *Real*) has an impact on the *Real* by ciphering, reducing and transforming it (ibid, p.26).

In a very simple formulation, the *Symbolic* order is the realm of language, culture, and laws. Evans (1996, p.203) has indicated that one might think of the *Symbolic* register as linked with language – but only the linguistic aspects of it, the structure and the laws. This is because language has *Imaginary* and *Real* dimensions to it along with its *Symbolic* dimension (ibid, p.203). Evans (1996) explains that 'the *Symbolic* dimension of language is that of the SIGNIFIER'[my italics, Evans capitals] (ibid, p.203); this dimension does not include what might be signified by or associated with the signifier(s). Rather, it includes the signifiers as empty placeholders – it is a system of signification. The analyst pays attention and attempts to engage with the *Symbolic* order of the analysand's speech (Evans 1996, p.203-4) to highlight the inherent constructions of meaning – laws of meaning attended to – in the analysand's narrative about oneself.

The *Imaginary* register is produced when the child enters the *Symbolic* register and at the point when the child asks: 'What does my mother (the Other) want (from me)?' The guess of the child about its mOther's desire creates the *Imaginary* register: a fashioning of the *Symbolic* with desire. Evans (1996, p.84) explains that the signifier is the foundation for the *Symbolic* order, whilst the signified and signification are essential to the *Imaginary* order. The child's guess in answer to the question of the mOther's desire fixes a relation between signifier and signified. Where in the *Symbolic* order, all associations to the signifier are possible,

the *Imaginary* order closes down these possibilities in the attempt to name or to know the Other's desire. This *Imaginary* fashioning of the *Symbolic* in the attempt to name desire is related to the processes of separation and alienation.

The orders of the *Real,* the *Symbolic* and the *Imaginary* are involved in the first interaction of the child with the other, in the processes of alienation and separation.

4.3.2 Desire and the Other: the processes of alienation and separation in the constitution of the subject

In this section, I explain the role of alienation and separation in the formation of desire and how "Other" is conceived or related to in each process. These two processes give rise to the production of the Master Signifier and the formation of fantasy.

In alienation, by submitting to the Other, (which, in this case, is language), the child becomes *a subject in language*. One must sacrifice some part of one's *Real* in order to come into language. Fink (1995, p.49-68) explains how the child must submit to language in order to communicate her needs to the Other (p.50). This is because 'language,' – i.e. what Lacan calls the *Symbolic* order, is not the *Real* – cannot absolutely be the *Real*, as it always *represents* the *Real*, and in doing so it kills the *Real*. Lacan, in one of the many formulations he provides about this interaction, refers to the child's encounter with the 'code'- the *Symbolic* register or language:

> …the first encounter at the synchronic level, at the level of the simultaneity of signifiers. Here we have what I call the point of encounter with the code. In other words, it is in so far as the child addresses himself to a subject whom he knows to be a speaking subject, whom he has seen speaking, who has penetrated him with relationships every since the beginning of his awakening to the light of day; it is in so far as there is something which operates as the operation of the signifier, as the word-mill, that the subject has to learn very early on that there is here a path, a defile through which essentially the manifestations of his needs must stoop in order to be satisfied.'
> (Lacan 2010, p.8)

In this excerpt, in Lacan's particular expression, as I (imagine I) understand it, the child has to use a code of the Other at the beginning of his existence. A part of the child's needs is sacrificed in being articulated in this code of the Other. This code

of the Other may also refer to how the mother's desire is interpreted as it is drawn away from the child by the third term (the father), which is how we might briefly describe the process of separation.

This encounter with the Other, on the level of both language and the parent (as mother), generates the desire for the Other and an *Imaginary* understanding of the Other, which brings forth one signifier, or sign which will fuel the subject's discourse and becoming. We might say here that alienation is a relation to language and separation is a relation to desire. Fink (1995, p.50) explains this:

> In this sense, *the subject is caused by the Other's desire*. This can be understood as a description of alienation in terms of desire, not simply in terms of language, though clearly they are but warp and woof of the same fabric, language being ridden with desire, and desire being inconceivable without language […](italics in original).

Fink refers above to the simultaneity of alienation and separation and thus of the interweaving of language and desire. To begin with, the 'cause of the subject's physical presence in the world' is the Other's desire, the desire of the parents (ibid, p. 50). The reference to the Other's desire first above is to the process of separation. Fink's explanation links and distinguishes the subject's 'confrontation' with the Other as words and the Other as desire – both of which are, however, implicated when the child begins to imagine what the Other wants from it. The Other, usually the mother, uses 'signifiers' to represent her desire, and these signifiers are passed on to the child to begin to express his or her desires. Nonetheless, these desires are always in relation to the code of the Other, as it has been perceived by the child.

This leads us to consider how this encounter produces desire and constructs the subject's discourse and its operations. I explain next how the Master Signifier is produced through the scenario of the child wondering about what the Other desires and a way of understanding it in terms of *objet a*.

4.3.3 Master Signifier and objet a

The Master Signifier might be understood in two ways. First, I will explain it in terms of the interaction of the child with the Other as producing a question about the

85

Other's desire. Second, I will suggest how it might be understood in terms of what is lost through this interaction with the Other, leaving behind a relic of the previously imagined union, a fantasmatic *objet a.* Both the master signifier and *objet a* contribute to the structure of fantasy, which I explain in the next section.

The subject, in Lacanian theory, both constitutes and is constituted by her discourse. By subject's "discourse," I refer here to any articulation of the subject, (and as such it is always fading), written or spoken in language, though it might also include actions, movements, etc. As I have noted, the constitution of the subject's discourse arises from an *Imaginary* question 'Che Vuoi?' "What do you want (from me)?" (Fink 1995; 2004). This imaginary question is "asked" during the process of separation and an *Imaginary* answer is provided/imagined, out of which the Master Signifier or in other words in the *trait unaire* is produced to represent it. Lacan writes in 'The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire'*:*

> Of what answer is the signifier, the master key?
> (Lacan, 2006, p.690)

The signifier, referred to above, is the key to the answer for the question: 'what does the other want (from me)?'[29] The signifier marks the beginning of the subject's existence as subject, and initiates the discourse of the subject and her knowledge (her conscious and unconscious knowledge of her "self"). This happens in the process of separation.

The loss of the *Imaginary* mOther/child relation and the intervention of the paternal metaphor (the name for the father or the person or thing who draws away the desire of the mother from the child and thus begins to institute separation) creates a *trait unaire*: a unifying or singular trait or the Master Signifier. The *trait unaire* affects, through a superimposing structure, the process of enunciating, creating secondary master signifiers, which are produced out of the subject's relation to the Other (Lacan 2010, p.10).

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[29] The child can elect *not* to be subjected to the Other's desire in this struggle with the parents' desire and language. This produces psychosis, instead of neurosis, (on extreme spectra of course). Psychosis might be understood as a subjectivity that is unanchored to signification and therefore to the condition of subjectivity itself (see Fink, 1995, p.49, 55).

Bracher (1994) explains that this unifying trait, established through primary identification, is then 'supplemented and extended by various secondary identifications' (p.111). This *trait unaire* establishes master signifiers, symbolized as S1 by Lacan. These master signifiers, then, create an articulated system of signifiers, S2 around which the subject organizes his invested identity (ibid, p.111). In the next chapter (5), I explain my stance in how I have traced master signifiers in the spoken and written discourse of the participants with regards the organization/constitution of their writer subjectivity. In the analysis chapters 6,7,8 I consider certain repetitions of discursive patterns in the participants' texts and interview transcripts, which could potentially be interpreted as the master signifiers orienting and constituting their discourse of writer subjectivity.

The concept of metonymy has also been central to my interpretation of the link between the master signifiers and writer subjectivity. Lacan has discussed the effects of metonymical replacements in the construction of signifying chains (2010, p.10) due to the effect of the Master Signifier. He compares this mode of metonymy to the effects that are 'characteristic' and 'fundamental' to those of the 'poetic discourse' (ibid, p.10). Lacan's comment alludes to the similarity between the way our own personal *Imaginary* metaphors constitute transfers of meaning as we talk, and the way that poetic language produces shifts in meanings of signifiers. It might be suggested that while the workings of our personal metaphors might be understood as invisible or unconscious, a poet's language works "consciously" to make a meaning: i.e. "the orange moon." However, it is also possible to argue that the unconscious associations operate in any text. For example, a particular master signifier in relation to writing has been identified as recurring thematically (as a subject-matter referred to) and structurally (how replies are constructed) in the participants' responses in their interviews in this research. This master signifier might be understood as the metonymy of their writer subjectivity.

Another way to explain the Master Signifier is in relation to the *objet a* (or *Das Ding* termed in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (Lacan 1992, p.51-68)) or cause of desire. It is fair to acknowledge that this term has various references, but for ease of reference I will refer to it as *objet a*. In addition, I am providing here a basic explanation, though I am aware that it has various nuances in the *oeuvre* of Lacan.

Objet a is the term proposed by Lacan to represent the remainder and reminder of what was lost in order to become subject through the processes of alienation and separation (Evans 1996, p.128-9). It could be understood as the *Imaginary* objectification of the "answer" received by the Other because this "answer" produced by the Other can in no way be actually *known* by the subject, since it is impossible to *know* the Other's desire.

What is lost through alienation and separation is a primordial state, an imagined affective experience of happiness and harmony. Simply put, *jouissance* might be understood as the enjoyable state of being and feeling before one became a subject, when one was still somehow (in whatever mode) one with the mother (Evans 1996, p.91-2). It has a sexual connotation in French (ibid). Since *jouissance* is a more complex term in Lacan's theory, at this stage of my argument, I will only briefly explain here that *jouissance* is the enjoyment sensed by the subject in a pre-symbolic state. The second chapter of analysis (7) is dedicated to exploring *jouissance* in relation to the written and spoken discourse of the research participants.

Jouissance relates to *plus-de-jouir* (in English called a surplus *jouissance),* which is what the subject can only access of *jouissance* in her entering of the social world. This *plus-de-jouir* is produced through an *Imaginary* prohibition, to cover over the impossibility of attaining *jouissance* (Braunstein 2003, p.138-9). *Objet a* is linked to *plus-de-jouir*, according to Evans (1996, p.128-9).

The *objet a* is the *agalma* of the pursuit of the primordial state of *jouissance* (Nusselder 2013, p.75*)* and has been translated onto the 'sign,' primary master signifier and further into secondary identifications/signifiers*.* Bracher (1994) explains that the *objet a* for Lacan*:*

> … holds the key to understanding the nature of *jouissance* and "what the incidence of the signifier in the destiny of the speaking being is all about." (Lacan in Bracher 1994, p.114)

Thus, the 'destiny of the speaking being' (Bracher 1994 and Lacan quoted in Bracher, 1994, p. 114), or who the subject will "be," what kind of identifications he or she will make, is dependent on that very "personal" experience of the subject of (phallic) *jouissance* before the subject's instantiation in language – being part of inducing primary identification and the subsequent secondary identifications. The

loss of this (phallic) *jouissance* creates a gap, since the subject is now divided through alienation from language and separation from the mother. This gap, which produces anxiety, 'a lack of being' (Lacan 2006, p.814), is covered over by the *trait unaire*. Consequently, the signifying scheme, created by the secondary identifications through the superimposition of the *trait unaire*, is the subject's fantasmatic scheme (Nusselder 2013, p.50) covering over this loss of *jouissance*. The *objet a* might then be thought as the objectification of this return to the primordial state. It is the object of pursuit in the construction of fantasy through the operation of the Master Signifier in the subject's discourse.

Distinguishing between the psychic or psychopathological and the psychosocial setting, I should note here that the master *signifiers* I identify in my participant's spoken and written discourse, are *not* the primary Master psychic Signifier of their fundamental fantasy, but rather the master signifiers within their discourse about writing and being a writer. These *master signifiers* in their writing could potentially be part of their larger network of secondary identifications, related to their Master Signifier of subjectivity. Nonetheless, my exploration remains, as much as it is possible, within the remit of their writer subjectivity, not interpreting how these *master signifiers* of their writing might be linked to the wider patterns of the symbolic relations arising from the fundamental fantasy of their psyche, and not going into psychopathological implications.

The term *objet a* has been a helpful metaphor in my later conceptualization of the effect of: the exercises and their sequence and my own presence/stance as contributing to the shifting or fixing of the participants' writer subjectivities in chapter 8 of analysis.

(note on phallic and feminine *jouissance)*
An important clarification here is that because the subject becomes a subject through separation from the introduction of a third term, the paternal metaphor or the name of the Father. This *'jouissance'* is a phallic *jouissance*, as it is recognized and instantiated as a loss through the signifier, which is linked to the symbolic phallus (not biological allusion) (Evans,1996, p.94). Lacan also refers to the feminine *jouissance*, which is beyond *objet a*. Lacan writes of feminine *jouissance* as

supplementary to phallic *jouissance*, and as mythical and beyond words (Fink 2004, p.158-166).

Ettinger (2006) has written about feminine *jouissance* as the supplementary logic of the relation, (not just biological and that is *originary*) between the becoming-mother and the becoming-child, referring to the matrix (conceptual term for womb), not in opposition, but beside the phallus. Thus, if there is an *objet a*, an imagining of a relic of a union in the logic of differentiating self from Other, Ettinger (2006, p.86-7) posits there might be *a metramorphic border-link, alongside objet a,* representing this state of part-subject in the womb, which has been repressed, and therefore has become frightening after its repression. She also has argued (ibid, p.87) that even though this 'state,' if state at all, exceeds pre-established discourse, its repressed memory can be re-invoked and thought about through art. I refer to *feminine jouissance* only speculatively and briefly in Chapter 6 in relation to participant A.

4.3.4 Fantasy

4.3.4 a) Structure
The structure of fantasy arises from the presentation of a sign (the Master Signifier), which, then, produces the process of enunciating and constitutes one's discourse of one's subjectivity. This representation has a particular structure made up of significations. Lacan suggests this process of construction of the fantasy can be understood as a defense against helplessness:

> You must say that the subject defends himself. This is what our experience shows us. With this ego he defends himself against this helplessness, [...] and this is why what I designate for you here as being this way out, this locus of references by means of which desire is going to learn to situate it[*sic*]self, is the phantasy. (Lacan 2010, p.12)

The subject constructs himself as a speaking subject to defend against this helplessness of "not being" when confronted with the desire of the Other. In the context of the quote above, the ego is what is at stake. The helplessness can be understood as the impossibility of constructing a subjectivity that corresponds to the Other's desire, which is ambiguous and impossible to grasp. The desire of the Other

is ambiguous, both visible and invisible because the signifier is always already distorting the desire, thus any signifiers presented by the Other are not directly articulating the Other's desire. This produces the need to "situate" desire in fantasy.

The fantasy, organized around a Master Signifier, produces a formula for the production of the subject: "to be someone I must not be someone else," or in this context 'to write like "b" I must not write like "not b".' This is translated across the subject's constitution of signifying chains making up his relation to the other. Thus, 'I write like "not b"' might be translated as "not the master signifier," a prohibition that the subject attaches herself to when losing the *Imaginary* union with the mOther; it is the *Imaginary* and necessary prohibition replacing the initial scenario of the impossibility to retrieve the lost *objet a*, the experience of the primordial *jouissance*.

Linked to this scenario "to write like 'b'" I must not write "not b," the analysis chapters of this thesis construct an interpretation of writing fantasies. A writing fantasy might provide a formula for thinking about the use of writing strategies in relation to unconscious assumptions about one's writer subjectivity.

The operation of Lacanian fantasy has been used theoretically as a method to criticize the operation of ideology in political theory. Žižek's (1989) conception of Lacanian fantasy in his work *The Sublime Object of Ideology* has been influential in establishing the structure of fantasy as a tool for ideological critique in the socio-political terrain. With regard to signifiers and fantasy in a social context, one of Žižek's basic points about ideology and fantasy, arising from Lacanian theory, is that:

> It is not the real object which guarantees as the point of reference and identity of a certain ideological experience – on the contrary it is the reference to a 'pure' signifier which gives unity and identity to our experience of historical reality itself. (Žižek 1989, p.97)

The point Žižek makes here is crucial for the analysis of fantasy at a political level. A signifier is invested upon, which organizes meaning both in the context of the subject, but also in a social sense in the context of ideology. He thus transfers the concept of fantasy from a psychic level to a collective level in which individual fantasies are articulated through the same master signifier.

In the field of political and discourse theory, Glynos (2008b) has suggested that the commonality between ideology and fantasy lies at the very aim of both to provide a sense of suture or wholeness through discursive forms, like the screen of psychical fantasy covers over the subject's anxiety of lack of being. In reviewing some major studies done in workplace practices, (2008b; 2010) he has also conceptualized fantasy in terms of a fantasmatic narrative, which is followed in relation to a practice. This is a useful formulation for the structure of fantasy, which I have used to identify the relation between the signifiers in the discourse of the research participants about their writing practice in this project.

4.3.4 b) Shift

Evans (1996, p.52) has argued that the *Imaginary* register produces an illusory fixity of things. The aim of psychoanalysis is to bring the subject to face the 'truth of her desire' (ibid, p.38). The subject no longer blames the Other, for who she is, but takes responsibility for her 'symptom' (put simply here the different ways in which her fantasy of subjectivity is acted out in her behaviour/ways of talking about oneself, etc.).

Fink (1995, p.62) explains the possibility of shifting fantasies by 'traversing the fantasy.' According to Fink (1995, p.61-62), the analyst begins to create a rift in the manner in which the analysand identifies with the *Imaginary* Other by not being the *Imaginary* Other, by presenting an enigmatic stance. Therefore, the analyst attempts to embody a desirousness, which will not allow the analysand to identify with the analyst's own ideals, but rather confront him or her with her or his lack of being – and *subjectivizing*, taking responsibility for constructing the Other to produce his or her desire, that is putting the "I" back into the "it."

Fink (1995) also has provided a way to understand this shift in relation to signifying chains and metaphors making up our subjectivity. Our subjectivity is constituted by a signifying chain 'against' which new 'data' is processed:

> To understand means to locate or embed one configuration of signifiers within another. In most cases it is a nonconscious process, as one could desire, requiring no action on the part of

the subject: things fall into place within the web of multifarious connections among thoughts already 'assimilated.' According to Lacan, something makes sense if it fits into a pre-existing chain. […] Metaphor, on the other hand, brings about a new configuration of thoughts, establishing a new combination or permutation, a new *order* in the signifying chain[…] Connections between signifiers are definitely changed. That kind of modification cannot occur without implicating the subject. [his italics] (Fink 1995, p.71)

Our understanding, then, depends on already existent structures of signifiers in our signifying chain, which have their personal meaning (our *Imaginary* relation to the *Symbolic* order), and which embrace the "external" or Other which we come to understand, whether that is an experience, the reading of a text or a person. These signifying chains have been constituted through our initial experience of language and desire as the Other and they are created by it. If something however shakes up this *status quo* order that governs our signifying chain (constituting our subjectivity) then new connections are made, which inevitably affect our subjectivity. In this sense, learning might be understood as a shift or formulations of new metaphors in our signifying chains of subjectivity.

Related to this research context, in terms of "learning Creative Writing" and engaging with the particular research setting, my initial interest was in whether the participants' relation to language might be transformed through engagement with enigmatic writing activities. Translated into a Lacanian conceptualization of fantasy, I can rearticulate this as an interest in whether the engagement in such activities might bring about a shift in relation to certain *master signifiers* in my participants' narratives of themselves as writers and/or in their writing.

The initial formation of desire is a mode of subjection to the desire of the Other, whereas the re-floating of one's desire is produced through a *subjectivization*: 'a process of making "one's own" something that was formerly alien' (Fink 1997, p.xii). This process of facilitation can potentially be explored in an educational context. In this case, the knowledge of Creative Writing produced or resisted in writing, according to the participants' writing fantasies, that is what assumptions they have about themselves as writers to put simply. On a complementary *wave* of thinking about Lacanian theory and writing, Hecq (2009; 2013; 2014) has discussed

the effects of an interactive narrative pedagogy, which uses the particular stance of a 'subject not supposed to know' in the manner in which she 'communicates' with her Creative Writing students, as I have mentioned in Chapter 1. Hecq (2013) attempts to 'teach students a relation to language that empowers them by stepping down from the position of master' (p.183) suggesting a reflective practice of the Creative Writing teacher, in order to help mitigate the possibility that students 'please' teachers (p.184-5) by embracing writing styles or practices of their teachers. This approach might be considered an engagement with the students' and the teachers' fantasies about Creative Writing.

On a final note, the analyst's stance I have described above in relation to shifting one's fantasy, is that which is directed towards a neurotic analysand. The direction of treatment for psychotics is different. In the case of psychotics, where unlike the neurotics 'the three dimensions [have not] become firmly tied together by the formation of a kind of a knot – a knot that [...] Lacan generalized as the 'paternal metaphor' [or process of castration]' the *Symbolic*, the *Imaginary* and the *Real* are not held together via castration (Fink 2007, p.263). Put simply, this means they develop a different relationship to language and desire and potentially do not form a structure of fantasy because of this relation. This affects how the analyst will interfere with their speech.

Sometimes, psychotics do not manifest any symptoms because the dimensions are held for them by a 'non-standard knot,' (Fink 2007, p.263), e.g. an artistic activity. For example, Lacan provides the instance of James Joyce who used his writing to 'prevent the imaginary becoming completely separated from the symbolic' (ibid, p.264),[30] i.e. when the character of a novel (Stephen) is portrayed as not feeling attacked as a person when his classmates attack his body, the *Imaginary*

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[30] Ettinger's (2006) conception of 'trans-subjectivity' is not the same as a psychotic's sense of subjectivity. I think that Ettinger considers that we have aspects of transubjectivity that can be articulated along side our usual neurotic subjectivity. Therefore, there is a co-existence of these two relations – the several (experienced in the womb/matrix) and the binary of self/Other separation or inducing a lack (through the phallus/the paternal metaphor/the entry into language and separation from the mOther).

is not connected to the *Symbolic.* This kind of knotting through other activities has been called 'sinthome' by Lacan (ibid, p.265).

Hecq (2005) has drawn on this notion in her discussion of anxiety as the principle that both organizes the act of writing and is fended off through writing (2005, online no pages). She suggests that a particular way of writing might constitute a 'symptom' that becomes a sinthome (for someone whose knotting of registers has not happened in the neurotic manner), which provides a modality of *jouissance* that allows one to 'live on' – to stay sane.

In a clinical context, sometimes, the relation of the analyst with the analysand becomes the 'sinthome' for the psychotic analysand, 'the analyst becomes witness' 'that he can guarantee […]' the new order of tied meanings for the analysand (Fink 2007, p.265). This indicates that a shift in fantasy does not happen or cannot happen in the same way for a psychotic, as there is no fantasy as such. Therefore, a psychotic does not respond to the interaction of the enigmatic analyst in the same way that a neurotic does. I will be conscious of this difference as I explain how I constructed my researcher position in the next chapter.

4.4 Research questions for constructing The Fantasy of Writer Subjectivity

"What is écriture (the writing of the 'writers') other than a similar

system of subjection, which perhaps takes slightly different

forms, but forms whose main rhythms are analogous?"

(Foucault 1970, p.64)

Foucault seems to suggest above that writing itself is a form of subjection. I would like to cleave to his statement, both attaching to and moving away from it. Glynos (2008) and Lapping (2013a) have argued that an articulation of repressed elements might produce in certain circumstances a transformation or a shift in the mode of our subjection. That I hope to invoke with my subsequent chapters, and argue that this might be possible through the particular use of the Creative Writing exercises and the research pedagogical setting I have designed to research them.

Drawing from the above sections, in my research questions I am using the structure of fantasy to wonder how writer-students might engage with the exercises and the research setting, and whether this engagement might affect their attachments to *master signifiers*, which organize their writing fantasy and thus their writer subjectivity.

Considering that the subject is constructed symbolically through her relationship with language and desire as Other, the main research question of this research project is: Is there an effect on one's writer subjectivity through the engagement with these six Creative Writing exercises? More specifically, if we construct our ego/identity[31] through our identifications and dis-identifications in networks of signifiers, is there a shift or enhancement in one's constitution of subjectivity by engaging with these six exercises/games in language and/or the wider research setting?

One's relationship with language reveals one's fantasy of the desire of the Other, in other words, one's desire, that is, through a subject's discourse – how one visibly or invisibly organizes meaning either in talking or writing (visibly), or reading or listening (invisibly). Therefore, one's desire may potentially become manifest via one's interpretation of the desire of the Other, that is one's *Imaginary* assumptions of what the exercise requests. These assumptions are linked to the writing fantasy, and therefore to the writer subjectivity that the writer-student is invested in. Considering this, we may ask: What is the writing fantasy of each participant, (if there is any organization of meaning or signifiers at all that might be traced), and how does the fantasy organize, their spoken and written discourse to display the subsequent writer subjectivity they are invested in, if it does at all? What is the fantasmatic scenario followed in the participants' spoken and written discourse? What are the *master signifiers* organizing this fantasmatic scenario in their discourses?

The enigmatic aspect of language and of the parents' desire is foregrounded in the instruction of the Creative Writing exercise-game being ambiguous about what exactly it requests. We may ask: What role of the Other do these six Creative

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[31] I am using here the term "identity" as interchangeable with "subjectivity," even though Lacan does not conflate the two.

Writing exercise-games play in affecting and/or effecting (or not) the cause of the desire in the discourse of the subjectivity that participants produce? What role of the Other does my own stance as a researcher facilitator, the structure of the classes and the temporality together of this whole project along with the interviews play?

My platform to investigate my participants' subjectivity through the exercises is language and more specifically the signifier and chains of signifiers repeating themselves in their articulations about writing and in their writing. The combination of the analysis and comparison of the written texts and the interviews of the participants produced by the research design (next chapter 5) will help me to answer the question: Are there any differences or similarities arising in the production of writer subjectivity of the participants at any stage of the research process? What are the implications of the experimental pedagogy of this research setting for learning (creative) writing?

In the next chapter, I present the research design and methods of data analysis in order to show how I attempted to answer-explore the questions I have posed here.

Chapter 5

An exploration of six Creative Writing exercises via an experiment course and interviews

'I always speak the truth. Not the whole truth, because there's

no way to say it all. Saying it all is literally [materially] impossible:

words fail. Yet it's through this very impossibility that the truth

holds onto the *Real*'

(Lacan 1987: 7 in Stavrakakis 2007, p.5)

This chapter provides an account of the methods used to conduct this research project, a discussion of the methodological stance that has informed the methods, and finally a consideration of the ethical implications. The chapter has a dual structure; divided into two major sections. In the first section, I describe the stages of research in a practical and concrete way, providing a very basic description of the research design and methods of data collection and processing. In the second section, I repeat the account of the process of research with a more methodological focus.

The second section with the methodological focus has two parts. The first part is a discussion of the underlying theoretical rationale for the construction of the researcher stance. It deals with the specific similarities of ambiguity between the instruction of the Creative Writing exercises and an analysts' stance, the use of some aspects from a Lacanian analyst's position for the formulation of questions in the interviews conducted with the research participants, the course facilitation, and the use of a researcher diary in order to monitor, record and maintain this particular stance.

The emergent epistemological implications and ethical issues are presented in the last part of this second section. This comprises a discussion of the interference of the Lacanian psychoanalytic stance with the data and therefore the participants' assumptions about their writing. I also discuss the particularity of this psychoanalytic intervention using a neurotic relation to language for the stance of the analyst that was employed in the research setting. The amount of information provided to the

participants about the research, the extent of anonymity provided by this research in relation to the participants' Creative Writing texts, and the nominal use of participants' sensitive information in the context of the research are also presented in the context of ethics.

5.1 Researching six Creative Writing Exercises through a Lacanian Psychoanalytic Researcher stance and the Derived Research Design

In light of the scarce qualitative data about the use of Creative Writing exercises in Creative Writing pedagogies in higher education, about learning through writing in the Creative Writing class and about students' Creative Writing texts, the research design was built around the production of Creative Writing texts through Creative Writing exercises.

The main research objective of the thesis has been to investigate the use of six Creative Writing exercises, generating data about the writer-students' assumptions about themselves as writers, about Creative Writing pedagogy and the exercises' instructions. Derived from this interest, an additional research objective has been to generate data that might provide a knowledge-base about the process of writing as learning in the Creative Writing classroom, which might also give insight about any shifts taking place in the students' manner of writing, in order to learn Creative Writing (through the use of Creative Writing exercises).

I explained earlier that the research interest of this thesis, the function of Creative Writing exercises in creative pedagogy, is connected to the choice of methodology, a Lacanian psychoanalytic researcher stance, by the common denominator of their engagement with "interpretation."

Lacanian psychoanalytic theory is concerned with engaging a specific kind of interpretation through symbolic acts of speech constituting the stance of the analyst, which interrupt the flow of the analysand's narrative in the clinic. This specific kind of invisible "interpretation – interaction" by the analyst is concerned with eliciting and interfering with the inherent interpretations the analysand makes in her enunciations whilst speaking (Frosh 2010, p.206-7). Thus, a Lacanian psychoanalyst's stance works with making "manifest" the operation of symbolic associations in the analysand's speech linked with unconscious communications, via never interpreting

from the analyst's position as a distinct person or human-being, but rather constructing oneself as an enigmatic *objet a* (Bracher 1994, 123-6). This enigmatic *objet a* is the position a Lacanian analyst attempts to occupy in the discourse, always deferring the meaning in order to both elicit and disrupt the particularity of meaning-making in the analysand's speech (ibid, p123-6).

In the Creative Writing context, it is possible to argue that the production of (Creative Writing) texts always involves an interpretation, a conscious and/or unconscious manipulation of language elements. In order to explore the inherent interpretations made in the production of Creative Writing texts in this research, from a non-literary criticism perspective, I have constructed an exploratory epistemological lens based on the Lacanian psychoanalytic researcher stance of an analyst in the clinic. To adopt this stance in the process of collection/production of the data, I used formulations of language that construct an enigmatic, ambiguous stance towards the research participants in the research setting. Therefore, I was partially emulating and attempting to transfer some aspects of the use of language by a Lacanian analyst in the research setting, in order to explore the participants' interpretations about themselves as writers, their writing in the context of researching these six Creative Writing exercises.

The research design for the project was a flexible one. I used the following methods to be analytically discussed below:

- initial interview + submission of participant's chosen text
- experiment course + submission of texts produced
- final interview + submission of participant's chosen text

The main methods of data collection chosen – interview and experiment course – sought to produce spoken and written discourse by the participants, in order to have a range of data relating to what the writer-student says she does (interview) and what she actually does (course – writing to exercises).

I have named it an 'experiment' because it involved the exploration of the effects of a particular intervention. Robson (2011, p.94) describes experimentation as: 'a research strategy involving: the assignment of participants to different conditions.' If we consider that the exercises were different "writing conditions," then this course might fit this definition of an experiment. Moreover, this course was

an experiment to the extent that it was designed to enable me to explore what was produced by a particular intervention – sequence of six ambiguous writing exercises. As such, it has been a 'focused' study (ibid, p.94) though not, of course, a strict experimental research design as there were no 'variables' assigned, nor were controls spelled out or tested (ibid, p.94). In addition to the exercises themselves, the use of the Lacanian researcher stance in the process of data generation and analysis was key in producing the research participants' relation to language, and in facilitating my exploration of their "learning in the writing" and any shift that might be traced through the symbolic relations produced out of their engagement with the research setting.

5.1.1 Sampling

a) Creative Writing exercises

The Creative Writing exercises I have used and researched in this research project are the following: "Free-Write," "Write about This" (a 2 pence coin), "Write to the following set of Instructions"(see footnote)[32], "Write Using a Voice Opposite to your Own," "Use the mirror given to you and write about what you see in its reflection," "Write a story using a myth or fairy tale but retell it so that it is changed somehow."

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[32] Write to the following set of instructions:
1. Write a metaphor
2. Say something specific but utterly preposterous
3. Use at least one image for each of the five senses, either in succession or scattered randomly throughout the poem
4. Use one example of synesthesia (mixing the senses)
5. Use the proper name of a person and the proper name of a place
6. Contradict something you said earlier
7. Change the direction or digress from the last thing you said
8. Use a word (slang?) you have never seen in a poem
9. Use an example of false cause-effect logic
10. Use a piece of 'talk' you have actually heard (preferably in dialect and/or which you do not understand')
11. Create a metaphor using the following construction: 'The (adjective) (concrete noun) or (abstract noun)…'
12. Use an image in such a way as to reverse its usual associative qualities
13. Make the persona or character in the poem do something he/she could not do in 'real life'
14. Refer to yourself by nickname and in the third person
15. Write in the future tense, such that part of the poem seems to be a prediction.
16. Modify a noun with an unlikely adjective.
17. Make a declarative assertion that sounds convincing but that finally makes no sense.
18. Use a phrase from a language other than English.
19. Make a nonhuman object say or do something human (personification)
20. Write a vivid image that makes no statement, but that 'echoes' an image from earlier in what you have already written here.
(Feel free to repeat any of the above anywhere in the poem. Fool around).

It would not be generally untrue that these six exercises are commonly used in Creative Writing classes. I was acquainted with them through a book, *The Practice of Poetry* (Behn & Twichell 1992), which was gifted to me by a dear teacher-writer-mentor, when I graduated from secondary school and was admitted to Warwick University to study English Literature and Creative Writing.

I chose these exercises because these were the exercises I had used in my Creative Writing classes in Greece, which initially triggered my curiosity about the different kinds of writings students produced and the students' responses to them (students said they wrote differently to how they usually wrote). From a theoretical perspective, the ambiguity of the exercises was also important, and consistent with the construction of a Lacanian stance.

b) Setting and Participants

The sampling for the research was purposive. The participants recruited were Creative Writing students studying for a Creative Writing course in higher education. These participants were chosen because they were assumed to have a more developed sense of writer identity, and thus might be able to provide a more developed interpretation of their own writing. I was also interested in the increasing institutionalization of, Creative Writing in a higher education institution, which has become a key site of discussion of Creative Writing pedagogy, and this provided a further rationale for carrying out my experiment course in an undergraduate setting.

I was introduced by a colleague in my supervising team to a lecturer in a Creative Writing Department working at a higher education institution, who provided me with access to the sample of students targeted for the research. The selection of participants from the Creative Writing course I was given access to was opportunistic. After getting in touch with this lecturer and informing him of my research interest and project, he agreed that I email his students to ask if they would be willing to participate in a project about exploring writing through writing sessions.

Six participants initially replied to my email enquiry. Five participated in the project, as the sixth one changed his mind before the project. So, the research participants recruited were 5 in total, two females (M and A) and three males (G, Q and E), 4 studying for a Bachelors degree in English Literature and Creative Writing

and one for Drama and Creative Writing. The participants were all native speakers of English, though I did not purposively select native speakers. I provide here three tables summarizing the main demographic information of the participants in relation to gender, age, and writing experience.

Table 1: Gender and Degree of Participants

	English and Creative Writing degree	Drama and Creative Writing degree	Total
Female	1	1	2
Male	3	0	3

Whilst gender balance was an initial concern when I was recruiting the participants, I did not attempt to recruit one more female, in order to have an equal number of female and male participants. I chose to go ahead with this ratio because I thought that such "imbalances" might not severely impact the setting. As this study was not investigating "biological gender" in writing, or gender in general, I think this ratio has been suitable for this research.

Something that has come up in the analysis of the data is that the women in this research explicitly articulate themselves as much less secure with their writer subjectivity than the men. I will address this in the conclusion.

Table 2: Age and Gender of Participants

	Female	Male	Total
20-30	2	2	4
30-40		1	1

In line with the age spread on many undergraduate degrees, the ratio here of 1:4 over: under 30 years of age, is broadly representative.

Table 3: Ethnicity of Participants

I did not specifically ask for my participants' ethnicity but in some cases it came up in the interview data.

	Mixed/British	White/British	Total
Female	1 (participant M)	1 (participant A)	2
Male	2 (participants E, Q)	1 (participant G)	3

I want to point out here that participants E and Q are both British from an ethnic minority background, but did not directly name their ethnic background. Participant E referred to it nominally in an autobiographical story, implying he was not white. Participant Q is not white British, but did not refer to his ethnicity at all. Participant M mentioned in her interview in relation to her writing identity that she is 'half-Caribbean,' though her external characteristics do not directly point to this ethnicity. Participants A and G are white British.

Finally, I provide here a brief overview of the participants' experience of writing and texts submitted and produced in this research setting, drawing from their interviews in summary.

Participant E is a mature student, who has over ten years of experience of writing. He explained in his first interview that the reason why he was doing this degree is because it has always been his wish to write and to cover the gaps in his education, and because of the texts he likes to read ('funny but dark'). He likes to produce texts he would like to read. All of his texts were fiction/short-stories, apart from three, which he wrote in free-verse in a more poetic style. He highlighted both in the first and final interview that he 'cannot' write poetry.

Participant A is a young woman in her 20s, who said she started writing because she used to love scribbling lyrics and played music as well. She also liked to invent imaginary characters as she explained she was an only child. At the time of the research, Participant A was studying for the Drama and Creative Writing undergraduate degree. She also explained she has been influenced by contemporary playwrights such as Tim Crouch, and one of the tutors in the department at which she studied. Seven of eight of her texts were written as a monologue (first-person narrator)/poem. One of eight of her texts is a short-story verging on being a long poem. Participant A seemed to expand her style of writing in two out of eight texts.

Participant M is a young woman in her 20s. At the time she was studying for the English Literature and Creative Writing degree. She started writing because she

is interested in political issues, she declared in her first interview, such as 'eugenics.' She has also been influenced by her readings of 'Harry Potter' (Rowling 1997) and 'The Amber Spy Glass' (Pullman, 2000). Her main mode of writing is a simple third-person narration of a story, which usually has a wider meaning, written in a narrative style that quickly moves to the resolution or the point of the story. M usually writes fiction (all of her texts are fiction in the project); though in her interview she said she also writes poems. M seemed to have shifted her style of writing in two out of eight texts.

Participant G is a young man in his 20s. At the time, he was studying for the Drama and Creative Writing Bachelors degree. He explained that he started writing because he liked drawing comic books in school and because it was an activity that helped him socialize. He did not mention any authors who might have influenced his writing. He explained however, that his coming from the 'deep countryside' may have affected the kinds of themes he deals with in his writing and the techniques he uses in his writing: e.g. description of landscapes, and protagonists who break down in urban areas. G did not significantly shift his style of writing; he reported in the final interview that he 'stuck' to his style.

Participant Q is a young man in his 20s, who was studying at the time for the English Literature and Creative Writing degree. According to his first interview, he combines his interest in science fiction and video games to write, but also has another writer identity which he uses to explore his emotions, when he writes poetry according to his interview accounts. Q also explained in his first interview that he likes the idea of 'world-building.' All of his texts were dramatically different from each other, apart from three science fiction genre texts: his first submitted text before the course began, his sixth produced text, and final submitted text. All of his other texts were experimentations with different styles.

On a final note, all of the participants seem to link their writing to something they like to read or to another playful activity that they like to occupy themselves with.

5.2 Methods of Data Collection and Processing

5.2.1. Data Collection

This project comprised three phases: Initial Interview Phase, Experiment Course Phase, Final Interview Phase.

1. Initial One-on-One Interview Phase:

The first phase of the research comprised one-to-one unstructured interviews with each of the five participants in the project. The interviews took place in a lecturer's office space in the department at the university. Apart from the furniture, it was an empty undecorated office. I arranged an interview with each one of the participants at a convenient time for all via email. Of course, the individual reactions that the participants might have had to this space are beyond the control of this research. However, it is worth noting that it is possible that the fact that it was in the department where they were studying might have affected our interactions.

In terms of physically placing myself in the room during the research interview, I sat across from the research participant in a similar chair away from the office desk. Since the space of the interview was part of an academic setting I wanted to avoid having a physical obstacle between myself and the interviewee so as not to imply an authoritative distance. Of course, it may be that for some participants this may have implied more of an authoritative distance, depending on their own interpretation of interactions and proximity with academics.

In this first interview, the principal aim was to gather primary data to explore the participants' relation to language and Creative Writing, in order to compare to their produced subjectivity in the final interview and in the written texts produced through the exercises. I wished to elicit their own particular unique discourse of subjectivity as related to their desire to study Creative Writing and to write. The initial question was: "tell me about (how you feel or view) writing?" The interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. I followed up with questions using the participants' own phrases or words, asking them to give an example or "tell me more" about what they talked about. Sometimes, I repeated a word they used to encourage them to talk about it further. I wrote any impressions I had before and after the interview in a researcher diary.

