

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

**The exploration of a performative space to nurture EAL  
international students' writer identities at a South African  
university**



Aditi Hunma

Thesis Presented for the Degree of  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

Department of Education  
**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

**August 2012**

## **Acknowledgments**

The exploratory journey as it can be guessed, was not a lonely walk in the woods dark, lovely and deep as Robert Frost would have it, but a story built inch by inch with the support, guidance and inspiration of those for whom, today I have the most respect and gratitude.

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Lucia Thesen. She has been the nurturing intellectual force behind this enterprise and calmly allowed my flights of fancy. She never said no, but rather, 'hmm interesting, explain!'. She made my work her priority and read my drafts very meticulously despite her busy academic schedule. I admire her poise and usual creative outlets in her office where we would both sketch our ideas, the clovers, recursive spirals, fractals. I would also like to thank Dr Rochelle Kapp for kindly offering to read through my thesis-in-construction and providing very valuable input on Discourses, and the writing experts at UCT for participating in the interviews and expressing their ideas with much enthusiasm.

I would like to thank my parents and sister, Hemlata for always believing in me, inspiring me to reach out for my dreams, for showing keen interest in my work and being a pillar of love, values and principles I could always lean on for support. I would also like to thank my friend Jeff Webster for reading my work with a lucid eye and sharing most fascinating insights always.

I would like to thank my friends at the Writers' Circle for nesting my ideas when they were still germinating. Yes, we had crushes on many theorists and pushed one another to give the best of ourselves and never never never give up.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the forty students who participated in the workshops. They were the reason for it all. I dedicate this to them.

## **Plagiarism declaration form**

I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own. I have used the Harvard convention for citation and referencing. Each contribution to, and quotation in this research project from the work(s) of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced. This project is my own work. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

Signature:

Date:

## **List of abbreviations and acronyms**

<b>EAL</b>	<b>English as an Additional Language</b>
<b>ESL</b>	<b>English as a Second Language</b>
<b>IAPO</b>	<b>International Academic Programmes Office</b>
<b>LDG</b>	<b>Language Development Group</b>
<b>NLS</b>	<b>New Literacy Studies</b>
<b>SADC</b>	<b>Southern African Development Community</b>
<b>UCT</b>	<b>University of Cape Town</b>
<b>WAC</b>	<b>Writing Across the Curriculum</b>
<b>WID</b>	<b>Writing In the Discipline</b>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>PLAGIARISM DECLARATION FORM</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1.1 BACKGROUND .....	10
1.1.1 <i>Conceptual dissonances around internationalisation</i> .....	12
1.1.2 <i>Masters research</i> .....	18
1.2 AIMS OF STUDY.....	19
1.3 THE DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF DESIGN.....	21
1.3.1 <i>Design and meaning-making</i> .....	21
1.3.2 <i>Methodological design – the affordances of the critical ethnographic gaze</i> .....	28
1.3.3 <i>Workshop design</i> .....	29
1.4 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	31
1.5 THESIS OUTLINE .....	32
<b>APORIA OF SUSPENSION</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2 – WRITING ACROSS SPACES</b> .....	<b>42</b>
2.1 EAL WRITING PEDAGOGIES .....	43
2.1.1 <i>ESL/EAL</i> .....	43
2.1.2 <i>Understandings of EAL</i> .....	43
2.1.3 <i>EAL research and pedagogies at UCT</i> .....	46
2.2 WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM AND WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINE PEDAGOGIES.....	47
2.3 PROCESS, GENRE AND ACADEMIC LITERACIES APPROACHES .....	50
2.4 THE NEED FOR NEW PEDAGOGIES OF WRITING.....	55
2.5 PEDAGOGICAL SPACES .....	57
2.5.1 <i>Institutional spaces</i> .....	58
2.5.2 <i>'Safe houses'</i> .....	59
2.5.3 <i>Virtual spaces</i> .....	60
2.5.4 <i>Pedagogical spaces at UCT</i> .....	61
2.5.5 <i>The need for new pedagogic spaces within the EAL geography</i> .....	62
<i>Inclusivity</i> .....	62
<i>Relevance</i> .....	63
2.6 PEDAGOGIES AND SPATIALITY.....	64
2.6.1 <i>Space metaphors in writing pedagogies</i> .....	64
2.6.2 <i>The third space</i> .....	67
2.7 KEY CONCEPTS.....	70
2.7.1 <i>Discourses, voice</i> .....	71
2.7.3 <i>Identities in writing: Ivanič's clover model of writer identities</i> .....	74
2.7.4 <i>Identities enacted</i> .....	77
<b>CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>80</b>
3.1 THE QUALITATIVE TRADITION .....	80
3.1.1 <i>Initial thought processes – epistemological frame</i> .....	80
3.1.2 <i>Revisiting the 'qualitative' in light of the 'post-structural'</i> .....	81
3.1.3 <i>The ethnographic approaches – What are they not?</i> .....	83

3.1.4 <i>The implementation process – ethnographic approaches redefined</i> .....	85
3.2 CRITICALITY IN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH .....	88
3.2.1 <i>Implications for educational research</i> .....	91
3.2.2 <i>Implications for the researcher and the researched</i> .....	92
3.3 THE PARTICIPANT OBSERVER'S DILEMMA .....	94
3.3.1 <i>Identity as participant observer and designer</i> .....	95
3.3.2 <i>Identity as an international student</i> .....	96
3.3.3 <i>Identity as Tutar and Writing Centre consultant</i> .....	96
3.4 THE SPACES .....	97
3.4.1 <i>Peer spaces and institutional spaces</i> .....	98
3.4.2 <i>Writers' workshop space</i> .....	98
3.5 THE FOCUS: WORKSHOP SPACE .....	99
3.6 SAMPLES .....	101
3.7 DATA CHARTING PROCESS .....	103
3.7.1 <i>Overhead slides and blogs (2010)</i> .....	104
3.7.2 <i>Facebook group</i> .....	105
3.7.3 <i>Brought along resources and texts</i> .....	106
3.7.4 <i>Reflections around practice, interviews and profiles</i> .....	107
3.7.5 <i>Snapshots of performance and physical spaces</i> .....	107
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS .....	108
3.8.1 <i>Textual analysis</i> .....	109
3.8.2 <i>Performance analysis</i> .....	111
3.8.3 <i>Context analysis - talk around text</i> .....	113
3.8.4 <i>Triangulation</i> .....	113
3.9 WORKSHOP EVALUATION - WORKABILITY .....	114
3.10 CREDIBILITY .....	115
3.11 RESEARCH ETHICS .....	115
<b><u>APORIA OF UNDECIDABILITY</u></b> .....	<b>117</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4 – PRIOR IDENTITIES: STUDENTS' BROUGHT ALONG RESOURCES</b> .....	<b>124</b>
4.1 REFLECTIONS ON THE 'BROUGHT ALONG' .....	124
4.2 THE TRANSITIONAL OBJECTS TASK .....	126
4.2.1 <i>Writing about objects</i> .....	128
4.2.2 <i>Objects as indexical of prior identities, performative of new ones</i> .....	131
4.3 WHAT DOES THIS QUESTION MEAN? .....	133
4.4 FIRST ATTEMPT AT ESSAY WRITING IN THE WORKSHOP .....	135
4.4.1 <i>Fiona's essay</i> .....	135
4.4.2 <i>Tahini's essay</i> .....	137
4.4.3 <i>Bob's essay</i> .....	139
4.5 PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS .....	141
<b><u>APORIA OF URGENCY</u></b> .....	<b>142</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5 – IDENTITIES IN REHEARSAL IN THE WORKSHOP SPACE</b> .....	<b>144</b>
5.1 BOAL'S 'THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED' .....	145
5.2 SOME PRECEDENTS .....	147
5.3 USE OF THEATRE IN THE WORKSHOP .....	149
5.4 IMAGE THEATRE .....	150
5.5 MULTIMODAL TOOLS .....	152
5.6 THE CHARACTERS .....	152
5.7 STILL ANALYSIS .....	153
5.7.1 <i>Group A</i> .....	153
5.7.2 <i>Group B</i> .....	159

5.8 FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION.....	161
5.9 EFFECTS OF THE PERFORMATIVE SPACE ON STUDENT IDENTITIES.....	163
<b>CHAPTER 6 – SUBJECT POSITIONS IN THE PERFORMATIVE SPACE.....</b>	<b>165</b>
6.1 THE SOCIAL ACTIVIST SUBJECT POSITION.....	169
6.1.1 <i>Tahini’s speech</i> .....	170
6.1.2 <i>Joe’s speech</i> .....	171
6.1.3 <i>Simba’s speech</i> .....	172
6.1.4 <i>Bob’s speech</i> .....	172
6.1.5 <i>Observations</i> .....	173
6.2 THE STUDENT-ACTOR SUBJECT POSITION.....	175
6.2.1 <i>Homesickness and lack of psychosocial support</i> .....	176
6.2.2 <i>Challenges with self-discipline and time management</i> .....	176
6.2.3 <i>Image theatre – finding the balance</i> .....	178
6.2.4 <i>Observations</i> .....	179
6.3 THE INTROSPECTIVE SUBJECT POSITION.....	180
6.3.1 <i>Observations</i> .....	183
<b>CHAPTER 7 – SUBJECT POSITIONS IN THE MAINSTREAM INSTITUTIONAL SPACES.....</b>	<b>185</b>
7.1 THE DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC SUBJECT POSITION.....	185
7.1.1 <i>Tahini’s essay</i> .....	186
7.1.2 <i>Simba’s essay</i> .....	193
7.1.3 <i>Bob’s essay</i> .....	196
7.1.4 <i>Common threads</i> .....	200
7.2 DISCUSSION.....	201
7.2.1 <i>Academic writing conventions in the discipline</i> .....	202
7.2.2 <i>Motivation, writing and authorship</i> .....	205
7.2.3 <i>Subject positions in the discipline</i> .....	207
7.2.5 <i>Facilitator’s role</i> .....	211
<b>CHAPTER 8 – REFLECTIONS ON THE PERFORMATIVE SPACE AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES.....</b>	<b>213</b>
8.1 ACTIVITY 1 - THE STAGE.....	213
8.2 ACTIVITY 2 - STAGE WITHIN THE STAGE.....	214
8.3 DESIGN PRINCIPLES OF THE WORKSHOP SPACE.....	215
8.3.1 <i>The participant observer’s musings throughout the aporias</i> .....	215
8.3.2 <i>Evolving space</i> .....	217
8.3.3 <i>Playful space</i> .....	220
8.3.4 <i>Research-driven space</i> .....	228
<b>CHAPTER 9 – CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>229</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>238</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>I</b>
APPENDIX 1 – WRITERS’ WORKSHOP BROCHURE.....	I
APPENDIX 2 – WORKSHOP STRUCTURE.....	III
APPENDIX 3 – LESSON PLAN EXCERPT.....	IV
APPENDIX 4 - CONSENT FORM.....	VII
APPENDIX 5 – EXPECTATIONS FROM THE WORKSHOP.....	VIII
APPENDIX 6 - HANDOUT EXAMPLE.....	IX
APPENDIX 7 - PARTICIPANTS’ PROFILES.....	XVI
APPENDIX 8 – TAHINI’S ESSAY IN THE WORKSHOP.....	XIX
APPENDIX 9 – FIONA’S ESSAY IN THE WORKSHOP.....	XIX
APPENDIX 10 – BOB’S ESSAY IN THE WORKSHOP.....	XXI

APPENDIX 11 – TAHINI’S GROUP PROJECT, DISCUSSION SECTION .....	XXII
APPENDIX 12 – SIMBA’S ESSAY.....	XXV
APPENDIX 13 – BOB’S ESSAY .....	XXVII
APPENDIX 14 – EVALUATION FORM (LAST SESSION) BY PARTICIPANT.....	XXX
APPENDIX 15 – EVALUATION FORM (LAST SESSION) BY OBSERVER .....	XXXII
APPENDIX 16 – THE BEST ACADEMIC ESSAY OF THE YEAR .....	XXXIV

## List of figures

FIGURE 1 TULI ASSIGNS POSITIONS TO THE ACTORS. ....	154
FIGURE 2 THE FACILITATOR ASKS TULI SOME QUESTIONS .....	155
FIGURE 3 GROUP INTERACTION .....	155
FIGURE 4 TULI JOINS THE OTHERS – ALL SIT ON THE FLOOR .....	157
FIGURE 5 TULI IS GREETED BY THE GROUP. ....	157
FIGURE 6 TULI WALKS TO THE GROUP. ....	157
FIGURE 7 DIFFERENT GREETING STYLES .....	159
FIGURE 8 THEY TRY TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS. ....	159
FIGURE 9 THEY AGREE ON THE FIST.....	160
FIGURE 10 SIMBA SHOWS THEM HOW TO GREET WITH THE FIST.....	161
FIGURE 11 THEY TRY DIFFERENT OPTIONS. ....	161
FIGURE 12 PARTICIPANTS’ KEY CHALLENGES.....	179
FIGURE 13 CHED BOARDROOM.....	221
FIGURE 14 IAPO QUAD – USED FOR THE ‘IMAGE THEATRE’ .....	221
FIGURE 15 JAMESON STEPS .....	221
FIGURE 16 VICE-CHANCELLOR’S BOARD ROOM. ....	221
FIGURE 17 FRIGO CAFÉ, UCT.....	222
FIGURE 18 GARDEN IN UCT FOR IMAGE THEATRE SESSION. ....	222
FIGURE 19 REAL IMAGE – STUDENTS CRAMPED UP IN KOMBIE .....	222
FIGURE 20 BRAINSTORMING OF IDEAS FOR AN ESSAY ON THE WHITE BOARD (SEE APPENDIX 6).....	223
FIGURE 21 A PARTICIPANT’S RESPONSE.....	224
FIGURE 22 A PARTICIPANT’S SCRIBBLES ON THE HANDOUT .....	225

## Abstract

This study is located within the internationalisation context at the University of Cape Town (UCT). As an internationalising university, UCT aims among other things to promote the ideals of 'Equity and Institutional culture' for all its students (UCT policy on internationalisation, 2009). The reality on the ground suggests that this may unwittingly reproduce the centre-periphery divide which characterises global knowledge transactions, within UCT's own institutional structures especially for students from developing African nations, the focus here being on Southern African Development Community (SADC) nations. The tension brought about at the institutional level may be partly due to the lack of specific support structures for international students, and partly due to the latter's misguided perceptions of the faculties' expectations. I argue that gradually, this tension begins to permeate students' texts, their production strategies and motivations.

My Masters research showed that, faced with the daunting activity of academic writing, first year international students often retreated into subculture spaces to cope with academic difficulties, instead of consulting with the faculties concerned. The assistance they received from senior peers unfortunately fell short of meeting the requirements. During my PhD research, through interviews with UCT's writing experts, that is those appointed by the faculties to address writing issues, it became clear that an intervention was needed to complete the dialogue of needs between those in the institutional and informal student spaces.

Despite the urgency to set up such an intervention, an informed decision could not be taken unless the study had undergone what Derrida (1992) would call the 'aporias' or impasses of suspension and undecidability. During the aporia of suspension, where action was suspended, I explored the literature and methods used by scholars in the academic writing field. My particular interest was in the design of a space similar to Bhabha's (1994) 'third space' to nest the intervention. I therefore used critical ethnographic approaches to explore the potential of such a space midway between mainstream institutional spaces and peer spaces. This space would need to offer participants the 'subject positions' to enact their multiple writer identities and negotiate the faculties' expectations (Ivanič, 1998).

After establishing the theoretical and methodological foundations, in the aporia of undecidability, I explored different spatial and pedagogical options by drawing on participants' brought-along cultural and academic resources. It emerged from the activities in this aporia that participants displayed a strong 'autobiographical self' when describing their cultural resources, but a strong 'discoursal' or discipline specific writer self when producing academic essays during the session, to the detriment of their 'authorial' self, which could allow them to take ownership of their texts. At this stage, I was less concerned with the pedagogies in the third space, and more with what the practices indexed about the participants' past and emerging identities and their interactions with texts and individuals in the wider socio-academic context. How could participants be encouraged to hone their authorial self in writing?

This question was the focus of the subsequent aporia of urgency, where the quest for further knowledge was interrupted to give concrete form to the intervention. Multiple methods were used in the five workshop series spread over 2010 and 2011, such as discussions, presentations, speech delivery and so on. I also explored the potential of online sites such as Facebook and Blogspot. The most significant one documented in the thesis, was the use of theatre performance as a mode. I used Boal's (1979) 'image theatre' technique to encourage participants to enact and actively resolve their socio-academic issues in a safe environment. It was believed that once participants were able to overcome these issues, they would be able to assert their authorial self in writing more confidently. The underlying premise for this was the possible link between texts, contexts of production and writer identities.

The texts, contexts and writer identities mediated by subject positions. These indexed the options offered by the context and informed some of the subsequent choices made within the text. The text in turn was

indexical of the context and writer identities via available subject positions or performative of the context and emerging identities via new subject positions. Indexicality and performativity were defined along these lines. The former was a mediational category indicating what the text signaled about the context and vice-versa, while performativity was a feature that transformed the objects of scrutiny themselves. Hence, when a text was performative of the context or of a writer identity, it was actually a tool through which the context or writer identity could be altered.

In the study, the 'image theatre' task was followed by a variety of writing activities in different in and around performance. It was found that the performance mode and the ensuing performative writing tasks in other genres liberated participants from the compulsion to obey strict discipline-specific conventions, which in fact stifled their 'authorial' self too early into the writing process. Comparisons with texts produced in mainstream institutional spaces revealed that the latter texts were still highly discursive in nature as expected, to the detriment of the aspects of other writer identities. On the other hand, the performative space allowed participants with more subject positions to enact their multiple writer identities especially their authorial self. This observation was confirmed during a focus group session at the end of 2011, where participants shared their understandings of the academic writing task and the contexts of text production and consumption using the stage metaphor to represent the writing process.

The findings thus suggested a strong link between space, performance and the enactment of an 'authorial self' in writing and other modes. It was found that following the workshops, students had not only become more confident in their writing and interactions with others in the contact zone, but were more likely to engage in leadership roles, though the cause for these might not necessarily be ascribed to the workshops alone. The aspirational values displayed by the participants were to some extent part of who they were, e.g. member of a warrior tribe, karate student and so on. At the same time, those values were brought out by the carefully framed activities requiring them to imagine 'ideal' scenarios. More useful than the pedagogies themselves were the design principles that could inform the creation of other possible performative spaces at internationalising tertiary institutions. It suggested the need for more evolving, playful and research-driven pedagogic spaces, so that the links between texts, identities and contexts could be more performative than indexical. Such spaces would not only alter the texts and what surrounded their production, but could well alter our understandings of higher education agents, learning and institutional structures at internationalising universities such as UCT.

## Chapter 1 – Introduction

*The study of pedagogical spaces to teach academic writing is inscribed within current internationalisation debates in the higher education setting. A quick scan of the press releases worldwide in the past months (June-July 2012) shows up a quasi-pervasive set of commercialisation discourses surrounding the ‘internationalised’ university, for example:*

*‘[T]he economic crisis does not allow for much innovation and investment. It will be interesting to see if internationalisation becomes an elite enterprise of top private research universities again’ (Rhetoric versus reality, 22 July 2012).*

*The phenomenon of ‘internationalisation’ is immediately linked to broader statistics such as: intake, national budget and revenue, and to a lesser extent throughput. These observations are similar across the board from Malaysia to Thailand, Turkey, North America, and parts of Europe and Africa (see, *The Nation, Inside higherEd*, June-July 2012).*

*The Guardian takes it as far as, ‘Internationalisation is not just about revenues, it is a political strategy’ (25 June 2012). Whether through the eyes of a Kenyan blogger studying in the US or those of scholars e.g. Altbach, Irwin, readers are assailed by the discourses around rhetoric and reality, socio-academic preparedness and inclusivity of international students, new racial and national distinctions, the degree of alignment between intentions, policies and the enacted curriculum, and the use of English as ‘the language of internationalisation’ (*The drive to internationalise*, June 2012; see also *University World News*).*

Taking the popular debates as an entry point, this chapter sets the context for the study, and discusses how the “internationalisation” concept is appropriated and how it gains relevance in the South for institutions such as the University of Cape Town (UCT). It asks the following questions. What does it mean to be an internationalising or globalising or Afropolitan university; how does this understanding affect the institution’s stance towards international students; and for the purposes of this study, how is academic writing perceived and taught?

The study follows on from my Masters study on the writing difficulties and coping strategies of first year Mauritian students at UCT. The chapter outlines the aims of the study as that of

designing new spaces and methods to teach writing to first year EAL international students. It then provides an overview of the different dimensions of design, from imagination to deconstruction to transformation and reconstruction, embedding re-design within the very blueprint of design. It applies the dimensions of design to the methodological design and pedagogical design processes. These dimensions also guide the way in which the chapters are structured. The chapter ends with research questions that seek to grasp how students enact their identities in different institutional settings with regards to writing; how new teaching sites and methods can be productively used; the role performativity can play to bridge or reshape the link between texts, contexts and identities; how these sites can be integrated into existing academic spaces; and finally the design principles that would guide the future design of such pedagogic spaces.

### **1.1 Background**

The interest in new academic writing spaces for international students with English as an additional language (EAL) stems as mentioned earlier from the current popular debates but also from the theoretical discussion around the internationalisation of tertiary institutions, the new aims of the University of Cape Town (UCT) as an internationalising university, and from the findings of my Masters research on the difficulties and coping strategies of first year Mauritian students with regards to academic writing.

UCT, like many universities worldwide, is currently going through the much contested process of internationalisation and opening doors to an increasing number of international students - 20% of the annual intake (International students statistics, 2010).

It is noteworthy that in the years of struggle against the Apartheid regime, tertiary education was markedly fragmented along racial and linguistic lines. Hence there were English-speaking, Afrikaans-speaking, Zulu-speaking institutions and so on for different racial groups of students. As fitted the Apartheid design, the quality of education differed vastly across these institutions, especially since Black students were not expected to perform white collar jobs anyway (Jansen, 2004). Adopting liberal ideologies and controversially calling itself an “open university”, UCT, with some other historically White universities tried to defy some strictures of the regime as best as it could, by allowing students across the racial divide to enter based on their results on a “test

for potential” for instance. Still, the majority of students remained elite White English-speaking students up until the end of Apartheid. In the years following democracy, the political dispensation’s aim to widen access to high quality tertiary education had a considerable impact UCT’s policies, administration and support systems (Thesen & van Pletzen, 2006).

UCT might well carry the legacy of being a former White English-speaking institution, but it was and still is actively involved in measures towards social redress and transformation, which would entail admitting more Black<sup>1</sup> particularly working class students, discriminated against in the former regime. This is evidenced in Jansen’s writings that by the late 1990s, the ‘character of student distribution and characteristics in Higher Education’ had radically changed (2004:300). Black student enrolment in universities such as UCT increased by about ten thousand students, in other words, a hundred percent increase. This also meant, as Scott et al. would argue that the university was caught in tensions between the aims of “equity”, in this case equity of access, and “excellence” that is ‘equity of outcomes’. Consequently, they argued for and put in place visible structures such as the Academic Support Programme, now Academic Development Programme to prepare historically excluded Black students to be at par with other mainstream students.

They are nonetheless aware of the constraints under which the programme is having to operate, such the ‘dysfunctional school system’ and an exit matriculation exam which turns out to be an unreliable predictor of students’ performance or potential (2005:267). Under these conditions, merely providing Black students with access to higher education would not guarantee success. They state that equity and excellence need to be balanced by ‘establishing clear, prioritized, and convincing goals at the national and institutional levels and developing strong theory’ and evidence-based policies and strategies that demonstrate how, or to what extent, the tensions can be reconciled in practice’ (2005:283) (see also Thesen & van Pletzen, 2006; Kishun, 2007).

Broadening its transformative agenda, UCT is now striving to expand its offerings to a more diverse cohort of students in order to be at par with other “world class” internationalising universities. As argued in this study though, the internationalisation policies raise questions

---

<sup>1</sup> Can race still be a valid predictor of schooling opportunities? In a post-Apartheid nation, perhaps to some extent. Still, one needs to explore more broadly the link between social class and schooling, especially in the light of the rising Black middle class.

around the design and content of courses in the disciplines and the pedagogic approaches to ignite or nurture the minds of such a heterogeneous group of students as international students join a more diverse group of local students.

At UCT, international students from 101 nations (of which 35 belong to the African continent) constitute a significant 20% of the overall student body, with an annual enrolment of about 3000 undergraduate and 1700 postgraduate students (International students statistics, 2010). The International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO) manages the administrative process and offers an orientation package at the beginning of students' first year to ensure that international students are socially integrated. However, within the various faculties, academic programmes have yet to adapt to the needs of the growing influx of full-time international students, mostly from the African continent, where the 2010 student enrolment for students from the South African Development Community (SADC) alone amounted to about 2100 students, i.e. 8% of the total student intake, and the enrolment of the semester-abroad international students mostly from parts of USA and Europe amounted to 4% of total intake.

### ***1.1.1 Conceptual dissonances around internationalisation***

So far, I have brushed a contextual tableau with the popular and institutional discourses around internationalisation and hinted at ways in which this global wave is impacting on UCT. In this section, I would like to present some conceptual dissonances with regards to the term by drawing on some theoretical resources. This discussion is necessary as the definition of "internationalisation" has bearings on the conceptual and pedagogic approaches adopted in the study to teach writing to international students from the SADC region. In other words, the way one perceives international students and the general phenomenon of internationalisation would inevitably seep into the motivations for the research choices made. In this study, it is therefore important to alert readers at the very onset to the fact that the appropriations of the terms "internationalisation", "globalization" and "afropolitanism" vary widely, and not surprisingly so, since its users situate themselves within different traditions and geopolitical locations. The conceptual dissonances presented below can shed also light on the nature of the rapport between parties involved in the process of internationalisation and where UCT situates itself in the discussion.

The much-cited UK scholars, Deem (2001) and Knight (2004) present a hopeful if not idealist picture of the internationalisation processes. Deem (2001) defines internationalisation as 'the sharing of ideas, knowledge and ways of doing things in similar ways across different countries' (2001:7). She observes that with globalisation, that is the opening of markets and flows of capital, the flow of ideas and the priorities and practices of higher education institutions globally are being permeated by neoliberal practices. These institutions are increasingly operating with a corporate mind frame, to embrace forms of 'new managerialism', which she defines as 'the extent to which contemporary business practices and private sector ideas or values have permeated publicly funded institutions and work practices' (ibid.). One of the business practices is the use of enterprising means such as 'consultancies and private research' (ibid.) to raise private sector funds.

These practices not only re-define our commonly held perceptions about who is involved, that is the universities (with degrees of State influence) but also what gets traded across borders, in other words, education. The focus shifts from the provision of education as a human right to that of a highly marketable, ostentatious commodity bartered as foreign investment across geographical borders (as was illustrated in the news articles). Tertiary education in particular acquires new meanings in the context of a rapidly evolving knowledge economy. Premium is placed more than ever on the development of marketable and transferable skills for eligibility in the job market on the one hand; and research projects to further knowledge, acquire funding and benefit from the privileges of the epistemological advances or even monopoly on the other.

In the course of cross-border transactions, the new understandings of tertiary education affect the values attached to knowledge production, what counts as knowledge and who is at the receiving end. Deem (2001) argues that knowledge production can happen at any institution world-wide, for what it necessitates is the ability to translate and apply global knowledge in local contexts. One nonetheless wonders whether all institutions have equal freedom to produce new knowledge, and what makes new knowledge. Even in a so-called free market system, some markets fare better due to low manufacturing costs, cheap labour, allowing them to have significant competitive advantage over other markets. Others benefit from special tariffs and quotas and manage to survive the harsh competition vis-à-vis the more affluent markets.

Hence, when Deem adds that 'the use of knowledge in innovation tends to take place locally' (ibid.), one reads this with some skepticism, for locally applied knowledge may not always be marketable beyond local contexts. In her view, different institutions' use and application of knowledge are often contingent upon the needs of the local institutions and society. She concedes nevertheless that within the internationalisation debate, little attention is given to this 'global-local axis', in other words to the way global knowledge can be applied in local contexts, so that one can develop more relevant, 'hybridized' and innovative forms of knowledge.

Also, in addressing the global-local connections, Deem does not make explicit the power differentials that separate out different ways of knowing and their validation. Hybridised knowledge cannot be a mere product of different knowledges. "Cultures" as we encounter them today are already so intermeshed that any further interaction would only make them more hybrid. Hence the use of the term "hybrid" can be misleading and over-simplify the products of cultural contact that are in fact unstable and hard to quantify.

Knight (2004) who also acknowledges the inter-cultural dimension of knowledge production, seems to smooth the complexities of such processes across geographical contexts. She defines internationalisation at the 'national, sector and institutional level' as 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education' (2004:11). The word "integrate" could give the impression that global players from different cultural terrains interact on equal terms.

Singh and Doherty (2004), based in Australia, caution however that in 'global contact zones' such as these, different institutions actually relate unequally. The authors argue that the global contact zone is a meeting place for people or institutions with 'disparate historical trajectories and cultural identities', and quoting Pratt (1992:4), they agree that these 'grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination' (2004:11). The uneven power relations between universities across the globe, they note, are not only legacies of the previous colonial structures, which some would perceive as the beginnings of globalisation, but also products of 'day-to-day pedagogic interactions' (ibid.). For example, how would African universities obtain accreditation for journal articles and relevant funding on international projects if they did not pay lip service to the research standards set by renowned Western universities?

For Scott (2000) based in the UK, at the core of the discussion, lies a conceptual confusion. One tends to conflate globalisation and internationalisation and use them interchangeably. However, for Scott, internationalisation secures the boundaries between nation states by reproducing the imperial relations between them. The conditions for internationalisation seem to reassert the high notions of diplomacy and culture prevalent in the former era and perpetuate the hegemony of some states over others. The idea of an equal partnership between institutions across the North-South divide crumbles down, since according to Scott, intrinsic to the 'internationalisation' concept are the conditions for North-South inequalities. He explains:

'[I]nternationalisation presupposes the existence of established nation states – globalization is either agnostic about, or positively hostile to, nation states. [...] [I]nternationalisation, because of its dependence on the existing unequal patterns of nation states, tends to reproduce – even legitimise – hierarchy and hegemony. Globalisation, in contrast, can address new agendas – of global climate change [...] the inequalities between North and South and those within nations – because it is not tied to the past, because it is a restless, even subversive, force' (2000: 5).

More relevant to issues of the South, Mthembu (2004) presents what he would view as an African perspective on internationalisation focusing on how African universities appropriate the internationalisation discourses. Mthembu argues that African universities can participate in internationalisation in three ways, through the 'embedding of an external space into an internal space', the 'embedding of an internal space into an external space' or an 'isomorphism of the two spaces' (2004:81). The first form takes place when more influential, generally Western institutions impose their norms or knowledge on African universities. The second form, which is less likely, occurs when African universities decide on and stipulate acceptable forms of knowledge that could be taught at foreign universities. African universities would perhaps have more authority about historical, cultural and linguistic matters that are specific to their local geographies. Still, one does come across occasional foreign experts on such matters.

Mthembu privileges the third type, the 'isomorphism of the two spaces', which occurs when both African and international universities share 'equivalent - not necessarily similar values' and can mesh gears together to generate world knowledge (ibid.). This partnership is yet to happen in the case of African universities (see also Moja & Cloete, 2001; Kraak, 2004; McLellan, 2008; Rouhani, 2007). Mthembu's re-interpretation of internationalisation in the African continent is

pertinent to the present study since UCT demands its own re-contextualised definition of the internationalisation concept. In fact, it defines itself as an “Afropolitan” university.

One can imagine an Afropolitan university to be cosmopolitan in its interactions with foreign institutions and African in its key principles and practices. UCT’s vice-chancellor, Dr Max Price holds that ‘to be a global university, UCT needs to be an African university’. He defines Afropolitanism as follows, ‘Afro connotes an open, assertive engagement with the world from the standpoint of Africa’. ‘Politan signals cosmopolitan, and signals a sophisticated and future-oriented approach to understanding Africa’ (Installation address, 2008). As an Afropolitan university, UCT aims to ‘expand (its) expertise on Africa and offer it to the world, extend (its) networks on the continent’, ‘engage critically with Africa’s intellectuals and world views in teaching’, ‘contribute to strengthening higher education on our continent’ among other things. (Introducing UCT, 2010).

At the core of the term “Afropolitan” lies a paradox, perhaps a necessary one. How does an African university interact with foreign institutions in a manner that allows it to preserve its traditional values and knowledges? What is gained, and what is lost in the process? While the engagement with other African intellectuals can add richness to one’s idiosyncratic views on teaching and knowledge, to what extent do the present global structures allow African institutions to ‘offer (their expertise) to the world’ or ‘extend (its) networks on the continent’? Research papers are still written with an assumed Western scholar and critic in mind, since the standards of correctness are still set by reputable Western universities. How does one escape the double bind of allegiances to the local and global forces while being Afropolitan?

In fact, Mthembu’s vision of equal partnership between institutions from the North and South is still in its infancy, as productive as the thought may be. Hence, the idea of “Africanness” in higher education institutions needs to be re-assessed in years to come, when the global structures would be in place for such a dialogue to take place. Moja and Cloete (2001) still caution that while arguing for an African identity, one should not misinterpret internationalisation as a detour from addressing local priorities. Rather, internationalisation should be seen as ‘prepar(ing) human resources to make the country a partner in a globalised world’ (Kishun, 2007). In his view, the internationalisation versus Africanisation debate is based on a false distinction and does disservice

to this vision of turning one's country into an equal partner in the global exchange of resources. Perhaps, the broad Afropolitan or internationalisation debate across the continent needs to be postponed in this study, to address its application locally at the University of Cape Town.

Scholars at UCT have appropriated the concept and workings of internationalisation within the institution in different ways. Baker (2007) and Geiser (2009) for instance, explore the institutional understanding of 'internationalisation' on the one hand and the students' experiences of it on the other. They offer an effective lens to examine the challenges faced by the stakeholders at UCT to align policy with practice and those confronting international students as they 'navigate' through the process. Here too, internationalisation becomes a site of contestation, where in the process of re-contextualisation, some meanings get lost, others are acquired and discursive gaps begin to appear between what is intended, interpreted and implemented.

A glance at writing pedagogies for international students at different universities indexes some of these discursive gaps. Certain universities in the US, UK and Australia offer special writing or composition studies programs to accommodate first year international students at their campuses, while at other universities, the programs are presently inexistent or absorbed by more generic writing support for all students (Singh and Doherty, 2004). At universities that do provide such support, at times there is a tendency to acculturate international students to the university's prevailing academic writing norms (ibid.; Lillis and Curry, 2010).

The acculturation may not be entirely harmful, since ultimately texts from foreign students are still judged against set pre-conceptions of good writing and writers. Lillis and Curry refer to these pre-conceptions as 'imagined readings' of the text often generated in a high stakes geopolitical context, where notions of texts may differ from the students' own and contributions to new knowledge may be '(mis)recognised' (2010:150). The authors offer examples of texts produced by a South European scholar whose text was criticised for being 'a little too over the top and too pretentious'. The critique spilled over into a judgment about the scholar regional background 'Maybe it is not the language, but it is just too Latin for a North-West European'. Looking at other examples, Lillis and Curry observed that 'the writer is being required to scale-jump from a (lesser valued) position of non-Anglophone-centre to a (higher valued) Anglophone-centre context and norms' (ibid.:151). The 'scale jumping' requirement is premised on the inevitable

hierarchy in text production contexts and its success would partly depend on scaffolding or explicit teaching that occurs in the 'centre'. It would also need to be accompanied by an evaluation, acknowledgment or pedagogic use of the international students' writing systems back home. If not, the teaching approaches could appear as a form of cultural brainwashing, and teachers could appear as 'cultural informants socializing non-western students into the norms and standards of western scholarly conduct' (Singh and Doherty, 2004:13).

At the University of Cape Town, some faculties offer writing support in addition to the services of the Writing Centre. There are also intervention programmes for South African students from disadvantaged schooling backgrounds.<sup>2</sup> These are offered as part of the transformation agenda to redress some of the past injustices towards Black South Africans. Currently there is no official writing program specifically suited to the needs of international students. While the need for such a program is increasingly felt with the growing numbers of international students, implementers would also need to bear in mind the university's initial priority of social redress towards previously disadvantaged racial groups especially Black students. The implementers would need to assist the university in its endeavour to meet both goals satisfactorily.

### ***1.1.2 Masters research***

While the above discussion offers a glimpse of internationalisation at the level of policy, conceptualisation and teaching practice, this section looks at internationalisation as experienced at the grassroots by a group of international students. My Masters research (2009) explored the writing difficulties of first year Mauritian students at the University of Cape Town. It revealed a discursive gap between policy statements on internationalisation and the reality at the grassroots. The study showed that students across different faculties, with satisfactory or excellent prior academic records found essay writing tasks challenging through most of their first semester at UCT. In response, they devised a series of coping strategies, generally involving an excessive reliance on subculture practices within a close-knit group of Mauritian students, rather than the use of existing institutional support structures. The strategies appeared to be counter-productive on the whole and some students fell short of their faculty's expectations often even beyond the first semester.

---

<sup>2</sup> This would include township schools, which still carry the remnants of the notorious Bantu education system prevailing during the apartheid era.

The study suggested that recourse to these informal strategies in the case of hitherto high performing students could have policy implications, signaling the possibility of a more profound mis-match between the university's policy aim of 'Equity and Institutional Culture' and its application (UCT policy on internationalisation, 2009).<sup>3</sup> Due to the small-scale nature of the Masters study, the issue of mis-match was not explored in much depth.<sup>4</sup>

The Masters study recommended a synergy of efforts at different nodes of the tertiary system to ensure that the internationalisation rhetoric was translated into relevant structures of delivery and outcome on the ground. At the level of the curriculum, the study suggested the design of a writing space, suited to the needs of EAL international students from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The emerging pedagogies from the subsequent research (present study), could be one step towards improving international students' access to academic writing resources and thereby facilitating their integration at the university or possibly re-structuring some of the academic spaces themselves. At the same time, it would raise awareness about the need for such an intervention and suggest measures to achieve this.

## **1.2 Aims of study**

This study's aim was therefore to create a new space at the junction between the informal peer spaces or subcultures used by international students and more formal institutional spaces, to develop and run relevant pedagogies of academic writing, and thus further the broader internationalisation agenda of the university. The study explores and critically assesses unconventional learning sites and their affordances, and the methods to teach academic writing.

Writing can be defined as the enactment of students' multiple identities, their autobiographical, authorial and discursal ones along Ivanič's clover model of writing identities explained in more detail later (Ivanič, 1998). The writing process is inevitably informed by students' socio-academic identities, the institutional discourses and the broader context. To nurture the

---

<sup>3</sup>Internationalisation at UCT will promote the University's equity and transformation objectives. Exchanges and development opportunities will take into account the under-representation in academic life of women, black people and people with disabilities. Internationalisation should contribute to an institutional culture which values diversity. Every effort must be made to integrate international staff and students fully into the life of UCT' (ibid.).

<sup>4</sup> The discussion is taken up in the present study through interviews with writing experts at the university.

participants' writer identities especially in the transitional phase they occupied as first year international students, different spaces and modes such as performance were explored. Performance could potentially open up a vast array of 'subject positions' or 'socially available possibilities' or roles where participants could explore more than one dimension of their writing identities (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). I also employ the term "performativity" to denote the ability of modes (writing, speech, performance) to alter students' experiences in the broader socio-academic context. This is not to be confused with the way "performativity" is used in the institutional or managerial discourses, as the ability of social systems to be efficient in the face of global pressures and competition, often at the expense of the welfare state's actual aims. Ball (2008) views this form of performativity as 'a culture or a system of terror'. The concept of performativity is elaborated in the forthcoming chapters.

In terms of the data collection process, it was partly based on a series of Writers' workshops conducted with first year international students from the South African Development Community (SADC)<sup>5</sup>, consisting of two pilots in 2010 with students from Zimbabwe, Mauritius and Swaziland, and three workshops run in 2011. Writing experts were also interviewed and a focus group session was organised to add texture to the observations and later the findings of the study.

Both the pilots and the formal workshops were run in different settings and the insights gained from the pilots were incorporated into the workshops. These workshops were then assessed in terms of their impact on students' writer identities and their writing itself, how they raised international students' awareness of UCT's academic writing conventions, sharpened their critical thinking skills, while taking into account their prior experiences and *habitus*. Bourdieu defines *habitus* as a 'system of durable, transposable dispositions... which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without in any way being the product of obedience to rules' (1977:72). An awareness of such dispositions would not only help explain students' interest in their field of study and their motivation levels, but may be incorporated into the pedagogic practices used to allow students to take more ownership of the text's content and their role in constructing it.

---

<sup>5</sup> SADC countries not only benefit from bilateral trade agreements and other economic advantages, but are also known to have supported one another in times of civil war or other calamities. Students within this region were invited to participate in the workshops as they brought along quite similar academic and at times socio-historical capital.

Ultimately, the objective was to arrive at design principles to create conducive spaces for the teaching of academic writing to EAL international students at UCT, and possibly at other English-medium universities. These spaces would allow the internationalising universities not to merely indoctrinate students with the norms of the centre and perpetuate inherited imperial and geopolitical structures, but to acknowledge students' different knowledge traditions while developing the academic writing interventions. Care would also be taken not to isolate particular groupings of international students and label them as disenfranchised 'other', but allow those from different nationalities to interact with other cohorts so that the models that emerge could be generalised to a larger cluster of international students.

### **1.3 The different dimensions of design**

To realise the intended creative end, the study submitted itself to the generative forces of design at various levels. The design process involved the macro-processes of meaning-making, the research/methodological dimension and in the pedagogical sense, the development of the writing workshops.

The purpose of this section is to introduce the different layers of design as they guided the research process but also as they informed the three-part structure of this thesis. The view of research writing as design, and of thesis structure as three moments or impasses, allows one to transcend the chronology in which the research was done, and to plot the events rather within particular mental frames that ultimately led to the design principles for future writing workshops. The discussion below introduces readers to the frames that organised the narrative in particular ways. These frames are generative and could be ordered or read differently in other research designs or theses to create variants of the research story.

#### ***1.3.1 Design and meaning-making***

##### ***1. Imagination – the search for alternatives***

The concept of "design" lurks in the fuzzy space between intention and its creative outlet. For the French thinker Bachelard (1950), design would flourish in the 'imagination matérielle', where ideas are like seeds on the verge of germination, as opposed to the 'imagination formelle', which

precedes it, where innovative ideas are merely beginning to emerge<sup>6</sup>. Design then, like models, sketches and writing, occupies a creative space between thoughts and matter, inherently invested with the 'germ' to materialise. This design remains active and dynamic even after its actualisation. In fact, its concrete expression in form continues to be punctuated by moments of re-design, through critical pauses, reflection, reflexivity and iterations even long after it materialises. Imagination is therefore a powerful tool in constructing, de-constructing and re-constructing models that each time come closer to the desired intent or projected outcome of the endeavor.

In the field of critical literacy, Janks (2000) argues that design operates in those symbolic spaces where existing meaning-making devices are questioned and re-articulated. For her, design represents 'the ability to harness the multiplicity of semiotic systems across diverse cultural locations and challenge and change existing Discourses' (2000:177).

In the initial phase of the study, I scanned the literature on the existing methods to teach writing, and observed how writing was being taught at UCT. What were the issues that international students grappled with other than those suggested in the readings? Which teaching methods were more suited to the international students' needs? Activities with a performance component such as discussions and presentations could help students bring out their 'authorial selves' more strongly. I was still considering theatre performance as a method at that point (early 2010). The workshop brochure was a way to bring some of these ideas into the 'imagination materielle'. While still conceptual in its emphasis, in general, the design held the promise of changing the 'ways of being and doing' due to its ability to enter the second form of imagination. To actualise some of these ways of being and doing, design would then involve processes of 'deconstruction', 'transformation' and 're-construction' (Janks, 2000:177). These are explained below.

## *2. Deconstruction*

In this study, emphasis was initially laid on the deconstruction of prior assumptions and accepted meanings in the field of academic literacies, where reading and writing are seen as part and parcel

---

<sup>6</sup> In *L'air et les songes*, Bachelard defines 'imagination matérielle' as that which seeps into matter and lives it by imagining it (1950: 195).

of social practices. To deconstruct an assumption from the poststructuralist point of view, does not mean to destroy it. Rather as Cahen concisely puts it,

To deconstruct is first and foremost to undo a construction with infinite patience, to take apart a system in order to understand its mechanisms, to exhibit all its foundations, and to reconstruct on new bases (2001:13).

Deconstruction appeals in the way that other critical theory approaches do not, in its unique way of challenging the boundaries of ontological truths. It actually brings together unconnected or opposite categories, such as presence and absence by stating that both can coexist in specific contexts. In the process, it undermines the boundaries that separate the categories.

In this study, where the existing institutional structures were observed for possible gaps and alternatives, the notion of deconstruction formed a critical analytic lens for the research processes developed, since intuitively, one could only design and construct new and alternative pedagogical models after deconstructing or interrogating current deep-seated and normative ways of doing. I explored existing literature and interviewed writing experts at the university about their views on the conventional and ideal methods and spaces used to teach writing in their discipline. These were later deconstructed through activities in the first workshop session, in order to make the methods used more relevant to the participants' needs. It is noteworthy that critical aspect of deconstruction did not entail an abandonment of current methods or structures. Rather the alternatives that emerged from this critical stance were incorporated back into existing institutional frames to improve first year students' academic writing and the way they asserted it.

Deconstruction has nonetheless been criticised especially by analytic philosophers due to its seeming vagueness which blurs the exact definitions of signs and how they operate (see Culler, 1981). Deconstruction involves questioning the structures of meaning that assign specific signifiers to specific signifieds. For Derrida, a meaningful sign can exist with or without a signifier or can have multiple signifiers all at once. The word "bar" can mean prison bar in one context and chocolate bar or drinking bar in other contexts. For Derrida then, signifiers often end up being 'floating signifiers' with indeterminate meanings (2004:97). Derrida defines this 'signifier' as follows:

Sly, slippery, and masked, an intriguer and a card, like Hermes, he is neither king nor jack, but rather a sort of joker, a floating signifier, a wild card, one that puts play into play (2004: 97).

Its meanings can only be known upon play or use. For the critics, the deconstruction process may well open up options but ultimately leaves the enquirer with unresolved questions.

In research, a strong reliance on deconstruction may lull the researcher into uncertainty about the very objects of scrutiny and at times cause anxiety. By questioning the structures that endow objects with meaning, for instance the international students' subcultures that define their members' group and individual identities, she may be left with a sketchy understanding of both the subcultures and its members. The finite nature of the research project demands that questions be ultimately answered, at least in part, that meanings be inscribed to those objects, even though, in reality, complete understanding could take a lifetime of constant questioning. Deconstruction however seems to postpone certainty about the ontology of the researched objects (see Luhmann, 1993). Derrida admits that 'the "sufferance" of deconstruction, what makes it suffer and what makes those it torments suffer, is perhaps the absence of rules, of norms, and definitive criteria' (Derrida, 1992:4).

In this study, the uncertainty brought about through the processes of deconstruction did open up several possibilities initially, for instance around the definitions of academic writing, writing programmes and so on. Admittedly, these were in favour of the study's exploratory nature. The uncertainty was then narrowed down by deducing the meanings of such concepts in specific contexts, such as peer settings and university departments. The recurring patterns across contexts and across methods of enquiry were then triangulated with a focus group session to generate a deeper understanding about these concepts.

Deconstruction has also been criticised for the way it engenders a spiral of questions and meta-questions and hence again delays action. Derrida responds to this challenge through a delineation of the three aporias, namely the 'aporia of suspension', the 'aporia of undecidability' and the 'aporia of urgency'. Before explaining the relevance of the aporias in pedagogic design, I will have to make a short excursion into the legal context where the terms were initially applied by Derrida.

For Derrida (1992), the Greek term “aporia” refers to a ‘non-road’ or an impasse. Derrida uses the term in the legal context to explain the process of law making. He stresses several times the distinction between justice and law. Justice is always to come, it is infinite and is perennially sought by law makers. Law, on the other hand, is finite, calculable and necessarily so, because otherwise, justice could be implemented in any possible way. Law is justice ‘enforced’ or performed. The application of force in the quest for justice is inevitable for ‘justice without force is contradictory, as there are always the wicked; force without justice is accused of wrong’ (1992: 11). Therefore, justice and force need to be combined in order to make laws. This law making process is however slow and goes through aporias of ‘suspension’, ‘undecidability’ and finally ‘urgency’ for ‘(n)o exercise of justice as law can be just unless there is a “fresh judgment”’ (1992:23).



