



Research Pipeline? How About Research Forest?

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When I first got involved with this journal back in 2017, I was a reviewer for the articles submitted to our theory, culture, and craft section. My involvement in creative writing up until then had been in the original crafting of my own creative writing, mostly creative nonfiction and poetry. But I'd always been drawn to theory, and one of the more enlightening classes in graduate school had been a course on continental theory. Despite being far outside my comfort zone of evening workshops, I found myself devouring the material in that class, then sliding theory into my work, revising it with an eye for not just telling a true story, but making meaning of that story. So when I started reviewing theory articles for this journal, I was intrigued and impressed by even more opportunities presented by the scholarship of creative writing studies (CWS) and how CWS dovetails with original creative writing.

Then, when I took over as a senior editor in 2020 and moved up to editor-in-chief by 2021, I had one more shift in perspective when it comes to all the ways we can add value to the study of creative writing, and that's by raising awareness of how one publication feeds into other publications, promotions, or opportunities. I've heard this called "the research pipeline," an industrial term that I suspect was coined by STEM enthusiasts. Working my way through the tenure track some years ago, my internal documents for promotion always had to have a clear explanation of "the pipeline" – what was coming up, what was right here in front of us, and what had left the pipe, so to speak, and been published.

Since I'm a nature writer in one of my professional personas, I prefer to re-frame that "research pipeline" as a "research forest." Hear me out. A pipeline is one-way. It tends to travel over (or under) territory that it just needs to traverse, as if the landscape of the world is in its way. It speaks to speed, efficiency, redundancy. It is long, but narrow. It can break.

A "research forest" is a better way to describe what's going on in the scholarship of creative writing studies – our ideas spread every which way, not so different from the famed fungal network. We tap into tree roots when we have a big idea, so that maybe our big idea eventually gets attention

and support, like the sun-drenched canopy branches of the tallest trees. Our insights spread wide instead of staying funneled. The diversity of a research forest, like that of a healthy actual forest, is astounding – no farmed rows of identical horticulture for us. If a tree breaks, it's not broken, it's just re-shaped and repurposed. And we might think of our stewardship of this forest not as a linear set of accomplishments, but as one of knowing where the seeds are, knowing what's sprouting, knowing what needs more resources, and knowing what is established, thriving, and pouring extra nutrients back into the soil to help the new stuff. Thinking of creative writing studies that way – instead of as a pipeline – is, I think, not just refreshing, but essential.

To that end, take a walk with me through just a tiny corner of our creative writing research forest by not only reading this issue, but checking out the rest of this editor's note, which is some contributor updates from volumes 4, 5, 6, and 7. What's been published since your JCWS appearance? What careers have developed? What graduate programs have been started or completed? What fertile and adventurous routes have your ideas taken, many of which had their origins in an article for JCWS?

Julia J. C. Blau is the co-author (with Amy Rose Capetta) of the Theory, Culture, and Craft article, **“World Line and Narrative Realism” from Volume 5, Issue 1, 2020**. She recently published a textbook, *Introduction to Ecological Psychology: A Lawful Approach to Perceiving, Acting, and Cognizing*, which expands on the ideas presented in her article. She has been promoted to the rank of Associate Professor and tenured at Central Connecticut State University, and continues her work of applying ecological concepts to aesthetic choices.

Saul Lemerond is the author of a Pedagogy article, **“Creative Writing Across Mediums and Modes: A Pedagogical Model,” from Volume 4, Issue 1, 2019**. He is also the co-author (with Leigh Camacho Rourks) of **“The Virtues of Podcasting and Multimodal Literacies in the Creative Writing Classroom: Diversity, Voice, and the New Digital Environment” published in Volume 7, Issue 1, 2022**. This article has since been included in a book he co-wrote with Leigh Camacho Rourks *Digital Voices: Podcasting in the Creative Writing Classroom*, published by Bloomsbury Academic in January 2023.

Micah McCrary is the co-author (with Zoe Bossiere) of **“(Re)Considering Craft and Centralizing Cultures: A revision of the Introductory Creative Writing Workshop” from Volume 6, Issue 2, 2021**, a special issue on teaching introductory creative writing. McCrary is author of *Island in the City* (University of Nebraska Press, 2018), a memoir-in-essays. His work also appears in *College English*, the *Journal of Creative Writing Studies*, and *Assay: A Journal of Nonfiction Studies*, among other publications. A contributing editor at *Assay*, Dr. McCrary lives in New York on Haudenosaunee homelands, where he researches public health humanities and teaches courses in writing studies and health humanities at Syracuse University. He additionally serves as a mentor-teacher and low-residency faculty in Wilkes University's Maslow Family Graduate Program in Creative Writing.