2. Second Phase: Experiment Course

The second phase produced the main research setting, where six Creative Writing exercises were presented to the participants in an 'experiment course.' The course comprised six sessions lasting approximately one and a half hours each week. The class took place in the same room throughout the duration of the course. The room in which this research took place was not within the department building where the students studied. This may have affected the way students engaged with the research setting, being an unfamiliar space where they had not been taught before.

The desks in the class were rectangular tables. I pushed four tables together every time, so that the students sat on a large shared rectangular table, and I sat with them on one side, alone. This, in a sense, physically brought the students together in the writing and discussing. Each of the four tables was long enough so that there was a "one-person" distance between each person. From my perspective, the spacing between the students did not seem too suffocating or too isolating. Two students sat on my left side, two students on my right side, and one student sat across from me. They all chose to sit in the same arrangement every time, though no such arrangement had been suggested by me.

My role in the classes was that of a facilitator. The class comprised three parts: first, the presentation of the exercise instruction, given to the participants on printed handouts, with the injunction under it 'you may stop in the next 15 to 20 minutes'. I also read this instruction aloud to the participants; second, writing to the exercises (15 to 20 or, in the later sessions 20 to 30 minutes); third, reading and discussion of texts written.

The fact that I read the exercise aloud could have linked the instruction of the exercise to me. However, I think this might have been inevitable as the whole project could be linked to me, as I was the researcher. This also highlights the blurred boundaries between the tools of pedagogy and the pedagogue. Also, timing may have affected them with the expression 'you may stop in the next' – implying that they could not stop earlier.

I had a stopwatch with me to monitor the writing time. I informed the participants of the time constraints five minutes before the writing time was over,

and asked them to stop writing when the given time had passed. 20 to 30 minutes was considered enough time, so as to allow time for them to write up to one page, though I never indicated how little or how much they would need to write.

When the participants finished writing, they were informed in every class that they had the option not to read their texts if they did not wish. I used the phrase "any comments?" every time a participant finished reading their piece, to initiate discussion. I recorded my responses to the participants and anything else I considered important at the time before, during and after each class in a researcher diary. I also audio recorded the discussions in sessions 3 – 6.

In the second exercise, I provided a 2 pence coin as the object of "Write About This." In the fifth exercise, "Use the Mirror Given to You and Write about what you See in Its Reflection" I provided each student with a square piece of a mirror which they could hold in their hand or place down on their desk.

3. Third-Final Phase: One-to-One interviews

A final unstructured one-to-one interview was also conducted with all participants, in order to generate data that could help me observe whether there were any differences from their initial stance and its development over the course of six weeks. I asked them to tell me anything they wished in general about the course, their experience of it, the exercises, and anything else they wanted to mention.

The interviews lasted between 30 to 60 minutes, arranged at a convenient time for all participants. Four interviews were conducted on the same day at a different lecturer's office space in the department. One interview was conducted three days later in the same space. This office space was also not a personalized space of an academic, empty of decorations and any personal signifiers that might point to a particular academic's office. I recorded my responses to the participants before and after each interview in this phase in the researcher diary I kept.

Construction of Project Space: I do not forego here my own ethnicity. I am Greek, not British yet bilingual (English-Greek) as I attended an English speaking secondary school (Anatolia College in Thessaloniki, Greece) and program of study (International Baccalaureate, which awarded me a Bilingual Diploma), and was admitted to the Warwick University Writing Program through submission of a portfolio of poetry,

written in English (along with required grades). Because of my subsequent graduate and postgraduate studies and work in the UK, I have lived almost all of my adult life in the UK. Thus, I am familiar with the UK culture but not always familiar with the assumptions a British citizen and native speaker, who grew up in this country, might have.

Though, I do not believe in having faith in "signifiers" used to determine one's origin and boundaries, my hybrid identity might make me more sensitive to emergent signifiers that others might ignore or over-emphasize. I am aware of how my ignorance might be helpful on the one hand, and of how it could allow for some small degree of naiveté in my accounts of the participants on the other. I hope to address how this might have affected my analysis and interpretations, through my reflexive and "wondering" writing, and in the data analysis section of this chapter.

The participants were informed minimally of my educational and professional background: that I am a poet, and that I have a Bachelor's degree in English and Creative Writing from the Warwick Writing Program and a Masters in Classics from University College London (UCL). I did not provide any further personal information about me, this being part of the wider Lacanian researcher stance that I wished to adopt in the generation of the data; though the signifier 'Warwick Writing Program' may have affected their initial responses towards me. I attempted to be enigmatic when the participants presented me with personal questions, and used the researcher diary to also record my personal reactions toward such comments, not articulating them to the participants. I will provide more detail about this stance in the second part of this chapter.

Texts: In addition to the data produced from the interview and the classes, I asked the participants to provide me with a favourite piece of their writing before they started the experiment course, and one after the course. I processed these to see if there was a noted difference between the two writings produced outside the class, before and after the experiment course. I assumed a "favourite" would be a useful text, as it would be evidence of their interpretation of the features of composition in a text that they like or idealize, linked with their writer identity.

Recorded Classroom Discussions: After the first class and the discussion that followed, it became obvious to me that even though class discussion of the texts was not the

main data to be investigated, it could not be ignored. I decided that it could be used as a method of triangulating 'findings,' as it was being generated as part of the whole research project's framework: the exercises, the texts that were written and my own particular stance as facilitator, writer, teacher and interviewer. Thus, I agreed with my supervisor that it would be in line with the Ethics guidelines observed to email the participants to ask whether they would give their consent to be recorded in class discussion from the next class forward. All participants gave their written consent to the form I provided in the second class, after I had received their email replies. The recording of the session started after the participants had finished writing to the exercises, as I did not want the presence of the audio recorder to affect them in their engagement with the exercise.

Researcher Diary: In order to monitor my researcher stance and provide additional triangulating data, I wrote diary entries about anything that made an impression on me before and after the interviews, and before, during and after the classes.

5.2.2 Data Processing

Transcription: In total, 10 interviews were transcribed, two with each participant, one before and one after the research project. 8 (Creative Writing) texts written by each participant were used also for the analysis, six produced in class, one each time, and two submitted, written outside the class, one before the project started and one after. I have numbered the participants' responses in both interviews continuously (e.g. A58, or A105). In writing up the analysis, I use the participants' letter/name and number of response to refer to their interview replies. I use single quotes to refer to their words and double quotes for my words.

Most of the submitted texts were in typed-up form, whilst the texts produced in class were hand-written by the students. At each session, I took the participants' hand-written texts, photocopied them and returned them in the following session.

The main data was the interviews and the texts. I transcribed the speech of the participant interviews in a continuous manner, not assuming-inserting punctuation, unless an extremely special emphasis was heard in the tone of voice or a pause or silence could be counted in time. I did not want to assume stops grammatically in the transcript as I thought these could interrupt "meanings" or associations that

might not have been connected otherwise if I punctuated them. When there was a small pause of three to five seconds in the replies, I inserted three dots to indicate it. For lengthier pauses, I inserted the seconds and the word 'pause' in brackets. All hand written texts from the classes were typed up and saved as files. I took into account where words were crossed out in the hand-written texts, and included this visually as crossed out in the typed-up text.

Finally, I less formally transcribed the recorded classroom discussions, and took notes on repeated signifiers (words or phrases or pauses). The notes I took on the recorded classroom discussions were used to confirm or question any repeated words, signifiers or ideas that came up in the analysis of the main data. I divided each recorded session (apart from the 4th as it was shorter in length) into approximately 10-minute time slots (e.g. 2nd class 23:09-39:30min).

In addition, I used my handwritten diary entries to consider and check on my own researcher-facilitator stance in the classes, whilst again considering the main data. One might criticize the use of the interviews and the texts as main data for analysis, instead of the recorded classroom discussions and the diary entries. However, I think that the analysis indicates a consistency of meaning-making patterns in each participant's discourse in texts and interviews, in the classroom discussions and in my diary entries.

5.3 Adopting a Lacanian researcher Stance

In this section of the chapter, I discuss how I attempted to generate and explore the research data by adopting a Lacanian researcher stance, choosing a methodology that is itself informed by a theory and practice that engages conditions of "interpretation." It is possible to argue that Lacanian psychoanalytic practice in the clinic (and thus its theory), through the discourse/position of the analyst, is concerned with producing a particular mode of reflexivity in the analysand triggered by symbolic acts of speech enacted by the analyst. By "reflexivity," here, I refer to the specific mode of reflecting about one's reflections in the Lacanian context. Fink (2007, p.35) explains that this position interrupts the analysand's speech, making the analysand question and think about the inherent assumptions in the "self-narrative"

she produces, slowly unraveling the imaginary associations and adopting a new relationship with the symbolic register and its representation of the real. The analyst essentially becomes the cause of the analysand's wondering desire (ibid, p.35). This stance enables the analysand to possibly articulate excluded aspects of her subjectivity (repressed material) – "new material," that "breaks" with the usual structure of the analysand's personal discourse.

Exploring the position of the Lacanian analyst in a social research setting, my interaction with the participants was informed by the ways that an analyst speaks to an analysand to constitute this researcher stance. The idea that an analyst functions not as a human being with whom the analysand interacts but as a pure function – maintaining an enigmatic stance – informs the way in which language is used in the interaction. Next, I start by considering the "request" of the Creative Writing exercises and its similarity to the "request" of the analyst, the conception of the interview, the experiment course, the use of researcher diary and methods of data analysis.

5.3.1 Creative Writing Exercises relation to Lacanian Theory

The Creative Writing exercises that were used in this particular research setting have an ambiguous instruction, which has some similarities with the stance of a Lacanian analyst and the original experience of the advent of subject, where the subject has to guess the "Other's desire."

Writer handbooks, which provide Creative Writing exercises and sometimes writing tips, describe the exercises' function mainly in relation to producing new material for writing. There is a paucity of research about Creative Writing exercises. Ben and Twichell (1992, xiii), for example, write about the exercises included in their book, not only referring to the six I used:

> A good exercise serves as a scaffold-it eventually falls away, leaving behind something new in language, language that now belongs to the writer. Sometimes, this new thing will be a real poem. In any event, exercises can result in a new understanding of the relation of image to meaning, or a way into the unconscious, perhaps a way of marrying autobiography with invention, or a sense of the possibilities of the various kinds of structures, […] [e]xercises can

help you think about, articulate and solve specific creative problems. Or they can undermine certain assumptions you might have, forcing you to think – and write – beyond the old limitations.

The authors above describe how these exercises might help a writer's understanding of her practice of writing. They go on to say that exercises can be 'provocative, challenging and often entertaining [...] engaging on several levels, and should necessitate the breaking of new ground' (ibid, p.xiii). All of these descriptions may well describe the (*Imaginary*) experience of the writers, teachers and students, but what concerns this research is: how can we explore the basis of these claims? What 'way' into the 'unconscious' do these exercises plough through, breaking 'new ground'? What does 'good' mean in the context of Creative Writing, of writing, of being a writer? For whom is a writer writing? Curtis (2009, p.106) has criticized the conception of the "unconscious" invoked in Creative Writing pedagogy handbooks discussing "how to write," suggesting it is 'under-theorised' and 'over-simplified.'

The common element in all of the six exercises used in the experiment course is a playfulness expressed through an ambiguity. The ambiguity is constituted in the uncertainty surrounding exactly what the student is being asked to write. The instructive phrase, for instance, "write about this," is ambiguous in relation to the unspecified object of the writing – even though an object is presented. So, there is an uncertain directive given, which depends on the student's understanding of the Other: as language, which relates to the student's writer subjectivity.

As I have already suggested, the ambiguity of exercise might be thought as analogous to the ambiguity of understanding the Other's desire in our *originary* experience of becoming subject and with the Lacanian analyst's stance. In Lacanian theory[33], the way we understand relates to the connections/associations we make in the chains of signifiers that constitute our fantasmatic ego. By "signifier," here I mean the symbol of language or concept that it represents – but which always stands for something else. Stavrakakis (2007, p.42) explains this instantiation of the subject in signification processes:

> From a psychoanalytic point of view, reality, the human world, is

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[33] Though as I have qualified in Chapter 4, there are many interpretations of Lacan's works and thus constructions of Lacanian theory.

> 'upheld, woven through, constituted, by a tress of signifiers.' Reality always implies the subject's integration into a play of significations (III: 249). The whole of human reality is nothing more than a *montage* of the symbolic and the imaginary (seminar of 16 November 1966), an articulation of signifiers, which are invested with imaginary – fantasmatic – coherence and unity.

Stavrakakis insinuates here that to be subjects in language, to communicate socially, we subject ourselves to an incomplete yet almost automated system of already sedimented preconceptions, which constantly re-present and reproduce themselves in our quest to keep our desire moving towards our "ideal ego," which is produced by our cause of desire: to speak, to write, to listen and to read.   Every student, even though they follow the pathway provided by the exercise – for example, to "free-write" – will interpret the instruction in a different way and write something different. The difference in writing will be dependent on, for example, how they view the construction of a sentence: one may write three nouns, another may write a "proper" "subject verb object" sentence. In this way, they reveal their particular relation to the Law of the Letter (the rules of the *Symbolic* register as the participants perceives them) from a Lacanian point of view. Their particular relation to the Law of the Letter reveals their desire to write, represented by a structure of fantasy specific to each participant.

Going back to the exercise's enigmatic desire: this type of ambiguous instruction, then, induces the student to engage with a certain request for writing that is open to his or her interpretation, which is similar to the enigmatic space constructed in analysis and partially with the original experience of the advent of the subject. Like the Creative Writing exercises' enigmatic space, the eliciting of the subject's relation to language from a Lacanian perspective constituted also the rationale and informed the technique I used to construct my stance in the interviews as an interviewer and in the classes as facilitator.

5.3.2 Conception of Lacanian researcher interview and experiment course

The main principle upon which my researcher stance was constructed was the specificity of the interaction between a Lacanian analyst and an analysand. I

attempted to adopt as much as is possible the position of a Lacanian analyst as a researcher and interviewer. This position was informed by the understanding that an analyst maintains a pure function towards the analysand, and does not engage the analysand with the analyst's *Imaginary* interpretations, thus enabling the analysand with the analyst's enigmatic stance to produce material that represents the analysand's *Imaginary* relation to the Other (a transference), which is slowly unraveled via the interaction of the analyst's specific attention to the analysand's speech. Laurent (1997/2006, online no pages) explains how a trained psychoanalyst does not impose his fantasy onto the analysand:

> Lacan's formula that the subject receives his own message from the Other in inverted form includes both the deciphering and the wish to act upon whom it is that one is addressing. Ultimately, when an analysand speaks he wishes, beyond the meaning of what he says, to reach the partner of his expectations, beliefs and desires in the Other. He aims at the partner of his fantasy. A psychoanalyst, enlightened by analytic experience about the nature of his own fantasy, takes this into account. He restrains from acting in the name of this fantasy.

My specific interaction with the research participants in the interview and classroom context was concerned with not becoming 'partners in their fantasy,' both eliciting their relation to Other, which is constitutive of their fantasy, but also at the same time subtly subverting it.

a) Conception of Interview

Starting with the interviews, in using a Lacanian psychoanalytic orientation, I am assuming that researcher and interviewee are co-producing meaning together (Clarke&Hogget 2009, p.8). My use of Lacanian psychoanalytic techniques of the analyst on a wider spectrum is in line with the work of Hollway and Jefferson (2000) assuming there is unconscious communication, transference, and countertransference, which require a particular phrasing of questions such as using open-ended questions, eliciting story, avoiding using 'why questions' and using the respondent's ordering and phrasing (Clarke&Hogget, 2009, p. 9-10). Clarke and Hogget (2009, p. 11) refer to Wengraf and Chamberlayne's argument of the importance of making the distinction between what is said in the 'story' of the

interview and the 'lived life.' From my Lacanian perspective, this points to the nuanced aspect of the unconscious censorship (from a psychoanalytic perspective) or the already inherent interpretive element in any interview account. The participant is always (consciously or unconsciously) interpreting what he or she is "supposed" to answer to a research question. For this reason, I have considered my interviewer stance key to the eliciting of data for this project.

I constructed an open-ended free-association interview to allow the participants to structure what is discussed, so that any unconscious motivations or indications towards their relation to Creative Writing and themselves might be "revealed," without suppressing or shaping these through a traditional form of interview (see Clarke&Hogget 2009, p.9-11). At the same time, my use of psychoanalytic theory in the interview approach was not aiming to expand an existing established form of qualitative interview in social research (not Hollway and Jefferson's 'free-association interview' (2000)) but to produce and explore a new approach based on the stance of the Lacanian analyst.

i) A researcher who is Not signifying something:

In order to attempt to construct a Lacanian interviewer position, I employed "language" in a specific way to produce my interaction with the participants: being abstract with my initial question, asking questions based on their phrasing, not interpreting their replies to my questions, not providing approval or disapproval of their replies and punctuating their speech at points to elicit more material.

To begin with, I remained as general as possible in terms of my initial interview question (demand). In this way, I attempted to elicit the participants' associations to the signifier 'writing,' in line with the idea that the analyst should not become partner in the fantasy of the analysand. I asked each of my five participants to: 'tell me about writing' or 'how they view or feel about writing.' I alternated the phrase, so that one participant could not inform the other of the specific phrasing that was used to conduct the interview. In the last interview, I asked if they had any feedback about the course or anything they wanted to say to me or in general.

When the participant stopped speaking, would "run out" of an answer, I would attempt to pick up on their last phrase, or a word they had used in their

response and ask them to elaborate on that. By not telling them anything specific I mean that I avoided using my own words, which would have a personal (in Lacanian terms: *Imaginary*) "individual" meaning for each of the participants and would make them assume something about what I wanted to hear as a researcher in the interview. I was hoping that their first response to the open request 'tell me about writing' would also be a clue as to how they come to grips with the lack of the signifier, which means a lack of giving a name to something and what "name" or signifier or thing or object or concept, however one may call it, they would come up with first. So, I took their initial response about 'writing,' that is the first signifiers they associated to "writing" as related to their individual "writer subjectivity."

ii) Using open questions and phrases:
Below is an example of an "open" phrase and of using the phrase of the participant to initiate the interview:

> Z: I'll just say again that the purpose of the interview is to get to know you better with regards your writing and language. So let's start off and see if you can tell me about um how you feel about writing?
>
> Participant E: okay well
>
> Z: or view writing, Creative Writing
>
> Participant E: um well I like writing, I've wanted to write for a long long time um probably since I was a kid I never really did anything about until about till about ten years ago when I started doing Creative Writing courses … I enjoy writing I mostly try and write well originally I wanted to write fantasy fiction um but I've been drawn more towards writing humorous fiction, although quite often the fanta … some aspect of fantasy might be, it's the sort of thing I like to read um I have been so I have been writing for about ten years I've been writing fairly seriously for a six or seven years and I came to do a course at [Anonymous University] more because I wanted to improve my knowledge of English Literature so ... […][34]

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[34] I am not including the rest of the reply for brevity.

Z: mmm you said fantasy, so when you say fantasy, what is it, what kind of fantasy are you referring to? (participant E, first interview, April 2012).

In asking the question as above, I intended to generate data that produces directly or highlights the participants' individual interpretation of what I am asking and their first associations of what writing is for them and others. Of course, this is not to say that "I' as "Zoe," as a physical appearance, or as a researcher and "named" in letter as poet do not have an effect on what the participant replied to me. It is inevitable that any reply (at least initially) is co-constructed with the person who asks the question, if not with spoken or oral signifiers, with visual signifiers that might be operating unconsciously on both sides. My own anxiety is reflected in the initial question, in the excerpt above, where I do not manage to be short and absolutely abstract, in fact I insert a "condition": "let's see if you can…" I compromise and rephrase because I do not feel comfortable with my identity as this "Lacanian" researcher yet, though I was not completely conscious of that at the time.

Studying all of the interviews I have conducted, I did not manage absolutely to be ambiguous or "pure function" in my formulation of questions. Indeed, I don't have any training, and this was my first experience of carrying out research interviews, so to have maintained such a pure stance would have been an impossible task. My aim, though, was, to infuse my approach with a dialectical stance that informs a Lacanian psychoanalyst's practice of working with the *Symbolic* of an analysand's speech.

To explain the difference, for example, I did not say: 'tell me about writing' and remain silent, which might be, from a strict perspective, an application of Lacanian technique. This relates to ethics. As Cartwright (2004) has pointed out, the interests of the analysand differ from the interests of the research participants. So, when transferring such concepts used in the clinic, one must consider the ethics of research towards one's participants and the setting to which this concept is transferred. First of all, I did not want to upset my participants by appearing completely unresponsive in the context of a research interview to their questions about what they were being asked. So, I rephrased my questions, if I needed to.

Certainly, being in an analysis session, the expectations of the analysand are different from those of a person being interview for educational research.

A second ethical issue that relates to the above is that one must appreciate that the participants had not signed up to be "psychoanalyzed" but to provide research in an educational setting. Therefore, I did not find it ethical to absolutely "apply" at all times a Lacanian response style of 'hmm' or silence, and attempted to reflect about it within the interview. An absolutely directly transferred decontextualized approach could potentially have put the participants' under significant psychic stress and would involve more than an engagement of Creative Writing knowledge from their part. It would involve also a more intense psychological engagement. The approach of the 'discourse of the analyst,' in fact, is part of the engagement of psychoanalytic therapy.

iii) Not identifying or Disagreeing with:

Lacanian psychoanalytic technique arises from the notion of not symbolizing "anything" or something to the analysand, so as to maintain this pure function for the productivity of the analysis, in order to become the cause of the wondering of the participant's desire. This means that one does not identify or disagree with or provide any opinion to the analysand:

> Lacan rather than seeking to satisfy the patient's passion for being which *can* be satisfied through identification – tries to get the analysand to encounter her *manqué-a-etre* (lack of being, failure to be, want-to-be). The analyst should strive to bring the analysand to encounter the absence of a signifier in the Other, a signifier given by the Other that can take her under its wing and justify her existence, say why she is here and what her purpose […]. It is a misfortune to identify with someone, for it keeps me from grappling with and going beyond my lack of being. (Fink 2004, p.37)

By not identifying with the analysand, the analyst allows the analysand to become more reflexive about what she says, about what she thinks she is. Essentially, in the course of the analysis, the analyst instigates with her stance the desire in the analysand to go further and to wonder about one's assumptions about who one is or what one says. Taking this idea into a setting for an interview, I

thought that by not identifying with the participants I would allow for the interview to "move" by itself and not "move" according to my "desire" of what I like or wanted/expected to hear about. For example, one of the participants, A, repeatedly said how badly she articulates herself. One would suppose that a teacher or a friend would reassure her. I attempted to remain silent for as along as I could, making 'hmm' sounds to let her go as far as she wished to talk about this:

> A26: […] I write about quite a lot and not being able to articulate myself, which is something I really struggle 'cause I can never say what I mean and I think writing in a poem in a kind of a frustra … flustered style is quite a nice challenge cause it gets all down and I have to force it into like two columns or something like that which is nice because when I speak I just kind of ramble and enter say quite what I mean and a lot of my poems have kind of a turnaround poem moment where I start to go a bit kind of mad and never say what I mean yea … I think it's about being I used to do a lot of I looked I do drama and Creative Writing so I used to do a lot of performances and I loved having a script cause as soon as I learnt the lines I knew them I could just say them but um … and to an extent improv … improvising was fine too if I was a character but have I am having to be myself writing a poem about myself I found it very hard at first I could never say what without sounding kind of drippy and slushy and pretentious and horrible like a lot of my early writings were just kind of really like self indulged rambles about me feeling I don't know … I am an a only child no friends *[change of voice as if playing a character) back to normal voice]* that kind of thing it was just so dull like I hated reading it back so I just kind of threw them away and started again … I think so a lot of my friends have kind of a slight point of humour in them hopefully as you see the person kind of standing there in front of you knowing what they're going to say or se they've rehearsed a poem but maybe having no idea what they're talking about … if that makes sense … it's quite a lot of things there

> Z: you said flustered and it's about … putting all of these into one form so you … do you find pleasure taking this feeling of all over the place and then

> A28: yeah …

> Z: and making aesthetics of sound that kind of brings something beautiful out of it?

In this excerpt, I attempted to use two techniques. First, I did not reassure the participant about how she articulates. Second, I picked up on a word that seemed to disrupt her reply. I have not noted the silence from my part in the excerpt above, but it is insinuated in the long excerpt presented/ spoken by the participant. There were points in her reply where I could have inserted a question but decided to remain silent. One point would be to tell her she articulates just fine; another point would be "oh what you have said is fine there are not too many things there" or "that is okay this is all very useful." Instead, I attempted to transfer/apply another analysis technique: I picked up on a possible slip of tongue: 'frustra' she then said 'flustered'. At the same time, I am making the "mistake" here to ask 'do you find pleasure' assuming that the word 'pleasure' might indeed be what A is feeling when describing what she is doing, and then subsequently I named her practice as 'making aesthetics of sound [which creates] […] something beautiful.' My technique was not completely Lacanian from a purely clinical perspective. I explain the notion of picking up disruptions next, and discuss this issue in the final part of this section.

iv) Highlighting and Repeating Slips of Tongue:

'Scansion' and picking up on slips of tongue is another Lacanian psychoanalytic technique used by practitioners to highlight features of speech in their analysand (Fink 2007, Chapter 3). I attempted to do this with my participants in order to help them further elaborate *Other* parts of what they said, which usually are not the main content of what they say. I thought this would provide additional information and elicit material that I could analyze and study as their 'writer subjectivity.' For example, I repeated to a participant a word he used to talk about what he likes to do with his writing, and this repetition seemed to bring out a response that indicated some sort of blockage in relation to articulating to this signifier:

> E19: well I like ... okay so ... okay I write because I like making people laugh because I like making people I suppose either sad or scared but not in a sense [pause] way um and I quite like to shock people at times as well which might give them a story slightly and [pause] I just feel good when I've sort of managed to create a story that does all those things ...
> Z20: okay ... um you said shock you like to shock people why do you think you enjoy that?

E20: um maybe shock's a bit of a strong word, maybe shock's a strong word I mean I don't particularly write horror

In this instance, I am picking up on the verb 'shock' and I am mirroring it back to the participant, yet I also make the "mistake" of assuming he takes pleasure in 'shocking.' At the same time, this is not a 'mis-take' because this pleasure might indeed be a kind of a '*jouissance.*' I will elaborate in the second chapter of analysis how this particular instance might have elicited excluded signifiers of the participant's writer subjectivity – which, through the process of the interview, and later on in his writing began to be verbalized and symbolized in his speech and texts.

To summarize, the above techniques of producing a specific interaction through the medium of language used in psychoanalytic practice have produced a particular Lacanian interviewer stance, which has generated a specific form of data that is eliciting the participants' desire but also subtly operating on it in their articulations.

It is important to note again that I do not claim to have exhaustively been a Lacanian interviewer at all times, as I was constantly negotiating the difference of space (clinic versus research setting) in my attempt to construct this position.

b) Conception of the Experiment course

In producing a Lacanian facilitator stance in conducting the classes, I took into account Bracher's point of view that learning is interfered with or motivated by the threats to or the support of the student's identity (Bracher 2006). I wanted to be careful not to influence the notions the students might have about themselves or Creative Writing or what they are meant to be writing by revealing to them my personal opinions, likes and dislikes.

The structure of the class, as mentioned earlier, was made up of three parts, first presenting the exercise to the students, second, asking them to write to it for 20 to 30 minutes, then third, an optional reading and discussion of texts written in class.

In terms of my stance in presenting the exercise, if a participant asked me what was meant by the writing instruction given to them, I replied "whatever you think the exercise requests." This ambiguous reply was part of my attempt to

construct the enigmatic Lacanian psychoanalytic researcher stance in class, which confused the participants about my desire for the research and the class, was potentially eliciting their own assumptions about what was being asked.

In terms of my stance as a facilitator in the class discussion, I attempted not to "demand" they participate. Whether they opted to participate each time or not was considered part of the data generation. After the students wrote, I would ask if anyone wanted to read but also remind them that they did not have to read. Participants, of course, reacted to this in different ways. For instance, in his final interview participant G told me that there was no choice for him not to read (G90). After a student read their text, I would ask: "Any comments?" to initiate the space for the discussion. I facilitated the discussion but did not respond with my own opinion to their statements about their or others' work[35]. For example, after a text had been read by one participant, another participant commented that she found the text 'quite masculine'. I asked "What is masculine?" One might say that I did not lead the class as a facilitator towards a certain learning objective in a conventional way, pointing out what is "right" in the practice. For example, considering more analytically what mode of writing might be named as "masculine" by the participant could have become a discussion about authors who have written in a masculine style for instance. I did not go into this.

Another example of my stance relates to an instance when a student referred to me in one of his texts in the 5th exercise, when the students used a mirror, and in his comments after reading the texts. I did not ask why, I allowed him to talk about what he wished to, when it was his turn to comment. However, I did fall into the *Imaginary* register of telling him that even though he said I could not see him in his text, I did actually see him writing about me. I did not have to say that, yet this participant elicited in me my own insecurity of wanting to be in control, even though there was no "need" to assert it. I refer to this incident in relation to the participants' overall engagement with the setting in Chapter 7.

I am aware that the particular way I contributed to the discussion had different effects on the participants. My perceived silence, as a "seminar tutor,"

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[35] I had decided that I would interfere only if someone spoke negatively or attacked another student, but this did not happen.

being just a facilitator of discussion, might have been interpreted in different ways by the participants. For example, participant M in her final interview thought that I was silent more than usual because the data had to be 'accurate' (M257). Participant A, on the other hand, said I was not as silent as another tutor of hers about whom she complained: 'I am paying a lot of money and I don't want to just sit there in silence' (A184). This statement could easily have been a displacement about how A felt in terms of the project I ran, but maybe not have felt consciously or unconsciously at liberty to tell me. The tutor, whom A described, got angry when her silence was met with the students' silence. It is very unlikely that a psychoanalyst will get angry if the analysand does not talk, as this would most certainly be counter-productive to the analysis (the psychoanalyst would then begin to formulate a demand towards the analysand, acting on the analyst's *Imaginary* assumptions). As Lapping (2013a) points out in her exploration of her reactions to a research participant, articulating to the participant how the researcher feels about what they have said can be an imposition of a demand of the researcher's desire on to the participant.

I wanted the stimulus, which would potentially affect the participants, to be the Creative Writing exercise and the enigmatic research setting of the interview and the class, not my own emotional contribution. At the same time, my own "non-contributing" position has potentially affected the participants in what they have produced. The analysis seems to indicate that it has. I explored my stance as the course was run, and looked to generate data in the form of a research diary (discussed next), which could provide me with useful insight about my "non-contribution."

To consider the effects of the class discussion, I asked about the discussion in the final interview. The class discussions, which I decided to record after the first session was another helpful form of data, which allowed me to "triangulate" any repeating opinions or themes or disruptions across all data. In psychoanalysis, too, "triangulating" is important: the more an analysand talks, the more "data" the analyst has to extrapolate associations of signifiers, appearing in different phrasings or syntaxes, or whatever context might be repeated, containing a similarity or anomaly to the usual organization of the analysand's speech. Of course, the material

produced in analysis is much more in-depth and arises out of a long-standing relationship with the analyst, compared to the relatively short time-space of this research (around 8 weeks in total).

c) Research diary

I used a research diary as a record and a depository to note and "disperse" my own affective reactions to the participations, which potentially related to my *Imaginary* interpretation of what the participants were communicating to me either on the level of texts, or interviews, or class discussions. The researcher diary helped me construct a particular mode of reflexivity, where I did not harness my affects as clues to interpret the participants' motivations or unconscious communications, in contrast to researchers who trust their affect in relation to interpret participants' responses, e.g. Clarke (2002). This mode of reflexivity, which has not been particularly explored in the research interview setting, except for Lapping (2013a), allowed me not to interfere with my participants' responses in a way that would impose on them my own insecurities and desires about this project. The alternative approach is a legitimate one too. However, I was interested in exploring a consistently ambiguous setting, my stance and the exercises, asking a different question about the relation of the researcher with the researched and producing corresponding data, which mapped this conception.

Conducting the interviews, and being a facilitator in the classes with a Lacanian psychoanalytic approach was a difficult objective to accomplish, mainly because I had not done it before and also because of my personal experience of psychoanalysis, which has given me an understanding of how complex the profession of a psychoanalyst is from an emotional/ personal perspective. Psychoanalysts have their own psychoanalysts in order to maintain their professional (not personally involved) stance with their patients. Even though at the time I had began my own analysis[36] in January 2012, for personal and professional reasons

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[36] My personal analysis is not with a Lacanian psychoanalyst. This eventually proved quite useful, I think, as it made me aware of the Lacanian position by looking at it from a positive angle of difference.

(which did help me with finding out more about my reactions to the participants, and maintaining a questioning stance towards the reactions I had), I used a research diary where I wrote anything I felt about the interview with each participant and the classes before and after.

These entries are not the main data of my project but in the process of analysis they have been used as a kind of triangulation, to trace how my own emotions/signifiers about the research process have appeared or not in the data and how they may have affected my interpretations initially. Also, if something specific happened in a class or interview (for example, a student going out of the class in the middle of the exercise), this was taken into account in terms of their interaction with the exercise. When I was re-reading the research diary entries, I acted like my own impossible "psychoanalyst," using the entries as a material to develop a reflexive force about the way I conducted myself as a researcher and facilitator. For example, I became convinced during a class that a student was trying to sabotage *my* class and *my* project because he had been late three times in a row and this time he had left the class in the middle of the exercise and had come back after 15 minutes, when the time allocated to write was almost over.

Lacan explicitly says that the analyst must not allow one's personal *Imaginary* feelings about the analysand into the psychoanalytic setting, because then the analyst starts representing something to the analysand (Fink 2004, p.32). So, for some unknown reason to me, participant Q acted in this way. It may have been related to me or the exercise(s), or to circumstances unrelated to this research. If I had expressed my insecurity to the participant about him "trying to sabotage" my class, then I might not have been able to "interpret" his reaction for what it "really" was. Fink (2007, p.132) explains Lacan's position on resistance:

> Lacan (2006, p.595) decided to adopt a point of view diametrically opposed to that of many contemporary clinicians when he said 'there is no other resistance to analysis than that of the analyst himself,' the idea being that when analysts are inclined to conclude that the analysand is resisting, it is often their own failing, not his.

Transferring this idea to the setting of this research, essentially, by interpreting that Q's reaction to the particular exercise was a resistance to the

research setting and myself, I had created the "resistance"' myself. In fact, whatever Q's intention was, it did not matter, as it was part of the data produced in this research setting. Later on, I found out in my final interview with him that he, in fact, struggled with what kind of writing he wanted to present to me because of other issues he had in other courses. His particular engagement constituted his reaction to the research setting. By not agreeing to go into the "struggle" with him about what to do in the setting – e.g. ask him to return to the class immediately – I allowed him to face this "struggle" himself and his potential confusion or conflict about what he wanted to do. At the same time, I also seemed to have allowed him, as the analysis will indicate, to continue his fantasy of 'straying from preconception' – which is something he seemed to enact and name in his writing, mode of attendance and commenting. So, having the research diary to write my reactions to the participants helped me maintain my Lacanian stance, hone my understanding of my own development as a Lacanian social researcher and provided additional records of incidents from the perspective of the diary.

Considering the specific interaction with the participants and the type of data elicited, I would like to highlight that this manner of being a researcher does not necessarily make the data more or less reliable; it does generate data that potentially has not been investigated before in this setting. In addition, I think that my imperfect Lacanian stance (imperfect from a clinical perspective, as I think it has been transformed), is still useful because I have been able, as far as is possible, through my own personal experience of analysis and the research diary to become aware of my own anxieties about the project, and to consider their effect in a research setting.

5.3.3 Analysis of Data using a Lacanian researcher stance

I want to briefly narrate here how I "found" the way to conduct the analysis. There is current literature about ways of "doing" Lacanian discourse analysis (e.g. Parker&Pavón-Cuéllar 2014). (Parker and Pavón-Cuéllar's edition on Lacanian Discourse Analysis was published in 2014). Unlike Frosh (2010) and Parker (2005), my intention in using psychoanalysis for research was not to disrupt modes of

presenting interpretations of the psychosocial element drawn from social data. My intention was to provide new insight about the engagement with Creative Writing exercises via an exploration of the processes of interpretation and the symbolic operations that constitute it in the research process.

So, the mode of analysis was not immediately obvious to me, in spite of my Lacanian psychoanalytic orientation. I did not wish to impose a particular psychoanalytic interpretation of the participants' writing or of their interviews, wanting to move away from criticisms of 'psychopathologizing' the research subjects (e.g. Frosh 2010). Nor did I want to construct a literary criticism of their texts, as this would be stepping into a particular ideology of composition such as formalism. In fact, the analysis might step into formalist commentary at some points, when I mention writing techniques in the analysis chapters. I discuss this in chapter 9. The analysis I have created also produces a hybrid genre of writing between sociological analysis using psychoanalytic concepts and some aspects of literary discourse to describe the participants' composition techniques. To construct such an analysis and also write its account *has been* a difficult feat, as I pointed out in Chapter 1 briefly.

I struggled to and fro between the participants' interviews and what they wrote looking for differences at many levels (words, metaphors, verbs, stories, themes, symbols) – all of which led me to an impasse. Nothing I analyzed was new to what was already written about someone's text. Eventually, I came to understand that this was because I was attempting to analyze or interpret the data from an imaginary level, my own understanding of Literature and writing. Fink (2014) quotes Lacan and explains:

> '...when it sometimes seems that two are already too many, since he runs headlong into the fundamental misunderstanding brought on by the relationship of understanding? I repeatedly tell my students: "Don't try to understand!" [...] May one of your ears become as deaf as the other one must be acute. And that is the one that you should lend to listen for sounds, phonemes, cuts, periods, and parallelisms, for it is in these that the word-for-word transcription can be prepared, without which analytic intuition has no basis or object.' (Lacan, 2006a, p. 471)
> Listening for these allows us to localize analysands' *jouissance* and ultimately have an effect on it, an effect on the *Real* (namely, their libidinal economy. Listening for meaning alone confines us to the

> *Imaginary* level, the level of understanding; listening at the *Symbolic* level for what makes speech go awry – whether making it lapse into silence when a thought is too disturbing to be given voice is not completed, or forge a compromise formation when multiple and at times opposing wishes or points of view vie for expression simultaneously – helps grant us access to the *Real* for which understanding (the *Imaginary* with its semblance of explanation) serves as little more than a cover and a rationalization. [my italics] (Fink 2014, vol1, p. 21)

What Lacan and Fink propose then is that we should not assume to understand, as this is our own *Imaginary* processing of the information that we hear. Instead, we should focus on the materiality of the language rather than the always assumed signified of what is communicated. This might, then, be thought of as a justification of my initial impasse: there was no way "into" my participants' unique operation of discourse about writing, either written or spoken, because my entry was (an exit!) in my own *Imaginary* register. At that point, I turned to the "mechanical" repetitions of words or phrases across the data and then my process of analysis began to present me with emergent scenarios: fantasmatic ones, but not my own.

> Although we can never fully symbolise the *Real* of experience in itself, it is possible to encircle (even in a metaphorical way) the limits it poses to signification and representation, the limits it poses to our theories. It is possible to become alert to the modes of positivisation these limits acquire beyond the fantasmatic reduction of negativity to positivity, of non-identity to identity, of the *Real* to reality. [my italics](Stavrakakis 2007, p.11-12)

Stavrakakis, here, points out an important aspect of what might be transferred into the intention of a methodological setting and the assumptions of analysis: we cannot fully symbolize the *Real* that is invoked out of our data. This refers back to the quote with which this chapter *started*. I do not wish to use this as an excuse or defense of the nature of some of my more precarious interpretations or limitations of my methodological structure, rather as an understanding of the mode of analysis that I have explored. Thus, I became able to construct and write my participants' fantasmatic scenarios by looking at repetitions in the data. These repetitions became the master signifiers that organized their "thinking" in simple

terms about how they presented themselves as writers in speech and how they symbolically articulated their writer subjectivity in writing through their logic of composition. I named *logic of composition*, the specific combination of techniques the participants commonly used to write.

In both interviews and texts, particular materialities of language were enunciated by each participant. The materiality of language expresses a subject's relationship to language, and this relationship represents on a wider scale the subject's relation to the symbolic realm – the society, in a sense. Each sentence formulated in language has its own materiality (aesthetic signifiers such as a symbol i.e. the sun, or narrative technique i.e. description) of language, which in turn reflects a particular unique relationship of the author with language. The author's relation with language is actually the author's relation to an Other, which is first constituted (and of course it keeps on evolving from this first construct) with one's relationship to one's mother and father, as one first enters language.