Derrida defines the aporia of suspension or ‘*epochè* of the rule’ as follows:

‘for a decision to be just and responsible, it must, in its proper moment if there is one, be both regulated and without regulation: it must conserve the law and also destroy it or suspend it enough to have to reinvent it in each case, rejustify it, at least reinvent it in the reaffirmation and the new and free confirmation of its principle’ (1992:23).

This is the first step in the decision making process. For “fresh judgment” to take place, one must suspend the assumptions made and insights obtained from previous cases. One needs to look at the present case with a fresh eye, so as to re-validate existing approaches if they apply or reject them. Hence, the ‘aporia of suspension’ refers to the break from usual ways of proceeding, or precedents, in order to derive a model that would apply in particular cases. This aporia also engenders a period of seeming apathy, which the researcher may also refer to as ‘reflection’. For the purpose of this study, the ‘aporia of suspension’ required me to suspend my assumptions about EAL pedagogies and read more around the topic (see chapter two) in order to derive a model that met the needs of international students at UCT and that could also be run at the institution.

The period of inaction does not last long since one would time and again be reminded of the need to take a decision. At this point, the decision maker finds herself in an ‘aporia of undecidability’, resulting from the range of choices open to her. In the case of law, Derrida opines that for justice

to triumph, law makers should necessarily go through ‘the ghost of the undecidable’, which he defines as follows:

‘The undecidable, is not merely the oscillation or the tension between two decisions; it is the experience of that which, though heterogeneous, foreign to the order of the calculable and the rule, is still obliged – it is of obligation that we must speak – to give itself up to the impossible decision, while taking account of laws and rules’ (1992:24).

The decisions he mentions, could be between two or more equally plausible options, his example being that between the ‘respect for equity and universal right’ and the respect for the ‘always heterogeneous and unique singularity of the unsubsumable example’ (ibid.). In this study, this period allowed for a re-visioning of alternatives, where the pros and cons of alternative English as an Additional Language (EAL) pedagogies were evaluated.

The final aporia is the ‘aporia of urgency’, in other words, the defining moment of decision and action that necessarily ‘obstructs the horizon of knowledge’ (1992:26). Derrida goes back to the Greek etymology of the term and sees the horizon as ‘both the opening and the limit that defines an infinite progress or a period of waiting’ (1992:26). Knowledge is similar to this horizon for it is always sought and always to come. As such, as discussed, it interrupts decision making. In the aporia of urgency, however, the quest for knowledge needs to be interrupted. Derrida defines this aporia as follows:

‘justice, however unrepresentable it may be, doesn’t wait ... the moment of *decision, as such*, always remains a finite moment of urgency and precipitation, since it must not be the consequence or the effect of this theoretical or historical knowledge, of this reflection or deliberation, since it always marks the interruption of the juridico- or ethico- or politico-cognitive deliberation that precedes it, that *must* precede it’ (1992:26)

Drawing on Kierkegaard, Derrida further describes this aporia as a ‘madness’ since it lacks the ‘patience of knowledge’ (ibid.). Thus, in the case of law, ethical decisions cannot be halted; they are bound to take place. Likewise, in the case of this study, the research process was pushed time and again into the aporias of urgency with the need to try out improved EAL teaching models continuously. The pedagogic thrust could remind some of the action research cycles, however the research methodology employed a critical ethnographic stance.

Reflecting on the aporias themselves, one notes that while they were initially used in the legal context to show how justice was performed and laws were made and re-made, they could be transferred into the education context to understand the transition from education policies to decisions around practice, or from the intended curriculum to the actual lessons, for instance. In this case, the aporias functioned at different levels of design, enabling the transition from existing EAL pedagogies to specific ones, specific pedagogies to teaching methods and lessons and so on.

The common denominator in law and as well as in education practices was performance. In the study, writing was viewed as identity performed, just as laws were viewed as justice performed. Hence the pedagogies used relied to a large extent on performance activities such as drama, presentations and speech delivery. Performance became a fundamental link between abstract notions of identity and the way these could be understood, instantiated or developed through writing, and how they could in turn affect writing. In the case of academic writing, activities with a performance component were used to explore and nurture participants' transitional academic identities as performed through writing. The attempts to incorporate the performance elements into its teaching approaches, allowed the study to move closer to the aporia of urgency.

### *3. Transformation and reconstruction*

In the legal context, finality comes when the judge takes his/her decision and declares the sentence. In the education context, one needs to move beyond stating the decision and actually implementing it.

In the language teaching field, Janks (2000) who looks at how students can be taught the link between language and power and reflects on the orientations to critical education literacy, would agree with the impetus for 'deconstruction' in the process of macro-design, for it allows one to grasp 'the manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production' (quoted in Janks, 2000:179). Still, she offers two further design layers to the study's deconstruction processes or aporias. These are 'transformation' and 're-construction' (2000:181). These design phases could compensate for the seeming inconclusiveness of the deconstruction lens as pointed out by Derrida's critics. These are also stressed by the proponents of the New London Group who explore the merits of 'multimodal production' and 'reconstruction using a range of media' to bring changes to students' literacy practices (ibid.:178).

Transformation could be understood at policy level as the vision to bring about 'equity' in access to the tools of success, but here refers more to the level of practice as the ability to re-adapt teaching practices after a thorough deconstruction of existing practices. Re-construction is equally important, for as Janks points out, 'deconstruction without re-construction or design reduces human agency' (2000: 181). I believe that human agency is enabled first and foremost through critique, though certainly enhanced through an active search for solutions or alternatives. Hence, the deconstruction move cannot be read off too lightly. Re-construction was significant in the study because it related to the ultimate end of the research, the design of alternative pedagogic methods and spaces. Hence, the term "design" at the broader conceptual, semiotic level in the study proceeded from deconstruction to transformation and re-construction. Owing to its spiraling, iterative evolution, it allowed for greater reflexivity on the part of the designer/participant observer/researcher around the research methods, design methods, boundaries of the pedagogic spaces and of the roles therein.

### ***1.3.2 Methodological design – the affordances of the critical ethnographic gaze***

The methodological design had an important role to play in the way the research processes unfolded. The study used a critical ethnographic lens to generate data collection moments, analyse insights gained in the field, and respond to them. One would suppose that when the objects of scrutiny are discreet, provisional and shifting, as in the case of international students' identities and writing voice, they can best be explored through ethnographic methods, which allow the researcher to become an insider to the participants' communities of practice.

What this lens does, is that it allows one to transcend the description of a particular culture and the identities therein, to explore options and alternatives in response to observations and other forms of data in the field. The critical ethnographic stance was adopted for the study as it operated within the three aporias, mentioned earlier. There was an exploratory phase where action was suspended, followed by a testing of different spaces and methods – 'aporia of undecidability' - as the researcher moved in and out of formal and informal spaces. This phase culminated in an 'aporia of urgency' during which the Writers' workshops were created, and later, where the design principles for future workshops were generated.

The Writers' workshops served as a form of 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994) at the junction between institutional and informal peer spaces. The "third space" notion is elaborated more fully in chapter two. It was a generative rehearsal safe environment where texts and contexts of text production and reception, in other words the iterative processes of writing and feedback were explored. Texts produced by international students in the different settings, such as the peer groups and the more formal institutional sites such as the lecture theatres were brought into the workshop space and analysed. Besides texts, the workshop space generated its own activities such as speech making and theatrical performances, to explore the writing-identity-performance link. It is noteworthy that the performance component was not prioritised in the pilots in 2010, but emerged as a necessary link between the abstract notions of identity and the more tangible forms of writing in the second iteration of workshops.

### ***1.3.3 Workshop design***

The workshops emerged as a productive forum for the creation of texts and other literacy moments. They imitated the informal nature of existing subcultures and experimented with different pedagogical methods and sites. Taking into consideration the macro and micro-design processes, they involved inter alia:

- evaluating existing intervention programmes and perceptions around writing at UCT
- exploring the link between students' *habitus*, identity and writing. This was partly explored in the Masters study of Mauritian students' writings
- adapting/designing, implementing and evaluating pedagogies for international students, with a particular focus on critical thinking
- re-designing and relocating the pedagogic space and methods over several workshops
- recommending design principles for the workshop's implementation at UCT

Throughout the different processes of design afore-mentioned, Janks (2000) insists that issues of 'domination', 'access', 'diversity' be considered, in her case to promote critical literacy education. This is especially important in the post-apartheid South African context where a critical awareness of literacy can 'contribute to our re-inventing our nation and ourselves' (2000:175). She argues further that domination, access and diversity operate interdependently with design. She focuses

on the local South African context. However, the themes discussed can be extended to the international students' situation, even if the way these are experienced may differ.

Firstly, 'design without domination', without the awareness of how dominant discourses operate in design may lead to their perpetuation. The awareness of how dominant discourses affect design in the South African context, can also be useful at the micro-level, in the higher education setting, to better grasp how they affect not only local but also international students' constitution of themselves and the design of support structures. Perhaps other dominant discourses may apply. Janks's argument hence supports the study's need to deconstruct mainstream, privileged linguistic discourses in order to better grasp how dominant discourses apply in this context.

'Design without access' to those dominant discourses would disadvantage those who are already marginalised. Access to the dominant discourses also has its own downside of perpetuating the hegemonic power of those discourses. This is what Lodge (1997) refers to as the "access paradox". At internationalising institutions, one may well introduce international students to the dominant discourses for academic success, but may in the process temporarily label them as marginalised and give pre-eminence to those discourses over the students' own brought along knowledges. Having said this, it is equally possible that one develops a writing pedagogy that draws both from the students' prior home discourses and the institutional discourses, and nurtures students' authority and authorship in writing. This is in part what the Writers' workshops in this research strived to achieve.

I deliberately treat "authority" and "authorship" separately to reflect on the nuance of meanings. The former refers to the credibility the writer has in the eyes of the reader and the latter refers to her ability to assume the "author" identity. Authorship in a sense precedes authority, for it is what allows writers to use the authority they may have judiciously or creatively. Arguably, even with a vast arsenal of tools to gain authority in the text, e.g. quotes, text template, one remains a mere reporter of events until one feels like an author. I would hence argue that mere access to dominant discourses does not suffice to make students authors, for in extreme cases, students may unthinkingly replicate the stated keys to success. For example, they may be quasi-dependent on mark sheets or rubrics for instructions or validation on what they intend to write. I do not discredit the importance of rubrics, but suppose that these need to be accessed by confident rather

than conforming students, else they could end up with a false sense of authority (more external), rather than authorship (more internal). Based on prior research by Street (2000), Clark and Ivanič (1997) and so on, there is reason to believe that if students begin to see themselves as authors and have sufficient confidence and skill to sustain the impression, then given access to the dominant discourses, they can also develop or gain access to ways to negotiate or subvert those discourses. Hence, in the research, while participants were introduced to the institutions' expectations, or indirectly to the dominant discourses of academic writing, they were also given access to a safe space where they could express or discover their multiple writer identities.

Finally, Janks states 'design without diversity', in other words, without awareness of how our diverse social experiences and discourses shape our identities, would lead to a programme that fails to adapt or design novel, non-mainstream discourses to better suit those experiences (Janks, 2000:179). The need to acknowledge diversity, in this case across regional and cultural borders, provides a rationale for the study's efforts to innovate and be sensitive to international students' *habitus* and their particular social and academic needs.

#### **1.4 Main research questions**

The study's aims were two-fold. On the one hand, it aimed at developing pedagogic models that are relevant, innovative or as Derrida would say 'differant' – different and deferred in time each time they are repeated. The study sought to understand the nature and substance of the difference in the pedagogic models as they were iterated over several workshops. The workshop setting where these pedagogic models were designed could be seen as a performative space at the junction between formal institutional spaces and the informal peer settings. On the other hand, it aimed at arriving at the design principles for future pedagogical spaces to teach academic writing. The questions informing the study captured its exploratory nature and organic evolution. These were as follows:

1. How do international students enact their identities in institutional settings especially with regards to writing?
2. What methods and teaching sites can be used in the workshop space to bridge the 'brought along' and expected academic writing forms?
3. What is the link between writing, performance and identity in the workshop space and beyond?

4. How can the workshop space be integrated into mainstream academic spaces at UCT and at other English-medium universities?
5. What are the design principles to develop similar EAL writing workshops?

This meta-question (question 5) around the design principles was what actually propelled the research into exploration mode. The study culminated in the principles after having gone through the successive aporias of decision making.

### **1.5 Thesis outline**

It is noteworthy that the sequence of moments characterising the exploratory research did not directly match the way the narrative was constructed. The moments had to be reorganised to reflect the mental spaces I occupied as I re-collected the different types of data.

The thesis is therefore divided into three main sections. It begins with the aporia of suspension where I survey the literature on pedagogic spaces and methods, and the key dimensions of a critical ethnographic stance. This is followed by the aporia of undecidability where I explore students' brought along resources and other options to generate a writing pedagogy from below. Finally, in the aporia of urgency, I share the practices that took place in the workshops and interrogate the dynamic link between texts, contexts and writing identities. The heuristic tool used to explore the link between texts and identities explicit was Ivanič's (1998) clover model of writer identities, and that between identities and the broader context was her notion of subject positions enabled by the context.

Each of the aporias is preceded by a prologue where I mostly engage in conversations with writing experts at UCT on different academic writing issues. These conversations reveal the complexity of such issues in the mainstream institutional spaces, and provide a broader context in which to view the research project.

‘The pause is as important as the note’

Truman Fisher (Story compositions, 2009)

In music like in speech, writing or acting, the pause punctuates the moments to come. This aporia was necessary in the study, to reflect on the ways forward and design teaching methods and spaces accordingly.

My Masters study on the writing difficulties and coping strategies of first year Mauritian students concluded as follows:

Mauritian students in the years to come may well confront similar challenges unless certain secondary school practices are revisited and relevant measures are initiated at UCT to further facilitate international students’ academic integration. This may be a challenge for UCT owing to the overwhelming diversity of its international student body. However it remains a necessity, especially at this point in time when ‘Equity and Institutional Culture’ issues are being eagerly discussed and appear at the top of the University’s concerns. As expected, this study produced more questions than answers. The study’s recommendations were as follows:

1. A longitudinal study tracking the academic performance of Mauritian students over time;
2. An action research initiated in secondary schools in Mauritius at A-Level to develop new teaching methods to enhance students’ preparedness for higher studies;
3. Similar studies involving international students from other countries;
4. Projects aimed at developing ‘mutual responsiveness’ that would facilitate first year international students’ adaptation to university realities.

This is where we begin. The Masters study partly justifies the need for the present study. It signals some trends among a group of international students of a particular nationality. Whether the trends would be applicable across international student groupings, would need to be explored in their own right. Broadly speaking, the present study may be seen as a response to the fourth recommendation, that is, projects aimed at developing ‘mutual responsiveness’. The aim of ‘mutual responsiveness’ within the scope of this study, may be translated into possible

undergraduate writing programmes to cater for international students' academic needs. To have a clearer sense of the writing environment at UCT, I conducted semi-structured interviews with UCT's writing experts. They were asked questions around traditional, current and alternative spaces and methods to teach writing; their experiences with academic writing as students initially, then as staff; their understandings of internationalisation policies and their implications on the curriculum; the key writing components in their departments' academic essays; whether they would fund writing programmes over other academic priorities; and how they saw the future of writing programmes.

Why do these interactions precede my account of the workshop space? Firstly, the writing experts have years of work experience at UCT particularly in the field of writing, hence the term 'experts'. They are aware not only of the politics of writing but also of its pragmatics, and had taken note of trends over the years to guide researchers in the field on measures that might be more feasible than others. The second reason is one related to the belief that the workshop space will have to be generated after gathering insights from the institutional spaces and the peer settings. The writing experts are not necessarily academics in the faculties, they could be staff members with an expertise in the pedagogy of writing to whom the writing component of specific departments has been outsourced. By virtue of this, they have a rich understanding of how the faculties operate and offer valuable insights into the writing requirements and the provisions made for text production within them.

Unlike the scholarly studies, the interviews themselves gave access to multiple layers of being and doing in the institution, for instance what roles and identities the respondents enacted, what their personal experiences were, how their roles were embedded within larger institutional goals and policies and so on. The interviews offered at once a bird's eye view of the issue and the minute details, and were interactive enough to allow for additional queries and dialogue. Ethnographic enquiry often thrives on rich data of this kind. Hence, the set of responses, presented here precede the scholarly studies in chapter two. I analysed the interviews less strictly for their form or embedded discourses, and rather took note, compared and discussed some issues they highlighted to set the context for this study. First, a brief introduction of the writing experts:

*A.C<sup>7</sup> is a programme convenor for a writing course in the Engineering and Built Environment faculty. It is run both for ESL and first language students. She also has experience as a Writing Centre consultant.*

*G.L is a linguist and currently a curriculum advisor in the Humanities faculty. Over the years, she has run several language courses where the essay topics were self-defined or chosen from a range of possible topics.*

*T.R is an academic who has been involved in the design and teaching of a communications course for Economics students.*

*W.N is a writing consultant in the Economics department. She offers one-to-one, voluntary consultations and runs workshops for first year Engineering students enrolled in a compulsory writing course, normally for their first assignment. Otherwise, she runs workshops at the behest of the course convenor.*

*N.G is a post-graduate coordinator and academic writing lecturer in the Environmental and Geographical Sciences department. She teaches on a directed reading course at the Masters level. She also has experience as a consultant at the Writing Centre.*

*I.B is an academic who runs a course on professional skills for Health Sciences students. Much of the teaching is explicit and students are taught how to develop a research essay. Students are given a complex topic at the beginning of the semester and have to produce drafts and mark themselves on self-assessment sheets.*

Below are some excerpts from our interactions. They shared their understandings of internationalisation and its policies, followed by a reflection on the needs of international students. The writing experts saw internationalisation as the new reality of tertiary institutions across the globe. They also shared some of their concerns in that respect.

*A.C: Diversity is the thing. It is the norm. We welcome a lot of students from Southern Africa. Internationalisation counts as well for diversity within South Africa. It would be useful for students at all levels.*

In post-Apartheid South Africa, the recognition and acceptance of individuals from other races or nationalities, form part of the country's efforts towards healing, transformation, reconciliation and social redress. National unity may well take precedence over the acceptance of the foreign others, however, the process of recognition is inevitable especially in the globalisation era where national boundaries are becoming increasingly fluid due to increased mobility and *trans humans*.

*G.L: Internationalisation is good for the university. There's always been an international component in the staff. But international students have only started coming in the last 15 years. This is good for students here and elsewhere. They can engage with one another both academically and socially, share commonalities and differences of experiences. This affects the teaching too, making us re-think the cultural reference points. These can't be taken for granted. Even South African*

---

<sup>7</sup> The writing experts have been given new abbreviations.

*students can be spectacularly unaware of SA's economy. They don't read or watch specific TV programmes.*

For G.L, from a pedagogical point of view, the cross-cultural encounters can be beneficial to local and international students, as these may offer them new 'cultural reference points' and broaden their otherwise narrow outlook on their own and other cultures.

*T.R: Internationalisation is closely linked to globalisation and has been made possible in post-Apartheid South Africa because of the lifting of past sanctions that allowed for very little student exchange on campus. Internationalisation for UCT means that there are and will be a lot of foreign African students, a lot of foreign exchanges with Europe, United States and Canada.*

A.C, G.L and T.R saw internationalisation as an inevitable outcome of global movements and expressed its potential in enhancing the socio-academic experiences of students at the university. Their views shared the idealism of Knight (2004) and Deem (2001) for example who detailed the academic and economic benefits of 'sharing' and 'exchanges' between international tertiary institutions. The two authors focused less on how these exchanges may be initiated on unequal terms. The others shared their scepticism about how these processes would unfold. As W.N. pointed out, international students may be seen merely as a 'source of income', implying that universities may admit an increasing number of international students without necessarily catering for their specific needs through additional academic structures for example.

*W.N: There is an engagement with research at an international level as well as a perspective on the teaching of curriculum more internationally than parochially. The process will also involve more engagement with international students academically. It means that South African students will have access to international students. There will be an exchange both in terms of ideas and people. At UCT, there's a concern I've always had. I saw it happen when I was overseas. International students become a source of income for institutions and while that may be what happens, that must not be what drives the institution to have more students.*

She argues that such a decision must be driven by policy. She acknowledges the efforts made by the university but states that more could be done following the example of Australian universities in terms of language and academic proficiency. She wonders if there is a 'clear university-wide policy with regards to international students', if there are strategies in place and if the other role players, faculty, courses and students are involved.

*N.G: Internationalisation really expands our impact and horizons. I worry that it may be at the cost of our local students especially at the Postgrad level. It certainly opens up new perspectives.*

*I.B: It depends on what people's reasons are for coming here. European and American students may be coming for the international experience in a different*

*context, or for more practical reasons like their parents are expatriates. For African students, UCT is a great opportunity they will not find at home. There is a divide between those who come from highly developed countries and those from African countries.*

W.N raised doubts about the commercialisation of tertiary education during the process of internationalisation and its impact on international students. While Deem (2001) focused mostly on the behavior of the institutions themselves with globalisation and their need to sharpen their entrepreneurial and managerial finesse, W.N spoke on behalf of the international students who may be prey to abuse, as profit-maximising schemes begin to override the aim to educate.

At the heart of N.G's comment was a concern about the allocation of resources. Internationalisation calls for more resources and services to cater for the surging numbers of students. When provisions are not made soon enough, the existing, limited resources need to be shared among more students, to the detriment of some local students. In fact, it could affect all students. At that point, the drive to internationalise the institution would have to be suspended. Hence, while internationalisation could allow universities to celebrate diversity, the broadening of minds, the sharing of cultures and practices, the influx of internationalisation and the limited resources to welcome them would require them to make strategic choices. Priorities would have to shift and the question to ask oneself would be: whose interests get served first? For I.B, the internationalisation phenomenon at an African institution would be experienced differently by students from the centre, and those in the more peripheral regions. This takes us away from questions of centre *versus* periphery, to those about 'centre or periphery for whom?'

These questions do not have straight-forward answers and perhaps a glance at the internationalisation policy and how it was received could give readers more direction into the issue. The comments also led me to explore existing literature on the topic in the forthcoming chapters. For the writing experts, the policies were quite vague unless they were related to practical measures on the ground. For A.C, for the policy to matter it would have to be applied to practical issues such as course content. At the same time, she was worried that the university may in turn neglect other diversity issues, alluding here to the local race-related issues that have left their imprint on the post-Apartheid education system.

*A.C.: It has to be tied to other things happening on campus. The term 'equity' seems to obscure other terms and priorities. Institutional culture and equity go hand in hand. One way to translate it in practice would be to teach globalisation courses.<sup>8</sup> There are conferences on internationalisation. But my question is, why are we separating it out from other core diversity issues?*

For G.L., on the other hand, the meanings of institutional culture as stated in the policy itself, needed to be revisited.

*G...: Institutional culture(s). This is fundamental paradox at the heart of UCT. People have different images about it both outside and internally. Sometimes one image surfaces – and then one will respond, 'but we are not like that anymore'. Historical and cultural forces are the epitome of centripetal forces. This image is not part of who you are. There are other options. The university is open and exploratory. There are spaces for debate, whether constructive and non-constructive. Institutional culture should be able to accept subculture. The engagement can be horizontal, vertical, sideways. Even the answer to the question 'Who is a part of us?' is likely to shift.*

The policy statements were not cast in stone but needed to be re-appropriated in new contexts, as the definitions of 'us' and 'them' themselves evolved. With this came the question of alignment. What values do we endorse, whom do we include or exclude in our new group? In the globalisation context, the questions of culture, migrancy, virtual migrancy, and how we 'imagine' spaces themselves become important (Juriens, 2001). As G.L. noted, 'Institutional culture should be able to accept subculture'. Gupta and Ferguson stress the significance of new 'imagined spaces' because '[t]he irony ... is that as actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate, ideas and culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps more salient' (1992:10). The institutional culture/s would need to factor in the blurring of these geographical boundaries, but more so, their impact on the cultural margins.

When asked about her views on the equity policy at UCT, G.L. remarked:

*Equity is not equality. It refers to the fairness of practice. Equal access into UCT (benchmarked at 35 matric points) can be said to be unfair on those getting less. But equity is not a question of getting those with equal, identical points into the institution. Equity in access would require that the exit points be the same. In tutorials, for instance, all students have equal speaking rights, yet someone may be dominant. One needs to tune into that and create a fair space. For the sake of equity.*

---

<sup>8</sup> There is such a course on offer, open to all students. It is called 'UCT Global Citizenship: Leading for Social Justice'. It is voluntary and non-credit bearing and has a strong 'volunteer ethos' (UCT Global Citizenship, 2011).

Here she made the distinction between equity as fairness and ensuring that everyone was given the opportunity to develop in the institution and succeed, irrespective of their initial scores.

*T.R: Equity? How? Is that because South Africa is providing others with equal opportunities to grow and learn? It is a positive aspect of internationalisation. It's good for South African students to mix with international students. It broadens their perspective and makes UCT a more multicultural and interesting space. In terms of interventions, I'm not sure whether we are addressing language issues of a diverse international group. Many international students that are not getting into the Academic Development Programme (ADP) may need support. It has to be addressed.*

While reflecting on policy, T.R drew the link between policy and capacity to deliver. In the case of the postgraduate distance studies, the two were at loggerheads. This did raise questions about how the university would address the needs of first year international students as per its vision.

W.N likewise noted a difference between the letter and application of such policies.

*WN: What do they mean? Equity? How? In terms of what? Are you saying that all students have the same access, assistance with integration? It is not clear what this means in practice. Is there an indication of how it will be integrated?*

*With greater diversity, the institutional culture is made more vibrant. But that depends on whether others coming into the institution are absorbed into the institution or are given spaces to voice their own ideas. It depends on whether the institution structures are pervious or impervious.*

I.B reflected more specifically on the absence of language interventions for international students, especially since most of them used English as a second/additional language.

*I.B: In terms of language, international students are accepted as ESL users but no provision has been made to cater for them. This is a big gap. International students are seen as people to make money from. They may be at a disadvantage. We need to give them support.*

She suggested that lecturers should make the teaching of academic writing an important part of their curriculum.

*I.B: It is the role of the lecturers. People need to take responsibility. But they may not know how to do it. We need to work with expatriates like us [like we deal with the local students].*

T.R and N.G agreed that it would be the lecturers' role to prepare students to meet the requirements of academic writing.

*T.R.: It is the mainstream's role. International students who are struggling can be integrated into the Academic Development Programme.*

*N.G.: The role should sit with every academic. Academics should be forced not to be lazy markers and provide constructive feedback. The responsibility also depends*

*on whether the issue is purely a language issue or a writing issue. If it is the former, then it is the students' responsibility.*

The other writing experts believed that there was a need for a language intervention for international students and each suggested a different approach. For A.C, the intervention could form part of the orientation programme, separately from the task ascribed to lecturers for the reasons mentioned below.

*A.C: Something can be done on the orientation side. There's not enough done for language support. In the case of current programmes, UCT has not invested merely in equipment but brought people in, academic development lecturers. We can't expect subject lecturers to do it. They may not know what students need. They may focus on plagiarism. They may not understand the mechanism. It is the role of literacy experts.*

G.L also suggested a separate intervention for international students have the shape and structure of peer support groups.

*G.L: International students struggle at all levels. The 'academic writing in English' module might help. Referrals can also work. At the Writing Centre too, slots could be designed specifically for francophone students.*

Looking more broadly, W.N argued that irrespective of the approach to teach academic writing to international students, it would need to trickle down from policies, to the courses, to the curriculum and to the students themselves.

*W.N: I think it is the role of the university policies and strategies, of the discipline-specific courses within the faculties. One also has to look at the curriculum, course design and other resources. The students also have an active role in their learning. There needs to be a determination and willingness to use existing resources as well. It's a partnership really.*

The intervention would need to be based on the willingness of all parties concerned.

This conversation was an eye opening experience as the different writing experts from different departments offered valuable insight into how writing was approached in their department or by them specifically. Their views assisted in the design of content and methods more suited to the needs of international students and of relevant faculties, even if the subsequent programme would be a generic one. Their views also showed that there was consensus about the need for a writing intervention for international students. The writing experts nonetheless cautioned against a hasty attempt to align internationalisation policies to practices, and signaled certain semantic as well as

practical contradictions ensuing from the very context of internationalisation, that would need to be resolved first.

To guide the understandings of spaces and their margins in an internationalisation context, in chapter two, I look at specific approaches and methods that have been used to teach academic writing especially to EAL students and explore literature on different pedagogic spaces, narrowing down to a possible form of third space for the Writers' workshop. Evidently, one cannot equate EAL and international students, therefore in the study, I focus on EAL students from countries of the South, primarily those in the SADC region. These students' needs would differ much from those of international students from the USA or from Asian countries. Then, in chapter three, I survey the methodological options in the critical ethnographic field to serve the purposes of the workshop design and implementation.

## Chapter 2 – Writing across spaces

Before designing academic writing pedagogies for EAL students, one needs to look at existing EAL writing pedagogies. This chapter reviews the literature on the EAL pedagogies, pausing to reflect on the ESL/EAL terminologies. It then traces how the understanding of EAL has shifted over time and interrogates the notion of difference. It is sympathetic to Canagarajah's view that difference can be more of a "resource" than a "deficit" (2006:152).

It then provides an overview the existing EAL pedagogies at UCT for local students, before looking at the teaching of writing more broadly. It surveys some key readings in the 'writing across the curriculum' and 'writing in the disciplines' traditions and the pedagogic approaches in the genre, process and academic literacies fields to argue that the latter may be most sensitive to the way students' writings are shaped by uneven cross-cultural encounters. Based on these approaches and EAL literature, it argues for new pedagogies of writing and research methods to generate these pedagogies. One aspect explored was the creation of multiple subject positions which consider the diversity of backgrounds and encounters that international students experience in the "contact zone" (Pratt, 1991).

In the process, it appraises the role of spatiality in the development of new pedagogies and suggests the use of multimodal tools as one of the ways to restructure space. As pointed out by the writing experts previously, these approaches would need to be nested within the institutional context, appropriate policies, and be incorporated into the curriculum, the courses and so on. 'It's a partnership really,' W.N noted. Scanning through the literature on pedagogical spaces, I argue that with the design of new methods to teach writing to EAL students, comes the need to design a new space similar to Bhabha's (1994) "third space". Such a space would consider the alternatives to available academic spaces (mainstream and peer spaces) and engage with them in a productive and situated manner. It could be situated between the binaries of formal and informal sites or furthermore, in the body as a site for embodied or performative practice whose features would only become evident once lived in. Thereafter, useful terms for this study are conceptualized, namely discourse, voice, identities in writing, performance and performative tools.

## **2.1 EAL writing pedagogies**

### **2.1.1 ESL/EAL**

The EAL writing pedagogies currently used at foreign universities and at UCT to teach students from non-English speaking backgrounds are explored in order to devise appropriate pedagogic approaches for this study. These pedagogies mostly fall within the category of English as a Second Language (ESL) pedagogies. It should be noted that ESL and EAL both carry different connotations that are related to the relative importance that is attributed to the 'first' language.

As Pennycook points out, by naming any language that is not one's first language, the 'second' language, one immediately relegates its speaker to a subordinate rank. One can reflect on how the speakers of a "second" language are perceived when the language is one invested with economic and geopolitical status like English. He questions by the same token, the 'othering' of the speakers' additional languages. He suggests the word "additional" instead of "second" to refer to those languages so as to avoid a possible ideological trap (2001:145).

While the term ESL is commonly used in the literature, this study consciously opts for the less politically loaded term EAL. One would notice that the EAL teaching methods for academic writing can be inward-looking in their attempt to teach English writing conventions, as they can be outward-looking in their acknowledgement of students' non-English speaking backgrounds. By being outward looking, the EAL methods open up a potentially democratic learning space, where learners of 'additional' languages are not viewed as inferior.

### **2.1.2 Understandings of EAL**

EAL pedagogies have evolved considerably since Charles Fries's writings on the oral approach to teach English in the mid-1940s (post-World War II), in the USA in response to the democratic impulse to widen access to higher education, and cater for an increasing number of EAL learners (Lillis and Scott, 2007). In the early 1960s, others such as Erazmus (1960) have proposed that if written exercises are included in the pedagogy, these should be framed as "free composition". Pincas (1962) objected to this suggesting that students should master the grammar, the sentence patterns before they can be creative. She was in favour of what came to be known as "controlled composition" (see also Danielson, 1965; Paulson, 1967, 1972).

The 'current-traditional rhetoric' approach which closely followed the controlled composition wave stressed on teaching students the written structure and discourses (Kaplan, 1967; Taylor, 1976). Some hypotheses on the teaching of English as an additional language that also emerged during that period were the "natural order hypothesis" and the "monitor hypothesis" among others. The former proposed that the second language be taught in the same order as it is naturally acquired by first language speakers. The latter supported the view that EAL students do not monitor their utterances as naturally as first language speakers who have acquired the rules of the language. In that case, language teaching to EAL students had to satisfy three necessary conditions, namely 'sufficient time to think about the rule', 'focus on form' and 'know[ing] the rule' (Krashen, 1985:23).

In the 1970s, some scholars (Zamel, 1976; Raimes 1978) showed a penchant for the process approach as it gave more value to the writer and the meanings she wished to convey. This approach is explained in more detail later. Critics however viewed the process approach as not enough focused on the academic writing context and the readership. Reid (1984) and Horowitz (1986) among others preferred the 'English for academic purposes' approach where EAL students were taught specific academic writing genres so as to gain membership into the academic realm.

While some of these hypotheses still have currency in present day pedagogies, they tend to present formulae for achieving linguistic proficiency, which on second thought may not be applicable across the board. Indeed, Morgan warns against the generalising tools in EAL that assume that students' identities are 'insular' and 'static' and that all students follow similar learning paths with predictable outcomes (1997:431, see also Fernsten, 2008, on 'fixed' identities).

For Norton (1995), the negotiation of students' identities requires investment on the learner's part into the practices of the language community. By investing in those practices and taking risks, the EAL learner gets closer to inheriting the 'symbolic and material resources' attached the additional language, hitherto reserved for the target speech community. One of the symbolic resources aimed at is 'communicative competence', that is an 'awareness of the right to speak' or as Bourdieu states 'the power to impose reception' (1995:18). If the learner is unable to harness this power, then s/he may in some cases succumb to silence or develop a counter discourse that grants

him/her a space and 'legitimacy' to be heard. It is in the pursuit of such resources that investment in additional language acquisition occurs.

Leki in her study of EAL students goes a step further to identify the ways in which students 'invest' themselves and navigate their journey through the acquisition of the additional language (1995:235). She focuses on how ESL students acquire the academic writing discourses, the strategies they bring with them and those they develop to succeed in their courses. Likewise, composition studies in the US emphasise ways in which EAL students' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds can be used in the classroom to foster writer's voice and critical thinking. Ramanathan and Atkinson note that the development of such qualities often relies on 'culturally specific norms of thought and expression' to which EAL students may not have access (Matsuda et al, 2006: 151).

Canagarajah explains that these cultural and linguistic differences can be approached in different ways in EAL pedagogy. In his framework, he uses the terms 'difference-as-deficit', 'difference-as-estrangement' and 'difference-as-resource' to alert educators to the fact that 'difference' can be approached in different ways which need to be articulated. He insists that one needs to develop a meta-awareness of how approaches to 'difference' influence one's pedagogic methods. (2006: 152-153).

On the whole, a move away from the 'deficit model' of writing to those acknowledging students' diverse identities and students' prior resources to engender learning seems more appealing (see Lea and Street, 2000; Fernsten, 2008). In this study, the recent EAL pedagogies, especially those emerging from composition studies in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa, were first explored during a pilot phase, before being refined in subsequent workshops for one could not generalise the approaches across contexts. The act of bringing out students' cultural and linguistic resources to boost their writing in Writers' workshops could potentially be beneficial. This was also evidenced in the EAL pedagogies used at UCT by the Language Development Group (LDG) which I focus on as this university is the setting for this study. The approach adopted by the group is to some extent also prevalent in other South African universities with similar histories.

### **2.1.3 EAL research and pedagogies at UCT**

The LDG has taken initiatives at UCT to assist and empower students in academic writing (Thesen & van Pletzen, 2006). The LDG programmes have until recently aimed mostly at improving learning opportunities of South African students from disadvantaged or diverse backgrounds in the name of national redress and social justice. LDG may now need to review its redress and justice related objectives in the context of an internationalising university and thus respond to the particular needs of international students. As W.N noted,

‘There needs to be, taking the example of Australian universities, policies put in place in response to the number of international students. I’m not sure we have reached that stage yet, especially in terms of language proficiency’.

Thesen and van Pletzen (2006) highlight the recent research in academic writing by the LDG, against the background of the socio-political changes in South Africa. One of the contributors, Nomdo, analyses how successful Black students from different schooling backgrounds, act out their complex identities and potential at the University, where they think educators view them as ‘behind’ and as ‘somewhat removed from the middle class, English speaking norm’(2006:180). Bangeni and Kapp allude similarly to the import of students’ *habitus* in the acquisition of new discourses. However, they note that the process is more multifaceted, stating that ‘students have complex motivations and pressures within and beyond the institution that are not clearly visible to us as academics’ (2006:82). Bangeni and Kapp share similar views to Nomdo’s that students can develop their own ‘collateral capital’, however this requires first overcoming the struggle between ‘former selves and becoming selves’ (Clark & Ivanič, cited in Bangeni & Kapp, 2006), most acutely felt during students’ first year of study at the university.

Matsuda et al. on the other hand, draw attention to the educators’ under-preparedness to teach EAL students. They note,

Second-language students in first-year composition continue to encounter curricula, assignments, and assessment practices that are not designed with their needs and abilities in mind, and even the most conscientious teachers often have not been given access to the background or resources to make their instructional practices more compatible with their students (2006:2).

Norton (1997) argues further that teachers not only need ‘access to background’, they need to ask the right questions to enrich their understanding. She states,

Thus the central questions teachers need to ask are not “What is the learner’s mother tongue?” and “Is the learner a native speaker of Punjabi?” Rather the teacher should ask, ‘What is the learner’s linguistic repertoire? Is the learner’s relationship to these languages based on expertise, inheritance, affiliation, or a combination?’”

The right questions would allow the teacher to develop learning strategies best suited for the student. The questions about the student’s existing repertoire will also prevent teachers from narrowly labelling EAL students as “deficient”. Labelling is inevitable and even as it ‘isolates the named’ to cite Ndebele (in Norton, 1997:424), Thesen observes that labels can be worthwhile when initiating measures towards equity in education. She stresses however ‘that the categories (which the labels attach to) have to be kept open and co-constructed with the learners’ (Thesen, in Norton, 1997:424) so that there is a fit between teacher’s perceptions of EAL students, and the latter’s perceptions of themselves. While teachers can misrepresent the students, Norton (1997) argues that they can also be misguided about their own roles in the EAL context. She notes that unfortunately teachers can easily become ‘teachers of culture’ over and above ‘teachers of English’, though she admits in the same vein, that culture and language are inextricably linked. As such, though EAL teachers may not be able to teach a neutral form of English language, they need to be aware of the possible cultural imposition through the medium of the language.

## **2.2 Writing across the curriculum and writing in the discipline pedagogies**

In terms of the content of the writing course, should the focus be on generic writing skills or discipline-specific writing? This will affect the teaching methods opted for, for example if the focus is on teaching generic writing skills, then ‘writing across the curriculum methods’ would be more appropriate to sharpen students’ critical thinking skills, rather than methods to enhance their skills at expressing technical terminology in words. Also, the scope of the intervention would be wider than if the focus were on discipline-specific writing. Over the past three decades, scholars in the field have been assessing the benefits and drawbacks of teaching ‘writing across the curriculum’ which stresses ‘writing to learn’ (Bazerman & Russell, 1994; see also Britton et al., 1975). Key aspects of the debate are presented below.

Writing across the curriculum (WAC) first gained currency in the US with emphasis on disciplinary specialisation in the early 1970s and with the admission of previously excluded portions of the population (Russell, 1991). Faculties were reluctant to teach academic writing,

seeing it as a digression from the teaching of the core course content. Hence, new structures specialising in different forms of writing, such as 'freshman composition' began to surface (Carter, 2007:386). The aim of WAC courses was to induct students in requisite but generic forms of academic writing with the premise that students could then apply these skills to their own discipline. It comes as no wonder then that WAC courses were targeted more at the undergraduate students who were still learning the ropes of academic writing. In recent years, more focus has been laid on multi-modal resources to teach writing under the sub-branch of 'communication across the curriculum' (Bazerman, 2009).

In the late 1980s, scholars such as Miller (1984) and Myers (1991) began to stress the importance of teaching writing in the discipline (WID) so that students might express disciplinary concepts in writing with more ease, and clarify their understanding of discipline-specific content. Russell (1997) notes nonetheless that WID is often taken for granted because it is not formally taught by faculty members. However, the potential of WID cannot be underestimated, because students still acquire language skills through immersion in their discipline and these in turn influence their understanding of concepts in that discipline. WID privileges 'procedural knowledge', the 'how to' as opposed to merely 'conceptual knowledge', the 'what'. Russell (1997) therefore seems to urge for a validation of WID within different disciplines. His chief criticism of WAC is that it tends to become formulaic and does not offer a language-rich environment. In a sense then, WAC appears to operate in a vacuum, without a relevant context for the development of the curriculum.

In all fairness, it could be argued that both approaches need not be diametrically opposed. It would be productive to adopt WAC then WID approaches or other combinations as best fits the academic programme. Also, granted that WID serves the aim of the faculties to turn students into specialists in their particular fields, the aim of the faculties is now widening across universities including UCT. Faculties at UCT now seem to endorse the dual aim of disciplinary specialisation and the holistic development of students through courses that cover critical thinking presentation skills and so on as part of the yearly programme. These types of courses, especially those requiring critical thought, were once solely the province of the "soft" disciplines in the humanities, for example Politics, English, Philosophy and so on, where students were made to question their assumptions and think critically about the content taught to them. In order to broaden their offerings, the other faculties are recruiting language experts, such as those consulted

'Evidence-based management' in the Engineering and Built-in Environment faculty, 'Professional Studies' in the Commerce faculty and 'Becoming a professional' in the Health Sciences faculty. It would appear from the course titles that they are closely related to the content of the main courses in the discipline. However, they largely emphasise metacognition and require students to think and write critically about themselves and their profession or other current affair issues. In practice, however, these objectives are not necessarily attained as participants enrolled for these additional courses require additional scaffolding and support as I observed during my Masters study. For instance, the participants enrolled for the 'Evidence-based management' course, did grasp what an argument or a fallacy meant, but did not always transfer this understanding when responding to an essay question on Outcome-based education in South Africa.

### **2.3 Process, genre and academic literacies approaches**

In terms of the "how" of writing pedagogies, some of the main approaches to teaching writing are process and genre approaches, and subsequently the academic literacies approach.

The process approach suggests that 'writing is not the straightforward plan – outline – writing process that many believe to be' (Taylor, 1981:6). Raimes (1983) and Zamel (1983) view writing as an 'exploratory', 'generative process' that allowed writers to come closer to the idea they wished to express. Raimes aptly captures this idea as follows, 'composing means expressing ideas, conveying meaning' (1983: 261). For Maybin (1994), the process approach treats the teaching of writing as a gradual process that goes through the stages of 'drafting, conferencing, revising, editing and publishing', all carefully scaffolded by the teacher. It aims at fostering students' authorial voice by giving them the freedom to manoeuvre through their own content. To create the right conditions for this exploration, the classroom is turned into a 'workshop' where students become 'apprentice authors' and writing itself becomes 'social practice' with real purposes and audience. Underlying this approach, is the assumption that through practice as well as a layered pedagogy and the teacher's supportive input at each stage of the writing process, 'the craft of writing will come naturally' and good writing would emerge (Maybin, 1994). The process approach is however criticised by scholars and proponents of the genre school for not offering explicit writing guidelines to students. Also, by stressing that students generate their own content, the writing programme restricts students, since the content remains limited to personal narratives for instance and few other genres.

The genre approach, on the other hand views the teaching of writing as a way of making explicit the underlying principles and conventions of different writing genres (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993). The focus is on the end product, rather than the process. They argue that the process approach may operate in a culturally homogeneous group, but denies students from minority groups access to legitimate texts (1993:63). They opine that students cannot simply acquire 'specialist linguistic structures' but need to be given explicit instructions. Teaching writing through the genre approach involves providing students with exemplars of the genre required, discussing and helping the student to reproduce its features. Unlike the process approach where the teacher has a facilitative role, the teacher here has 'strong directional input'.

While the genre approach claims to empower students to write in different genres, it is criticised for being overly prescriptive and hampering students' voice (Badger and White, 2000). It may be surmised that while the writing conventions may well become formulaic, their explicitness may give scope for negotiation and subversion.

Also, while the process approach is generally associated with the WAC tradition and the genre approach is linked to the WID, readers may note that this need not necessarily be the case. A genre approach can be used to teach writing across the curriculum by focusing on general essay structure for instance, and a process approach can be used to facilitate the teaching of disciplinary genres. During the workshops that constitute the backbone of this study, the process and genre approaches were both used as it was believed that they complemented each other. Badger and White (2000) call such an approach the 'process genre' approach. Students did require scaffolding during the sessions so that the writing task did not appear too overwhelming. At the same time, they needed to be told explicitly what the specific writing conventions at UCT were for three main reasons. Firstly, these might differ from their prior academic writing conventions; secondly, lecturers seldom make the conventions explicit; and thirdly, students' experimentation with the conventions by trial and error might lead them to waste an entire academic year and perform poorly. It is therefore argued that one could merge the two approaches and teach the academic writing conventions step by step, ask students to write parts of texts, allow them to offer examples from their experience and encourage peer collaboration rather than prescribe the right answer.

Still, it appears that regardless of the approach/es used, the end result seems to assimilate the student into the university's writing system. While the process approach may acknowledge elements of students' voice, one wonders the extent to which this consideration informs the design of material or the assessment of texts produced over time. It seems that there is still a standard to be met, following several amended drafts, in order to produce a legitimate text. In the case of the genre approach, the pre-eminence of the best model is even more obvious. In all fairness, without a clear target, the students may repeatedly produce texts that are "unacceptable" and rejected by the faculty.

Lillis observes that in some cases, what is acceptable remains a 'mystery', which excludes mostly 'non-traditional' students or EAL/international students who may lack awareness of the requisite conventions of academic writing in particular contexts (2001:53). The case of non-traditional international students in Europe for instance may appear different from that of students from Southern nations studying in postcolonial institutions. Yet, as pointed out in the introduction, due to processes of internationalisation, the latter institutions may well emulate Western academic norms, display similar cultural myopia and demand similar academic rigour from their non-traditional students. Hence Lillis's concerns may well apply in the South African tertiary context.

At other times, the writing conventions may rely implicitly on students' prior acquisition of the English writing style (Curry & Lillis, 2004; Lillis & Curry, 2010). In a globalising context, it may be misleading to assume that students from diverse cultural and multilingual backgrounds and with different *habitus*, would share a similar standardised writing style. Lillis and Curry (2010) examine the responses or orientations of local reviewers who are native speakers of English vis-à-vis 'non-traditional' scholars' texts, especially when the scholars' mother-tongue style intervenes in their English writing. It is found that reviewers tend to interpret long sentences from French-speaking, Spanish-speaking students writing in English as a pompous display or a sign of lack of clarity.

Yet, is proficiency in academic writing merely a question of one's skill to assimilate the norms of the host institution/departments? How would one approach writing in classes with international students in a way that would also give them the critical tools to manoeuvre and negotiate the

rules? Possibly, some judgments need to be suspended until one becomes more familiar with students' linguistic backgrounds and writing styles. Also the expectation from local and international students to write critically almost operates as a gatekeeping practice. It is at times assumed that international students from the South would be unable to think or write critically partly because of their EAL status or different schooling system, hence the placement tests to stream them into special programmes. This assumption is reinforced by students' inability to display signs of critical thinking in their first few essays, due to lack of confidence or lack of awareness of writing conventions. However, the fact that students are unable or unwilling to display critical thinking in writing cannot serve as a measure for their competence to think critically.

Also the teaching of genres is becoming increasingly problematic as the boundaries between disciplines become fuzzier. Schryer (1993) in fact describes genres as social actions that are 'stabilized-for-now'. Their routine-ness offers the members of the disciplinary commune a sense of certainty, but does not eliminate the possibility that this stability may be disrupted by cross-overs between genres or variations within them (Creme and Hunt, 2002; Lea, 2012). Also, it would appear that the genre approach does not valorise voice as much as the process approach, since students are expected to assume a discipline-specific persona. However, it can be argued likewise that the process approach seems to essentialise voice as something intrinsic to the individual, as such not addressing the ways in which voices can be appropriated or lose currency when produced in new contexts (see Maybin, 1994).