Teresa Milbrodt is the author of the Theory, Culture, and Craft article **“Whose Line Is It, Anyway?: Doing Harm in Disability Memoir,”** from **Volume 5, Issue 1, 2020**. Since then, she has completed her PhD in English at the University of Missouri with emphases in Creative Writing and Disability Studies. She is currently an assistant professor at Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia, teaching classes in creative writing and disability studies. In 2020 Milbrodt published her third short story collection, *Instances of Head-Switching*, which integrates speculative fiction and characters with a range of disabilities. She has also published a monograph, *Sexy Like Us: Disability, Humor, and Sexuality*, a book that focuses on how people with disabilities can use humor and other forms of creative practice to expand the definitions of disability and sexuality.

Oindrila Mukherjee is the author of *“Writing Here, Writing Now; Making Sense of it All: Examining Cultural and Historical Context in the Introductory Creative Writing Class,”* published in *Volume 6, Issue 2, 2021*, the special issue on teaching introductory creative writing. Her debut novel *The Dream Builders* was published in the US in January 2023 by Tin House Books and is forthcoming in Australia, the UK and India later in 2023.

Nancy Reddy is the author of **“The Extracurriculum of Creative Writing,”** a **Diversity and Inclusion** article from **Volume 6, Issue 1, 2021**. Her most recent books are the poetry collection *Pocket Universe* and the anthology *The Long Devotion: Poets Writing Motherhood*. She writes the newsletter “Write More, Be Less Careful” about why writing is hard and how to do it anyway. Other recent pieces include articles in *Poets & Writers* about revising a poetry manuscript and working with an independent publicist, an article about poetry book contracts for *The Millions*, and a guide to making the most of a writing residency for *Catapult*.

Jill Stukenberg is the author of **“What Do Introductory Students Learn by Creating Shareable Digital Artifacts?”** from **Volume 6, Issue 2, 2021**, which was the special issue on teaching introductory creative writing. Since then, her debut novel *News of the Air* won the Big Moose prize for the novel from Black Lawrence Press, and was published in September 2022. This work of eco-fiction is set in a near-future Wisconsin Northwoods She is the co-editor of the literary magazine *Midwest Review*.

Connor Syrewicz is the author of **“Centering the Activity of Writing: Designing Writing Tasks for the Introductory Creative Writing Classroom”** from **Volume 6, Issue 2, 2021**, the special issue on teaching introductory creative writing, and he is also the author of a Theory, Culture and Craft article, **“Toward an Erotics of Reading: Three Hypothesis on Pleasure from Barthes’s ‘The Pleasure of the Text,’”** from **Volume 6, Issue 1, 2021**. Since then, he has passed his Ph.D. qualifying exams, has published two papers in *New Writing*, has presented papers at five conferences, has had three short stories accepted for publication at *Bridge Eight*, *The Hunger*, and *X-R-A-Y*, has published interviews with Kevin Brockmeier and Matt Bell, has helped to edit three

issues of the online literary journal *Barzakh*, has been elected Chair of Research of the Creative Writing Studies Organization, and is slowly beginning to work on a Substack newsletter about art, science, and creative writing called *the unromantic*.

Elena Traina is the author of “**Challenging Conventional Approaches to Teaching Creative Writing in Italy**” from **Volume 7, Issue 1, 2022** as well as a book review in the current issue. Traina studies in the PhD program in Creative Writing Studies at Falmouth University in the United Kingdom. Traina is working on a thesis on creative writing pedagogies in Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries. She teaches creative writing in English as a second language for a number of international institutions, including Scuola Holden and Fondazione Universitaria San Pellegrino (in Italy) and Escuela de Escritores (Spain/Latin America). She serves on the board of NAWE, the National Association of Writers in Education (UK).

Erin Wahl is the co-author (with Pamela Pierce) of “**How Creative Writers Can Work with Archivists: A Crash Course in Cooperation and Perspectives,**” a **Theory, Culture, and Craft** article from **Volume 6, Issue 1, 2021**. Since then, Wahl has stepped into a position as University Archivist at New Mexico State University, where she is also a PhD candidate in NMSU’s Educational Leadership and Administration program. She is working on a book proposal about archives for creative writers. She continues to publish work on this topic, as well as library work environments and professional development, the intersection of sustainability and libraries, and rhetoric of and about libraries.

This is not an all-inclusive list of our contributors and their accomplishments, and we’re happy to continue hearing from contributors – I hope to make contributor updates a seasonal part of our announcements. And thanks is due to the 2023 JCWS editorial assistant and graduate assistant who compiled these updates, Jeremy Boorum, who is a PhD candidate in American Studies here at Penn State Harrisburg. Jeremy also proofread many of the articles in this issue.

I’m proud of the wide-ranging work done by scholars of creative writing studies. Reading this issue and browsing all the past issues is always like a nice hike in the woods. Exhausting at times, yes, but we all come away enriched, and as stewards of scholarship, just like stewards of the environment, we’re trying to make it better for the next people walking through.

Jen Hirt

Editor

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