In the previous chapter (4), I described what Lacan suggested happens at the birth of the subject (the beginning of our existence) during which a *trait unaire* is established. This single element, that distinctly fashions the way in which our speech becomes constituted through our entering in language and our guessing of what this entering means for the desire of our parents, is our primary identification (S1), the initial master signifier. This primary identification as we grow as individuals begins to acquire other secondary identifications, which Bracher calls 'avatars of the primary identification' (ibid, p.111). We can transfer these principles of the operation of master signifiers onto the discourse of the subject, linked to an organization of meaning which adheres to a fantasmatic scenario: e.g. to write a short-story, I never use first-person perspective (the prohibition here being the 'first-person'), or, e.g. I always look for the 'wider meaning' in writing, the prohibited element here is unnamed (might be thought of as the 'personal meaning'). Of course, these prohibitions are *Imaginary* and may be deconstructed.

An example of a discourse's *master signifiers* is the repetition of the term 'relaxed' and 'natural' in one of my participant's interview in relation to writing. We might say that 'relaxed' and 'natural' act as *master signifiers* in his discourse about his identity as a writer and his writing fantasy therefore. Similarly, in my analysis,

using texts and interviews of my participants, I have identified the main repeated *master signifiers* in each participant's spoken discourse and explored how these corresponded to their written texts, if at all. For example, in some participants the *master signifier* might be a technique. In participant A's interview (spoken discourse), it was the narrator figure, which also corresponded directly to her written discourse (her texts), because she used a first-person narrator all the time and thus to her writing fantasy, to the scenario she unconsciously followed to write in specific ways. For participant M, her *master signifier* of writing for 'wider meaning' is not a composition-technique but was traced as a technique by looking at the way she constructed the narrative of her texts, whether she used detail or not in combination with what she said about how she usually writes in her spoken discourse.

In order to see if each Creative Writing exercise, the sequence of them, the whole research setting and myself as researcher affected the writing style of the participants, I considered the changes in the investment of particular *master signifiers* either in the participants' final interview (after the experiment course I conducted) or in their texts. For example, participant M says she felt 'conflicted' in her final interview when she refers to a text she wrote that is different from her usual writing, having written personally with intimate detail, not a narrative that has a wider political purpose. These changes in the investment of signifiers were the baseline to check whether there were any potential shifts in the participants' practice of writing.

Thus, the analysis of the data has combined evidence from signifiers in the spoken and written discourse of the participants, to identify their writing fantasy, operated by master signifiers producing the fantasmatic scenario 'I write like X, not Y,' constitutive of their writer subjectivity. Furthermore, shifts in their investment to their usual *master signifiers*, and commonly shared fantasies about Creative Writing have also been proposed.

5.4 Ethical implications of Lacanian stance
The previous section has indicated that on the level of generating data, the

construction of a Lacanian researcher stance, both as interviewer and class-facilitator produced a specific form of data due to the enigmatic form of interaction with the research participants. At the same time, it seems that it intervened with the participants' assumptions about their practice, at times subtly and at times more evidently, either in their interview responses, their mode of attendance and participation in the classes, or in their produced and submitted texts.

On the level of analyzing data, in the analysis chapters, the adoption of a Lacanian analyst stance on my part, unusually for the practice of the Lacanian clinic, might be understood as attempting to articulate the invisible scenario that is punctuated by a Lacanian analyst. I have considered the structure of the participants' writing fantasy, yet also attempted to maintain (as much as is possible in a PhD thesis) a wondering discourse, which did not absolutely fix interpretations.

The discussion of constructing a Lacanian researcher stance in designing and conducting the research reflects both a "new" way to generate data about writing but also interferes with the "data" interestingly. I might have intervened with my participants' conceptions about writing or Creative Writing through my "silences," my "hmms," my questions, and so forth.

Thus, this methodological chapter, written now (not only) for the nth time, in the past tense, poses more serious ethical questions than even before it began: Who can talk about others' desire to write, and, most importantly, to dare to elicit their desire? Can anyone ever dare to "judge" someone's "pleasure" or "symptom" to write?

The judging of other people's desires is done continuously in the realm of evaluating Creative Writing texts in higher education, in publishing houses and in every day conversations between people. It is an invisible demand of the Law of the Other within Creative Writing studies or Literature, whereby one is visibly judged according to the Other's *Imaginary* invisible criteria, and of course ideological and financial criteria.

I wonder whether an Other way of attempting to describe how one's desire to write might operate in the context of an engagement with an ambiguous setting, such as the one I have set up in this research project experimentally, might be an Other way out of "judging" writers' desire to write and also moving away from

objectifying writers themselves as parts of their texts. From a sociological perspective, the author is not dead at all, even though one might say the 'death drive' – in other words, 'a nostalgia for a lost harmony' (Evans 1996, p.33) – is continuously present in the act of writing in an attempt to symbolize outside oneself as subject in one's encounter with the Other, to get rid of parts of our desire which we wish to extinguish, distinguish or annihilate. Kristeva writes:

> Writing would be the recording, through symbolic order, of this dialectic of displacement, facilitation, discharge, cathexis of drives (the most characteristic of which is the death drive) that operates-constitutes the signifier but also exceeds it, adds itself to the linear order of language by using the most fundamental laws of the signifying process (displacement, condensation, repetition, inversion) (Kristeva 1980, p.102)

Writing, in an all-encompassing sense, is not an empty vessel of the writer's drives, but possibly a vessel that rearticulates, and transforms them through the articulation – whether defensively or not, being another matter altogether.

In terms of following ethical guidelines, I informed my subjects about my background, and that I was researching the function of Creative Writing exercises-games in relation to their identity (see Appendix for forms of consent and letter of information).

The main ethical issue that has arisen is that the Lacanian psychoanalytic stance has interfered with the research participants' assumptions about their writing, as has been suggested by the analysis in some of their texts and interviews. Of course, the effect of this interference can only be suggested as momentary in the instances of texts or interviews. Further research would need to be done to confirm whether this effect is more than momentary.

On the one hand, this stance may have caused the participants unintended psychological stress because of the enigmatic space that it created through the interaction with language, which is not, by any means, an everyday interaction with a human being. Nonetheless, I have explained the contextualized way in which I attempted to transfer this stance in the interview. I have pointed out that I constantly attempted to negotiate the difference of the space (interview versus clinic) and did not maintain an absolute Lacanian stance towards certain responses

of the participants in the interview, when it might have been kept in the context of the clinic. In this context, the clinical approach might have been considered unethical, as the participants did not sign up to be "psychoanalyzed." In addition, my punctuations were primarily concerned with aspects of participants' writing, not the overall structure of their enunciation, so the interference may not have caused them severe psychic stress.

On the other hand this project has taken the psychoanalytic techniques used by a Lacanian analyst in the case of neurotic patients, not psychotic patients. The assumption in using the most commonly used approach in Lacanian analysis, which is for neurotics, is that individuals participating in this research were probably of neurotic structure, and thus the research did not interfere with them in a way that caused them further stress, as it might in the case of a psychotic, who might be frustrated by such a stance.

In the case of a psychotic, in the process of analysis meaning is made with the analyst; the analyst helps the psychotic analysand tie the severed cuts between the "realities." My approach, though focused on the Lacanian analyst's treatment with a neurotic structure, has not been ignorant of the main Lacanian principle, which is to ignore one's *Imaginary* feelings towards "attacks" or accusations by a psychotic/neurotic analysand. Therefore, on some level, if there were some elements of psychotic relation to some elements of the practice of writing in this research project in some participants, the main Lacanian approach was not unethical towards them.

In relation to issues of anonymization, I have kept the anonymity of all participants and ensured to let them know that they are able to leave the course whenever they wish. The academic institution where this research took place has also been kept anonymous to protect the privacy of the participants, the course and the academic teaching team. Furthermore with regards to anonymity, I had to bear in mind the possibility that some students (writers) might not have wanted to be anonymous if I was using their writing. It is possible that some of them might be identifiable from their texts, (if these texts later become published, or if they are already published). This will remain an ongoing issue. After discussion with the

participants, it was decided that they would remain anonymous as much as possible, even though their texts might later reveal their identity.

Considering the exploration of this approach, a transfer of some aspects of the clinical psychoanalytic practice into a research setting, the possibility that the research participants might encounter personal issues they might not wish to bring up or expect to encounter, even though they are acquainted with the process of writing in class, was also taken into account. For this reason, I had informed myself of how to advise about counseling, if any significant issues arose (e.g. domestic abuse) and ensured that I did not probe into personal or sensitive matters in my interviews or classroom discussion. In the course of the classes, it turned out that some personal data (not of the above serious nature) did arise in the conversations and the texts of some participants. This personal data, in principle, was used and referred to only nominally as "personal," but no further clarification was asked or further detail was given when used in the analysis.

Finally, the participants were informed that they had the right to access my analysis of their texts and their interview transcripts before publication and had the right to discuss the findings and the analysis of them with me, if they wished [37].

5.5 Conclusion

Concluding, my methodological stance has led to the subsequent construction of the research setting analogous to a principle of ambiguity – that characterizes the exercises and has similarities with the enigmatic discourse of the analyst – aiming to bring out dialectically the cause of the desire that produces the discourse of the subject (of desire). I have identified more specifically here that my data analysis focuses on tracing the *master signifiers* of the participants' spoken discourse from the interviews in symmetry or dissymmetry with their symbolic articulation in their written discourse (written texts), formative of their writing fantasy, metonymical of their writer subjectivity.

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[37] I will be planning a meeting, with those participants who wish, to provide them with a description of how they have engaged with the exercises, and their preferences/identifications as writers right after the submission of this thesis.

According to Žižek, activity 'relies on some fantasmatic support', while 'act involves disturbing – "traversing" – the fantasy' (Žižek 1998a: 13). From a Lacanian point of view, theory should be thought of as a resource enabling us 'to accomplish a more radical gesture of "traversing" the very fundamental fantasy', not only within clinical psychoanalysis, but 'even and also in politics' (p. 9). A resource, furthermore, creating and sustaining a space where such acts can be continuously re-conceived and re-enacted, a space permeated by a truly democratic ethos. (Stavrakakis 2007, p.12-13)

Next, follows my own gesture of analysis, in order to begin to create a new space where writing fantasies and writer subjectivities *appear and disappear*.

Chapter 6

WRITING FANTASIES

In chapter 4 I presented an architecture of Lacanian fantasy; the main idea I introduced was that one's subjectivity is constituted by one's unique relation to the Other, as language and as desire. In other words, I attempted to explain the idea that the subject's discourse, articulated in response to the language and desire of the Other, is constitutive of their/our subjectivity. I also foregrounded the way that, from a Lacanian perspective, this discourse, produced in relation to language and desire, can be understood as structured by fantasy. There is a fantasmatic scenario that organizes the discourse of a subject (and their subjectivity) through *master signifiers* producing identifications and dis-identifications. For example, in the context of writing, a writer may use a writing technique, e.g. description, because they identify this feature with a writer's (*Imaginary)* qualities in line with their desired writer subjectivity. This identification may not be conscious but elicited or verbalized as the writer talks about their writing practice and potentially traced in their writing. This process can also be understood in terms of prohibition: for example, a writer who never uses dialogue, a narrative writing technique, might associate it with an element that does not fit their writer subjectivity.

In this chapter I use and explore the Lacanian concept of fantasy in the context of a writer's discourse. As I have already suggested, there is a risk here of forcing the data to fit a pre-existing conceptual framework. However, the tracing of one's writing fantasy is productive as it might be understood as a methodological and pedagogical tool, which attempts to approximate the system of knowledge of the student without judging the writing aesthetically. In tracing this system of identification in one's writing practice, what also appears is the *negative* – what is *not* practiced or named, the blocked writing pathway or process. This may be an area of Creative Writing knowledge, which the student does not find attractive, or in other words, repudiates. Repudiated elements in our practice do only not pose limits to our subjectivities and our practices, but to the larger picture in which we are contributing to, e.g. the Creative Writing community in general. Lapping (2013a, p.378) explains, for instance, that precisely 'our unknowingness [an encounter with

the Other that confuses our understanding of our practice] in the process of research […] seems to be absolutely what we should be aiming for.' The structure of fantasy may be used to begin to conceptualize what 'unknowingness' is or where it is in Creative Writing practice.

Hecq (2012b, p.4) has argued that 'Creative Writing is first and foremost an experiential knowing.' I understand 'experiential knowing' as learning through the doing of something; a practice is also an experience. How can we facilitate the *new* in our students, then, if we cannot help them verbalize/experience what is *not yet known* for them, directly affecting the "evolution" of the community of Creative Writing as well?

The chapter is divided into three parts presenting three case studies of writing fantasies, participants M, A, and G. Each part has a similar structure of argument. In order to discuss consistency or discrepancies in terms of the participants' engagement with the research setting I trace:

- The fantasmatic scenario espoused in the first interview
- Links between the fantasmatic scenario and the logic of composition enacted in the texts written by the participant

I use the term *logic of composition* to refer to the unique combination of writing strategies through which a writer creates her texts. My analysis suggests that it is possible to discern connections between the writing fantasy and the logic of composition.

The data related to each participant can be interpreted as articulating a writer subjectivity that relates to an initial fantasy. However, the effects of the engagement with the experiment course are played out in different ways in the texts of each participant. For example, these three case studies "showcase" three different ways in which Otherness has been encountered. For M, it was problematic; for A it was productive; and for G it was threatening. The difference between the three case studies is in the way in which the element of prohibition in the fantasy appeared and was experienced in the writing of the participants in moments of shifts. The more rigid the fantasmatic identification the less easier or possible it was to allow for a shift to emerge or be acknowledged. In the case of G, the fantasmatic identification was more rigid than for M or A, since no shift is acknowledged or it

might have been covered over since any other way of writing seemed to absolutely threaten his writer subjectivity. In the case of M, the fantasmatic identification seemed to be disrupted causing a troubling experience for M initiating, however, an articulation of the prohibited element in her writing. For A, the fantasmatic identification seemed to be looser in response to the setting and the exercises, thus allowing for an experimentation and expansion of the fantasmatic scenario usually followed in her writing practice. The extent to which examples of writing produced from the exercises seemed to move away from or disrupt the fantasmatic scenario relates to the extent to which the participants were confused by the overall setting and/or instruction of exercise or felt threatened by the instruction of the exercise and thus further enacted their fantasy.

6.1 The 'Wider Meaning' Writing Fantasy – Participant M

Participant M was a second-year undergraduate English and Creative Writing student at the time of research. In her first interview, M discussed her interest in writing in terms of writing with a political purpose – relating one's writing to something bigger than oneself. She mentioned that she is half-Caribbean/British. M explained that she usually writes fiction. Though she referred to writing poems in the interview, she did not write any poetry during the research. M also mentioned that sometimes she is quite critical of herself, 'picks on herself' (M53) in terms of her writing abilities. M attended only the first four sessions of the experiment course. However, I emailed her the final two exercises, she wrote to them at home, and submitted them for the research. Her participation both in the interview and in the classroom setting might be interpreted as slightly nervous and tentative at points.

Participant M's writing fantasy might be represented with the master signifier 'wider meaning,' which seems to unconsciously organize both her account of writing in the interviews and her written texts. This master signifier organizes her discourse both thematically (i.e. what she talks about) and structurally (i.e. how her responses are constructed).

My analysis of M's interview and texts also constructs/draws on a distinction between "telling"[38] and "showing." This is a distinction that is frequently offered as a writing tip: a writer must "show not tell" (Griffiths 2014). I interpreted "telling" as moments in the data where M gives abstract generalizations about her writing, rather than specific examples. In contrast, "showing" occurs when M provides examples and details that directly enact her meaning, rather than generalizing or abstracting. It is possible to argue that M is focused in her replies on "telling" the 'wider meaning,' that is generalizing, instead of providing specific details about her writing. In my interpretation of M, references to 'wider meaning' might be interpreted as her "telling" the "signified" of a text, while references to the combination of "signifiers" that she uses to produce the "signified" can be interpreted as instances of "showing." This "telling not showing" has been traced both in her discourse in the interviews, and in the logic of composition of the texts that she submitted and produced during the research project.

First, I present examples from M's discourse in her first interview to suggest her writing fantasy. Then, I present examples from her writing, where she has followed her writing fantasy. Finally, I present examples from the two texts, where she seems to have written "Other" than herself, supported by her final interview responses. I argue that she wrote in her prohibited element of fantasy in these two texts and that her writer subjectivity may have been troubled or momentarily shifted.

6.1.1 The 'Wider Meaning' Writing Fantasy in M's Spoken Discourse

M's focus on the 'wider meaning' emerges as a consistent theme in her first interview but can also be interpreted as an unconscious organizing master signifier of her spoken discourse. In what follows, I discuss this organization of her discourse, and thus of her writing fantasy, using examples from her account of: writing in general, other writers, and her own writing. I suggest that M's use of the notion of

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[38] I reiterate here that I use double quotes to refer to my own words and single quotes to refer to words the participants use.

the 'wider or political meaning in writing' to talk about her "writer self" becomes a metonymy for her writer subjectivity.

In most of her responses, M posited that writing 'needs to have' (M12) a wider meaning (M3, 12, 34, 77, 80, 77 explicit references in first interview). She talked about this in her first interview, but also enacted it in her writing. For example, in one exercise (Free-Write) she put a note at the top of the page: e.g. '2 characters- debate over marriage-/Similar and ~~Mrs~~[39] Lady Kuma.' This seems to set a goal for a 'wider meaning' in the text (i.e. 'debate over marriage').

In her first interview reply, M presented the elements that she associates with writing, starting with a general statement that seems to be a definition. She was responding to my initial interview question 'um I just wanted to find out more about how you feel about writing.' The excerpt presented below is organized with the master signifier 'wider meaning.' She referred to 'big expression of self,' 'imagination' and 'personality,' but then introduced 'different aspects that interest you and society,' and made an association between 'fiction' and 'a political meaning':

> M2: okay ...[40] um I view it [writing] as a um big expression of self in a way but also … as something that you could do to grow your imagination … explore um different aspects of your personality and different aspects that interest you and society …um particularly with fiction like it could have more of a political meaning or something you wish to achieve with people … like … persuade them that your opinion is right or that this is an issue in the current climate or yep things like that really ... I view writing in different ways I suppose it depends on the form of the writing but journalists I suppose that is more ... can be more persuasive but then I think creative writers are just as persuasive ... um (pause: 5 sec) 'cause I read a variety of different things, different genres … fantasy when I was younger I loved fantasy (giggles) ... um

M stated here what writing 'has to have for her, a certain 'meaning' that is beyond the personal, the specific, which she refers to four more times later in the interview (about 'meaning' M12, 77, 80, 97). This response begins with a reference

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[39] Crossed out words indicated as in the original hand-written text.
[40] "…" indicates small pause, less than 8 seconds.

to what might be interpreted as a personal meaning: 'a big expression of self in a way.' This is followed by the conjunctive phrase 'but also,' suggesting a hesitation or a contrast to the previous statement ('big expression of self'): 'something that you could do to grow your imagination … explore um different aspects of your personality and different aspects that interest you and society.' The 'self or 'the personality' and the 'society and 'the political' are not presented as distinctly separate purposes in writing. M's response constructs an association between 'expression of self' in writing and the idea of a political meaning.

M's discourse at this point seemed to be oriented towards providing generalization. Combined with the use of 'you' rather than 'I,' this produces a sense of distance between speaker and subject matter. Most of the response is phrased in this more abstract way, except for its last part where M explicitly named a personal experience and a related emotion: 'fantasy … when I was younger I loved fantasy.'

In these initial comments in the first interview, we can begin to see how signifiers relating to the idea of 'wider meaning' take the place of M's writer self. Her use of signifiers of 'wider meaning' in opposition to signifiers that relate directly to herself explicitly connect her writer self or subjectivity with the need to have a 'political' or 'current' meaning.

Throughout the first interview, M is led through my questions to make some brief references, which insinuate a more personal connection to M's goal of writing having a 'wider meaning.' For instance, the emphasis for 'political meaning' can perhaps be related to M's references to her 'identity'[41] (half-Caribbean) relating to her 'father's side' when she was explaining why she likes to set her writing in 'far off tropical places' (M18). When I asked her to tell me more about why she likes to write about 'eugenics' (which she defined as 'genetic discrimination')(M28), she had explained that she wanted to write about 'eugenics' because of how some events in the world make her feel 'like that guy in Norway' (A30) followed by the hedging statement that she doesn't 'personally feel strongly about it' but that it 'makes her

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[41] I used the word 'identity' first, when I asked her whether writing about particular themes might relate to her identity (Z15).

angry.' However, in both cases M then resorted to more abstract signifiers that related to a 'wider meaning,' rather than relating it to a personal story about herself.

The 'wider meaning' fantasy also seems to be operative in the way M spoke about other writers' work and how she constructed an account of their work. Her discourse maintained the orientation of "telling," instead of showing through illustration and going into detail. M's account did not name or acknowledge the procedure of signifying. She did not explain how meaning comes about in other writers' works, but only presented signifiers representing their work. For example, M cited two writers and their work, Ian McEwan and Sylvia Plath, to provide an example of what she meant by 'being outstandingly gifted', an attribute she said one has to possess to be a writer. She explained that she admired the fact that there is a wider meaning to what McEwan writes:

> M77: the underlying meaning he manages to have some sort of p
> p … p … owerful and sometimes not just about the psychology of
> or the dynamic between characters its also like a wider meaning
> to it […] it's kind of interesting how he sews the two together like
> the everyday with the kind of more philosoph ... philosophical

When I asked her how the philosophical is sewn together with the everyday she replied:

> M80: […] I read like the Bell Jar[42] for example, that is kind of very
> psychological, I find that very interesting as well but it also when
> you think about has the kind of underlying meaning […]

These responses were a naming of the (literary) achievements of the writer in the work referred. How the meaning is constructed was not elaborated. A second related point is that her expression of opinion as a writer seems to be minimized by a hedging, that is paired with more direct statements about her theory of writing or what she thinks about other writers. Whenever M provides more detail, there is some hedging. For example, describing Plath, the poet/writer she admires, she said:

> M80: […]the kind of underlying meaning about equality and
> women and things like that, with women bla bla bla […]

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[42] A novel written by Sylvia Plath.

Even though the 'wider meaning,' is so important to her, the subject matter that Plath or 'The Bell Jar' is said to deal with is followed by 'bla bla bla,' which could be interpreted as un-intensifying or trivializing the subject matter 'equality and women.' This hedging might be interpreted in several ways. She might have been hedging here because she might have assumed that I might not be a "feminist." Alternatively, the 'bla bla bla,' could be interpreted as a defense to cover over potentially something that might be troubling or revealing too much about her writer subjectivity. She might feel strongly about 'themes of women' (M84) [in this response she said she does not feel 'mega strongly' about (M84)]. She referred to this subject in her first interview, (i.e. she likes 'feminist poets' (M82-84) but again did not say what she likes about them). We cannot know for sure if her hedging is a general effect of her talking about her writing, or if it is also an effect of the research context.

Finally, M's focus in her discourse in the first interview suggested an avoidance or prohibition on the personal; the structure of fantasy around the master signifier of 'wider meaning' seems to exclude whatever is intimate or autobiographical. At the end of the interview, she explicitly named her fear of the personal. When I asked her if she has anything else to add, M responded:

> M88: I do find it very personal like when you show someone your writing I think people automatically think 'oh their personality you can see their personality in this' or you feel ashamed sometimes if you write about things that you don't think you should be writing about […] I think can be a bit scary if you show people your work and they know you have written it

M explained that she was worried about people reading what she writes as a personal reflection on her (M88). When I asked 'why is that scary?' (Z91), she explained that she is afraid that she might make something 'too explicit' or 'suggesting one thing is better than another when morally incorrect' (M92), articulating a fear about being either misunderstood or understood. When I asked her if that 'has happened to her' in her experience, she narrated an experience of 'showing' a poem about a 'porn model' to her classmates, which made her feel 'shamed' (M96). She was worried about what they might think of her and that they did not understand the 'wider meaning' of her story (M96). M did not elaborate on

the story or the meaning of the poem or her aim in writing it, but then she explained a bit more when I asked 'why do you think you felt shamed?' and 'why do you think you wrote about it when you do not approve of it?'. She said that it was about a 'porn model she was posing…'(M93). Then, she explains 'the porn model […] posing' (M97) was written to invoke the meaning that 'women are perceived more by how they look rather than what they think or how clever they are' (M97). This 'wider meaning' seems to have a resonance with 'equality and women' (M88) in her response about the 'underlying meaning' in 'The Bell Jar.' M said she does not like to be 'too explicit' (M92) in her writing and indeed, she was also not 'too explicit' about the making of the wider meaning of her poem. I wonder if this 'shaming' experience was an encounter with her prohibited element of her fantasy. Her discomfort with showing the story to others might be interpreted in relation to the prohibition of the personal or perhaps a fear of self-revelation.

Additionally, it is as if discussing this in the interview is also 'shaming' or might prove to be 'shaming' in how M is imagining my response to her story. It would perhaps be not hyperbolic to assume that this worry might be also produced through the interview.

Thus, M foregrounded the 'wider meaning' and seemed hesitant about expressing "the personal" directly in her generalized account of writing, in her account of other writers' works and in her account of her own practice. This initial interpretation of her first interview suggests that the relation to the signifier 'wider meaning' and a distancing or prohibition of "the personal" seems central in M's discursive construction of writer subjectivity.

6.1.2 The 'Wider Meaning' Writing Fantasy in M's Texts

It is possible to argue that this writing fantasy of 'wider meaning' in M's spoken discourse is enacted also in her writing (written discourse). I develop this argument by tracing the logic of composition in her produced and submitted texts in this research. In five of eight of her texts, M's logic of composition of texts seems to be constituted in *telling* the wider meaning: less focused on personal details of the protagonists and more on fast-forwarding the narration towards resolution. This is in line with my interpretation of her writing fantasy of 'wider meaning' in her spoken

discourse about writing. In both of her interviews, M described these as features of her usual approach to writing. Contrariwise, in two of eight of her texts, M's logic of composition seemed to be oriented towards *showing t*he meaning via the personal/intimate details of the protagonists. I argue that when there is more development of the characters' emotions and the narration is slower and more precise in M's texts, we can interpret these as instances of M's repressed "desire to write," which is about focusing on the self, indulging the personal or intimate and thereby "showing," not "telling." I present first an example from her usual logic of composition, and then examples from her *Other* logic of composition.

6.1.2 a) Telling the Signified: M's usual logic of composition

Five of eight of M's produced and submitted texts are composed through a narrator oriented towards the 'wider purpose' of the narrative (telling), rather than focusing on the 'finer details of character dynamics,'(M80) (showing). They also do not have a focus on personal or intimate accounts of the protagonist or the other characters. Therefore, it seems the 'wider meaning' of the story is "told," instead of "shown." In presenting this mode of composing used by M, which seems to be in contrast to the "tips" by some Creative Writing manuals (e.g. discussed in Griffith 2014), I do not wish to insinuate that had she written in a "showing" mode she would become a better or worse writer.

An example of M's usual logic of composition is her first text, submitted at the first interview, titled 'Give me Swimming with Sharks Any Day.' This text is a story narrated from the protagonist's point of view as he is trying to climb up a rock for charity. The protagonist is presented as nervous throughout the narration. It is revealed at the start that ever since he fell off a ladder and almost broke his neck he has been scared of heights; this fear is not elaborated further. He was convinced, however, to climb the rock for charity after 'a night out with the guys.' A description of the protagonist follows, climbing up the rock, at times pausing interjected by some of the protagonist's worries. In the middle of the story, the protagonist's friend, who is there watching him climb the rock, urges him to keep going saying:

'Think of the money you'll raise mate.' This is followed by the thoughts of the protagonist:

> *The guilt, of disappointing those old people who expected a large sum for a new community center back home made me twinge. If I wasn't going to raise the money for them, who else would bother? I couldn't disappoint them now. And I was safe right?*

This extract keeps the focus on the 'wider' meaning of the deed of the protagonist: a man climbing up a rock for the good of the community. The narrative is focused on narrating the action of the story. Considering both the structure of the narrative and the low level of details in terms of "showing" the emotions of the protagonist, it seems that the focus of this story is more on telling the 'wider meaning' directly, rather than focusing on the more "personal" or precise details of the narration to progressively invoke a 'wider meaning.' The whole story is focused on a removal of the personal fear, both on the level of narrating details of the protagonist and on the level of the story.

I list in the table below similar examples of narration focusing on the 'wider meaning' with my subjective interpretations of the wider meaning in each text:

Table 4 – Participant M – Wider Meaning in Texts

Text	Narration	Subject	Wider Meaning
"Free-Write" (1st)	Third-person	A daughter is reprimanded for not wearing appropriate clothing to attract a man in order to get married	Debate about marriage
"Write About This" (2nd)	Third-person	A girl is saving up pennies to buy a dollhouse	Saving Up? Being Patient?
"Write in A Voice Opposite to Your Own" (4th)	First-person	An adventurous boy goes off to a dangerous part of an island with his friend	Being Adventurous
Final Submitted Piece	Third-person	A daughter breaks a valuable vase, that her father does not know is valuable, and gets away with it.	Being a good daughter

[question-marks above intended]

M does not use specific detail in her descriptions in any of these texts. This lack of detail puts the focus on direct narrative and, although not explicitly stated, suggests that the purpose of the text relates more to a 'wider meaning' related to

the direct narrative. So, for example, in the 'Free-Write' text, the main interest is the content of the debate, rather than the specific relationship between the daughter and her parents, which might have been suggested through detail in the language.

6.1.2 b) Showing the Signified: Momentary Shift in or Troubling of M's Writing Fantasy

The analysis of the combination of M's texts and her interview responses suggests that in two out of eight texts, M wrote differently to how she usually writes. In these two texts, written to the 3rd and 5th exercise of the experiment project, '20 Instructions' and 'Use the Mirror and Write What You See in its Reflection,' M did not write in her usual 'wider meaning' writing fantasy or in the style of "telling not showing." In her final interview, she referred to ways in which these texts were not written in her usual style of writing. In these two texts, her logic of composition is oriented towards providing more detail about the characters and a slower rhythm of narration. Her writing in these texts is focused on the personal, "indulging the self." In these two texts, and more evidently in the second one, I construct the difference in logic of composition as a moment where she articulated something that is or might potentially be personal, which constitutes an Otherness in her practice of writing. I suggest this is an encounter with a repressed Otherness, which may have been troubling for M's writer subjectivity. M also wrote her final produced text to the 6th exercise differently. M wrote this text at home as she was absent from the last class, and sent it to me via email. She did not refer to it in the final interview.

In relation to both texts that M referred to in the final interview, there is a contrast between her account of writing the text and the text itself. In her account of the text written to the exercise with the list of 20 instructions, she said she was 'slow' because she chose to write to only three instructions. She compared herself to the other participants, and said that she did not try 'as hard,' as I had suggested they did not have to follow all of the instructions (M121-125). The instructions (which she ticked on the handout) were: "1. Write a Metaphor, 3. Use at least one image for each of the five senses, either in succession or scattered randomly throughout the poem, 13. Make the persona or character in the poem do something he/she could

not do in 'real life.'" At the end of the final interview, M told me that not knowing what some of the instructions in the 3rd exercise 'meant it was limiting' (M296).

In contrast to this slightly negative or apologetic account, the text she referred to has been written with detail and unexpected turns in the narrative, quite unlike the linear structure of the texts described so far. The text is about a woman called Violet, who is lounging in her garden, fantasizing about a young boy sitting on his mower. The reader is given more information about 'Violet' than about characters in her other texts and the language is strikingly more precise, dense and does not feel as "rushed" a narration:

> ~~Mrs~~ Violet did not share any of the ~~pyhss~~ p*(h added)*ycical signs of bruising associated with her name. Rather her face was often as red as a rose or a lobster to be more accurate. She did not spent too much time *(added above in between: outside)* in the sun or wear too much blusher. Quite the opposite ~~Mrs~~ Violet was a kept woman who spent summer months underneath a lacy-white parasol ~~on~~ overlooking her lawn, ~~reading~~ pretending to read the books from her library, which formed exactly one ~~bookcase in~~ corner in her lounge. *[I include words she had crossed out on original handwritten text]*

M provided a variety of character elements here, unlike her text about the man climbing up a mountain. There are hints of a wider meaning: potentially that one's embarrassing moments or one's loneliness may be transformed to art. This meaning is left for the end, and open for the reader to construct. Rather than directly telling the reader the character's emotions, there are concrete details such as 'underneath a lacy-white parasol,' or 'which formed exactly one corner in her lounge' and associations to her name. What follows the above extract is also detailed and even though it is the main incident of the whole narration, it does not seem that there is a rush to get to it. It is a short yet intimate description of how Violet feels starting from her bodily sensations in the warm weather and then moving on to a paragraph about her fantasy about the young boy, Frederick. This description may have been affected by the two instructions that refer to using metaphors and detail in description "Write a metaphor, and 3. Use at least one image for one of the senses." No "meaning" is named in this text. We read the sensory experience of the character's feelings, showing us, instead of telling us.

There is also a very different portrayal of the female protagonist in this text. The women portrayed in her other texts are "almost ashamed" or are "shamed" but do not "do" anything with their shame. Simila, for instance, the daughter in her "Free-Write" text does not talk back to her mother's reprimands about wearing baggy jeans. Violet, in contrast, fails to get Frederick's attention by 'waving her arms frantically' and doing 'a little dance-salsa to be exact' (M's text). Yet she transforms her 'ridiculous dance' into a 'show piece' (M's text): her shame into art. If we consider that M is fearful of indulging in the personal, since this feels uncomfortable to her, this turning of "shame" into art, could oddly be sublimating M's feeling of Otherness in a double bind – both for the protagonist and for the author of this story.

In the final interview, M also provided an account of the text she wrote to the exercise "Use the Mirror given to you and write what you see in its reflection." She said that she 'automatically thought it was about [her]' (M266). In response to that, when I told her that she has said that she does not write directly about herself usually, M seemed to attempt to name her fear:

> M269: yea I think it's probably my fear ... there was ... [giggles nervously]

This was followed by a short pause, which I interrupted to ask her (out of my own nervousness) whether she thought the "Free-Write" exercise was the least useful, to which she stated that indeed it was because this was something she does at home anyway. The response above, nonetheless, is interesting to compare with what she said a little earlier in the interview, repeatedly expressing her discomfort with this text. She said (M128-129) that she was worried it would turn into some sort of autobiographical reference' (M128). Adding that: 'I probably have a problem with my appearance already' (M129) and 'it kind of made me focus on all the negative things' (M129) and that it was 'gross' (M184). Later, she explained that the 'mirror exercise' showed her 'what problems she had about writing about [her]self…and yeah autobiographically' (M258). She also said that she doesn't 'tend to write in first person explaining 'it being my character I think well I don't particularly like myself' (M259). This would stop her writing about herself because she likes to 'like [her]

characters' (M259). Given M's fear of the personal and her dislike of herself, the text she has written might be interpreted as a direct encounter with this fear:

> I'm too close to myself. I see an ugly face with a button nose, with a shiny tip like Rudolf, and a dry chin trying to shed its skin away. It needs painting and powdering, before it becomes a giant pimple like the rest of my face.
>
> But the eyes – they're the worst. There is something surreal in them that attempts to blink out the rest of the horrors of my face and without me sensing it I miss the odd split second of my face, the occasional frown, and the microscopic cells that lift off my face and mingle with the air. It's strange to think that I'll touch my dead self for many weeks to come.
>
> A girl that's eaten too many pies – that's what I see hanging off my chin – something stagnant given to vultures at feeding time. The marked cheeks are too full and the lips are too thin. Saying all this I do not once think of the traces of a tash on my upper lip – to the anguish of my childhood bullies.

This is a very short and intense piece. It is an internal monologue, and a kind of a reflection on her reflection. The way the story is made through the focus on intimate and precise descriptions creates a narrative that is not in a rush to get to a point of resolution, like her other texts.

The assumed "bullying of oneself," which she had indirectly mentioned in her first interview (M53), is set up against with the 'childhood bullies' in the end, with details providing an anchor to the context of this narration. Indeed, in her first interview M mentioned that she like to 'pick on [her]self' (M53) because she is a 'perfectionist' (M53). When I asked her why she thinks she picks on herself and how she criticizes herself, her response enacted her voice of critique:

> M56: you're worthless, you should have done better, you're not as good as that person ... um as good as that person things like that...

M's internalized voice of critique might be operative in her 'wider meaning' writing fantasy, motivating her to enact the 'wider meaning' in her writing. When I asked her why she thinks it matters to her to be 'as good as someone else,' she laughed for the first time *not* nervously as if surprised, saying 'I really don't know' (M57). After a small pause, she said it may have to do because we live in England, and that is how people are here, 'there is an idealized person' and 'an idealized

world' (M57). M returned to the generalizing safer discourse of master signifiers of 'wider meaning' ('idealized person or world'), when she was asked about her own personal critique on herself.

M seemed to have been led to name her troubling experience in the final interview. When M said that this text brought out her problems with herself (M258), I asked her 'what problems are there with writing about [herself]' and indicated that she did not have to tell me 'personal things but from a writer from a writerly [I did not complete my phrase as she started talking]...' (Z259). M then more comfortably constructed a reply explaining that she does not tend to write in first person, and this being 'her character' '[she] does not particularly like [her]self' and that she likes 'to like [her] characters'(M259). I then pointed out:

> Z260: hmmm
> ... even though you did say that you do write about ...
>
> M260: similar people which is odd ...
>
> Z261: so that's a bit
>
> M261: conflicting yea ... [giggles nervously]
>
> Z262: I would say contradictory why are you saying conflicting?
> ... that would have been the word I almost ...
>
> M262: yeah ... [giggles nervously] um ... I don't know... contradictory is probably more accurate ... yeah ... [pause: 10 sec] I just think because it was the style and the specifically looking in the mirror rather than talking about the mirror without looking at it I think it was harder from my perspective ...

In this interview incident, M seemed to be naming her troubling, foregrounded by her describing this writing as 'conflicting' (M261). It is interesting that, instead of 'contradictory' as practice, M uses the word 'conflicting.' From my *Imaginary* perspective, the word 'conflicting' seems to foreground more of a personal struggle, rather than 'contradictory,' which seems less directly self-involving. At this point M was more directly asserting her own opinion, when this particular articulation is elicited about her 'problems with herself writing about herself.'

There is a similarity here between the incident in the interview, where M attempted to name her fear of the personal, and her encounter with the mirror exercise. M may have encountered a moment of Otherness in her practice of writing through writing and reading this text *post facto.* Lapping (2013a, p. 377) explains Žižek's understanding of what an encounter with the Other might be:

> … the Other reminds us of that which was both excluded and not fully excluded in the constitution of our subjectivity on entry into the symbolic order – it is the failure of castration – the hidden shame of the human subject …

Lapping (2013a) writes this in attempting to explore her own reaction towards a participant's response about a subject (Literary Studies), which Lapping has not completely excluded from her own disciplinary identity. A 'failure of castration' may be associated with the idea that 'fantasy' is a fantasy, an illusion; it never manages to make us whole or completely *subject*, there is an excess that escapes at points. It is interesting to connect the idea that an encounter with the Other might be a 'failure of castration' with Hecq's suggestion (2005) that writing is organized in such a way so as to harmonize with the mark of castration. This harmonizing makes it a writing symptom. In the context of writing: "I write always in metaphors" might be the symptom as an expression of the fantasy: "I am a poet." We might then suggest that in M's case here we have the opposite: the disruption of a writing symptom: her writing in the prohibited element of her fantasy, not in her usual writing symptom: the 'wider meaning.'

This might not be the only writing fantasy structuring M's writer subjectivity in her interviews and texts. However, it is one repeatedly emerging signifying strand organizing the meaning of both her own writing and of her understanding of writing in general, as well as the majority of the texts that she produced. It could potentially be used as a tool to help M gain further understanding of her writing practice, and manage to explore other previously prohibited pathways of Creative Writing. However, it is also possible that this kind of learning can be supported through experiential encounters, such as the encounters with ambiguity constructed in the two exercises that M wrote to differently.

6.2 The 'Narrator Figure' Writing Fantasy – Participant A

Participant A was a second-year undergraduate Drama and Creative Writing student at the time of the research. In her first interview, A mainly talked about why she writes in relation to her childhood as an only child and her interest in music. She also explained that she likes to invent characters, writes according to the 'sound' she has in her mind and uses aspects from performances of playwrights in her own writing. Participant A explained that she usually writes poetry and plays. In this research, all of her texts seem to be a mixture of prose-poetry and monologue. She confirmed this in her final interview. She only missed one class out of six, the 4th one: the exercise "Write in A Voice Opposite to Your Own." She completed this task at home and submitted it in the next class. My perception of A was that she was passionate and spontaneous both in the interviews and the classes.