The 'academic literacies' approach of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) movement expands one's take on the teaching of academic writing beyond that of skills or genre and looks at the subject matter as situated social practices and the 'voices' developed as contingent upon context (Blommaert, 2005). This broader view of writing, emerging from Street and Lea's analysis comes out of the 'widening participation' agenda in the United Kingdom (Lillis and Scott, 2007). This view of writing would at times call for a 'negotiation of conflicting literary practices' or a challenge of the power differentials involved in the transfer of academic writing skills and norms (Lea and Street, 2000:34; Lillis and Scott, 2007). On the ground, because writing operates at these multiple levels, researchers point out possible disjunctions between teachers' expectations and students' interpretation of academic writing tasks. Lea and Street's study on student writing and staff

feedback in two universities in South-East England, shows that while formal aspects of writing may be communicated explicitly, the interpretations of student writing on the whole by students and staff rely upon assumptions of what counts as 'valid academic knowledge' within particular fields of study (2000:13). These assumptions remain implicit in most cases and so do the multiple functions of academic writing.

Lea and Street's models of academic writing attempt to capture this multi-layered view of writing by describing it under the heading of 'study skills', 'academic socialisation' and 'academic literacies' (2000:34). These models show a progression in the conceptualisation of writing over time, but they all still have currency in the present day higher education system.

The 'study skills' model emerges out of the behavioural tradition and views student writing as a set of standard, 'atomised' skills students needed to master to be called 'literate'. Insufficient mastery of these skills is regarded as a serious 'deficit' or handicap. The second model borrows from social psychology and anthropology and admits that more than skills, students need to be 'acculturated' to a specific set of institutional discourses in order to count as literate. What the second model overlooks is the fact that students arrive at the institution with a cultural and academic baggage that needed to be off-loaded, appreciated or rejected before new knowledge was acquired.

The third model goes a step further and defines literacies as 'social practices... at the level of epistemology and identities' (ibid) and regards student writings as signs of possible 'negotiation of conflicting literary practices' that are acquired in different learning contexts. This model emerges out of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) movement in the UK (Street, 1984; Barton and Hamilton, 1999; Lea and Street 2000). Street, one of the key proponents of NLS, opines that literacy is not reducible to any standard reading and writing skill acquired equally at school by all individuals (1993:4). Hence, even if students are taught the writing norms in an explicit or process-oriented manner, there is little likelihood that all students would learn and use them in equal and measurable ways.

By looking at academic literacies as embedded in social practices beyond the confines of the classroom, one could design writing methods that are more meaningful to the students' contexts. Why academic *literacies*? For Lillis and Scott, the plural form "literacies" allows one to grasp

academic literacies not only as a 'field of inquiry' but also as an 'applied field' (2007:5-16). The plural form enables one to situate literacies at the 'juncture between theory building and application' and it fulfils particular strategic, epistemological and ideological functions each time it is used (2007:5).

This said, the three models can coexist and best define academic writing when integrated in a hierarchy rather than viewed in isolation. While acknowledging the role of the first two models as a foundation in 'acculturating' students into academic writing, in the context of this study, we focus additionally on the 'academic literacies' view of writing since it allows one to be sensitive to the possible production and enmeshing of different cross-cultural literacies and identities at UCT, as students from various backgrounds begin to share common institutional spaces.

#### **2.4 The need for new pedagogies of writing**

The view of academic writing from the academic literacies purview brings its own challenges in terms of designing teaching methodologies. For instance, as mentioned before, with the cross-over between disciplines due to changes in the work order and technologies among other things, the academic writing genres themselves become hard to define. Therefore, before one can develop academic literacies approaches, one needs to step back to review the text production norms of the discipline. In her recent chapter, Lea recommends that one could analyse the practices within the disciplines and beyond.

'In facing this challenge both researchers and practitioners will need to focus the literacies lens more tightly on micro-practices and, at the same time, widen the lens to pay more attention to the institutional practices that are implicated in the emergence of new genres, both in and outside the academy' (2012:109).

In this landscape of genre instability, others also see opportunity and attempt to subvert the genre delimitations further by teaching more embodied forms of academic writing. Creme (2008) explores the transitional genres between personal narratives and academic writing forms, in a less essentialised way than Elbow (1998) who believes that individual thinking in academic writing can be boosted by asking students to write in non-academic forms. More recently, English (forthcoming) looks at what she has coined as 'regenring' and the affordances of different genres for writing and knowledge. The experimentation with genre is in keeping with the academic literacies thrust which focuses on agency within and over and above structure.

The academic literacies approach also calls for greater sensitivity to cross-cultural differences, especially in the case of internationalising universities. In this vein, Matsuda et al point out,

The stakes of reexamining curricula become even higher when increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in classrooms is matched by the proliferation of different kinds of texts – both print and electronic – that students and teachers encounter and produce (2006:243).

Indeed the texts that are circulated across spaces begin to blur the distinctions between what is and is not acceptable. Lillis (2006) suggests the need to find ‘ways in which alternative meaning making practices in writing can be institutionally validated’ and sees dialogue as a means to facilitate the acceptance of new forms. These forms may be hybrids and in post-colonial, globalising contexts, may be expressed through the medium of new “Englishes”. For Kachru (1985), English is predominantly spoken by three circles of people: the ‘norm-providing’ inner circle consisting of native speakers, the ‘norm-developing’ outer circle where English is the official language, and the ‘norm-dependent’ expanding circle where English is the foreign language used for strategic purposes. While the first and last categories of speakers attempt to produce utterances as close to the norm as possible, the variations in the outer circle cannot always be controlled or predicted (see also Ashcroft et al., 1989).

These new, hybrid forms could be factored into the writing curriculum by asking students to share texts from their homeland, or by opening the floor for discussions on style and prior learning practices. In other words, the relevant pedagogies of writing need to embrace ‘other’ knowledges and search for non-prescriptive methods that allow, in a democratic spirit, the flow of knowledge both from the top down and vice versa, and allow one to go beyond the possible strictures of teaching genre. Still, Lillis notes with concern that ‘if the style is judged to be inappropriate, it is not just the text that is negatively evaluated but scholars themselves and their intellectual activity’ (2008:380).

At UCT, the EAL pedagogies employed form part of the academic development programme (ADP) courses to induct second language English speakers in academic writing. These courses are restricted to South African students, who may have scored poorly in the ‘Placement Test in English for Educational Purposes’ (PTEEP) admissions test. However, it is necessary to point out at this stage that the implementation of similar programmes for international students from

different cultural and academic backgrounds may not necessarily be effective. Hence, in this study, the workshops were designed with a view to develop writing across the disciplines for participants from varied backgrounds. WID was not focused upon because as Russell points out, the WID rhetoric would hopefully be acquired by students over time through immersion in their discipline's community of practice. However, participants might have limited scope within their disciplines to sharpen other writing-related aspects across the curriculum (WAC), such as their critical thinking skills, required for their additional courses and in their professional life. This said, WID and WAC were not necessarily seen as mutually exclusive categories and participants could bring their discipline specific writings into the workshops if they felt inclined.

My previous study showed that most first year Mauritian students intuitively realised that writing was somehow connected to a series of assumptions about their identities as writers, members of a particular discipline and so on. They therefore sought advice and validation from their subculture members rather than consulting with the lecturers or tutors, who were involuntarily perpetuating the 'mystery' around writing. In other words, the students turned to subculture settings, which they referred to as "nou base"<sup>9</sup> where they could enact transitional identities privately without the fear of being ridiculed or criticised. Their manoeuvre supports Scott's observation that lurking behind a socially compliant figure, is a deeply private self who abides by a 'hidden transcript', performed in an intimate space, when public modes of expression are not available (1991:37). An understanding of first year students' possible resistance to highly formalised learning structures is likely to impact on the design of the writing space in this study.

## **2.5 Pedagogical spaces**

The definition of space has evolved over time from that of natural or man-made physical structures, to the virtual spaces such as social networking sites and blogs. Spaces can also be "imagined" ones taking shape as we enter them and revealing an interactive bond between the container and the contained. Some ethnographers even speak of 'esoteric' spaces accessed after one partakes in a community's spiritual rituals (see De Souza, 2008:206). In short, the imagined or conceptual spaces are created by like-minded individuals in the pursuit of a common ideal and goal. Without going too far, one can think of graffiti artists, for whom a crumbling old bridge

---

<sup>9</sup> 'Nou base' is a Mauritian Creole phrase meaning our space/territory.

would at once represent a conceptual and a physical space, a canvas for free expression as well as the outcome, a visual and tangible artwork. Pedagogic spaces can vary too, the reason why merely erecting buildings, or giving computer grants to schools cannot be a guarantee for quality education.

Here, I present literature on the following spaces: institutional spaces, 'safe houses', virtual spaces, pedagogic spaces at UCT, and argue for the need for new pedagogic spaces within the EAL geography, drawing on some literature on the 'third space'.

### ***2.5.1 Institutional spaces***

It is likely that as first year university students begin their academic journey and devise ways to construct acceptable or desired academic identities, the transitional or partly familiar spaces they occupy in the meantime, could deeply influence their behavior, actions and academic writing. In the case of international students, the adaptation to institutional spaces could be doubly challenging since they have not studied through the South African education system. The Cambridge A-Level examinations may in some ways over-prepare them for UCT's requirements, but at the same time, under-prepare them for the South African academic context. This is not necessarily to label international EAL students as 'needy', but to be aware that they may not be familiar with the codes of behavior or codes of success encrypted in the university's institutional spaces.

As individuals move across spaces, the discourses, genres and assumptions governing their writing may 'travel' less well. Blommaert looks at handwritten documents produced by a Burundese asylum seeker in Belgium for examples of 'grassroots writing' where the authorship is normally collective. It emerges from a textual analysis that these documents are not merely meant to be 'read' but to be 'read', 'viewed', 'decoded' and 'reconstructed' (2004: 658). He adds that when texts move across space, the 'economies' of literacy, or what counts as meaningful differs and influences text production and reception across geographical spaces. He further suggests that writing, together with visual elements in the documents need to be decoded ethnographically, that is within the geography where it is produced, so that the understanding governing one's reception of the text may correspond to the norms of production (ibid., see also Maryns and Blommaert, 2002 on 'pretextual gaps').

Academic writing is undeniably embedded in particular academic or discipline specific or social contexts, each with its own conventions and gate keeping practices, imposed by academics/experts in the field. These conventions may represent challenges for the teaching staff as they strive to include students within the academic community, while trying to resist prescribing the 'right' form of writing, based on some pre-defined assessment criteria. However, as the proponents of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) would argue, for academic writing to flourish and for the writers' voices to be heard, the obsession with one 'fixed', 'decontextualised' standard may need revising (Barton et al, 1999: 177).

### **2.5.2 'Safe houses'**

One would also need to understand how pedagogised informal spaces operate. Pratt (1991) and Canagarajah (1997) refer to these informal spaces as 'safe houses'. Pratt defines the safe houses as 'social and intellectual spaces where groups can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogeneous, sovereign communities with high degrees of trust, shared understandings, with temporary protection from legacies of oppression' (1991:39). For her, the safe house is a space where the disharmony and threats outside urge its members to display solidarity and live as equals inside.

Canagarajah likewise extols the benefits of the safe house, especially for its non-hierarchical structures. He defines this space as one 'free from surveillance, especially by authority figures, perhaps because these are considered unofficial, off-task or extrapedagogical' (2004:121). Canagarajah's study 'Safe Houses in the Contact Zone' revolves precisely around the safe house strategies employed by minority students in his alternative classroom to cope with external pressures in the mainstream community of practice. In his classroom, students can voice and enact their cultural identities and display strong group solidarity, which they cannot express in the larger sphere of the academic 'contact zone', where students and staff from different cultures brush shoulders but fear to interact. His study draws attention to the 'shifting identities' and 'community membership' (1997:176) of students as they struggle to adapt to the university's academic culture while safeguarding their prior identities.

This new geography outside the hazardous contact zone for writing oneself into being and for validating one's multiple identities through and beyond writing in mainstream academic

communities, is useful in conceptualising the Writers' workshops, where new international students could seek and rehearse different voices in a safe environment and reinforce those which would be favoured more for uptake in the formal institutional spaces. It would also be an enabling space to explore possible community dynamics and evolving identities in and out of writing.

### *2.5.3 Virtual spaces*

This new space could be a virtual one. The world-wide web is transforming the way individuals access, consume and produce texts. It is also impacting on the ways reading and writing are acquired and used. McKenna (2006) explains how the structure of online sites, that is the superimposed layers of hypertexts affects the way arguments in academic writing are formulated on the page. The pervasiveness of blogging sites, social networking sites such as Facebook, or more formalised online academic sites is perhaps shifting some information seekers' preference towards more interactive online spaces<sup>10</sup>. Here, information is constantly updated and generated and users can remain anonymous or project alternative, hybrid or different subject positions or cyborg netizen identities (see Castells, 1997). This allows them to gather, produce and reproduce information without fear of being tested or penalised.

Still, Hawisher and Selfe warn against the easy tendency to view the web as a democratic, 'neutral communication environment', especially as suggested through the global-village analogy (2005:5). The use of English, of western cultural icons and web resources all serve to demonstrate this fact. In fact, those who are actively engaged in these sites could at times get unwittingly immersed into the western, capitalist ideologies and construct themselves as the more desirable western "other" (2005:9). Yet, the same spaces can also be used to celebrate linguistic and/or cultural specificities, through the creation of smaller online hubs where non-mainstream/marginal identities can be expressed. As identities express themselves in different online safe nooks, so do the literacies. Hawisher and Selfe describe these new forms of literacies as 'hybrid and multiple literacies that share the blessings of diversity and difference' (2005:289).

---

<sup>10</sup> From my experience as a Writing Centre consultant, the appeal of internet sources is evident in students' academic essay references in support of their argument (or at times, in its stead). As expected, in the initial essays Wikipedia may well show up in the list.

An awareness of the potential of virtual sites to accommodate diverse and perhaps, contested voices, can be used to pedagogic ends to allow students to voice in some ways their minority writer voices in a safe and non-judgmental space. This is partly because social networking sites blur the distinction between the social and academic relations between the members of these sites and can ease lecturer-students rapport. The use of blogs as pedagogical tools was explored in the pilots in 2010, and the use of Facebook, subsequently in 2011. The effectiveness of these as pedagogical tools is explained in chapter three.

#### ***2.5.4 Pedagogical spaces at UCT***

The networking site Vula could be considered as an online pedagogical space where notes and notices are posted, essays are submitted, where students can participate in chatrooms and so on. The pedagogic spaces at UCT where writing support or interventions currently occur are the formal lecture and tutorial spaces and the Writing Centre.

In the formal spaces, academic writing constitutes an adjunct to content knowledge, since it is the main medium by which knowledge is recorded and assessed. Yet it is not necessarily taught separately as a generic communication module. Exceptions include writing programmes for local students from disadvantaged academic backgrounds as part of the 'Academic development programme' (ADP), generic writing programmes in few departments such as Politics, more specialised ones such as 'Professional Communications' in the Commerce faculty and 'Becoming a Professional' in the Health Sciences.

These are generic or "add-on" writing courses designed to prepare students for the job market and may not bear direct relation to the discipline itself. They challenge the myth that these disciplines are merely instrumental in nature and they attach a more humanistic component to them. As it stands, none of these specifically address the academic needs of international students per se. Some international students would take these courses if they belonged to the Commerce or Health Sciences faculties only. Also, international students would require an intervention that focuses additionally on their academic identities prior and while they are at the university.

The Writing Centre has been established as a port of call for students at all levels, providing one-to-one consultations and offering feedback on structure, argumentation etc. The Writing Centre's

role is not merely remedial, as some lecturers in the discipline would assume when sending their students there to “fix” their essays. Feedback given by the Writing Centre staff could also serve formative and pedagogic ends. Additionally, the consultants run independent workshops in specific departments to teach students the generic writing skills such as coherence, cohesion, producing a thesis statement and referencing.

In the case of EAL international students, we may not yet have fully grasped the nature and implications of the writing challenges facing them across different spaces at the institution, because context-specific studies have not been undertaken in this area. To better grasp the implications of these and identify and design teaching practices that are more responsive to these students’ needs, deep ethnographic research would be required.

#### ***2.5.5 The need for new pedagogic spaces within the EAL geography***

To ensure the success of any programme for EAL international students, writing would have to be taught in ways tailored to their needs. This said, the programme’s structure would inevitably be provisional and adjust to each new cohort of students. The flexibility of the design could be seen as one to the offshoots of the Derrida’s aporia logic that structures the study. The spaces designed to support the interventions would need to be flexible too, even as they aim to fill the perceived gaps between the informal community spaces and the more formal mainstream spaces. In fact, due to the two-way interaction between space and method, the meanings and scope of each would constantly shift to accommodate the other. Nonetheless, two general features of possible pedagogic spaces would be inclusivity and relevance as elaborated below.

#### ***Inclusivity***

The pedagogic space needs to create opportunities for inclusivity. The Masters study (2009) revealed that first year international students had a greater penchant for subculture practices than mainstream practices because they felt alienated in the institutional spaces. It goes without saying that a space that could include the minorities and give them the tools to negotiate their positionality in the mainstream spaces could also enable the informal and formal spaces to better respond to one another.

Matsuda and Silva (2006) argue that new pedagogical spaces need to allow different minority groups to interact so that they may see their difference as a common rather than as a marginalising feature. For example, they argue in favour of cross-cultural composition classes where students mingle with other EAL students from diverse backgrounds. Such an arrangement can increase EAL students' confidence in reading and writing in the English language and remove the stigma that often accompanies courses for particular second language speakers of English.

In the Masters study, the participants were first year Mauritian students. In this study, the category of participants was broadened to include first year students from the SADC region. This allowed for greater inclusivity and the possibility to compare the experiences of students from different nationalities, gather richer data and design writing interventions that would take into account the needs of heterogeneous groups of students for the present and future workshops. Hence, while the workshops would be flexible in structure, they would be more varied in the issues addressed based on the needs and experiences of a more diverse participant group.

One might argue that the widening focus could hinder an in-depth analysis of the students' needs and their backgrounds. This is possible if one researched them for a very short period of time. The duration of the PhD research however allowed for a longitudinal study that extended the researcher's gaze both in depth and breadth.

### ***Relevance***

A related point is that the sessions should be designed so that the content is relevant to the faculty's expectations and international students' socio-academic experiences. The faculty's expectations are at times tacit or a 'mystery' as Lillis puts it (2001:51). Of course, the academic performance of local and international students both would suffer due to this. In the study, attempts were made to demystify the faculties' expectations through interviews with the writing experts introduced earlier. Activities were also organised to delve into students' brought along experiences. Looking at the content of English assignments, Reid and Kroll (1995) recommend that the tasks should not be set on issues unfamiliar to EAL students, as these would distance them further from the mainstream cohort of native English students (NES). As pointed out earlier, it was observed that the participants of the Masters study (2009) performed poorly in one of the add-on writing course's essays, to a great extent because they were asked to express their experience

of the Outcomes-based education (OBE) system with which they were not at all familiar. Hence, the essay question made an unfair demand on them. For this reason, Reid and Kroll's point on relevance cannot be taken lightly during the development of workshop materials.

Moreover, the space should question what counts as relevant in the institutional spaces and revisit underlying assumptions. The role of drama, script-writing, journaling, blogging and other tools in new spaces have not been explored to their full potential in the teaching of EAL writing. Based on the above discussion and also input from the writing experts, there is reason to believe that for writing to be relevant and seep into students' academic identities and cultures, it needs to be enacted in alternative sites and with other possible media besides paper. These possible forms could be part and parcel of the new spaces for the Writers' workshops.

## **2.6 Pedagogies and spatiality**

### ***2.6.1 Space metaphors in writing pedagogies***

Scholars in the field of education or more specifically language teaching, at times use space metaphors to describe their pedagogies as situated teaching and learning practice.

In a study on multimodality and multiliteracies in post-Apartheid South Africa, Stein and Newfield demonstrate through a series of examples, how multimodal pedagogies making use of visual, written and performance modes re-structure the learning space and students' alignment to it in more democratic ways. As the authors 'map the terrain' of language pedagogies deployed by creative teachers, they argue that,

'Multimodal pedagogies have the potential to make classrooms more democratic, inclusive spaces in which marginalised students' histories, identities, cultures, languages and discourses can be made visible' (2006:11).

Archer (2006) focuses particularly on the potency of symbolic objects in a 'less regulated curriculum space' to enable EAL students to learn experientially through a wider repertoire of resources for expression.

Still, such spaces can be critiqued for their lack of relevance to central institutional spaces. For instance, Bremner and Andrew's design of a multimodal space to engage their students in the objects of their study, through 'performing the space' or 'making their own animated films', needs

to be complemented with 'explicit writing instruction in English ('overt instruction') and forms of mentoring' so that students may produce 'coherent academic essays' (quoted in Stein and Newfield, 2006:11). Any attempt to restrict believably 'marginalised' students to alternative 'marginal' spaces may lower their chances of internalising the mainstream institutional discourses, unless these are consciously incorporated in the alternative curriculum.

When Giroux argues in favour of 'border crossings' between formal and less formal learning settings and 'refiguring disciplinary and pedagogical boundaries' (1992:89), he is not suggesting that new critical pedagogies should do away with hegemonic discourses embedded in mainstream spaces and invested with particular values and interests. He calls instead for a sharpened awareness of the way they operate, with the utopian view of 'transforming public culture and life':

'The notion of pedagogy being argued for here is not organized in relation to a choice between elite or popular culture, but as part of a political project that takes issues of liberation and empowerment as its starting point. It is a pedagogy that rejects the notion of culture as an artefact immobilized in the image of a storehouse. Instead, the pedagogical principles at work here analyze culture as a set of lived experiences and social practices developed within asymmetrical relations of power' (1992:99).

His words resonate with Mitchell's that landscape is an 'instrument of cultural power, perhaps even an agent of power' (1994:2). Hence, the design of new spaces alongside or through different pedagogic practices can inflect upon the interests encoded in traditional spaces.

In the context of bilingual and bicultural classrooms more specifically, hooks (1994) and Gutierrez et al. (1995) describe the "third space" as a transgressive site where students can use tools or a metalanguage to question or subvert what is linguistically acceptable. In this, it resembles Canagarajah's 'safe house' where minority voices can find an outlet and rebel against the authorities, in some cases, the educator himself. For Gutierrez et al., the third space is 'the only space where a true interaction or communication between teacher and student can occur in the classroom' (1995:447). What does she mean by "true" interaction? Is true interaction possible, as opposed to untrue interaction? Here, she is not alluding to the truth value of interactions but rather the fact that some interactions, especially in the traditional classroom do not abide to the true meaning of an interaction, a two-way dialogue between teacher and students. In the third space, on the other hand, both the teacher and the students sense the freedom to

participate equally. Elsewhere, she mentions that to facilitate such a dialogue, the teacher would need to let go of directives and ask students to imagine. She would enter the classroom with a generative rather than a prescriptive script.

It is noteworthy that the workshop space in this study is more of an enabling than a transgressive space. In that sense, the third space differs from Canagarajah's 'safe house'. Still, it is not assimilatory either, for students were encouraged to think independently and proactively through activities such as theatre performance and presentations. As discussed previously, the aim of the workshop space has been to nurture participants' writer identities and prepare them to write confidently and critically in the formal academic spaces. It could allow participants to voice their anxieties or their hidden identities and offer them resources to express these in a non-confrontational manner in the mainstream.

It is perhaps for this reason that scholars like Fleckenstein (1999) postulate that pedagogic practice is situated not only in space but also in the body. The formalisation of knowledge has over time ruptured the ties between the self and the objects of scrutiny. The author seeks to reclaim that link by suggesting that the body is a necessary part of location and practice. The workshop space in this study aims likewise to be a 'performative' space. The elements of spatiality and of performativity cannot be separated for the workshop space opens up subject positions or roles, which cannot be envisaged without first conceiving of a subject. The subject positions are both spatial referents (positions) from where subjects can act and internal(ised) moulds from where participants can explore their multiple writer identities. The moulds can be interpreted differently across settings and individuals for the latter inevitably re-define the boundaries of the former. For this reason, no two roles can be identical even when iterated by the same individual at two points in time; they can at best be different.

Broadly speaking then, the performative space can be seen as open field for dialogic flows between self, text and context. Over time, these interactions in the workshop space can spiral out to affect the dialogic flows of praxis in the institutional and peer spaces and feed back into theory or design principles.

### ***2.6.2 The third space***

The “third space” notion can be quite productive in this context, for it seeks to go beyond the available academic edifices to embed itself meaningfully in the lives of its participants. Its features begin to crystallise as we proceed to the ‘aporia of urgency’. For now, it can be said that a possible third space would grow from the grassroots. The concept has been theorised in a variety of disciplines across time and traditions, such that it becomes hard to assign specific dates or influences to its stages of evolution.

The critical tradition tends to see the third space as a theoretical alternative to the hegemonic impositions of meanings and ideologies in the mainstream spaces. Critical texts would include Lefebvre and his followers’ neo-Marxist readings of the third space, where the third space is an alternative site mostly of contestation, inviting questions around the ownership of the means of production. More recently, in postmodern writings, the third space has been conceived as a representation of sites (physical or conceptual) that have already been created; a space that inevitably re-constructs existing spaces in the post-structural sense, or even a space that overcomes ontological definitions of entities by fusing reality and illusion into one (Rusted, 2002). Here, one could allude to the work of Baudrillard (1994) on the ‘hyperreal’, where reality and fiction are so intermeshed that at times, the latter seems to precede the former.

Rusted notes that across social theory traditions, especially within the critical tradition, the cultural significations of the third space tend to be overlooked, since the theoretical deliberations tend to push ‘grounded, cultural and ethnographic research to the margins’ (2002:8). He argues that cultural approaches to phenomena are necessary especially in anthropological studies in order to generate a balanced dialogue between the ethnographic stance, culture and space. For him, ‘cultural approaches locate the social experience in the body’ (ibid.) and hence allow for different levels of engagement with space.

One comes closest to cultural theory with the postcolonial literary tradition, where the third space allows one to move beyond cultural specificities and entertain possibilities for ‘hybridity’ (Bhabha, 1994:4). The third space here is depicted as a ‘stairwell’ or ‘interstitial passage’ between the high and the low. Yet, the in-between or hybrid entities that emerge in such spaces are not merely a product of fusion but ‘a process’. He explains that they are not a product of ‘two

original moments from which the third emerges, but gestures to an ambivalent third space of cultural production and reproduction' (1994:221). The third space is thus an in-between site where postcolonial meanings and identities are not pre-established but discursively realised after being 'appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew' (1994:37).

Jameson, who is known for his contributions to the neo-Marxist theory, likewise holds that third space is a site of 'interfection' where individuals from different cultures that are in 'unexpected juxtaposition' begin to generate new practices (1994:217). Soja on the other hand, looks beyond the 'in-between' or 'interfection' and conceptualises the third space as 'an-other way of understanding and acting to change the spatiality of human life, a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness that is appropriate to the new scope and significance being brought about in the trialectics of spatiality-historicity-sociality' (Soja, 1996:10). In other words, the third space is defined through its physicality, history and the people who inhabit it. It is a one of potential, where identities can be re-visited taking into stock visions of their past and possible futures. It is hence a space where linear time is temporarily suspended so that new forms of order or linearity can be created for future dispensations. This bears much resonance with the three aporias, as I elaborate later.

I was also intrigued by one of his phrases 'the spaces that difference makes' instead of the 'difference that spaces make'. The inversion of subjects is significant here since it is the plurality or hetero-meanings/alterations of space that ultimately define that space. This is a move away from the pre-designed or deterministic notion of space. Space is constantly in a state of becoming because its content (in our case, the transitional writer identities and texts) is constantly morphing into and out of shape, especially when we consider writing as an enactment of identities or staged process. Even a margin could become a space. This reminds one of Margaret Atwood's viewpoint, where time too could become a space 'Time is not a line but a dimension' (1988). This could also allude to Dali's paintings of the exploding or melting clocks or Einstein's fourth dimensional space-time fabric. Soja elsewhere in his book affirms that the third space is 'a purposefully tentative and flexible term that attempts to capture what is actually a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances, and meanings' (1996:2).

With the internationalisation of universities, with the influx of culturally diverse groups of students, the university space should ideally be flexible, its gatekeeping practices fluid, to better integrate its new students. However, perhaps the speed at which these changes have occurred over the past decade, may not have allowed universities to adjust fully to the needs of incoming students. The institutional structures that remain rigid are unable to keep up with global shifts in the knowledge economy. This reminds one of Barnett (2000) who insists that universities should function according to the uncertainty principle, be flexible and revisit their academic ethos and institutional margins, especially in this age of 'supercomplexity' when it becomes hard to isolate the factors influencing throughput or success in the broader sense.

In its initial phases, the research into new pedagogic spaces drew on both Bhabha's and Soja's outlooks on space. Bhabha, a renowned post-colonial writer and academic, has a keen interest in the way multi-cultural histories in the South *present* themselves through their hybrid offsprings, identities and spaces. Soja, an urban planner, attempts to theorise the links between spaciality, historicity and sociality. While he may not have a direct interest in post-colonial encounters, his study nonetheless shares some similarities with Bhabha's. As pointed out earlier, each of them has a distinct definition of the third space, yet both are interested in the cultural hybridity that takes shape within the third space. For Soja, the boundaries of the third space keep stretching to include the 'other' identities within it and allow for hybrid forms to emerge.

In the study, due to the fact that the design of the workshop space went through moments/aporias of 'suspension', 'undecidability' and 'urgency', there was a delay in the production of this space, during which other 'possible futures', as expressed by Soja, were considered. This delay invited different perceptions of what the workshop space could be, which then informed, interrupted and mediated the different moments of the workshop design. The delay was also a conceptual one. As first year students from different national, cultural, academic contexts entered the third space, which was the workshop and research space, they carried with them resources of a time past. These then inflected upon the workshop's own time-space fabric in the non-scientific sense and created new undulations in our definitions of time and space in the Writers' workshops.

While the conception of this space was tentative, the workshop space as participants would experience it in the 'aporia of urgency' could be akin to Bhabha's depiction of the 'intestitial

passage', since it lay mid-way between participants' informal peer settings and the academic spaces at UCT. This 'in-between-ness' was easier to locate physically and conceptually and yet did not prevent the workshop space from being internally in a constant state of becoming. This is because the workshop space responded not only to the dynamics in the other two spaces but also to students' transitional writer identities in the workshops. These identities, filtered through by post-colonial experiences, cultural and linguistic specificities in the homeland and new encounters, altered the physical circumstances within which subsequent workshops inscribed themselves. Hence, the workshops were perennially provisional, especially in terms of the methods they explored. This allowed them to be flexible to change and different<sup>11</sup> each time they are iterated. In terms of teaching practice, in the pilots, I focused on classroom discussion and used projectors, slides and sheets of notes as mediating tools. In the workshops the following year, I gave participants five-page handouts for each session, inserted a drama component and other activities, and varied the physical learning settings more. The research interest had by then shifted from the mere location of writing in different physical spaces to the location of writing in the body and in physical and conceptual spaces, as an embodied practice, an enactment of multiple identities.

As the chapters unfold and as the notion of space becomes animated with individuals and pedagogical methods, its definitions are refined further, until the point when its design principles can be generated.

As a participant observer and now a "reporter of events", I still need to remind myself of how metaphors of space such as 'multimodal terrains', 'border crossing' moves, embodied praxis, could affect my readings of the site during the data collection and analysis processes. I therefore present them alongside key concepts below, as possible options or tools to explore the field.

## **2.7 Key concepts**

The key concepts used in the study are as follows:

---

<sup>11</sup> The difference here refers not only to difference but also to deferment in time.

### **2.7.1 Discourses, voice**

While texts mediate between self (the writer) and the context of production, discourses define the rules that would underlie this form of relating. Gee carefully distinguishes ‘discourses’ which are ‘connected stretches of language’ from ‘Discourses’ that are ‘always more than just language’ (1990:127).

A Discourse is a sort of identity kit which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act... so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognise (1990:127) (see also other applications of the concept in Gee, 1996; 2008).

In higher education, as students seek membership into particular communities of practice, they need to appropriate this identity kit. Discourses encompass beliefs, conventions and practices and can be formal literacy practices related to reading, essay writing, classroom interaction, feedback, consultation with tutors and so on. They can be a set of skills that includes critical thinking and argumentation. They can also be a set of conventions such as research, compulsory tutorial attendance, plagiarism rules and so on. Less formal practices would include group study, participation in debates, writing for the students’ newspaper so on. Discourses are always governed by a set of ideologies or ‘tacit theories’ or values establishing what counts as acceptable in a given society (1990:vix). Some of these are more obvious than others.

While first year students may have some exposure to the higher education Discourses, what needs to be investigated is the nature of their induction into those Discourses. Is it formal or informal? What push-pull factors enhance or inhibit their affiliation to those Discourses? Gee notes that ‘telling the rules’ is not a solution to making students insiders to a Discourse.

‘Rather, we have to let (them) become a fully accepted member of the group, and to do *that* we have to really accept (them), accept (their) home, (their) community; we have to understand (them), appreciate (them), and be aware of the Discourse-bound nature of all practices in and out of school (1990:xviii)’.

In the case of academic literacy, Gee would suggest that it does not suffice to make writing demands explicit. Students’ diverse backgrounds need to be appreciated, otherwise students remain outsiders to the institutional culture and may choose to strengthen loyalties with subcultures where they are acknowledged. Kapp and Bangeni use the genre approach to assist students from print-impooverished backgrounds who lack the requisite cultural capital to engage meaningfully with texts in the disciplines. Using this genre approach, they help the students

'navigate their entry into the discipline' (2005:110-112). They find this approach useful in forging bonds of apprenticeship between the lecturer and the students (ibid.). In this study, as writing pedagogies are developed, one needs to be sensitive to how participants cope with possible disjunctions between old and new knowledges and Discourses, between their multiple identities and between different allegiances, in their search for voice within a new institution.

Ivanic (2004) makes further distinctions within Discourses and suggests ways to teach and assess each of these. These strategies are underpinned by particular beliefs about writing and learning to write. The "skills discourse" looks closely at the internal structures of the text; the "creativity discourse" and "process discourse" seem to regulate the links between self and text as well; the "genre discourse" and "social practices discourse" seem to define the links between text and context; while the "socio-political discourse" bring self, text and context in a dynamic dialogue, by contesting and revising the nature of the links themselves. Since the writing pedagogy in this study focuses on elements of voice more than grammar, there is particular attention on the latter five discourses and spaces and modes are used, at times created to facilitate the mental processes of writing, the writing event and sociocultural and political context of writing to unfold. The last three raise important identity issues especially for international students writing in novel contexts.

On the issue of voice, can there be such a thing outside of discourse? Already, readers can see that "voice" is a contested term. It is generally understood as an intrinsic quality, a fingerprint, a marker of individuality. However, as suggested by the thinkers below, it is more often a variable tool in the communicative process, contingent upon the context of interaction and its function. In the study, voice constitutes the nexus between writing, individual, the institution and the community in this study. Students' voices could manifest themselves through different media including writing, in and out of official learning spaces and their related discourses. Hence, the notion of voice is significant in the analysis of writer identities and how they were transformed during and after the workshops.

Blommaert defines voice as the 'capacity to make oneself understood ... a capacity to generate an uptake of one's words as close as possible to one's desired contextualization' (2005:68). It is the capacity to use words or 'linguistic resources' to fulfill a desirable communicative and social purpose, while adhering to acceptable social values within a specific community. One wonders

whether the successful assertion of voice is restricted to the assertion of the community's values and practices. In that case, voice is simultaneously enabling and constraining. It allows for the validation of one's views, beliefs and opinions but is restricted by the context or 'space of meaning ratification' where given utterances have specific functions (ibid).

When individuals move from one contextual space to another, their voice is transformed in interesting ways. This is because the discourses defining voice differ in different spaces; some discourses 'travel well' and root themselves in new spaces, others do not. What the discourses ought to be, is prescribed by 'centering institutions' (Blommaert, 2005:220), in this case the official gatekeepers in the institution such as lecturers, administrators and more abstractly, the rules or perceived codes. Different departments establish their own academic writing conventions, which students are expected to follow. They thus regulate the degree to which voice ought to be displayed in academic texts. In this regard, as pointed out earlier, the lack of explicitness around the writing practice turns it into a 'mystery' (Lillis, 2001). This mystery excludes students, often 'non-traditional' students, who may lack awareness of the requisite conventions of academic writing. Hence, 'essayist literacy' remains a 'privileged' practice acquired unequally by students from different backgrounds. At times, due to the fact that the institutional conventions are a 'mystery', it is possible that students fall back on their prior discursive selves, and pay allegiance to gatekeeping practices from elsewhere, their high schools, tuitions and so on (Hunma, 2009).

Specific social conventions also govern students' day-to-day interaction on campus. Hence, first year students who are unfamiliar with these may have differential access to UCT's meaning making spaces. They may turn to less formal spaces in the search for meaning and these spaces may exercise their own kind of centering pull. It would appear then that within the formal structures, first year students, especially international students, without awareness of the requisite norms may feel alienated and without voice, agency and the 'right' discourses.

It comes as no wonder that Bakhtin (1986) sees voice as dialogic and defines it as 'speaking consciousness' which is produced in anticipation of an ideal listener. Hence it is never complete in itself, but infused with the voices of others. Thesen notes that due to its incompleteness, voice becomes open to 'shared meanings'. Shared meanings would presuppose the recognition of the

individual voices which are involved in the exchange of meanings. Hence, she states that ‘the individual as agent has primacy in times when shared meaning is most important’ (1997: 494). She adds that this primacy needs to be taken seriously so as not to undermine the ‘heterogeneity’, ‘possibilities’ of language arising from the encounters (1994:82). While the sharing process affects the code, it also impacts on the relations between the users. Hence, the sharing process also has the potential for ‘reshaping alliances’ between the educators and the students for instance.

Meanwhile however, individual voices may not only be shaped but at times stifled by the widely used discourses, established through group consensus. They may be challenged by institutions ‘whose routine nature pushes us to work for sameness rather than to recognize difference’ (Rudduck, in Thesen, 1997). In addition, as Thesen points out, institutions may classify students into categories that do not reflect the students’ perceptions of themselves (1997:489). In these cases, institutions begin to chart students’ academic identities, at times labeling them in the attempt to predict the pass rates or remedy possible “deficiencies”. Here, structure and its instrumental logic impose a strong influence on individual identities. It is in these moments of crisis between ‘structure’ and ‘agency’ that informal sites such as the Writers’ workshop may assist in engendering voicing. “Voicing”, the verb, is viewed here as the externalising or enacting of suppressed, less visible dialogues or different instances of academic and cultural selfhood. Since the dialogues, in speech and writing, are manifestations of different identities, the study operationalises and uses the term ‘identities’ more frequently than voice.

### ***2.7.3 Identities in writing: Ivanič’s clover model of writer identities***

As mentioned, writing can be viewed as a projection of students’ multiple identities, choices and motives. These motives may at times be tacit, hidden and unconscious. To bring them to the surface, the necessary pedagogical space needed to be created wherein students feel welcome to share their ideas or challenge institutional norms. The fact that the participants for this study belonged from different disciplines, meant that they could share department specific issues, as well as social issues experienced by international students at large.

To grasp how these different identities were being actualised, or not, through the writing medium, the study used Clark and Ivanič’s clover model of writer identities. Clark and Ivanič (1997)

describe writing as a lively interaction between participants' 'autobiographical self', the 'authorial self' and the 'discoursal self' (136-140) as shown in the diagram.

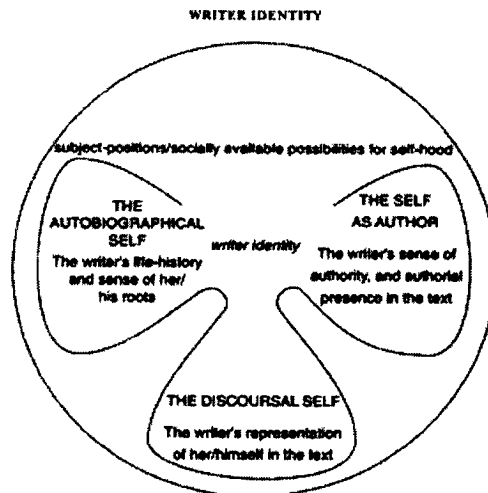


Figure 6.1 Aspects of writer identity

(Clark & Ivanič, 1997:137)

The writer's 'autobiographical self' is defined as 'the writer's life-history and her/his roots' (ibid.) and is reflected in the use of personal history, regional, cultural, linguistic and academic background that are reflected in the text. For example, his/her use of examples from their local context can be viewed as a projection of the autobiographical self in writing. The 'discoursal self' refers 'the writer's representation in the text' (ibid.) by following specific discourses or genres of writing. In this study, participants' 'discoursal self' was initially inferred from the writing conventions that they subscribed to. There might be an overlap between the 'discoursal' and 'autobiographical' selves since the influence of students' prior 'discoursal self' from secondary schooling might also be categorised as 'autobiographical'. For the sake of analysis, the term 'discoursal self' was used to designate elements in students' writing where they made use of specific conventions, past and present. For example, his or her use of rote learnt idioms can be a sign of an enduring high school 'discoursal self'. The term 'autobiographical self' on the other hand referred to elements in the writing that signalled broader socio-cultural aspects of their identity. Finally, the 'authorial self' refers 'the writer's sense of authority and authorial presence in the text', in other words, her handling of content and style to assert authority and credibility in

writing. For instance, her play on words to persuade the reader can add prominence to the 'authorial self'.

To develop a working definition of 'authorial self', I traced the concept's development through various articles. In *The Politics of Writing*, Clark and Ivanič (1997) define the 'authorial self' as the extent to which writers 'express their own ideas and beliefs in their writing' and 'their presence in the text.' The 'authorial self' would hence be reflected in the type of content the author chooses to present and the manner in which s/he aligns himself/herself with that content in a way that marks his/her presence or absence.

The concept becomes easier to grasp if we look back at previous work such as *Who's who in Academic Writing*, where Ivanič (1992) refers to the 'authorial self' as the "I" in inverted commas. It can be informed by the content through voicing, expressing one's own ideas, drawing from personal experience and deciding what is worth expressing. The "I" can also be informed by the style of writing through 'choices from a range of alternatives within academic writing' that best convey the identity the author wants to project. For instance, if the author wants to align herself with a particular feminist stance, one of her stylistic choices could revolve around the careful use or avoidance of the generic pronoun 'he' to refer to an individual in general terms.

The notion of "I"ness or the 'authorial self' is crucial in understanding the students' formation of their writer identities. For Ivanič, the "I"ness is the most important aspect in the writing process for 'what motivation is there to a student writer to develop ideas when he's positioned as someone displaying knowledge rather than someone making a contribution to it?' In this study, the Ivanič's model was used to extricate students' multiple writer identities as they appeared in their written texts and their talk around the texts. Since the different writer identities often served different masters, the writing process could trigger moments of contestation and anxiety within the writer.

Clark and Ivanič (1997) point out furthermore that the writer identities displayed in the text may or may not entirely map onto students' socio-academic identities. This is because the writer identities are (re)constructions of students' socio-cultural or academic identities. At times, students may choose to display their preferred identity or that which is given more valency in the

institution. To get closer to participants' other hidden identities, the study seeks to create subject positions and offer modes through which they can enact those other identities.

As mentioned earlier, first year 'non-traditional' students (Lillis and Curry, 2010) may be reluctant to display signs of critical thinking, which is in fact a crucial component of the 'authorial self'. This is because the display of critical thinking may be a risky venture especially when the academic writing norms are not made explicit enough at first year level or when other gatekeeping practices in the discipline such as accuracy or referencing take the upper hand. Hence, while analysing students' authorial self in writing, particular attention is paid to aspects of critical writing in the text. The writer selves are further operationalised in chapter three.

#### ***2.7.4 Identities enacted***

Since identities can only be accessed when enacted, participants can be offered performance tools to express themselves with greater ease. In this case, when speech or writing falls short of uncovering and later of nurturing students' multiple identities, other modes gain significance. As Kress notes,

'the pre-eminence of language as the mode of communication is coming under increasing challenge, on the one hand, initially through theoretical attacks on 'logocentricism' by groups who had felt oppressed in relation to powerful groups in particular social configurations, but increasingly, on the other hand, over the last two decades or so, through actual changes in the semiotic landscape, the landscape of public communication, which is remaking not only that broad landscape, but, in doing so, is remaking the place and characteristics of writing language within it' (1996:186).

He argues that the young generation is increasingly exposed to other semiotic modes especially visual ones and do not relate to writing cognitively in the same way, adding that they have more enhanced 'visual analytic skills and muscular coordination' that do not apply to the encoding and decoding of written texts (ibid.,193). Pedagogic investment into other semiotic tools becomes necessary.

The study sees the theatre performance mode as a link between un-expressed identities of the individual and their concrete expression in writing. Boal (1979) is convinced that performance and brought along objects are themselves a language. Hence, when he asks a question in Spanish

and his learners 'answer in photography', this move by them is a legitimate one (1979:122). The performance mode is used in the EAL classroom in Peru as a communicative tool until the learners acquire the language of power, e.g. Spanish. Yet, in Boal's theatre, it appears that the acquisition of language becomes secondary to the drive for social emancipation.

In this study, the teaching of writing was the primary focus. Hence, the ways in which performance influenced writer identities in the workshop space, were given precedence over their possible social impact. To grasp the link between performance and the display of identities, it is useful to introduce Clark and Ivanič's notion of 'subject positions' or 'socially available possibilities for self-hood' (1997:137). According to Clark and Ivanič, the writer can take up particular subject positions, for instance that of a feminist or a Marxist in order to construct the text from that vantage point. This impersonation may be conscious, or less so if she has simply allowed herself to absorb the dominant discourses surrounding her. In that sense, no text, irrespective of conscious claims otherwise, is ever ideologically neutral. The text and the writer identities present therein, cannot exist or become manifest in a vacuum. They need to be recognised as valid in the context where they are performed and received by the audience.

What are the subject positions available to students in the tertiary context? At times, students may be required to write as an apprentice, novice scientist, scholar or reporter of events. The Writers' workshop is thus intended to function as a rehearsal space, where different writer identities can be presented, discussed, developed so that participants may opt for those to enact in the institutional spaces. This said, the performance activities do not simply shape students' writer identities to fit the mould, but push students to think critically through play, so that they may in future re-interpret the subject positions available to them in the formal spaces. The workshop space adds new subject positions, where participants can assume new roles without being restricted by rigid conventions and discourses. Through performance, the participants can engage with different modes in performative ways.

Here, one needs to draw a line between performance and performativity. While performance is situated in the 'here and now' of praxis, performativity is the ability of a mode to impact upon real events in a wider social context. Hence, when stating that participants can assume performative roles, I am suggesting that their actions bear consequences on other events beyond the

performance. I elaborate on this in chapter five. These concepts, along with the pedagogical approaches described are operationalised in the next chapter to guide the design and approach used in the Writer's workshops.

## **Chapter 3 – Methodology**

The aporia of ‘suspension’ has so far been a fertile ground to reflect on prior studies in the field and define key terms. It now calls for reflection on the ‘how’, the research methodologies that would initiate movement from ‘suspension’ to ‘undecidability’ and later to ‘urgency’. This movement demands attention to process. The process in this case is a combination of critical ethnographic approaches, and this chapter details how the process takes place. It thus features at the junction between prior scholarly engagement and the data that is beginning to emerge.

The chapter begins by outlining the ethnographic stance adopted, delineating what it is not, and re-appropriating its methods for the purposes of this study. There is a particular penchant for textual and contextual analysis, within a broader qualitative methodological design. Of interest in this frame are the tools provided by Blommaert (2004) and Lillis (2008) to move back and forth between self, text and context. These tools are “indexicality” and “orientation”. While these serve the purposes of textually based ethnographic approaches, one needs other resources to fulfil the requirements of critical research, presented and discussed in light of its implications for educational research, the researcher and researched (see Simon and Dippo, 1986; Canagarajah, 2004). For this purpose, I suggest a third tool, namely performativity and argue that performativity allows users of texts to redefine the nature of the links between self, text and context. I then present the participant observer’s dilemma especially in light of her multiple identities in the institutional sphere, and outline the different spaces where the research is situated, the samples, data charting process, data analysis methods with a particular focus on the analysis of texts and contexts. I later consider issues of workability, credibility and ethics.

### **3.1 The qualitative tradition**

#### ***3.1.1 Initial thought processes – epistemological frame***

In response to the need for new pedagogic spaces and methods, several workshops were organised over a period of two years. As pointed out earlier, the macro-design went through processes of deconstruction, transformation and re-construction with a view to achieving relevant EAL pedagogies. The term “performative” in the title refers indirectly to a critical if not transformative move since it rests on the ability to explore existing tensions and links between space, action,

people and the broader context, and it offers possibilities for improvisation or more long term changes.

Intuitively, the design of relevant spaces and methods presupposed three things: firstly, a grasp of the workings, strengths and shortcomings of institutional structures; and secondly, a distancing from the status quo and thirdly the development of novel perspectives. These perspectives included interrogating not only current definitions of key issues, but also what they are not, but could be. It was only when “what is not” could be included within “what is” that different perspectives began to appear feasible. This required a deep understanding of the workings in the different spaces through a qualitative methodology with a critical ethnographic lens.

### ***3.1.2 Revisiting the ‘qualitative’ in light of the ‘post-structural’***

In *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*, qualitative approach is defined as the activity of ‘analyzing data that are “sensory narratives”, or accounts of verbal, visual, tactile, olfactory and gustatory observations’ (LeCompte, Millroy & Preissle, 1992:preface). The methods within it are as varied as the disciplines employing them such as anthropology, sociology and so on, and the methods range from case study to ethnography to phenomenology etc., to also include mixed methods and variations that suit the requirements of particular research projects. As qualitative methods gained more appeal in the 1980s, Jaeger (1988) suggested that they are in fact ‘complementary’ rather than ‘alternatives’ to quantitative methods (in LeCompte et al.).

In the post-structural context, one would further steer away from the tendencies to box methods within particular approaches or paradigms, though through a reflexive move one would need to document where the fuzziness occurred. Lather argues that, ‘the term qualitative is inadequate for naming this unprecedented cross-disciplinary fertilization of ideas’ (1992: 90; see also Usher, 1996). She prefers the term ‘post-positivist’ which she alternates with ‘post-structuralist’ because such studies look for “gaps, discontinuities and suspensions of dictated meanings’ (ibid.). She is also convinced that it is more appropriate to speak of ‘constructed’ worlds than ‘found’ or naturalistic worlds, and perhaps with studies such as this one, to speak of ‘deconstructed’ and ‘reconstructed’ ones (ibid., 89).

Indeed, due the fact that the broader epistemological frame and write-up process are governed by the aporias, it is almost impossible to frame the research within a single qualitative approach. As a researcher, I needed to constantly be aware of how the approaches framed the research questions and the answers and in a post-structuralist move, resist such compartmentalising in order to arrive at more options within which to view the 'case', the Writers' workshop space/s. Either way, the aporia of suspension and undecidability would not allow for a foreclosing of qualitative approaches. Thus, I employed approaches often associated with ethnography such as observations, interviews, textual and contextual analyses, but together with other broadly speaking qualitative approaches.

These approaches also suited the strong performative element that would emerge in the aporia of urgency. The interest in performativity also called for a broader definition of texts to encompass performative modes and with this, the inclusion of performance analysis in the set of methods employed. Furthermore, at the end of students' first academic year I ran a focus group session, used across diverse qualitative traditions, to triangulate my research findings. I opted for the focus group session rather than interviews in order to explore the embodied dimension in the participants' rendition of their socio-academic experiences.

In addition, the performative aspect required a re-visioning of the spaces used. While qualitative research would normally take place in a "naturalistic" environment, in this case a form of 'third space' had to be created to allow participants more subject positions and leeway to explore more writer identities. This made the task of the conventional participant observer/researcher more interesting, for she was at once generating the space and experiencing it with the other participants. I elaborate on this later.

From a wider methodological purview, the cyclical research process could remind readers the cycles of action research. Again, the cycles were generated by the aporias in this research to arrive at better-suited pedagogic spaces, rather than to improve the practitioner's teaching methods per se. The improvements in teaching practice could have been an ancillary effect of the interactions and reflexivity within the cycles.

Taking the discussion of performativity further, one is tempted to think: is field research ever not performative? The researcher's multiple roles, notably as a participant observer, would seem to

suggest otherwise. Also, if by performative, one means actions and words that impact on real events, then even an ethnographer merely observing practices in the field, is likely to impact on the behaviour and actions of the observed, as was suggested by Heisenberg (1927) and other quantum physicists. For Law (2004), the research method is in essence 'performative'. He states:

'Method is not, I have argued, a more or less successful set of procedures for reporting on a given reality. Rather it is performative. It helps to produce realities. [...] There is a hinterland of realities, of manifest absences and Other-nesses, resonances and patterns of one kind or another, already being enacted' (2004: 143).

For now, I will discuss the essential components of ethnographic methods and how they are appropriated in this research and return to the aspect of performativity when revisiting the researcher's multiple roles.

### ***3.1.3 The ethnographic approaches – What are they not?***

The ethnographic approaches are often pitted against quantitative empirical ones to emphasise their non-quantitative dimension, but by the same token are misunderstood both within and outside their own field (see Hammersley, 1992). Van Maanen debunks some prevailing myths about ethnographic research. It is not a mere 'pleasant, peaceful, and instructive form of travel writing' but in fact 'something akin to an intense epistemological trial by fire' (1995:2). Ethnographic methods are employed in this study because they involve constructing knowledge about communities by stepping in and out of them and recontextualising the story in as reliable and sincere a manner as possible, while acknowledging the inevitable subjectivity present in the rendition of facts.

Hammersley underlines some key features of ethnographic studies namely:

- *Research takes place in the field*
- *Data is gathered from a range of sources, including documentary evidence of various kinds*
- *Data collection is, for the most part, relatively 'unstructured'. First, it does not involve following a fixed and detailed research design specified at the start. Second, the categories that are used for interpreting what people do or say... are generated out of the process of data analysis*

- *The focus is usually on a few cases, generally fairly small-scale to facilitate in-depth study*

- *The analysis of data involves interpretation of the meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local, and perhaps also wider contexts (1995:3).*

In this study, multiple sites are explored, with heterogeneous groups of individuals - students and staff - and their multiple practices. Additionally, a writing space created for the purposes of generating particular practices in writing and other modes. The ethnographic process becomes doubly complex as I intervene in and generate the moments to be observed. The ethnographic challenges are expressed further down.

In his later work, Hammersley has suggested that, '[a]ny inquiry is an attempt to answer some specific set of questions; and there are always different questions that could be asked about the same phenomena, which would produce different answers' (2008:67). One needs to acknowledge that ultimately, meanings are co-constructed by the participants and researcher in search for particular answers. The apparent instrumentality of the research does not rule out the possibility that the researcher could still empathise with his subjects in the field, as noted by Duranti:

A science of the people cannot but also exploit the researchers' ability to identify, empathise with the people they are studying. This implies that there exists (...) a certain playful element which consists of changing the familiar into the strange and vice versa (1997:86).

At times even, such empathy leads the researcher towards the unbeaten tracks, and unexpected findings. Nonetheless, despite spontaneous moments of experiencing with the 'other', the researcher needs to reflect and exercise discretion in the way she renders the account so as not to make facile assumptions about the familiar or cast the unfamiliar as bizarre. Duranti explains that the ethnographer's role is likely to be one of a 'cultural mediator' bringing together different accounts of both known and unknown worlds to engender a conciliation of different equally valid ways of being. Hence, in designing the workshops, I integrate both the knowledge of writing pedagogies gathered from the formal institutional spaces and my own teaching experiences, and students' prior academic and cultural experiences.

When I started the research certainly, there was a powerful thrust to develop a practical intervention that would assist international students, similar to those I had seen struggling in my Masters research. So while the Masters was primarily an ethnographic study, I was drawn to more practice-based approaches such as action research for the PhD (see Appendix 3 for lesson plans). Upon reconsideration, instead of opting for action research, I framed my study within broadly qualitative critical ethnographic approaches that would offer greater insight into the dynamic tensions between texts and contexts especially at an internationalising institution, over and above insights about teaching practices, which could at times be instrumental. While this research framing did not alter my practice or my desire to make a difference in students' lives, it implied that some pieces of data such as my teaching notes or the shadows' comments on classroom practice or classroom discourse would fall by the wayside. It also implied that other data such as writings about brought along objects or academic essays would now be foregrounded, and that issues of indexicality and performativity would become paramount to the research.

#### ***3.1.4 The implementation process – ethnographic approaches redefined***

As pointed out, the handling of texts and how they were impacted upon by the different spaces/contextes became the main interests guiding this study in order to generate design principles for future ones.

This would require a redefinition of ethnographic approaches themselves that go beyond the common written accounts of observed spaces and seeks to forge a dynamic, as opposed to a relayed link between text and context. Theresa Lillis's paper 'Ethnography as Method, Methodology, and Deep Theorizing' widens the scope of ethnography that involves text by acknowledging its various applications in research (2008).<sup>12</sup> Lillis argues that there is still a gap between the text itself and the context of text production and reception that now needs to be bridged in academic writing research (2008:374). I explore the potential of Clark and Ivanič's notion of "subject positions" to fill the gap. They are not exactly spatial categories, but the ideological positions offered by those spaces. Such positions easily seep in and out of writing,

---

<sup>12</sup> It would be useful to explore dimensions of ethnography-as-theory or epistemology in future research and look at its interactions with technique, its challenges to pin meaning down or to define/demarcate the status held by referents in particular contexts.

such that in order to better grasp the broader context of text production, one can first look at the ideological stances made available by that context.

Lillis explains how ethnographic research often operates as method, particularly as ‘talk around text’. She demonstrates how it ‘directs the researcher’s attention beyond the written text towards a consideration of some elements of writers’ perspectives about texts’ (2008:376). The drawback, she argues, is that the focus remains primarily on the text. Ethnographic research as methodology fares better by urging the researcher to use different data sources to ‘explore and track the dynamic and complex situated meanings and practices that are constituted in and by academic writing’ (2008:355). She also questions the way in which text and context are framed as dichotomous entities in research, and shows an inclination towards ethnographic research as ‘deep theorizing’, while proposing analytical tools to close the gap between the two.

To this end, she offers two terms, borrowed from linguistic ethnography, namely “indexicality” and “orientation”. The term indexicality was first coined by Silverstein (1998) and extended by Blommaert to look at ‘orders of indexicality’ that is ‘systemically reproduced, stratified meanings’ or ‘connections between linguistic signs and contexts’ (2005:73). Blommaert would argue that different indexical meanings would have different social or cultural values. Lillis uses the term ‘indexicality’ to mean ‘the specific ways in which bits of language (speech, writing) index, or point to aspects of social context’ (2008:355). For instance, students’ use of turns of phrase at the beginning of the essay could indicate or index their prior writing practices, where rote learnt platitudes were seen as desirable in essays. In order to infer a link between the text and the social context, I would need to be an insider to social practices as well. After students’ initial writings in the workshop space, it would also be worthwhile for the researcher to see these writing strategies in the light of ‘subject positions’ made available to students in the different writing contexts (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). In the case of international students, an awareness of prior and current learning contexts could allow one to extend the discussion from what texts index about context, to what texts index about the cruising between contexts (see their profiles in appendix 7).

The link between texts and context/s cannot be fully understood without attention to those involved in the production and consumption of texts. “Orientation” refers to the ways in which ‘speakers/hearers orient to what is said and written’ (Lillis, 2008:376). Speakers articulate their

ideas from a particular vantage point or subject position, and hearers too receive texts from their own ideological perspective and align to them to varying degrees. Here as well, the role of context becomes crucial in determining how speakers/hearers would relate to text. Both aspects of orientation are thus said to be 'embedded socio-historically' (2008:376).

On the whole, Lillis states that indexicality and orientation are not 'denotational' but rather 'mediational and relational categories'. In other words, they are not tools restricted to a textual analysis of utterances but enable contextual analyses by bridging the gap between text and context. Hence, as tools in research, they allow the researcher to 'navigate between emic and etic understandings' that is between the outsider and insider perspectives (ibid).

In this study, the use of 'indexicality' as an analytical tool could prove useful since it widens the scope of interpretation beyond text or 'talk around text', allowing one to analyse students' texts as indexical of features in their social, personal or academic context.

In the previous chapter, it was mentioned that as students travel to new contexts, their brought-along Discourses<sup>13</sup> may not transfer as well, requiring them to acquire new text and context-specific ones. The cues about the possible alignment or mis-alignment of brought along and required Discourses are gathered from students' initial writings or other forms of texts. The texts therefore become indexical of the students' discursual challenges to fit in the new academic context. In order to facilitate the acquisition of mediating Discourses, different modes of expression and subject positions can be used. Modes such as written texts, images, performance can be used particularly to address the link between self and text and new subject positions can be introduced to ease students' transition into the new context.

As for Lillis's notion of 'orientation', it could be helpful in understanding and differentiating the students' ownership of texts and the researcher's responses to them. While tutors marked essays with a set list of criteria, I relied on fieldwork, in other words on activities in the workshop space, to uncover underlying issues of identity and strategy in writing and assess texts in that light. As a reader delving into and inevitably shaping the meanings of texts, I perhaps became an instrument

---

<sup>13</sup> Capitalised to suggest that they are 'secondary discourses' (see Gee, 1990).

in research, a meaning making device and my orientation towards the text was likely to be imbued with greater subjective insights. These are articulated reflexively in the write-up of the findings.

Following observations of first year students in informal spaces and the collection of their writings in the formal and informal spaces at the university, one could generate an in-between, conducive semi-structured pedagogic space for EAL students. The workshop space itself became an observed and text generating field and its life-blood was an influx of materials brought in by the students and researcher from the other two fields. These materials became the entry points into the formal lessons on academic writing and allowed for more experiential and embodied forms of learning.

Owing to its attempts to generate a new space for the emergence of these diverse forms of learning, the ethnographic stance brushed on the critical as explained below.

### **3.2 Criticality in ethnographic research**

We may start by asking ourselves: what is “critical” about critical ethnographic methods? And what does it add to the ethnographic enterprise?

Critical ethnographic methods may be treated as one of the offshoots of critical theory, which relies to some extent on the interrogation of ideologies as Marx would have it, or assumptions that are taken for granted. While ethnographic methods seek to describe particular cultural ways of being, critical ethnographic ones ask the following questions: ‘what are the missing questions they (the situations) answer’, what is ‘the invisible grid of context’ operating behind the observed actions (Willis, 1978:18). These go a step further than Hammersley’s point that our quest is predetermined by the questions to which we seek answers (2008:67). Here, in face of the phenomena being witnessed, the researcher works backwards to understand what were the triggers?

Many of these missing questions are surprisingly generated from ground experiences rather than the towers of knowledge and sometimes relate to issues of power, domination, youth apathy and so on. Kumaravadivelu describes the critical ethnographic stance as follows:

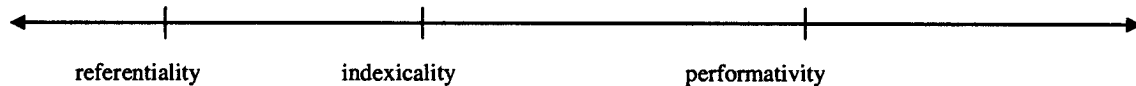
'Unlike conventional ethnography, which is considered to be mostly descriptive, critical ethnography is deemed to be mainly reflective. Critical ethnographers take into account historical, political, sociological, and other macrocontextual factors that influence a person's cultural life' (Kumaravadivelu, 2008:183).

In the study, I focus more on the sociological than the political or historical factors influencing students' performance at the university. Or more accurately, I looked at the politics with a small 'p', i.e., the power issues in the immediate academic and classroom contexts. For instance, students' fear to consult with faculty could raise questions about the power relations between staff and students or the perceptions thereof. These ground experiences suggest that there could be a degree of subjectivity in our present commonsense top down understanding of the issue. The experiences could generate additional questions about whose interests are eventually served in a context characterised by such distortions of power. In the case of international students, observations on the ground prompt one to ask: why are well-performing international students struggling so much in their first year? What were the structures in place to assist them? Why are they relying on subcultures for help? Whose interests are served in the end? The missing questions in this study pertained to students' multiple identities in and out of formal learning spaces and by extension to geopolitical issues about how new contexts can arm or disarm students and make their brought along resources irrelevant, students' relations to writing and for pedagogic purposes, how these could be unraveled when writing or speech proved insufficient.

Confronted with these questions, in this study I had a range of options. I could merely relay information on the field in a dispassionate and wishfully "objective" manner, or foreground the voices of the participants, and intervene in the status quo, speak on behalf of the oppressed and propose solutions (Fine, 1994). By opting for the latter, the study would challenge the frontiers of "what is" in the 'aporia of suspension' and consider "what could be" (Denzin, 2001) in the 'aporia of undecidability', hence initiating possibilities for transformative action in the 'aporia of urgency'. One can sense a tension between the critical and the transformative in the critical ethnographic stance. It appears that the 'missing questions' are stretched in the aporia of urgency to include the solutions as well. The transformative agenda in the final aporia seems to suspend or re-shape the critical for once one begins to intervene in the 'invisible grid of context' (Willis, 1978:18), one can no more critique it except in its new form. As Canagarajah (2006) states, critique loses its 'critical edge' each time it is documented. I would argue that critique then takes

on new shapes, where the researcher either concedes or undertakes to transform the situation. Yet the critical questions leave their trace in the transformative actions.

One of the tools to engage in transformative action is “performativity”. It can be placed on a continuum alongside referentiality and indexicality.



These three concepts describe the nature of the links between words/texts and the world out there. “Referentiality” may have a denotational or connotational quality and is used to associate words/texts to objects/people/contexts in the real world. For instance, the word ‘pig’ refers to the animal ‘pig’ in the world or possibly to an untidy person (who behaves like a ‘pig’). “Indexicality”, as explained in the previous section, operates on the assumption that the words/texts can give us more than generic knowledge about the context out there and vice-versa. This link between texts and contexts allows us to augment referential knowledge about particular texts and particular contexts. For ethnographers, there is no doubt that indexicality would be a useful tool to generate sensitive, contingent and localised knowledge about the field and what informs it.

Performativity goes a step further than indexicality by re-engineering the link between texts and contexts. By shifting the rules of the context, texts can begin to take on other significations and vice-versa. The rules of the context can be altered by using pedagogic spaces for new purposes or recreational spaces for pedagogic purposes for instance. In the process, new subject positions are created for those creating texts. The rules of the text, especially as it relates to the writer, can be altered by alternating between modes, in the case of this study, between speech, writing and performance. Performativity, in short, allows the research to move from the realm of account to that of re-count in the critical transformative sense.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> In *Linguistic Anthropology*, Duranti (2009) seems to suggest that performativity could be a part of indexicality. Indeed, the notion of indexicality as the bridge between texts and contexts does not preclude the possibility of it having a dynamic performative feature. However, the notion of ‘indexicality’ is not often used with this feature in mind.

### ***3.2.1 Implications for educational research***

Educational research ultimately seeks to resolve certain educational issues or gaps just like Derrida's aporias seek to resolve violations of justice through contingently applicable laws. Often though, the solutions may be narrowly focused on the factors at hand and ignore intervening factors. Critical ethnographic methods, in that sense can provide a holistic picture of the problems so that the solutions proposed in the 'aporia of urgency' take stock of the enabling or hindering conditions and thus are sustainable in the long run. In our case, the critical ethnographic study pays attention to the happenings in the formal and informal spaces on campus to generate the design principles for the workshop space to teach EAL pedagogies for first year international students. Elliot also emphasises the virtue of assessing different structures and experiences in order to derive a deeper understanding of education reforms. He defines education as a process by which 'the meaning and significance of structures, including policy, are reconstructed in the historically conditioned consciousness of individuals as they make sense of their life conditions' (1991: 9-10).

UCT finds itself at an interesting point in time, for as an emerging Afropolitan university, it is in the process of re-structuring its educational and financial priorities. These have bearings on international students' first year experience at the university for some of the interventions intended are still burgeoning or in transition.

These also have bearings on the way the research methodology is deployed. Green and Bloome (1997) would describe the methodology used in this study as akin to 'ethnography *in* education' as opposed to 'ethnography *of* education' since it is carried out by those within the institution rather than anthropologists or sociologists from outside. It is noteworthy that I am not doing an ethnography *per se*, but employing a combination of ethnographic and other qualitative methods. The observation of institutions from inside out, offers a novel glimpse into the familiar spaces to those within; it may empower the very people it researches by aligning them with the interventions; and in the process of creating a form of third space, it re-defines "normal" spaces imbuing them with new senses and functions.

It is also likely that alterations in the educational set-up in the workshop space could alter the events in the other two spaces and more specifically the dialectical process between the individual

and formalised structures of knowledge. In the long run, the formal structures themselves could become more receptive and allow students to express novel modes of thinking and being. Due to the priorities of reform, it is likely that the ethnographic enterprise would have undercurrents of action research, where the researcher would engage in the iterative processes of exploration and practice to yield improved pedagogic models. Still, the practices are not the primary focus of the study here, rather it is the design principles that the practices generate.

### ***3.2.2 Implications for the researcher and the researched***

As a participant observer in the field, I had to be wary of the power I wielded over the participants and the influence my presence had on them as they participated in the workshop activities. As Simon and Dippo contend, 'power operates not just on people but through them' (1986:197). In other words, I could become an instrument in the power play and unwittingly submit to and transmit the essentialising or marginalising tendencies, while trying to research (with) those students.

The question is not about how to avoid this, but rather how to cultivate a self-aware, self-critical mind to notice and acknowledge it. As mentioned earlier, this is what Scott and Usher (1996) term 'reflexivity'. In relation to ethnographic methods, reflexivity involves being aware that ethnographic data is more often "produced" than "found"; that empathy cannot be complete due to inadequate historical and cultural glosses of the "other" context such as students' cultural backgrounds, the academic contexts in which they now study; that the discourse used to communicate can at times articulate ideas, at times silence them; and that our positionality or the space from which we speak in the research can become a marker of our authority, regardless of our overt measures to downplay it (Simon and Dippo, 1986). Madison (2005) displays similar concerns stating that the participant observer not only needs to be aware of her subjectivity but grasp how she relates to or positions herself vis-à-vis the other. In this, Madison (2005) finds dialogue to be a vital feature in the attempts to relate with the researched.

Dialogue is always a two-way process; it encourages questioning and negotiation of meanings and displays varying degrees of "difference" and "unity" throughout, all of which resist closure or the single answer. Opinions may diverge or coincide, but there will always be more questions raised to refine one's understandings. This has bearings on our handling of time in the ethnographic

journey. The lack of closure challenges the stagnancy, the 'ethnographic present' or as Madison would say, the 'connotation of timelessness' (2005:10). In fact, the reality in and around and outside the ethnographic recount is constantly evolving, even if attempts are made to tie it down to the observed moment. Here dialogue becomes a way to challenge the illusion of stasis and demonstrate the dialectical rapport between the observer, the observed and the recount even beyond the research. Dialogue can also generate moments of self-discovery in the other. Quoting Bakhtin, 'to be means to be for another, through the other, for oneself' (1984:287), Madison argues further that dialogue also implies that one has to learn about oneself. Both seem to echo the Hegelian thoughts on the dialectics of self and other. The self resides as much in itself as in the other, and this realisation can lead to liberation within and beyond ourselves (Hegel, 1998).

The dialogues in this study surfaced in multiple ways. Some were casual conversations with the international students in their first year and beyond. Some were thoughtful conversations with writing experts on their perceptions of writing, international students and the internationalisation phenomenon as a whole (see the prologues to the aporias). Some were pedagogic conversations with participants before, during and after the production of texts and some were performances of student identities during the theatre activities. The latter were dialogues too, but in a different more embodied medium.

The dialogues with the first year international students did trigger moments of remembrance. I recalled my first year at UCT, as an international student, trying to find my way around campus, to resist the lure of subculture groups, to manage my courses, tutorials and unfamiliar conventions. I could hear my own voice in their concerns and at that instant, I re-membered them, re-constructed them anew, by situating myself and my experiences within this new group of international students. As a participant observer, this re-visioning marked me, because this time around, the dialogues bore repercussions on me as well. The re-visioning also challenged the linearity of experiences. Perhaps experiences were in fact timeless and shifted each time they were iterated or re-collected. In other words, they were 'different' and perhaps their deferment in time allowed for their re-inscription in a set of new contexts and accompanying meanings.

My experiences as a writing consultant at the Writing Centre with students from a wide range of disciplines also permeated and deepened my interaction with the international students. For

instance, when they related their concerns with a particular essay, I could engage with them since I had seen many drafts on that topic at the Writing Centre. I had also probably interacted with my Writing Centre colleagues in the field on the topic to be able to provide an informed response to the text. Hence the dialogues can become a system of utterances with multiple points of departure and contact making. The connections between the nodes in that communicative system could be so intertwined that some utterances could be mere quotes of other conversations across time, in other words they could be intertextual or subliminal references.

While these dialogues can deepen the ethnographic experience, the observer is necessarily present in them and implicated in their rendition. How then can one begin to be critical to a situation if one is fully immersed in it? As mentioned, it seems that the critical loses its currency as soon as one critiques a situation. One way to respond to this touches on Shklovsky's (1998) idea of "defamiliarisation". Defamiliarisation involves seeing the proximal at a remove, and trying to perceive the unfamiliar in familiar experiences. How does one defamiliarise oneself with the researched? How does one escape the normalising tendency that comes with pinning the data down in writing? Perhaps the use of multiple lenses during the ethnographic journey or its cyclical evolution could ensure that the critical remained so. These questions are attended to in more detail in the following sections.

### **3.3 The participant observer's dilemma**

Journeying back and forth between different spaces, conversations and texts, the researcher begins to simultaneously occupy various overlapping sites, such that her identity at any particular point in time is likely to be 'liminal', to use Jackson's words. Jackson holds that 'liminality necessarily occurs when we impose classification systems upon the natural world' (1995:37).

What he implies is that as ethnographers cruise between worlds, they inevitably disrupt the existing boundaries between worlds. Their perceptions are informed both by their subjectivity and their newly-adopted meaning-making lenses, such as the language and discourses of the observed. This liminality 'betwixt and between worlds, selves ... words' (1995:39) enriches ethnographers' insights, but it also complicates their task as researchers. In the study, I situated myself at any given moment as a participant observer, an international student, tutor and Writing

Centre consultant. With these, I became insider to some of their discourses, which include their practices, with access to their exclusive resources.

### ***3.3.1 Identity as participant observer and designer***

My research identity as participant observer can be understood in light of Geertz's words that ethnographic research is about 'understanding a people's 'culture' in a way that 'exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity' (2003:14). This may be a milder version of Schklovsky's previous comment on the defamiliarisation of the "normal". For Geertz, one can still present the "normal" issues as they are, without deliberately making them appear strange, but still suspend one's assumptions about them. Thus, there is, implicit in ethnographic studies, an inevitable negotiation of positionality between the observer and the observed, and their respective notions of what counts as "normality" and "particularity". In addition, implied in this negotiation of positionality, is the component of researcher participation. One cannot know enough about the 'other' unless to some permissible degree, one becomes the 'other' (see Nagel, 1974, 'What it's like to be a bat' for a deeper engagement on such existential questions).

In this study, rather than studying the "other", I explored and participated in what appeared normal and familiar that is the international students' informal interactions in and around the workshop space in order to extricate their particularity. The 'other' in this case was the formal academic site at UCT, a vast and unfamiliar institution with what was often perceived by international students as having unfamiliar rules and values governing both social interactions and academic requirements. In practice, the distinctions between the familiar and the other often blurred as I shifted in and out of the fields. Initially, in order to undertake the pedagogic tasks involved in the research project, I had to interact with writing experts in the formal institutional spaces, to become more familiar with the pedagogical component and its embedded discourses. That component became more familiar as I engaged in the workshops and got feedback from the shadows and participants (see Appendix 14 and 15).

It is noteworthy that the performative nature of the research also bestowed me a new researcher role, that of designer. I was involved not only in the participation and observation of activities but also in the selection of the spaces themselves, and in the creation of rules and activities within them. I developed the "lived in" spaces then entered them with the participants to generate

practice. As such, like my participants, I was also projected into different subject positions even as a researcher. As Quantz states, in view of Hammersley and Atkinson's earlier writing, 'the concept of reflexivity suggests that ethnographers conduct research in a manner that treats the researcher as part of the research' (quoted in Quantz, 1992:472). This view was actualised to the extent that the researcher had as many if not more subject positions at the macro and micro research levels as those given to the participants to bring out their critical/creative potential in the performative space. Fortunately, the designer role preceded the participant observer role and simplified my task, though I still had to be open to improvisations in design. Outside of the researcher role, I also had other roles which insistently beckoned my attention as the boundaries would threaten to blur and called for necessary choices as explained below.

### ***3.3.2 Identity as an international student***

As a Mauritian student, I was socialised into many of the Mauritian international students' practices, and they continue to inform my worldview to this day. I was nonetheless wary of generalising about peer groups based on my participation in the activities of the Mauritian Society, of which I had been a member for the past eight years. Yet I must admit that I was more of an observer than a participant. I appreciated the society's efforts to promote social wellbeing especially among first year members who may be feeling homesick. I was however skeptical of the senior members' skills to advise first year students on academic matters. At this stage, I had to remind myself that the other national society members perhaps experienced the subculture practices differently. I therefore strove to give more voice to my participants and allow the data to speak for itself to limit possible value judgments on my part. As such, I asked them to write their profile, to bring objects of their choice that best represented them to the workshops, gave them the freedom to choose their own essay topics and design their own theatre performance from start to finish.

### ***3.3.3 Identity as Tutor and Writing Centre consultant***

At UCT, I taught semantics to second year Speech Therapy students during the Winter school in 2008. It was a crash course designed for those who had previously failed the course. After a month of intensive tutoring, the students had made significant progress. Everyone passed the course and approximately a quarter of the class scored a first class in linguistics that term.

I had a similar experience at the Writing Centre where students are offered one-to-one consultations on their essay drafts. After a series of consultations, students started producing significantly improved essays, and freed themselves of the belief that they were 'poor' writers. What this suggests is that there may be factors other than formal course components such as motivation, confidence or congruence between prior and new academic backgrounds that could determine students' success or failure in academia. This deepened understanding of text production and reception had an important impact on the teaching methods employed in the workshop space.

My prior teaching experience shifted the focus of the writing sessions. The aim of the sessions was not restricted to teaching writing skills, or moulding students to belong to the institution's academic communities, but giving them the confidence and license to think and write critically. The teaching role posed a challenge for my observer role which required that I observe as well as intervene in the data collection moments in the Writers' workshops. I mitigated the impact of my multiple roles in the space by calling upon the participants' views and two 'shadows' from the Writing Centre to act as participant observers and share their views on the session. Their input was more around the pedagogy than the methodology (see Appendix 15).

This said, in methodologies such as action research, the intervention component is a given, and through cycles of planning, action, observation, reflection, the researcher is expected to generate improved versions of (pedagogic) practice (Elliott: 1991). However, as mentioned in the first section, with the critical ethnographic approaches, the emphasis is more on what the contexts observed or created index about broader themes rather than the actual pedagogic practice itself.

### **3.4 The spaces**

As mentioned in chapter two, spaces are not only physical, but more importantly conceptual ones that take any shape when occupied by possibly like-minded individuals. They are methodologically speaking, the 'case', the lived-in contexts that would engender meaningful practices for the surfacing of design principles. In order to narrate a comprehensive story of students' identity formation and voicing at the institution, I moved in and out of different spaces, lingering longer in the workshop space. I observed all three spaces because they were intricately linked and likely to influence one another. While the faculties had a deep understanding of the

formal spaces, they did not necessarily share the same awareness of the subcultural spaces and their academic repercussions. While the Masters study looked at the subcultural spaces, this study sheds more light on the interactions in the workshop space and what it indexes about the peer and mainstream institutional spaces.

### ***3.4.1 Peer spaces and institutional spaces***

The first space for observation was students' peer spaces. These spaces could be defined along Hall and Jefferson's (1993) definition of "subcultures" as:

*'distinct enough shape and structure to make them identifiably different from their parent culture. They must be focused around certain activities, values, certain uses of material artifacts, territorial spaces etc. which significantly differentiate them from the wider culture'. (13-14)*

My Masters study focused on this space and revealed the proliferation of different subculture practices that sometimes ran counter to the mainstream institutional practices (Hunma, 2009). For example, the senior students gave incomplete advice on referencing or content and shared notes that may in fact short-circuit the learning process or the consultative process with relevant formal structures.

*Nina just explained the format and where I could get the facts. I didn't think referencing was so important.*

*She said that lecturers already have the scenario. I don't need to explain.*

The more formal institutional spaces were the various departments on campus. Insights from writing experts in those spaces were gathered and allowed me to understand writing issues and practices from the departments' perspectives. As already evident, the experts' views formed the prologue to the three key sections of the thesis.

### ***3.4.2 Writers' workshop space***

I explored the semi-structured space of the Writers' workshop, which aimed at mediating between the two other fields in order to hone students' writerly voice in academic settings. Due to the reflexive nature of this study, the design of the teaching space and resources was constantly 'in the process of becoming' (Elliott, 1991:10). It was shaped 'within pedagogical practice' as the facilitator developed the content in response to students' own 'search for meaning'. The content was further refined after close attention to students' responses to ensure that they found it

'relevant to their concerns', 'interesting' etc (ibid). The pedagogy hence required the facilitator 'to reflect in as well as on the classroom processes, quite independently from any assessment they make of the quality of the outcome' (ibid.).

The teaching itself was not viewed as a process aimed at achieving intended learning outcomes but rather as a way of 'activating, engaging, challenging and stretching the natural powers of the human mind' (ibid.). For this purpose, drama was used during the 2011 sessions to allow participants to think and behave outside the box. As for assessment, it was not viewed as a tool to measure specific skills in terms of a 'predetermined output criteria' but rather in terms of 'intrinsic qualities of being (learners) manifest' (ibid.). The different elements of the pedagogic space in this study are elaborated further.

### 3.5 The focus: Workshop space



←→ Movement of texts and identities across conceptual and physical spaces <sup>15</sup>

While observations could generate deep data on students' behavior and interactions in the three fields, the focus throughout was on the production and reception of texts (essays, notes, performances), especially in the conceptual space of the workshops where the rules of the game changed, new subject positions were introduced and impacted upon the writing process.

With regards to the physical space for the workshops, different venues were explored such as the Writing Centre, the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO), the Vice-chancellor's boardroom, cafes or gardens to grasp how these could affect the macro and micro-aspects of design. The use of familiar physical spaces in unfamiliar ways gave a new spin to the ethnographic research, since it not only revolved around describing the familiar spaces as strange but creating that very strangeness, by using those spaces for different purposes. The spaces could

---

<sup>15</sup> The dotted lines around the community and workshop spaces emphasise their flexible structure and permeability. The community space, if composed of international students of a particular nationality could be less permeable to the 'others' and yet flexible within. Some forms of hierarchy would still prevail (Hunma, 2009). The workshop space deliberately attempted to flatten some hierarchies and make students from diverse backgrounds mingle. It was permeable to the extent that it spoke to both other spaces and exchanged resources with them.

also create opportunities for students to explore a range of subject positions in which they could enact their socio-academic identities.

The norms of practice in the workshops were co-generated by the researcher and the students with leeway given to students to interrogate the teaching methods and content. This was done initially through discussions about the rules and forms where students were asked to think critically about why they were where they were and where they expected to get by the end of the workshop. Critical thinking was one of the chief outcomes of the lessons in the workshop space and also constituted the life-force of the research to develop relevant pedagogical models. The role of the participants and researcher was initially that of practitioner, then of the critical thinker and researcher. In other words, the participants initially functioned on the periphery as apprenticed writers; they gradually moved towards the centre, as they began to contribute to the design.

For this, the workshop placed emphasis on academic writing conventions and the gradual development of students' writer identities (see Appendix 2). While these two components may appear contradictory, they together formed the crux of students' academic writing journey. Thus, on the one hand, the lessons aimed at the appropriation of skills, conventions and discourses of academic writing. The acquisition of the requisite conventions was what Cope and Kalantzis allude to in 'A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies':

For anyone who is not a comfortable part of the culture and discourses of the mainstream, it is even harder to get into networks that operate informally than it was to enter into the old discourses of formality. This is a crucial factor in producing the phenomenon of the glass ceiling: the point at which employment and promotion opportunities come to an abrupt stop (2000:12).

On the other hand, the lessons were aimed at fostering students' critical thinking skills to enable them to question dominant ideologies, or assumptions, and project their ideas confidently before academics in the disciplines. The workshop strove additionally to offer students the resources to negotiate faculty expectations with their own writing agency.

The teaching methods and tools used in the various workshops included the use of handouts, videos, presentations by students, interactions on online sites and image theatre. The analysis of texts was based on a comparative analysis of students' prior and current writing. The videos were

used to illustrate ideas around writing such as coherence or malapropisms. The presentations aimed at assisting students to hone their voices in public settings. The online sites urged students to reflect on their writing, share their anxieties, sharpen their meta-cognitive skills and feel heard. The image theatre session aimed at helping students become agents of change or “spect-actors”<sup>16</sup> in their learning and more specifically help them develop strength to own their writing voice (Boal, 1995:13). The theatrical techniques are elaborated in chapter five and six.

The workshop content was constantly re-viewed to ensure that it was relevant, topical and interesting for the learners. The written text was complemented with pictures, videos or used as a piece of visual mnemonic. Innovations were brought through the crafting of hybrid and intertextual models from other disciplines and meaning-making resources. Overhead slides, videos and blog postings were used to make the workshop more interactive. The materials thus took into account Cope and Kalantzis’s contention that new pedagogies should respond to ‘the context of our culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalised societies’ and the ‘plurality of texts that circulate’ (2000:9). In that sense, they aimed to be critical and transformative, diversified in the issues they addressed and relevant to a more heterogeneous cohort of students.

### **3.6 Samples**

The pilots were held in April and August 2010 and the formal workshops were held in March and April 2011. To recruit students for the pilots of April and August 2010, I attended the general meetings of different National Societies, such as Namibian Society, Botswana Society at the beginning of the year and presented the offerings of the Writers’ workshop. Information about the workshop was also posted on the Open source and networking site, *Vula*, by the societies’ chairpersons. Interested students submitted their details to the chairperson or directly to me. I then randomly selected three students from each country and informed them about the times and location of the workshop. The first pilot was organised in April 2010 with ten international students from the SADC region. This pilot resulted in more questions than answers on the following:

---

<sup>16</sup> Spectators and actors

The pilots were of short duration, namely four two-hour sessions spread out over four weeks. How could we ensure that students were able to take ownership of their learning after the sessions? Should we have follow-up activities, for example through a blogsite or focus group sessions or consultations? These questions provided a direction for the subsequent workshops in March and April 2011 where it was expected that more clarity would be achieved on the different design aspects.

The sample for each of the formal workshops consisted of ten first year international students from different SADC countries. These were:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Academic Area</b>	<b>Batch</b>
Mimi	Zimbabwe	Science	Saturday
Bina	Tanzania	Commerce	Thursday
Maya	Mauritius	Commerce	Thursday
Tuli	Zimbabwe	Commerce, then Humanities	Saturday
Anita	Zimbabwe	Science	Vacation
Tahini	Mauritius	Science	Saturday
Bob	Namibia	Commerce	Thursday
Tembi	Zimbabwe	Science	Saturday
Figo	Zambia	Commerce	Saturday
Fiona	Congo	Commerce, then Humanities	Saturday
Joe	Lesotho	Engineering	Saturday
Simba	Lesotho	Engineering	Saturday
Jaya	Mauritius	Science	(Focus group)
Karl (Shadow)	South Africa	Humanities	

SADC students were chosen because they shared a similar academic background. Most of them had taken the Cambridge A-Levels international examinations and were mostly EAL students.

The SADC students in this study were informed about the workshop during meetings with their national societies on campus, given brochures, and sent bulk emails via the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO). Students who had attended the meetings entered their details in a sign-sheet, and those who saw the advertisement in their email, emailed me their contact details and the days that would suit them most. They had three options: four sessions on consecutive Thursdays afternoons from four to six, or four sessions on consecutive Saturdays mornings from ten to twelve, or four consecutive days during the April vacation. Saturday was the most popular choice because it did not clash with their courses and was scheduled soon enough to assist students with their first few academic essays.

For the specific aspects of data analysis, I selected the students with whom I had continued interactions even after the official workshop sessions. These students handed in essays written for their mainstream courses in the course of the year and participated in the focus group session at the end of the year. I selected them because it would be easier to track their progress in writing and related issues over time. Hence, I used the purposive sampling method to select the participants.

### 3.7 Data charting process

Only data collected during the two workshop cycles in March 2011 were used for the purposes of this research. The insights gained from the 2010 pilots served to alter the focus of the 2011 formal workshops.

	<b>March/April 2010</b>	<b>August 2010</b>	<b>March/April 2011</b>
<b>Data</b>	Texts in the mainstream and workshop spaces	Texts in the mainstream and workshop spaces	<i>Students' profiles</i> <i>Interviews with writing experts - transcript</i> <i>Students' performances – snapshots</i> <i>Spaces - snapshots</i> <i>Texts</i>
<b>Spaces</b>	The Writing Centre	CHED seminar room	<i>Jammie steps</i> <i>Vice-Chancellor's meeting room</i> <i>Garden</i> <i>Coffee shop</i> <i>IAPO room</i> <i>CHED boardroom</i>

<b>Modes</b>	Writing Brought along objects Discussion	Writing Brought along objects Discussion	<i>Performance</i> Writing Brought along objects Discussion
<b>Methods</b>	My reflections Blogs Screenings Handouts Overhead slides	My reflections Blogs Screenings Handouts Overhead slides	<i>Interviews</i> <i>Focus group</i> <i>Facebook</i> <i>Shadows' impressions</i> My reflections Screenings Handouts Overhead slides

The 2011 workshops are the key focus of this thesis. The changes brought about in 2011 are italicised. These allowed for greater proximity with the objects, contexts and experiences outside the workshop space which the texts seemed to index. For instance, the students' profiles could hint at their autobiographical self and explain the choices behind their brought-along objects or their writing styles. I detail below the thought processes that informed my selection of particular forms of data.

### ***3.7.1 Overhead slides and blogs (2010)***

In the first two pilots in April and August 2010, I used overhead slides and videos as pedagogic tools. I collected data in the form of students' written texts during the sessions, brought along objects, blog entries and expectation and evaluation forms. The overhead slides and videos served as illustrations of the concepts introduced, but some participants spent excessive time taking notes rather than reflecting on the lesson at hand. At times, the overhead slides also reinforced the lecturer-student hierarchy, the sanctity of knowledge, my control over the materials and the pace as facilitator, for I changed the slides to match the progression of the teacher-talk. The slides seemed at a remove from the students both physically and conceptually. Displayed at the far extremity of the classroom, they physically challenged notions of pedagogic access. Conceptually, they added one more layer to the decoding process of information flows. The abstract noun 'knowledge' could perhaps translate into the transitive verb 'knowing' once it was made physically proximate through the re-writing of notes, and conceptually relatable through context-specific examples that aligned knowing to students' familiar ways of knowing in particular settings.

In the 2011 workshops, the overhead slides were replaced with four-page long handouts given to students at the beginning of each session. These handouts contained writing activities, points for discussion, games and food for thought. They were used as starting points for more embodied activities such as discussion and performance, where students could relate to the ideas at a conceptual level. The handouts were mere points of reference to guide participants for other activities beyond the pages' margins (see Appendix 6).

Other data sources that later lost their appeal were the blog entries on Blogspot in 2010. Though I created much excitement around the activity and the identity of bloggers as social commentators and critics, only two participants blogged actively and responded to the writing topics I had posted or they posted their own. The online community of practice was not very dynamic primarily because many participants had never entered or used blogsites before. Many had difficulties logging into it. Also, it is likely that posting words online was riskier than uttering them live for the web was a volatile space with an amorphous mass of readers one could not anticipate in advance. Even when the security settings were tightened, information often leaked to third parties in remote parts of the world. It is possible also that participants did not find the blogging task particularly relevant for it was removed from their traditional ways of knowing. More guidance on my part into this practice could have increased its popularity. Participants preferred the face-to-face interactions and e-mails to the blogs. There was a more personalised quality about these. By sending their essay drafts via email, they did not have to disclose their doubts or writing challenges. Also, the messages and conversations were more instantaneous and allowed students to comfortably assert themselves as suited them rather than assume the strange blogger subject position.

### ***3.7.2 Facebook group***

In the 2011 workshops, the blogsite was replaced with a Facebook group: UCT Writers' space. All participants were already familiar with Facebook and could easily access and post entries in the group. Facebook groups by definition were informal, friendly and I assumed that they would allow participants to share their writing challenges without inhibitions. However, participants preferred to use the group page to share and comment on photographs taken during the sessions. The preference of pictures over words was inherent to the Facebook mode itself where written posts were short and truncated, but where the nature and reach of images or faces were

extended through tags and “share” settings, e.g. share with friends, friends of friends, public or custom. Images were also more tangible than texts and added a flair of the instantaneous to the practice.

A possible reason Facebook gained more appeal than Blogspot could be that it offered students another subject position to express themselves should they feel uneasy to do so in words. By creating a Facebook community of practice, I borrowed the affordances of a larger Facebook community of practice and re-appropriated them for the ends of the workshops. However, I did not use the Facebook page as data either, because it did not bear any direct pedagogic implications and was mostly used as a port of call by students and as a notice board by me. I noticed that the one-to-one conversations and emails of essays were still more popular in 2011 and therefore factored these into my data set. The emailing of essays was somehow deemed more important than the posting of impressions around the writing activity. Was it because students lacked the meta-language to write about writing or was it because the essays were graded and therefore of greater consequence than mere emotive writing?

### ***3.7.3 Brought along resources and texts***

The brought along resources were still placed at par with students’ written texts in 2011 workshops for they were carriers of their autobiographical selves beyond the confines of the workshop space. Since they belonged to another time and space, they still needed to be documented to receive similar value and functions in the new setting. By endowing the objects with cultural meanings they may have lost in transition, participants also attached those meanings onto themselves. Hence the brought along resources had material import and could be accessed by all through different senses and served as evidence for their identities and explanations for the choices they made in text construction later. These were strengthened by participants’ profile information they provided and conversations I had with them outside the workshop space and via email. I also looked at the texts produced by participants during the sessions as they assumed and enacted a variety of subject positions. I compared these with the texts produced in the mainstream institution spaces.

### ***3.7.4 Reflections around practice, interviews and profiles***

I used my own reflections, the shadows' views, the expectation and evaluations sheets as planning tools in the conceptualisation of workshops. The questionnaire also partly probed into students' *habitus*, in other words, their cultural and academic backgrounds. Content for the workshop was subsequently co-generated by the participants based on an understanding of their needs and histories. The evaluation questionnaire assessed the teaching methods, pacing, relevance and structure. At the end of the four-week workshop, students were expected to offer feedback on the workshop by filling a more detailed questionnaire with open-ended as well as closed questions.

As a participant observer, I felt that questionnaires could have been misconstrued by participants as monitoring tools wielded by exposed themselves less as a defensive strategy. Also, I asked myself if the use of expectation and evaluation was an appropriate deconstructive move to assess the workshop design. Did it offer participants enough space to conceive of the unconceivable or was it too prescriptive? Were we not at times creating conditions for the (dis)confirmation of our own subjectivities? At times, the scope of questions could be too narrow to engage the student in critically assessing the sessions? How could we move beyond the "true-false", "hence-proved" logic to the "what if" scenarios? The use of questionnaires was therefore viewed with a critical eye and supplemented with dialogue. In 2011, I also sought the assistance of two shadows from the Writing Centre who acted as participant observers and offered their insights and substantiated my own observations of the practice. However, they did not offer feedback on the methodology. I used the interviews with Writing experts and students' profiles to contextualise the observations in the workshop space and official mainstream spaces.

### ***3.7.5 Snapshots of performance and physical spaces***

The performance element was added in 2011 to the pedagogic methods used to teach writing. Here, performance stills and videos were analysed alongside reflections of the affordances of different physical spaces in enabling the development of diverse roles. More importantly, the links emerging between writing, space and performance and the design principles surfacing during various activities, were reflected upon and consolidated during a focus group session at the end of 2011. The data here consisted of written texts, charts, conversations and performance stills.

On the whole, the data selected from the 2011 workshops for the study were the brought along objects, students' texts in the workshop space and in mainstream institutional spaces, performance stills and videos, snapshots of different physical spaces and the focus group data. The writing experts' views, participants' profiles, expectation and evaluation forms, the shadows' views, my reflections on method, and conversations with participants outside the workshop space served to contextualise the key moments in the ethnographic study.