Participant A's writing fantasy might be represented with the master signifier 'narrator figure.' This signifier emerges continuously in her first interview. The idea of the 'narrator figure' might thus be said to structure her discourse, producing A's constant move of identification with and distancing from the narrator figure. She also enacted this in her writing.

In Literary theory, the narrator is very minimally defined as the 'voice that speaks or tells the story' (Wheeler 2014, online no pages). The narration is usually in first-person narrating with an 'I' or in third person narrating without the presence of an 'I' (ibid). One basic way of distinguishing the narrator's voice is through their overview of what is happening: the narrator may have a limited point of view, that is not knowing everything in the story or alternatively an omniscient point of view, knowing everything in the story (ibid). I provide here a minimal definition, just to indicate the difference in A's texts later.

First, I present examples from A's first interview to suggest her writing fantasy. Then, I present examples from her writing, where links between her writing fantasy in her interview and her logic of composition have been traced. Finally I present two texts where she seems to have expanded her fantasy. It should be noted that the kind of change noted in A is not as easily or directly traced as in M's

case because of A's own multi-layered theorization of her writing processes that seem to stem from her personal experience. This renders her accounts not as "accessible" as M's references.

6.2.1 The 'Narrator Figure' Writing Fantasy in A's Spoken Discourse

A referred to three seemingly complementary threads in relation to the master signifier 'narrator figure' in her writing, which make up her writing fantasy: 1) the narrator figure and herself 2) the narrator figure and sound 3) the narrator figure as unified and then disrupted. I argue that 'the narrator figure' is a master signifier constituting A's writer subjectivity and is an avatar for A's personal exploration of her imperfect writer subjectivity.

The analysis suggests A's complex relation with the narrator figure: on the one hand she seemed to identify herself with the narrator figure by claiming it always links back to her. On the other hand, she also let the narrator figure stand in for herself as a writer, not taking direct responsibility for what is achieved in her text, but attributing it to the narrator, thereby distancing her writer self from the narrator.

Talking about the construction of the narrator in her writing, A described the possibility of writing in the voice of people she meets, constructing 'a fake diary entry for them' (A5). She also talked about the possibility that she might 'essentially lie' (A5). She described these approaches as 'constantly training the imagination' and liking to 'heighten everything' (A5). She also talked about creating the narrator according to her personal experience.

> A5: yeah I think definitely curiosity I was always wanting to write about things I could see like I would if I met someone I would try and write a monologue or a … a kind of fake diary entry for them that's the kind of thing I used to ... to um I guess making up people was constantly making training the imagination going that's why I was into um I used to always heighten everything I think and most of my stories as narrators usually have a kind of a heightened version of myself somehow some little tie always kind of links back to me cause I used to yea heighten every story and my mom used to get annoyed … because I used to [change in tone to emphasize but quickly said] essentially lie … 'ahhh I did this today' ... [using another voice to indicate dialogue] 'what no

155

you didn't you were in the garden" [change of voice to indicate shift to her voice] "nah nah nah I did this" they would not be completely out of the squad I never said a spaceship came oh no I did this I found this hole in the garden I got under and someone's in there and I would like well [mumbles something] there wasn't anything …

This account constructed quite a complex image of the relation between the narrator figure and A. Her habit 'to always heighten everything' – implies that whatever her own life was, it was not exciting enough and had to be transformed into something else via the avatar of the narrator figure. A here seemed to take direct responsibility for the creation of the narrator as a writer. It might be possible to claim that for A's writing fantasy to be achieved, she must prohibit anything that seems to her to be boring or uninteresting, or flat; instead she likes to 'heighten.' The heightening seems to be done via the 'narrator figure.' Structurally in her replies she used her personal experience stories to justify her way of writing, thus turning her own self into the "main protagonist" in her discourse about writing.

In other replies, there was a moving to and fro from completely identifying with the narrator. She explains:

A10: […] the focus of my work is about always is [sic] the narrator

figure […]

The narrator figure remains the focus, she said, whether it was just her as a child (she said 'if that is all I had to go with' (A10)) or later on just the narrator figure. At the end of her reply, she said that she was not sure 'if this is a selfish way of writing' (A10). In this response, A let the narrator figure stand for herself and not at the same time with her optional phrasing: 'the narrator is the focal point and everything happens around and is usually from the point of […] whether that's me or whether it's someone […] it always is around one person creating the world for them' (A10).

A also linked her writing to her relation with music. She explained how she started 'Creative Writing' coming from a habit of 'scribbling lyrics' (A1), linking her interest in writing with her interest in music. However, the connection to music was also related to the construction of the narrator:

A1: […] I like it to be out somewhere whether its being heard in music or **whether it' s being heard from the kind of narrator figure** … I guess that's what I see it as

'The narrator figure' in the phrase 'whether it's being heard from the kind of narrator figure' [put in bold text above for emphasis] is positioned as the vehicle of writing for A. In other replies too, A highlighted the contribution of sound to her construction of the narrator. She referred to 'how things flow with the presence of the kind of narrator or storyteller' and the 'lyric sound of poetry,' and the 'Beat poets' [43] (A2). A's own internal aesthetic of use of sound linked with the narrator seems to be constitutive of A's manner of composition and the subject matter she writes about.

Finally, A explained how the narrator figure can sometimes disrupt the narration. She explicitly identified with other writers/performers who use this kind of narrative disruption and seemed to draw on her experience of other works. When I asked her about poets or playwrights she admires, she explained:

A40: […] kind of tricking into the audience and lulling them into false sense of security questioning who that is who they are seeing because I think the narrator is always slightly heightened if they are performing.

The false sense of security the narrator can provide seemed to be important for A. She said that she enjoys this process in her own writing and performances. A appeared to ambiguously refer to herself with the phrase: 'the narrator is always slightly heightened if they are performing.' Again, A, here, both identified with the narrator but also distanced herself from the narrator by speaking in third person about him or her, as she did with considering the use of sound and the narrator and her personal experiences linked with the narrator.

The disruption in the narrator's articulation is linked with what A said in other parts of the first interview in relation to her process of writing, the use of sound and her own ability to articulate. A explained:

A27: writing in a poem in a kind of a frustra flustered style is quite a nice challenge cause it gets all down and I have to force it into like two columns or something like that which is nice.

---

[43] famous American poetry movement with emphasis on the sound and the beat of the writing.

This way of "making"/creating/composing is linked to other places in the interview in relation to how she manipulates sound to produce the disruption in the narrative. She said she enjoys the tempo of narration, the 'rise and fall' (A29). A described:

A29: [...] I am able to control it within the life of the poem which

is really nice 'cause you have pulled things back [...]

Earlier, she had explained that 'a lot of my poems have kind of a turnaround poem moment where I start to go a bit kind of mad and never say what I mean yeah....'(A27). This account of the build up of rhythm, the ability to control the 'life of the poem' and the disruption or 'turnaround' in meaning can also be related to A's reference to 'crescendo,' the point in her poems which reach a climax (A9).

The significance of rhythm to A's process of writing was further emphasized when she explained that she does not think about her writing but rather 'says' it again and again to see how it can 'fit the beat' (A32) she has in her mind. This suggests A has an internal aesthetic of sound, which she follows in the process of composition. This seems to be similar with previous findings about the process of composition of poets. Magee (2009) in his research interviewing poets about the process of composition has suggested that 'most poets stressed the priority of hearing' (2009, online no pages).

This process of composing via the sound and the disruption in the narrator's narrative may relate to A's repetition in both interviews that she is not good at articulating herself. In the first interview, she explicitly said she writes about: 'not being able to articulate myself which is something I really struggle 'cause I can never say what I mean' (A27). In the final interview, she also repeats that she is 'bad' at articulating herself (A132-137).

I wonder here whether A explores her fear of disarticulation through her fantasy of the narrator figure with identifying with her "symptom" of disarticulation, her disrupting of the narrator's narrative. This disruption may have some sort of effect on or relation to A's performance of internal aesthetic of sound too.

6.2.2 The 'Narrator Figure' Writing Fantasy in A's Texts

My analysis traces how A's writing fantasy of the 'narrator figure' is enacted in the logic of composition of her texts. In six of eight texts produced during the research project, there is a first person narration with limited point of view and a disruption in the narrator's narrative, which may be an exploration of or defense against disarticulation. In the other two texts written by A in this research, there seems to be a slight modification in the structure of the narrator figure. This modification suggests that a re-modeling of A's writing fantasy might have taken place in the course of the research, which has expanded the remit of her 'narrator figure' writing fantasy, and therefore also expanded her symbolic articulation of her 'imperfect' writer subjectivity.

For A, the technical features of the narrator figure also seem to be constitutive of the subject matter of the writing. This contrasts with M's where the signified of the 'wider meaning' can be separated from the technique of the writing. These technical elements of A's writing fantasy can be traced quite directly in her logic of composition, though the element relating to an internal aesthetic of sound is not accessible to trace. The analysis will focus particularly on A's logic of composition in relation to the narrator's point of view (first or third person and limited or omniscient) and any slips in the narrator or imperfections alluded to, which may relate invisibly to A's use of sound.

6.2.2 a) The disrupted narrator: A's usual logic of composition

A's usual logic of composition represented in six of eight of her produced and submitted texts has the narrator as the main protagonist. This is done via a first person narration with limited point of view. Also, in line with her interview account, there seems to be a slip in the narrator, an allusion to his or her imperfections in the narrative.

For example, her first submitted text, a long poem titled 'The Eye of A Snail,' is about the narrator's 'theory about snails' reporting incidents in the narrator's life: a snail climbing, her mother combing her hair, an incident at school, her mother being brave, her being lost, her love of mad poets, her own writing, her mother's

pride in her writing, and a final call to the audience to 'not be tired' because 'there is more' (A's text). The poem starts with the narrator 'thinking' simultaneously and criticizing this 'way of thinking' as not a good way to start a poem:

> I think.
> I am always thinking.
> I know that I over-think
> And I know I don't think nearly enough.
> And right now I 'm thinking
> That you're probably thinking
> This is the worst stinking
> Introduction to a poem you've ever heard.

This poem is in first-person narration. The narrator takes the role of the writer here and there is allusion to the narrator's "weaknesses" from the very beginning.

Another instance of an address to her subjectivity as an imperfect writer is a critique at the end of the poem:

> [...]
> And I know this poem
> Has taken a turn
> For the worst
> It's like some sort of curse
> To pour 'me'
> Into my poetry
> In an attempt to see
> Who I really am

There is an exploration of subjectivity here in the introduction of a relation between 'me' and 'my poetry': i.e. " to pour 'me' into my poetry in an attempt to see who I really am.' This might be interpreted as the confusion of either A and/or the narrator. This not knowing (oneself) is in line with the previous stanzas, where A or the narrator talks about her mother, how she loves her, wants her to 'keep swimming' but also about her not knowing what 'love' is and how to say 'I love you'; she has a 'lack of script.' The word 'curse' could relate to A's fantasmatic investment of her faith in the *Symbolic* guarantee of her disarticulation within her writing. Both the technique in terms of narration in this poem and the theme/story of the poem seem to be enacting A's conception of the narrator figure, her writing fantasy that is.

160

I list in the table below a summary of A's usual mode of writing and my subjective interpretations of the disruption in her texts:

Table 5 – Participant A – Disruption in Texts

Text	Narrator	Subject	Disruption
The Eye of A Snail	First-person and protagonist of story	Monologue about snails, her love of her mother, writing, and poetry	At the end of the poem: 'this poem has taken a turn for the worst'
"Free-Write" (1st)	First-person and protagonist of story	Monologue about not being able to sleep	Mid-narrative, interruption of the flow of the narration, sudden shift in length of sentences, referring to 'Klazo' and Screaming –
"Write About This" (2nd)	First-person speaking to personified coin partial protagonist	Monologue about the 'coin' and how it is treated by others	Wondering in the end if others will look at the coin as the narrator will, if they need 'it' as she does, breaking from a description of the coin
"List of 20 Instructions"(3rd)	First-person and protagonist of story	Monologue about a relationship that ended	End of poem: telling her lover: 'To go fuck yourself, And~~with~~the pulse of your bass' The rest of the poem is not expressive of the narrator's feelings towards the lover describing the relationship
"Write in A Voice Opposite to Your Own" (4th)	First-person and protagonist of story	Monologue about not being understood, feeling like a 'stain'	Not clear who the narrator is and who the narrator addresses
"Using the Mirror given to you write what you see in its reflection" (5th)	First-person and protagonist of the story	Monologue about one's face on passport and how she is perceived by her mother and grandmother	The narrator's face is disrupted through describing it as an object to be matched when checked as a photo on passport. The description focuses on the narrator's imperfections

The first submitted, and first exercise texts by A in the project present a more directly self-involved narrator figure, who is the main protagonist, and the story is built around the narrator's world. For example, A's Free-Write text talks about the 'lack of sleep' and how the narrator writes when he or she cannot sleep, self-

examining or introspecting. These texts might be interpreted as instances of composition where A's conception of the narrator figure as being the main protagonist is more or less directly applied. The second, third, fourth and fifth texts are not so self-absorbed, since others participate in the story. These might be thought of as the transitional exploratory phase before the expanding that happened in the final two texts that A produced.

6.2.2 b) The Omniscient or Omnipotent Narrator: A's expanded writing fantasy

In two of eight texts produced in the experiment course, A's usual logic of composition seems slightly altered. In the text produced to the final exercise and the final submitted text after the course, the narrator figure no longer plays the protagonist role in the same direct way as in the other texts – the point of view is now more omniscient and the protagonist is not the main or only voice in the story. In the final interview, A noted that all of the exercises had something to do with the narrator except for the last two texts (A55) in line with the interpreted potential difference in point of view.

The final exercise of the experiment course was "Write a story using a myth or fairy tale but retell it so that it is changed somehow." Participant A chose the fairytale about Hansel and Gretel. The usual story is that Hansel and Gretel get lost in the woods and are tricked into a house made of candy created by the witch, in order to lure kids in and eat them. The children manage to escape by fooling the witch at the last minute by throwing her in the oven meant for them. The principle of the story might be that the children, despite some moments of gluttony, manage to overcome their greed as they are virtuous and smart and so they escape. In A's sixth produced text in class, the narrator figure is not the protagonist in the story but seems to be narrating from an omniscient perspective. I want to suggest that the narrator figure in this text is different to her usual logic of composition constructed with a first person narrator figure.

There are two features in this text that seem to place the narrator differently. First, the narrator only comments directly twice in the text, and these interventions are unexpected: a) 'Eat as much as you like/And **I** imagine they did! *and* b) '**I** can

imagine their parents would find that Quite hard.' Second, the narrator's "I" does not dominate the narration like in the other six texts. The narrative is mostly in third person:

> G+H's parents loved them very much.
> Or so they said.
> It was as if they thought that all of country walks,
> Cloud watchings and potato smilies could make up
> For that terrible day in the woods.

The style of narration throughout this text with a relatively distant narrator, although there is a moment of A's typical disruption, the narrative introduces an element of doubt: 'or so they said.' The main thrust of the narrative seems to build towards the children's "punishment" it seems. They are portrayed as 'delirious' with hunger and their description: 'scabby elbows […] hair thick […] brown […] he laughed like a clown,' which A explained in her final interview that:

> A112: […] I wanted to make it more grotesque like I thought I'd
> make it a grotesque style […]

In the same reply, she explained that everyone wants to read a fairytale that has been 'tampered with.' I wonder here whether there is an analogy between the tampered narrative of the narrator and this re-telling of a fairytale. Although at the same time it can be suggested that A is exploring and expanding her fantasy using the new frame provided by the exercise to produce a third person narration. She said in the final interview that she went with what she felt first: she could not resist 'killing the children' (A113) and that it is quite 'sadistic' – 'someone always has to die in the end' – and it is 'ambiguous' in the end [pronounces the 'm' in ambiguous more slowly emphasizing it]. However, she said that the 'story one was the most different' because it was not about ... [her]' (A125).

If we consider that the narrator "kills" or A "kills" the imperfect children, this seems to be both similar and different from all her other texts where the denigratory comments are directed at the narrator rather than at another protagonist. The denigration of the protagonist(s), however, is maintained. So, there is still a way in which this annihilating of the imperfect children might replicate aspects of a "killing" of the imperfect narrator – parts of A's own writer subjectivity. This 'sadistic'

enjoyment, I think, is also enacted in her final submitted text, which also deals with the subject matter of death.

- The narrator and everyone else die

The narrator's voice in A's poem without title, which is her final submitted text written outside of the class, is used in a different way from the first six texts. As with the Hansel and Gretel text, in this text the narrator has a more omniscient position. In A's usual logic of composition there is an uncertainty about the narrator's 'knowing,' which is not articulated quite so directly in either the Hansel and Gretel text or in the final poem. Additionally, in the final poem, the narrator has a different relation with the reader and audience because the narration is both in first person singular and first person plural.

The poem starts with an exploration of the possibility of death. I use bold text to denote the different 'people' who appear:

> Maybe **we**'ll all die
> Hopeless, worthless
> In New York,
> With **the cops** lining
> All the way up 5th avenue.
> **I** bet **a crook like you**
> Could shut a whole street down
> On a day like today
> And **I'll** lead the parade.

The narrator's voice is both collective and individual: first "maybe we'll all die" and second "I'll lead the parade." Though the uncertainty about the narrator is not articulated directly, as I have pointed out, the confusion about who is narrating is indirectly articulated here, and is also related to the theme of the story; a parade of death. For example, 'a crook like you' could imply another character, the narrator in self-reference or the reader, or potentially all of these at the same time. This ambiguity of address might be interpreted as an indirectly articulated uncertainty.

This mixing of who the narrator is can perhaps be related to the lines where A writes about the mixing of dust:

> Maybe all of the wasp stings
> And nicknames
> Will amount to nothing.
> *And all that's left is to mix*

164

> *My dust with his.*
> [A's italics]

The phrase 'to mix/My dust with his' might be considered as integrating the narrator's loss (the enigmatic inadequacy of 'wasp stings/ and nicknames/Will amount to nothing' with an abstract loss indirectly hinted by 'his[dust]''). This reference is not entirely accessible to the reader. Broadly, however, one does trace the theme of loss repeated in all of A's texts. Nonetheless, in this text it seems that the "I" is now including others too. The voice of the narrator in this poem becomes the voice of a collective self-confession of the reader, the audience, and the narrator. Adding to this sense of inclusion, there is a sense of "performance" that seems to make the audience participate in the narrator's performance in this poem. This is achieved through the use of the repeated refrain 'And maybe we'll all die' and with the performance of those 'stand[ing] naked and proud':

> But isn't it better
> To stand naked and proud
> And say, "I feel great"
> At the front of the crowd
> And get your money's worth
> When I hit the dirt

These lines could be understood analogously as a performative embodiment of the disruption that usually takes place in the narratives of A's narrators. Also, this performance of death could be understood as a legitimation of the performance of imperfection – an identification with one's/the narrator's/the author's symptom of "imperfection" even. Unlike her other texts, it seems possible to suggest that A's manner of composition, her use of the ambiguous narrator appearing as "I" and "we" and references to a "you" seem to *refract* the places from where the voice of the narrator comes from, multiplying the implied narrators. A co-fading and a co-emergence of emotions, time and appearances seem to be taking place in this poem, where the Other to whom this written discourse is addressed cannot quite be pinned down:

> Maybe, on a day like today,
> After the sun burn's gone down
> And the make-up's smudged off
> And our hair's finally cooled,

We'll lay on our backs
In the garden say
"I vow to never die old"

A different dynamic in the narration *and* consequently a different kind of 'narrator figure' than in the previous texts are produced because of the use of "we" "I" and "you" in the story making the reader and the narrator participate together in this narration. The refrain, the phrase that is repeated, seems to foreground and legitimise this acknowledgement of the lack in the narrator.

It may be possible to suggest that a 'potential space' (Kuhn 2013, p.4) may have been triggered for A to write this; something was *played with* in a way that opened up pathways of writing/of her writer subjectivity that had not been previously accessible. By 'potential space,' we might understand, 'the place that contains fantasy and reality' (Kuhn 2013, p.4) – what lies between 'symbol and the symbolized' from an object-relations perspective as proposed by Winnicott (ibid, p.4). From a Lacanian perspective, I think, this might be understood as a moment of pure desirousness between the *Imaginary and the Symbolic* registers, beyond *objet a.*

We might wonder here whether the confusing combination of 'presence/absence' of the setting, (providing a frame through the exercise (fairytale) earlier, but not the content – which fairytale – and the temporal dimension of providing an exercise and then asking for a text written without an exercise) may have allowed A to play with her desire. Instead of following her logic of composition according to her invisible fantasmatic *objet a* of her fantasy, A may have conjured the complementary fantasmatic *objet a*. This *objet a*, Ettinger (2006, p.41-90) posits, is produced before *objet a*, before one's subjection, during the late intrauterine state. Broadly, she argues interpreting the Other's desire in Lacanian theory or playing with the 'primal maternal object,' produce the experience of the self of the baby through the instances of the presence and absence of the mother and thus the child's first aesthetics (2006, p.78). Thus, there must also be aesthetics that relate to the *metramorphic link a*, constructed in the womb before the *objet a*, which might sometimes be invoked in the process of writing/creating in art.

Ettinger (2006, p.83) suggests that remembering the *matrixial objet a (or metramorphic link a)*, the subject creates *a 'multifocal object'* in the creative process. In the aesthetic outcome of this process, like A's ambiguous narrator in her final text, 'the co-emerging I and *non*-I *are both active and passive beyond appearance/disappearance,* whereas the '*I* interweaves with the unknown *non*-I' (ibid, p.84). Ettinger (2006, p.86), referring to visual artwork, explains that such an engagement produces in the audience the experience of a 'similar *metramorphosis*[44], and will momentarily co-emerge with the gaze caught in the artwork'[my italics]. In such events, she explains, 'we participate in the traumatic events of the Other' (ibid). Thus, I wonder here whether this moment of desirousness potentially produced by this enigmatic setting of the research brought Participant A in touch with her supplementary *feminine* desire in writing, and helped her explore the *non*-I (the invisible prohibition in her writing fantasy) in a *several* way through her poem. Such an expansion of fantasy presents the beginning of a significant insight into moments of something new emerging in art.

6.3 The 'Natural' 'Relaxed' Writing Fantasy – Participant G

Participant G was a second-year undergraduate Drama and Creative Writing student at the time of the research. In his first interview, G provided an account of how writing changed from a hobby to a career option for him. He also linked his interest in writing to being a good at drawing his childhood, and discussed his process of writing as relaxed and natural. G also mentioned that he comes from the 'deep countryside' (G34) and speculated that his desperate wish to escape his place of origin may be articulated in his writing. In this research, the texts G wrote are all prose fiction, apart from his last submission, which is a play. G attended all of the sessions, except the 4th one, "Write in A Voice Opposite to Your Own." He completed this at home and submitted it in the next class. In the classroom discussions and interviews, G seemed tentatively confident. He frequently asked the other

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[44]'Metramorphosis' is one of many neologisms used in Ettinger's text (2006) to indicate the transformation (metamorphosis) in the womb (metra in Ancient Greek) (p.1-37).

participants whether they had thought of what they wrote beforehand or if it was spontaneous.

Participant G's writing fantasy has been quite difficult to "untangle" in the data because all his texts remained the same in terms of logic of composition, apart from one small difference in one text. Also, G's texts seemed to me to be closer to versions of Creative Writing texts that might be published, and less experimental or hesitant than the texts of the other participants. In G's accounts, his writing fantasy is organized by the master signifier 'natural.' Unlike the other two participants, G's organization of discourse is not organized thematically *and* structurally*.* For example in the case of M, she thematically refers to the 'wider meaning' in her interview, and her replies also enact this 'telling' not showing in their constructions. G presented his development, process, and analysis of his writing as 'natural' thematically. His discourse presented a structured account of these, which was not so 'natural' or spontaneous. In his texts in this research, G seemed to enact a 'natural' writer subjectivity through a signifying gaze, which is the repeated traced logic of composition. I call it a signifying gaze because it signifies/assigns meanings through the narration of detailed images. However, this mode of composing was not acknowledged as a conscious writing technique by G.

As this chapter is an exploration of the structure of fantasy in the context of writing, and because this case study's tracing of fantasy is different, the argument here is a little bit more speculative than the other two. I present examples from G's interview and then from his writing to indicate his writing fantasy. Then, I present an example from a text where G may have encountered an Otherness, which may have been "covered over" in the way he engaged with the exercise in class and how he talked about this incident in his final interview.

6.3.1 The 'Natural' Writing Fantasy in G's Spoken Discourse

G's focus on the 'natural' aspects of writing emerges as a consistent theme in his first interview (repeated 7 times G13, 20, 23, 65, 76). He links the *master signifiers* 'relaxed' (G12) and 'natural' to three strands: 1) the development of his writing 2) his process of writing and 3) an analysis of his writing techniques and themes. These

three ways in which he described his writing constructed this "effortless" writer subjectivity that he described as 'fun' and not 'too solemn' (G32). 'Funny' is a secondary master signifier supporting this 'natural' and relaxed writing fantasy (repeated 7 times in first interview G2, 16, 17, 59, 66, 69, 76). In most of his responses, G did not fix an ideal of writing with a master signifier. G frequently discussed what he never does in the first interview ('never' is repeated 11 times in responses, twice in some responses G1, 2, 9, 12, 15, 29, 30, 39, 50, 65, 71: e.g. 'there's never any pressure on it' (G12) 'never thought of it as a chore' (G15)). These references are all linked to the process of writing being a 'natural' thing for him. There is an inherent focus in his accounts on "not fixing" in his practice of writing; this is in evident contrast with what I will explain he referred to as 'stuck' style in his texts in this project.

In his first interview, G's account of writing was an analysis of his practice. In response to 'tell me about how you view or feel about writing,' G's first reply was about the development of his writing in the past, present and future. This account of the development presented a "natural" evolution of the role writing has played in his life:

> G1: eh well, I guess writing for me *has always been* **something** sort of just **something** like a hobby you know like a rainy day sort of thing because I never really take Creative Writing seriously as a sort of career option? or as **something** to study I guess, cause *it was always* **something e** like when youre little you sort of write these little stories cause it was always just a way to pass the time I guess rather than taking it so seriously and so ... but *now it sort of become* **something** that you know I am taking more seriously its taking priority over my life ... it's probably not that good? But it's it sort of went from **something not serious to something that I've been looking into as something that is a viable career option** ... I guess

G talked about writing chronologically, in terms of what it was, what it always has been and what it has become. I use bold and italics text to highlight the elements referring to this in the response above. The repetition of the word 'something' could point to G's attempt to objectify his practice. This account is an analysis of what his writing is for him, providing a categorization : hobby versus career option. He said that it has always been 'sort of just something like a hobby' 'like a rainy day sort of

thing.' Even though G described how he saw writing in the past, he used present tense for 'I never really take Creative Writing seriously.' His reference to writing as something he is taking more seriously, taking priority 'over' his life, instead of 'in' his life might be an articulation of his view of writing. This is then followed by a questionning of what he has just said 'It's probably not that good?.' The pairing of these two statements, an assertion followed by a question, might be interpreted as enacting the prohibition of 'serious' in his relation to writing.

G also tended to report that writing for him was not something serious throughout the first interview, constructed by his replies which use 'never' as a formulation. For example, he said : 'I never thought about doing it at university level' (G9), 'I am never directly thinking about a writer in general' (G29), or 'never very good [endings of stories]' (G39). In describing possible defenses in writing in composition from a Lacanian point of view, Bracher has proposed that writing, which is an account of development of something/ of a process, 'functions as a kind of condensation of [the composition techniques] analysis and description – [interpreting this way of writing in relation to the subject's subjectivity as] a way of avoiding both the abstract and the personal, both the Other's desire and one's own' (1997, p. 117). I wonder whether the above formulations of his development of writing may point to a potential defense, a fantasmatic investment in *not* presenting his investment in writing, (for fear of failure or evaluation? [question-mark intended]).

The ongoing contradiction in G's replies in his first interview is that writing does have a serious function for him but this is not directly acknowledged. For example, G explained that he chose to draw or write because 'you want to seem more creative and you want to seem more interesting to people' (G2) and felt 'more creative that way.' G's interest in writing originated from drawing and creating 'little comic books' (G4) at school. He said that he used to draw and create 'cartoon stuff' and that he is unsure whether his classmates 'liked it' but that it was just a way of 'showing off'(G5). This use of creativity might be interpreted as a means for representing oneself socially, which is a serious function of his writing. When I punctuated his phrase by saying 'you show them off?' (Z4) to probe him to elaborate on what he means, G minimized the meaning of 'showing off.' He said that it was

this 'weird thing' (G5) and it is literally 'showing' his comic books[45], his illustrated stories to other people. This serious function of 'showing off,' that is not acknowledged as serious, is evident in the themes of the stories he explored in his 'little comic books,' e.g. the outcast penguin who succeeds in an art competition and then makes friends (G8).

G presented his process of writing as also not serious, as 'relaxed' (G12). He said:

> G2: [...] I only sort of ever do it when I am relaxed and when you're sort of sat down clear mind and you're not thinking of anything else and so I usually just can go off start off straightaway [...]

G's account of the process of writing was presented as stress-free. He began the reply above by saying 'he does not know what others say […] stuck there with a writer's block […] desperate to think of anything.' G's account comprised of his thoughts about the process of writing and his consideration of others' thoughts on this matter. This may perhaps indicate that this is a not so "natural" or spontaneous account. He seems to assume that my question has to do with the difficulty of writing things down, rather than just being able to describe what one does when one is sitting down to write.

G also talked about being relaxed in relation to receiving feedback from others about his writing. For example, he repeated that he is not really 'bothered about giving them a story, I am just sort of wanna whatever of comes naturally [...] not like in a show off way' (G23). This attempt to come off as not being 'bothered' is also enacted in his replies about the way he writes. When I asked G 'how would you describe that language' (Z20) to gain more concrete details about his way of writing, he explained:

> G20: a lot of my writing now is really sort of really descriptive people describe like sort of some natural like sort of romantic descriptive full of these metaphors and I guess readingt hrough a lot of it a lot of it is naturally based and like sort of set in the

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[45] G4: yea 'cause I always used to write these little books and ah illustrate them all show them make little comic books and like hand them round?

country and very like I don't want to say that very like poetic but
like I am not like bigging it up but that's sort of the kind of way …

On the one hand, G seemed to know how to describe or to have thought about his writing. He was clearly able to give quite an analytical account of his style, which, he, then, seemed to want to retract; this move might be considered a hedging in terms of providing a fixing account of how he might write. The final strand of his reply appeared conscious of sounding quite elaborate and "prepared" and might be considered an attempt to maintain the 'natural' style/attitude to his art, ('I am not like bigging it up'). Trying to minimize the seriousness is analogous to his attitude in previous replies about the process being quite relaxed for him but 'not in a show off way.' Another example of this attitude is when he explained that his writing starts as a single line and then develops into a story without having any lucid plot in his mind beforehand (G31).

Finally, G also seemed to both know and not know about the autobiographical element in his writing. His accounts about his writing being an 'escapism' or 'weirdly autobiographical' are also linked to the *master signifiers* 'relaxed' and 'natural' of his writing fantasy linked with not sounding serious. In response to my question about 'what fuels the content of what you write,' G said:

> G17: I've tried not to think about it 'cause a lot of my stuff is
> probably could be looked into quite a lot me being quite crazy
> but I guess most of it is is sort of like social stuff

Before I formulated my question, I said 'quite a lot of fun' responding to his previous replies (G9-15), where he continously highlighted writing has been 'fun' and a 'hobby' nothing serious. When I asked G to explain what he meant by 'social,' he said that he looked at his 'stuff' and that it has evolved as he has changed from being a schoolboy to moving to London (G17-18). Even though G said he had tried not to think about it, in later parts of the interview, G said that his writing is usually about 'one male protagonist' (G32) whose life is 'sort of breaking down around him' (G32) and it has to do with his background having grown up in the 'deep countryside' and being 'desperate' (G32) to move to an urban area. He intercepted this response by saying he does not want to sound 'solemn' but that it is about 'being overcome by

the city life' (G32). In the following replies, G also related his writing with escapism and said that is 'from where the 'descriptive things come from' and 'focused on landscape' (G36).

He provided explanations of elements in his writing but at points paired these explanations with hedging statements claiming that he has not really thought about these elements. The interview setting may have triggered this hedging in G's articulations. However, his hedging may also relate to G's wish not to sound 'solemn' (G32). 'Serious' or 'solemn' seemed to be signifiers representing one of the main elements possibly prohibited in G's writing fantasy in his interview. He explained that his writing has always been 'fun' and refers to it as funny throughout his first interview (repeated 7 times) in contrast to his numerous denigrations of the seriousness of the role of writing, his process and descriptions of writing (G1, 2, 9, 12, 15, 29, 30, 39, 50, 65, 71) using 'never.'

The idea mentioned earlier by Bracher (1997, p.117) that one analyzes oneself (by providing an account of a development in one's writing) in an attempt to move away from one's desire and the Other's desire is interesting to consider here as a form of defense espoused by G in his speech about his writing. The research setting, in G's case, may have enhanced G's fantasmatic scenario about writing when relaxed, if it was perceived as having a serious frame, 'look[ing] into' something. G used the phrase 'looked into' (G17) to refer to his writing: 'a lot of my stuff is probably could be looked into quite a lot me being quite crazy' (G17). This 'looking into' understood as 'thinking about it' or 'serious' or 'solemn' seems to be precisely what G prohibits, so that he can write.

6.3.2 The 'Natural' Writing Fantasy in G's Texts

6.3.2 a) The signifying gaze : G's usual logic of composition
There is an emergent common logic of composition in all of G's texts produced and submitted in this research. As noted earlier, G's logic of composition is a narration through description of images, which symbolize the meaning of the story: "a signifying gaze."

I argue here that all of G's texts follow a similar logic of composition, which may have been produced in response to the interpreted threatening frame of this research setting as 'unnatural' or not relaxed. I also speculate whether in one text (written to the 5th exercise) G might have approximated an encounter with "Otherness" constructed as the element usually excluded from his writer subjectivity. This is because in this particular text, in addition to describing images, their symbolized meaning is also stated. This is different to G's commonly traced manner of writing in his other texts. I precariously suggest that G may have covered over this potential encounter with Otherness by the way he engaged with the exercise in class and his particular references to it in the final interview.

G submitted two texts at the first interview. Both follow a similar logic of composition. One of the two is a piece of fiction, a short story about Santa Claus' wife, Mrs. Christmas. The story begins with Mrs. Christmas getting out of bed and wrapping up a present. The description of this scene pinpoints she is alone in the house. Then, she listens to the elves speak about her husband from next door. After that, she watches a couple and their children spending Christmas together from her window. Then, her husband returns to the house in the morning to fall asleep next to her. The story ends with her husband fast asleep next to her and her opening the present that she wrapped for herself at the beginning of the story. This text is written in continuous description, using it to "show" or draw out the protagonist of the story. The description of pictures and scenes are left to "tell" the story, instead of for example having Mrs. Christmas speak her sadness to spend Christmas alone and being the only one who does not receive a Christmas present from Santa Claus, who is her husband.

An example of continuous description of scene comes at the start of the story where Mrs. Christmas is described wrapping her present, which she will open at the end of the story when her husband returns home.

1st submitted text

> Taking the end of the ribbon in one hand, and gently flattening it out over the top of the neatly wrapped packed with the other, she pulled the opposite end and fastened the two strands together in a precise bow, which sat firm on top of the gift like a meditative Buddhist. She took the box carefully, and in both hands, and placed it amongst the others at the foot of the bed.

> Climbing under the sheets, her large frame sinking fat into the mattress and heaving her down like a chopped tree, she pulled the duvet over her body and stared through the darkness at the ceiling.

The logic of composition is constituted in the description of the picture of the scene slowly built up via the punctuation, which creates longer sentences and a sense of continuity in the narrative. Also, this slow development is produced via the continuous tense used for the verbs in the scene and via the metaphors or similes used such as 'like a meditative Buddhist' or 'heaving her down like a chopped tree.' The combination of these elements develops a narrative through a specific lens on the story, one that is very much visual: a gaze that signifies through the detail of images. This, in turn, creates a story of pictures to signify the feelings, emotions and intentions of the characters. The plot in this story, as G claims in his interview (G21) about his plots in general ('not having a direct plot or […] lucid story'), is not lucid and only becomes apparent at the end of the story.

The same logic is followed in all of G's texts. A table outlining these texts follows on the next page.

Table 6 – Participant G – The Signifying Gaze

Text	Images (examples)	Narration: Description of images in scene
"Free-Write" (1st)	Movements with clothing to describe the unbearable heat: e.g. 'one fanned his face with an open palm, washing it like a leaf in front of him'	The unbearable heat in a campsite
"Write About This" (2nd)	Coins being produced in a factory: e.g. 'As another coin is dropped, great clouds of soot and vapour rise from the chimneys, necessary products of the great machine'	A copper coin factory scene
"List of 20 Instructions"(3rd)	A man eating up his food greedily: e.g. 'He was a pig. He shoveled in twenty round, moist new potatoes (sentence marked out) at once into his (marked out) cheeks, drool(ing) spilling out of the wides.'	A man's leisurely relaxation at his home
"Write in A Voice Opposite to Your Own" (4rth)	The symbol drawn outside a building to indicate if it is inhabited: e.g. Where there wasn't mud, there was peeling blue paint, which as I have yet to be proven otherwise, means it the building in front of which I sleep is unoccupied.'	A homeless man's description of symbols communication for homeless people
"Choose a Fairytale and re-write it so that it is changed somehow" (6th	The grandmother's nightgown: e.g. 'her night gown which lay hung over the back of her chair, as if it had swooned in terror'	Little-red riding hood scene finding her grandmother dead in the wolf's stomach
Final Submitted: A play	Dialogue indicating the wife does not see her husband being killed by a thief, who then chats her up in her house…	Married couple's dialogue, showing what each does not notice in the scene affecting their understanding of each other

The same descriptive style is also followed in the 3rd, 4th and 6th exercise texts and final submitted text; pointing to the symbolism of the story through description of images or through movements of characters in the play script.

6.3.2 b) 'Bare thoughts'

There is one text written by G during the research with slight variation. This slightly different writing was done to the exercise "Use The Mirror Given to You and Write What You See In Its Reflection." In this text, G's composition seems to be more

176

confessional than usual. Moving to the floor, and looking at the underside of the tables in class, G wrote what the desks did not have under them:

> they didn't have that, or compass etchings of love notes, or hate notes or notes of boredom which students carved into them to relieve themselves of some deep desire for destruction, or because their emotions and lack of resources had finally got the better of them.

This type of narration is not as directly telling a story through what the picture symbolizes as other texts by G in this project; though there is still description of the scene; the metaphors allow the story to be signified via the signs of pictures. In his final interview, referring to this exercise, G said that he does not like the idea of writing down his 'bare thoughts' (G175). He also said in the classroom discussion that he had 'this overwhelming desire not to write about [his] face' (5th classroom discussion 28:40-45:13 min). This exercise seems to have made him uncomfortable. He said he felt comfortable but in relation to being able to move and going to sit on the floor:

> Z189: you felt more comfortable with the mirror?
> G189: I guess more comfortable with the opportunity to move
> around ... yeah ... and the mirror sort of gave that I guess...

G replied here in relation to me asking him earlier why he sat on the floor (Z187-8). I asked him that because earlier in the interview he had told me that he considered this environment as very 'controlled' (G113) and 'professional' (G116). G expressed an indirect avoidance towards this exercise in the final interview. This move away from the participants may in fact be substantiating his discomfort.

Additionally, G did not acknowledge any writing techniques that he necessarily followed, yet in relation to this exercise his responses point to a particular way of writing that he did not wish to 'do.' In relation to what other people did in the 'mirror exercise,' he explained:

> G171: […] I think I always went in like ... you know ... I wouldn't have liked to do like ummm a trail of thought or just like a sort of more abstract piece 'cause it's just ... **I don't know I don't really feel very comfortable about that [**…] (bold text highlighting my interpretation)

The extract might be interpreted as G "knowing" why he cannot write an 'abstract piece': he wouldn't feel comfortable. This may perhaps relate to what he expressed later in the interview that he likes to be able to 'use' his writing (G172) and to be 'safe with his writing' (G178). On a side-note, G also drew right under the printed instructions of the exercise on the page a comical sketch of a jellyfish, with this writing next to it: 'mirror/hello I am [G]/ [unrecognizable words] octopus, writing in mirror.' We might speculate here that G resorted to even safer master signifiers "drawing" to get rid of any discomfort he might have felt. His discomfort could be further speculated by his naming his sketch of a jellyfish as an octopus.

It is possible that the overall research setting may have triggered a more defensive fantasmatic enactment of G's writing fantasy, if we consider G's references in his final interview to 'sticking to his style.' For example, G confirmed in his final interview that it felt he had no other choice but to write the way he writes:

> G130: ahhhh I did I find cause when I saw the first exercise I can't remember what was that. Oh ah the free write ... I wrote that and I was expecting to sort of ... what I sort of went into this ... thinking it was a good opportunity to be experimental with my writing to get out of my style and try some things out ... but as the weeks went along I realized ... that it was sort of (laughs a bit) **I found it really difficult to ... I don't think I did get out of my own style ... at least I don't think I did ...** and I gu ... I am not sure whether I feel positively or negatively about it ... but **... I I found that I did sort of stick to my style no matter what was given to me ... which ... I think I feel good about ... because it sort of I sort of cemented something about my writing that I can sort of make consistent between different pieces of work ...** but in the same way I would have wanted to be more experimental with it but I just ... it didn't come ... I guess … that has taught me that **if you've got a style then you stick to it** I guess because as well with everyone else I think I think it's quite opposite they have their styles …

I have put in bold above all of G's references to sticking to his style. G, in this reply, which was to a general question about anything in relation to the project, asserted that his style did not change. He came to the project with the impression that he would experiment but apparently he seemed to have been "taught" that if you have 'a style then you stick to it.' G seemed to have ended up taking up this project as a chance to 'cement' something about his writing to continue to 'write'

consistently between different pieces of work, even though he said he that he wanted to experiment at the start. The "choice" of the word 'cement' is interesting in consideration of the 'stuck' style that G has kept to. In relation to 'sticking,' G explained that the environment somehow forced him to "stick":

> G117: […] it's just being recorded as well... it sort of like... stay on topic.

The setting of the research seems to have elicited the kind of self-consciousness – because of being recorded – that is exactly what G avoided in his usual approach to writing through being 'relaxed.' In the first interview, G's references to writing suggest that he is not 'conscious' when he is writing, falling into a not so conscious mode of writing in terms of logic of composition. Though he seems to have some awareness *post facto* about the techniques he uses. When I asked G if he felt that he 'pushed his boundaries' (my wording) (Z225), he said that he tried not to think about what he wrote (G225) because it's just that it is 'inside of you' (G226) – 'you don't think about it you write' (G226) – and that you 'have to be conscious about fighting it' (G227), so as not to stick to one's style.

Finally, G's references to not giving himself an option of not being consistent in his writing, and his admission in the final interview to not giving himself the option to not read his writing out loud (G89)[46]in class might perhaps be interpreted as defensive responses to an environment that might have felt threatening towards his writer subjectivity. G's theory about why he stuck to his style may be related to the setting. He said that it is probably something that 'these environments' (he means 'controlled' he explains) (G126) make you do it 'subconsciously' (his words) (G127).

'[S]ticking to a style' might be a paradoxical articulation of the impossible scenario of G's writing fantasy. He said that it is not that one cannot get out of the style but 'I think you can't really get out of it without it being worse' (G134). A fantasy is operative, Lapping (2013b, p.93) explains, 'precisely' because it needs to conceal an 'unbearable traumatic kernel of our being'[…] permit[ting] engagement in

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[46] G89: I don't think I would have ever *not* read it...[my italics to indicate his emphasis in tone of voice]

day to day social life.' So, we might suggest that writing fantasies initially 'permit engagement' with the act of writing. In this case, G's fantasy of writing "naturally" may have allowed him to engage with a research setting, which he perceived as an Other that might threaten his writer subjectivity.

6.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has attempted to explore the structure of fantasy as a methodological and pedagogical tool to explore student-writers' assumptions about their writing and potential blockages in their writing. Hecq (2012b, online no pages) highlights that we need 'conceptual tools' suited for the particularity of the field of writing. Linking one's writing with one's articulation of writer subjectivity, I have attempted to suggest that the structure of fantasy through *master signifiers* organizes the meaning of writers' writing practice.

From a psychosocial perspective, like Hook (2014, p. 231-2), who analyzed, for example, an account written about a person's experience during Apartheid, I have attempted to read the "unconscious" of the composition of these texts in terms of the participants' assumptions about their writing. Extending this approach, I have, in a sense, *triangulated* the reading of the texts with the unconscious of the interviews by the students, in order to trace continuous strands of signifying chains, engaging with the *Symbolic*, rather than solely with my *Imaginary* interpretation of the signifiers of their texts.

In summary, the operation of fantasy, which makes the participants' particular writer subjectivities possible, is dependent on a form of prohibition. The element prohibited is a key factor in exploring obstacles to a writer's writing practice. In the case of M, this prohibition relates to an 'indulgence of self' or on the "personal" against her 'wider meaning' fantasy. M's case is an example of encountering a troubling Otherness in our practice. The exploration of this Otherness may help us discern "limiting" methodological identifications in writing, which can contribute to the same recycling of discourses in the production of literary pieces.

In the case of A, the prohibited element was a non-disrupted narrator in the narrative of her texts. The research setting gradually built up a space for A where she could re-envision the type of 'narrator figure,' allowing the narrator to narrate from a more integral point of view, constitutive and expansive of her writing fantasy. Participant A's case opens up the potential space of expanding one's writer subjectivity, and attempting to engage a pure desirousness to write.

In the case of G, the whole of the research setting seems to have been perceived as a kind of a threat to his writing fantasy of writing as relaxed, even though an enigmatic stance from a Lacanian perspective was supposed to elicit rather than obstruct the participants' desire to write. On one hand, G seemed to manage to write in his usual writing style confirming for himself that this is his style of writing, but on the other hand, G seemed to defend against an anxiety towards writing badly by 'sticking to his style.'

In some cases, it is possible to trace an application of one's identifications in speech about writing with the way in which techniques are (consciously or unconsciously) chosen to construct the composition of a text. These may be traced indirectly in the case of M who usually uses "telling" the 'wider meaning' in her narration in her stories, or directly in the case of A, who uses a narrator figure always. In other cases, these are traced in a more speculative manner as the process of writing is conflated with the product of the writing, without specific mention of techniques in language, (except if asked persistently), like in the case of G. The diversity of identifications and foci on the various aspects fueling the act of writing (meaning, sound/narration, process) emphasize the particularity and uniqueness in learning Creative Writing for each writer and thus also emphasize the sensitivity required in its pedagogy.

Next, I go on to explore the rest of the participants in this project looking at instances where they attempted to talk about elements of their writing that may relate to blocked aspects of their writer subjectivity. I consider the concept of *jouissance* as the fantasmatic energy, which is sacrificed in their articulations of their writing fantasy, and which is potentially revealed in their disarticulations of their writing fantasy.

CHAPTER 7

The Shock of the *Jouissance* that Strayed

7.1 … [47]

In the previous chapter, I constructed possible interpretations of the participants'
writing fantasies based on the repetition of certain *master signifiers* in their
interview accounts, which were linked to their logic of composition. These *master
signifiers* might be thought of as objects of attachment and identification[48] that
constitute the participants' writer subjectivity. The writing fantasies served as a
baseline to consider the participant's engagement with the research setting.
Changes in participants' texts were traced where they might have written in the
prohibited element of their fantasy. This pointed to areas of Creative Writing
knowledge, which may have been blocked to them. I suggested that in their
different forms these changes/shifts in the participants' text might be interpreted as
moments of Otherness, which were experienced differently by each participant.

This chapter explores the notion of disarticulation of one's practice in
participants' interview responses, as an indication of an encounter with one's limits
of writer subjectivity. The title of this section, (3 dots), symbolizes this notion. I use
the concept of *jouissance* to conceptualize and explore whether these moments of
disarticulation might be interpreted as moments of encountering one's repressed
desire in one's account of one's writing practice.

Such an exploration is not new. For instance, Sagan (2009, PhD thesis) has
discussed the uncomfortable silences (10 second pauses) of one of her participants
in relation to the participant's difficulty with discussing her biographic identity
(p.160). Over the time of the research, Sagan (2009 p.160) noted that this silence
had 'chang[ed] dramatically' to more comfortable pauses.' These pauses may have

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[47] The three dots have been used by Lacan to denote one's belief in one's symptom,
that is that one is justified by acting or reacting the way they do (Verhaeghe and
Declercq 2002, p.9)

[48] I understand the difference between identification and attachment as follows:
identification refers to the "elements" used to constitute the identity positively,
whilst attachment refers to the "drive" to not necessarily identify with some
elements but "use" them to construct one's subjectivity, therefore necessarily
attaching to them in a negative mode to constitute one's identity.

related to excluded signifiers about this participant's past, which were impossible to articulate or verbalize at the beginning of the research. Sagan did not use a Lacanian framework, but she does suggest it is possible to interpret the pauses as communicating something significant about her participant – a very vulnerable woman with extreme anxiety and depression. While Sagan's work provides a reference for the interpretation of pauses and disruptions within a psychodynamic framework, she also points to the need to take care in such interpretations: 'I have been cautious about the research therapy interface and possible over-zealous license to interpret the pauses, silences and discomforts of a person very unused to the biographic setting' (ibid, p.160). This is a useful caution, and in my interpretation of disruptions and hesitations in my interviewees I have taken care to try to provide detailed context to support this slightly risky interpretive move …

Taking a more explicitly Lacanian perspective, Proudfoot (2012), in research about the enjoyment of sports fans and national identity, used *jouissance* to conceptualize moments of expression of emotion (crying) or abrupt endings in his interviews with Italian or Portuguese immigrants in Canada during the football World Cup. A specific relation to excluded signifiers in these participants' disarticulations was not the focus of the analysis. Proudfoot (2012, p.516) speculates on the possibility that these moments might have revealed overwhelming or excessive aspects of national identity that were not elicited by direct questioning in his interviews. The conclusion he reached was that more material was articulated when the subject matter of national identity of these immigrants was not asked about directly. This research also relates to excluded aspects of one's subjectivity "revealed" through disruptions in articulation.

Put simply, *jouissance* is the experience of a primordial pleasure, which we lose when we enter language and become subjects (Fink 2004, p.12). To become subjects, we sacrifice this *jouissance* in the *Real* upon entering the *Symbolic* and through separation from the mOther(ibid). This experience of excess ('enjoyment in displeasure' in the *Real*) is encapsulated in the fantasmatic *objet a*, aspects of which we seek in other 'objects' in our pursuit of fantasy. So, *jouissance* is the fantasmatic energy that fuels the construction of fantasy. In chapter 4, I explained that we become subjects through our identification with certain master signifiers. These

identifications are created through the process of subjection, which involves the loss of primordial *jouissance*. Thus, an encounter with excluded signifiers from our subjectivity, which are symbolic of the prohibited element of our fantasy, may cause a momentary encounter with one's primordial *jouissance.*

Lapping (2013a, p.13) has proposed that since in 'Lacan's framework desire is precisely that which is excluded from language' so an articulation of repressed desire may appear in the disruption of a discursive context, constituting 'the encounter between subject and Other.' In the context of this research's interviews, these encounters with the Other, hypothesized as disruption in the participants' articulations, might point to signifiers that are unconsciously excluded from the participants' writer subjectivity.

This is a paradoxical and illegitimate chapter, in the sense that it acts also as a methodological exploration of whether it is actually possible to "trace" one's *jouissance* within speech, or indeed *not speech*. Also, this tracing has implications about what it might mean to "judge" one's pleasure or displeasure about a practice in one's speech.

The first part of the chapter provides a brief theoretical account of *jouissance* in Lacanian theory. The second part is divided into two smaller case studies drawn from the data by the other two participants E and Q. In each case study, I present:

a. the writing fantasy of the participant

b. the incident of disarticulation in participant's interview

By "disarticulation" I mean a phrase or a word that is either preceded by a long pause, silence, or a phrase that is left incomplete, or where the participant forgets what question he or she was answering.

I discuss the signifiers in the incident of disarticulation in relation to the *master signifiers* used in the participants' writing fantasy. In this way, I explore the possible scenario that a disarticulation might be a momentary traumatic encounter with *real jouissance* and therefore, indicative of the limits of the participants' writer subjectivity.

7.2 Conceptualizing Jouissance - articulating one's repressed desire to write by not articulating?

In Lacanian theory, it is fair to accept that *jouissance* is a highly contested term, which has evolved in Lacan's work. Nonetheless, I think it is both useful methodologically and creative, as an ontological and ontic exploration of knowledge, to experiment with the exploration and re-contextualization of the term in the interpretation of empirical data about writing and one's relation to language. Even though I have explained the story of the advent of the subject, according to Lacanian theory, in Chapter 4, I will briefly refer to some aspects of this story here to put *jouissance* in further context.

In this section, I explain *jouissance* vis-à-vis:

1. the subject's experience of it in the *Real*

2. fantasy and discourse

3. note on relation to language

7.2.1 *Jouissance* as an experience of "pleasure" in the *Real*

Jouissance is a primordial affective experience of pleasure/pain in the *Real (*Fink, 2004, p.124)*. This experience is formative of the production of the subject's desire, and thus the subject's fantasy and subjectivity. Referring to Lacan's formulation of *jouissance*, in relation to becoming subject in his seminar 'The Subversion of the Subject,' Fink explains (2004, p.124) that this affective experience (*jouissance)* is lost in the process of becoming subject. It is a *pure* state of not knowing and just enjoying, impossible to put in words.

A distinction between *jouissance* before and after we become subjects has been proposed:

> Bruce Fink distinguishes between what he calls *jouissance* before the letter and *jouissance* after the letter. The first-order *jouissance* can merely be presupposed as an imagined primordial state, prior to the subject's castration, where happiness and well-being would abound. Lacan is careful to point out that no such state has ever existed. There is no lost object that, if were we only able to find it again, would put an end to all our suffering and throw us into an existence of unlimited joy. (Cederstrom & Grassman 2010, p.114-115)

Cederstrom and Grassman above explain that the *jouissance* attained before the subject entering language (before the letter) is by definition not possible after the subject enters language (after the letter). So, the way *jouissance* circulates/"appears" in the subject's world is shaped by the subject's existence in the *Symbolic* order. Because *jouissance* was experienced in the *Real*, in a pre-symbolic state (before the letter) and it is an imagined experience, it is impossible to ever find it again. Another form of *jouissance* can circulate in the *Symbolic*: a *plus-de-jouir* is attained in our enunciation of subjectivity (Fink 2004, 126). This limited form of *jouissance, plus-de-jouir* is attained through the operation of fantasy.

7.2.2. *Jouissance operating* fantasy and discourse

Fantasy is the defense against the imagined loss of this primordial pleasure (Fink 1995, 95). In relation to this loss, Fink explains that closely related to alienation and separation is castration. Alienation, as mentioned in chapter 4, is the process of the subject entering language (Fink 1995, p. 99), thus giving up her *original human form of being,* as I understand it. Separation is a second "renunciation" (Fink 1995, p.99):

> The pleasure derived from the Other as demand, from casting the Other's demand as the object in fantasy […] that is the pleasure obtained from the drives. […] The sacrifice involved in castration is to hand over a certain *jouissance* to the Other and let it circulate in the other, that is, let it circulate in some sense "outside of ourselves."

The process of separation is traced here by Fink in his reference to 'casting the Other's demand as the object in fantasy.' In the process of the subject's interaction with the Other (as language and as desire), the Other's demand as the object in fantasy might be understood as the subject's *Imaginary* understanding of the Other's desire/demand. This *Imaginary* understanding produces the subject's identification with the Master Signifier "received." This "receiving" of the Master Signifier produces the 'object of fantasy,' which structures the subject's fantasy and activates the drives in "servitude" of fantasy. The loss of *jouissance*, via the processes of alienation and separation, motivates one's enunciation of subjectivity.

Jouissance is linked to the impossibility, the prohibition in the fantasmatic scenario of fantasy. Glynos (2008, p.681) explains:

> In short, *jouissance* as impossible (primordially lost) is transformed into a prohibition of *jouissance,* which enables a certain '*plus-de-jouir'* via the transgression of the Law *qua* prohibition. The subject derives its being and identity via this transgressive enjoyment.

Out of this fantasy, there is a "constant"[49] *jouissance* (a *jouissance* after the letter, after the subject's initiation into language) or a *plus-de-jouir* in other words, that is sought through the enactment of the fantasmatic scenario and the transgression of the ideal producing the prohibition, the key in producing the fantasy in the first place. Therefore, the prohibition of an element (a repression in more Freudian terms) in a writing fantasy is linked with the *jouissance* drawn from it. Thus, the signifiers that are prohibited are linked with this encounter of the *jouissance,* an encounter with *the Real* or Otherness.

Jouissance might also be called in other words "libido." Evans (1996, p.94) describes the term libido coined by Freud as having many strong affinities with Lacan's *jouissance*. Lapping (2011) uses the term libido to refer to *jouissance* in discourse. She explains how the analysis of libidinal relations might help us understand how identities are formed in a specific discourse:

> Lacan articulates a speculative theorization of libido. For Lacan, libido is an objectification of a desire that cannot be named within the symbolic order of discourse. He says 'libido allows one to speak of desire' where 'desire is a relation of being to lack… the lack of being properly speaking' (1991, pp. 221, 223). Libido, then, expresses in an objectified form, the lack of the subject: it directs energy to produce objects that conceal the lack of the speaking subject (p.223). So, the analysis of libidinal relations can help us understand how particular objects or signifiers are constituted as nodal points that organize the formation of identities within a specified discourse. (Lapping 2011, p.110)

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[49] It is strange to describe *jouissance* as "constant." In "itself" this energy is not an experience of a stable pleasure in the *Real* – I am using here this adjective, not in terms of its temporality, but to denote that *jouissance* is determining factor in the production of the subject emerging continuously...

The above excerpt is helpful to understand the term libido or *jouissance* in the context of the articulation of desire in discourse. Libido is the energy that motivates the particular associations between signifiers or objects in discourse. Speaking, in a sense, is a constant relinquishing of *jouissance* to the Other, and allowing *jouissance* to circulate in the Other constantly. In another sense, one might say that writing, a more concrete mode of engaging the Other as language or Law, is another kind of a circulation of one's *jouissance* in the Other. This might be extended onto the "small" fantasies at the level of writing for the participants. Desire is inevitably embedded in the network of signifiers of the participants' writing fantasies, shadowed by the fantasmatic energy of *jouissance.*

7.2.3. Note on relation to language

On a final note, Lacan provided different formulae of fantasy and becoming subject in relation to the Other (Evans, 1996, p. 61), as I have mentioned in chapter 4. For example, the neurotic manages to assimilate language in a way that she sacrifices a part and becomes alienated. The neurotic structure refers to the above process of sacrificing one's *jouissance* and having access only to the *plus-de-jouir.* The psychotic subject on the other hand does not have such a "smooth" entrance into language because he is unwilling to give up part of his *Real jouissance*. Fink (2007, p. 255 footnote 30) argues that this means that there 'is no fundamental fantasy in psychosis, there is only *jouissance*.' My exploration in this chapter refers to the neurotic relation to language. Yet, the interpretive boundaries between neurotic and psychotic relation to language in this exploration and transfer are blurred, as they are affected by the idiosyncratic nature of the relation to language that each participant has in this transferred context, not on a psychopathological spectrum. I point to the blurring in the second case study.

7.3 The Mirage of Jouissance: interpreting the limits of writer subjectivity

In this section I present two case studies. First, I introduce the possible writing fantasy of each participant. Then, I discuss the incident of disruption, in relation to the master signifiers of the participants' fantasies. I suggest here that my constructed interpretations be taken as 'actions of interpretation' (Lapping 2013a) (material that the analyst provides to help the analysand think further), in an attempt to elicit further material for thinking about the limits of writer subjectivities methodologically traced in one's speech about one's practice and related to one's texts.

The main line of argument I explore is whether a disarticulation is a momentary traumatic encounter with *Real jouissance* for the participants in these incidents. This disarticulation might be understood in two ways: as a momentary *aphanisis* (disappearance) of the subject *and* an "articulation" of the subject's repressed desire to write. In terms of the participants' writer subjectivity, the signifiers eliciting such a disruption might be said to point to the limits or prohibited elements of their fantasy in writing. This encounter might also be understood as a moment of overwhelming anxiety or shame, which is not necessarily spoken or acknowledged.

7.3.1 'Shocking' *Jouissance* – Participant E

7.3.1 a) Background:

Participant E was a mature second-year English Literature and Creative Writing undergraduate student at the time of research. E referred to his profession in the first interview. He works as a civil servant. In his first interview, he said he chose to study this degree because there was a hole in his education (E3) and that he had been writing 'fairly seriously for about six to seven years' (E3). He also said that he writes 'mostly fiction' (E3). E wrote five of eight texts in prose fiction. The other three texts were written in poetry or non-genre like form: his response to the 3rd exercise (set of 20 instructions), the 5th exercise (mirror) and the final piece of writing he submitted at his final interview. E is the only participant who attended all of the classes. Overall, my perception was that E engaged with the interview and the

class quite confidently with very few moments of nervousness. He made jokes and seemed quite self-deprecating in these moments.

7.3.1 b) Fantasy:

E's writer subjectivity in the first interview was organized by two *master signifiers* a)'straightforward' and the combination of b)'dark' and 'funny,' which were repeated throughout his first interview. The first master signifier 'straightforward' appeared in relation to how E talked about writing in relation to his profession, which involved writing reports, other writers and his style of writing. This master signifier organized his responses both thematically and structurally. The 'dark but funny' master signifier is mainly referred to in E's responses about what he reads and how he likes to write. This master signifier is not so directly traceable in the construction of his responses in the interview, and is more of a thematic reference. It has been possible to link both of the writing fantasies proposed by these two master signifiers in E's logic of composition. Overall, E's engagement with the exercises suggests that he may have written in his prohibited element in three texts of eight. I will be referring to these in the next section in relation to the incident of his disarticulation.

The relation of writing 'straightforward not convoluted' was discussed by E in relation to his profession in his first interview. In response to a question from me about any connections between his idea of himself as a writer and choices in language that come easily to him, E explained that the way he writes has something to do with his being good at relaying information clearly:

> E12: ummm I think all of my writing and this is not just my fiction writing but my report writing which I do quite a lot for work ever since probably ever since I was at school I've been because I've been putting information I think I am good at putting information in a straightforward way and I got better at that because of my career which is a civil servant ah … and I think I take the same sort of view about my writing fiction writing ... […]

E's fluency about his writing practice and his long replies made me at points *not know* which aspect of his replies to pick upon. In the above reply, E explained the relation between his writing and his profession where he is required to 'put […]

information in a straightforward way.' This is indeed a very 'straightforward' explanation of his writing.

The master signifier 'straightforward' organized E's responses structurally too. In the same reply he explained the principle of writing simply by giving an example. Referring to Conrad's novel 'Heart of Darkness,' E explained:

> E12: […] his use of language is so important and dense, Henry James is another example I don't generally like Henry James because I find it so difficult to get through his convoluted sentences and I don't really want to write like that ...

E explained here that he finds these authors' styles 'convoluted' and that he 'do[es]n't want to write like that' (E12). This prohibition on 'convoluted', from a theoretical perspective, might be understood as the ideal that is transgressed in his (writing) fantasy in order to allow for his (restricted) *jouissance* to circulate in the Other – in his writing.

Later, E explained that he likes his writing to invoke a similar 'darkness' (E14) to the one in Conrad's novel. E's fantasy of "straightforward versus convoluted" fantasy operates both in the way he constructed his replies and in the way he likes to write. The logic of composition E proposed, referring to another writer (whose name is mumbled in the recording of the interview), was in line with his conception of writing as 'straightforward':

> E10: […] with as few words as possible and he leaves things unsaid that you can imply from the writing and I prefer to write like and I think my stories tend to be fairly pacey and not bogged down with description that's generally why I go for... not bogged down with description, dialogue, no metaphors, some similes, language taking a back seat allowing the story to be interesting.

E explained above that his writing is fairly simple and that the language is not the main focus of the writing. He also suggested that the narration is 'fairly pacey,' which he seems to associate with not very elaborate descriptions or very long sentences in his texts. His conception of writing being 'straightforward' seems to be in line with the way he has written his texts.

Five of eight texts produced by E for this research are written in the logic of composition, which is 'fairly pacey' narration and 'not bogged down by details' (E10).

An example of a straightforward narrative is E's response to the "Free-Write exercise." This text is a story about a visit to one's country of origin for the first time in years. This visit leads to the discovery of an uncanny sculpture at the end, which is left to signify what this story might be about. "The town of scary Art" begins with a description upon arrival at Zurich airport and a subsequent train-ride in the countryside:

> Zurich airport looked like any other airport in the world, lots of glass, elevators, shiny fake marble floors, moving walkways and of course, plates. It was only after my brother and I left the airport's train-station that Switzerland's new character emerged. The train journey went through Zurich which.... With mixed view of generic office blocks and towers and more old-fashioned European apartment blocks painted in pastel yellows, pinks, greens and creams. Either with external metal blinds or rust coloured shutters. The countryside was to dissimilar to the English countryside in that even the wilderness had gave the impression of a well-tendered country estate-the wild grass was usually cut and areas were fenced off. Also, unlike England the view was usually framed by green mountains on the horizon, even whilst traveling through Zurich. And you were never far from a lake or a river with a covered wooden bridge. Villages were marked by industrial estates, farms and houses mixed together, not zonal as they tend to do in England.

This description of the Swiss countryside seems informative: it is descriptive, but the descriptions are not elaborated with figurative or explicitly metaphorical language. The comparison with the English countryside makes the landscape even more alive by contrast. The pace of the narrative is not fast but not slow either, in the sense that it does not have long, winding sentences but sharp to the point descriptions of a picture. This text is in line with what E explained as his style of writing, and with his fantasmatic scenario of 'simple not convoluted.' A similar style of description is also followed in his text-responses to the second, fourth and sixth exercises.

The second master signifier in E's first interview accounts is 'dark,' repeated seven times (E7, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21) and more than twice in some of these replies. 'Dark' is also linked to 'funny' in responses E17 and E21. E explained that he usually writes or reads or likes 'dark' (E8, 14, 16) stories but also 'dark and funny stories'

(E17). He also said that 'happy is boring' (E16) when he explains why he likes 'twists' and 'dark.' When I pointed out that 'dark' seems to keep coming up[50] in the interview E explained that he liked exploring dark stories, and not happy endings, and liked 'anti-heroes' as he's 'been like that ever since [he] was a kid' (E15). In this strand of fantasmatic scenario, there is a prohibition on 'happy' and on 'boring.' This strand of fantasy about his writing was not reflected in his discourse in the interview. One would not say, for example, that his replies in his interview seemed to have a prohibition on 'boring' or on 'happy.' We might speculate the signifiers 'boring' and 'happy' are signifiers that contain the affective experience of another signifier, which is personal to E, and is repressed.

Content-wise, E's writings might be interpreted as "not happy." For example, in the first submitted text the child that rubs the genie dies. The text written to 'Write About this,' (2nd exercise) is a story about the beginnings of a loan shark as a child. The third text (20 list of instructions, 3rd exercise) is about the struggle of someone being born to an unstable parent. The fourth (opposite voice, 4th exercise) is about re-visiting a childhood institution, and the memories one had there. The fifth (mirror, 5th exercise) is about the wondering of what to write and being irritated about having to write articles for a newspaper before finding out it that has 'gone bust.' The sixth (fairytale, 6th exercise) is the legend of Arthur re-told where his servant steals the Excalibur sword when Arthur dies. His final submitted text is the third text re-made into a poem, which deals with the same subject.

Even though all his stories are apparently 'dark,' they also contain a comical element in them, (E highlights this in E15 and 16), i.e. there is something funny about the way language is used by children in his second text. A character in this story attempts to negotiate the 10 pence he is going to borrow from the future loan-shark:

> Johny was about to start his life's first financial negotiation when he noticed the queue in front of the van was almost gone. He realized his negotiation position was weak and the purchasing opportunity was passing him by (although perhaps Johny did not

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[50] Z15: so darkness, and dark keep coming up in most of your answers I am thinking do you think they relate to the way that you might see the world and the messages that you want to convey in your stories your writing?

express those thoughts in exactly those words). "Yeah, alright but hurry up before the van goes."
To Silvio that constituted a verbal contract (again maybe his phraseology was a little more primitive and he handed the 10p to Johny).

The narrator here comments on the incongruence of language in the narrative. This awareness of "realistic" talk of a child at that age about financial language lightens the "mood" of the narrative, as we are supposedly reading here about a future 'loan-shark.'

We might then speculate that the two elements prohibited in E's writing are elaborate descriptions, convoluted sentences and stories that are 'happy.' The existence of these prohibitions allow for an Other unto which E's limited *jouissance* circulates.

7.3.1 c) E: shocked by 'shock'

In this section, I will describe an incident where I repeated a word, which E used for what he likes to do in his writing in his first interview. This repetition seemed to cause a small disruption in E's subsequent response, quite unlike his earlier fluent style of responding. I argue that E's retraction of the verb he used ('shock') might be due to it being a possibly horrifying traumatic encounter with E's Otherness. This might point to an element E excludes to constitute his 'straightforward not convoluted' writer subjectivity. Secondly, E's justification of what he does in his stories might be interpreted as an attempt to somehow integrate or make this the signifier 'shock' fit in. However, this attempt to make this signifier fit in is preceded by a silence which might be interpreted as a momentary *aphanisis* of E's writer subjectivity. E's subsequent resort to his usual master signifiers of his writing fantasy – 'dark but funny' – possibly indicates E's uncomfortable break in his account.

Towards the end of the first interview, E said he liked abrupt endings to stories without any meaning to them both fairy-tale like but with a 'contemporary feel' (E23). Then, I asked E if there was anything else he wanted to add. He said the following:

E19: well I like ... okay so ... okay I write because I like making people laugh because I like making people I suppose either sad or scared but not in a sense … way ummm and I quite like to shock people at times as well which might give them a story slightly and ... I just feel good when I've sort of managed to create a story that does all those things...

In the above reply, E started off with his usual *master signifiers* of his writing fantasy, combining 'making people laugh' (funny) with making people 'sad or scared,' referring to 'dark.' He immediately resorted to qualifying the 'sad or scared' with the phrase 'not in a sense'. He was led to the pause in his reply when attempting to explain further. I wonder whether this space of silence, where I did not provide E with any particular clue from which to start off, might have confused him slightly and led him to almost name a part of his repressed desire. Next, I picked up on the verb 'shock' and attempted to find out more about it:

Z20: okay... ummm you said shock you like to shock people why do you think you enjoy that?
E20: ummm maybe shock's a bit of a strong word, maybe shock's a strong word I mean I don't particularly write horror …

After this question of mine about why he might enjoy "shocking," E retracted his choice of verb. He justified the retraction by saying that it might be a bit too strong (repeats two times) and that he does not 'particularly write horror.' The repetition and the subsequent denial of writing 'horror' seem to cover over some anxiety about his writing being associated with 'horror' and 'shock.' I think at this point E might have encountered a *horrifying* Otherness through my repetition of the verb shock. His identification with stories and writing, which are 'dark but funny' potentially come in sharp contrast with writing 'horror.'

Indeed, the stories he likes to write was E's next reference. I asked E whether maybe he meant 'surprise' attempting to facilitate another articulation:

Z21: maybe you mean surprise or....
E21: yea I guess I guess again it goes back to the stories that I've always liked reading I mean I am ... probably … … (pause 9 sec) a bit maybe a immature ... I like twisted endings I like stories that surprise me in that way I still like those I like other things as well ... um for instance I like writing I like writing something funny that then has a darkness in it or then something happens that isn't funny ummm or something that shouldn't be funny but it is

because of the way it's been told but the basic aspect of it's this serious dark somebody dies in a funny way

E did not attempt to say again (like in E20) that the verb 'shock' was not the right one. He attempted to justify his choice instead. He attributed his choice of 'shock' or to be 'shocked' or the gist of what he was saying in the previous reply to a trait of his personality: he says he is 'immature.' E took a pause of almost 10 seconds and he almost stuttered in saying 'immature.' The description of himself as 'immature' contrasts with how "professionally" he presented himself in the interviews. This admission or new material in his speech via the new word 'immature' led him back to the safe *master signifiers* in terms of content, but also in terms of how it is expressed with his usual (repeated 39 times in first interview) mode of expression 'I like' e.g. 'I like twisted endings' […] something funny that then has a darkness […] something happens that isn't funny ummm or something that shouldn't be funny […] but the basic aspect of its this serious dark somebody dies in a funny way.' The *master signifiers* of his 'darky but funny' writing fantasy appeared right after the disruption in E's account.

I consider this a disruption because in the context of how E usually replied to me he seemed to be quite slow in finding the words. All of his replies in both interviews, to a large extent, were (like his stories) 'fairly pacey' (E10). This reply seems to stumble upon "something" that remained not articulated in the gap of nine seconds. We might propose here that E confronted his *jouissance* in the *Real*. Could we assume that E might have had some sort of an affect to go with this encounter, which went unsaid and "unfelt," since it would be impossible to symbolize?

Relevant to this argument are the two texts (3rd and 5th exercise), which E did not write in his usual logic of composition. These texts have some elements that might be considered to shock the reader. These texts might be symbolically articulating new material that might have arisen through a disrupted limited *jouissance.*

Here, it is useful to consider that his third text, "Write to the set of 20 instructions' (3rd exercise) actually did 'shock' his classmates and was 'shocking.' E

said in his final interview and classroom discussion that this text was very unlike his usual style.

> He was drunk at the wheel when he crashed. The alcohol smelled of vinegar on his breath and turned into yellow urine in the womb. Slashing against my father's sperm and my mother's egg so the essence of Brian of Flann of Myles pass to me on a sofa on Belsize park, an Irishman having found a receptive soul (if there is no such thing) but confusing nationalities.
> Of course I could be wrong. I don't know for certain that I was conceived the day the great man pegged it. But maybe my conception was the cause of his death.

In the above excerpt from E's text, the logic of composition is different than his usual style vis-à-vis the narration, the description and the content. E's style of narration here is not as linear as he usually writes. This narrative is not in linear chronological sequence leading the reader slowly step by step to understand how the story unfolds. The way the events of the story are narrated is condensed. Also, the kind of language used here is not very like E's usual style, there are metonymies (i.e. alcohol smelled of vinegar, slashing against my father's sperm). In both the first (E10, 11) and the final interview E emphasised his poetry is 'flawed' (E83) because he 'cannot do' metaphors (E84). E's language in the text above is by no means what one would consider 'straightforward.' In my view, it "shocks" because it contains concrete details referring to bodily fluids combined with a stream of consciousness type of narration. The bodily fluids being 'gross' is mentioned by M in the classroom discussion. E also referred to something very personal in relation to this text in the classroom discussion, (which for anonymity and ethical purposes I will not refer to), which seems to point to the possibility that 'convoluted' texts for E might be equated with the "shocking" encounter of one's *Real* and personal experience directly, written with the 'logic out of the window' (E86)[51]. He also said in the

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[51] E86: and I think because we had all these questions I just had to start I kind of I I I had to probably turn off turn down the logical side of my brain just to cause I I I did sort I'll I'll try and answer as many of these questions in the writing but that probably means that any narrative is gonna to go out of the window so that is why I am not even gonna bother trying it so that's kind of why that happened ...

classroom discussion, after M's description of the bodily fluids as 'gross,' that he 'digusted [him]self.'

An analogous move from "unsafe" signifiers to safe *master signifiers* is made in the sequence of E's texts in the research from the fifth to the sixth exercise. In the fifth exercise, E said he just wrote to the mirror and wrote whatever thoughts came to him; he slowly "released" himself from a reporting style to express his irritation about something that happened to him and his curiosity about the researcher's use of the object he is using to write:

> Now I look at myself- I have a blank look in my eyes.
> Will I be able to keep the mirror? I could use another one. Maybe
> Zoe is planning to mirror tile
> ceiling-2 birds with one stone. PhD experimental home decoration.

In this text like the previous one, when E let himself go, he wrote something that might be considered to 'shock.' E's fantasizing of the researcher in the project mirror tiling her ceiling is a bit shocking for the researcher too. In the sixth exercise, E went back to his usual story-telling, re-telling the myth of Arthur, having Arthur's servant steal Excalibur when Arthur dies. In this sequence, E explored an "unsafe space" (5th exercise) where he "let a bit of his self go" and then went back to the safe signifiers of 'dark and funny' and simple not convoluted in the exercise response (6th exercise) that followed.

Considering the above, it is possible to argue that the signifiers that caused E's disruption, in his response about the effect he desires his writing to have on his readers, may point to the excluded signifiers of his writer subjectivity, and thus to the limits he sets on himself in his practice of writing.

7.3.2 Straying from Falling Into ... *Jouissance* – Participant Q

7.3.2 a) Background:

Participant Q was a second-year English Literature and Creative Writing undergraduate student at the time of the research. Q's engagement with the project was a little unpredictable. Q did not show up to the first interview on time. He also

did not show up for his final interview, and we had to re-arrange it for another time. Q was absent from two of the six classes (the 4rth and the 6th). Q was also late to the 2nd (2p coin) class and started writing for it 15 minutes after everyone else. Q's texts are not mostly fiction like E; his texts seem to range from poetry to fiction and also science fiction. However, even though Q claimed he writes science fiction, the only texts that are science fiction are the two he submitted and the one he produced to the sixth exercise of the project. The rest of the texts he wrote are not science fiction. Q's engagement seemed passionate both in the classroom discussions and in the interviews, as he intervened quite often to speak his mind about his writing and the other participants' writing. He inhaled deeply quite often during the interviews, which gave me the *Imaginary* impression that he was almost feeling what he was saying in his body.

7.3.2 b) Fantasy:

I argue here that the concept of attempting to 'stray from preconception' might be the overall encompassing writing fantasy constituting Q's writer subjectivity, considering Q's interview accounts about his writing and his produced and submitted texts during the project. Unlike the other participants, what is prohibited is not articulated through repetition of master signifiers. Instead, there is a repeatedly enacted disorientation of the Other (here as reader and researcher) in how Q talks about his writing and his engagement with the setting.

Q's writing fantasy is very convoluted and has multiple strands. This may perhaps be related to the fact that his writing constantly shifted during the research. It is not always clear whether Q is following a scenario of fantasy. Hecq (2005, online, no pages), for instance, has discussed the particular 'modality of *jouissance'* in Joyce's use of language, a 'destructive re-fashioning of the symbolic.' I wonder if Q's differential and multiple ways of writing have any similarities with such a modality. As the concept of 'writing fantasy' is a new proposition, there is further research to be done in relation to participants who constantly experiment. We might wonder whether Q does not have a writing fantasy, however, this element of shift in "voice" or "style" constantly seems to be what he identifies with in his writing. We

might also wonder whether he has identified with his writing symptom, and does not need to traverse any fantasy (Verhaghe and Declerq 2002). The notion of an already "traversed fantasy" writer might also require further exploration in the new realm of writing fantasies.

Q's case is also interesting to compare to G's as they both represent the opposite extreme responses for this setting. In G's case, there is a consistent style whereas in Q's case there is a continuously shifting style of writing. It is not possible to find the same repeated signifiers in Q's discourse in the interviews, as is the case with other participants. What is repeated, however, is the sense that Q positions himself as a writer who likes to "do" the unexpected either in terms of writing style or how he will respond to the exercise.

There are three threads in Q's first interview, which relate to Q's master signifier of 'straying from preconception,' which organize the meaning of his responses both structurally and thematically. Q referred to: 1) the process of writing 2) his style of writing and 3) the genre he writes. Along with these, Q said he also writes differently when he writes poetry. So, he also presented himself with a "split" writer subjectivity. In a sense, then, Q was already 'straying from the preconception' that because he is a science fiction writer, that is the only genre he can write; he "revealed" he is also a poet. Overall, Q seemed quite invested in misleading, or at least, in doing the unexpected.

First of all, in relation to 'straying from preconception,' Q seemed to repeat and actually seemingly enact this process, which he suggested is what enables him to write. In the first interview, he said that first he has to procrastinate, and then he writes (Q2). The period of procrastination validates the writing and vice-versa – he gives this in detail in Q2. He explained:

> Q34: […] they talk about the actual mechanical process of writing that's like excruciatingly painful [emphasizes 'excruciatingly' by pronouncing the word slowly and then also putting emphasis on the 'pain' in the word 'painful'] but they kind of gather rewards afterward I don't want to think about that I don't want to think about the actual act of sitting and writing is painful but what comes out is nice I like to um it's an organic process where it's fun not fun but enjoyable but not a chore.