### 3.8 Data analysis

Data was analysed at different stages of the study in order to generate pedagogically speaking, a growing resource of skills and methods, but more importantly a set of design principles for future Writer's workshops. As one notices, the study operated at two levels, at the pedagogic level to design events around writing and at the higher conceptual level, to grasp what the practices indexed about the workshop space and other spaces. The workshop sessions, activities (all texts produced were collected), texts analysed (including documents, performances) are presented in the following table and detailed below:

Workshop and other sessions	Activities	Texts analysed
Workshop session 1	Introduction – form filling Brought-along object (written and oral task) Detecting malapropisms Unpacking the question (written and oral task) Essay writing Food for thought	Expectation forms Texts about objects First essay
Workshop session 2	Close reading and answering questions Spotting fallacies Managing sources (video screening) Paragraphing Referencing (spotting errors) Using evidence provided to write an essay on the following: “Assess the benefits of art in our society” (Group discussion prior to write up) Food for thought	Answers to question
Workshop session 3	Drama performance using Boal's 'image theatre' techniques Discussion: what is critical thinking? Reading and discussion: excerpt from 1984 Discussion of elements of critical thinking, points of view	Image theatre stills and video

	Introduction to the Toulmin model Argumentative essay writing Food for thought	
Workshop session 4	Discussion on art of persuasion in advertising. Write down the qualities of a person you admire the most. Discussion on qualities of good speeches. Speech writing and delivery: campaigning for national society elections. Introduction to different persuasion tools. Analysis of Obama and Churchill's speeches (excerpts) Mind game Food for thought: 'circle of influence' from Stephen Covey's book	Participants' speech delivery (photo and video) and written speech
Mainstream activities	Essay writing	Essays written for mainstream courses
Focus group session	'The stage' – situating the Writers' workshop 'The stage within the stage' 'Image theatre' session Reflections (written and oral task) 'The best academic essay of the year'	Written response to each activity Image theatre stills, videos Recordings of discussions

### 3.8.1 Textual analysis

Students' essays and their theatre performances were examined using Ivanič's clover model of 'authorial', 'discoursal' and 'autobiographical' selves, to identify how students negotiate between their different writer identities in the workshop (1997:136-140).

As explained in the previous chapter, students' 'autobiographical self' was seen as that aspect of their writing, determined largely by their linguistic and academic backgrounds and their initial days at UCT. Their 'discoursal self' was the aspect conditioned by specific writing conventions at school and those they were gradually adopting at UCT so as to gain access to the university's academic resources. Finally, the 'authorial self' was broadly speaking that aspect of the writing associated with students' 'presence in the text', and credibility.

The three concepts are operationalised as shown in the following table. I divided them into 'content' and 'structure and style' categories for the sake of analysis, though it is likely that in practice, these might be hard to extricate. For instance, lack of fluency in the language might also affect the reader's understanding of the content.

	<b>Content</b>	<b>Structure and Style</b>
<b>Autobiographical self</b> 'The writer's life-history and her/his roots'	Knowledge of topic, orientation towards issues of interest, examples from life experiences.	Perceived fluency in English, interference from other languages.
<b>Discoursal self</b> 'The writer's representation of her/himself in the text'	Facts versus personal views, referencing of sources, elaboration, attention to word count.	Introduction-body-conclusion, use of tables, diagrams and subheadings.
<b>Authorial self</b> 'The writer's sense of authority and authorial presence in the text' (Clark & Ivanič, 1997:137)	Individual/critical thinking, taking responsibility for content.	Use of 'I', active versus passive voice, originality in structure, assertiveness in style.

Table 1: Writer identities operationalised in terms of content, structure and style.

I assessed the nature and degree of students' alignment with theory by looking at whether they were merely citing theory or also interpreting it, appropriating, discussing, giving examples or novel ideas and using "I". The more strategies they deployed, the more critical their engagement with texts. This relates back to Lillis (2008)'s notion of 'orientation' to texts. If the alignment between individuals and theories or texts more generally was strong, it would demonstrate that the students were close to making the theory their own, that they were willing to take risks, reflect and negotiate their way through more complex aspects of the theory. Since alignment required students to reflect and make informed choices, strong alignment would indicate students' ability/willingness to display critical thinking in their writing.

Students sometimes employed other strategies such as processing and tabulating data, and these were factored into the data analysis process. If students employed only few of the strategies, one needed to probe into their reticence to do so and to devise new lessons to hone the relevant skills. This was done by analysing students' profiles and conducting a focus group session on their challenges at the university. The advantage of Ivanič's framework was that it could in part track the progression of students' critical engagement with texts, moving from the less risky to the riskier choices. The least risky choice would be the citing of theory and the riskier choice, especially after students had been cautioned about 'bias' in reasoning/writing, in particular in the Science and Commerce faculties, would be the use of 'I', which made the writer directly

accountable for his/her words. The word “bias” gave the impression there was an “objective” truth outside of bias. If the workshop sought to encourage critical thinking in writing, the hindrances along the writing trajectory would have to be attended to, as they arose. For this, I analysed participants’ writing agency across different activities, each enabling the uptake of different subject positions.

### ***3.8.2 Performance analysis***

The analysis of the performance mode has evolved considerably since the early semiotic analyses proposed by the structuralists, notably Saussure’s formal system of signs. Saussure applied the system of signs not only to the study of language, but also to the interpretation of visual, auditory signs and the interpretation of the actor, whom he saw as a crucial embodiment of semiotic codes. In the following years, phenomenological theorists posited that signs could possibly be invested with double meanings. For instance, the actor could at once be present in his own person, and absent, being the representation of a character out there. Barthes understood the complexity of theatre signs and coined the vague but productive phrase ‘density of signs’ (in Carlson, 2006:14).

In the post-structuralist tradition, the easy equation between signifier and signified was fundamentally shaken. Carlson drew parallels between the views of Lyotard that signs were ‘libidinal displacements’ of energy and the views of F  ral that they were ‘flows of desire’ rather than mere representations (2006:17). These flows were fluid by their very nature because drama was a dynamic, living art that could not be boxed into categories. Carlson however argued that any form of ‘unmediated’ performance was impossible, that it was difficult to avoid signs and codification, since that was how one was cognitively conditioned. Signs were therefore bound to erupt in the course of analysis, even if they were unstable (Carlson, 2006:17).

In this study, I suggest another possible way to analyse performance that would both do justice to our codifying mental impulse if such is the case, and that would accept the irregularity of signs. I suggest that performance be treated as an extended text and be analysed like the written texts in the study, using the ‘clover model of writer identities’ (Clark & Ivani  , 1997). The stretching of the clover model was possibly also hinted by Clark and Ivani   when they questioned,

‘How far are the aspects of writer identity which we have described also aspects of identity in general?’ (1997:160).

The appeal of the clover model over semiotic analyses stems from the fact that the clover offers place-holders for the enactment of identities, as opposed to discreet units of analysis on the one extreme, and fluid movements of energy on the other. I describe how the autobiographical, discursal and authorial self could apply in the analysis of the performance.

Clark and Ivanič define the autobiographical self as 'the writer's life-history and sense of her/his roots' (1997:137). In the case of performance, the autobiographical self would surface mainly in the participants' choice of the plot. The performance is an enactment of their story, of their socio-cultural and academic experiences at the university. It depicts their past and present journey and their projection of an ideal situation and identity in the future.

The discursal self is defined as 'the writer's representation of her/himself in the text'. In this case, the actor's discursal self as an actor would be evident in his/her use of movements, gestures, props, facial expressions and so on. The more visible the gestures, the closer possibly her alignment to the role of stage actor. In this case, the conventions embedded in the discursal self, do not hamper creative expression to the same extent as it could with academic writing. In fact, the expectation is to be outgoing, to think outside the box, to take initiative and find creative solutions. If participants are shy, then they are asked to enact their shyness or make someone else in their group enact it. The value of the performance is its ability to draw on participants' feelings, emotions, anxieties and so on. The victories and vulnerabilities are precisely the themes of their performance.

The authorial self is defined as 'the writer's sense of authority, and authorial presence in the text' (1997:137). How do actors demonstrate their authority and authorial presence in drama? One of the ways of doing so is by themselves crafting the defining moments of the narrative in the play and guiding the co-actors to act in particular ways. Their agency comes from their ability to decide what to add in the different frames, assign roles, and in the event of conflicting ideas, their ability to negotiate with others and reach consensus.

These multiple identities are enabled through 'subject positions' or the 'socially available possibilities for self-hood' (1997:136). In a lecture theatre of about two hundred students, students would be expected to conform and take the backseat as members of the audience, or at

most as active listeners but seldom as actors themselves, for fear of disturbing the fragile orderly state of affairs. Smaller tutorial groups could offer students the 'actor' subject position, however, they are generally a space for the clarification of concepts, correction of classroom assignments, explicit teaching and discussion. Theatre performance for instance would be a step beyond discussion.

In this case, the Writers' workshop as a performative space could provide participants with an opportunity to be actors of their own script, literally and figuratively. It would be worthwhile to analyse this space, the subject positions it provided and its ability to reconcile the students' multiple identities, which could be conflicting in other modes of expression such as academic writing.

### ***3.8.3 Context analysis - talk around text***

Participants' 'talk around the text' was also crucial in grasping their strategic choices in writing and other modes. As Lillis (2001) suggests, while some choices of content and voice may be overtly made, others are more tacitly influenced by students' mother-tongue styles. Some of these choices were revealed during discussions around the text, the focus group session as well as through the students' profiles. At times, the discussions were planned, and at times, they emerged organically. For instance, a Congolese student commented on the way the French style inhibited her writing in English, more frequently than others, even after the sessions. These provided me with an in-depth insight of the workshop dynamics, the effectiveness of the pedagogic space and the ways in which students re-created themselves and learned collaboratively through talk and text. Through talk around text which were recorded, I was able to grasp how students' multiple identities were performed in the workshop and beyond.

### ***3.8.4 Triangulation***

The analysis of texts and theatre stills, and the discourse analysis of 'talk around text' were then triangulated with the researcher's reflective notes and that of the shadows. A focus group study was also held at the end of the year to confirm some initial findings around the impact of the new subject positions in the workshop space on students' writer and other identities. The term 'triangulation' was coined by Webb et al. to mean 'validating a finding by subjecting it to 'the onslaught of a series of imperfect measures'' (Miles & Huberman, 1994:266-267). It involves

drawing together data from various methods, so that patterns may emerge and lead to more reliable findings. In the case of ethnographic studies, one would hope rather that the patterns would lead to a 'deep theorising' of the field and its players (Blommaert quoted in Lillis, 2008). One is not suggesting the complete obliteration of uncertainty as with the positivist sciences, but a move towards better describing the mechanisms and relations at play beneath the surface of different types of data.

In this study, a focus group session was held at the end of the participants' first academic year to confirm and *extend* insights about the links between texts and broader contexts gathered during the workshops. At times, focus group sessions can fall prey to the assumption that there is a single truth to be reached. The session however employed various performative modes so as to arrive at richer and at times unexpected data, to re-emphasise Hammersley's point about 'multiple realities or forms of life', under his 'postmodern version of triangulation' (2008:12) and stress the fact that research is always dynamic and dialogical even after the facts. The focus group activities and findings are discussed in chapters six, seven and eight.

### **3.9 Workshop evaluation - workability**

Towards the final phases of the project, the researcher reflected particularly on the workability of the pedagogic methods and space, taking into account the events and texts produced in the other two fields of scrutiny. The assessment of the workability of pedagogic processes required reflecting on the initial aims of the workshop, its refined aims, the workshop activities and its outcomes for participants. In this case, the aim was to empower participants to be critical writers, see themselves as an important part of UCT's wider academic community and hence support the university in its 'institutional culture and equity' agenda. The questions posed in this section relate to the design principles that would allow the university to concretise this project.

An assessment of the success of the workshop itself lay beyond the scope of this study. Such an assessment would rest on one's ability to re-inscribe this new pedagogic space within UCT's broader academic structure, while bearing in mind the enabling and inhibiting forces that might operate within and outside the institution. For this, other decisions would need to be made at different stages. One of them would relate to the choice of space for the workshop. Its physical location, the International Academic Programmes office (IAPO), Writing Centre or other, also

constituted an ideological positioning, investing the workshop with a specific set of values and practices. The workshop's positioning at IAPO for instance, would result in a subtle shift of emphasis from writing itself to the welfare of international students. The workshop could become a way for the university to realise some of its key internationalisation policy statements.

### **3.10 Credibility**

The research imperatively needed internal credibility. In other words, participants within the group needed to have good reasons to trust that the sessions were led with professionalism and that the efforts they made during the project would enhance their academic experiences. For instance, the objectives of the workshop were published in a brochure (see appendix 1). During the workshop itself, the cogeneration of the teaching design and materials contributed towards enhancing its internal credibility. External credibility on the other hand, was achieved by demonstrating the reliability of the results to outsiders. For this purpose, two observers<sup>17</sup> from the Writing Centre were requested to shadow the sessions and offer feedback on the teaching methods used, the materials, and the participants' and facilitator's responses to texts and to one another during class discussions. They were well-versed in writing issues faced by students at all levels of the academic journey.

### **3.11 Research ethics**

I strove to preserve the participants' rights to choice and freedom by providing them with a consent form that stipulated that they accepted to participate in the research and that their identity would remain anonymous during and after the research (see Appendix 4). They also had the right to withdraw from the research at any stage, should they feel thus inclined.

Throughout, the principal values of confidentiality, respect, accuracy and transparency were observed. Participants were also asked for permission before any photographs were inserted in the study. These are scaled down to preserve the students' identities. Also care was taken to limit these photographs to the performance of theatre stills, or the general workshop space and the individuals in the photographs were not labeled by name.

---

<sup>17</sup> The shadows' presence/surveillance was not a compromising factor since they participated in the activities like other students. If initially there might have been some self-monitoring, it disappeared once everyone got involved in the workshop activities.

Feedback obtained from students was rendered in an accurate and unambiguous manner and the objectives and implications of the study were clearly communicated to the students. Students were provided with feedback on their writing identities and style. Hence, feedback served as a formative learning tool. In addition, as active participants in the research process, they were given access to parts of the thesis where their texts had been interpreted ('your essay clovered'), to ensure that the rendition was accurate and they were not misrepresented. According to Cameron (1992), feedback achieves two purposes. The first is that it refines research findings and the second is that it forms part of the ethics of the relationship between researcher and researched whereby the 'informants' interests act as a constraining influence on the investigator's independent plans' (1992:42). Students' feedback on the sessions served to improve the design and content of subsequent ones.

'Oh heavy lightness! Serious vanity!  
Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms!'  
Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*  
(Shakespeare, 1982)

Having gathered the theoretical and methodological resources, I presently share the second phase of the exploratory journey in the workshop space. My conversations with the writing experts on the pedagogies of academic writing offered a wide variety of choices in addition to the above resources on possible methods and teaching approaches. Hence the aporia of undecidability.

Here are some excerpts of the conversations where the writing experts stressed the importance of teaching genres of writing specific to the discipline.

*T.R: The ideal scenario would be to have a discipline specialist to teach reading and writing that he thinks is important and teach literacy himself. In Academic development, we have seen that. If the lecturer senses that the student has not understood something, he explains it with illustrations. Then the student is asked to write it with another illustration.*

*In terms of alternative method, lecturers could ask students to write something spontaneously. Students could then do peer assessment. Students will have to be trained to assess their peers' work. The biggest problem with the mainstream is number. Part of what we want to achieve is more the experience of writing.*

*It worries me a bit that the academic literacy classes taught by us may not be closely linked enough to the curriculum. It certainly has a wider benefit, which is learning to write better. But I am interested rather on how they are taught to learn better through writing.*

T.R raised the concern about student numbers and the success of writing interventions. This is something to bear in mind as writing programmes are potentially rolled out for large numbers of international students. Can there be a mass-produced, one-size-fits-all programme to tackle the writing issues of vastly heterogeneous groups of international students? Earlier, some concerns around internationalisation were raised especially with regards of the little time, energy and resources devoted to curriculum reform, over and above the overt aim of admitting an target number of international students. Elaborating on the writing interventions, T.R saw a strong link between academic writing and learning about the course content. She was in favour of the 'writing in the disciplines' pedagogy. In her view, the content of writing tasks as well as the questions set to students would need to push them to reflect more deeply about their subject

matter. For this, the teaching of writing in the discipline would have to be undertaken by an insider to the department. This hinted how complex the academic writing expectations across departments could be.

*In the commerce courses, one notices moves to insert writing in the mainstream, but it is problematic. The reason for this is outsourcing of the teaching of writing [which would imply that those running the programme are not always familiar with the writing demands of the particular disciplines].*

A.C and W.N agreed that specific genres needed to be taught as a tool for enquiry, but W.N also stressed on the need to train the teachers of academic writing in the department, in this case, tutors.

*A.C: We teach research methods in the fourth year, make the conventions explicit, especially the thesis genre.*

*W.N.: Current methods: If an assignment is set for a particular course, students need to be taught the genre to be used, approach to the discipline specific enquiry, and given examples of appropriate and inappropriate responses. It can also happen in the tutorial. Tutors need to be trained.*

For N.G, before discipline-specific could be taught, one needed to go back to the basics. Due to the heterogeneous cohort of students, assumptions could not be made on their writing styles or abilities.

*N.G: In this department, I teach 'Directed reading for independent research' at Masters level. For the first six weeks, I teach them basic academic skills, how to write a literature review and construct arguments. For the next six weeks, we cover the parts of the research proposal, focusing on the hypothesis, research questions and methods.*

These programmes had considerable merit in honing students' 'discoursal selves' (Ivanič, 1997), yet were they adequate to encourage critical thinking and nurture their 'authorial selves'? Courses run by G.L and I.B seemed to cater for this dimension.

*G.L: I ran courses with R.K and L.T. There was a lot of explicit teaching. We showed them how academic writing conventions were compared to other writings. Know who your reader is. Imagine an intelligent lay reader from a different course. You need to have the background, the idea and proper ordering for it to make sense. Or ideally find someone like that to read your essay. You don't write well without a real readership. The process happens in three phases:*

- 1. Identify the field, identify the question, formulate the question. Don't shortcut it.*
- 2. Where would you look for the answer? What would constitute the answer?*
- 3. How would you find it?*

*I.B: I spend a lot of time just teaching people how to write, to develop a research essay. I give them quite a complex topic at the beginning of the semester, get them to find material, write a plan, produce a draft.*

She explains that the best way to learn writing is by writing and getting feedback. Students also have to mark themselves on a self-assessment sheet. The process helps students to understand that one does not write in a 'neutral-factual' way but in a very selective manner for a particular readership, to achieve a particular purpose.

This realisation enhance the sense of ownership one felt towards one's text and how one aligned oneself to other theorists, the readers and the discipline. This would be one of the ways of inviting students to write in a critical voice. Since certain disciplines were now focusing on developing students' 'discoursal selves' in writing, it would be important to address students' 'authorial self' in writing, for this was intimately linked to their psycho-social and academic well-being and their motivation to engage with their different subject matters.

For this purpose, the pedagogy of writing would have to start from the heterogeneous group of participants themselves. It would be a pedagogy developed from below, drawing from their rich socio-academic brought along resources. Here were some of the participants' expectations from the workshops.

#### *Expectations from the workshop*

When asked to express their expectations for the workshops in 2010 and 2011, participants' perceived needs pertained to structure, vocabulary, plagiarism, argumentative writing, style and critical thinking (see Appendix 5). The 2011 responses have been organised under two headings: discipline-specific issues and principles of writing, though there may be some overlap. Out of the thirty participants who responded to the forms from the three workshop series, about seven participants' responses are displayed here as they are representative of the groups' views. The other participants' views are not included because they tend to be along similar lines. These selected participants are from different disciplines and are followed closely at other stages in the research especially Tahini, Bob, Fiona and later Simba who participate actively in the sessions or offer valuable insights beyond the workshops by sharing their academic essays or participating in the focus group session.

#### *Discipline-specific issues:*

*Mimi: Writing scientific analysis reports.*

*Bina: writing style and structuring*

*Maya: What if I'm unable to write as per university demand? What if I don't meet the standard expected in my writing? EBM essay writing & their arguments and justifications, logical. Economics 1010F essay.*

The discipline-specific issues pertained primarily to genres of writing in the discipline, such as 'writing scientific analysis reports', and meeting the requirements of the university, or more specifically that of their department.

*Writing principles:*

*Tuli: Bad intros as well as conclusions which result in the miscomprehension of my work.*

*Anita: how to do research and knowing which information is more important. Plagiarism, structure, grammar*

*Tahini: I have problems on critical writing.*

*Bob: proficiency, argumentative writing, vocabulary*

*Tembi: plagiarism, critical thinking, structure*

*Figo: How to develop an argument/essay and referencing. Also how to get the right reliable sources of data.*

*Maya: Referencing/plagiarism is such a mission!*

The writing principles were around structure, research, critical thinking and argumentation and finally referencing. The workshop material was geared towards addressing these principles of writing. Participants also shared other concerns relating to adaptation and identity issues.

*Bob: debating, learning about other cultures, making new friends.*

*Tembi: how to become a well-round student*

The ability to achieve these could affect students' academic development and marks. In fact, socio-cultural issues were the backdrop against which writing took shape. These issues are unpacked in one of the activities in chapter six. For now, I focus on the writing principles that guide the evolution of the Writers' workshops in 2011. During a discussion in the third session three weeks later, participants mentioned that they had been told to think critically, but were offered no guidance on precisely how to do so. Critical thinking, as mentioned in the methodology chapter is a crucial component in the development of participants' writer identities, especially their authorial self. From the responses gathered in the expectations form, critical thinking is possibly one of the most challenging aspects of academic writing for international students and could be linked to a lack of familiarity to the features of academic writing as expressed by them earlier, and difficulties to express themselves fluently in English as also mentioned with the point on vocabulary. "Vocabulary" here could refer to the English words used to express ideas and understanding, but perhaps also to the metalanguage enabling them to speak about their own writing and understand feedback. It is evident from the expectation forms that

students are aware their essays need to demonstrate the critical thinking component. What is less clear is whether they understand the full scope of these terms, how they can be applied to texts and to what extent. In chapter six and seven, more light is shed on how participants display this identity over time and across pedagogic spaces. The role of performance in the process is given due attention.

Also, the exercise indexed students' fear of being accused of plagiarism. They were instilled with fear rather than the principles that would encourage them to reference properly. The workshops therefore focused strongly on the 'why' rather than the 'should' of referencing and other academic writing principles. To balance out the concerns, participants were asked to share their perceived strengths in academic writing. Some pertained to genre or academic learning abilities; others were a list of values.

*Tuli: Very good on narrative and descriptive essays. Argumentative is average due to my weakness in coherence. The section on argumentative is the one I will need the most due to my degree.*

*Mimi: Usually remember to add in small details and usually precise in definitions, etc.*

*Figo: Looking at both sides of a situation.*

*Bob: Perseverance, confidence, hardwork.*

They were then asked to rate their writing and to provide an average mark on their essays during the semester. The purpose of this task was to grasp their perceptions of their writing skills or identity as author. Their perceptions could influence their motivation to engage in the workshop activities. With the exception of Tuli, none of them had received their marks yet. So, they entered their anticipated rating/marks rather than actual marks. This also meant that they were not yet able to process and learn from feedback on writing.

Name/Rating	Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Average marks
Fiona (Congo)	/					
Tahini (Mau)			/			65%
Tuli (Zim)				/		50%
Mimi (Zim)			/			
Bina (Tan)			/			70%
Maya (Mau)			/			70%
Bob (Nam)			/			70%

Table 2: Participants' ratings on their essays in the discipline

I read the ratings with some skepticism because they were projections of future grades and could have been overstated in that instance to impress or save face. In fact, Fiona's confession after

class that she was not fluent in English and her lack of writing ease in the first essay given during the workshop did not correspond to her rating.

The participants were then asked to reflect on the areas that needed to be improved and how they hoped to achieve it. The areas were mainly vocabulary, spelling and genre.

*Fiona: I want to strength my vocabulary*

*Tuli: Improvement of coherence within my writing and use of professional English.*

*Mimi: I tend to go off topic and add unnecessary information.*

*Bob: Learn more vocabulary, improve on spelling*

The few who answered the latter part of the question stated that they would read and practise writing more to improve.

*Tahini: I'd improve my writing in essays by reading and practicing more.*

*Figo: I believe that workshops and interacting with skilled and experienced personnels would help me.*

*Bina: I can improve by writing more essays, the more I write, the better my expressing ability will develop.*

*Maya: reading and practising writing*

*Anita: Grammar, practicing more*

The participants' comments indexed a misreading of the faculty's expectations and possible solutions based on what worked in their prior academic settings. One wondered how they would improve their writing merely by reading and practising, if they were not conscious of the faculties' academic writing expectations. What if they reinforced the less desirable components? While many pointed out that they wanted to write better argumentative essays, the solutions they suggested were not directly linked to the development of critical thinking skills. The question asked served a dual purpose. The first purpose was to identify what students understood by academic writing in practice, to elicit self-reflection on their 'flaws' and possible solutions. The second purpose was to serve as a driver in the design of forthcoming sessions. For the forthcoming sessions, the handout content was modified with more relevant activities to accommodate participants perceived and actual needs, some of which they had yet to discover.

The next chapter shares the participants' responses to the first two writing tasks during the first workshop session in March 2011. As mentioned earlier, over time, the research focus was narrowed down to fewer participants for more in-depth analysis of their writer identities. They consisted initially of Tahini and Bob from Mauritius and Namibia, studying for Science and

Commerce degrees respectively. A third participant was later added, Simba from Lesotho, studying for an Engineering degree. He joined the workshop during the second session but participated actively in all the sessions thereafter and sent his academic essays for feedback after the official end of workshops. I opted for these three participants because they served as good points of contrast, being from different nationalities and cultural contexts, and belonging to different faculties on campus. Also it would be interesting to explore how similar their writing experiences were in and out of the Writers' workshop space, which would feed into the research interest around the design of a writing programme across the curriculum.

To be fair, the three participants were asked to write their own profile and were guided by questions relating to their culture, the languages they spoke, and their socio-academic experience in their home country and in South Africa, in particular, their experiences with academic writing. The profiles (see Appendix 7) and dialogues in the focus group session inform the analysis of participants' autobiographical and other writer selves in the later chapters.

The sample focus is narrowed in the chapters that specifically address participants' writing experiences. For now, I present the statements and objects of the larger and diverse participant grouping with a view of offering the reader with a richer, global perspective of the workshop space community of practice and the activities that subsequently generate the moments of 'urgency'.

## **Chapter 4 – Prior identities: Students’ brought along resources**

This chapter offers an insight into the participants’ brought along resources through two activities in the first Writers’ workshop session. The first activity documented here is about brought along “transitional objects”. Participants were asked to bring along objects that represent them, their culture and to describe these in the new context. Culture was understood more broadly than ethnic and national ways of being, as a phenomenon that manifest itself in the form of global tendencies as well as individual choices and identity constructions iterated over and over again from a range of available, marked and unmarked symbols (see Butler, 1990). For international students, migrants or increasingly global commuters, both the determinism and fixity of an in-born “culture” in the singular are likely to be challenged sooner or later.

In the second activity, participants were asked to write an essay from a given list of topics. The descriptive topic ‘A day in the life of an international student’ seems to be the most popular choice. Through this task, one not only learns about participants’ preferences or preoccupations but also their prior academic identities and possible clashes between the authorial and other writer identities. From a pedagogical perspective, this session formed the premise for the other sessions to nurture participants’ authorial self in writing.

### **4.1 Reflections on the ‘brought along’**

Brought along artifacts, just like un-mediated words, can be powerful repositories of one’s cultural belonging, one’s individuality and can be indexical and performative of the differences wrought by shifts in physical geographies and a particular warrior quality that allowed them to confront some of the challenges facing them at the university. This is partly because the meanings of objects are not intrinsic to their form, but assigned by convention, the consensus of the masses or simply the will of cultural authorities. Hence, the objects, like carbon dating rings become cues about participants’ cultural or personal backgrounds, or as Bourdieu (1991) puts it, part of students’ ‘cultural capital’. At the same time, one should be wary of essentialising along cultural lines. Archer (2006) argues that symbolic objects can extend students’ repertoire and enable the acquisition of different forms of knowledge, especially when their access to other modes, especially academic writing is unequal.

‘In the less regulated curriculum space of the Symbolic Object project, students could experiment with multimodal representation and a range of resources whilst acquiring

knowledge of both English and academic literacy practices. Different modes can enable different kinds of being and knowing which has particular implications for students who have English as an additional language' (2006:203).

The use of multimodal tools is to some degree a requirement of the 'less regulated space' she creates, where emphasis is placed more on the experiential learning process rather than the product, assessment or outcome. The aim of Archer's Symbolic Object project is to analyse the discourses employed by the students so that these may be incorporated within teaching strategies. Any understanding of these would nonetheless have to be mediated by spoken or written words. In her project, students need to describe the characteristics and uses of the object as well as the range of meanings attached to it. In this study, the objects serve as an entry point together with their profiles, into participants' autobiographical selves in and out of writing. At the theoretical level, they allow one to reflect on the affordances of the learning space to engender these moments of sharing by the participants and to guide the workshop design process. At the pedagogic level, the brought along objects allow one to better understand the personalities and needs of each participant in the group.

The activity also adds relevance to the writing task subsequently set to the participants. As Reid and Kroll (1995) argue, the writing tasks given to EAL students should not be set on topics that are unfamiliar to them. Kress (1996) points out that a focus beyond the strictures of writing is necessary in the globalising context where one cannot establish an easy relation between texts produced and the social meanings, which seem to shape them. This is because the social meanings are constantly in flux due to the movement or arrival of diverse individuals and new global cultural influences. He argues that 'this move goes entirely beyond presently advocated notions of competent language use; it sees each individual as creative and innovative in their transformation of existing semiotic resources in relation to their perceived needs, expressed in their designs' (1996:196).

In the pedagogical experiments of Augusto Boal (1979) who is more formally introduced in the next chapter, one of the techniques used to teach Spanish to so-called illiterate Peruvian inhabitants is photography. Photographs, as Kress and van Leeuwen (1999) would attest, have 'high modality' or close alignment to truth value. They not only capture the instantaneous reality

as witnessed, but like writing, allow this vision of truth to be frozen and accessed vicariously by a larger audience at a deferred time. At the same time, the photographs are framed and angled by the photographer to give prominence to issues that matter most to the student. Hence, they offer insight into his perspective and raise questions about his motivations in highlighting or hiding portions of 'truth'. This can generate rich discussions during the feedback session.

At the beginning of Boal's class, the educator spoke in Spanish and asked 'where do you live?' The learners had to 'answer in photography' (1979:122). It was thus a pedagogy very much informed by the 'brought along' knowledge of learners. They came back with heart-rending pictures of shacks, a riverbank with pelicans eating garbage, a boy with a bleeding nose, bitten by rats in his sleep. How could learners study Spanish when they were struggling to survive? Using photography, and other techniques that I elaborate upon in the next chapter, the educator synthesised learning, context and the body.

It is noteworthy that this is the only chapter in the aporia of undecidability, for the latter cannot last. It uses students' brought along objects as a starting point, and later their writing styles, in order to develop a writing pedagogy from below, that would then inform the practices in the aporia of urgency. As Canagarajah would put it, this pedagogy would use 'difference as a resource' (2006:152) towards pedagogical and ethnographic ends.

## **4.2 The transitional objects task**

In the first workshop session in the 2011 series, participants were asked to describe an object they had brought along in the workshop, explain how it represented them, their culture and what it meant in this new space.

### **1.1 Objects and symbols**

**Task:** Briefly describe the object you have brought along. In what ways does it represent you/your culture? What role does it play in this new space? Write a paragraph.

**Discussion:** Certain objects become carriers of socio-cultural norms and practices. They become symbols or encodings of our identities and our origins. What do you think? Give an example of one such object.

- **Food for thought: Archaeological artefacts**

The Aztec Sun Stone, a 24-ton sculpture honoring the sun god Tonatiuh, was discovered in Mexico City in 1790. It depicts Tonatiuh (center), the four previous sun gods (in boxes around Tonatiuh), and the 20 days of the Aztec calendar, among many other symbols (National Geographic).



What can we learn about civilisations through objects? Is there sufficient evidence in the objects themselves to hold our hypotheses as true? Is it a question of interpretation? Who assigns meaning to objects, who decides what counts?

The purpose of this first task was far from that of essentialising different cultures, or celebrating our differences in a romanticised way. The aim was to enable participants to see the cultural meanings of objects as ascribed by the immediate context. The aim was to make participants question the facile association of objects with culture or identity, especially as these objects moved between spaces.

This task required students to write in a genre most familiar to them. It was enjoyable because it allowed them to share a piece of their identity, it validated the 'brought along', and also made students realise that writing does not happen in a vacuum but is invested with self to varying degrees. The responses were both descriptive and reflective. The style was conversational, with frequent use of the pronouns 'you' and 'I' to draw the reader in. The writings were interpreted, not for their grammar but for participants' level of confidence in the autobiographical writing forms and the actual content. The way participants interacted with their objects was compared with their engagement in their first impromptu essay. After the task, we had a discussion on language conventions and how meanings could also be arbitrarily assigned and standardised through use in particular contexts. From a theoretical point of view, I used the notion of "objects" as a metaphor for discourses, along the lines of thought of Blommaert (2005) and Thesen (1997).

Some of the responses are presented here, making sure that there is at least one representative from each country. The workshop brings together participants from different nationalities, not to

make the geographical differences markers of fixed nationalities identities, but precisely to break the boundaries and make participants form a new more diversified community of practice. Here are some of their responses. They are compared briefly to the participants' first essays written in the third activity of the first workshop session. In section 4.4, I analyse three of the essays in greater detail.

#### **4.2.1 Writing about objects**

##### **Tuli**

*'I brought my poems. Within my culture lies how I behave everyday and my etiquette. Thus, I write about it in my poetry. The remembrance of where you come from will keep you grounded in why you are where you are and what you are doing. Thus, I am proudly Zimbabwean and you see this in my object... Within my object lies a sense of pride that allows me to go through everyday with a sense of confidence.'*

For Tuli, poetry was a conduit or a reminder of who she was in this new place. It helped to moor her to her cultural roots. For her, culture was embedded in her actions and poetry was a reflexive tool that made her sensitive to what she did on a daily basis. It also endowed her with a sense of confidence and pride and could be seen as an emotional bedrock, for poetry like the other arts, often oozed out of artists' hearts and conscience. Tuli used the personal pronouns 'I' and 'you' to make the text's experience more vivid and relatable for her and her readers. Her voice here had evident 'autobiographical' and 'authorial' elements unlike her first essay in the workshop.

For her first essay, she chose 'Democracy is a sham'. To what extent is it true?'. Here, her discursal voice was more prominent than her authorial voice, mostly displayed in the final paragraph.

*'...there is no real balance of equality or of real freedoms. The freedoms that exist are mainly used by the most powerful who are able to afford attaining these rights...'*

There was nonetheless a tendency to generalise, which could be explained by the fact that the essay task was set in class and participants were unable to consult with other sources for a more balanced view.

##### **Mimi**

*'I brought a small sculpted treble clef symbol that is beaded all the way round. I think it's the best description of me as I believe myself to be a very diverse person... To me it is a representation of my history and future. In this new space it reminds*

*me of what I am capable of and to never dream small because I can do anything I want, the way I want, without conforming to what is typical and usual. I love being different and diverse and this symbol shows it'.*

Mimi stated that her treble clef, with its multiple beads represented her multiple character traits. It was linked to her past but also accompanied her into the unknown future. It was invested with the power of her past ties and future dreams, and the will to achieve all her aspirations without being trapped by convention or the familiar. In this, she demonstrated her non-compromising and ambitious nature but also her wish to be creative, and think differently and step out of her comfort zone. These qualities could also make her a good critical thinker in academic essays.

Her first essay did display a high level of confidence as author. In response to the essay, 'Describe a day in the life of an international student', her first sentence read as follows, 'As an international student myself, I can tell you with utmost certainty, that a day in the shoes of an international student is eventful to say the least'. I wondered if the same authorial self would be displayed in academic essays where she might not use "you" to address the reader, and might have to find evidence to assert her ideas 'with utmost certainty'. Still, her present essay showed keen engagement with the topic, engagement with the reader and a sense of self-awareness that would enable her to write critically in future.

### **Tahini**

*'My karate belt. It represents change for me. Karate transformed me, from this shy girl to a confident person, ready to face challenges in life.*

*In this new space, I still refer to karate as one of the major factors that led me here, I still practice karate and look forward to train with my old Sansei, who is unfortunately no as fit as before. I learnt how to fight but I also became a better person by practising traditional Japanese karate'.*

Tahini's karate belt stood for boldness and confidence and she attributed the success of her academic journey thus far to the lessons learnt in Karate. These lessons transcended the martial art and promoted character growth. Tahini used the free writing space here to pay her respects to her old Sansei. Her writing was introspective and it showed character depth as well as a confident 'authorial self'. Tahini's first essay on the benefits and drawbacks of Facebook, was less personalised than this description as discussed later in the chapter (see Appendix 8).

### **Fiona**

*'Le Zahir, my favourite book, it's a novel written by Paulo Coelho. Well let's say that I am a novels lover. It represents nothing about my culture because it's just a philosophical book'.*

Fiona was a French speaking student from the Democratic Republic of Congo, which could explain why she opted for a French novel. It linked her back to her roots, though she did mention that it was just a philosophical piece, perhaps even an inspirational one. Fiona was a very pensive girl in class, and her writing displayed the same thoughtful mood. Her essay on the topic 'Describe a day in the life of an international student', was shaped by her anxieties and she used the page as a personal diary with much autobiographical detail (see Appendix 9).

*'...you have to study hard to avoid failing and be pulled out or kicked out of the university...'*

She confided later that year (2011) in an informal chat with me outside the workshop space that her experiences at South African universities had not been pleasant. She explained that she had first enrolled for a degree in Media and Psychology at a French medium university in the Democratic Republic of Congo. She was performing well, but was soon sent by her family to the University of Witwatersrand to study for a Commerce degree, because there were more career prospects and she could become conversant in English. After a year of struggle, she enrolled for an undergraduate programme in the Commerce faculty at UCT. She admitted that she was struggling with English, possibly more than the other participants who had taken the Cambridge A-Levels exams. Hence, her fears of failure were understandable. Her nervousness and other social issues which she did not elaborate upon, made her miss two of the workshop sessions as well. Her experiences at UCT that year are elaborated in chapter six.

### **Joe**

*'One. It represents independence from everything around me so as to attain my goal, I also believe in the slogan, 'One for all and all for one'. So I still think some things one has to depend on others but not to rely on them for everything that comes along the way.*

*Another reason is that I want to be ONE great person, to my society, help people out so as to help them develop as much as I do (grow mentally, spiritually and socially). To be ONE'.*

Joe showed great confidence right from the outset. His object was surprisingly a number. I initially questioned the relevance of the number one in responding to this task. Also, was his view of culture one of unity or of distinctiveness? He wrote that the number 'one' signified independence as well as unity or interdependence, which seems to echo the principles of Ubuntu.

He also linked it to his personality and his drive to make a difference in society and within himself. He even quoted Dumas's 'one for all and all for one' from *The Three Musketeers*. He ended the paragraph by reiterating the oneness with all. In class, he was very jovial and he appeared to a positive thinker as well as one likely to assert his 'authorial' self in writing.

For his first essay in the workshop, he chose the topic 'Compare and contrast oral and written forms of communication', he foregrounded his ideas.

'Oral forms of communication have tone in them and emotion can be expressed from the tone while written forms of communication emotions are normally expressed by use of metaphors and expressions. As different as they may be, in both cases the messages may be interpreted differently and one can extract a different meanings all together'.

It initially appeared that he was merely juxtaposing two separate definitions, but he displayed maturity of thought in acknowledging that views could differ from person to person. Still the comments were vague and could have been enhanced with examples to add more weight to the ideas and make them his own.

### **Bob**

*'It is a cellular phone. It represents me as it shows that I am a technologically active person. It keeps me attached to friends and family especially those back in Namibia'.*

For Bob, the link between past and present spaces was literally a medium of communication, the cellular phone. It also represented him for as a dynamic youth, a 'technologically active person'. Bob viewed culture more broadly than the possibly essentialised features of ethnic or national identities. Communication was crucial for international students, to keep in touch with loved ones especially during the transitional period when some experienced culture shocks and felt homesick (see chapter six). Bob's first essay on the benefits and drawbacks of Facebook was however written in a dispassionate manner as discussed in section 5.3.

### **4.2.2 Objects as indexical of prior identities, performative of new ones**

For participants, the objects were similar to mementos or indexes linking them to their past or familiar spaces. They also served as anchors for character building in the new environment, offered possibilities for "mushfaking", a term coined by Gee. Mushfaking occurred when

prisoners, at a remove from their familiar spaces, built miniature objects out of matchsticks to project themselves outside the walls of their confinement (Gee, 1990). The prison hence became a conducive space for a crossover between the confining and free spaces. Though far from a prison, the workshop was conceived as 'an other space' (Soja, 1996) a safe space where students could resist the conventional boundaries between different the geographical or conceptual institutional and socio-cultural spaces.

Many of the cultural objects such as the karate belt, the poems, the number one were more than mementos. Participants drew character strength and reassurance from these objects to continue their life journey in a new setting. Thus the objects were not merely indexical of prior identities but also performative of their transitional identities as they became invested with new aspirational values. Through the objects, they shared their desire to become a 'better person', 'diverse person', to 'attain one's goal'.

Reflecting on the activity at present from the researcher's remote gaze, it would appear that the task perhaps narrowed down the repertoire of symbols that participants could choose from, that the question's framing might have compelled some to look for traditional symbols and fetishes that were sometimes alluded to by the national societies on campus. It is likely that this activity might have been a mild instance of 'cultural brainwashing' (Singh & Doherty, 2004), though in this case it did not impose Western norms, but rather placed labels (or asked participants to do so) on assumedly national cultural symbols. Still, Bob's object which was far from a representation of the rich Kavango heritage he described in his profile. Thus, one can see how some participants might resist the task's demands because those seemed to essentialise national identities. Due to increased migration trends, these national identities were no longer a faithful representation of cultural identities. Yet, the task also gave participants the license to re-imagine and construct themselves as they wished to be perceived by others. As van Alphen states,

'The act of imagining homeland identity is always framed by the historical dimensions of that place of the migration that started from there, but it is also inflected by those acts of imagining that produce the cultural identity in the present' (2002:53).

The words "imagining" and "framing" capture the sense of blending between the real and the fictitious, the memory and the re-membering, the whole and the parts selected with the aim of constructing a new coherent story for oneself.

Hence the objects could be performative of processes of identity formation, a thickening palimpsest of processes of social and individual imaginings. In the globalising context, homeland identities could be layered with turbulent migration experiences during the transition phases, and inner and outer revisionings of identities in the foreign land, a performance not devoid of romanticised allusions to satisfy the inquisitive “other”. Framed as a task in the workshop space, the identity quest was inevitably inflected upon by a heightened awareness the tourist gaze cast upon oneself. At the same time, it was an opportunity for participants to perform themselves anew and make alignment choices as in Bob’s case, when he speaks about a global cultural symbol the cellphone instead of a Kavango symbol, or to peel away the superficial layers of identities ascribed to them.

#### **4.3 What does this question mean?**

The next activity was aimed at assessing participants’ interpretation of essay questions, by asking them to define certain key action words such as “describe”, “examine”, “compare and contrast” and “discuss”. These were the participants’ responses to the word ‘discuss’ in the question: “Democracy is a sham.” Discuss.

*Tuli: Discussing involves outweighing two sides, giving the pros and cons of a particular subject.*

*Mimi: To not only describe a situation but also talk in depth about the pros and cons, strengths and weaknesses, and to look at both sides of a situation but end up with a conclusion showing your opinions.*

*Tahini: Making an assessment and relating the subject to other subjects and associating meaning and explanations.*

*Figo: Look at both sides of a situation. Merits and demerits and draw a conclusion with data applied.*

*Bob: To widely explore a topic or text and look at all aspects affecting it.*

*Joe: Give views from different aspects of situation. Argue.*

*Bina: Explain in depth.*

*Anita: Involves facts, opinions, similarities, differences and a conclusion on a certain topic.*

*Tembi: Evaluate the points for and against the given topic. Be sure to make all the points clear. Not too sure if you are meant to pass your judgement.*

From the responses, it appeared that only few students understood the full extent of what was meant by “discuss”. While some understood that both sides of the issue needed to be weighed, others restricted the definition to providing descriptions, explanations or similarities and differences. At the tertiary level, some departments would expect students to state their main claim or thesis statement upfront in the introduction and substantiate with valid arguments in the

body of the essay. Since participants did not mention this, one could infer that they had different prior writing practices, or perhaps did not deem the thesis statement to be as significant in an argumentative essay. From their essays, it would appear that, for them, one's claims could solely be expressed in the conclusion. One did not own the right or an appropriate subject position (Ivanič, 1997) to state it elsewhere. Some, such as Tahini nonetheless chose to stay impartial even in the conclusion. Tahini's conclusion read as follows:

'Facebook is a very useful social network and has proved to be very easy to use, but it may also ruin people's lives, and cause certain people to do stuff that they will regret' (This is analysed in more detail in the next section).

The lack of constructive engagement with ideas through substantiating a stance or arriving at it, was perhaps a remnant of high school academic writing where there is minimal assertion of voice and more often spoonfeeding.

I wondered how undergraduate students could produce relevant answers if they misinterpreted the instructions in the first place. Writing all one knows about a topic may at most yield a pass mark, but would not reflect the students' full potential at deciphering the meanings of concepts, processing information and writing-up, had they understood the question. The idea behind 'discuss' would be similar across disciplines with minor variations. Making the instructions explicit, as the writing experts also mentioned, would go a long way in easing the writing process, otherwise doubly daunting. Scholars such as Swales (1990) would recommend further the explicit teaching of genre, while some such as Devitt (2004) would propose the teaching of "genre awareness" by exposing students to new genres after they have analysed more familiar ones. They would thus learn about new genres by drawing comparisons with other genres and linking those used to the contexts of text production. Another approach would be to teach the genre explicitly 'in the process of doing some discipline-specific learning activity' (see Russell et al., 2009:410). Regardless of the approach used, there is a recognition that genres need to be taught directly or indirectly, and that as daunting as the task of teaching genres may be, the sooner it is attempted, the sooner students will grasp the instructions and provide "satisfactory"<sup>18</sup> responses.

---

<sup>18</sup> Whether there is a tangible rubric or not, there is no doubt that lecturers have some tacit criteria in their minds.

#### 4.4 First attempt at essay writing in the workshop

Half way through the introductory session, participants had to write an essay from a list of options. At this stage, we had gone over the action words, such as 'discuss', 'describe', and the questions together. Their essay choice was as revealing as the content itself.

##### 1.3 Essay writing part 1: Questions & Action words

- a) Describe a day in the life of an international student.
- b) Examine the role of the press in a democratic society.
- c) Compare and contrast the oral and written forms of communication.
- d) 'Democracy is a sham'. Discuss / Do you agree?/ To what extent is this true?
- e) Using the extract below, as a starting point, discuss the benefits and drawbacks of facebook.

*Facebook dissidents in Lybia gathered some 20,000 online followers. Dissent is even stirring under Saudi Arabia's absolute monarchy. Working through the internet, groups of Islamists and liberal nationalists plan to form political parties, hitherto banned. (The Economist, 19 Feb 2011)*

The first question was a popular choice, opted by five of the ten participants sampled. It was the most open-ended one, requiring a listing of details sequentially as opposed a reordering and processing of raw data. Believably, students were more keen and confident to relate their own stories.

Some of the essays have been analysed briefly in section 4.2 and compared with the participants' writings about objects. At this point, I analyse three of the essays in greater detail using Ivanič's clover model categories (see chapter three).<sup>19</sup> I opted for Fiona's essay where she shared some of her apprehensions of being a student at UCT and Tahini and Bob's essays since they were written on the same topic and would be easier to compare along the lines of writer identities.

##### 4.4.1 Fiona's essay

*Autobiographical self:* Fiona answered the first question on a day in the life of an international student and wrote only half a page, scratching out whole sentences and re-phrasing them. She started her paragraph with:

---

<sup>19</sup> The length of the texts does not affect the reliability of their analysis. Firstly, the texts are analysed using the 'clover model of writer identities', a heuristic which can be used at the sentential level as well. I also mention elsewhere that while the categories within this heuristic may not be discrete, they are separated out for analytical purposes. Secondly, the texts are analysed in conjunction with other texts such as students' profiles and observations made in the workshops, which give the texts more credence as instantiations of broader trends and enactments.

'Being an international or a new student is often a difficult and stressing situation'.

Though she did not use the first person pronoun, it was evident that she was sharing her experiences as an international student. The first word 'being' associated Fiona with the international student in question and allowed her to engage more profoundly with the topic. The avoidance of I could be a remnant of schooling, where the French essays would often contain the impersonal pronoun 'on' or the collective personal pronoun 'nous'.

This was followed by a litany of reasons why a day in the life of an international student could be stressing.

'Because firstly you have to find a place where to stay, to learn the language of the country if it is different than your mother tongue or the language that you are used to speak, you have to get information about the university...'

It would appear that Fiona used this safe writing space to share the troubles she experienced when she first arrived for example finding a place to stay, learning the language. Fiona admitted that she was not very fluent in English and could not find translations for French words. She therefore used short stock sentences, and cut out whole sentences as mentioned earlier. However, in terms of content, she displayed ease of expression. Her ideas flowed well from the broader to the more immediate and topical issues. She started with a depiction of the challenges of the geographical transition to the sociological challenges of occupying that space, interacting with others and through this of gaining access to the doors of academic success. She perhaps used the writing task as a way of releasing pent up tensions and the result of such personal writing seemed cathartic.