Q positioned himself apart from the other writers, and what he imagines "they" talk about: 'the actual mechanical process of writing, that's like excruciatingly painful.' I wonder whether the emphasis on the words 'excruciatingly painful' is the *partial* prohibited element of pain, the element prohibited in his fantasy, allowing Q to write.

Q's participation in the project seemed also to be analogous to his process of writing. Q was late for the 2nd class 2p coin exercise and started writing 15 minutes after everyone else has already began. We might speculate here, that Q sometimes did not allow himself to write, in order to write afterwards in the class. Also, the fact that he was absent from two of the classes, seemed to enact this process of "not writing," not attending the class that is, in order to write, which he did at a later period at home, when I sent him the exercises by email. Also, during the third exercise (list of 20 instructions) Q left the classroom and returned after 15 minutes. Q wrote two texts to this exercise. I have divided what was created first and what was created second with a line. Q put a similar line on his original page:

Series of Consecutive disconnects   Loads of instructions!
Exercise 3

    This is

Here's a 1 for you to think about
to fight against the prospect of 2 when you 3 your way in
for 4.
Listen 5! That's right, 6, embrace your7, be a bit of a 8. I'll tell
you how, just like when the 9, my friends call it 10.
The 11.
11's got your attention now-you're half way there to 13 and I'm,
9that's 14 to you) ready to 15
                  I've got insight, see…
Like an unwieldy 16, try and 17 yourself free, fell galvanized by
19 like quality, even the 19s are doing it
20 mate, 20.

———————————————————————

Arriving like the Messiah, I could save the world. You want to see
the results of my promises-touch m thoughts [inserted

afterwards: see my words], American I'm not the Messiah. I grew up on a farm, jonesing for a chance to fix things and just like a journey made with ~~[indiscernible crossed out text]~~ a full tank. I tried harder, pushed the car. I can be your honey, the easy captain, the calm enforcer, America you could make fly if you elect the everyman. We will make it through the [inserted afterwards: paranoid] darkness into a liberal ~~[indiscernible crossed out text]~~ dawn. I will rep your viva internationally! An hola there, a dake over here, America I'll make you smile again, so come the 31ˢᵗ Make the everyman's future yours.

Q wrote the upper section before he left the class, and the other text when he returned. The first part of this (before dividing line) might be interpreted as a "reaction against" the 20 instructions. It is as if the narrator is "emptying" up the content of the instructions making them the subject of the text in a different signifying manner. This could relate to what Q likes: 'reading things that are not open to me' (Q23). On the other hand, the second part seems to be almost completely obeying the order of the instructions along with a line of a story in his or the narrator's mind. It is almost as if Q has split his writer subjectivity in this exercise. The page presented him "divided" about how to write on the page. Writing like this, Q managed to stray from preconception, as he understands it, in terms of how he would have responded to this exercise. He remains "not fixed" in a particular way of writing. Q also strayed from his own preconceptions, he claimed, in relation to his engagement with the research. Referring to the story he wrote to the exercise "Free-write," he explained:

Q62: […] the free writing one… ahhhh when I said that I strayed

away from doing the automatic thing […]

Q here explicitly said that he 'strayed' 'away' from writing in automatic writing. This might suggest that Q likes to "imagine" what is expected from him to write and then write in a manner that questions this expectation in order to support his writer subjectivity. This seems to hold in all of his texts: for example, in the sixth exercise, Q writes in the science fiction genre and refers to an insinuated alien invasion, seemingly irrelevant to the instruction of the exercise: "Write a fairytale or myth but re-tell it so that is changed somehow." Before I come to an example of

'straying from his preconception of his reader' in his composition of texts, I want to discuss how he talked about it in the first interview.

Q's master signifier of 'straying from preconception' seemed to organize his treatment of his reader in relation to how he writes. He explained that his texts also 'mislead the reader' as he said in his first interview:

> Q22: […] sometimes I find is in … is kind of irrelevant to what's going on I try to not spoon-feed in the sense that I am trying to hint at something I will give myself a line or two to hint at it … cause a hint should be a line … not gonna write an entire chapter and then explain (tone changes pitch) my hint … and like close the next chapter or start the next chapter immediately because like I kind like I like misinformation I like kind of hinting at something and let someone … someone go down a path and then ahhh later on then it might they might see another line and then go 'oh … I'm going to go back … not that I've written something big enough to go that far but ummm giving it up to the reader because reader participation I think is the biggest thing for me in reading and that was end up being most of the drive for why I write because I kind of wanna give the power back to the reader …

Q's account above is about his interest in misleading his reader. He seems to assume that this "hinting" triggers 'reader participation.' Q said that keeping the reader's attention by misleading them in the story gives the power back to them. One might assume that misleading the reader actually takes the power away from the reader as the writer still is leading the reader down the "wrong path." In fact, I wonder whether this might be an exercise of power by the author. So, Q also presented himself as author who 'strays from preconception' in his writing from his reader.

In terms of his texts in this research, Q has written science fiction (two submitted texts and (6th exercise), fiction (1st exercise), poetry (2nd exercise), dramatic monologue (2nd and 3rd exercises), diary entries (4th exercise), stream of consciousness (5th exercise). Yet, there is a "core" or a "periphery," that is invisible but also present in regards the *plus-de-jouir* that Q seems to "get" from writing texts that 'stray from preconception.' The only element that all of his texts have in common is that the narration tends to always mislead the reader. This misleading in the narrative is produced via either: a) a self-referential comment of the narrator,

thereby breaking the illusion of a narrative, b) abstracting names that confuse the understanding of the story, or c) syntax change that makes for less linear development of the story. In fact, his texts, collectively, have confused me as a researcher and reader, and still do, in the process of conducting the research and analysis about what Q's "agenda"[52] for his (writer) subjectivity is.

One example of straying from preconception in Q's writing in terms of the expectations of narrative storytelling may be traced in his final submitted text, written in the genre of science fiction. Q has created a story whose narrative does not follow the principle of explaining words and rituals of the characters to the reader:

> The Mortal Realm lived up to its reputation when some of the Flock had descended to it. Chaotic, fragmented, disenfranchised. Sephrielle, an Archangel, had been given the task of overseeing the search and rescue of other Third Choir Angels. The Dark One had moved against God once again, infiltrating Creation with his refuse, threatening to tilt the already frail balance towards the Darkness. Sephrielle always frowned upon the semantics of the language of humans. It was not darkness that the Mortal Realm had to fear, darkness came to all-such was their plight as mortals, but something else, something greater.
> The Antithesis.

This piece of writing presents a fantasy world where God and the 'Dark One' fight at some supposed end of the world. On the one hand, the use of language that has a particular prophetic register (i.e. The Dark One had moved against God once again' (giving the impression this is the continuation of a narrative/story that already exists)). The diction also is unusual. This could be due to the genre, but that is not always the case. The narrative has an unfamiliarity that might be fascinating for some readers. On the other hand, this narrative continues in the same strand of "empty signifiers" that are not explained to the reader (i.e. what is the "Antithesis" in this context of a text?) This narrative becomes abstractly symbolic for the reader: could it be a long symbolizing epic about human nature? In addition, at points, the

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[52] I am not implying that every writer has an 'agenda' but rather they at points we are aware of how we wish to portray ourselves as writers sometimes; and even when we are supposedly "unaware" there is a determination that might run subconsciously that positions us in an *Imaginary* agenda of an Other.

syntax is shifted unexpectedly for emphasis, which changes up the rhythm of the narrative and makes the reader go back to re-read to get the point (e.g. 'The Mortal Realm lived up to its reputation when some of the Flock had descended to it' followed by the fragment 'Chaotic, fragmented, disenfranchised'). Finally, the comment 'Sephrielle always frowned upon the semantics of the language of humans' potentially means nothing to the "literary" reader and is left unexplained. Is this text "allowed" to make self-referential comments that expand our perception of what a "literary" text might be and might "do" to the reading experience of the reader?

Yet, Q does not always write in this experimental style, (which for him might be his usual style). That expectation is overthrown too. Q also strayed from preconception in terms of the genre he wrote. In the first interview, he explained that the main genre he writes in is 'science fiction' (Q9, 11, 23). He considered the video games he plays and the books he reads in this genre as his inspiration (Q9, 11, 23). However, apart from three texts (the two submitted before and after the project and the final one written to the sixth exercise), none of the texts that Q wrote are in the genre of science fiction. One possible scenario here is that Q simply experimented. This might be in line with what he said in the final interview, that he only started writing in science fiction when he started his course to prepare himself to be taught by a famous writer that teaches at the program in his third year. This could perhaps be interpreted as presenting his writing activity as indirectly concerned with the desire of an Other, this Other being the famous writer. Finally, there were also moments in the interview and the class setting where I wondered whether Q was wondering about my own desire as a writer or researcher. In the interview, at some point Q explained he might have liked to be 'a mermaid in Ancient Greece'[53] in his reply about exploring other worlds. In his writing to the 5th exercise (the mirror) he referred to me as not being able to see him and that it was

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[53] There reference to 'Ancient Greece' and my education in Classics made me think that this might be referring to me. Though the reference to 'mermaid' was also strange as this participant is male, not to perpetuate gender stereotypes here of what a male might fantasize, but from my *imaginary* perspective it did not fit with Q's overall gender performance (Butler, 1990).

getting 'stalkerish' that he was referring to my 'fringe'[54]. Of course, these are speculations.

This confusion on my part, has led to an insecure realization: Q might not write for "understanding," he might write for "misunderstanding." I wonder how much of this misrecognition has to do with a fear of being categorized and therefore more easily criticized as a writer.

Having tried to briefly highlight the 'straying from preconception' writing fantasy of Q in his interview accounts and texts, I will go on to look at an instance where Q seems to almost articulate a sense of disappearing by 'falling into' an unnamed somewhere. His interview account is disrupted by a phrase that he leaves incomplete in attempting to articulate the contrast to 'straying from preconception.'

7.3.2 c) Falling into the Other's *Jouissance*

In this section, I will describe an incident where Q may have approximated the articulation of what is prohibited in his writing fantasy. In this reply in his first interview, Q discussed what he 'always' does when he writes and this led him to almost name what he attempts to not do (Q7). The possibility of naming the space he does not want to 'fall into' (Q7) seems to cause a disarticulation in his reply. This might be understood as a momentary *aphanisis* (disappearance) of the subject in his reply. This momentary *aphanisis* may have been due to an encounter with the Other, which Q excludes from his signifying chains of writer subjectivity, in order to be a writer and write. I precariously propose here that both the avoidance of the naming of that space and this unnamed space might be interpreted as pointing to his fear of being categorized as a writer. I argue that Q's subsequent articulation after this

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[54] Q's reference (to me?) in his 5th text:

There are fingerprints / around where her face sits.

maybe I'm done now. Maybe I'll deflect back on Zoe. Her fringe,

the double necklace she's wearing, how because she's not at my

angle, she can't see that I see her. Wow I sould stalkerish. Better

stop now.

encounter with the Other of his writing fantasy produces a defensive formulation of the master signifier of his fantasy 'straying from preconception.' This instance of disarticulation might point to the conditions Q excludes to construct a 'straying from preconception' writer subjectivity.

In the beginning of the first interview, Q talked about 'marks' (grades) and other people reading his writing (Q5) in relation to his writing being good. This is an interesting reference again to the Other judging his writing. I then asked him 'putting aside marks' if there was anything that he could recognize that is unique in his writing, that he likes doing, or that he is good at manipulating. Then, I listed some narrative techniques (dialogue, monologue, similes, metaphors) and added 'or it could be everything' (Z5-6). The question I asked Q turned out to be quite ambiguous, but I was hoping to help him specify further what he was doing in his writing and to see whether he had any awareness of the techniques he used. So, Q explained:

> Q7: I really like **world-building** where ... say you ha ha ha have your story and it's rich with characters and what not I never ever use the real world. Like I never say this is set in London England, I never say this is set in so on and so forth. I always always (emphasis) make a place to space it or make a country or in one case an entire galaxy, which is taking a long time... **but I really like world building cause then I don't I don't don fall into fffff e ummmm [pause 9 seconds] I I ... I don't know,** I explained this to someone once in order to I kind of hope that in **doing that I can stray away from any kind of preconception o**f where the place is set so then if someone reads it they can choose where to see proposed where they're at in real life and then see my creative worlds and fit kind of fit in or not ... umm ... my most obvious case is a lot of things that I write is I set in like a city I call 'The city,' I never say where it I never say the country I never say anything about it ummm why I've enjoyed doing that is that whenever write something in the city I kind of ... um this is gonna sound really arrogant I don't know but ... I refer to my other stories in the things I am presently writing because they're all set in the same place so if there's something that I kind of feels in the same time line it'll refer to events in the other place and I'd kind of like to think that if I get somewhere it can kind of be collated and be some kinda like 'tales from the city' [tone changes as if advertising in pronouncing this title] kinda ... an anthology thing but building worlds to me is really fun and then

from that I kind of hope that the characters I put in them are enjoyable to read ... [bold text indicates the emphasised elements in this interpretation]

This excerpt might be described in three parts. The first part is Q's expression of what he likes doing in his writing. The second is his near articulation of his fear, which triggered an articulation of his goal in writing 'straying from preconception' and the relation of this goal to his readers. The third part of the reply presented detail of how he does the non-naming of places in the worlds he builds and his fantasy of producing references to this non-existent world across the body of his work.

In the first part, Q began to express what he likes doing and what he does not like doing. 'Never ever us[ing] the real world' might have been interpreted as a prohibited element of his writing fantasy. On an inverted scale, this emphatic denial could point to the possibility that Q may use aspects from the real world, but this is something that he *needs* to prohibit in his writing. In relation to 'never using the real world,' Q is the only participant who has not referred to his personal life at all in the interview, apart from referring to a poem he had written for his girlfriend at the end of the first interview. He abstractly said that is where he explores his feelings (Q33). The articulation of what Q does in his writing led him to almost articulate why he does this: '**I really like world building 'cause then I don't I dont don fall into fffff.'** It might be possible to argue that, at this point, Q is unable to articulate "the thing" that he wishes to exclude from his subjectivity, whose fantasized overcoming might be producing a *plus-de-jouir* (limited *jouissance*) to him. "Falling off *into*" **something**, which is unnamed, seems to be the opposite to how Q has positioned himself as a writer in the whole of the project. He is always **outside**, 'straying from preconception.' In relation to his engagement with writing the texts, Q does not *fall into*, but *falls out* of his writing continuously. Q's unique feature of writing, indeed, has not been as traceable as in the other participants' texts.

This potential encounter with the Other, his fear of 'falling into' a category is followed by 'I don't know…'; this uncertainty is then followed by a certain assertion of what he hoped to be doing in his writing, that is 'straying from any kind of preconception.' We might speculate here that the near possibility of naming his fear

caused him to articulate the scenario of his writing fantasy. Furthermore, after that Q seemed to insinuate he does this for his readers, so that they have the chance to fit what they read into their world. Q's explanation about how his readers might use the abstractness in his writing might be interpreted as a preoccupation with the Other in the process of his writing. This preoccupation is also evident in the way he spoke about his writing in general and the way he engaged with the research setting in line with the master signifier of 'straying from any kind of preconception.'

From this point of view, of not falling "into" something, Q's texts in this research tend to not "fall" into something, into a particular logic; apart from the logic that is he attempting to 'stray from any preconception' of having a particular logic. Q also fell out of my expectation in terms of having a 'visible' and symbolically articulated logic of composition. We might really wonder then, whether Q does "stray from his preconception" of "straying from preconceptions" at all in the course of this project. Even though, Q has experimented with different styles in each of his texts, he has not managed to write "unlike himself" but rather as he says 'for myself.' He highlighted in his final interview that when he realized there was no 'obligation from my end' he started going with the first thing in his mind (Q62). Yet, elsewhere, he said the opposite, that he went off straight with the first thing in his mind in relation to the "Free-Write" exercise in the class discussion.

This might suggest that Q likes to "imagine" what is expected from him to write and then write in a manner that questions that to support his (writer) subjectivity. This seems to hold in all of his texts. In the sixth exercise, which he sent after the session, from which he was absent, Q's text was written in the science fiction genre and refers to alien invasion. (Could the concept of alien invasion be considered a myth?). This text does not seem obviously relevant to the instruction of the exercise: "Write a fairytale or myth but re-tell it so that is changed somehow." I present below the final paragraph of Q's response to the sixth exercise:

> Madeleine heard and saw Jeremiah crouch over her in worry. She tried to cry out to him to look up, to look at the sky. But he kept his eyes on her. And her soundless mouth remained open, her eyes transfixed on the slowly rotating ship rising back into the sky…

There is no obvious myth or fairytale re-told in story of alien abduction. This might be explained by his absence from the class, but it is also consistent with his general avoidance of doing what he imagined is expected.

Q's disarticulation, then, his non-articulation of the space he does not want to fall into, might perhaps be related to the variety of texts he produced and his overall haphazard engagement with the research setting's conditions of engagement. Unlike E, Q did not write any texts in his prohibited element in this research project in line with his disruption. The very prohibition of Q's writing fantasy is something that is both nothing and everything. Q's logic of composition is constituted by the element of continuous surprise and shift, therefore there is a conundrum in the naming of such a prohibition.

7.4 Conclusion

As I mentioned at the start, this is an illegitimate chapter, however for supposedly what will become legitimate reasons via my thesis discourse. The methodological exploration of attempting to trace the embodied *jouissance* at moments of disruption in the speech of the participants or in new material written might prove a useful tool to unfold the *Imaginary* and potentially blocking assumptions that students of Creative Writing have about the avenues of writing and the limits of their writer subjectivity. I wonder whether there is a similarity between the emergence of the verb 'shock' in E's account with the emergence of the phrase 'I don't I don't don fall into fffff ummmm I I' in Q's account. They both seemed to repudiate the invisible looming articulation or non-articulation of elements that seemed to be central in constituting their writing fantasy by occupying the Other in relation to which they are writers.

It seems that E's opaque element in his writer subjectivity had something to do with the verb "shock" and 'immature' and its horrifying intrusion into his writing fantasy. I attempted to point out the relation of this signifier to E's writing fantasy of prohibiting 'convoluted,' which might relate to keeping a particular repressed 'affect' at bay.

Q's opaque element in his writer subjectivity was related to an unutterable space that he might fall into. This fear produced a 'straying' constituting his writing fantasy. His writing enacted a constant shift in his mode of engagement of meaning-making. I attempted to point out the relation of this prohibited space as a foreclosed signifier in Q's writing fantasy. None of Q's texts presented a disrupting of his 'straying from preconception' writing fantasy, and therefore Q, unlike E, did not write in his prohibited element.

Was the research setting's enigmatic stance identical to Q's wandering desire of being a writer? It may be the case that Q's several entanglements of straying from preconception on the levels of engagement with the setting, modes of writing, and genre have to do with his relatively new path as a writer. He seemed to be occupying various spaces of writing, and multiple logics of composition with his texts. In this sense, this spreading of Q's *limited jouissance* might relate to his relatively unstable, for the moment, writer subjectivity. It may be the case that the ambiguous/enigmatic stance of the exercises and the setting may not have been as productive for Q, as his own stance towards his own writing is that of wandering.

In relation to the tracing of *jouissance*, the feeling of *empathy* has been associated with encountering *feminine jouissance*. Ettinger (2006, p.64) argues that 'the feminine/prenatal meeting as a model for relations and processes of change and exchange […] [is when] the *non-I* is unknown to the *I* […] but not an intruder.' So, the incidents in these encounters with *jouissance* do not appear to constitute an encounter with the *feminine jouissance* as they seem to be associated with a return to the master signifiers of the fantasy, thus indicating a potential anxiety.

Finally, the transfer of the concept of psychic *jouissance* to a psychosocial *jouissance* and writing fantasies is a challenge and an experiment. Further exploration of these particular signifiers with the participants with additional interviews might provide additional elements to continue this initial speculation and psychosocial leap; but might also raise ethical issues, and would require sensitivity.

The redirection of *jouissance* and thus the confusion of the cause of one's desire – the *objet a* might be used to conceptualize the wandering "effect" of the exercises on the participants' "desire to write."

Next, I wander into the "straying" effects of the exercises of the experiment course. I highlight the exercises' potential to shift individual writing fantasies, the compositional effects and process elements produced by their instructions, and draw out possible collective fantasies about Creative Writing in this setting.

Chapter 8

Exercises in Wandering of Desire

One of the aims of this research project has been to answer the question of whether or how the engagement with the experiment course exercises affects one's writer subjectivity. In order to focus more directly on the experiment course itself, this chapter presents an overview of all of the responses to the exercises used during the research. This overview indicates, on the one hand, that it is impossible to essentialise the effects produced by each exercise and on the other hand, that it may be possible to suggest social or collective fantasies shared by the student participants.

The first section suggests a brief theorization of the operation of the project's exercises in the moments participants wrote outside their logic of composition. The different experiences of Otherness in the participants' writing practice might be associated with a possible confusion of the participants' cause of desire – *objet a*. Put simply here in relation to writing, the fantasmatic *objet a* might be understood as the invisible ideal which they aim to attain in their writing, linked with their writing fantasy and their writer subjectivity.

The second section is a presentation of the range of the participants' responses to each exercise. It is divided into six parts, one for each exercise, considering three elements:

a) writing outside one's logic of composition,

b) compositional effects and/or process elements of the exercises, *and*

c) possible social fantasies at play about Creative Writing in this research setting.

This interpretation also draws from interview responses and the classroom discussions. By *compositional effects* I mean here any specific ways of composing a text interpreted as what the exercise requests. By *process elements* I refer to the process of writing the participant followed to write to the instruction of the exercise.

The chapter points both to the potential of the exercises to regulate the student's 'textual behaviour' (Westbrook 2004, p.146-7) or writing practice and to

the potential of the combination of the exercises with an enigmatic setting to put such behavior into question.

8.1 The operation of the project's exercises from a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective

It is fair to assume that each exercise will have worked both in correlation with the overall temporality of the context of the research project (including the interviews before and after), and also individually, as interpreted by each participant depending on their relation/stance to language. The effect of some of the Creative Writing exercises and their sequencing within this research might be thought of as inducing a wandering of desire. I use the term "wandering of desire" to refer to the moments participants might have felt confused about what or how to write, which may have led them to encounters with Otherness in their writing.

As suggested in the earlier analysis chapters, this wandering may lead to troubling encounters with one's excluded elements of one's writing fantasy (participant M); it may also lead to a potential expansion of writing fantasy (Participant A). In other cases, it leads to an emphatic denial of one's prohibited element and then a re-integration of it within one's fantasmatic scenario (participant E). Finally, the threat of one's desire being put into question might be too overwhelming, therefore it may be covered over by 'sticking to one's style' (Participant G); or one's desire to write might be a wandering in itself producing a constant experimentation with one's style (Participant Q). So, what is produced to these exercises can be material that points to the limits of the writer-student's writer subjectivity and the prohibited elements of their writing fantasy.

From a theoretical perspective, the wandering of one's desire in this writing context might be linked to a confusion of one's *objet a,* thus a re-direction or suspension of one's limited *jouissance*. *Objet* a, as explained in Chapter 4, might be thought of as the objectification of what has been lost (the *primordial jouissance)* to become a subject and is also called the cause of desire (Evans 1996, p.128-9). The primordial *jouissance* is the affective state we experienced before our becoming a separate subject who entered language and the social world (Evans 1996, p.91-2). Separation, however, is not complete, there is always an excess, a relic from the

Imaginary union with the mother remains in the form of the fantasmatic *objet a*. The *Imaginary* return to this, this affective experience before language is an attempt to re-gain some of that *primordial jouissance* and is what fuels the fantasy (Nusselder 2013, p.50). I pointed out in chapter 7 that *jouissance* in writing is probably not a different *jouissance* potentially from the psychic *jouissance;* in contrast to the transfer of the structure of psychic fantasy to a psychosocial writing fantasy. Equally, the fantasmatic *objet a* is not something traceable in the participants' texts and potentially changes invisibly; though this change might be conceptualized through the articulation of new signifiers or alteration of combinations of signifiers of one's fantasy either in one's spoken discourse or enacted in one's writing.

Related to this confusion of *objet a* and thus to a wandering of desire in writing, it is possible to consider that the specific exercise that causes a participant to write outside her usual logic of composition may act like "an analyst" bringing the participant to name or articulate symbolically her desire by affecting somehow her cause of desire. Evans (1996) explains Lacan's conceptualization of the goal of psychoanalysis:

> Hence in psychoanalysis 'what's important is to teach the subject to name, to articulate, to bring this desire into existence' (S2, 228). However, it is not a question of seeking a new means of expression for a given desire, for this would imply an expressionist theory of language. On the contrary, by articulating desire in speech, the analysand brings it into existence:
> "That the subject should come to recognise and to name his desire; that is the efficacious action of analysis. **But it isn't a question of recognising something, which would be entirely given…. In naming it, the subject creates, brings forth, a new presence in the world.**"(S2, 228–9) (Lacan, quoted in Evans, 1996, 37)

I have put some of the above lines in bold to suggest that the "learning," in the form of momentary shifts in students' texts, could, indeed, have been momentary *and* experiential; in lieu of learning which might take place through reflection about what one did and what it might mean for their practice. The point here is that the analyst both in their ambiguity and in foregrounding the ambiguity of the analysand's desire allows the articulation of a desire that has not previously been named. I am suggesting that the ambiguity of the exercises might in some way

provoke a recognition of the ambiguity of the participant's desire as a writer, and thus a new articulation of desire.

In this sense, in the instances that the participants produced something different to their usual logic of composition they effectively brought what Lacan calls 'a new presence in the world' – a signifier or a symbolic entity in the form of a text, which brings forth their "desire" – in a form that is repressed in their usual logic of composition. Considering the whole of this research project, we might also propose that there was something in the sequencing of the exercises within the course that permitted such an articulation of desire.

We might suggest that the role of the *Imaginary* "frame" constructed through the whole setting, the exercise, the presence of other participants, myself as an enigmatic facilitator, alongside unguided discussions about what was written had the effect of bringing out the emerging writer subjectivity of the participants and at points encouraging its disruption like an analyst's interaction with an analysand. In the *negative* of these findings, what is also evident is how difficult it is to produce momentary shifts in one's writing, even when the setting is enigmatically set as such to potentially allow for such shifts.

8.2. Wandering of Desire via a series of six Creative Writing exercises

This section is an overview of the range of the participants' responses to each of the six exercises used in the research project discussing the production of a) writing outside the logic of the participant's composition; b) compositional effects or process elements; and c) possible collective fantasies about Creative Writing in this research setting.

The six exercises, one presented each week at each consecutive class in the time frame of six weeks in chronological order are: "Free-Write," "Write about This" (a 2 pence coin), "Write to the following set of Instructions"(see footnote)[55], "Write

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[55] Write to the following set of instructions:
1. Write a metaphor.
2. Say something specific but utterly preposterous.
3. Use at least one image for each of the five senses, either in succession or scattered randomly throughout the poem.
4. Use one example of synesthesia (mixing the senses).
5. Use the proper name of a person and the proper name of a place.

Using a Voice Opposite to your Own," "Use the mirror given to you and write about what you see in its reflection," "Write a story using a myth or fairy tale but retell it so that it is changed somehow." The first two exercises were followed by the instruction: "You may stop in the next 20 minutes," and the rest were followed by "You may stop in the next 20 to 30 minutes."

Overall, only three exercises, "Write to the following set of instructions"(3rd), "Use the Mirror given to you and write what you see in its reflection"(5th) and "Write a fairytale or myth but re-tell it so that it is changed somehow"(6th) seem to have invoked in some participants a shift in their cause of desire which has caused them to write in their prohibited element of their fantasy.

There were, however, other effects produced by the exercises, which were not necessarily directly related to the participants' individual fantasies. These effects were compositional; responses/writing produced directed/regulated by the exercises' instructions. In addition, certain process elements were also produced depending on or also regulated by the exercises' instructions.

The "Free-Write" exercise did not seem to have any common stylistic influence on the participants' writing, they all wrote in their own different styles, not producing 'automatic writing' which might have been my or the usual expectation (Ben&Twichell 1992). The "Write About This" exercise (two pence coin) produced texts that directly treated the coin as the main protagonist or stories about coins. In their process of writing, the participants either engaged with the coin throughout

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6. Contradict something you said earlier
7. Change the direction or digress from the last thing you said
8. Use a word (slang?) you have never seen in a poem
9. Use an example of false cause-effect logic
10. Use a piece of 'talk' you have actually heard (preferably in dialect and/or which you do not understand').
11. Create a metaphor using the following construction: 'The (adjective) (concrete noun) or (abstract noun)…'
12. Use an image in such a way as to reverse its usual associative qualities.
13. Make the persona or character in the poem do something he/she could not do in 'real life.'
14. Refer to yourself by nickname and in the third person.
15. Write in the future tense, such that part of the poem seems to be a prediction.
16. Modify a noun with an unlikely adjective.
17. Make a declarative assertion that sounds convincing but that finally makes no sense.
18. Use a phrase from a language other than English.
19. Make a nonhuman object say or do something human (personification)
20. Write a vivid image that makes no statement, but that 'echoes' an image from earlier in what you have already written here.
(Feel free to repeat any of the above anywhere in the poem. Fool around).

the exercises as they were writing *or* looked at the coin once and then wrote. In the third exercise, the compositional effect of the instruction was to produce texts that either disguised that they were written to instructions *or* texts that were directly written to the instructions, producing unexpected combinations of words dictated by the instructions, if followed "to the letter." In the fourth exercise, the effect on the composition related to how "opposite voice" was interpreted, as 'person,' genre or accent. The fifth exercise seemed to generate two kinds of combinations of texts: those that treated autobiographical elements directly and those that did not, *and* those that were written without a particular storyline and those that were written with a particular storyline. The sixth exercise generated composition responses that related either to "plot change" or to a change in the character in the fairytale or legend chosen to be changed and re-told.

Finally, the possible collective fantasies which may be traced in the participants' interviews and discussions about the exercises were: the fantasy of writing coherently, of justifying one's writing choices and the fantasy of writing something that can be used. These might be named as fantasies of coherence, accountability and utility of writing. All of the participants, except participant A, seemed hesitant to include autobiographical elements of themselves more directly in their writing throughout the experiment course.

8.2.1 "Free-Write"

 "Free-write" was the first exercise used in the first week of the research course. In this exercise none of the participants wrote outside their logic of composition. There is no evident identifiable influence of the exercise's instruction on the participants' texts in this case. Responses in both the discussion and the interviews revealed a desire for a limit – either from me as the facilitator or from the exercise. A possible expectation from the participants articulated in both their interviews and the discussion was that they initially thought there must have been a way of writing to this exercise that was suitable for the research.

In relation to the participants' writing fantasies, this exercise seemed to invoke in all participants a style that, retrospectively, according to the analysis of

their fantasy's master signifiers and its link with their logic of composition, was consistent with their writing fantasy and writer subjectivity. Perhaps because this was the first exercise of the experiment course, and potentially due to the uncertainty of not knowing the purpose of this exercise, it seems that all participants resorted to their familiar style of writing and to their safe *master signifiers* of their writing fantasy. Q, for example, wrote an explanatory line at the end of his text: "Strayed away from stream of consciousness, also brought in a narrator to dictate my thoughts." In Chapter 7, I suggested that Q's writing fantasy seemed to be organized by the master signifier 'straying from preconception.' In this exercise, it is as if Q created an *Imaginary* Other who wanted him to adopt stream of consciousness, which he then strayed away from. In other words, he created a fantasy that some particular style of writing was expected of him. Q said in his final interview (Q62) that he 'strayed from doing the automatic thing' because at the time he did not know that anything was 'suitable '(Q62). Q used here again what I have traced as a master signifier in the logic of his fantasy 'straying from preconception' to refer to the writing he did because he was uncertain.

Not in direct relation to the participants' individual fantasies, a sense of a need for a limit or guide on how to write was expressed by several participants, referring back to the first session in the discussion in the second class (the 2p exercise class). This might be considered a process of writing element that emerged in relation to writing to this instruction. Participants E, G, A all referred to the "Free-Write" exercise as more difficult than the 2p exercise, since they had to think of something to write, which was more difficult than already having something they could use (2nd class: 23:09-39:30minutes[56]). Comparing "Free-Write" to the second exercise in the discussion G said, for instance, that the 'last one was more limiting' (2nd class: 23:09-39:30minutes). In the final interview, participant A said that the 'free-write one scared' her 'a little bit at the beginning' (A210). She then explained (A211-12) that they do not usually do this kind of exercises, and that she usually aims to write 'inside the exercise' (A212). A's responses seemed to be attempts at making

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[56]I am re-iterating here that I have divided my transcription notes on these recorded discussions into ten-minute slots (3-4 slots for each class discussion) and 20-minute slot in the 4rth exercises as only two participants were present.

sense of the different experience of this exercise. Referring to this exercise in her final interview, M said that 'the free-writing was the least useful although [she] found it easy but being easy isn't useful' (M258). She also later pointed out that 'it's not any different from anything that [she] did [at home]'(M272). M's responses suggest that she also wrote in her usual style, and that for her it was easier to immediately resort to her writing fantasy when confronted with the lack of guidance about what to write.

Overall then, it is possible to suggest that the "Free-Write" exercise seemed to produce (perhaps also because of its placement as the first exercise of the project) the usual writing fantasies enacted in the participants' texts, in an attempt to cover over the anxiety of the non-existence of a limit as to what to write. This desire for a limit almost seems to resemble the desire produced in response to one's initial encounter with the desire of the Other in Lacan's theoretical account of becoming subject through the processes of alienation and separation. "Free-Write" may have constituted an enigmatic and overwhelming initial symbolic interaction with the participants (being the first exercise of the experiment course also), which may have triggered fantasmatic/defensive responses.

8.2.2 "Write About this"

"Write about this," was the second exercise used in the research. A two-pence coin was presented as an object and placed in the middle of the class. In this exercise too, none of the participants wrote outside their logic of composition. The participants' texts indicated that the participants engaged with this exercise in two ways: using the coin either as a protagonist or as a theme of a story. Also, responses in the discussion and interviews indicated that the coin was perceived as a focus, a route or a trigger for writing. In the classroom discussion, all participants seemed to agree on the fact the there was something nostalgic in all of the participants' writing in relation to the everyday utility of two-pence coins.

In relation to the participants' writing fantasies, this exercise also appeared to invoke a writing style that was consistent with the participants' logic of composition.

The main variance among the participants produced in writing was in relation to how the object (2p) was written about. It was used as an inspiration to write a story about coins or money *or* was personified and written about specifically. For example, Q and A seemed to have written specifically about the coin in the class, which was pointed out by Q about his text and A's text (2nd class: 23:09-39:30min). For example, Q wrote in the voice of the coin:

> You never want me then.
> It's all plastic these days, paper too when you can be bothered to buy physical things physical rather than digitally, my shinier, higher denomination brothers are loose change but more welcome than me and any of my coppery kin. [Q's text]

Q personified the coin in this exercise speaking with a tone of resentment about its negligible status. Participant A's narrator, similarly, "spoke" to the coin in her text wondering about how it views the world for example: 'I wonder if all you see is darkness. Your side' [A's text]. Q pointed out that the rest of the participants wrote a story about the 2p coin. The other participants used the coin as a theme to write a story. G wrote a story describing the scene at the factory where copper coins are produced, indicating workers' bad work conditions 'inhaling fumes' and 'coughing' [G's text]. E wrote about Sylvio, a young boy trying to get interest from lending money to a friend of his. M wrote about a young girl collecting 2ps from everywhere she could find in order to save up and buy the 'dollhouse' of her dreams.

In relation to engaging with the actual object, after Q spoke, A said she felt 'connected' to the coin and kept on writing looking at it (23:09-39:30min 2nd class). G responded to that by saying that he looked at it once and then he knew what he was going to write. E and M then said they also just looked at the coin once and then wrote.

The "openness" of "Free-write" seems to have been perceived as more difficult by some participants (Q, G, A) and less challenging by others (M) in terms of finding something to write about, whereas the specificity of the object (ironically this being a coin)"lent itself" as the "subject" of the writing. Most of them seem to have enjoyed this exercise and have found it relatively easy. This was mentioned both in the final interviews and in the classroom discussion.

In the final interviews, the two pence coin seemed to be perceived as having a helpful specificity which was linked to the process of writing as: as a 'focus,' as a 'route' and as a 'trigger' that produces material. For instance, M 's response in her final interview (M108) that she enjoyed it and that it was specific enough to help her focus on something (M117) suggests it helped her focus her writing. On the other hand, Q's response that he 'particularly' liked the 2p exercise in his final interview (Q118), because it went down the 'route' he wanted it to go seemed to suggest that the object was a less regulating frame, which could be used to write in one's own fantasy. In line with Q's usual style of writing fantasy and his responses, Q then concluded in the same reply (Q118) that all the exercises went down the route he wanted them to go. This assertion might suggest an investment in maintaining control of his writing and the direction it takes. Finally, for A the object two pence acted as a 'specific trigger' (A56). Participant A said in her final interview that such triggers are helpful because they are not given such exercises usually, so this gives her the opportunity to write 'fresh' (A56).

As evidenced by the participants' interview responses, in contrast to "free-write," it seems the 2p coin provided a specific space for participants to write 'inside of' (A212). A common element with all these descriptions of the function of the coin is the sense of space or positioning: i.e. 'focus' 'route' 'trigger.' This is also consistent with what the participants said in the general discussion in class (2nd class: 23:09-39:40min) in relation to the exercise being limiting or liberating. Using a similar metaphor to describe the function of the coin, G said it was like a 'springboard' (same discussion). He also said that he found it more liberating than the previous one; in "Free-write" he had to find something to write about, whereas in this one something was given, he said. Participant A commented that this exercise 'makes you open it, you focus on something and go out from there' (2nd class: 23:09-39:40min). Q said in the first exercise 'the constraint was on the entire imagination' whereas with the 2p coin he could still write 'whatever,' except he said if I had told them 'you can only use these ten words' (2nd class: 23:09-39:40min). Q's references to the exercise suggest that the specificity of having an object (e.g. Q also said it 'anchored whatever') (2nd class: 04:12-13:10min) as opposed to something more

222

open such as "Free-write," provided the students the "fantasy" that they had "something" to write about or (a space to write themselves inside of).

Another element that seemed to emerge was that the coin became an object of displaced affect, articulated as nostalgia in the classroom discussion (although this might have probably represented something different for each individual disguised and repressed). All of the participants seemed to refer to connecting threads about the coin in each other's texts. In the class discussion, E commented on the political aspect of the significance of the 2p coin, stating that its value today is negligible in terms of buying something just with 2p. M proclaimed: 'weird how we all associate copper coins and children' (2nd class: 17-18-23:09min) during discussion of E's text and in reference to her text and G's. Q made a point about it being 'nice' that they all seem to write in similar associations to the coin. When I asked him to 'tell me more about that,' he abstractly said that it was 'tangential, all over the place, neat associations [and] it anchors whatever' (mentioned earlier above 2nd class: 04:12-13:10min). A picked up on Q's point and said there was a 'continuum of lines' and that it is 'nice to hear the slight similarities through the pieces' (2nd class: 04:12-13:10min). These references to the coin seemed to point to the unacknowledged contradiction of having a 'signifier' 'the 2p coin' in this case, which is then "poured" with meaning by each of the participants.

In this exercise, the two pence seemed to have been perceived as an origin from which the ideas are supposed to come to the participants. The two pence coin is attributed different fantasmatic functions: a focus, a route that can be designed or a trigger for writing. The space of knowing what to write ironically came neither from "within" them nor from "without" them, not so paradoxically. Even though their writing is constructed from their own *Imaginary* space, this space is perceived as an Other space, with which they inform "themselves" to write something specific that disguises themselves, and is an Other.

8.2.3 List of 20 instructions

The list of 20 instructions exercise is the 3rd exercise that was used in the experiment course. At the end of the session, I asked all the participants to tick which

instructions they had used, as I had told them they did not have to use all of them. Four of five participants (E, A, G, Q) carried out almost all of the instructions. There was not any instruction that was not done by all of the participants. Because this exercise has the instruction "Write to the set of the following instructions": and because of the ambiguity of what the instructions' "demand": e.g. "Write a metaphor," this exercise contained a demand and a question-mark as to what it "desires" the subject-participant to write.

In this exercise, three of the five participants wrote differently from their usual logic of composition. This exercise's instructions seemed to have two different compositional effects: some participants wrote a story using the instructions (G, A, M), whereas others followed the instructions without covering over their use of the instructions with other additional sentences (E and Q). Both in the classroom discussion and the interviews, the participants' references to this exercise seemed to construct a collective fantasy or a fear of not writing coherently when writing to an exercise that has a list of instructions. We might provisionally suggest here that there might be a connection between their collective fantasies and their individual fantasy, for those who did manage to write outside their logic of composition.