In the conclusion, she also shared her fears. 'An international student must know that he/she must be courageous and hardworker [...] avoiding to fail and be pulled out or kicked out of the university'. Hence there was a strong autobiographical presence in her text marked by the thoughts of failure, which she had already experienced before.

*Discoursal self:* Due to the nature of the question, there were more personal views than facts. For example, she wrote of her fear to be 'pulled out or kicked out of the university' rather than a summary of what a day in the life of an international student would look like. Fiona still paid attention to structure and used link words such as 'to conclude'. It almost seemed as though, for her, the conclusion was a reflection of the conclusion of her academic journey (with success or

failure), rather than that of the essay. The ideas themselves tended to repeat, but this was perhaps inevitable as Fiona was propelled by her strong emotions. She wrote in a liberating, stream of consciousness style common to personal diaries and post-modern narratives, not deterred or interrupted by structural considerations. Other participants writing on this topic and sharing their feelings also displayed similar ease of expression, which could perhaps be inhibited in more formal writing on more abstract issues.

*Authorial self:* Fiona did not use 'I' and opted rather for 'you' or 'an international student'. Still, the absence of these personal pronouns cannot be equated to a lack of 'authorial' voice, for that would be a very narrow application of Ivanič's clover model. In instances when the use of 'I' may be frowned upon, students can use other avenues, such as choice of data or creativity in structure. Due to the strong 'autobiographical' element in the text, one could sense that Fiona had ownership over her ideas. It was interesting to consider the possibility of an overlap between the two selves. How could students in certain formal disciplines be expected to freely own their ideas, when they could not make their writing/thinking agency visible? Did those students have adequate skills to manoeuvre through this agentless authorial self? I engage more fully with these questions in the following chapters. Meanwhile, Tahini and Bob's essays on a quasi-academic topic may trigger some thought for the reader along these lines.

#### **4.4.2 Tahini's essay**

*Autobiographical self:* Tahini opted for question five on the benefits and drawbacks of Facebook, using a quote from 'The Economist' as a starting point. In her introduction, she stated,

'Facebook is a widely used social network and has millions and millions of users from all around the world'.

Tahini was clearly familiar with Facebook. Perhaps that was one of the reasons she chose the topic. Much of the data seemed to come from her use of the social network. 'People with similar hobbies still use Facebook for that same purpose'. She was therefore able to engage with the topic confidently without needing to hedge with 'could', 'might' and other modals of possibility.

'The power that facebook has today is so big that it can overturn a country's political system'.

Here, she was making use of her general knowledge and the current news on the uprisings in Northern Africa. In this manner, she was relating her essay back to the initial quote. In terms of

style, Tahini was fluent and concise in English and despite her francophone background where writers normally wrote extensively.

*Discoursal self:* Tahini presented the facts in a general speculative way, using her general knowledge to back up her statements. 'Dangerous people look out for ways...' This was understandable since the essay was set as a classroom exercise and participants did not have the opportunity to do research. The essay was well-structured. The first paragraph was devoted to the pros of Facebook, the second to the cons paragraphs and the third could be either. Tahini presented it in a general statement following the other cons, such that one was not certain of her stance on the issue.

'Also, since very recently, facebook has become like a network for growing masses of people with similar opinions to get together and try to cause a change...'

Perhaps the confusion was caused by the alternating of pros and cons a few times. While she used the link word 'also' to link this paragraph to the previous paragraph on the drawbacks of Facebook, her point did not seem to be an additional drawback. On the whole, however, there was a convention-abiding, 'discoursal' element in the text.

*Authorial self:* Tahini showed signs of reasoning by assessing the consequences of different options provided by Facebook.

'Facebook users make their life public, that is, their details are exposed to the whole world [...] Dangerous people look out for ways to use facebook to get to their goals'.

However, she did not engage much with the quote or did so more tacitly. She could have used it as a starting point and offered similar examples. Many of the essays at UCT normally have this format and students need to be trained to answer them. For this, the genre approach whereby conventions are taught explicitly may be used. Despite the absence of 'I' in the introduction or conclusion, Tahini provided her opinion in a balanced way. 'Facebook is a very useful social network and has proved to be very easy to use, but it may also ruin people's lives, and cause certain people to do stuff that they will regret'. Tahini tended to make some sweeping generalisations, with words such 'very useful', 'so big'. In the departments, this voice could be seen as misguided, and the use of the word 'stuff' could be perceived as colloquial. However, given more time to find evidence in support of such claims and to emulate an "academic" tone, Tahini would be able gain the credibility of her readers.

On the whole, the 'authorial self' was less apparent than the discorsal self she displayed through close attention to structure. This could be a result of her high school experience where individual or critical thought in addition to or contradicting the teacher's prescribed notes was frowned upon. These are some excerpts from the participants' profiles (see Appendix 7 for the complete version).

*'High school was mostly a race towards good marks and bursaries, failed to teach students the language, but instead forced them to follow a certain writing pattern where no personal opinion or thought can be put into words' (excerpt from Tahini's profile, see Appendix 7).*

In terms of subject positions then, her high school experience narrowed her scope for free expression as a writer. Her experience could be compared to that of Simba, who was compelled to use pre-structured phrases and idioms unthinkingly to gain good marks.

*'When I was in high school we were always encouraged to use idiomatic expression in our writings. We had a book that had a list of these expressions and their definitions, failure to use them would result in very low marks' (see Appendix 7).*

At UCT, the subject position for the expression of new ideas was broader and more enabling than what they had encountered before. However, until participants realised the extent to which their individual thoughts could be validated, some like Tahini, would perhaps continue to play safe and reproduce the 'discorsal' elements that had guaranteed them a good pass mark. Perhaps the uncertainty regarding the new conventions of the subject positions they were now supposed to occupy made them excessively cautious around structure and made them work hard on 'discorsal' elements that could in fact be counter-productive.

*'Also I have gained maturity on my work, I tend to write more structured essays where I take my time, plan properly, then write' (see Appendix 7).*

In the Science courses which Tahini had enrolled for, the importance of structure could not be overlooked. However, students needed to realise that structure was not merely at the service of the 'discorsal self', but could be stretched to augment the credibility of the text and its persuasive quality, these being in fact, elements of the 'authorial self'.

#### **4.4.3 Bob's essay**

*Autobiographical self:* Bob also chose the essay topic on the benefits and drawbacks of Facebook. His interest in the topic could be inferred from his earlier statement in the workshop where he described himself as a 'technologically active person'. In his introduction, he wrote,

'Facebook is a social networking site that allows users to actively communicate with each other. It has millions of users and is very common among teenagers'.

Another example would be, 'The site acts as a strong marketing tool for some businesses as many potential customers are often online'. Like Tahini, Bob also relied on his general knowledge to answer the question.

*Discoursal self:* Bob's 'discoursal self' was present throughout, in his coherent structure. The introduction defined Facebook, the first paragraph detailed the benefits, the second paragraph details the drawbacks and the conclusion took a stand based on the discussion.

'To a greater extent, Facebook is a positive tool for both communication and entertainment. This is evident in its forever increasing rate of popularity. If used correctly and appropriately, Facebook is certainly one resource most people cannot live without'.

Academic essays of the argumentative type would often require that the claim be made in the introduction followed by a "road map" of how the writer would proceed, as opposed to the exploratory "essai" or "trial" described elsewhere by Montaigne (1993). By weighing both sides, Bob displayed ease in enacting a strong 'discoursal self'. The first line showed his stance towards Facebook. He then attempted to provide evidence, though he might not have had the exact figures at that point. He then offered a more balanced view of the site starting with the conditional 'if' so as to leave the possibilities open, and insinuated that some individuals could in fact use it to serve inappropriate ends without yet offering his opinion.

*Authorial self:* The 'authorial self' was harder to detect in the script since Bob did not employ first person pronouns or other such gestures. Yet his voice did resonate in the conclusion where he shared his opinion.

'If used correctly and appropriately, Facebook is certainly one resource most people cannot live without.'

This voice could have been more apparent had he referred back to the quote in question and reflected on its relevance in the light of the present debate. It would be useful to track the development of participants' different writer identities over time, especially as they were later

manifested in their academic essays in the mainstream institutional spaces. Those essays are analysed in chapter seven.

#### **4.5 Preliminary observations**

I noticed that participants' 'autobiographical self', in the form of content knowledge or prior writing experience, helped them to engage with the topic. While some students initially showed concern around vocabulary or marks, what emerged from the essays was a pressing need to develop participants' 'discoursal' and more importantly their 'authorial self' in academic writing. These might be tacit in some cases and might need to be brought out or extended more explicitly in the course of workshop sessions. The 'discoursal' and 'authorial' elements in their essays were mostly indexical of their prior academic identities in environments where they were constantly spoonfed ideas and stock phrases. These elements would need to be enacted in more creative ways through the use of performative modes and spaces in order to relate better to the present academic context.

The 'discoursal self' could be enhanced through handouts, exercises at different points in writing process and continuous feedback, as was also suggested by the writing experts. It could later be taken up by the academic staff in different disciplines and consolidated by the researcher or the Writing Centre staff through additional one-to-one writing consultations.

To nurture the 'authorial self' however, which would comprise of individual thinking and attitude to writing among other things, mere writing practice would not suffice. One notices already that an excessive concern to develop the 'discoursal self' at the university in line with a blurry understanding of the subject positions open to them, conflicts with the participants' cultivation of the 'authorial self' in writing. More creative, hands-on, non-academic activities such as drama would have to take the forefront. Admittedly, many of the interventions might only reap results in the long run. However these activities could open up enabling spaces and subject positions for the participants to fully be and act in different situations in the institution, as discussed in the following aporia of urgency.

Beatrice: 'Yea, as sure as I have a thought, or a soul.  
Benedict: Enough! I am engaged'.  
Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing*  
(Shakespeare, 1982)

The 'aporia of undecidability' does not last long. The urgency to act soon shakes actors out of their initial torpor. In the following chapters, I present the practices that took place in the Writers' workshops, with a particular focus on drama and writing to nurture participants' writer identities, especially their authorial self. The links between performance and identity, performance and writing and finally performance and the workshop space are then analysed, so that design principles for this space can emerge.

While the writing experts were not aware of the developments of the research at this point, their earlier comments with respect to writing pedagogies in their own disciplines echoed some of the research's concerns. G.L and A.C noted that in their discipline there was a need to intervene, do things differently with a new frame of mind.

*G.L: Writing programmes are ongoing. I think that there needs to be an attitude shift. The department must recognise the importance of skilling more tutors. There needs to be a specific tutorial curriculum. One needs to realise the importance of writing programmes in increasing throughput.*

*A.C: The interventions need to happen either at the grassroots or within the faculties. The Writing Centre offers workshops, but not all students attend. Online resources could also help.*

T.R further stressed on re-design and the need to guide them along the writing process.

*T.R: There needs to be more recognition of its importance. What I would like to see is a focus on the cyclical process of feedback – revising – rewriting, rather than on the teaching of many genres.*

W.N emphasised further on the need to first acknowledge students' brought along resources.

*W.N: One needs to have a clear understanding of what they bring or do not have. Structure operates at the micro and macro level. In their second year, as students begin to take on academic discourse, their writing becomes more complex and obscure.*

Their views on the need for a pedagogy at the grassroots and on the need to acknowledge students' brought along resources in the teaching methods, add value to the routes I explored in the 'aporia of undecidability'. Their statements do justice to the spirit of this aporia where there is

little room for uncertainty. This is felt in the dispassionate tone used and the high modality words opted for e.g. 'must', 'attitude shift', 'specific', 'clear understanding'. One also notes the repetitive use of the words 'need' as opposed to 'want' or 'would like' which heightens the urgency of such measures and brings the statements close to resolutions, declarations of intent and policy documents. Furthermore, it would appear that these actions should happen within a short time frame especially with W.N's last comment.

What is less evident is who should take charge. Except for A.C's comment that the Writing Centre should intervene, the other experts use the neutral pronoun 'one' in 'one needs to have' or the dummy 'there' in 'there needs to be'. Earlier, in the aporia of suspension, T.R cautioned against the outsourcing of writing interventions outside of the disciplines. This said, if the outsourced so-called "generic" interventions drew on the suggestions and resources from different disciplines, it could still speak back to those disciplines in a meaningful way. Further analysis will have to be suspended for now, the activities in the performative space need to begin.

## **Chapter 5 – Identities in rehearsal in the workshop space**

Chapter four left us with some pertinent questions namely: Where is the 'authorial self' in writing? Why does the 'discoursal self' take the forefront so strongly and why is it over-performed in the first year students' essays?

As observed in the 'aporia of undecidability', participants brought along a vast array of resources and wrote about them in a very engaging manner. However, in their first essays in session one, their 'discoursal self' took precedence over their self-aware authorial self, which became very hard to access. The aim of the theatre session was therefore to provide participants with new subject positions to bring to the surface those hidden selves that may in actual fact enhance the critical component in their writing. It is argued that there is a powerful link between theatre and identity, and in forthcoming chapters, between theatre and more specifically writer identities.

This chapter begins by briefly exploring Boal's use of theatre techniques to educate and emancipate the "oppressed" and outlines the pedagogical uses of theatre as outlined in the literature. It then explains how Boal's image theatre techniques were adapted and used in the third workshop session. The workshop activities are then analysed using an expanded version of Ivanic's clover model of writer identities. Initially, the performance can be seen as indexical of participants' current issues, but due to its solution-seeking, future-looking nature, it is able to generate a performative space for a discursive engagement with student identities and future actions. It does so through communication, here a concept that transcends writing and speech and becomes impersonation. It is in this extreme form of living the art, of expressing the issues in embodied ways (the body being a mode here), that the performance is able to unleash creative and critical thought in situations where other modes may not always succeed.

Theatre appealed for several reasons. Theatre, or "theatron", the Greek word from which it is derived, was once merely a space where live performances could be viewed and various life situations vicariously experienced. Augusto Boal's experiments with theatre modes since the mid-1950s, and his later formulation of the 'Theatre of the oppressed', in tribute to Freire's 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', added new texture to the imagined 'theatre' forms. His practices were in line with his political convictions as a Workers' Party activist in Brazil.

To start with, Boal's theatre fundamentally questioned the visible notion of 'aesthetic distance'. Here, the boundaries between stage and audience not only became permeable, but surmountable. The viewers became "spect-actors", the plot became their plot. They could redesign it, change the ending at will. It was not merely the scriptwriter's story, it was their life-script too. Hence, the stage provided a rehearsal space to re-enact different forms of oppression they might have encountered in the household, in society and possible ways to cope with this oppression.

### **5.1 Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed'**

In August 1973, Boal was involved in the Operación Alfabetización Integral (ALFIN) campaign in Peru targeted at an illiterate population of approximately four million inhabitants. While they could communicate in their mother tongue, they were unable to do so in the language of literacy, Spanish.

ALFIN's key aim, as expressed by Peru's revolutionary government, was to teach literacy in the inhabitants' first language and in Spanish. The second related aim was to teach literacy in other languages including arts as a language. ALFIN's task was highly challenging since the Peruvians spoke some forty-five different languages, including Quechua and Aymara, which themselves had over forty-one dialects in total. This not only constituted communication barriers among the participants, but also raised significant pedagogical issues for the educator.

Yet, the learning of a new language was fundamental, not only because it operated as a *lingua franca*, granted the inhabitants access to this language's symbolic resources, but because it offered them 'a new way of knowing reality and of passing that knowledge on to others' (1979: 121). In the process, it also gave them tools to step out of conditions of oppression. The use of the language of the theatre was particularly productive in this case. It did not require any sophisticated skills on the part of learners and allowed them, in spite their different linguistic backgrounds, to express themselves and their oppression.

To explain the theatre mechanism, Boal first outlined Aristotle's poetics where the spectator 'delegate[d] power to the dramatic character so that the latter may act and think for him' and Brecht's theatre where the spectator thought for himself. In contrast, in the *Poetics of the Oppressed*, sooner or later, the spectator himself became the protagonist and revisited the

dramatic options available to him to affect the turns and endings. For Boal, at that point, 'the theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution' (1979:122).

The notion of "rehearsal" begs the question: Is the action on stage make-believe? I would like to argue that there is no such thing as a "fake" performance, only the stakes and the audience differ. In a rehearsal, the stakes are possibly lower and the boundaries are more fluid for improvisations. In fact the word "improvisation" is not so accurate here for it assumes a fixed script from which one chooses to deviate. In the rehearsal space especially in the realm of theatre, the script is still in construction and the boundaries are fluid for creative design and re-design. This is the space that the participants also occupied. This said, it can still be a sequence of concrete movements, infused with articulate dialogues. Perhaps it acquires its status as fiction (not fake) based on the rules and expectations of the context where it is set. With the theatre of the oppressed, though the play was performed in a psychologically and physically safe space given the political context, the line between real and fiction was deliberately blurred so that the transition from "rehearsal" to "revolution" or change became seamless. With the "invisible theatre" techniques, even the line between real and unreal setting was blurred as actors performed in real-life settings such as restaurants and cafes. Their readily available audience was never told they were a part of the play, even after it had ended. As such, they never had to suspend their disbelief for they never disbelieved in the first place.

Theatre hence became an ideal arena for experiential and embodied learning. What was less well documented was how frequently Spanish was used alongside the language of the theatre. (Boal, 1979). In the activity with brought along photographs described in chapter four, it is not clear how the lesson was scaffolded so that learners would move from the silent language of images, to their native tongue to Spanish. Still, though Spanish was used sparsely, in the end, learners had a more powerful tool to resolve issues of oppression.

While Boal did hint at the uses of theatre to empower learners in a particular language of power such as Spanish, the teaching of language became secondary to the larger aim of empowerment. Hence, as one would suspect, the language of theatre seemed to replace Spanish, at least while the play was on, for the sake of activism. The activism was cast within particular Marxist ideologies, while this study adopted more of a post-structural, post-modern stance vis-à-vis the institutional

spaces and possibly the weak or disenfranchised subjects. I therefore re-appropriated Boal's techniques in a manner disembedded from politics, but not from issues of power. This study attempted to explore, through the theatre of the oppressed techniques, the actual link between theatre and language, between performance, identity and writing in different academic settings. Mere writing exercises, as illustrated in chapter four, did not offer much evidence on these links. This is because perceptions of the strictures of academic writing possibly stifled participants' authorial self, which was apparent in the first activity with brought along objects.

## **5.2 Some precedents**

The strong link between education and activism was exploited in the 1980s by Freire in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and prior to him by thinkers from the phenomenological and historical-materialist schools (Mutnick, 2006:35).

Mutnick argues that some scholars such as Luke (1995) would situate Freire in the critical pedagogy tradition where there was both an awareness and critique of the stifling structures of schooling and an affirmation of 'critical self-determination', in other words, of the capacity to empower the student through student-centred pedagogies (2006). While this wave aimed to bring about a 'democratic transformation of schooling and society', it was critiqued for its reliance on a 'liberal individualist ethos' where equality and participatory democracy were still imagined with the 'male individual at the centre of theoretical public discourse' (ibid.). By 'neglecting' the implications for radical feminist thought, critical pedagogy became a contested ground between its self-driven and social imperatives.

In light of the post-world war II developments in existential thinking, critical pedagogy was once more caught in controversy due to its dual allegiance to humanist and historical-materialist lines of thought (Mutnick, 2006:36). Among the postmodern scholars, there was a tussle between the critique of the post-war human condition and culture that often resulted in passivity and lament, and the critique of the alienating forces of capitalism that could point to the oppressive structures that had to be overthrown. In Freire's critical pedagogy, there was fortunately a stronger emphasis on praxis as an outcome of a process of consciousness raising, dialogue and reflection. The aim of education was to awaken and present options rather than to impose or convert. Whether such praxis was political or polemical or both, is beyond the purview of this study.

Suffice to say for now that Freire's critical pedagogy was embraced by Boal due to its potential to transform the individual and structures of learning and being through dialogue, without aiming to indoctrinate. In Boal's theatre, praxis was more than just an option, it was an integral feature of the genre, for words could be nothing but embodied, and action *was* expression. As Mutnick notes, 'the people-to-people contact in the realm of theatre [...] and the relation of actor and audience – for Boal, all "spect-actors" – creates an exigency that is not viscerally present in written communication' (2006:42).

There is much to be said here about the contact forged through speech and through writing. Speech, especially the informal one is by its very nature a spontaneous performance, whereas writing can be pre-meditated and accessed years after its production. According to Chafe (1982), writing and speech also differ in terms of speed and more importantly in terms of how they allow the speakers/writers to align to their audience. Though, with increased emphasis on multimodal resources, it would be more productive to see modes in their collectivity complementing one another rather than acting separately (see Kress (2006) on visual design, where writing takes on more of a visual semiotic role), for analytic purposes one could inflate their distinctiveness. Speech allows for the 'monitoring of information flow' and 'involvement'. He explains that 'the speaker may do things to reassure him- or herself that the listener is assimilating what he or she is saying, or to prod the listener into noticing and acknowledging the flow of information' (1982:47). Likewise in speech, the speaker is more likely to use the first person, for 'a speaker's involvement with his or her audience is manifested, for one thing, in a speaker's more frequent reference to him- or herself' (1982:46). This aspect is crucial in the development of participants' multiple identities especially their authorial self.

Nonetheless, the moulding of identities and their reception by social gatekeepers can at times produce lively discussion. This would not have been the case had identity been a fixed socio-cultural disposition. However, identity is always in the making, as some feminist authors would endorse. For Beauvoir, 'one is not born, one becomes a woman' (1984:267). Butler explains further that identity constructs such as gender 'congeal' into a seemingly fixed category as a result of iterative performances of the desired gender (1990:45). The role of performance is therefore crucial not only in the fossilising of desired behaviour, but at times, also to break away from stylized patterns and reinvent new ways of being, 'the parodic proliferation and subversive play of

gendered meanings' (ibid.: 46). An extrapolation of Butler's thinking would suggest that theatrical dialogues could, over various iterations, also create identity modes that respond differently to events in the staged and real worlds. The staged performance may also draw attention to possible strictures in language use that inhibit the expression of thoughts and identities, and in turn offer a safe space for experimentation with enabling media to do so.

Taking the above into account, what this present study explores here is the nature of the link between performance and identity, and in the next chapter that between performance and writer identities.

### **5.3 Use of theatre in the workshop**

Boal's theatre techniques were used in the 2011 Writers' workshop, during the third session focused on 'critical thinking' to allow participants to:

- think outside the box and beyond the script;
- reflect critically on socio-cultural or academic issues affecting them in their new environment where some of them possibly felt 'oppressed';
- resolve, or at least rehearse the resolution of such issues;
- reflect on their course material using a similar trajectory;
- reflect on their writing journey using this trajectory;
- generate more agency in their courses and academic life-script.

The assumption underlying this activity was that once participants managed to voice and resolve the socio-cultural issues they faced in the academic contact zone and feel heard by others, they would feel empowered and, as a result, express their multiple identities in academic writing more confidently. The theoretical support for this comes from the work of Clark and Ivanič (1997) on "subject positions". It was not useful to merely focus on writer identities, if participants did not feel they had a subject position from which they could speak. The writing pedagogies followed a broad to narrow logic. Instead of encouraging different forms of writer identities then establishing the subject positions where they would fit, the study first created rehearsal spaces where several forms of identities could unleash themselves, then sought to focus on the identities themselves. For this, the workshop became a performative space for the unfolding of a variety of subject positions, where participants could confront the challenges linked to those identities and later,

confront possible clashes between them, especially between the 'discoursal' and 'authorial selves'.

As the participants began to think and act more freely, they claimed to perceive the academic writing conventions discussed in class less as a gatekeeping measure and more as aspects to be negotiated. The institutional subject positions may well be more specific than those available at the workshop, but participants were given the confidence to manoeuvre through them. As Simba pointed out after the theatre activity,

'When we write now, we'll be aware of what we want to say and how to get there'.

Simba became aware of the message he would give, how he would deliver it, and not merely the department's expectations from him. Whether this confidence would translate into their academic essay later in the year is explored in the next chapter.

#### **5.4 Image theatre**

The main technique used during the theatre session was the 'image theatre'. Image theatre operates similarly to the photographs the Peruvians were asked to take of their home and neighbourhood.

Why images? Over the last few decades, Kress observes shifts in the prominence of certain meaning making modes, such as writing, noting that other modes such as the visual are redefining the semiotic terrain (1996:186; 2006). Images also have vividness, often absent in modes such as writing. This is because of the near resemblance between images and the real objects. Images in this case are iconic of the objects they represent, as opposed to words that carry only indexical or symbolical meanings. The relationship between images and real objects is however not merely restricted to representation. At times, it redefines the way we apprehend the objects themselves. Sontag observes this trend especially with photographs.

'The primitive notion of the efficacy of images presumes that images possess the qualities of real things, but our inclination is to attribute to real things the qualities of an image' (Sontag, 1999:83).

The power of images over other modes is aptly captured by Sontag's statement,

'The photographic exploration and duplication of the world fragments continuities and feeds the pieces into an interminable dossier, thereby providing possibilities of

control that could not even be dreamed of under the earlier system of recording information: writing' (Sontag, 1999:82).

In other words, images allow one to represent facts, but also to re-present them by extracting those facts from the actual sequence in which they occur and reformulating them in new ways. As Sontag explains through the 'recycling' metaphor, 'The photographic recycling makes clichés out of unique objects, distinctive and vivid artifacts out of clichés' (1999:91). As an ethnographic tool, it can therefore bring into focus the unfamiliar in the familiar and vice-versa.

The image theatre technique operates in this manner since it requires participants to enact real life scenarios and juxtapose them almost timelessly with transition and ideal scenarios. In this manner, the technique compresses the delay that often occurs in real life between the real and the ideal, and allows players to visualise possible futures in more concrete and achievable steps.

In fact, the images could be even more impactful than their real counterparts because they frame and focus the gazer's attention on the object of scrutiny and erase the extraneous objects from view. Hence for Sontag, one becomes more 'vulnerable' to images as they turn the viewer into a 'spectator twice over, spectator of events already shaped, first by the participants and second by the image maker' (1999:88). For Baudrillard, often even, the image begins to precede the real. 'It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real' (1994:2). Through the media's tentacle-like reach across the globe especially, viewers are likely to witness the war in Iraq through televised footage before witnessing it live. One is also aware of how television advertisements and glossy magazine pictures feed the mass consumerist appetite and influence purchasing behaviour.

In this study, the potency of images to re-enact real issues and perhaps to precede potential real events was considered when designing the image theatre session. The participants were divided into groups of three or four and asked to brainstorm on a social or academic issue affecting them in their first year at UCT. Each group then presented a still on the issue, through a collective immobile pose or human sculpture. The other groups were asked to explain what they witnessed. This was followed by an oral explanation of the issue by the performing group. The image of this issue was called the 'real image'.

The group was then asked to produce an 'ideal image' of the situation. This required them to step out of the immediate stasis triggered by the situation and imagine a better outcome. Once again, this new 'image' was followed by explanations and feedback.

Finally, the group was asked to imagine two transitional frames that would allow them to move from the real to the ideal 'image'. This required much creative and critical thinking and turned participants into active problem solvers. To analyse the stills further, the images produced by the participants are discussed using Ivanič's clover model of writer identities supplemented by multimodal tools detailed below.

### **5.5 Multimodal tools**

In social semiotic analysis, texts are seen to play different 'representational', 'compositional' and 'interactive' functions at the level of the text and beyond to draw the viewer in. As such, texts tell a story, they structure components within the story's frame and they forge a rapport between the writer/performer and the reader/audience. A multimodal analysis of the theatre stills requires not just an analysis of transcripts and the plot, but also a close look at the body in social settings and interactions as the 'locus of multimodal meaning making activity' (Franks, 2003:156). Franks observes the shifts between texts, in this case a printed Shakespearean scene, and dramatic and social action.

For this purpose, he uses the notion of "frame", in similar ways to Goffman's (1975) as the 'social or theatrical context', and extends it beyond these. For Franks, frames operate as overlapping layers of an onion. He thus locates scenarios within textual frames, pedagogic frames, theatrical frames and so on. He looks at how students move between frames and how the teacher mediates those movements through instructions and modelling. The teacher's 'peripheral vision' and students' review of a filmed version of their theatrical performance make them more conscious of their performance. This breaking down of frames through the interlocking gazes of the performer and the spectator becomes as significant as the smooth shifts between frames.

### **5.6 The characters**

Group A comprised of Maya, Tuli, Tembi and Karl. Maya was a Mauritian student in the Commerce faculty. She participated in all sessions actively. Tuli was a Zimbabwean student who

had recently opted out of Commerce courses, to study Psychology, explaining that 'I can say what I feel more...'. Tembi was also a Zimbabwean student in the Science faculty. She was less talkative in class but an active listener. Karl was a participant observer from the Writing Centre who was shadowing the session. The session with Group A was facilitated by a Drama lecturer, who had kindly agreed to introduce Boal's techniques in practice. I arrange to meet her at the end of 2010 to explain the rationale for using Boal's techniques, and the fact that I had little practical exposure to the technique. She expressed her keenness to assist in facilitating the session. The workshops reported here in fact belong to the three 2011 series. During the session, I moved around to take snapshots of the images produced and film some parts of the session.

Group B comprised of Tahini, Joe and Simba. Tahini and Simba introduced themselves in the prologue to the previous section. Joe was a student from Lesotho enrolled for a Bachelors degree in Engineering. This time I was the facilitator and was also filming the session. At times I had to place the camera on an elevated ledge to move around freely and interact with the students. The role of facilitator and observer at once was nevertheless a challenging one and I revisited the filmed session later to reflect on the parts we each played.

## **5.7 Still analysis**

The different groups were filmed during their performance. The stills are presented below. They are analysed to highlight emerging identity issues as they are rehearsed in the three stills.

### **5.7.1 Group A**

Group A performed the image theatre session in the quad in front of the IAPO office. The space was used in a creative, even subversive manner. During office hours, especially at the beginning of the year, this quad is generally bustling with activity. International students and their parents sit on the adjacent benches, clutching tightly to admission related documents. The mood is quite tense as IAPO is the first and main gate-keeping office that grants applicants acceptance into the university.

Staging a play in such a space after hours, was itself a playful transgression of the official status attached to it. It also became a way for the students to speak back to the university about the issues they have encountered almost in the same way in which Boal's oppressed spoke back to the

system. In this case though, the audience comprised of their peers. Their performance was but a rehearsal of the stance they may adopt in future, a 'hyperreal' instance when the image preceded the real (Baudrillard, 1994).

### *Real image*



Figure 1 Tuli assigns positions to the actors.

This picture was taken at the outset of the play where Tuli (in the background, third from left) explained her issue to the others and moulded them into a picture. Through her choice of the plot, one could learn more about her 'autobiographical self', the issues that were probably on her mind at that point in time or even affecting the others, who had agreed to play along with her.

Initially she hesitated, but then displayed more confidence in constructing the image. Here, the script was hers. She was the main design agent; she moved their arms about and they passively obeyed. Through her initiative, Tuli emerged as someone with a strong 'authorial self'. She was not only in charge of the plot, but managed to persuade the co-actors, assigned roles to them and managed their movements. Tembi was grinning to herself, but eventually suspended her disbelief and participated. Van Alphen believes that identities are ultimately products of 'historical dimensions' and of 'acts of imagining' in the present (2002:53). What she depicted were representations of her past experiences, but re-shaped by the reality of the performance, the tools at her disposal, the co-actors at her service and the audience who needed to be convinced. In other words, the performance mode was indexical of her past experiences and was performative as it allowed her to assume the role of stage director, revisit those experiences and alter her response to them.

Once they were ready for the frame, the co-actors froze in front of the imaginary stage and Tuli took her position on the back bench (Fig. 2). At this point, Tuli was no longer in control of the plot. She was merely an actor like the others in her team. Their actions were



Figure 2 The facilitator asks Tuli some questions

merely a depiction of Tuli's initial idea. Meanwhile, other participants stood around the group as members of the audience and tried to interpret the image. They used their imagination or their own experiences to co-construct possible meanings of this representation.

*Facilitator: What is happening here? How is she feeling?*

*Bob: She looks lonely and bored.*

*Ray: She looks like she's too scared to mix with the others.*

The audience's active participation in interpreting the picture, also gave them some agency or authority over the meanings of the scene. The facilitator then asked Tuli (in the background) to explain what she was doing and how she was feeling. She explained that she had just arrived at UCT, that she had no friends and was feeling homesick, which confirmed the audience's suppositions.

*Tuli: At first, I didn't have any friends to talk to. I was by myself.*

As she explained the situation, she took ownership of the script once more. Tuli's hunched posture and lowered gaze created a field of vision and footing misaligned from those of the other participants. Hence in the image, she partly contributed to her lack of access to the group. Overall, as the actors enacted it, they became doubly bound by the script, being at once the actors and the acted upon by the circumstances it created.

Tembi, Maya and Karl (the shadow) in the foreground (from left to right) appeared to be well integrated in the group. Tembi was sharing her ideas with Karl, leaning down to tie his laces, and Maya was pretending to read a book. While they were involved in different activities perhaps related to



Figure 3 Group interaction

the same topic of conversation, from their physical proximity and the leaning posture, it was evident that they were at ease with one another. Their group indexed some of the cliques or subcultures forming on campus and demonstrated how they tended to draw students with similar interests or of same nationalities and ostracised the others. The push and pull factors defining the group and its boundaries were aptly displayed in the performance. New members could change the entire constitution of the group and were only allowed into the group after consultation with the existing ones. While the co-actors had less of an authorial influence in the crafting of the plot, their very enactment of individual roles, made them actors and carriers of a particular message. As the activity progressed, their authorial self became more evident. At this stage, the facilitator then asked them how they were feeling. They replied that they were content, except for Maya.

*Facilitator: How do you feel?*

*Maya: Homesick.*

*Facilitator: I mean how do you feel in this image?*

*Maya: Huh, oh, I'm happy.*

Interestingly, Maya had lapsed into the reality or the *real* 'real image', or perhaps she simply internalised the main protagonist's role. On close scrutiny, from her facial expression, she did appear slightly morose. Her natural reaction to the questions might be an evidence of the power of theatre itself, to trigger introspection on one's own issues, regardless of who had designed the script and how the roles were distributed. This meant that while the participants obeyed Tuli's script, as writers would follow writing conventions, their compliant 'discoursal self' was nonetheless interrupted by their new subject position and the accompanying freedom available to them as actors. In fact, in this case, Maya began to assert her own 'authorial self' in the script by re-casting herself as the protagonist.

Theatre's potential for the seamless fusing of fiction and truth might follow from the inescapable reality of performance, as echoed by Franks (2003) when he explains that the frames of theatre and social reality necessarily subsume one another like the layers of an onion. As a result, the more participants empathised with the character they portrayed, the more conjoined their autobiographical and authorial selves and the more space they had to vent out their own issues in the process.

### ***Ideal image***

The participants then imagined the ideal scenario, where all four of them sat in a circle on the floor to share their ideas. Sitting in a circle allowed for more inclusivity than the bench, for the circle could easily expand to welcome more members. It was also more



Figure 4 Tuli joins the others – all sit on the floor

convenient and democratic as it was free of the hierarchies created by elevated structures like the bench. The participants could now see one another more clearly and engage with them from an equal footing. As Tuli stated while sitting on the floor,

*We're all the same now. I feel happy and welcome.*

At that stage, one could infer that the participants asserted their 'authorial self' more freely. Tuli's issue had been resolved. She was no longer the protagonist, so the others could take initiatives and come to the fore with ideas.

### ***Transition images***

After this image, the participants imagined the transition images which would take them from the real to the ideal scenario. Tembi was the first to notice Tuli sitting by herself. She drew the others' attention to her. They chatted among themselves and decided to invite her to the group. Tembi walked to her, chatted and invited her to the group. She agreed and they joined the group, where the others greeted her and introduce themselves. They then sat on the floor and shared their experiences, which, as they came to realise, were actually quite similar.



Figure 6 Tuli walks to the group.



Figure 5 Tuli is greeted by the group.

The activity's message was then discussed.

*Facilitator: How are you feeling?*

*Tuli: I'm feeling happy.*

*Facilitator: Right, what else about how you are feeling?*

*Tuli: It's like at the beginning, I had no support. I was all by myself. I wasn't fitting. And now I'm happy. I'm well-surrounded with friends. They have accepted me.*

*Facilitator: What made it possible?*

*Tuli: We had to talk, communicate.*

Tuli and the co-actors agreed that communication played a key role in building new relationships, especially in unfamiliar settings. It was often more difficult for the new person to take the first step, in which case, those accustomed to the place could make more attempts to help the others integrate. There were several transition images in this scenario, since the transition from real to ideal was a slow and often difficult process, requiring the need to step back, revisit the situation more globally and devise creative steps forward.

As an aside to the readers, the topic of adaptation issues at a new university and country, was also chosen by five other groups in the other workshop series. Two groups expressed how they struggled with accommodation upon their arrival. The protagonist, Daisy was a foreign student who had just arrived at UCT and learnt that she was not on the database and that she needed to find her own accommodation. This was a true story. She did not lose faith, temporarily stayed with some acquaintance and queued for her papers and accommodation daily, until she found a flat off campus. The protagonist of the other group, Ray was not offered a UCT residence either and she shared her stressful story of living off-campus with an alcoholic landlady. Here, Bob played the role of the calm and supportive neighbour.

Another group expressed the culture shock experienced when travelling in the crowded city and kombis. Here they were all seen squatting, one on top of the other, in a jam-packed kombi.<sup>20</sup> Another group shared issues of homesickness worsened by linguistic differences. The protagonist, Fiona shared her academic and social challenges especially homesickness while at the university. She sought the assistance of her classmates and tutor to resolve her academic issues. She passed with flying colours. The performance ended with the family reunion. Finally, one group focused on their experiences of different greeting conventions across countries. This group's stills are discussed in the next section.

---

<sup>20</sup> Taxi van stopping and collecting passengers waiting on the road side.

### 5.7.2 Group B

The group B participants attended the Saturday sessions and comprised of Tahini, Joe and Simba. I chose to focus on this group because they featured Tahini and Simba, who were two of the main 'actors' in this thesis's narrative. They enacted their image theatre session in the quad outside the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) boardroom. The CHED boardroom is formal space for Masters seminars in Education, presentations and meetings of academic and administrative staff. For our purposes, the quad allowed enough room for two groups to perform. Students dragged chairs and other props from the boardroom to make their performance more believable. Group B's performance focused on greeting conventions.

#### *Real image*

Greeting conventions across different countries differed. In this still, Tahini, Joe and Simba from different SADC countries greeted one another in different styles. Tahini motioned for a hand shake, Joe for a tap and Ketzo for a friendly fist. Their facial expression showed an odd mix of



Figure 7 Different greeting styles

joy and confusion. It was a *quid pro quo* in the making, indexing moments they personally encountered at UCT when greeting people verbally. Hence the picture projected strong autobiographical elements, being a valid though humorous recount of their experiences and emotions when first arriving at UCT.

*Simba: Like sometimes, they'll say 'what's up?' or 'how's it?' What do you say?*

*Joe: Yeah, it's like that you know.*

*Tahini (with a slight grin): And you can't tell them your whole story...*

This was a sign of what Burn and Parker (2003) observed in their research, where participants' brought along knowledges and their present experiences, began to infiltrate in the design of the image.



Figure 8 They try to make adjustments.

It appeared that though the participants were facing one another and shared a common desire to greet, their gestures were very dissimilar and not necessarily understood and reciprocated. Thus they greeted from different footings. It is almost as though, figuratively speaking, they still had

one foot in their native land and that they were still attached to the modes and objects invested with socio-cultural capital there. The issue here is not actually one of home and foreign territory, but of the symbols that confer power to those within the territory. What are the effects of migration on the value of those symbols? As Blommaert (2005) points out, as people travel, conventions travel less well. In fact, they lose purchase in the land of adoption. The cultural shock as expressed in the image, could signal the fact that in our globalising nation states, the rich diversity of peoples is often taken for granted, leaving individuals confused and suspicious of the 'other'. The homesickness experienced by Fiona, a Congolese student, was partly because she was struggling to make new friends in Cape Town. Her reason was that she was not very fluent in English.

*Fiona: They don't understand my accent. It's so hard. Sometimes you don't have the words.*

Participants admitted that unless they shared their cultural resources, it could not become common knowledge.

*Joe: You have to try, make an effort to understand their customs.*

When greeting conventions differed, they also threatened the successful beginnings of communication, however fluent their English. This was because the peculiar greeting gesture not only became an index of difference, but an assertion of 'negative face' or worse of a 'face threatening act', in cases where it unknowingly offended or demeaned the other (Goffman, 1975).

### ***Ideal image***

The ideal image was a show of fists by all three participants. The fists were here a sign of bonding rather than resistance. Certainly, its significance across cultures would differ and could lead to misunderstandings if not mediated by dialogue. For instance, in South Africa, the fist was a symbol of resistance to the Apartheid regime, and of bonding among the



Figure 9 They agree on the fist.

followers of the Black Consciousness movement. The image showed that they had come to an agreement about the greeting convention to use. Though they still stood at different angles, they all converged towards the midpoint. One could read this act as performative of a growing acceptance of the other, without losing touch with one's own cultural bearings. Also, the lowered

fists were less confrontational than raised fists, which were also iconic of the Black Consciousness movement in South Africa.

### *Transition images*

The movement from the real to the ideal image in this case required the sharing of different greeting conventions and agreement on the use of a common one. First, they each tried one another's greeting styles.

The negotiation process was not always straightforward as no single convention was superior to the other. At some point, one of the participants, in this case Simba had to take the initiative and suggest that they greet in a specific style. Through this, he assumed a significant authorial role. He was not only taking a decision for himself, but on behalf of his co-actors, when he suggested the fist, often considered a masculine and aggressive gesture.

*Simba: How about handshake [pause] or the fist? Like that [tightening his fingers into a fist].*



Figure 11 They try different options.



Figure 10 Simba shows them how to greet with the fist.

It required courage on his part, openness on their part and certainly a desire not to confront or withdraw, but to resolve the issue. In this case, the camaraderie forged between the participants from previous sessions allowed for an easy transition to the ideal image.

### **5.8 Follow-up discussion**

In the follow-up discussion on the same day in the image theatre venue, participants commented on the relevance of the activity to their experiences. Many of the comments related to strategies to cope with socio-academic issues outside the workshop space. Participants stated that they would step out of situation to consider possible alternatives. The session also boosted their courage to ask questions in tutorials for that would be one of the transition images to help them

succeed in their studies. Hence, the performance sessions urged them to place current challenges in perspective and look at the bigger picture. It would take willingness and courage on their part to explore and adjust to the different academic conventions. Here's an excerpt of the discussion:

*Joe: Sometimes, in the big lectures, you don't know what they're saying.*

*Simba: Yeah, here you can ask questions.*

*Aditi: And tutorials?*

*Simba: Yes that helps. Still you have to make an effort.*

*Tahini: Yeah, it's not that you're shy but you have to stand up and talk in front of all those people.*

*Aditi: So how would this activity help you?*

*Joe: You have an ideal image, right? You know you need to succeed in this. Then you'll work hard.*

*Simba: Yes, ask your lecturer questions if you are not sure.*

Through the discussion, one could witness a gradual mind shift and the participants' willingness to take initiative, to assume their new academic identity with confidence and take all necessary measures to achieve the ideal image. Academic success was seen as a product of hardwork, but also increasingly of one's ability to communicate with others in the academic community of practice and acquire the tacit norms, discourses that would ease their integration within that highly competitive and contested academic space.

Gee notes that 'telling the rules' is not a solution to making students insiders to the norms of this community.

Rather, we have to let (them) become a fully accepted member of the group, and to do *that* we have to really accept (them), accept (their) home, (their) community; we have to understand (them), appreciate (them), and be aware of the Discourse-bound nature of all practices in and out of school (1990, xviii).

Those who advocate the teaching of genre (Swales, 1990; Devitt, 2004; Carter et al., 2004) differ around the degree of explicitness that could be achieved. One possible reason for this is that as much as genres are discipline-specific, they are also context-dependent and if students came from different prior academic backgrounds, mere instruction about genres or immersion into the discipline would not suffice. The use of performative modes could be one way to reach a common ground of understanding between international students and staff members, so that the latter could learn about and accept international students' diverse backgrounds and brought along

knowledges as resources, instead of merely acculturating those students into the academic community's norms and practices (Singh & Doherty, 2004).

### **5.9 Effects of the performative space on student identities**

In the evaluation forms, participants identified the links between theatre and identity. They stated that 'the session boosted my confidence'; 'helps you discover something about yourself'; 'feel at home'; 'images help break communication barriers'; 'develop communication skills'; 'demonstrations help in continuing with the activities'; and 'they are helpful in analysing data from different angles'. Confidence and communication skills were stressed by the participants, though as one would admit, words were barely used during the image theatre performance. The performance in fact opened up the commonplace notion of communication as a string of words available for uptake.

Communication in the broader sense was necessary to transcend the real image and achieve the ideal image. In the absence of smooth verbal or written interaction, the use of theatre 'as a language' (Boal, 1979) could prove worthwhile. Image theatre in many ways bears the same spontaneity as speech (Chafe, 1982) or of writing functioning visually/semiotically (Kress, 2006). Chafe also mentioned that speech is characterised by the frequent use of the first person. Theatre parallels this feature by investing in gestures, movements and at times, utterances. These are endorsements of the "I", for there would be no acting, no gesture, no movement without an actor. They rise above the utterance of "I" by in fact performing it. Thus, through theatre, participants acquired other tools to express themselves should they fall short of words. Also they were beginning to display a more outgoing persona that could also give them the strength to articulate their thoughts in words.

While one should be wary about generalising from the above theatre experiments, it would appear that the theatrical methods could assist participants in trying out subject positions within new contexts as well as forging confident social and academic fronts. The effects of theatre hence ranged from relational benefits such as improved communication skills to greater cognitive awareness and degrees of self-realisation. Also, the theatre experience allowed the protagonist, and at times the co-actors as well, to take ownership of the script, to direct the actions of subordinate actors and influence the outcome of the play.

Much of the affordance for critical thinking stems from the fact that the theatre space is a performative one where meanings can be questioned and where there is room for various interpretations of the script and at times, for spontaneous improvisations. As Lyotard puts it, theatrical performance is a living art (in Carlson, 2006), where the script is not only acted out, but tested through the actors' skills, demeanor and capacity to impersonate the characters, the audience's patience and so on. Theatre hence operates in the shaky terrains of 'undecidability' and 'urgency', to quote Derrida (1992), where each ensuing performance is bound to be different and unique. It is this capacity for novelty that allows theatre to be a fertile ground for creative and critical thought, and particularly so, in Boal's provisional form of theatre, where the solution is always forthcoming and co-generated by actors and audience, or "spect-actors".

When the workshop space does not assume the shape and boundaries of a theatre, it is performative through other modes such as writing and speech. A performative space is one where different modes of expression allow for the revisioning of indexical links between texts, self and context of production. The modes themselves can be performative as will be discussed in the following chapters or the links can become indexical of transitional alliances between texts, self and context.

Writing can become performative and critical when new alignments are forged between the writer and the text and/or context. It becomes performative, when the student-writer begins to question the author's intent. In other words, writing critically would involve taking ownership of one's script and honing a cautious yet powerful 'authorial' presence. Do the subject positions available in the formal academic contexts offer room for improvisation and re-alliances in writing? Or are the texts produced re-productions of perceived expectations? Do the participants as writers function as authors or actors, or are they largely acted upon by conventions?

Suffice to say for now that this initial theatre experience introduced participants to the performance mode, helped boost their communication with others and contributed to greater self-awareness. It would be interesting to see the issues that emerged at the end of the year. These are documented in the forthcoming chapters. The next chapter looks more closely at participants' subject positions in the workshop space during the workshops and their socio-academic experiences in the course of the year.

## **Chapter 6 – Subject positions in the performative space**

The previous chapter introduced a new mode, theatre performance to see identities in rehearsal. This chapter explores the subject positions made available to participants during the workshop in March 2011 and the focus group session in November 2011 where the moments of the performative space were recreated. Participants were assigned three tasks namely speech writing and delivery, image theatre and writing prior and after the task. Here, they were able to combine the modes of writing, speech and performance and explore the social activist, student-actor and introspective subject positions. This chapter outlines the affordances of each subject position, for instance the possibility to assert the authorial self more strongly, or to reflect on alternative forms of behaviour in the new academic context. It then presents the implications of such tasks for writing pedagogies arguing that the deliberate shift in writing genres not only opens up subject positions but in so doing offers students more room to explore their creative and critical writer selves, with less discursual or disciplinary constraints.