In this exercise, two of five participants, M and E, wrote differently from their usual logic of composition. M wrote in more detail than usual in contrast to her faster narration style in her texts focused on telling the 'wider meaning.' In Chapter 6, I explained that M's response to the exercise was a story about "Violet" a woman who fantasizes about her gardener in her garden. Even though she ticked very few of the instructions (only three), my argument in that chapter through the analysis of her writing fantasy and its translation into her logic of composition suggested that M was "showing" more than "telling" in this text. Again, even though M wrote to just a few of the instructions on the list, perhaps these instructions made M pay more attention to detail thus creating a narrative that had a different orientation in the way it signified meaning for its reader (e.g. 'Then her body started to sweat beneath her clothes soaking the flowery fabric of the deck chair she called her lounger' [quote from her text]).

In his response to this exercise, E wrote using metaphors and a non-linear narration, that was not 'informative' or 'straightforward' in contrast to one of the

two *master signifiers* in his usual logic of composition 'straightforward, not convoluted.' We might, however, suggest that E's text was 'dark but funny' which is in line with his other complementary line of writing fantasy. At the same time, my subjective perception is that this text was more dark than funny. I will refer to E's text in the next section in relation to compositional effects.

This instruction seemed to produce two compositional effects: either a story with a standard usual narrative or a more experimental and/or less linear narrative that could indicate it was written to the list of instructions. By standard narrative I mean here that it was composed in such a manner so that it was not discernible that it was written to instructions, e.g. additional lines were added to make it resemble a story. By "experimental" narrative I mean that effort was not made to disguise the fact that this text was written to the instructions, which if followed "to the letter" produced some unexpected effects in language. For example, potentially writing to instruction number 10 "Use a piece of 'talk' you have actually heard (preferably in dialect and/or which you do not understand')," A wrote:

> Hid you- Salik! Hayir, canim, hayir. Napisum, ya?

An example of a coherent narrative without disruptions is G's text to this exercise. He wrote a story about a character, who orders his servant to bring him a blanket; the main aspect of this story is its visual element, a focus on the description to produce the character:

> He was a pig. He shoveled in twenty round, moist new potatoes (sentence marked out) at once into his (marked out) cheeks, drool(ing) spilling out of the wides.

 This text is in line with G's usual logic of composition, similar to his other texts produced and submitted in the research. He stuck to his style as usual. G's commitment to making sense is exemplified by his interpretation and writing to instruction 13 "Make the persona or character in the poem do something he/she could not do in 'real life.'" He said in the discussion that he could never eat twenty potatoes in one go, as his character does in the above excerpt from his text.

Indirectly pointing out that the writing of this story did not show it was written to a list of twenty instructions, Q asked G in the classroom discussion 'did

you do it consecutively' (3rd class: 00:00-13:00min). G replied that at first he did but then 'he wanted it to make more sense' (3rd class: 00:00-13:00min). The text making 'more sense' is a point I will come to in relation to the possible social fantasy constructed in this class discussion about the exercise.

Before I move to this, I wish to present an example of a supposedly "non-sensical" script, which is the other compositional effect this exercise may have: writing to the instructions without attempting to insert additional lines to make it into a narrative-story. E seemed to have written one of the two least "non-sensical" scripts or texts (the other one being Q's two texts, which I mentioned in Chapter 7). It seems that E might have allowed more of an Other internal logic to take over the narrative composition of this text:

> Goddamnit I tell her in later life Sort up your problem and embrace your sobriety. Take your responsibility lightly as if they came naturally.
> And so the wasted creative genius of one life drifts on a whisky coloured cloud to be absorbed into mother and son, there to waste one and be wasted by the other.

As I pointed out in Chapter 7, the narrative in E's text to the 3rd exercise above is not linear. By linear I explained that I mean not following a specific chronological sequence. The above excerpt is the end of this text, ending on quite a convoluted note – there is no informative element in this text. As I explained earlier, however, this text seems to be dark and slightly funny, though not as funny as his other texts, from my subjective perception.

E was asked about his text after he read it in with regards to his process of writing and the text's inclusion of autobiographical elements. G, seeming surprised his text "did" make sense even though he wrote to the instructions only, asked him if he had 'an idea' to write it (3rd class: 18:57-26:26min). E replied that it was about the day he was conceived. He also then explained that he did the instructions in order and might have skipped a few (3rd class: 18:57-26:26min). He was also asked if he 'brought himself into it quite a lot' by A and he explained that this was the 'arrogant part' about him taking the talent of a writer who died (mentioned in the text) on the day he was conceived. His reply to this latter question was both a confirmation and a kind of a judgment of himself, not his writing.

The particular compositional effect in relation to coherence or non-coherence of narrative came up as a subject both in the participants' final interviews and in the classroom discussion. All of the participants expressed a worry about this exercise in the class discussion. Q said that he found it 'daunting at first,' A said that it 'worried her' in the beginning and that it was 'hard with all the terminology,' G said it felt 'more [*sic*] became more dominated' and M 'found it really hard' (3rd class: 32:00-41:50min).

Provisionally, we might say here that the production of these two compositional effects may relate to how the participants felt about writing coherently or not in relation to their writing fantasy. In response to G's assertion in the discussion (3rd class: 32:00-41:50min) that:

> it's nice to be given it rather than usual when you have to think
> of something start somewhere and end somewhere

Q said 'so you don't do the Romantic idea of writing for the sake of it.' G then replied that he did but the two 'things go together' – [the idea and making sense]' explaining that 'you have an idea but it's got to make sense.' I intervened to ask: 'Is that the Romantic idea of writing?' To which Q responded:

> I can sit down and write for an hour incoherent babble – I don't
> have objectives

Q seemed to point out the contradiction in G's talk about his writing: he is not 'doing the Romantic thing' as G said he has an objective, but he did say on the other hand he did not think about it too much. This "attitude" to feeling comfortable with writing in a particular "incoherent" manner seemed to be connected to writing outside one's fantasy, in relation to other participants such as E and A. This was different in the case of Q, where the fantasy was about straying from expectations. E explicitly said in relation to writing to this exercise that the 'narrative' went out of the window' (E86) and that he 'had to probably turn off turn down the logical side of [his]brain' (E86).

It seemed then, that the varying degrees that participants concerned themselves with adhering to the fantasy of "making sense" seemed to produce subsequently the varying degrees that participants wrote into their prohibited element of their own individual writing fantasy. A also seemed to pick up on the fact

that this exercise may produce reference to autobiographical elements, when asking E about whether he 'brought himself into' his text. Participants A and E seemed to be the only ones who wrote more personal narratives referring to themselves and using all of the instructions of the exercise, in contrast to M who wrote a story using only three instructions and G who wrote a story covering over the use of the instructions. Q's case was a playing out of this dilemma, which led him to a more abstract production of two texts both of which were experimental. Interestingly, though both E and G wrote in coherent narratives usually, E managed to write in his prohibited element, whilst G 'stuck to his style' as usual. The enigmatic setting may have allowed E to slightly loosen his attitude to 'making sense' and indulging in another style for this exercise. On the other hand, the enigmatic setting for G may have been perceived as threatening thus not allowing his text to show he wrote to a list of instructions.

To sum up, the exercise with the list of 20 instructions may have possibly allowed the writing in one's prohibited element as it confused some of the participants in relation to the element of "coherence" in their writing. It is possible that following the instructions of this exercise "to the letter" and not adding any additional lines to conceal their use and the strange effects the produce in language, might have been interpreted as risking the revelation of any autobiographical elements. The fear of this revelation may have been articulated as writing either coherent or incoherent texts in the engagement with this exercise.

8.2.4 "Write in A Voice that is Opposite to your Own"
The 4th exercise used was "Write in A Voice that is Opposite to your Own." Only two participants were actually present in this class, M and E. The other participants submitted their texts in the 5th class, which they had written at home. None of the participants in this exercise wrote outside their logic of composition. The compositional effects produced to this exercise's instruction were in relation to how "opposite voice" was interpreted by the participants. The "opposite voice" was interpreted in the participants' writing as a different character to their own (M, G, Q), as a different genre (E and Q) and as a different accent from one's own (A). In

both the interviews and the class discussion, the participants mentioned in relation to their writing that it was not so different from how they usually write, and the impossibility of writing something that you do not know. M, A and G mentioned this exercise in passing in their final interview. E and Q did not mention it at all.

In this exercise, no shift in the logic of composition was observed in the participants' responses to it. Though the instruction seemed to produce complementary elements to the participants' writing fantasy, which were perhaps related to the compositional effects of the exercise.

M and G seemed to interpret this exercise as an opposite "person" to themselves. M wrote a first-person story about an adventurous boy, whose character is opposite to hers, she said in the final interview (M157). M also said in her interview that it was strange that, after all, the first person narrator was not so 'bad,' even though she did not use 'first-person' often and yet it did not feel opposite but quite similar to her style in the end (M259, M278-280). In the class discussion, M said that she 'tried' but the style ended up being 'similar' to her usual (4th class 00:00-23:00 min).

G also wrote in his usual style. In his response to this exercise, G wrote in the voice of a homeless man who describes the external of a building and the signs that one can use to tell if a building is inhabited or not, in order to choose to stay there or not. This narrative uses "signs" or symbols to tell a story, which is G's usual style. G was not present in this class. So, there is no contribution from him in the discussion. G only said in his final interview that he found this exercise the 'hardest' because he did not feel motivated because he wrote it at home (G108-111). Later in this interview, G said that he is 'used to writing at home' because he is relaxed (G186). In chapter 6, considering other replies of his first and final interview, I had suggested that he perceived the environment of the research as 'controlling,' which seemed to be different from the setting he liked to write in – a relaxed environment. I wonder here whether my interview stance may have led G's into the contradiction of saying that he is able to write at home because he is relaxed, but not able to write at home when is given the exercise of the project.

Q and E both interpreted the "opposite voice" as opposite genre or style of writing. For example, in his response to this exercise, Q seemed to write opposite to

229

himself in the sense that the protagonist is a woman, narrating her life through her diary entry in what seems to be a story placed in a kind of a 'Jane Austen' Victorian era.

> Monday
> One wakes up at the crack o' dawn. It's customary to lie away and wait to be waited on. This can take anywhere from a jiffy to a bloody long time, but no one hears me curse like that. Our retainer would take it upon herself to prepare our bath, prepare our gown for the day and most importantly brush our hair. The two hundred strokes. One hundred either side of a thorough wash and conditioning. I insist on only being waited on by female staff. Father believes that I spend too much time around – too much time to deemed appropriate for a lady in my station.

Q seemed to be able to write in an "opposite" voice to 'science-fiction' and in quite a convincing manner it seems as above. His excerpt from the text he wrote to this exercise above shows that he has included various idioms of speech of the time or words that make this diary account quite convincing: i.e. "Father believes" or "deemed appropriate for a lady in my station." Q said in his final interview that he would probably have written the same thing in class, as he always writes better when it is 'handwritten' (Q55). Q may have interpreted this exercise as an opposite person/character as he writes about a woman in a Victorian time. However, he did not refer to this in the interview and he was not present in the class discussion.

In the class discussion, E explicitly said that he did not understand the point in writing in a style he finds 'boring' (4th class: 00:00-20:00 min). Even though his style was similar to his usual style, there was a little more description. E said that this was his 'not so good' 'second voice' in the classroom conversation. The text is a story of a visit to an old institution where the protagonist had spend his childhood years:

> The high metal barred gates in the high metal barred fence further evidence of the protection the movement had felt it was necessary, to undertake, after the first version of the Scout building was razed to the ground by unidentified arsonists the moment its construction had been completed.

This excerpt presents a narrative with more description, yet there is not much divergence in terms of how the story is usually told. So, this does not seem to be the opposite voice to E's usual logic of composition.

Finally, A seemed to interpret "opposite voice" as "opposite accent" to her own. Such an interpretation of the "opposite voice" might be interpreted as quite closely related to the element of sound, which is a key element in A's own internal aesthetic in her use of the narrator figure in her writing fantasy (discussed in Chapter 6). Participant A attempted to engage with this exercise by interpreting as 'opposite' voice an ethnic voice, her own perception of Caribbean accent in her narration. An excerpt from A's text to this exercise indicates that she may also have conflated the signifier "voice" with "character" or "person," but her "opposite person" seems to approximate her logic of composition (the narrator figure and her use of sound):

> Before I turn to (sth crossed out) guts an' gone
> Soakin' up de floor.
> Before I'm nuttin' but a stain
> On ye carpet
> An' a blot on ye page
> A spot
> On de records
> Tha you think will save you
>
>
> (An' I bet you don't see dis thru)

Participant A tried to write in a Caribbean accent she would never speak through her *Imaginary* perception of the sound. A still used sound here and a narrator as a main protagonist.

A's reply to my question 'whether one can ever write outside oneself' is quite intriguing in terms of how she perceived the opposite voice exercise:

> A105: […] so I guess somehow it will come back to me like if I was to write like when I wrote the opposite voice to mine though it's completely opposite to my voice it's still something that I've heard that I would think to write because I've heard it or I don't know ... that yeah ... it came from ... my ... own thing thing to write about for me that is an opposite I wouldn't write it in a language that I didn't know sometime that I .. if that makes sense … [laughs]

A explained that what she writes usually always relates to herself. Later in the same reply, she said that 'it links subconsciously back' (105). It is noteworthy that in her speaking of this, A seemed to wonder at the end about her statement that she

cannot write about something she does not know about ('I wouldn't write it in a language that I didn't know'). This wondering might be interpreted as hinting at the impossibility of not being 'yourself in your writing.'

A's wondering nicely sums up the "impossible task" that the instruction of this exercise sets: to write in an opposite voice might be impossible, as one's writer subjectivity is constituted precisely by an exclusion of an opposite. The opposite is what is not known, the unknown Other.

All the students tried to make sense of the instruction and did this either writing opposite to their own character, to a genre or style of writing or to a more specific element to their accent. They produced styles that were in various ways complementary to their usual logic of composition – but not actually moving outside of this usual logic. It seems here that what was considered "opposite" is not something that can directly be articulated in the writing of the participants, but, rather, their fantasy of what is opposite to them is articulated in terms of signifiers that are "allowed" in the chain of their writer subjectivity.

8.2.5 "Use the mirror given to you and write about what you see in its reflection"

The fifth exercise was "Use the mirror given to you and write about what you see in its reflection." I bought five identical square pieces of mirror from a house decorations shop and provided each participant with one square mirror piece along with the printed handout of the exercise's instruction. The pieces of mirror were around 30cm to 40 cm and they could be held by hand, or placed flat on the desk. They were not propped up mirrors. All of the participants were present except for M. The participants seemed quite excited and intrigued, according to my perception, with the introduction of the mirror object proclaiming surprise. In this exercise, four participants wrote outside their logic of composition (M, and E more obviously, Q and G less obviously).

In terms of the compositional effects of this exercise's instruction, it seemed to trigger a dilemma of whether one would have to refer to autobiographical elements or not. This appeared in the writing of the participants and was discussed in their interviews and the classroom discussion. Four participants directly referred

232

to themselves (M, A, E, Q) and three referred to their physical appearance (M, A, E). Two referred to physical appearance in a less direct way (G and Q). Another compositional effect of this exercise seems to be causing a wandering in the writing of the text, which might be interpreted also as a wandering of the students' desire to write. The wandering in the writing happened in two ways however. Some participants seemed to enjoy it (A, Q) whereas for others it was disconcerting (M, E, G). Finally, the participants in relation to the element of wandering and inclusion or exclusion of autobiographical elements chose to engage with the mirror object in two ways: either directly looking at themselves and writing about it or using the mirror to write about something else in its reflection.

In relation to the participants' individual writing fantasies, the mirror exercise caused some participants to write in their prohibited element, especially E and M and speculatively G, as I have argued in Chapters 6 and 7. It is interesting to contrast M's comment here in her final interview (258) that this was the 'most useful' exercise repeating that "Free-Write" was the 'least useful' (M258). Q and A on the other hand, seemed in some ways to have produced some new signifiers and in some ways to have also maintained their usual logic of composition. From my subjective perception, they seemed to "play" with the mirror more comfortably than the other participants, as if trusting its/their reflection. For example, Q both strayed from preconception, did not write about himself and yet also felt comfortable to play with the mirror and see how his writing is forming. Q also wrote to the mirror whilst looking at the mirror's reflection. For example, he wrote:

> though I know what word I want to write watching it from
> backwards is
> fucking weird. Mirror set-up changed. It's not facing me
> anymore. But
> ceiling I have peripheral note pad sight available-but again I'm
> trying not to
> look at that. **[…]**
> [page 4]:
> Feels an awful lot like automatic writing because I'm adding and
> thinking about the words as they come to me. How fun. There
> are fingerprints
> Around where her face sits.

At the same time, Q's reference to 'fingerprints around where her face sits' might be interpreted as a *wondering* about the Other's desire. He later referred to the fact that I cannot see him, as I suggested in Chapter 7. I suggested in that chapter that Q's writing fantasy may perhaps be related to a wandering of desire in general. However, the above text, in contrast to his other texts, seemed to more directly name or acknowledge his wondering of the Desire of the Other, and enact it with a seemingly purposeless piece of writing, as if he was "free-associating."

The main compositional effect of this exercise, not directly related to the participants' writing fantasies, was the integration or non-integration of autobiographical elements in the participants' writing. All of the participants in varying degrees "faced" (ironically) the dilemma of whether or not write about themselves or their face, having associated the signifier "reflection" and the use of the object of mirror with "looking at oneself." Both M and A wrote about their face, E mentioned in his text that had he known there would have been a mirror he 'might have shaven.' Q's writing described the in-the-moment experience of using the mirror to observe his writing, referring to his eyes and also to his hair/beard' my eyes are slightly red' 'I'm in need of a little bit of a trim.' G was the only one who did not use the mirror directly looking at himself. Instead, G chose to look at the reflection of the underneath of the tables in the class with the mirror. G also moved to a corner of the room, away from the other participants and sat down on the floor to do his writing. Yet, as I argued in Chapter 6, it seemed G's text revealed some of his more personal thoughts disguised as signs on desks possibly.

It is noteworthy that in the female participants' texts, the autobiographical element seemed to bring out a critical stance towards their self or physical appearance. Content-wise, the two women, A and M, wrote about their face or physical appearance.   A wrote for example:

> Am I nothing more than passport documentation at the end of it
> all?
> A heavy week and morning shakes
> Makes for dry chin skin and spots
> That blot the English rose, that granny knows.
> Dregs of dread stick out at the back
> The tail of a rat
> "Don't worry" says mother " We can cut that out".

In this text, A used her usual narrator poetic voice, building up on the sound of the narrative using internal rhymes such as 'That blot the English rose, that granny knows.' Additionally, this poetic voice was combined at points with more prose-like narrative 'Am I nothing more than passport documentation at the end of it all?" A's narrator in this text is not critical of her imperfect appearance, though pointing to the "apparent" imperfections (e.g. 'dregs of dread stick out'). This was in contrast to M, who had an intense reaction of disgust towards her own text, which she expressed in her final interview. She said that it brought out the problem she has with herself autobiographically (M258). Her text seemed to enact a critical voice towards her face. I suggested in chapter 6 that M's main writing fantasy may be about writing stories with 'wider meaning' using 'telling' not showing through details of visual description the plot of the story. In this text, M seemed to shift her style of writing and use detail to pinpoint to the story's wider meaning. M expressed 'disgust' ('gross' (M184)) in response to this text. She also said in the final interview she was afraid it would turn out to be some sort of 'autobiographical thing' (M128). So, because the mirror makes one focus on one's appearance and she has a problem with her appearance, the mirror object of the exercise made her focus on the negative things (M128). Yet, as I mentioned earlier she said she found this exercise the 'most useful' (M258).

So in some cases, it might be possible to argue that the participants' individual fantasies affect the compositional effect of the exercise, for instance the compositional effect of the mirror exercise to cause one to consider writing about oneself confused M and made her write in her opposite element, which was related to her writing fantasy. In G's case, this exercise seemed to also cause some anxiety, which may have been covered over in relation to his fantasmatic scenario of writing. G said in the final interview that he did not want to put his 'bare thoughts' (G175) on paper, but some "slippage" may have happened as his composition was slightly different as argued in Chapter 6.

So, this exercise seemed to confuse the cause of desire in all of the participants. However, the manner in which this confusion was dealt produced the different experiences of Otherness (M, maybe G and E) or potentially "Pure

Desirousness" (Q and A), in the sense that neither Q or A expressed directly any discomfort with engaging with the mirror, unlike the other three participants. For example, E did not have much to say about the mirror exercise. In fact, he said he did not know why his text did not end up having a narrative (as he perceives it) (E82). It is also noteworthy that he took a nine-second pause after saying he is not quite sure why this happened. His reply finished with an abstract phrase 'did everything with the mirror' (E82), which was proceeded by a mumbled phrase. Both Q and E wrote about how they saw themselves in the act of writing and how their writing was forming via the mirror. However, in contrast to Q who found it 'fun,' E said it was a 'disconcerting' experience (5th class: 0:00-7:00min).

On a final note, this exercise because of the enigmatic mirror object, and the instructions 'write about what you see in *its* reflection' leaving it open to write about oneself or not, opened up a space of free-association with varying degrees of censorship for all the participants. We might suggest that the mirror exercise with its instruction of: "write what you see in its reflection" might act like the pure function an analyst takes, in the sense that it allows for some participants to encounter their lack of being, by allowing their desire about the Other to wander, thus "permitting" them to write non-purposefully and "non-cohesively." Whilst operating individually on the level the participants' writing fantasies, this exercise also seemed to operate on the level of a common shared fantasy of the participants. This common fantasy may have been about writing about the personal/oneself and the implications of that in relation to the legitimate accepted identity of a writer. All of the participants' texts seem to touch upon this aspect of one's writer identity: how the personal is excluded or integrated in what seems to be the (very) social act of writing. We might wonder here if the course they attended had a particular direction, which may have advised against or in favour of explicit autobiographical writing.

8.2.6 "Write a story using a myth or fairy tale but retell it so that it is changed somehow"

The sixth exercise was "Write a story using a myth or fairy tale but retell it so that it is changed somehow." Only participants G, E and A were present in this final class. M

and Q were absent. M and Q wrote these texts at home and provided them via e-mail to me after the class. Three of five participants, (G, E, Q) wrote in their usual logic of composition, whilst M and A seemed to have written not completely outside their logic of composition, but in a slightly modified style. The sixth exercise's compositional effect seemed to depend on the interpretation of the shift induced to the fairytale or myth chosen. Finally, the participants' references to this exercise in their interviews and the classroom discussion circulate around two possible fantasies: a) a justification for the changes they did in their writing relating it either to an Other of authority or their own desire b) a desire to write something they can "use." Both of these possible collective fantasies seem to point to the need to legitimize their engagement with this project with "getting something out of it" and justifying their "transgressions."

In relation to writing fantasies and this exercise, participant A seemed to be the only participant who wrote differently to how she usually writes, not exactly outside her logic of composition but in a re-modified space of her logic of composition. I argued in A's case study in chapter 6 that she produced new material, which was added to her structure of fantasy. M also seemed to write differently but there is no information from her about this exercise, either in the discussion or the interview to support this further. E, G and Q wrote in their usual logic of composition.

Whilst neither M or A wrote in their prohibited element of their fantasy, they both managed to effect a change in their writing style, using both usual *master signifiers* of their fantasy but also potentially new signifiers in this mode of composition. In relation to the sequence of this exercise, it seemed relevant that some of the participants had written in their prohibited element in the previous exercise (5t[th]) and returned to their safe master signifiers in the logic of composition produced to this exercise (6th) (E, G and maybe Q). For instance, Q presented a kind of a regression to his "supposed" usual style of writing in science fiction. Q did not adhere to the exercise's instruction; he did not write what is usually considered a "fairytale" or "myth." However, his text made me wonder whether the submitting of such a text to this exercise may have turned it into a myth or a fairytale that might have been narrated in the genre of science fiction.

On the other hand, we might wonder whether for some participants this exercise allowed further space to explore the new signifiers emerging in the previous exercise (M and A), both female, in a way this time "allowed" or "sanctioned" by the Other of the instruction of the exercise: "retell it so that it is changed somehow." Finally, for example, M wrote in more detail than usual in this final text. This is not to deny the possibility that this could be due to the fact that she did the exercise at home. The story she wrote was about Wendy's encounter with Peter Pan. She seemed to have done a reversal of the fairytale of Peter Pan: everybody looks old but they are really young.

> However, as Wendy gazed around the ramshackle room Peter had laid her in, she did notice that the lost boys, which he had described to her before she left her home in London, were not young like the boys she knew or her younger brothers. Instead, they all, except one, had no hair and plenty of sun-worn wrinkly skin left on display and a small piece of crocodile skin covering their private parts. Wendy giggled to herself noticing this strange dress code.
> 'Peter. Are these the lost boys?' She called to him while he was over near the stove preparing her some food.
> 'Why yes Wendy. Let me introduce you. This is Spike, Pip, John, Fred, Bill, Dynamite, Flame, Ice and of course my closest friend Hook.' He replied, pointing a stubby finger at each one of the boys.
> 'But Peter, why are they so old?'
> Peter dropped his head. 'We are all old here. Neverland ages everyone who enters it. But we can do anything we want because we are old enough.'
> 'I don't feel any different Peter.'
> 'Here. Look in the looking glass. Your[sic] older than you feel.'
> Wendy took the reflective surface in her trembling hands.

M changed the story of Peter Pan in this text. The excerpt above has been presented at full length because I think it has several elements that show that M's logic of composition has moved. Her *objet a* of her writing fantasy might have changed its position in the fantasy somehow: the detail is used here as part of the narrative, i.e. 'sun-wrinkly skin' ' a small piece of crocodile skin covering their private parts.' The dialogue does not just tell what is happening but symbolizes too. M's composition in this story "allows" the action of looking at the mirror to tell the

'wider meaning of the story' which is 'you are older than you feel.' It is interesting that M used a mirror in her text for this exercise, after having done a mirror exercise in the previous class (which was troubling to her).

In relation to the compositional effect of this exercise's instruction, the participants focused on plot changes that relate to choice of character (M, A, G, E) and/or historical period (E) or genre (Q).

All participants, except Q, seemed to do "plot changes" in their changing of the fairytale, which related to a change in a character. For instance, E wrote a different version of the legend of Arthur, having Maurice the servant steal the Excalibur sword in the end. G re-wrote the 'Little Red-riding hood' having the grandmother eaten by the wolf and the 'little-red riding hood' escaping without revenging the wolf. Participant A also changed, as explained above, the Hansel and Gretel story. M changed the Peter Pan story, making everyone look old, instead of young as in the original. Q's "change" of plot is the least obvious as pointed out in Chapter 7, as he writes a science-fiction story of an abduction, which might relate to a myth in the science fiction genre.

Two possible social fantasies about Creative Writing in this context seemed to be constructed in the participants' final discussion in class and in their final interviews about this exercise. The first fantasy was about justifying the changes produced in their texts through reference to the origin of fairytales, a kind of a Creative Writing Other. For instance, G's story about the Red Riding Hood finding her grandmother dead seems to be gruesome but not unexpected and direct in terms of what he was describing. G did not mention the sixth exercise at all in his final interview. However, G called this story 'funny and psychotic' in the class discussion (0:00- 6:25min 6th class). He described his piece as 'realistic,' 'dry' and 'farcical,' when I asked him to explain 'why psychotic.' At this point, E intervened to point out that many fairy tales originally started as very grotesque to scare off children who were being naughty, e.g. the original story of little red riding hood had the grandmother and her eaten. E also pointed out that it is fairly realistic that the wolf would sleep after eating a grandmother since the wolf would be unable to eat another whole human being right after having eaten one because it would not fit in his stomach.

On the other hand, A, as explained in Chapter 6, directly related her choice to "tamper with" the fairytale to her own personal desire to kill the children: 'they were gonna die I could have not killed off at the end' (A112). M and Q did not discuss this exercise in their interviews, nor were they present in this class. So, it seems that this exercise potentially caused some participants to want to justify their "change" linked with a legitimate authority Other e.g. the original purpose of fairytales is to scare people. Other participants like A, who seemed more comfortable with the personal elements of her writing as well, did not appear to link this change with an Other legitimate authority, but with herself.

The second potential fantasy is in relation to producing something that can be "used." In relation to this, all three male participants seemed to use the fairytale in a way that fitted their "personal" writing agendas, yet avoiding the personal/autobiographical reference in their texts ultimately. Indeed, G mentioned, in his final interview, that he likes everything he writes 'to be of something he can use' (G171-2). E said in the classroom discussion he wrote this because he wanted to use a piece from this experiment course (6th class: 13:39-23:59min). For example, E said that he wrote a possible end to a novel he has thought of writing. This was a story he already had in mind and so happened to fit with this instruction. He said in the discussion that he 'cheated' (6th class: 13:39-23:59min) as he had something in mind to write.

An additional point peripheral to the effect of exercises is that some of the participants seemed to appropriate some of the signifiers that were my own (I had said "choices" in the previous class in referring to G's text to write about underneath the desk) to discuss their own writing, affecting their discourse of writing. E also talked about 'choices of realism' in the 6th class. The word 'choices' was also used by Q in the previous session right after I had used it first.

Overall then, this exercise seemed to have been appropriated as a platform to either further one's exploration of new signifiers in writing (M and A) or as defensive frame to re-enact one's writing fantasy (G, Q, E). In terms of compositional effects, this exercises' instruction seemed to produce a change in plot usually related to the changed actions of a character. Finally, this exercise seemed to instigate discussion about justifying the shift produced by it either by linking it to another

authority Other (i.e. past fairytale aims), or linking it to oneself. The discussion also indicated a potential discomfort experienced by some of the participants wanting to write something they could "use." Both of these discussions about justifying one's tampering with an Other's story and producing something for an Other's expectations point to a fantasy of accountability and utility of writing in relation to the Creative Writing in this research setting.

These fantasies of utility and accountability may have been enhanced by the fact that this exercise was the last exercise of the experiment course potentially covering over an anxiety about the desire of the Other in this setting, the exercises and myself.

8.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, in this chapter I have attempted to:

a) Review the instances where the instructions of the exercises caused a shift in the participant's writing fantasy,

b) Trace the compositional effects and/or process elements which specific instruction of the exercises regulated,

c) Suggest three potential collective fantasies about (creative) writing in this setting relating to the coherence, accountability and utility of writing.

To summarize here, the exercises which seemed to cause a confusion in the participants' invisible *objet a* and thus a wandering of desire were the 3rd (List of Instructions), 5th (Mirror) and 6th (Fairytale). We might suggest that this confusion related to a common potential compositional effect of the instructions of all three of these exercises: the inclusion of autobiographical elements or an apparent link to the author in the text. In the 3rd exercise, the composition of the texts suggests that writing directly to the instructions produced strange effects in language, which were thought as personally revealing or troubling by some participants.

An ambiguous alternation of demand ("Free-Write," "Write About This," "Write in A voice Opposite to your Own") and ambiguity ("List of 20 Instructions," "Use the Mirror Given To You and Write what you see in its reflection," "Choose a Fairytale and re-tell it so that it is changed somehow") seemed to constitute the overall

sequence of the exercises. This alternation seemed to constitute the project's overall punctuating "discourse" or position along with my own stance potentially in the class discussions.

In conclusion, it seems that where the participants did not follow their usual logic of composition, not only was their individual structure of fantasy shifted but also in a wider context the social collective fantasy potentially espoused in that space was also shifted momentarily. This points to the significance of the environment or the frame of the pedagogy that allows such a loosening of (Creative Writing) institutional boundaries, which otherwise rigidly demarcate the recognition/"recognizability" of the (writing) subject-student and also enable the dominant suturing of this subject.

I suggested in chapter 4 that learning might be understood as a shift or formulation of new metaphors in one's signifying chains of one's subjectivity (Fink, 1995, p.75). An important realization, then, from the discussion of the effects of these six Creative Writing exercises is that learning *does* happen unconsciously through different encounters with frames which might either represent master signifiers of the learner's/writer's subjectivity or not.

More specifically, we may suggest that the sequence of the six Creative Writing exercises seemed to allow an exploration of the writer-student's writing fantasy whereby different exercises trigger different experiences of the writer-student's writing fantasy. "Free-Write" and "Write About This" produced an enactment of writing fantasy. "The list of 20 of instructions" and "Use the Mirror Given to You and Write what you see in its Reflection" produced a troubling/confusion or wandering of the participants' desire to write. Finally, "Write in A voice opposite to your own" and "Write a story using a myth or fairy tale but retell it so that it is changed somehow" pointed to particular individual elements specifically espoused in the logic of composition of the writer-student. Therefore, it seems that the combination of these exercises can provide an overarching engagement with the writer-student's knowledge of Creative Writing – and of her and his writer subjectivity. At the same time, what is obvious is still the difficulty to shift fantasies of writing even in an environment that was supposedly open to allow for such shifts. Equally, when fantasies were shifted, these shifts were quite

dramatic, e.g. in the case of M and E, both writing in their prohibited element (M in personal detail, and E in metaphors and convoluted).

The area of Creative Writing exercises in the pedagogy of Creative Writing is still a largely unexplored area, along with the wider area of "writing as learning" in Creative Writing. In one of the few papers about Creative Writing exercises, an investigation of the ideology of "Creative Writing exercises" used in American writing handbooks, Westbrook (2004, p.144-6) discussed Creative Writing exercises that call students 'not to think' about the political purposes of their writing or the potential of their writing to change the world. He does not give a specific analysis of instructions of exercises but refers to the commentary provided by the authors suggesting ways of writing (e.g. Haake (2001) on writing dangerously p.146). He concludes in this paper (2004, p.146-7) that exercises in such handbooks act similarly to what 'Althusser (1971, p.133) has called an Ideological State Apparatus [...]– teaches know how but in forms *which ensure subjection to the ruling ideology*' (ibid, p.146).

Connectedly, by exploring the Creative Writing s*ubjective* experiences of these students' engagement with the six exercises, this chapter has attempted to show the potential of the combination of these six Creative Writing exercises to both produce and question student-writers' assumptions/fantasies about Creative Writing.

This analysis also invisibly points to the crucial link between the pedagogue and the tool of pedagogy; the enigmatic setting may have allowed students to wander with me in this exercise of wondering, highlighting the significance for an *ethical* pedagogy of Creative Writing.

Chapter 9

In-*tensions*[57] *and Ex*-Tensions[58] of Writing Fantasies

9.1 Overall argument of the thesis

This thesis explored the hypothesis that the combination of enigmatic Creative Writing exercises and setting produces a pedagogical space enabling/facilitating an exploration of students' writer subjectivity through different experiences of Otherness in their writing.

An experiment course and interviews (before and after the course) with five Creative Writing undergraduate students were conducted in order to research the effects of six Creative Writing exercises on the students' subjectivities. As the research project developed, the investigation of the six Creative Writing exercises was reformulated into an investigation of ambiguous exercises and setting together.

With regards the effects of Creative Writing exercises I have suggested that the combination of these six exercises provides an overarching engagement with the writer-student's knowledge of Creative Writing – of one's writer subjectivity. Pointing to the compositional effects of the Creative Writing exercises, the degree to which the students are confused by the instruction indicates the extent to which they might either write in their prohibited element or further "stick to their style" as a defensive response to the setting's potentially overwhelming enigmatic atmosphere. In addition, specific process elements in the writing to the exercises that are interpreted as the exercises' demand may relate to potential possible collective fantasies about Creative Writing: of coherence ("making sense"), legitimation (justifying "choices" in language) and utility (producing writing that can be "used").

The sequence of these exercises seems to produce a balance of examples of a) the participants' writing fantasy, b) prohibited elements of their fantasy, and c) further exploration or disruption of the elements of their fantasy. Therefore, these

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[57] Inspired from Lacan's use of the word 'in-tension' in Seminar on 'Sinthome' – (I 14) playing with the notion of 'intention,' symbolizing/suggesting potentially a tension arising from inside, as I have interpreted it.

[58] My play with the word "extension" symbolizing intentions of this thesis' extensions and hopefully productive "tensions" produced through it.

exercises seem to have the potential to enable writer-students to explore their writer subjectivities opening them up to otherwise blocked routes of writing and learning of Creative Writing. Further research with other exercises would be valuable in order to consider their effects on participants' modes of writing.

Drawing from the data generated through this research, the analysis has produced both a concrete and a conceptual contribution to the field of Creative Writing pedagogies. In terms of the concrete elements, the analysis suggests the concept of *writing fantasies* may be used as a pedagogic tool. *Writing fantasies* have been traced in the students' spoken discourse and as a logic of composition in their written discourse, which may be used as a baseline to explore fixations on and prohibitions of elements in students' writing practice. The use of writing fantasy as a baseline allowed me to explore the extent to which Otherness was produced in my participants' writing during the experiment course. It helped me to understand the complexity of the relation between idealized/prohibited elements and writer subjectivities, and the difficulties of shifting this relation.

Conceptually, the analysis has produced an understanding of *writing fantasies* as a way of thinking about pedagogies of Creative Writing. The concept of *writing fantasies* enables a distinctive understanding of writer subjectivities, providing a conceptual platform for exploring students' practices of writing. The writing fantasy constitutes both a limit and a resource in students' writing. In all cases, it might be suggested, some form of writing fantasy is required to support an initial production of a practice of writing. In some cases, the fantasmatic element of the writing fantasy is followed *and* re-modified in the way that the demands of the exercises are interpreted by the students. In other cases, the rigid identification with elements of the fantasy hinders the wandering of desire, thus also hindering any experimentation with one's usual style of writing, as articulated through one's usual logic of composition.

The concept of *writing fantasies* also helps to reorient the objective of teaching Creative Writing as it considers the students' texts as instances of a potentially shifting logic of composition, without judging them aesthetically. The use of *writing fantasies* points to particular writing techniques (e.g. description in whatever fantasmatic way it is perceived uniquely by the student) privileged

unconsciously and sometimes consciously by the students in their writing practice. This exploration of the students' texts is not the same as for instance suggesting ideals to be followed (e.g. "show, don't tell" Griffiths 2014); instead the focus is on what cannot be articulated, and its potential acknowledgement and/or naming may trigger the opening up of blocked writing pathways.

In the next sections, I discuss the argument of this thesis in relation to Creative Writing Studies and Psychosocial Studies, my teaching, limitations and finally the *Otherness* of *this* writing that might have been explored through this thesis.

9.2 Writing Fantasies *as a new way of teaching Creative Writing*

In my argument about the Creative Writing Studies literature, I pointed to three ways in which Creative Writing learning has been defined: in relation to Literature, to a shift of self/practice and to research.

I suggested that in teaching Creative Writing alongside Literature, in all of its conceptions, learning is constituted through discussion of *and/or* writing and re-writing to exemplary features of "canonical" texts. My analysis of *writing fantasies* points to a new method of learning Creative Writing, not based on canonical criteria, suggesting students' texts as sources for their learning.

The second strand of literature in Creative Writing Studies posits a shift of self and/or practice, suggesting its effect as either political or therapeutic. In the political conception of Creative Writing learning, the use of various theoretical texts, both as inspiration for the students' writing and the pedagogy employed, has been considered a way of enabling a shift in the students' writer subjectivity on a disciplinary and inter-disciplinary level (e.g. combining the study of Creative Writing with other arts, sciences or the digital technologies). This shift had been traced on a macro-level in students' subjectivity, in terms of shift in genre of writing or way of talking about their writing, without any specific research with empirical data. The analysis of this research project contributes to an analysis of the potential shifts in students' writer subjectivities on a micro-level in their texts, through the use of *master signifiers* of writing fantasy and their link to a logic of composition.

In therapeutic conceptions of learning Creative Writing, the shift in self is traced in relation to the content of students' texts and its connection with students' biographical elements. The concept of *writing fantasies* developed in this thesis has proposed a hermeneutics for conceptualizing the shifts in the students' texts looking at the psychical level but not in terms of students' biographies.

In reviewing empirical research on Creative Writing pedagogy practices, I distinguished three approaches: the conception of the practice of Creative Writing as methodology in itself; approaches that map trends in the practices of Creative Writing; and finally, qualitative research conducted about writers' experiences of their practice. My research constitutes a novel empirical addition to the current research on Creative Writing pedagogies, both because of its explicit focus on the use of writing exercises as pedagogy Creative Writing pedagogy and because of its specific action of interpretation (Lapping 2013a) of students' texts. As far as I am aware, students' texts have not been directly researched in this field from an educational and psychosocial perspective (apart from Yan's (2011) PhD thesis in the field of linguistics researching bilingual Creative Writing students).

9.3 Investigating Fantasies and their Shifts

In the Psychosocial Studies literature, I identified three ways in which psychoanalytic theory has been used in social research: a) as a tool of analysis questioning the ideology of hermeneutics in psychosocial studies; b) a manner of expanding our understanding of the relationship between the researcher and the researched; and c) as both an object and subject of research.

My thesis has been inherently interested in the methodological effects of the use of psychoanalytic approaches in the research process. Authors questioning the ideology of hermeneutics, I argued, have attempted to use psychoanalysis for interpretation of psychosocial data in a manner that does not psychopathologize subjects and does not produce fixity of a singular narrative of interpretation relevant to the subject matter researched. They are interested in the ideology of hermeneutics linking it with the uniqueness of the Lacanian method in clinical analysis. The Lacanian method, they (e.g. Frosh 2010, Parker and Pavón-Cuèllar

2014) have argued, is always about deferring meaning, and thus allowing for the ambiguity of occupying multiple positions in interpretations at the same time. This strand has opened up a space for questioning the authority of the discourse of interpretation of a social scientist. It has brought on, in a sense, the development of a reflexivity that is oriented around the idea that there is no meta-language; that we are in the picture in which are we interpreting, and thus we are always already situated.

My contribution to this field is an expansion of the use of Lacanian discourse analysis using both the spoken discourse of research participants (their interviews) and an objectification of their practice (in this case their texts – written discourse). However, my contribution does not stand only in the domain of data analysis as the data analyzed was generated in a specific way, which is *border-linked* (Ettinger 2006) with the second strand in the Psychosocial Studies literature.

In the second strand, then, the work of Hollway and Jefferson (2000), Clarke (2002) and Wengraf (2001), for instance, has been inspirational for my research in pointing to ways in which psychoanalytic methods might help expand current methods of the research interview. They have developed a focus on how the relation between the researcher and the researched might be used to provide information about the psychosocial context of the data generated and interpreted.

I have attempted to follow a different but border-linked (inspired by Ettinger's (2006) ideas of relations without relating) approach to the above two strands in the current literature in psychosocial studies, also influenced by Lapping's stance in considering the transformation of explicitly psychoanalytically derived concepts (2011) in the process of both data generation and analysis. Furthermore, Lapping's (2013a,b) approach is a simultaneous exploration and punctuation of the assumptions of such an investigation of encounters between the subject and the Other (encounters that might be considered *troubling*) in the research process and the tracing of collective fantasies of disciplinary knowledge. This approach has been key in my attempt to use some concepts from the position of the Lacanian psychoanalyst, and its specific focus on language (involved in the transaction between analyst and analysand) to inform the researcher stance in data generation and analysis. Thus, I have been able to create a research setting specifically designed

to explore and intervene in fantasies of subjectivities in the Psychosocial Studies field.

Therefore, in a broader context, this thesis has explored a way to investigate fantasies of subjectivities and their disruption (or interference with) using the whole enigmatic research project and setting – as an intervention inherent in the investigation. More concretely, perhaps, the design of the research with pre and post interviews and an intervention, aimed at disrupting or shifting fantasmatic attachments, constitutes an approach to exploring fantasy that has not, as far as I am aware, been used in other psychosocial projects.

9.4 Re-turn *to my teaching in Thessaloniki*

This thesis emerged out of my curiosity about the effects of the use of enigmatic Creative Writing exercises in the class of Creative Writing. As I explained earlier, it has developed in the course of this research project. My interest may be re-formulated as an interest in whether the engagement with an enigmatic setting overall with the combination of the exercises *and* my Lacanian researcher stance may affect one's writer subjectivity.

The analysis developed in this thesis has indicated different ways in which one's writer subjectivity might be momentarily shifted in the context of the constructed enigmatic setting of an experiment course and interviews. As I have suggested in detail, for some participants the ambiguity of the whole setting produced a space where they seemed to expand their writing fantasy (participant A); for some this space led them to articulate their prohibited desire, in a way that seemed in some way troubling to them (M, E); for others the enigmatic setting was perceived as threatening and thus no explicit shift was noted in the students' writing (G); and finally a constant experimentation with style was one of the effects of this setting (Q). What is notable through the potential interpretations of this data is that even though this enigmatic setting was constructed specifically with aim of *effecting* or allowing a shift in students' writer subjectivities, this shift or loosening of writing fantasy was still difficult. When a shift did happen it sometimes involved quite a dramatic shift in logic of composition, e.g. in the case of M or E. However, as noted,

this shift could be experienced as a troubling, and can only be traced momentarily within the research data. Longer-term effects on participants' writer subjectivities can only be a subject of speculation.

In my discussion of participant A's particular re-modification of fantasy I proposed some speculations about her playing with her *fantasmatic objet a* in relation to the concept of 'potential space' (Kuhn 2014, p.4). From a Lacanian perspective, this space (potentially opened up by the setting and the exercise) might be understood as a state of being able to remain in the borders between the *Imaginary* and *Symbolic* registers in the process of creation, thus allowing expansion or experimentation of one's fantasy of practice in a non-troubling manner. I suggested that A's text of multiple narrators (her final produced text), might be an instance of a subject not feeling troubled by an encounter with the non-*I* (Other). I suggested that this might relate to Ettinger's conceptualization of encountering the *metramorphic link a* (the fantasmatic objet *a* before one becomes subject). This invocation of this object through the enigmatic setting might have affected the production of a piece of writing that constructed *several*, multiple gazes in the narration of its story. Further research is required to explore such moments of creation.

It is interesting to compare the overall difficulty which participants in this project appeared to experience in relation to shifts in their fantasies with the experience of the students I taught in Thessaloniki. One of the reasons why the research participants of this project may have had more rigid fantasmatic identifications, and thus a more fixed writing style, might relate to the very fact that they are students of Creative Writing and thus have specific strong investments in a writer identity. In contrast, my students in Thessaloniki did not name themselves as Creative Writing students and in fact, the Greek title of the course, "Creative Writing" (both directly translated and with its additional name in Greece "A Writer's Art"), is not so well-known or so widely understood in Greece as signifying the teaching of writing. I assumed in my first classes that those students initially thought that part of what they would learn was literary theory. Of course, my sense of the shift in the writer identities of my students in Thessaloniki is not grounded in a detailed analysis. I do not have the data to specifically identify and trace more

dramatic shifts of *writing fantasies* in those students' texts. The possible difference between the two groups, however, indicates that the relation of the context to the shift or interference with *writing fantasies* may be significant.

More broadly, as I was conducting this research I also had the opportunity to teach at university level a course on a module in reflective practice for students on the Bachelors of Education at the Institute of Education, in London. My exploration of pedagogy in the thesis and the ironic coincidence of this course focusing on reflection theory afforded me the opportunity to consider the different ways in which the use of an ambiguous pedagogy might facilitate or not shifts or expansions or *troublings* of student writer subjectivities in other academic subjects.

In teaching more traditional academic subjects the concept of writing fantasy is still pertinent but the way it might be explored would be different from the Creative Writing context. In teaching for the Bachelors in Education, it became obvious to me that students studying for this degree required lesser levels of ambiguity than the Creative Writing students in relation to their writer subjectivity. They needed guidance with regards the course's requirements, for example what categories to include in their (writing of a) presentation of a small enquiry they did in their educational setting (e.g. area of enquiry, methods of enquiry, key finding and relation to theory and link to reflection theory about how one's educational practice has developed through this enquiry and thinking about reflexivity).

On the other hand, students seemed to also benefit from a small degree of ambiguity in terms of loosening their inherent assumptions about what they could and could not explore in their practice. For instance, I would not specifically direct students who had a particular anxiety about presenting or finding a topic for their enquiry to an area of enquiry *I* thought was suitable. My approach was to ask them questions helping them think about their assumptions further, but only to a certain degree, as their expectation seemed to be that I would tell them what was "allowed" and what was not.

In Creative Writing pedagogy through the use of implicit canonical criteria an invisible writing pedagogy of what works and does not in the writing of a text is in operation. This type of pedagogy assumes an implicit canon to which the creative writer responds. However, because Creative Writing is associated with "discovery"

as an art, a pedagogy that does not *privilege* styles in anyway might be considered more conducive to allowing *new* material to emerge and be created.

Reflecting upon my teaching experience of this module in relation to the interpretations of the data of this thesis, it is possible to expect that *writing fantasies* will play out very differently in other academic contexts. Yet, their consideration may be useful pedagogically in a wider sense.

9.5 Limitations

I have identified five limitations of this research project relating to the data produced, my researcher stance, my interpretations, the specific focus of Lacanian theory on language and the use of logic of composition as a specific ideology of literary criticism.

First, one limitation of this research project is the focus of the data collection within the setting of the experiment course investigating specifically the six Creative Writing exercises. This focus meant that I was not able to trace whether some of the issues that appeared in the data were related to the course studies and the social setting. A more ethnographic approach, incorporating observation and/or documents from the students' degree courses, would have enabled me to trace some of my speculative interpretations through related data.

Second, as I explained in the methodology chapter, this has been an exploration of an attempt to transfer some Lacanian principles for an analyst's interaction with an analysand in the clinic to the research interview and the class facilitation. As I am not a trained psychoanalyst, I have not been able to monitor my discourse, as much as a Lacanian psychoanalyst, might. So, there are circumstances where I "faltered," and interpreted with some of my questions. I have pointed out that a constant negotiation of the educational versus the clinical context had to be reflected as the research was conducted. Nonetheless, I have wondered whether the data would have been different, if I had received a Lacanian psychoanalytic training. Thus, I have also wondered whether my negotiation of infusing my researcher stance with Lacanian theoretical elements from a psychoanalyst's stance may have constrained the data and the analysis in any way.

Third, even though I have tried to be reflexive about my subjective interpretations there is no way to absolutely remove all *imaginary* elements which may have contributed to parts of my interpretations of the participants' data.

Fourthly, in using a Lacanian stance, an obvious criticism from a social or more ethnographic perspective would be whether there was too much focus on language and linguistic signifiers. It is possible in some instances I may have over-read and over-interpreted some features in the data with this focus on language.

Fifthly, the techniques I have named as logics of composition might be thought of as formalist, e.g. in the case of 'showing not telling' or continuous image description in the case of Participant G. Nonetheless, I think what has been innovative in this approach is that these techniques are not privileged in any way, but instead their use is foregrounded in relation to the assumptions of Creative Writing practice by each student. We cannot deny the *address* of a Creative Writing text to the Other as literary discourse, since this is the language/terminology that is used to partially describe the practice of writers. However, we can identify with its "reading symptom."

Overall, I think that the contributions of this research project, and the reflexivity I have developed, including my punctuation of my discourse at times with Ettinger's theory of supplementary logic of relations, have outweighed its potential limitations, since this has been a very new endeavor in both the field of Creative Writing studies and Psychosocial Studies.

9.6. At Last, Am I an Other?

The goal of this thesis has been to contribute to a psychosocial knowledge of the function of these six Creative Writing exercises, and of this ambiguous pedagogical Creative Writing setting, but also to provide a conceptual tool that can be used to begin to fathom the operations that make writing possible and the teaching of *ethical* Creative Writing impossible in some cases. I have called this knowledge 'psychosocial' as it has not been directly engaged with the biographic psychic material in relation to the students' writing.

The structure of fantasy in a writer's spoken and written discourse has been the key innovation of this thesis, not merely in the field of Creative Writing Studies but also more broadly in the field of education and subjectivities.

As suggested in the beginning of this chapter, the position of the Lacanian interviewer and facilitator of class might also be integrated in a Creative Writing teaching context, as a way of exploring the writer-students' writer subjectivities, helping them explore their "learning obstacles" or their Creative Writing fixations. This research has attempted to continue the conversation with Hecq's (2013) proposition of an *ethical* pedagogy through a pedagogy of 'active consciousness' – reflecting on the teacher's *master signifiers* in their teaching of writing practice in proposing an attempt to consider students' *master signifiers* of their writer subjectivity. The thesis also attempts to continue the conversation with Bracher's (2006) suggestion of a *radical pedagogy [italics for his term]* that constructs ways of teaching infused by Lacanian theory that do not suppress students' desires.

This research has posed serious ethical questions about the teaching of Creative Writing (and of art), and about the conducting of research. The ethical questions about the teaching of Creative Writing have to do with the kind of transaction that takes place between a pedagogy and a writer-student's writing fantasy, either enhancing it or exploring and/or it *troubling* it. This conception of an ethical transaction has wider implications on art that is taught and produced depending on the level of awareness or reflexivity of the pedagogue-writer's desire to write. The imposition of the writer-teacher's desire is a significant element in the teaching of Creative Writing, which must be taken into account in allowing the students to learn Creative Writing that is not limited to the writer-teacher's writing fantasy.

Through its ellipses, what I conceptualize as lacks and precarious interpretations but also playful combinations, this thesis might claim to have been constructed on an ethical platform as it has been constantly concerned with not falling into a claim to know, and rigorously punctuating my/its discourse at times with hesitation, at times with Ettinger's theory and at times with my own poetic playfulness, allowing for ambiguity instead of fixedness – as much as that is possible in a PhD thesis. I hope to have negotiated this paradox well.

The aim of the thesis, reformulated in relation to this chapter, has been to indicate how my particular conception of subjectivity in writing, using a Lacanian infused framework, produces a different, yet linked with the "others," psychosocial method of research, exploring a *severality* (Ettinger 2006) of enacted knowledge, of what is *learnt* through writing, *touching* the Psychosocial and the Creative Writing fields simultaneously.

This thesis, being "unconsciously" (and partially consciously now) a product of my own narcissistic desire, has a conclusion about itself too. It has been impossible to write me into the intersection of a contribution to Creative Writing studies and Psychosocial Studies, without constantly engaging with confusing "my" object *a*, redirecting "my" *jouissance,* identifying with my writing symptom of complicating things and producing grandiose projects of *Imaginary* genius, thus traversing the fantasy that I need to become Other than myself. Though an exploration of fantasies does point to the rigid structures that our *knowledges* are scaffolded upon, their very illusion of scaffolding tells us that any *metaphor* is possible, if we desire it purely.

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Appendices

APPENDIX I: Information for Recruiting Participants

<u>E-mail Sent to Students:</u>
Dear All,

I am a poet and a doctoral researcher at the Institute of Education. Having been a Creative Writing student and teacher I have become increasingly interested in the use and function of Creative Writing exercises-games.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project exploring Creative Writing exercises.

Purpose: The main purpose of this research is to look at the way students can explore their relation to writing through these exercises.

Time and Location: I will be running a 'Creative Writing exercise writing class' for six consecutive weeks at Royal Holloway this summer term 2012 (probably beginning the second or third week of term). Each class will run for one and a half hour. We will fix the standard day and time of the class according to the convenience of the students.

What will happen in the class: If you participate in this class you will be presented with a different Creative Writing exercise or game every time and will be asked to write. After writing, there will be time for you to share what you wrote, if you wish, in class.

What you can get out of this class: engaging in these exercises can be helpful in developing your practice of writing from an experimental and playful angle and might provide you with ideas about your relation to writing and language.

What my data for my research will be: After each class I will make photocopies of the texts produced to use in my analysis. You will be able to keep the original, of course. In addition, I will be interviewing all of the students who agree to participate before the course begins, in the first week of term, in order to get to know you better.   After the course is completed, a final interview will take place with all participants as well. The initial interview will take approximately 30 minutes, the follow up interviews will last a maximum of 1 hour. I will ask you to submit a copy of a piece of your Creative Writing that you like at the first interview and another (produced after the course begins) at the second interview. The texts you write will not be assessed for any credit. All interviews will be tape-recorded.

Both texts and interview transcripts will be used as data for my research and I will be happy to provide the analysis to the participants who wish to read it.

Up to 8 students will be admitted to the course.

I will not discuss your participation in the course with any of your course tutors and your identity will be anonymised in any publication arising from the research. You have the right to quit the class at any time.

If you think that you might be interested in participating please email me at:
angelzoelin@gmail.com

I look forward to hearing from you and please do not hesitate to contact me for any clarifications or with questions.

My best wishes,

Zoe

Consent Form

Project title: An investigation of the function of Creative Writing exercises-games in Creative Writing pedagogy
Doctoral Researcher: Zoe Charalambous
Institution: Institute of Education, University of London, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H OAL
Contact details: e-mail, zcharalambous@ioe.ac.uk
Doctoral supervisor: Dr. Claudia Lapping contact: C.Lapping@ioe.ac.uk

Project overview
This study is concerned with investigating the function of specific Creative Writing exercises-games. It will explore how one's relation to language is explored through the engagement with these specific Creative Writing exercises-games. In particular, the researcher is interested in providing information with regards the learning that might take place through the writing to these specific Creative Writing exercises-games in class and how this learning may or may not affect one's relation to language and writing.

In order to investigate this exploration of one's relation to language through writing to these specific Creative Writing exercises-games, participants will be asked to take part in two interviews, and a six-week experiment course. The first interview will take place one week before the course begins. The participants will be asked to bring with them and submit a copy of one their favourite pieces of their writing. In the final interview, the participants will be asked to bring with them and submit a copy of a favourite piece of their writing produced after the course began.

The main aim of the study is to explore if and how one's relation to language and writing is explored through the practice of writing to specific Creative Writing exercises-games in class, in order to contribute to knowledge about the practice of writing in class in Creative Writing pedagogy, an area which has been left largely unexplored from an educational perspective in previous studies.

Informed Consent
Gaining 'informed consent' is a complex process that is necessarily ongoing, as our understanding of the project will develop over the course of the research. This form gives a brief overview of the project and of what participation in the project will entail. *You should read this form carefully and if you are happy to continue in the project, you should complete and sign the section at the end of the form, giving your consent.*

The researchers

The Principal Investigator on the project is Zoe Charalambous. She is a poet, translator and doctoral researcher at the Institute of Education with background in English Literature and Creative Writing (B.A Warwick) and Classics (Ancient Greek Philosophy, M.A UCL). Zoe's particular interests are in Creative Writing pedagogy, poetry, psychosocial methodologies and theories of subjectivity. She will carry out all of the interviews, run this course and take the final responsibility for the development of the project and the analysis of the data.

Participation

Participation in this study will involve your consent to the following:

1. *In depth interviews.* The interviews will be unstructured and will involve reflection on your relation to Creative Writing, writing and language in general.

2. *Six consecutive week course.* The course will run for six consecutive weeks and your participation to every session is required. At each session you will be presented with a Creative Writing exercise-game and will be asked to write to it for 15 to 20 minutes. After that, you will have the opportunity to share and discuss what you have written, if you wish.

3. *Time commitment.* Participation in two interviews, one in the first week of term and one after the completion of the course. The first Interviews will last no longer approximately for 30 minutes. The second and final follow-up interview will last approximately an hour. In addition, participation to a one and half hour class for six consecutive weeks is required.

4. *Recording of interviews*. With your permission the interviews will be audio recorded. You may request to review the interview transcripts if you so wish.

5. *Recording of sessions/classes*. With your permission the classes will be recorded. You may request to review the class transcripts if you so wish.

6. *Submission of selected texts*. You will be asked to bring to the first interview a piece of your Creative Writing which you like very much and a piece of your Creative Writing (**written after this research course begins**) to the second and final interview. Also, a photocopy of what you have written at every class will be acquired at the end of the class, promptly returning the original copy to you within an hour after the end of the class.

Confidentiality

In any reports resulting from the research, pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. You will have the right to read the analysis produced through the data collected from your writing and interview transcripts.

It is hoped that participation in this study will afford you the opportunity to explore your practice of writing in ways that your day-to-day work may not allow. If you agree to participate, please complete the form below. Please feel free to contact me if you would like any further information about the study.

Thank you
Zoe Charalambous

CONSENT

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Your written consent is required to confirm that your participation is voluntary and that you are aware that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

I consent to the following:

1. Participation in two interviews, one at the start and one at end of the course.
2. Participation to the six consecutive week experiment course.
3. Recording, transcription and analysis of the interviews, classes and texts submitted by the researcher
4. Submission of two of your own pieces of Creative Writing to the researcher
5. Submission of a copy of your texts produced during the class to the researcher

NAME: …………………………………………………………………………………

INSTITUTION: …………………………………………………………………………

COURSE: ………………………………………………………………………..

DEPARTMENT:…………………………………………………………………..

SIGNATURE:……………………………………………………………………..

DATE: ……………………………………………………………………………….

APPENDIX III: <u>*Research Participants' Texts*</u>

Examples from usual and unusual logic of composition in texts

<u>Participant A</u>
a) Free-Write Exercise 1(usual logic)

Free write…
Write free…
Write about sleep. Write about feeling sleepy. Write about
Staying up half the night researching sleep.
Write about why I still walk on my tiptoes.
Write about Ibsen.
"When we dead awaken. We realize we have not
lived."
Write about paraphrasing.

Head hitting the pillow does not feel as
Comfortable as pen touching paper. Write about
That. Write about anything.
Trying to drift and having to sit
Up
Every two minutes to scribble again.
Write about when
This needs to stop.
(And whether it will…)
My eyes don't feel heavy like they used
To.
I don't feel that familiar strain on the
 retinas. Don't feel tired these days.
I scratch at the mattress, and I ..(crossed out :make) mark
out words. My skin stains the shapes of the
pillow. The dents they make on my face.
I'm told I've lost some 'elasticity' but
That's normal at my age…it's a coming change
And if the face is a map then mine's
Complete with tea stains. and holes from pins
that document half baked plans.
Still not asleep.
You read of vocal tics…
Klazo-I think, in Greek?-which means 'to scream'
How did I get here?
Nearing 3 am. And 'Klazomania' fills my brain.
Do people live with such things?
I wonder why waking at night feels so
different to waking in the morning.
Why a lack of pale light can make things
sinister. Why it feels like a secret…
So I write.
When sleep's not there, I write.

A blind scrawl on the page. Before I flick the
light.
"Goodnight."

b) Submitted Text After the Course (unusual logic)

Maybe we'll all die
Hopeless, worthless
In New York,
With the cops lining
All the way up 5th avenue.
I bet a crook like you
Could shut a whole street down
On a day like today
And I'll lead the parade..

And maybe we'll all die
With smoke filled throats,
Straw hair and scabby knees.
Maybe no one will marry us anyway…

Perhaps a dry smile
Will lick your lips
As we bob under
The scum of the river
In Cambridge
As the tourists watch from the bridge.

Maybe all of the wasp stings
And nicknames
Will amount to nothing.
And all that's left is to mix
My dust with his.
Maybe all of the rum
That I'm saving will go to waster.

And sure we could all be
Underground and edgy
And wear black and never smile
But isn't it better
To stand naked and proud
And say, "I feel great"
At the front of the crowd
And get your money's worth
When I hit the dirt

Maybe, on a day like today,
After the sun burn's gone down
And the make-up's smudged off
And our hair's finally cooled,

We'll lay on our backs
In the garden say
"I vow to never die old"

<u>Participant M</u>
a) Free- Write Exercise 1(usual logic)

2 characters- debate over marriage-
Similar and ~~Mrs~~ Lady Kuma: [writing above the text]

They were sitting up against the window when she entered the room. She could see them mumbling, giving each other sharp looks when they heard their daughter's flat footsteps make their way across the [[[candy-floss coloured carpet. Something in their sudden silentness gave them away. Her mother was never quite- ~~It was~~ She was far from it in fact. Simila could hear her mother talking on the phone even from the other side of the house to the drawing room they were now in.

      Simila clenched her sweaty palms as she reached ~~th~~ her parent's seating (overlooking) area. Her father looked nervous, quickly glanced at her then [[[shifted his eyes away. He rarely told her off, and this time was no different.

        'Take a seat my dear, you're mother, and I wish to have a short word with you."

        She flung herself into the nearest seat.

    "Simila-Simila-oh darling! Don't look at me in that way!"

      " In what way exactly?"

      " Oh that grumpy expression has aged your face. Do sharpen up. Your eighteen now young lady."

      Simila stared down at the Persian rug underneath her feet trying to avoid her mother's gaze.

      "It is time."

        "I know mother."

          "Then why do you continue to act like a child? I don't know how many times I have told you to change those clothes. You have so many nice clothes in your wardrobe upstairs!"

      " I like these. They're comfortable enough."

      "You must think of what people will think of you. A member of parliament's daughter running for government does not wear converses and baggy genes (j pressed over g)! I'm almost ashamed to call you my daughter.

      Her father was still quiet (was quie~~te).~~

b) List of 20 instructions Exercise 3 (unusual Logic)

~~Mrs~~ Violet did not share any of the ~~pyhss~~ p(h added)ycical signs of bruising associated with her name. Rather her face was often as red as a rose or a lobster to be more accurate. She did not spent too much time (added above in between: outside) in the sun or wear too much blusher. Quite the opposite ~~Mrs~~ Violet was a kept woman who spent summer months underneath a lacy-white parasol ~~on~~ overlooking her lawn, ~~reading~~ pretending to read the books from her library, which formed exactly one ~~bookcase in~~ corner in her lounge.

    It was another scorching day in July, when ~~Mrs~~ Violet felt for Jane Eyre on the table near her lounger. She was wearing her black tinted sunglasses so she found it rather tricky

to see the book through the darkened air. But what did it matter? She was unlikely to read more than a page when ~~sm~~ Frederick, the gardener was making such a racket ~~with~~ with driving around on ~~the~~ on the lawn mower.

Violet took a deep breath, ~~smelling~~ sensing the faint smell of her nearby rose~~s~~ trellace enter her nostrils. The pollen in the air made her head swoon. Then her body started to sweat beneath her clothes soaking the flowery fabric of the deck chair she called her lounger.

She got up and tried to attract Frederick's attention. She liked to imagine he was also her personal butler (added with asterisk: ready to wait on her when she pleased). What she would give right now for a glass of (added in between: cool) sparkling water. Standing, bear foot on the patio, she waved her arms frantically to attract his attention. (added over: Then rather abruptly) she did a little dance-salsa to be exact, but the young boy sitting on the mower, with his MP3 plugged in still didn't notice her. ~~The~~ When He ~~circled~~ circled the pond she drabbed her parasol and started twisting in in the air. (Added below on the page with arrow: motioning it from side to side, above her head and swinging it near the ground). ~~She~~ Violet was (added over ~~go~~: of course) about to make her ridiculous dance into a show piece.

Participant E
a) Write About this Exercise 2 (usual logic)

Write about a 2 pence coin. What am I going to write about it? I don't know perhaps

It's cursed
Shiny
Copper
Not worth a lot
The amount of a bet
A debt over which someone gets killed
It saves someone's life
2007

Silvio's vocation was to be a lone shark. It was in his blood, his very being. Not as one might imagine because of his name or his heritage. Silvio might sound like an Italian name but he was christened that by Miles and Margaret after their favourite character in the Sopranos. Silvio had not a fluid ounce of Italian blood, just eight pints of middle class English AB+.
His first loan was to Johny in the playground of the primary school where they were both in their first year. Johny had asked Silvio for 10p to make the different between the pocket money he had on him and the price of the strawberry split ice-lolly he wished to buy from the ice-cream man outside the school-gate.
"I want it back next week" insisted Silvio then had a brainwave "along with an extra 2p."
Johny was about to start his life's first financial negotiation when he noticed the queue in front of the van was almost gone. He realized his negotiation position was weak and the purchasing opportunity was passing him by (although perhaps Johny did not express those thoughts in exactly those words). "Yeah, alright but hurry up before the van goes"
To Silvio that constituted a verbal contract (again maybe his phraseology was a little more primitive and he handed the 10p to Johny).
The following Monday, Silvio made sure he was the first out in the playground and made sure he positioned himself on the path next to the toilets, and waited.
Johny came down the path with two friends. Silvio squared up the path and said "Johny you got my money?"

"Oh yea, I have." He fumbled in his pockets and came up with a ten pence piece (along with a used paper tissue to which was stuck a green, almost wrapped, Fruitella) he handed it to Silvio.
Silvio stared at the ten pence piece in his open hand and then looked at Johny. "What about the rest of it?"
Whaddya mean? I've paid you all of it."/
" You still owe me 2p Johny."
"What?"
"The deal was you'd pay me an extra 2p."

b) List of 20 instructions Exercise 3 (unusual logic)

His being drove into mine on the day of fools. He was drunk at the wheel when he crashed. The alcohol smelled of vinegar on his breath and turned into yellow urine in the womb. Slashing against my father's sperm and my mother's egg so the essence of Brian of Flann of Myles pass to me on a sofa on Belsize park, an Irishman having found a receptive soul (~~if~~ there is no such thing) but confusing nationalities.
Of course I could be wrong. I don't know for certain that I was conceived the day the great man pegged it. But maybe my conception was the cause of his death. The opportunity was there and the Catholic god that both he and my mother believed in but who does not exist, decided that it was time for the spirit to move on. And so came into being the creature that was to be named Space in later life.. Now dead Brian or Flann or Miles decided that he will never touch another drop and passed on his habit to Ruth who will not go to honour his spirit, although she will prefer Barley wine to enable her weaving journey from one off license to another to the dray clinic.
Goddamnit I tell her in later life Sort up your problem and embrace your sobriety. Take your responsibility lightly as if they came naturally.
And so the wasted creative genius of one life drifts on a whisky colours cloud to be absorbed into mother and son, there to waste one and be wasted by the other.

Participant G
a) Write about this Exercise 2 (usual logic)

I'm unsure of the exact process, or science, that is involved, or even if there is an ~~exact~~
specific process, or indeed an science at all, ~~do it~~ to the manufacturing of coins, or I suppose, if there was any in the past when this 2001 coin was made, but I Imagine it begin with some gigantic, war-like, screaming machine.
Men in boiler suits ~~there there eyes covered with goggles. Sattle~~ sattle (?) around the factory floor ~~like insects~~ like insects, their eyes magnified through goggles and their ~~weak~~ hands and feet, weak with work, covered with ~~rubber~~ thick protective clothing, ~~lest~~ in case they should ever came in to contact with the industry ~~they~~ around them. Information is shouted from one shadowy corner to the other, picked up by their trained ear through the hisses and the whines of the great machine, and then processed and completed until another shiny two-pence piece falls from the other end lightly chinking against the rest, no different ~~from~~ than it were dropped happily into the purse of a child before they ran of to exchange it for sweets.
As another coin is dropped, great clouds of soot and vapour rise from the chimneys, necessary products of the great machine, and the … scoutting men cough again into ~~their elbows~~ the inside of their elbows, before counting over another barrow of fuel ~~towards inot the two pence machine~~ to create another two-pence piece.

b) "Use the Mirror Given to You and Write What you See in its Reflection" Exercise 5 (Slightly different logic)

The underneath of a table

My first thought was that there was no gum. The tables weren't new, or at least, they didn't smell new or ~~do that~~ have that strange liquidy film on them, that, when you lean your hand or elbows down, makes them feel wet, without actually being wet, like they have just been cleaned and the shine tricks you into thinking it will be slippery; they didn't have that, or compass etchings of love notes, or hate notes or notes of boredom which students carved into them to relieve themselves of some deep desire for destruction, or because their emotions and lack of resources had finally got the better of them.

There was none of that. Nor, and I am ashamed to admit it, signs of the old game on the table edge, which involved taking a ruler ~~with~~ and your opponent doing the same, and carving-sawing the table to see who could collect the most table dust, to then blow it in the ~~enemies~~ enemy's face. There was none of that. It may be that they are university tables, destined for better things, more appropriate users, who will sit and learn their trade or passion, rather than take plart in the table carving or amateur lumberjack work secondary school students, who are forced to sit through maths and science, even though they have no idea how to make the blue crystals, or what hydrolysis is and can't see why working out the missing angle of the triangle is worth taking half an hour on, when the answer is in the back of the book and the man who wants to know already does know an dis far more qualified to find it out than I ever will or want to be.

But, I'm still surprised that there's no gum under there, in the corners or under the rim ~~I think people chew less gum and enjoy education ,,, enough~~ of this nice clean table.

Participant Q
a) Logics of Composition (as I have noted Q's particular style shifts in every submission of text he provided)

Series of Consecutive disconnects   Loads of instructions! Exercise 3

Here's a 1 for you to think about
to fight against the prospect of 2 when you 3 your way in
for 4.
Listen 5! That's right, 6, embrace your 7, be a bit of a 8. I'll tell you how, just like whine the 9, my friends call it 10.
The 11.
11's got your attention now-you're half way there to 13 and I'm, 9that's 14 to you) ready to 15
                    I've got insight, see…
Like an unwieldy 16, try and 17 yourself free, fell galvanized by 19 like quality, even the 19s are doing it
20 mate, 20.

Arriving like the Messiah, I could save the world. You want to see the results of my promises-touch m thoughts [inserted afterwards: see my words], American I'm not the Messiah. I grew up on a farm, jonesing for a chance to fix things and just like a journey made with

[[[[[[[[crossed out cant make out] a full tank. I tried harder, pushed the car. I can be your honey, the easy captain, the calm enforcer, America you could make fly if you elect the everyman. We will make it through the [inserted afterwards: paranoid] darkness into a liberal [[[[crossed out can't make out] dawn. I will rep your viva internationally! An hola there, a dyke over here, America I'll make you smile again, so come the 31st Make the everyman's future yours.

b) Write in a Voice Opposite to Your own Exercise 4 (Other example of logic)

Monday
One wakes up at the crack o' dawn. It's customary to lie away and wait to be waited on. This can take anywhere from a jiffy to a bloody long time, but no one hears me curse like that. Our retainer would take it upon herself to prepare our bath, prepare our gown for the day and most importantly brush our hair. The two hundred strokes. One hundred either side of a thorough wash and conditioning. I insist on only being waited on by female staff. Father believes that I spend too much time around – too much time to deemed appropriate for a lady in my station. I asked him what he meant by that and he did the most ungentlemanly thing by smacking me on my rump and laughing his hearty laugh.
One was not impressed.
Needless to say, Abby assured me that Father's uncharacteristic conduct was a compliment on a 'lady's favourable appearance' though what men would spend their time looking at a lady's bottom instead of her face I cannot tell you? Can it speak, how conversation at court? Nor can it sing, entertain guests and be educated? No, a bottom is good for nothing more than being sat on. I said all of this to Abby but she did not share my… our… thoughts.

Monday, again.
I… one returns from another fencing lesson led by Madame Renoux. She moves so swiftly and gracefully that sometimes I'm sure I cannot see her moves. She tells me (remembering to say our is so troublesome – no wait, why are you writing this down too? You're only supposed to write what I say that should be written –)
Madame Renoux moves so fast that sometimes one cannot see her moves. She tells… us that our progress with the foil is better than both Mother's and Father's at our age and that it is a shame that we were born a lady and condemned to use only foils at court and not on the battlefield. Court is enough of a battlefield for us. We approach the day of our majority, our inheritance with excitement and we stepped around Father's next attempt to smacking our rump and duly delivered a retaliatory one of our own.
One was impressed.

Thursday
Emissaries from the Southern Kingdoms arrived today. Dignitaries who wear their long moustaches and tousled hair as a sign of highborn status. One could have been forgiven laughing at such a sight but on the premise of diplomacy, one held a fan to our face and promptly allowed the dalliance of a soft chuckle into it, disguising it as a cough. The way they bend their knee to Mother and Father, considering the open rebellion of a few summers ago, is an insult to the men that died fighting to quell their insurrection. And now all the times that Father smacked my, blast, our rump have reared their objective. He means to marry me to one of the chieftain's sons! I am not ready for marriage, I do not want to become my Mother just yet. She is of the court, born and destined to run it. I have fire that should not be made to bow to a man I have never met. One threatens to run away, to cut off one's hair and be made to look like a boy if another proposal of marriage comes my way.

APPENDIX V: _Interview Examples_

Examples from beginning of Interview: Initial and Final

a) Example of beginning of initial interview

Z1: So we are beginning … um … as I said the purpose of the interview is to get to know you a bit more… um with regards writing aah. It's the second of May today 2012 … I am here with M (anonymized) and I do not know who I am addressing but anyway … um I just wanted to find out more about how you feel about writing

M1: Okay … is that an open question … [giggle] okay um feel about writing

Z2: or view writing

M2: view writing … um creative …?

Z3: or create writing

M3: okay … um I view it as a um big expression of self in a way but also … as something that you could do to grow your imagination... explore um different aspects of your personality and different aspects that interest you and society... um particularly with fiction like it could have more of a political meaning or something you wish to achieve with people … like … persuade them that your opinion is right or that this is an issue in the current climate or yeap things like that really... I view writing in different ways I suppose it depends on the form of the writing but journalists I suppose that is more...can be more persuasive but then I think creative writers are just as persuasive … um [pause 9sec] cause I read a variety of different things, different genres … fantasy when I was younger I loved fantasy (giggles) … um (2:05)

Z4: do you not love fantasy anymore?

M4: I think I do but I don't read like adult fantasy and sort of sci-fi and stuff like, I am never really into that....but um

Z5: why not?

M5: [giggle] … I just find it a bit … dry and not … not as imaginative and like … interesting as children's [Giggle] fan [giggle]tasy I know it sounds weird but …

b) Example of beginning from final interview (numbers of replies continue from first interview)

Z29: okay thank you for coming E (*anonymized)* today ... (E says: a pleasure) um in this interview I'd just like you to tell me about your experience um of participating in this project ...

E29: um okay ... um I I enjoyed doing it ... um I think I ... enjoyed doing all the exercises... I think some of them probably gonna turn into something whilst others aren't ... ... um ... don't know that's about it really (laughs a bit)

Z30: mmm you enjoyed doing ... what exactly?

E30: well I enjoyed doing [Z speaking over him: what aspect of it] I enjoyed doing the exercises because I I usually quite a lot of my ideas have originated from Creative Writing exercises and I was hoping to get quite a few out of this that out of this course ... um this experiment

Z31: hmmm

E31; ah so ... I enjoyed I guess I enjoyed the fact that I had to think of something to write with with varying degrees of guidance from the exercise that was set ... um I think the one that I enjoyed doing the most was the big list of questions ... one that turned into something it's probably ... probably turn it something a bit more unusual for me had to do um and I am thinking about turning it into some sort of poem which is also unusual for me cause I don't write a n awful lot of poetry ... um yea... I enjoyed the discussions we had afterwards I think there were some interesting things that came out to the exercises and it was interesting to see what other people have done and in what ways they were similar to what I had done and in what ways they were different....

Z32: hmmm

E32: and then I knew all the people that wrote so that was that was ...

Z33: can you tell me more about the varying degrees of guidance that you just ...

E33: well they they

Z34: about the the exercises?

E34: they ranged from write something to a wide extreme to the long 20 or so questions the other extreme m um and they just kicked in different types of I guess kicked in different types of writing and different types of ideas so I enjoyed doing that ... um I think I reverted... well didn't revert cause didn't write in that style very often anyway ... but when I had no guidance I simply wrote something from memory ... whereas when I had some guidance then I might think of I think

quite a lot of my writing usually ends up on the basis of a theme or an object or something that that then gets turned into a situation that tends to be my more … my more humorous writing um because you have to think of an object an the way I usually think about an idea is to think about what fun you can have with this I think that the coin one came out like that most … um the mirror one was fun to do although I think it's not anything that I'm gonna do anything with … um and probably would have written anyway …

APPENDIX VII: <u>Researcher Diary Examples</u>

a) Excerpt from my notes after interview with Participant M (this was the first interview of the whole project)

She almost run away after the interview – I told her 'everything went fine- that she didn't have to worry – she said sorry she spoke so low – I said it was fine – I repeated everything was fine – thanked her again – I then explained to her that I cannot say yes or no, approve or disapprove what she says, I am not here to be judgmental. Maybe I should not have said that at the end of the interview. She appeared really anxious though. I wondered at parts of the interview whether my stance made her think I was no longer identifying with her – and that made her feel unsafe –
I do recall telling her to take her coat off – if she likes – to feel more comfortable –
She did seem locked in her position when talking – enclosed – contained – worried about what people might think of her – At points I felt worried that I might be pushing her to say personal things that she might not want to share – I felt a bit guilty about not connecting with her and telling her more about myself – As If I was taking advantage of her – fragility comes to my mind – she made me want to protect her – to make sure she was contained – her "squeaky" giggles kind of made me feel that she did feel uncomfortable with talking about her writing.

b) Excerpt from my notes during class when Q left the class to go to the toilet

12:43- Q goes to the toilet he says (so he feels so capable he can take a break?? But maybe he really needed to….)
[… notes about other students]
Q still expected to return 16:42, it has been 3 minutes… An interesting resistance this time…
[notes about other students]
18:20 Q has not returned yet
how does diligent student meet the genius writer, if at all?
19:50 Q has returned and comes back in the class through the other door
[The classroom has two doors one on the right side and one on the left side of the room.]

Thank you for Reading