Boal (1979) explains that the theatrical mode is a 'common language' through which multilingual individuals share their stories and are understood by one another. By virtue of being a language, theatrical performance is likely to be dialogic in the Bakhtinian sense. For Bakhtin, language is dialogic by default, 'the real unit of language that is implemented in speech ... is not the individual, isolated monologic utterance, but the interaction of at least two utterances – in a word, dialogue' (Voloshinov, 1973:117). In other words, the theatrical language is generally produced in anticipation of a hearer, or better, of a response from this hearer. As mentioned in chapter 3, dialogue challenges the linearity of time and experiences, the stasis of the 'ethnographic present'. Dialogue reinvigorates what is being observed and how it will be understood. If this dialogic mode impacts on the relations or situations between speaker and hearer, then it also becomes performative in its functions.

What is meant by "performative"? We need to remind ourselves of the distinction between "performance" and "performativity". A performance is the enactment of an idea or script through movements, gestures and other modes in the immediate context, whereas performativity is the capacity of the context and its modes to impact on the events beyond the mere performance. Performativity could apply to a variety of modes. Still, modes such as speech, writing, or more

generally language are not always performative, at times, they play referential or indexical functions. When referential, the space or modes offer the semiotic tools for people to speak about objects. When indexical, they point to aspects of the broader context. When performative, they transform the objects or contexts described by re-defining them. The idea of language intervening in and ritualising matter becomes evident in the power of signatures, court sentences and vows. Signatures for instance, are not only a marker of authority and permission, but as Derrida (2004) would say, signal both the presence of the signatory and his physical absence, for if he were truly present he would have uttered the consent. Hence signatures are performative of the signatory's consent.

The language of theatre (Boal, 1979) operates at an interesting junction between language as referential of experiences out there, and language as embedded in performance. Can the theatrical dialogues become performative and affect life as lived? And can theatre in turn transform language? While theatre provides its own semiotic tools to engender praxis as shown with the ALFIN campaign, can the staged events in turn re-engineer those tools or offer other meaning making devices?

Jackson (2007) states that texts and theatrical pieces can be performative and impact on events in the real world if their purpose is not clearly spelt out, in other words, if they leave 'creative gaps' to be filled in a dialogic manner by the readers or audience (2007:182). Hence the theatrical pieces also become performative, for the contributors become active contributors of meaning. On the other hand, if excessive emphasis is placed on the didactic function of theatre, the aesthetic and educational aims of theatre are defeated, for learning and the appreciation of art are relegated to the back seat.

In a multilingual context, Jackson states that theatre transforms language by legitimising recourse to multilingual resources during the performance (2007:191). With the help of theatre, the actors in Jackson's study learn to adapt to and mould different receptive grounds on and off stage, where their multilingual resources are accepted in varying degrees. Hence they develop confidence in the use of those resources even beyond the theatre's confines. In the case of Boal's theatre, there are certainly creative gaps left for spect-actors to write the script and hence generate new meanings.

The discussion around theatre, language and performativity is incomplete without looking at writing, another manifestation of language and the key focus of this study. Pollock (1998) considers the possibilities of performative writing. For her, the notion of 'performative writing' avoids the facile association of performance and texts with the notion of performativity and likewise the hasty move to separate them out. A written script that is performed does not automatically become performative unless it alters the conditions of the context of its production as mentioned in the previous chapters. For Pollock, performative writing operates in the 'liminoid field of possibility' which she defines as 'a field of hybrid, mixed forms that exceed categorical distinctions in their effort to *make possible*, to make absence present and yet to recover presence from structural, realist mimesis for poesis' (1998: 81). In other words, it operates in a space that represents, imagines and designs outcomes in the real world differently, without ignoring the shadows of form on existing meaning. This space bears some similarity to the workshop space, where alternative meaning making devices and methods are explored.

Pollock identifies six key features of performative writing. It is 'evocative' of something outside the texts, which she calls the 'other-world'. Yet, the offerings of writing share an unequal relationship with its referents in the world, such that writing becomes only 'metonymic' of the reality out there, a part representing the whole. As Pollock puts it, this writing is hence 'a self-consciously partial or incomplete rendering' of those referents (1998:82). Its incompleteness does not take away its ability to affect situations in the real world. In other words, it is 'consequential': it operates both at 'constative' and 'performative' levels, and becomes the ends and means of action. It also brings together different subjects, the actors and those represented beyond the performance. It is thus 'subjective' as it performs the 'dynamic' and 'contingent' relations between different subjects. At the intra-level, it brings together different texts, in other words, it is 'citational' or intertextual. This makes it 'nervous' for it constantly 'crosses various stories, theories' and fails to establish a linear trajectory. Similarly, in the theatrical form, it is likely that performative language as a whole makes different crossovers all the time, especially in the transgressive, boundary-breaking form of the 'theatre of the oppressed'.

In the study, performative writing activities were used as a starting point to theatrical performance or speech delivery and as extensions of the performance. I present here the performative writing pieces produced during the workshop sessions and in the focus group session at the end of the

year after students' first year exams. This gave them time and distance to reflect back on their academic year as a whole.

Researchers generally opt for the interview method to confirm their hunches and deepen individual analyses. However, I opted for the focus group method because I hoped that the dialogue with several participants would offer richer inter-subjective accounts and would allow them to interpret and negotiate meanings alongside my own interpretations. As mentioned in chapter three, dialogues also allow one to challenge the assumption that research is linear and uni-directional and show the dialectical relationship between the researcher, the researched and the recount.

I conducted the focus group session in a coffee shop. It was attended by five participants out of the twenty who were on the list: Tahini, Simba, Joe, Fiona and Jaya. The others were on their way to their home country, so could not be contacted or could not attend. Better timing, possibly weeks before the exams, would have ensured better attendance, though they could have been caught up by revisions and might only have better perspective of the academic year presently. The first four participants belonged to the Saturday workshop group. Jaya a first year international student from Mauritius was not from the group, but had heard about the workshop from friends and asked if she could join us. She became a participant observer. After a friendly conversation, the participants were asked to brainstorm ideas for a final group image theatre session around the most significant issue they had faced that year. The difference this time was that the theatre session was mediated by writing at different stages in order to identify the different roles of performative writing and how they were enabled by particular subject positions.

In the following sections, I outline the ways in which students enacted their writer identities during the 2011 workshop session entitled 'The Art of Persuasion' and the focus group session. Since some of the academic essays written in the workshops have already been analysed and demonstrate a strong 'discoursal' self, stemming from their high school experience and less of an authorial self, here I analyse other types of texts which are performative of participants' social identities.

I then present activities done during the workshop session where speech and writing served to brainstorm ideas for an 'image theatre' session and later, to reflect on the performance. Speech and writing here became thinking tools mediating the participants' thoughts and the resulting action. Since the topic was about their social or academic challenge faced in the course of the year, the writing activities also led to self-reflection and self-awareness. The written text could be performative not only of the act they were going to play, but also performative of deferred future. For instance, if participants' shared their life resolutions through the medium of writing, they might possibly enact them in reality in future. In that case, the writing activity would be doubly performative – lending itself to the theatrical performance and to real life changes. On the whole, it was useful to reflect on the affordances of writing as it attached itself to different functions and subject positions.

### **6.1 The social activist subject position**

In the final workshop session entitled the 'Art of Persuasion', participants were asked to write a speech to campaign for an activist position. Speech and writing can be seen as a medium to engage in social action. In the final workshop session entitled the 'Art of Persuasion', participants were involved in a brief discussion about different media and their impact on readers and viewers. I was aware that academic writing seldom required the elements of persuasiveness in forms other than what Aristotle would call 'logos', or logical arguments. Participants would not be required to display 'ethos' or virtue and 'pathos' or appeal to emotion to strengthen their arguments (Lawson-Tancred, 1991). The session aimed to offer rhetorical skills they could leverage to display more confidence in their social or even academic interactions.

Also, the session allowed them to see the scope of critical thought and power play in language outside the strictures of academic writing. Having said this, participants could apply the skills in the academic context to analyse others' persuasive texts critically. For instance, we reflected on advertisements and gender stereotypes embedded in them. This was followed by an activity where they had to think of a person they admired the most, write down his/her qualities and ask the person next to them to guess who the person might be. They then shared their experiences of delivering speeches. This led them to the task: You are running for your national society's

elections.<sup>21</sup> Write a short speech (not longer than a paragraph) to convince the audience that you are the ideal candidate.

Given below are the speeches of Tahini, Joe, Simba and Bob. The scripts are analysed using Ivanič's clover model of writer identities. Here are some possible ways in which these identities could emerge in the speech. A strong 'autobiographical self' could possibly be demonstrated in the speakers' description of their principles. These would add credibility to the rest of their speech and allow them to win their audience's trust. A strong 'discoursal self' could be demonstrated in the speakers' ease with the rules of logical argumentation, such as the validity and soundness of arguments. A strong 'authorial self' could be demonstrated through the speakers' ability to use pathos and gain the audience's sympathy. Certainly, this is not an exhaustive list. The way these identities unfold in the speech at times closely matched Aristotle's categories of ethos, logos and pathos in his book, *The Art of Rhetoric* (Lawson-Tancred, 1991).<sup>22</sup>

#### 6.1.2 Tahini's speech

*"I am Tahini and I will talk about how life will be if you vote for me. My dream is to eliminate poverty by providing shelter to the needy ones. My goal is to tackle poverty of the mind and the body. I will help children to get access to education and have the chance to get a career and move up the social ladder by helping their families also. Food will be provided to the poor, and as no one can live properly without being in an ideal health condition, I will give free access to medical institutions."*

Tahini adopted the subject position of a politician wishing to eradicate poverty and promote social welfare. Her speech displayed a strong 'authorial' voice. Her use of the first person is used in most of the statements. Unlike academic essays, where she might be reticent to use the first person, here she was bold to take responsibility for what she stated. In other words, she fully took

---

<sup>21</sup> Some participants opted for a different type of election because they felt they would have more to say.

<sup>22</sup> I use the terms 'logos', 'ethos' and 'pathos' in the way defined by Aristotle to look at persuasive texts (Lawson-Tancred, 1991). 'Pathos' by Aristotle's definition would not be recommended in academic essays for it would point to sentimentality. I nonetheless think that such definitions can be extended to apply more productively to academic essays. In this study, these extended meanings are subsumed under the category of the 'authorial self'. Hence, when I explore participants' authorial self in their writing, I look at how they have ordered their ideas in support of their claim (extended logos), how they gain credibility through the use of evidence for instance (extended ethos) and how they align themselves with the audience and the subject matter (extended pathos through the use of 'I', passive or modals for example). For now, the categories are used as is, purely to analyse features of the participants' speeches.

ownership of her words. Was it because the scenario was a fictitious one, or because she was passionate about eradicating poverty? It was also possible that her ownership of the text was an outcome of her new subject position as a campaigner, and that she used the first person pronoun as a persuasive strategy to set the right example and win the confidence of her electorate.

Owing to the lack of examples, the statements might appear idealistic and not appeal much to the readers' sensibilities. Nonetheless, the speech was a strong statement of intent, with useful 'discoursal elements' as her premises followed a logical course<sup>23</sup>, tightly associated with the genre of speech making. For instance, access to education will give individuals better career opportunities which in turn will improve their standard of living. The speech was on the whole forward looking and began with a vision, followed by concrete actions that she intended to undertake. In this manner, it also allowed her to create the 'autobiographical self' of the caring, philanthropic leader.

#### **6.1.2 Joe's speech**

*"My fellow classmates, I am a suitable candidate for class representative. I am aware that most of you are struggling with your studies. Believe me, I am going to bring an end to it. I have the leadership skills for project management in engineering.*

*I believe in change. Engineering for us all."*

Joe's speech began with an appeal to character and he stated that he would be best suited for the position. Hence, he constructed an ethically sound 'autobiographical self' that would allow him to win the admiration of his fellow classmates. He also appealed to their emotions and sympathy. He employed logical arguments and reiterated the values he possessed, to demonstrate that he has the right qualities to ease their situation. Hence he deliberately combined the 'discoursal' and 'autobiographical' elements in his speech. He ended with an idealistic statement which could function as their motto. It reminds us of his 'One for all' quote from *The Three Musketeers* in the brought along object activity (see chapter four). His speech outlined the current problems, but

---

<sup>23</sup> By logical course, I mean the structure of thoughts not restricted to the genre of speech making.

was also highly deliberative, since he displayed a strong intent to improve the situation<sup>24</sup>. In this, one could clearly hear his firm 'authorial self' that not only took ownership of his utterances, but rallied the audience together to join him as agents too. This was perhaps what was intended by his final praise of the Engineering faculty and his use of the collective pronoun 'us'.

### 6.1.3 Simba's speech

*"I am Simba, a candidate for the upcoming elections. I am very knowledgeable in cultural matters and if you remember. Last time I was selected by the government to guide and run several workshops involving tourists. It was even publically announced that my contribution was satisfactory and I gave a very clear view of how the Basotho nation lives. This makes me the best candidate for this society with vast experience which is exactly what you want. If what you want is innovation."*

Simba firstly listed his knowledge, prior actions and the praise he received, to convince his audience that he was a person with laudable attributes, an authority on the cultural values of the Basotho people, and therefore suitable for the new position. . In his profile, Simba indeed expressed the link between cultural values and social norms, the link between the features of the crocodile and people of his tribe. His flattering 'autobiographical self' was inflated with adverbs such as 'even' and 'publically'. He then equated his abilities to the type of change the audience wanted. In the final sentence, he emphasised the point by subtly hinting that if they wanted innovation, which is what he was offering, then they wanted the right thing. Through this audience awareness, and his gesture to close the gap between speaker and audience by reading their thoughts, he showed strong 'authorial' presence as well.

### 6.1.4 Bob's speech

*"Ladies and gentlemen, I am the person you have been waiting for, an intellectual who keeps his word, delivers his promises and has got the people at heart and extraordinary vision in mind. The time has come for this society to rise up to its full potential, as it was meant to show to the rest of the other societies, countries and*

---

<sup>24</sup> The term 'deliberative' is borrowed from Aristotle to mean the capacity of words to exhort individuals to act (Lawson-Tancred, 1991:80). Usually 'deliberative' phrases are short and concise, so as not to delay action. The judge's sentence 'I sentence you to ten years' imprisonment' suffices to decide someone's fate.

*individuals what we are made. I see a bright vision and through your vote is the first and most important fact. Thank you ladies and gentlemen for your precious time."*

Bob's speech began with a clear display of his qualities, namely intelligence, integrity, compassion and vision. By saying that he was 'the person you have been waiting for', he alluded to mythical 'autobiographical' self of 'chosen one' coming to rescue the masses. His speech was essentially deliberative as he urged society to 'rise up to its full potential'. Hence instead of merely listing his actions, he turned into a visionary with a powerful 'authorial' credence who would lead others to greatness. He closed his speech with a one of the 'discoursal' conventions of political speeches whereby he reiterated that they should vote for him, so that change may begin.

#### **6.1.5 Observations**

On the whole, the activist subject position allowed participants to display a confident 'authorial' presence that was less evident in their academic essays in the mainstream institutional spaces. Even if they were actually mimicking a particular political style, infused with some dose of make-believe, for the duration of the act, they seemed to suspend their disbelief about what they were asked to do, and endorsed their statements with a confident tone of voice. They even urged the audience to step out of the compliant crowd, in other words to think outside the box, stop accepting everything blindly, voice their views and take agency. The 'authorial' presence was inevitable since the speech making genre relied on the display of beliefs, character and actions. These embodied denominations could not be asserted without an overt agent. Hence, the very use of this genre invited the honing of a strong 'authorial self'.

One wondered if the authorial and critical elements in students' academic writing could be redeemed by first asking them to write it in speech format? This is elaborated further down. Also, would these speeches have had as much of a structured and persuasive quality had they been delivered without being mediated by writing? Initially, some of the participants reported that they were shy to give the speech.

*Tahini: Don't laugh at me. Should I read it? Can you hear me? Should I start again?*

Her self-consciousness interrupted the flow of the first part of her speech. Later, as she became more absorbed in her role, her tone displayed more persuasiveness, through emphasis on key words and forging links with the audience.

Writing the speech down helped the participants to structure their thoughts before speaking, to counter or harness the spontaneous and elusive character of speech (Chafe, 1984). In Pollock's (1998) words, it was 'consequential' and gave them prompts if ever they forgot their lines and played a part in persuading the audience because of it was addressed directly to them. Though consequential, speech writing was less risky than the speech itself because it could be produced at leisure, edited and revisited using appropriate tools and strategies. Through the use of particular constructions such as 'I believe in change', 'this makes me the best candidate', 'I am the person you have been waiting for', speech writing was also highly intertextual, echoing former political speeches and hence sitting 'nervous(ly)' on the edges of real and fictional texts (Pollock, 1998). At times, through anecdotes of previous achievements, it was also 'evocative' of other traits in the campaigner's character construction (ibid.). On the other hand, the speech delivery was spontaneous, vivid, memorable and what was said could not be unsaid. Writing hence offered a way to rehearse the speech before its quasi-spontaneous outburst.

The space and modes of expression here were highly performative since they allowed participants to enact possibly ideal social identities. To some degree, they were also indexical of participants' background and prior experiences, as in the case of Simba. One could arguably distinguish between indexical and performative spaces and modes along the lines of temporal realities. Modes index present or past aspects of context, but are generally performative of aspects that participants aspire to project in the future.

The participants showed signs of growth in the months following the workshop series, though this need not be solely attributed to the workshops. Tahini became less shy than before and maintained strong ties with the members of the workshop group and other students outside. Joe also became more voluble and dispensed advice to the other group members about how to make the most of their stay at the university. He applied for an internship to use his skills in practice. Simba participated much more in discussions, though he carefully chose his words before talking. Bob stood for the 'house committee' elections at his residence and the Namibian Society and was elected in both. This would support Butler's (1990) view that some identity forms are not prescribed but optional and that they are reinforced or 'congealed' through various iterations. The performance of social identities was in that sense an opportunity for the rehearsal of a new identity form, which they could then consolidate and endorse through various iterations in the

relevant social domains. During our brief meeting at Frigo Café (on campus) in October 2011, Bob verbalised his views on the impact of the theatre session on his socio-academic life and writing.

*'The workshops have allowed expression. When we found something hard to say, it allowed us to show things instead. It allowed me to come more out. To say more to the tutor and ask questions. When I'm given an essay topic, I think about it first. I construct different images in my mind. These help me build my ideas around the topic. I then draw a mind map for the essay. Theatre allows you to open up in the process. It frees your mind, allows you to be creative. If you want to write, you need to enjoy it, to be creative.'*

The above feedback indicates that there could perhaps be a link between performance, participants' identities and writing. With regards to writing, participants showed greater ownership of the content when the writing mattered, when it made a difference to them, in other words when it was performative and more precisely 'metonymic' (Pollock, 1998) of the life experiences outside.

## **6.2 The student-actor subject position**

During the focus group session at the end of the year, participants were asked to construct an image theatre performance on their main challenge in the course of the year. Here writing became performative of their emerging group identities, as they interacted and discussed ideas together. First, the participants had to brainstorm their ideas for the image theatre performance and write the script. In similar ways to the speech activity, writing was tied to particular roles to be performed by the participants. In this case, writing was less formalised than speech writing and served as a thinking tool to string ideas together and generate agreement. The headings were: issue, real image, transition images, and ideal image. One of the participants was the scribe and wrote down the ideas after the team had reached a consensus. The scribe could also make sketches, though participants preferred speech, followed by writing. Here are some excerpts of the discussion that followed. While the focus is on the function of writing in this instance, as soon as students begin to act as themselves, a host of other psycho-social issues come to the fore. Readers may appreciate the conversations below as indexing the stresses of students' first year at a foreign, Afropolitan university, and possibly that of local students too. Below are the themes that emerged.

### **6.2.1 Homesickness and lack of psychosocial support**

*Jaya: I've been away from home. I had to cope on my own. It's like in the morning when I wake up, there's no one to prepare my breakfast. So I had to plan, myself. I had to cope with my time. It was the biggest challenge.*

*Aditi: And home sickness?*

*Jaya: Yes that was bad. You have to cope with studies.*

*Tahini: (murmurs of approval)*

*Jaya: You had to cope with bad weather, falling sick, finding medicines.*

Jaya shared some common emotional challenges faced by international students in their first year. While one could address their academic challenges with a series of short term interventions, one would also need to admit the impact of psychosocial issues on academic performance especially in the case of international students. The comments suggest that the university may lack adequate support structures, counselors to assist international students through the transition period after the orientation week. What is worrying is that issues such as homesickness remain a challenge even after a year at the university. The word "homesickness" is redolent of Bhabha's (1992) term "unhomely" in his creative lecture on 'The world and the home', where he defines 'unhomely' as that which provides 'the estranging sense of the relocation of the home and the world in an unhallowed place'. He goes on to explain:

*'To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the "unhomely" be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and the public spheres. [...] In that displacement the border between home and world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting. In the stirrings of the unhomely, another world becomes visible' (1992:141).*

In their first year, it would appear that students oscillate between the familiar and the strange spaces, individuals and facets of their own self, what is home and what is 'unhomely', as though they inhabited a 'third space' of becoming (more examples to follow).

### **6.1.2 Challenges with self-discipline and time management**

It also emerged that life skills such as self-discipline in the case of international students had to be acquired within a very short time span, after students had had a taste of academic challenges. For instance, Tahini explained her difficulty to be self-disciplined, and perhaps to develop intrinsic motivation which initially impacted on her performance in assignments and tests.

*Tahini: Laziness. It was so difficult to wake up in the morning.*

*Aditi: Were you still able to hand in your assignments in time?*

*Tahini: I had to run.*

*Joe: (grins in approval) Yes. You finish the assignment on the day. Now you have to go the red lab and get it printed. The printers are down.*

*Tahini: I had an essay for ten o'clock. Then we had a test for ten o'clock. I'm starting the essay at eight o'clock in the morning. I managed to finish. Nine hundred words, whatever. I took the jammie (shuttle). I was late. I had to run, hand-in my essay. I was late for the test.*

*Aditi: So you survived? What lessons have you learnt?*

*Tahini: I'm not really more disciplined but I think I got the lesson that in first year you can still be like that. Not after.*

With hindsight, it was possible for her to joke about it but she consciously took the decision to have more disciplined second year at the university. Unfortunately, she developed these norms on her own after struggling for an entire year to meet the overwhelming academic demands, especially those that are rule-governed as opposed to the intellectual issues.

Others resorted to coping strategies. Fiona and Simba's coping strategy was however detrimental to his health. To compensate for the lack of time to finish assignments, they reduced their sleeping time.

*Fiona: I've learnt something. How precious is the time. It's like you have to study till late because first of all, you don't speak the language properly. So you have to study for a long time and sleep for just a few hours. Like four hours. Yes I think that the only strategy that I developed was to avoid to sleep hungry and try to find something to cook or to eat. And sleep at least for four hours or five hours, but study before sleeping. It's like reducing your time of distraction.*

*Simba: I struggled with the pace. It went so fast.*

*Aditi: And you still managed to finish everything on time? And what was your strategy?*

*Simba: So sometimes, I would just carry on, have sleepless nights. I was having lots of coffee.*

*Joe: That's bad for you.*

Though Joe frowned on the drinking of 'lots of coffee', he made a similar point. In his case, instead of cutting on sleep with coffee, Joe prioritised the courses in which he wanted to excel and neglected the others. In his view, one could not excel in all the courses given the limited time.

*Joe: When there's not enough time. At times like you have to sacrifice. Like there's a course I intend on passing. Supposing I have two tests right? On the one. I know that if I spend more time on it, I'll get a better mark. Sometimes, it's like, you sacrifice this course, so that you can pass this other course. I'd want to do well in both. But I'll do my best in the other one. And sometimes it's like I'll sleep for six hours, and sometimes it's like. I'll go to lectures and fall asleep in lectures. The thing is, I still don't know how long I should sleep, so that I can still be efficient.*

His strategy could be detrimental in the long run, since he could fall short of meeting certain requirements. He would need to resort to more sustainable time management strategies, such as cutting down on socialisation time and entertainment during the assignment period.

It was evident from the responses that the participants were still adjusting to the new environment, and had limited support to find their equilibrium.

*Tahini: It's about structuring work, study, sleep.*

*Joe: Finding the balance. Sometimes, you have just fifteen minutes of break. You find your friends. You start chatting to them. You spend a whole hour.*

They agreed that their common issue was 'finding the balance' and wrote it down. Writing about such issues had more potency than merely speaking about them. Utterances, like winged thoughts fled no sooner than produced. However, writing made them permanent, but also available for change. Newfield and Stein (2000) explore the potential of different modes in new contexts and she calls this process '*re-sourcing resources*: taking invisible, taken-for-granted resources to a new context of situation to produce new meanings'. They explain,

'Through this rearticulation in a new site, students come to see what they have and what they know in a different way: The source is re-sourced. Re-sourcing resources is possible through multimodal pedagogies that recognise students as remakers and transformers of the representational resources available to them'. (Newfield & Stein 2000; see also Stein, 2004; 2008).

By using modes creatively to 'remake' resources, participants leverage on what is described in this study as the modes' performative capacity. Once students wrote their issues down, they had something concrete and compelling to work with. They wrote 'finding the balance' as they felt it encapsulated their different experiences very concisely. While they were initially asked to decide upon the real, transition and ideal images, they decided to each enact something different.

### ***6.1.3 Image theatre – finding the balance***

As such, for the real image, they decided to have 'one person sleeping [lying down], drinking coffee and trying to cram five minutes before exams, reading a chapter before exams, someone in a hurry, scribbling very fast'. For the transition images, they wrote, 'sleep on time, watch fewer movies and have a strict schedule, summarising notes, doing work in advance and prepare, make a time table and follow it'. For the ideal image, they wrote, 'be more organised – wake up with an alarm, adequate sleep, synthesise information, [be] calm, reflect more'. These were then performed in stills as shown below:



Figure 12 Participants' key challenges, possible solutions and ultimately, academic success.

As can be seen in the images, while the participants wrote about and enacted their different experiences, these all related to 'finding a balance' between studies and life. They generated a common ideal image, namely academic success (an A+ was written on the sheet of paper). Having gone through the activity together, they were in a position to affirm and articulate in writing and acting what they could improve in their social and academic lives. While the real image was indexical of their key challenge to find a balance, the ideal image was performative of where they wanted to situate themselves in the future. The ultimate balance could hence be seen as a re-alignment between their selves and the new context in which they were, through series of adjustments in their thoughts and actions.

#### **6.2.4 Observations**

On the whole, the student-actor subject position allowed participants to look back on their academic year and reflect on alternative scenarios, issues they could have tackled differently.

From a pedagogical perspective, the writing activity allowed participants to reflect and take deliberate initiatives to change themselves, rather than unthinkingly obey the sermons of a patronising educator. In this case, speech as a brainstorming tool took precedence over writing. In fact, due to its spontaneity, the speech mode allowed participants to pour all their ideas on the table. The writing mode then helped them to make choices between different ideas and find patterns and commonalities. Hence, writing was only in part a brainstorming tool, but more of an ordering and synthesising tool and urged them to be self-critical about their learning approaches. Later, the performance mode allowed them to enact these approaches and take ownership of them. This instance does not just illustrate that the modes are embedded in the context where they unfolds, but that the importance one attributes to them varies in relation to shifts in their functions.

It would be an oversight to simply link the writing or performance task to their relevance in EAL students' lives. The use of particular modes is in fact contingent upon the functions they are expected to play within particular activities. Reflecting on the functions of modes generally, Archer notes that 'different modes can enable different kinds of knowing and being which has implications for students who have English as an additional language' (2006). For instance, drawings can at time be more expressive than words and can be given salience in a variety of ways not always available to EAL students via the writing mode.

This said, one cannot ignore the pre-eminence of writing in formal institutional settings. This is the reason why the writing mode cannot be overridden by other modes even if the latter are more appropriate for the prescribed activities, for then, one narrows EAL students' access to means of success. It may be the case that students are not yet fully aware of the extent of writing's affordances for that task or it may be that other modes actually fare better in those cases. Either way, students should then be given the option to choose from a variety of possible modes to express themselves more accurately, without foreclosing any of those too soon. Some modes can even become entry points into the writing mode. In terms of the writer identities more broadly, these are best asserted within socially meaningful activities, where different modes of expression are available, and they are asserted differently within different subject positions, as illustrated in the next activity as well.

### **6.3 The introspective subject position**

In the post-performance stage, participants were asked to write about their feelings before, during and after the performance, and what they learnt about themselves, others and how this experience would influence their interactions with others in future.

Participants confessed that at the outset, they were not comfortable with the task. This is understandable since participants were performing this play for the first time and had to work as a group to string together a common story. The feelings before the performance task was assigned were as follows:

*Tahini: I was a bit shy and was not too keen on the activity.*

*Jaya: Unsure about what was happening.*

*Joe: Not really sure what was going to be done here.*

*Simba: Quite inquisitive, wanting to know if I could make a very clear image of what I have encountered.*

*Fiona: I was stressed.*

Their feelings may also be reflective of their first few days at UCT when they were still *writing their scripts*, e.g. courses to take, sports club to join and so on, and were starting to enact their new socio-academic identities.

The feelings during performance were reported as follows:

*Tahini: As everyone started participating and bringing in their own opinions, the atmosphere eased and I was eager to complete it and make it a success.*

*Jaya: Got to understand a bit more about the importance of planning.*

*Joe: Nervous about what I was going to say and a bit shy.*

*Simba: A bit nervous but happy at the same time.*

*Fiona: I felt more happy.*

From the responses and observations, it appears that the group dynamic played a significant role in boosting participants' confidence level and encouraging them to participate more actively. Some were still nervous about how the image would unfold, but they were also 'happy' because they could rely on the other members of the team. One could sense the development of a feeling of community among the participants.

The participants' feelings after the session were as follows:

*Tahini: I felt happy that the activity was a success and we all had fun.*

*Jaya: The feeling that maybe things can change for the better.*

*Joe: I felt a bit better about my first year experiences finding people who had the same experiences.*

*Simba: Relieved (to some extent) and hopeful that I'll become that ideal person for me.*

*Fiona: I became more relaxed, I forgot my stress.*

The participants seemed satisfied with the performance. Some began to transpose the feeling of achievement they experienced onto their future undertakings. Over several iterations of the successful theatrical performances, it is likely that participants would develop not only the habit of winning, but also the requisite emotional baggage and attitude to transfer this to other spheres of their socio-academic life.

What the participants learnt about themselves is summarised below:

*Tahini: I found out that I was not too bad at image theatre, and being spontaneous.*

*Jaya: I should take time to get more organised, and can open up to others to seek advice.*

*Joe: I become more flexible after sometime when I am around new people.*

*Simba: I have become more comfortable telling people my thoughts.*

*Fiona: I should become more open to other people and take my time.*

Participants were able to step back and reflect on their values and behaviour. Interestingly, while the task required them to reflect on themselves, they could not do so without reflecting on themselves relating to others. Their responses stressed the fact that one can only define oneself fully in relation to the other, which as Hegel (1998) asserts in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, is the essence of true 'self-consciousness'. In a multi-cultural setting, where international students are still undergoing adaptation stresses, the realisation that 'self' and 'other' are in multiple ways conjoined, can be psychologically liberating and contribute to cultural integration.

What the participants learnt about others was:

*Tahini: They all went through similar experiences and are all prepared to improve and do better next year.*

*Jaya: They are facing the same problems as I am, so I am not the only one.*

*Joe: Try not to be persuasive to others to share.*

*Simba: That we basically all have problems in academic life.*

*Fiona: [blank]*

More importantly, participants used the writing space to acknowledge their oneness or similarity with the other students.

What the participants learnt about their interactions with others:

*Tahini: I won't laugh at a student hurrying to print his/her work, to submit their work, or missing deadlines, because that also happened to me.*

*Jaya: Should realise that others too may be facing same problems and sharing can help a lot.*

*Joe: Give everyone some time to share their thoughts with us.*

*Simba: I think it will be even better.*

*Fiona: Trying to be nice with them, being there when they need me.*

Their sense of identification with others positively affected how the participants would interact with them in future. Sympathy, compassion and sharing were among the most evident values in their answers. On the whole, in this section, writing was mostly reflexive and experiential. It enabled participants to express on paper the reflections that they may not be able to express orally. At times, writing was a cathartic experience or even a self-revelatory one if it allowed their deep subconscious thoughts to surface. It was also a crucial reflective tool allowing the writers to resolve their social issues. Thus, the task became performative of forms of behaviour that students might wish to enact in future.

### **6.3.1 Observations**

The introspective subject position allows participants to take a different trajectory from texts to self. In the analysis of academic essays written early in the workshops, texts were read in terms of what they indexed about participants' writer identities. Here, participants' writing allows them to look back at themselves through the mirror texts and make changes in their behaviour. In that sense, it was performative in nature and function. It made participants commit themselves to an ideal future self.

In terms of writing pedagogy, writing for the purposes of brainstorming ideas or detailing rhetorical elements for a speech before its performance is different from writing critically or reflexively about an issue. For the latter, enacting the issue first becomes useful in order to then write meaningfully about it. In this manner, one is tempted to think that for students to begin to think critically about texts or events and display critical thinking or the ability to "think outside the box" in writing, they should not be boxed so tightly inside the writing task or the genre from the start. They should first be given sufficient leeway to explore more around the topic, make its challenges their own, that is, a part of their own identities. If possible, they should be given subject positions to try out and perform their thoughts through other modes, before translating these into writing.

The reason for suggesting other routes of expression prior to writing is that these routes could perhaps allow students to freely engage with content without fretting over the strictures of the academic writing form, the limitations of words, issues of plagiarism, all of which might stifle critical thought at its very inception. This would much in line with the process approach to teaching writing, where the product is given less importance than the actual writing journey (Maybin, 1994). Once students have been able to generate meaningful content, and filled the 'creative gaps' (Jackson, 2007) in innovative ways, they will be able to express themselves more easily through words. In this process, they are more likely to produce a rich form of performative writing that enacts their academic identities and displays a strong 'authorial' presence (Ivanič, 1997). This view of writing is also in line with the academic literacies model, where reading and writing can only be effectively communicated when embedded in meaningful social practice even if the setting is constructed, in this case a theatre performance or a speech delivery.

The discussion here also lends itself to a critical reflection about the application of writing in the discipline (WID) and writing across the curriculum (WAC) pedagogies. As mentioned in chapter two, WID programmes aim primarily to turn students into specialists in the discipline, and into thinkers capable of using specific terminology to express their understanding of concepts in their field. Certainly with the new work order, what constitutes the discipline and its epistemological groundings are likely to evolve (Robinson-Pant & Street, 2012). While the reading and writing in particular contexts is more generative than that acquired through generic lessons, the writing that is featured more narrowly in the discipline in this case, is seen to hamper students' authorial self because of its focus on form more than alignment to content. The pedagogical approach mostly used in the study (Bazerman, 2009), seeks a middle ground between a narrowly framed writing context, in the case the discipline, and a very generic writing context where conventions would be too broad to cohere or apply to readers' demands. One would agree that there needs to be some form of writing context nonetheless. In the case of this study, the context is re-constructed around common socio-academic issues faced by international students, which prevents the pedagogy from being too discipline-specific or too generic. At a later stage, participants were asked to relate the activities back to their experiences in the discipline. From my observations, it would be easier to inculcate writing in the discipline once students have acquired the confidence to project multiple writer identities in a variety of contexts.

This said, as a participant observer, I was less concerned about the teaching methods used, than what they revealed about participants' identities, university experiences and the values of the workshop space in enabling this discussion to take place. The identity issues were discussed in greater length in chapter five under the heading of performance and identities. Their import cannot be overlooked here in the analysis of participants' writer identities in the workshop space. The different activities, though focused on how writer identities were constructed through subject positions, shed light on other socio-academic challenges that the participants faced. Hence, an analysis of what the writing tasks indexed about the students and their learning contexts is more important than the task itself. I will suspend my thoughts on the potential of new performative spaces for now, until I have looked at the affordances of mainstream institutional spaces in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 7 – Subject positions in the mainstream institutional spaces**

As discussed earlier, the performative space allowed participants to enact different subject positions to varying degrees as well as write about them. This chapter looks at the subject positions made available in mainstream institutional spaces by analysing academic essays written by the participants in their specific disciplines. These essays were written after the April workshops in May (two essays), August to October 2011 (six essays). Feedback on the initial drafts of an Economics essay due in May was offered in the final workshop sessions in April. It is found that the 'discoursal self' is more prominent in participants' essays than the 'autobiographical' and 'authorial' selves, which differs from the writings participants produced for various workshop activities. Why the pre-eminence of the 'discoursal self'? As we begin the analysis, it is important to remind ourselves of what Bangeni and Kapp mentioned earlier, 'students have complex motivations and pressures within and beyond the institution that are not clearly visible to us as academics' (2006:82). To grasp those patterns better, a focus group session was organised at the end of year 2011 whereby participants were pulled out of their institutional subject positions and asked to imagine the essay writing task as a play. As we saw in the two previous chapters, performance gives participants the opportunity to create new subject positions or at least to subvert the set ones. Based on this activity, the chapter offers possible avenues to understanding the affordances and limits of the performative spaces as compared to the traditional mainstream spaces. It discusses the findings by looking at the role of academic writing conventions, motivation, authorship, subject positions and factors in the facilitator's role in the focus group activity.

### **7.1 The discipline-specific subject position**

Participants were engaged in academic writing in the institutional spaces and these required them to assume new discipline-specific subject positions. Hence, while writings could be seen as indexical of the identities they endorsed outside the workshop space, they could also be uneven, unstable and performative, as participants tried out new ways of being in the institution. The academic essays written for their courses at the post-workshop stage were analysed to identify how they enacted their 'autobiographical', 'discoursal' and 'authorial selves' in writing.

If their writing exhibited a strong 'authorial' element, one could infer that they were confidently assuming agency over the content. If the writing had a more prominent 'discoursal' element, one could infer that students were rehearsing their newly acquired disciplinary self. Perhaps they were not keen to take risks and display their authorial self too overtly and preferred to couch all knowledge behind tried and tested writing conventions. If the writing had a stronger 'autobiographical' element, then perhaps the students were still relying on prior knowledge, or using their history creatively to hone their authorial selves in writing. Some choices were less conscious than others. These are merely some of the theoretical suppositions. In practice, the writer identities performed may be so intertwined that it may be hard to categorise them into discrete types or to list all their features exhaustively. There could also be tensions between the different writers' identities enacted.

One would recall that a similar analysis was done in chapter four, when participants' initial brought-along writing resources were explored. Participants were asked after the workshops had ended to share their academic essays over the first and second semesters. In this section, I refer back to those initial writings time and again to trace participants' writer identity trajectories over time.<sup>25</sup>

### ***7.1.1 Tahini's essay***

Tahini shared a biology field trip report and a French essay she had written for her courses (see Appendix 11). In the biology report, she was required to assume the subject position of novice researcher in the field, collecting data and reporting findings to the academics in her discipline. Her group was therefore required to display accuracy and rigour in the presentation of data, as well as adequate mastery of the scientific report style, which was still new to them. The French essay allowed her to assume the role of an art/poetry critic, which was easy to assume since, as reported, she was an 'avid reader' of different types of texts.

---

<sup>25</sup> It could be argued that the academic essay tasks in the workshop would be less demanding than those written in the mainstream. However, one should also bear in mind that the writing tasks designed in the workshop were driven by particular theoretical and pedagogical considerations and therefore could not be replicas of what was done in the mainstream. The tasks were more preparatory and to some extent, emancipatory. While the workshop aimed to transmit the university's expectations of what counted as acceptable academic essays, it did more than serve this instrumental aim. It was intended as a safe space where students could learn different aspects of the writing process and explore other enabling genres and ways of constructing and negotiating meaning.

She scored 72% (a lower first division) in the biology field trip report written as a group. The tutor's comment on the discussion section that she wrote was that it could have been more thorough and analytical. Tahini also reported that the quality of the work would have been better had there been better cooperation among group members. She scored a first class for her French essay and an overall of 77% (an upper first division) for the course. The two essays were analysed in terms of the three dimensions of writer identities.

*Autobiographical self:* In the discussion section which Tahini wrote, entitled 'Comparison of intertidal algal and animal life in False Bay with other regions along the South African coastline', she was expected to compare and discuss the differences in the algal and animal life in the different regions. A glance at structure however showed a brief listing of the differences in the animal life in those regions, with brief explanations of the environmental conditions enabling or inhibiting the growth of those creatures. Due to the listing structure, there was no necessary link between the paragraphs.

In terms of the 'autobiographical self', one could not deduce from the descriptions made that the group members had actually spent time in the field. The information was presented in a factual manner.

'While the Eastern coast is dominated by algal forests, the Western coast consists of kelp beds, which may extend to as much as 3 km'.

The autobiographical elements were less evident in the text. Tahini did mention in her profile about her fascination with 'microscopic organisms'. Perhaps that could account for the painstaking descriptions of the types of creatures in the discussion section, and the lack of space for actual discussion. The lack of engagement could also be a result of her high school academic experience.

*'High school was mostly a race towards good marks and bursaries, failed to teach students the language, but instead forced them to follow a certain writing pattern where no personal opinion and thought can be put into words. The best students are those who diligently follow the method imposed by teachers, themselves governed by an impenitent system, a vicious circle impervious to any sort of criticism'* (From profile, see Appendix 3).

Her comments suggest that she was in fact displeased by the way the school system stifled their voice. Her tone becomes more incisive as she states ‘I believe that high school was *only*<sup>26</sup> a means to access an acceptance letter from the university’. She was determined to learn the ropes of academic writing now to fill in any possible lacunas, since ‘I realized how much I didn’t learn about language and writing skills at school’. The influence of her prior schooling experience in the text could be viewed as part of her autobiographical or ‘discoursal self’; hence a possible blurring of the categories of Ivanič’s clover model. This said, from Tahini’s comments, one could expect her to display the ‘discoursal’ elements required by her department, perhaps in excess to compensate for her perceived lack of ‘writing skills’.

*Discoursal self:* As expected, the ‘discoursal self’ was very evident in the text. The field trip report as a whole was mostly constructed in the passive voice, especially when the group members had to describe what they did, observed and found. Here, they successfully assumed the subject position of the novice scientist, where the discovery or finding takes precedence over the individual responsible for it. This is unlike the social sciences, where the researcher or writer is as important as the findings made, because they are inevitably tinted and transformed by his gaze or attached subjectivities, values, beliefs and theoretical stances. In fact, the writing subject was also the part of the subject matter and the accepted cause of the inevitable subjectivity of the text produced. Here is an example where the group effaced themselves from the research process and made the results take precedence.

‘The results were noted down on a data sheet’.

‘This project is divided into two parts. The first one compares...’

On other occasions, as shown, the use of the passive voice gave inanimate objects such as the project or the report an active voice, all in the effort to mask the authors’ actual identities or more simply their inevitable but intrusive presence. Thus in such disciplines, the passive voice, like nominalisations created “objectivity”; and the project of furthering knowledge was deemed larger than the sum of people or experiences creating it (see Halliday & Martin, 1993 on precisely how nominalisations turn events, actions etc. into quantifiable objects; see also Parkinson & Adendorff, 2004).

---

<sup>26</sup> My emphasis.

Perhaps the other elements of the student's writer identities were muted because of the strictures of form in scientific reporting. One could not assume that the silences, or lack of discussion in the text to be "deficits" on the student's part. In fact, in the light of Tahini's prior essays in the workshop and the French essay analysed later, the above assumption becomes implausible.

*Authorial self:* As discussed, the limited freedom to assert oneself in the first person or show agency over the actions one did take, could lead to a hushed 'authorial' voice in the text. Yet there were covert ways of taking ownership of the content. One of them was to tabulate the differences and to explain their implications as Tahini did on behalf of her group.

'The Littorina zone is the highest region up the shore and the most exposed one, whereas the Infratidal zone is the most sheltered one and closest to the water.

Region	Mean number of species	Standard deviation for number of species	Mean Biomass	Standard deviation for biomass	Mean Size
Littorina	10	0.972	302.544	68.035	18
Infratidal	91.6	1.912	17356.752	1572.298	137.12

Table 4: The summary of figures from the Results section

The above table shows that there is a big difference between the number, biomass and size of species in the Littorina and Infratidal zones. The differences arise due to a variety of factors, including, temperature, exposure to sun, wind, nutrient availability water currents and wave action'.

She used the table as a starting point to make the claim that there was a 'big difference' in the number and size of the species. The table hence became a basis to validate some of her initial observations and gain credibility, without having to rely on her 'authorial' presence to achieve it. The table also allowed her to stretch the observations and assume the causes for this 'difference'. However, had she spent more time discussing the salient figures in the table, she would have wielded greater authority over the content. In my view, this would perhaps have required that she took up the subject position of statistician, or applied mathematician, which she might not be ready to impersonate.

It is ironical that the more the student immersed herself in the discipline and the more tools she had to manipulate data, to deepen the analysis and develop an authoritative text, the less authorial presence she was left with to negotiate. In fact, had she analysed the data more deeply, she would have used more detailed calculations or scientific terminology, which would align her with the

'scientific' project, but perhaps reduce her agency as a knowledge *maker*. Earlier, in chapter one, I separated out authorship and authority arguing that it was only once the writer gained the subject position of 'author' that he/she could wield 'authority' over the text. In this case, I would argue that Tahini was not expected to be an author and hence even less likely to assume authority over the text. If anything, the text itself could become authoritative if it met the scientific rigour of research. Tahini was penalised for not engaging with the data in depth, and as mentioned, a deeper analysis would require more technical analytical skills, a less overt authorial presence, and the dexterity to juggle these two. For a lay person, this skill could be quite unnatural for the verb 'to engage' is itself an implied reflexive one, even without a reflexive pronoun, requiring the presence of a 'doer'.

On the whole, both authorial and autobiographical elements were overtaken by the discursive aspects of the text. I now compare Tahini's writing in this report to her essay in French literature, to illustrate the influence of disciplines have on authorial presence in particular. In this essay, she had to analyse the use of prosody in Baudelaire's poem 'Le Chat', the cat. I translate the relevant parts of the text into English, footnoting the French version.

*Autobiographical self:* The autobiographical self was very evident in Tahini's writing for various reasons. Firstly, as a Mauritian student, Tahini was brought up speaking in Creole and French. Much of her schooling was done in French and English. She also took up French literature in secondary school. Hence, the opportunity to write in a language close to home added rich autobiographical flavor to her essay, allowing her at once to empathise with the poet and subject matter, and to better express the feelings the poem evoked for her.

As one glanced at the content, one could also possibly imagine that Tahini related with the character of the cat, since the poet compared her features to that of a woman.

'He explains that his wife has beautiful eyes, like the cat, and this mixture that he sees in the cat's gaze, is perhaps the same as that in the eyes of the woman'.<sup>27</sup>

Tahini's active and sympathetic engagement with the poem and poet's intentions was most evident in the concluding lines where she used a series of subordinate clauses and adjectives to

---

<sup>27</sup> 'Il fait comprendre que sa femme a de beaux yeux, comme le chat, et ce mélange qu'il voit dans le regard du chat, est peut-être le même que dans les yeux de cette femme'.

depict the effects the woman/cat had on the poet. The amount of detail suggests that she was not merely decoding the poem's surface meaning but extricating deeper significations.

'Charles Baudelaire, in this poem presents a narrator in love in company of its cat, suffering from the absence of this woman, who captivates, whom he loves and tries to obtain, but, the latter, reticent, and cold, does not give in to his game (attempts to woo her)' .<sup>28</sup>

Tahini here wrote in an extensive form, taking liberties with sentence structure for effect and playing with elements of contrast to express herself and to transfer those feelings onto her reader, as a pseudo-poet.

*Discoursal self:* The 'discoursal' elements were mostly present in the first half of the poem analysis where Tahini described the prosody, meter and rhyme in the poem. She then presented the content of each stanza, before finally launching into the analysis of the poem's meanings. While she could have linked the prosody to its effects on how the poem was read and how the meaning was received, her subsequent analysis was thorough. She did a line-by-line analysis of the poem and offered various interpretations of words and turns of phrase.

'The author makes use of comparison in the verse "Son regard, Comme le tien, aimable bête" (Her gaze, like yours, friendly creature). The word "comme" (like) indicates this figure of speech' .<sup>29</sup>

Through this she demonstrated her awareness of the formal features of poetry and her ability to apply them to particular verses. At the same time, she offered multiple interpretations as is shown in the next part.

*Authorial self:* While Tahini did not use the first person in the essay, her 'authorial self' was present in her detailed appreciation of the text, the multiple interpretations she offered and finally the questions she addressed directly to the readers.

'Is she the narrator's wife, or the woman he loves and would like to marry, and refers to her as his wife [...]?'<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Charles Baudelaire, dans ce poème montre un narrateur amoureux, en compagnie de son chat, souffrant de l'absence de cette femme, qui le captive, qu'il aime et essaie d'avoir, mais, cette dernière, réticente, et froide, ne se donne pas a son jeu.

<sup>29</sup> L'auteur utilise des comparaisons, dans ces vers, "Son regard, Comme le tien, aimable bête". Le mot « comme » indique cette figure de style.

Hence Tahini played with the expected structure of responses, by asking questions instead of answering them in the declarative form. Her question opened up options without foreclosing any one of them. It was hence a clever 'authorial' move on her part to offer different interpretations without committing to a particular one. While one may think that her 'authorial' voice was weaker here, in fact, through her questioning manoeuvre she demonstrated greater control over the unfolding of the text, hence wielding both greater 'authorial' and 'discoursal' strength. By asking a question, she rose beyond the marker's expectations and her subject position as a student writer to assume that of a speculative critic. She even succeeded in drawing her readers in to interpret the poem with her.

The purpose of juxtaposing Tahini's scientific report with this literary appreciation was not to suggest that Tahini's possible fluency in French gave her more authority in the latter text. The purpose was not to make a case about language. The textual analysis skills would certainly transfer across languages, given adequate lexical resources to do so. The purpose of the juxtaposition of the two texts was to show that the lack of 'authorial' or 'autobiographical' elements in texts was often not due to a deficit on the part of the student, but a lack of opportunities or perhaps expectations, real or assumed, to display these in writings in specific disciplines. In an email conversation I had with Tahini towards the end of the year when she submitted her essay to me, I mentioned to her:

*'I loved your 'Le Chat' essay by the way. I translated a few of your interpretations into English. Your 'authorial' voice was so powerful there<sup>31</sup>. Especially as compared to the dry scientific style of the other. It's amazing how the discipline in which we belong, can so radically change the way we write. Perhaps you felt that way. I don't know. :)'*

Her reply was as follows:

*'I do believe that the way we write is often governed by our feelings of the moment, and our previous knowledge and beliefs, but still the discipline in which we belong may indeed reflect in our writing'.*

---

<sup>30</sup> Est-ce l'épouse du narrateur, ou est-ce la femme qu'il aime et voudrait épouser, et la réfère comme "sa femme" [...]?

<sup>31</sup> I told the participants about the clover model I would use to analyse their essays once they had submitted them. It was a way for me to keep them informed about the research process so that they could provide feedback and close the researcher-researched loop.

Her response showed awareness of the multiple dimensions of writing including one's emotional engagement with it, which were not always easy to detect in the actual script. Hence one would need to carefully assess students' engagement across writing genres and even other modes of expression, before making any judgment on their abilities. The fact that the lacunas here were not necessarily intrinsic to students' thinking skills, also suggested that these missing elements could be nurtured by clarifying the demands of each discipline to the students and guiding the writing process more closely. This could be done by a tutor, lecturer, or a writing expert in the discipline.

### ***7.1.2 Simba's essay***

Simba shared two essays he wrote for an African Studies course. I selected the argumentative essay over the other one which was more of a text-based analysis (see Appendix 12). It should be noted that Simba's main stream of study was Electrical Engineering. The African Studies course was an elective course taken in the second semester that allowed him to engage with texts in a more critical and creative manner, with room to formulate his own 'subjective' interpretations unlike his core courses.

*Autobiographical self:* The essay I focus on is about the locally produced movie 'The Gods must be crazy' in 1980. Simba was required to analyse the depiction of Africans by referring back to key moments in the movie. One could initially think that Simba would struggle with the South African movie genre and content. However, being from Lesotho, he did have some exposure to such movies. Also the movie was set in Botswana and presented images of African identities and stereotypes in general.

There was certainly a passionate note in his writing that could not be overlooked. For example, he wrote 'This picture is painted in the minds of an audience, as an image of Africans, and that of Africa, sad is it not?' Like Tahini's question, this last gesture allowed him to elicit consensus from his readers. Questions could also guide the reader into the writer's thought processes at that point in time, especially in an introduction. It could also be a creative move to interest his readers. Paxton also notes the occurrence of rhetorical questions in her students' scripts and posits that they may be indexical of 'literary genres' in the students' African home languages, especially in praise poetry (2007:49). In her view, these genres are a part of students' 'interim literacies' on their way to acquiring the university's requisite literacy practices.

In his conclusion, Simba wrote,

‘The film is a rather sad and false depiction of Africa, full of exaggeration and one of the ultimate mockery of mockeries, meant to feed the mind of the stereotypes’.

One wonders whether his take on the representation of the African communities in the movie would have been different, had he spoken from outside of Africa.

*Discoursal self:* In terms of structure, the essay had a coherent flow as per the outline set in the introduction.

‘...Another “fact” that is exhibited by the film is that: Africa is an object of exploitation, and to wrap up, exaggeration versus reality of the Africans in the film will be explored. A stereotypical view of Africa and its inhabitants’.

Though Simba provided readers with a “road map” of how he would proceed, he did not write it in a trite formulaic manner: ‘In this essay, I will first discuss, then I will... and conclude that...’. His creative gestures to achieve the same end, displayed growing confidence in the norms of academic writing. He performed a similar stylistic move at the onset of the second paragraph in the body of the essay.

‘The concept of Africans being illiterate and them having low intellectual abilities is also another image created of Africa’.

The more general sentence structure would begin with ‘another image created of Africa was...’. However, Simba’s foregrounding of the point of this paragraph allowed him to link it more naturally to the last line of the previous paragraph on the ‘primitiveness’ of Africans.

‘And all these emphasise to some extent the inhumanity and primitiveness of an African society’.

Simba’s structure was also organic since his paragraphs were sequenced in terms of the ordering of the movie scenes as well. The themes were discussed within the write-ups about the scenes. This allowed a reader who had not watched the movie to follow the themes he would then refer to, more easily. This structure also allowed Simba to provide evidence for each idea or interpretation given. The evidence came from the scene examples used alongside the themes.

On closer reading, the third paragraph was particularly long and seemed composed of two shorter paragraphs. The second idea in the paragraph was the one beginning with:

'Xi then decides to go to the "end of the world" to get rid of this "evil object" displaying another level of illiteracy in them thinking that there actually is the end of the world'.

The linking of both ideas in one paragraph was likely here since the scenes in the paragraph were interlinked. On the whole however, the paragraphs each treated a separate idea and linked them to the idea in the former paragraph.

In terms of relevance, Simba made a clever move by foregrounding his analysis of themes and scenes first before offering more details about the movie itself, its cast, crew, genre and reception.

'For the grand finale, a deeper look into the director of the film is taken, him using a caricature of exaggerated "clicks" as a form of comedy in a film that seems to be a documentary depicting the life of that African tribe...'

It is often tempting to give these details in the first paragraph of the essay as a background to the movie. Simba's however relegated this section to the final paragraph so that he could engage more directly with the discussion at hand, uninterrupted by asides about cast and crew. It appears Simba planned the paragraph structure and content with much attention to detail before starting to write.

*Authorial self:* The essay displayed a prominent 'authorial' voice despite the fact the first person was only used in the concluding paragraphs. The authorial voice was firstly apparent through the choice of words, such as the high modality adverb 'clearly' in 'This clearly exhibits an animalistic behaviour'. In the final paragraphs, as Simba convinced the readers of his credibility and owned the right to use the first person, he used 'we'.

'We then see Africans who have not embraced the western culture in the film shown half-naked...'

The use of 'we' perhaps allowed him to hide behind a collective identity and share his opinion about the movie. However, on second thought, it would be awkward to say, 'I then see Africans...'. In fact, 'we' could be a way to rally all the members of the film audience together, since films are seldom watched alone. It could more powerfully rally the author and the reader, and generate agreement. More broadly, 'we' could refer to the African community watching the film from the sensibilities of the postcolonial subaltern.

As the paragraph evolved, the words used became bolder. Some examples would be 'sad is it not', 'not even close to reality', 'a rather sad and false depiction of Africa', 'full of exaggeration', 'one of the ultimate mockery of mockeries'. He also used quotation marks to challenge assumptions or givens, for example "facts". Using double quotation marks, more often referred to as "scare quotes", he questioned what made facts facts, and the historically and politically invested texture of the reality we are presented with through the media.

On the whole, it seemed that Simba earned the right to speak out in this passionate manner since he had persuaded his readers about the stereotypical depictions in the former paragraphs. It also appeared that the confidence to do so came from his autobiographical self, Simba's identity as an African himself, and his footing, that is the context from which he spoke. As Simba stated earlier in his profile, his bond with the land was a very close one, since his father was a farmer and he often helped out in the chores, hence perhaps the strong engagement with the topic. Also he was in touch with the traditions and folklore of his land and it would appear that he espoused the values that they encapsulated.

'The crocodile is an animal which the "Bakoena" mythically have its attributes, especially strength, a very strong will to power, and its being respected by other animals in its habitat as if it were king, it is also used on the national flag because the royal family are also "Bakoena"' (From Simba's profile, see Appendix 7).

From this perspective, it is likely that Simba would attempt to critique if not correct the naïve, myopic stance that certain film producers seemed to hold of Africa.

### **7.1.3 Bob's essay**

Bob shared two essays, one from his first year Economics course and the other from a foundation course for Commerce and Engineering students, 'Evidence based management'. I focus mostly on the Economics essay here (see Appendix 13).

*Autobiographical self:* The essay required students to write about the effects of government interventions on the market for maize, rice or any product of their choice. Students could subsequently formulate their own titles.

Bob chose the maize market and the essay title he constructed was:

'Distortions caused by Government Intervention. Is it helping in the growth of the maize market or is the maize market taking a Nose-Dive? Let us investigate'.

Working as a consultant at UCT's Writing Centre, I had read several of these essays and was struck by the fact that 'maize' was such a popular option. When I asked the students who came for consultations if maize was grown in their country, they replied,

*'No it's just that everyone is doing on maize. That's why I chose it'.*

*'There are more articles on maize [so it would be easy to write about it]'* (students' statements at the Writing Centre during my consultations with them).

In Bob's case, maize was certainly a cash crop cultivated in Namibia, but so was 'mahangu', a cereal crop also known as the pearl millet. However, it would be quite unlikely that South African readers would be able to relate to 'mahangu', not to mention the small likelihood that there might be refereed academic articles on it. Livestock could have been another option. Yet, maize was strategically chosen to meet the department's expectations. In fact, Bob additionally chose to focus on the maize market in South Africa. Hence, the 'autobiographical self' was quite limited in his writing.

Moreover, one could mistakenly assume from reading his essay, that he could be a local student.

*'Moreover, as our resident firms become economically stronger...'*

Hence, not only was he playing safe by effacing or neutralising any hints of his cultural difference and thus the possibility that he may be perceived as lacking knowledge about the South African economy, he went to the extent of positively suggesting a South African sense of belonging. Perhaps, the general emphasis on the South African context in lectures was becoming an embodied reality for him, or perhaps, it suggested to him that his readers would appreciate his text more if he inscribed it in their context.

This did not prevent him from thoroughly engaging with the topic. In fact, the title had the vividness of glossy business magazines, especially with words such as 'nose-dive'. At the same time, through the sentence 'Let us investigate' he spoke from the subject position of an active enquirer taking the reader on that journey with him, rather than that of a novice economist.

*Discoursal self*

Bob's essay displayed strong 'discoursal' elements, with close attention to form as well as the discipline-specific meaning-making devices such as graphs. He began the essay by stating his thesis statement and "road map" up front.

'I strongly argue that government intervention in the South African maize agricultural market has greater positive implications than negative effects. In this essay, I explore the various distortions that the government brings into being and the effects of such distortions. I will focus on maize as an agricultural commodity in South Africa'.

One of the departmental guidelines was to state the thesis statement unambiguously in the introduction. Together with stating this as clearly as possible, Bob also heightened the degree of assertiveness in the statement, using the adverb 'strongly'.

He then defined the role of government interventions in the maize markets, and each paragraph thereafter presented a benefit of government interventions. The benefit was stated in the first line of the paragraph and then explained using the micro- or macro-economics reasoning.

'Intervention by the state through its monetary and fiscal policies further helps to ensure that there is ample amount of funds in the economy. This creates a good commercial environment for businesses that are in their start-up phase [...] This will lead to an absence of large monopolizing businesses that exploit the market. This ascertains that prices are stabilized and native maize producers have a greater chance of succeeding in the market'.

Here, he gradually adopted the subject position of a novice economist. The argument had a logical flow from causes to outcomes and displayed Bob's understanding of the discipline specific content as well as his ability to use the economics terms productively. There are very few references throughout since Bob was deriving the content from his grasp of the mechanisms of demand and supply. He only quoted other scholars or economists a few times to support his reasoning.

'The economic theory of the firm supports my claim as it assumes that the average private business operates on the profit-maximization motive. "The firm's primary objective in producing output is to maximize profits" (Anderson, 2001)'.

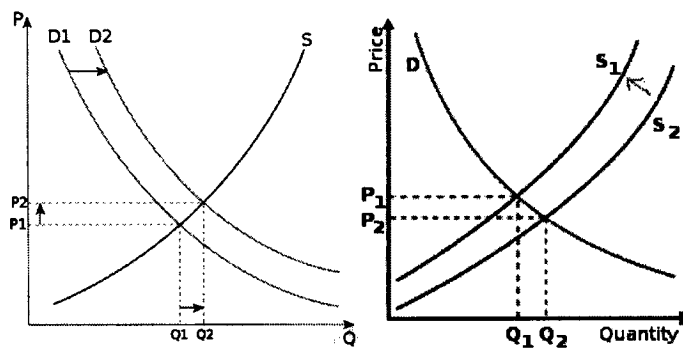
He also ventured outside of what would be perceived as the conventional sources.

‘However, it can be argued that businesses are most effective and productive if governed by the invisible hand. The French economic doctrine, “*laissez faire*”, argues that; “an economy is most productive, if it can pursue its own economic interests freely” (Blecher, 2009)’.

It would appear that he had actually made a conscious effort to give readers a wider grasp of the issues discussed.

His presentation of visuals was likewise carefully structured, with a sentence introducing the graphs and an explanation of its particular features afterwards.

‘Economic theory dictates that when any one of these events occurs, the demand for maize sky-rockets since its supply diminishes.



An increase in supply

a decrease in supply

As depicted in the graphs above, a decrease in supply from curve S2 TO S1 shows a decrease in output supplied. This leads to a decrease in demand from curve D1 to D2. In order to restore the optimum supply levels of maize, the government in such instances may offer fertiliser subsidies, irrigation subsidies, grants or loan rebates’.

He enhanced the credibility of the text by referring to economic theory as the authority and added relevance to his analysis by relating the technical demand-supply components back to the discussion on the maize economy more holistically. In Economics terms, he linked the micro- to the macro-economic effects of government intervention.

Hence on the whole, Bob displayed a strong 'discoursal self' in his writing. Perhaps this was part of his attempt to be quickly assimilated within the university's community of commerce students/apprentices.

*Authorial self:* Bob's authorial self was inevitably shaped by his 'discoursal self'. He used the first person in the introduction to make his claim: 'I strongly believe that...', in one of the last paragraphs to reiterate his claim: 'the economic theory of the firm supports my claim' and in the conclusion: 'I believe that distortions caused by government intervention in the South African maize market do way more good than damage'. The low occurrence of the first person in his essay could be linked to his concern of appearing objective in the text, which appears a requirement in the discipline of Economics. He knew however that he could assert himself in the introduction and conclusion, and he 'strongly' did so.

On closer reading, there were other though less visible traits of the 'authorial self' in the text. One of key ones was in his organisation of ideas. He began by expressing his idea and used theorists only to support that idea. As shown in the previous paragraph, he used 'economic theory' to support his claim, rather than showing how his claim supported or obeyed the economic theory. Through these moves, he asserted himself as the main thinker, enquirer and author in the text, not merely a novice economist.

#### **7.1.4 Common threads**

One of the common threads across the essays was that, while participants engaged well with the content and in many cases succeeded in reproducing the 'discoursal' elements of their discipline, at times they muffled the 'autobiographical' and 'authorial' elements. However, whenever they assumed that the 'authorial' elements was permitted, they displayed those more fully and also showed complexity of thought and rich interpretations of content.

Their academic essays written in the discipline-specific subject position of novice scientist or economist differed in part from the academic essays that had been written in the Writers' workshop space. Besides the fact that they were written months after and could have been an improvement on the essays written in the workshop space, they were also more cautiously crafted in response to the subject positions available to them in the mainstream institutional spaces.

While Bob had the tools to endorse the economist's role, Tahini lacked the analytical tools in her discipline to assume the scientist's persona. Generally, their academic essays progressively demonstrated more critical thought, especially through their assertion of the authorial self as shown above. They were more logical in the case of Bob, more nuanced in the case of Simba, and a more creative and empathetic in the case of Tahini with her critical appreciation of the French poem. Perhaps they misunderstood some specific requirements of their respective departments, but this would need to be clarified by the department staff members. On the whole, though there were more signs of critical thinking in the text, at times, the participants were still playing safe, especially Tahini and Bob. At times, they identified the opportunities to voice their 'authorial self' and seized them and at times appeared too overwhelmed by the conventions afforded to them by their new subject positions.

At this point, the research was guided in a new direction, namely: In what ways did the shifts in subject positions affect students' perceptions of the "correctness" of writing and their writer identities in the text? As noted previously, the subject-positions in the mainstream institutional spaces were often discipline-specific ones and therefore required students to display a strong discursal voice motivated by the conventions in that discipline. At the same time, students were also expected to display maturity of thought through the workings of a strong authorial voice, whether in analysis or discussion. Yet within the discipline, students favoured the discursal over the authorial self in writing, while in the performative space, with the variety of subject positions available to them, they were honing a stronger 'authorial self'. To better understand the motivations behind such choices, it was necessary to pull the students out of their disciplinary subject positions which could occasionally be saturated with terminology and conventional strictures, and ask them to describe the different components of essay writing in a newly created inter-disciplinary terrain using performative tools.

## **7.2 Discussion**

The discussion is framed around an activity 'the best academic essay of the year' that participants were engaged in, in the Nov 2011 focus group session. In this activity, participants were to imagine the essay as a play they needed to perform (see Appendix 16). Through the activity, they were cast in the subject position of performers, as the agents of text, as opposed to those acted upon by texts. Using the play analogy, I asked them to imagine the stage as a 'writing stage', and

writing as the play. Who would be the actors, the stage director, the script writer? Participants went through this thought experiment in their group.

The purpose of this activity as mentioned, was to understand how participants perceived academic essay writing, its phases of production and consumption and the influences of the broader academic context in the framing of their writing play. The participants' answers pertained to their interpretation of the essay writing task using the stage-craft components as metaphors. I present them within the broader theoretical ideas around conventions and subject positions in the discipline, motivation and authorship, academic writing, the roles of space and that of the facilitator.

### *7.2.1 Academic writing conventions in the discipline*

What were participants' views with regards to the conventions in the discipline? Why was their 'discoursal self' so prominent in the text? Who were the rule setters? Participants explained that the rule setters were the lecturers or more broadly the department, an abstract entity that remote controlled students' text production process.

*Joe: Lecturer. B'cause sometimes they tell you to go to the library, to get these books. The department also sets the rules. It tells you, 'write a two thousand words essay'.*

Though the department prescribed the rules, it did not necessarily dispense information about the disciplinary genre for instance. It was certainly a 'centering' structure in the words of Blommaert (2005), and while it could offer writing guidelines through departmental handbooks, these were often generic, remote and non-interactive to be particularly relevant or interesting. Lillis (2001) mentioned that there was a 'lack of explicitness' around the writing conventions or the 'divine discourses', but I would argue that even if the conventions, the genre or the expected product were made explicit, these would need to be scaffolded perhaps by the tutors to apply to particular writing contexts.

It is noteworthy that the "rule setters" were also the members of the audience, to use the stage metaphor, or readers at the receiving end. This awareness could raise the stakes of writing and lead to a thorough piece. Not to mention the fact that the audience could assist in generating new ideas, because of their dual role as audience and educators.

*Jaya: The marker.*

*Aditi: And are they art lovers or art critics?*

*Joe: Some are art critics, some like your work.*

*Aditi: And in your case?*

*Joe: Critics.*

*Jaya: Provide other ideas, supplementary ideas.*

At times though, participants' awareness about the audience could be detrimental to the writing process. It could generate anxiety of similar magnitude as stage fright among actors, especially if the members of the audience were critics.

*Jaya: The audience is here to criticise.*

*Tahini: To mark.*

*Aditi: So like a judge, to give you marks?*

*Jaya: yes like that.*

According to the participants, the audience's key role was to give marks, to identify the winners, losers, and perhaps the "weakest links". On the other hand, audience awareness could mislead students to assume that they need not explain concepts, ideas further, because they are performing in front of a specialist audience. It does not seem to be the case that participants had much one-to-one interaction with the rule setters, since the rules, such as, 'write a two thousand words essay' were generic ones for all students. Perhaps there were also certain specific rules which participants did not mention. The roles of rules were explained as follows.

*Tahini: To make sure that you meet the requirements.*

*Simba: Sometimes they ask us to write about things we can't think about. Or write about.*

*The topic is too narrow.*

*Jaya: Can we say, they sometimes act as speed breakers?*

*Joe: Sometimes they ask you to write about a specific section. You write two paragraphs and you're out of ideas.*

While the issue of breadth and depth of engagement with the essay topic was more a concern with the script, it did bear implications on participants' ability to follow rules such as word count.

A related issue was that students did not always have much choice over the topic. It does not necessarily follow that they had limited control or agency over the script. They could still manoeuvre and present ideas in original ways.

*Tahini: It depends, you have scientific essays. You have all types of essays.*

*Jaya: (murmurs) The department.*

*Joe: Sometimes you have to debate. Sometimes you have to say what your thoughts are.*

*What you think. Give your opinion.*

*Aditi: Okay, and do you ever have to write fiction?*

*Joe: No.*

Yet one could imagine that if the topics were too remote and disjoint from the students' interests or their brought along knowledges, they would lose interest in the script right from the outset. Also the students were never asked to write any piece of fiction in their discipline. On the other hand, one would believe that for students to grasp what academic essays should look like, one of the tasks could be to try out what it should not look like. They could also venture into other genres, explore commonalities, differences, or simply more effective yet acceptable modes of expression across genres. This echoes Archer's view that, 'Different modes can enable different kinds of being and knowing which has particular implications for students who have English as an additional language (2006:203).

With regards to style, participants agreed that the English style should be formal and academic. They were not wrong for as Lillis points out, 'if the style is judged to be inappropriate, it is not just the text that is negatively evaluated but scholars themselves and their intellectual activity' (2008:380). Yet the participants' statements were quite vague even upon probing.

*Joe: English.*

*Joe: Formal*

*Tahini: Formal. Academic.*

*Aditi: What's particular to the academic style?*

*Tahini: The use of jargon specific to the topic.*

As students navigate their way through the new academic norms, one wondered the extent to which an excessive demand on form could constrain meaning production. Pennycook (2001) notes how the strictures of academic writing such as referencing are often over-stated, how they do not factor in international students' brought along learning traditions and could potentially lead to meaning loss.

With regards to the nuances of meaning and participants' ability to manipulate the text to enhance the reader's experience of it, what we called, 'special effects', they mentioned the following.

*Joe: Highlight words.*

*Simba: Emphasise the point. Sometimes we are satirical.*

*Jaya: The way that you present it.*

*Joe: The order of ideas.*

*Jaya: Charts.*

*Tahini: Define the key words.*

*Jaya: Debate about it.*

*Joe: Not have too many technical words, so that anyone can understand. Use images, give examples.*

Ideally, students should also be able to query about other creative and critical modes of writing to get their message across. Wordsworth once wrote about poetry: 'poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling... recollected in tranquility' (2003:151). Even if academic writing were more serious than serious poetry, it should be spontaneous at the outset so that students can take liberties with the genre and form, and think 'outside the box' as mentioned in chapter six. For this, the rule setters would need to allow space for students to experiment with genre before they wrote their final draft, else students would in all likelihood foreclose their options too early in the process. In other words, students' would need space to experiment with different 'discoursal' options in writing a valid academic text.

### **7.2.2 Motivation, writing and authorship**

It would appear that as a result of strict departmental rules, the script was seen by some participants as a way to conform, be accepted within the discipline, but more importantly to gain marks. The focus was more on delivering a legitimate text or product, than on mastering the stages in the writing process. The competitive nature of tertiary education, or simply the survival instinct made students endorse the university's rhetoric of throughput, pass rate and retention rate. Participants explained the role of the academic script as follows.

*Joe: To persuade people.*

*Tahini: To show your opinion. To get marks.*

*Simba: To correct our ideas..*

*Joe: Sometimes, you write about something that has happened or is about to happen.*

As shown, participants shared different views, but still tied the functions of the script to concerns about the academic transcript, 'to get marks', and more subtly 'to correct our ideas'. They believed that there was one correct answer that would yield the most marks, as opposed to seeing the essay as a lively arena where different meanings are contested. This could be because they

belonged to the Science and Engineering faculties respectively where answers were mathematically computed. Simba did take an 'African Studies' course as an elective but could not escape the quasi-scientific discourse of a right and a wrong answer.

As the concern with the transcript overpowered the script production process and motivation, questions of authority and authorship began to emerge, in other words, how the writers' gained credibility in the text and asserted themselves as writers. What happened to their ownership of ideas when they felt pressured to re-produce the formula, believing that to be a key to success? Participants unanimously believed that the script writer was the student and explained his/her role.

*Jaya: Deliver the information.*

*Aditi: How? Does he repeat what everyone has said?*

*Jaya: Summarise.*

*Tahini: He takes from everyone and creates his own ideas.*

*Simba: To communicate your ideas.*

They agreed that the script writer did not merely report events. Jaya's initial response could indicate that script writing was a matter of giving to the readers what they expected, in order to yield marks. She later hinted that the script writer should also process the information by summarising. While this may be an initial step to manage long pieces of information summarising alone would not add much value to the text or generate new meanings. Tahini and Simba stated that the script writer also appropriated others' ideas, made them his own and in the process shared his own stance as well, alongside the other thinkers. This comes closer to the definition of critical thinking as delineated by Brookfield, namely 'identifying and challenging assumptions, challenging the importance of context, explor[ing] alternatives and reflective skepticism' (1987: 7-9). However, they did not challenge the thinkers' views or display doubt about the veracity of their writings. They still showed deference towards them, perhaps another remnant of high school conditioning.

The participants' authority was also undermined to some degree by the nature of the tasks. Students mentioned that they had to engage with very broad themes, but that at times, the topics themselves were very narrow to say anything meaningful. In Ivanič (1997)'s terms, it becomes hard to hone a confident 'discoursal self', that abides by the departmental writing conventions when one is unsure about the scope of the answer. At worst, the 'discoursal self' may be over-

acted. The themes mentioned by the participants were vague and covered a vast area of knowledge and expertise.

*Simba: Historical issues.*

*Tahini: It depends. It can be contemporary issues.*

*Fiona: Education. Philosophy.*

Participants' grasp of the themes would in many instances be limited to the readings given and the questions asked. Any meaningful engagement with these would certainly require them to delve further on their own and explore the histories and debates around those issues. Reflecting on the functions of themes, the participants explained,

*Joe: They create a main idea.*

*Simba: One solid idea.*

This solid idea could be interpreted as the main claim, participants' standpoint vis-à-vis the issue discussed. Yet one could argue that until students were exposed to the vast array of sources and were able to develop their own thinking trajectory around the development of those issues, their attempt at critical thinking or better, knowledge production would necessarily be limited to the interpretation and often surface discussion of prescribed readings. In addition as pointed out by Reid and Kroll (1995), the tasks should be familiar so that students can deploy additional resources in responding to the question. Without generalising, certain undergraduate students' limited scope to explore ideas would partly explain why knowledge production only became the province of postgraduate studies.

### **7.2.3 Subject positions in the discipline**

The subject positions in the discipline were not only narrowly constructed but there seemed to be a tough power-play between the script writer, actor and stage director, terms used to designate different roles assumed in the writing process. While there could be different actors in a play, in writing these should ideally be one and the same person. In the activity, participants first saw the thinkers as actors, before entertaining the likelihood that they could be actors too in addition to being script writers. As for the powers of the stage director, these were shared between the student, the lecturer as perceived reader and the tutor.

*Tahini: The actors are the authors.*

*Joe: Thinkers.*

*Jaya: Scholars.*

*Tahini: Ourselves.*

*Fiona: Maybe you can get ideas from other people. Like your friends. Your surroundings.*

They also noted the importance of their surroundings towards the development of their academic script. This was particularly significant for various reasons. As Street (2000) notes, academic literacy, and writing more precisely, is not an 'autonomous' skill acquired equally by all, but shaped by the context of its production and related social practices. For international students whose identities were still in transit, whose understandings of context and practices were still in formation, what would constitute a nurturing surrounding for them? Related to context, the participant's mood could also be an actor.

*Tahini: Your mood can influence your writing. If you're positive [pause] you write better.*

Her promptness to see mood as an actor could be revealing of the power of emotions in the production of texts. When asked about the role of mood, participants responded:

*Simba: I think both good and bad mood can have an effect, a good effect on the writing. It depends on whether you are writing about something positive or not.*

*Jaya: I write better under pressure.*

*Simba: If I'm a bit depressed, I can be more critical in my essays.*

*Tahini: I don't think so. I think that... Like last semester, I had to write an essay on terrorism. [...] And I was in a bad mood. And I wrote a very biased essay.*

This discussion challenges our traditional approaches to teaching academic writing, located somewhere between the teaching of grammar and genre, and signals the need to re-valorise the academic literacies model, with a focus on students' learning environment, the academic practices where writing occurs and the emotional stresses students undergo.

As they became more convinced about their role as actors, they were asked to classify the actors in different categories: protagonists, antagonists and supportive friends.

*Tahini: Protagonist. Myself?*

*Jaya: The thinkers, because we are going to write about them.*

*Joe: I'm still thinking about it.*

*Aditi: Who would the antagonists be?*

*Jaya: Maybe myself, because then I would be debating about what the thinkers say.*

*Aditi: And who would the supportive friends be?*

*Tahini: The other theorists and scholars who agree with us.*

*Simba: I think the protagonist is the thinker. I am the antagonist.*

*Fiona: I think I'm supporting other actors in the essay.*

The participants were initially in doubt. It would appear that they had never asked themselves the question of how they featured in their scripts. Considering their initial stance towards the role of the script writer, it would appear that thus far, they had mostly been preoccupied with the content rather than the author, or authority in the text, which would be endorsed by the 'actor'. They then stated that the protagonists were the thinkers and that they were the antagonists since they were required to argue against the thinkers.

Essay questions were often formulated in this manner. They offered a quote from a key thinker and required the students to agree or disagree with the quote. These questions already primed students to present the thinker's ideas first, then their own. However, questions drawing on students' experiences as relating to theory, would turn the situation around and make students protagonists (see Lave and Wenger, 1991). These questions if well-structured could elicit more authorial presence from international students and acknowledge their brought-along resources more.

In academic essays, participants felt that they did not always have control over the plot's execution. When asked about who the stage director was, participants responded:

*Tahini: It is the scriptwriter*

*Joe: Yes ourselves. But sometimes, the marker is the stage director. Because he tells you to take things out.*

*Aditi: And how about the tutor? Would he have an influence?*

*Simba: Yeah sometimes he would read your drafts prior to submission and make changes and ask you to keep only the relevant bits.*

Initially, Tahini responded by saying that the stage director is the script writer. Others however had some reservations. Joe mentioned the marker as stage director, later agreeing that he would be a member of the audience. Still, on second thought, his views could signal something about the complexity of the writer-reader relationship. Texts are not only written with an anticipation of how they will be received, but this anticipation transforms the text as it is written in Bakhtin (1986)'s dialogic sense. One example would be the case of the writer-tutor interaction where ideally the tutor would take the student through the writing process.

If a student restricted her role to that of a script writer, then that role remained very passive. She would write about other thinkers' views but never her own. Moreover, she would follow a structure or template offered by the tutor without experimenting with form. If the student was both a script writer and an actor, then she could still share her views with the audience. However, her writing could be constrained by the formal guidelines of the tutor or lecturer, acting as stage director. Once the student became the stage director however, she could manipulate the form to better suit her message. Hence, by revisiting her subject position or 'socially available possibilities for self-hood' (Clark & Ivanič, 1997:137) in the text during the production phase, the student would be able to assert her 'authorial' voice more confidently.

The narrow construction of subject positions could be due to the overarching conventions in the discipline. Academic writing was developed along departmental rules relating to word count, referencing, deadlines etc. However, these guidelines were too removed from individual students' writing processes, and too generic to suit the individual styles of the 'stage directors'. Due to this distance, students might reproduce the gate keepers' authority by playing safe and respecting all the rules.

#### ***7.2.4 The role of spaces***

Through the broadening of the spatial options for text production, the previous chapters suggest that participants could take on more subject positions. As discussed earlier, spaces as physical and conceptual sites were the carriers of particular values, conventions or ideologies. Interestingly, the academic writing location transcended the boundaries of the physical academic writing spaces. The stage was a lived-in space where work was done, where writing took shape. Without its writers, the stage was devoid of meaning or function.

*Simba: It could be at home.*

*Tahini: In the library.*

*Fiona: A classroom.*

*Joe: Exam room.*

It was also a conceptual space that nurtured the writers' thought processes.

*Jaya: The library provides materials.*

*Joe: Provides assistance with materials.*

*Simba: The material should also be well-documented.*

The participants' interactions with the affordances of those spaces became as important as the spaces themselves. The spaces fulfilled the roles of accessible physical spaces, and conceptual spaces housed with resources for which they were created in the first place. Yet, the academic writing stage was viewed more as an instrumental rather than a performative space where actors/writers could take agency over their movements, dialogue delivery or academic script in this case.

Indeed, while the afore-mentioned spaces offered students with the content and disciplinary knowledge they required, where did they learn about the nuts and bolts of academic writing, and related practices of argumentation and critical thought? The editing services offered by the tutor or a Writing Centre consultant could assist students with the writing genre and the actual written product. Still students would need more guidance, over a longer duration of time to learn about the processes and practices of academic writing. In fact, for students to move from the status of mere scriptwriter to actor and stage director, they would need to acquire and practice certain skills in safe environment where they would not unnecessarily make marks or rules an overarching concern.

What is also being suggested here, is that for this safe space to address academic writing issues, it would need to enable the conventions or 'discoursal' elements of students' academic identities to interact with their other identities. In other words, it would need to allow the 'discoursal' elements to become a part of students' 'autobiographical self', so that in turn, students may assert a stronger 'authorial self' in writing. In the Masters study on Mauritian participants' difficulties in academic writing, it was found that a disjunction between these different elements, partly led to students' taking minimum risk in academic writing ventures. Consequently, their voice was more of a whisper in the wings.

### ***7.2.5 Facilitator's role***

To some degree, I needed to be aware of my role in enabling or hindering the voice of the participants. I present here the initial conversation I had with the participants before the activity.

*Joe: It's a bit difficult.*

*Aditi: Ok I'll guide you. And if ever you have other categories, you may add them. So for instance, in a play, you also have the critics, you have the backbenchers who make lots of*

*noise. So you just have to say 'Who/what' here, and the next step is to say what their role is.*

With hindsight, the participants were being encouraged to suspend their disbelief, to imagine an alternative scenario or the unimaginable, when the essays became plays. Joe's comment that the thought experiment was a 'bit difficult' was an interesting one since the task required a mind shift from the disciplinary context in which the essays were written, to a playful context where there were no preoccupations with marks, or deadlines. His response also made me more conscious of my dual role as a participant observer and in this case as a facilitator and educator.

It was evident that I was moulding the discussion and requiring students to imagine themselves in particular scenarios. As Hammersley (2008) notes, the questions one poses influence the type of answers one seeks or receives. I was particularly cautious of this and kept participants' options as wide as possible by asking them to imagine what the different stage components could stand for. At the same time, I had to scaffold much more, with the added risk of framing the outcome of the discussion. Being aware of this, I refrained from being too specific in my responses. While engaged in the discussion, it was also hard to fully fulfill my role as observer. In this case, recording the conversations on a recorder and playing them back allowed me to be more faithful to my multiple roles in the study.

The facilitator in the safe space would need to adopt mostly an academic literacies approach in the development of writer identities, where he or she would not only guide the text production process, but also create events where participants could literally enact their writer identities. The events could supplement or offset the pedagogic practices to develop writing in the institutional and subculture spaces. The safe environment could be open-ended in signification, 'a space of radical openness, a space of resistance and permanent struggle, a space of various representations' (Soja, 1996:56), a performative one as that explored in this study.

## **Chapter 8 – Reflections on the performative space and design principles**

The previous chapter ended with the affordances and constraints of the mainstream institutional spaces in enabling the development of the students' writer identities, based on students' academic texts and 'talk around text' in the workshop sessions and end of year focus group. The authorial voice was on many occasions less apparent than the discursive voice and it was seen that a safe space could create writing events that enabled the former. Alongside the post-structural, post-colonial and feminist writings, the study leaned towards a definition of workshop space that was performative. To engender performance, the space should itself be performative, that is, contain 'creative gaps' (Jackson, 2007) to be filled by the users.

At times, this would necessitate a playful re-definition of what the space was already used for. For instance, one of workshops was run in the Vice-chancellor's boardroom. In that space, participants were given agency over the workshop design and they participated actively in debates and presentations. Only once the space was thus re-engineered, could the performances in the workshop space be authentic. Due to its performative nature, the workshop space could be conceptualised as a "stage", or part thereof, where the scripts originated or were rehearsed.

In this chapter, I present two focus group activities bringing to the fore the link between performance and space. These are used as a means to confirm and clarify the discussion so far. The 'stage' and 'stage within the stage' activity are meant to initiate deeper reflections on the nature and role of pedagogic spaces. Participants perceive the Writer's workshop at the centre of the writing stage, and on the left or right of the institutional stage with the potential of being a rehearsal space in the backstage. These understandings of the pedagogical space of the Writers' workshop assist in the conceptualisation of design principles for such spaces. After reflecting on my role in the shaping of this space, I present the three design principles namely, evolving nature, playfulness and a research-driven impetus.

### **8.1 Activity 1 - The stage**

Participants were shown a sketch of a stage and asked to imagine that the stage was a writing stage. They were asked to situate the Writers' workshop on the stage.

*Aditi: Now the Writers' workshop, would that also fit on the stage? If you look at the theatre... (shows a diagram of stage)*

*Aditi: This is the stage. The proscenium arch. The front of the stage, arch-shaped. This is where the audience sits. The house or auditorium. [...] And these are called the wings. [...] Then you have the cross-over at the back of the stage, where those on the left and right can meet. And then you have the backstage. Now if you had to situate the Writers' workshop that we did, where would you locate it?*

*Tahini: In the centre.*

*Joe: It's focusing on everyone. And we're not just writing, we're also participating.*

They pointed to the centre stage. They explained that the workshop put each of them in the spotlight. This was one of the initial aims of the workshop, namely to have no more than fifteen participants per group to devote enough attention to each one. A related aim was to give them enough room to enact their academic and social identities, and allow them to share their brought along as well as their new knowledges. As a *work-shop* space, it had to make of them actors on stage, not passive members of the audience. If they deliberately chose to be spectators, they could at best be "spect-actors" (Boal, 1979).

## **8.2 Activity 2 - Stage within the stage**

They were then asked to imagine a stage that was bigger, the university. They were asked to situate the Writers' workshop on this stage.

*Aditi: Now let's say. This is UCT. You occupy this space all the time. This is where you write assignments etc. And then you begin to attend the workshop. Would it feature at the centre?*

*Tahini: In the wings. Or maybe not wings. Not centre stage. Maybe on the left or right of the stage. It still forms part of it.*

Initially, Tahini mentioned 'in the wings'. In that case, the workshop could be seen as a 'safe house' which Canagarajah defines as a site that is relatively 'free from surveillance, especially by authority figures, perhaps because these are considered unofficial, off-task or extrapedagogical' (2004:121). As such, it would feature on the frontiers of the 'contact zone' where students had to perform.

Wings are generally dark, secluded spaces where actors revisit their lines, share their anguish, boost each other's morale. They are the dotted lines where the actors can see but cannot be seen, hear but cannot be heard, spaces they temporarily occupy before they wear their smiles or

scabbards on stage. Tahini later corrected herself and said that she would situate the workshop on the left or right side of the stage. Joe agreed with her.

*Joe: Though it is not the major play, at some point it comes into the play.*

He explained that what happened in the workshop did later influence the main play. It was not a floating space or limbo. Through this statement, it would appear that the boundaries between the workshop and the mainstream stage were actually fluid. They flowed into one another seamlessly. Hence, while conceptually, it could resemble Soja's 'third space' defined as 'an-other way of understanding and acting to change the spatiality of human life which was 'purposefully tentative' (1996:10), in practice, the workshop space was more of Bhabha 'hybrid' space where texts and experiences with texts across institutional and peer spaces were made to intersect.

When asked about backstage, here were some of the responses.

*Fiona: It's like your drafts that you write.*

*Aditi: So it's more like a rehearsal space?*

*Fiona: Yes.*

*Aditi: So would you sometimes be here, then backstage?*

*Fiona and Tahini: Yeah.*

Fiona noted the significance of the backstage where the drafts get written. The workshop was seldom a backstage of the mainstream stage, except when students sent their academic essays to me for feedback. It was certainly a rehearsal space but could assume more of a backstage role in future, especially in the post-workshop phase. These discussions helped me in crystallising some of the key characteristics of a performative workshop space, as presented below.

### **8.3 Design principles of the workshop space**

#### ***8.3.1 The participant observer's musings throughout the aporias***

In the literature, I explored different definitions of "third space" from various disciplines, with various applications. At that stage, the term remained open to potential plural meanings, which would be tested in the field.

While Soja defined the third space as 'an-other' space, Bhabha saw it more as a 'bridge' or 'stairwell' that allowed one to cruise between the other spaces (1994:5). Even as a 'bridge', it was not an incomplete parasitical space relying on the other two spaces. In the initial phases of design, I even imagined the 'third space' as a 'stairwell' that would lead elsewhere, in a direction not

anticipated, towards 'the road not taken'. It was important nevertheless to bear in mind that whatever form the space assumed, it would need to be in constant dialogue with the students' peer spaces and the more institutional spaces, so that it may allow the two to interact on the same wavelength.

I also wondered whether the workshop was a permanent space, or a temporary one, serving the purposes of the writing intervention and churning out intellects ready to be integrated into the mainstream institutional spaces. I hesitated. It could not be factory to make square cogs rounder. Certainly, in the end, students had to feel they more agency to undertake tasks in the institutional spaces, but they had to retain their individuality. In other words, the workshop was intended as a temporary physical space where writing issues would be addressed, but as a permanent conceptual space, where students could continue interactions with other members of workshop community, to share their experiences and know that they were not alone in their struggles. This support system, sense of shared practice or 'intersubjectivity' could go a long way to easing students' academic challenges, writing or other (Goodwin, 1995).

Later, I paused to think about the boundaries of this space. In the process of bringing international students from different SADC countries, was I not isolating them from the rest of the university? I did not want to create another subculture, where students celebrated their minority identities and subverted the mainstream practices. I wanted it to have the same energy and freedom of subcultures nonetheless. So what was the workshop space achieving here? Was it flagging their difference to themselves and to others? Even if it weren't, how would one avoid essentialising or generalising workshop space categories or the identities of students within it in speaking or writing about them? As Lossau notes 'spatial language leads into the very "territorial trap" of identity and homogeneity which is tried to be avoided by the scholars of the spatial turn' (2009:72).

Upon reflection, one of the ways to avoid the 'territorial trap' would be to constantly question it, to constantly innovate in the workshop in terms of the locations and methods used and allow students to define themselves, instead of making prior assumptions (Lossau, 2009:72). Either way, any assumption about students could be misleading since the workshop was a meeting place for students from very different cultures, customs and practices. They in turn were exposed to this

rich diversity of people, with whom they began to form strong ties despite their differences. They stated in the evaluations that they learnt to overcome their initial shyness and could now speak openly to new people. For instance, Bob mentioned, 'It has allowed me to open up to everything around [...] It allowed expression'. Simba similarly pointed out, that the workshops

'opened a new door altogether and introduced me to rather vast methods of not only communicating information but analysing literary works. One of the methods I learned that intrigued me very much was what I would call: "The non-face-value analysis" it involved deeper analysis in which a phrase might have either multiple meanings or a single meaning, that a reader would not get by thinking of it at face-value'.

By the same token participants realised that irrespective of their differences, they all had similar socio-academic challenges and similar goals. In students' responses, they generalised their writing experiences to those of all first years, irrespective of nationalities. Tahini stated that, 'they [local and international students] all went through similar experiences and are all prepared to improve and do better next year'. Hence, the boundaries of the workshop space remained loose and the 'territorial trap' was avoided through the space's very heterogeneous internal constitution (Lossau, 2009:72).

Another way in which the boundaries were kept flexible was through the exchange of texts and experiences across spaces. Some participants such as Bob and Tahini brought their academic essay drafts to the workshop and shared the challenges they were facing during the break between sessions or after sessions. At times, they merely shared their writing concerns during the workshops. I also brought material that I had compiled, into the workshop space, based on faculty members' expectations and the needs expressed by students.

Based on their reflections and experiences on the field, some design principles for potential pedagogic spaces to address academic writing issues emerged.

### ***8.3.2 Evolving space***

The Writers' workshop space evolved over time and allowed individuals within it to evolve, such that one could not always establish with certainty who was the agent and who was acted upon. The roles themselves changed over time. The workshop space evolved from being merely a pedagogical writing-focused space, to one that experimented with different methods and locations

as the need emerged. The pedagogy was informed by participants' needs and expectations of different departments. At the same time, it showed a preference for process approaches, especially focused on giving participants the confidence to display their 'authorial' self in writing, and less on the genre approaches, that only emerged subsequently. If anything, we (facilitator and participants) experimented with different genres and deliberately made the boundaries between them fuzzy to allow the authorial self to surface.

The activities started with brought along objects and writings. They then evolved to more formal aspects of academic writing. As such, the space could be seen in the Vygotskian sense, as a 'zone of proximal development' (1978) where the link was made between what students knew and what they needed to know through 'scaffolding', or more simply in this case, the link between participants' everyday knowledge and more specialised knowledge. Gutierrez, quoting Cole, refers to this space as the 'zo-ped', or 'shaman pedagogy' where students are gradually initiated into the wisdom (of the learned one or 'shaman') by firstly being taught everyday concepts, then being offered tools for problem-solving and finally being transformed as individuals (2008:152). In the study, participants' learning was scaffolded through familiar objects and their own bodies during the theatre performance. Later, the learning was translated in other modes such as speech and writing. Writing itself became performative. The focus of the lesson was, like Gutierrez's, on the micro aspects of writing via the sharing of everyday experiences and gradually on the macro aspects of personal development. The workshop space was thus conducive to consolidate the links between the mind, the individual and the social.

The activities designed brought out specific behaviour patterns and aspects of participants' identities linked to strength, resilience and future aspirations. For instance, the brought along objects task asked participants to imagine an object that best represented them. In due course, it became the object from which they drew strength and which represented the self they aspired to be. The positive values of strength and resilience were perhaps already present in the participants. A glance at their profiles and other less formal writing would suggest that right from the onset, most of them signalled warrior qualities. Tahini trained in karate, Simba belonged to the Bakoena tribe, Bob came from the 'land of the brave', Joe constantly made allusion to *The Three Musketeers*. Perhaps it is this collection of fighter qualities that made them join the workshop space. They wanted to overcome their initial insecurities at the university. Or perhaps, the

workshop space drew on the strengths all students had when they first stepped into university. Over time, faced with the hardships and routine drudgeries of university life, some students perhaps forgot that they were once victors, that they were the cream of the crop in their own school or province. Perhaps, the mainstream spaces did not offer them the subject positions to revalorise and explore their inner strengths. Or perhaps, students were too pre-occupied by the desire to conform that they overlooked the unique qualities they already possessed. These qualities were crucial not only for their social wellbeing at the university but also the development a critical voice in the academic field.

In another task, participants were asked to write about someone they admired the most, and in yet another, they were asked to come up with 'ideal' scenarios. The way the tasks were framed to some extent defined the trajectory participants would take when faced with any situation in the workshop space at least. They had to transcend the immediate, the real and move to the desirable. At the heart of it, we (facilitator and students) were acting under the dictates of the aporias, from suspension to undecidability to urgency. The workshop space could have been like a confessional or a dispensary where the participants simply shared their issues and expected help from outside. However, the workshop space was structured in such a way that once participants had shared their stories, they had to *work* towards finding creative solutions; the facilitator could only an observer at that point. This is why I avoid using the word "empower" to define my role. It immediately assumes that I have more power, which I would now magnanimously share with my participants. A self-aggrandising act certainly. I would prefer the word "encourage" or the phrase "bring out" – which is the literal meaning of *educere* (the etymology of "education") (Online etymology dictionary, 2012). As such, based on the findings, I would hold that if the onus of responsibility is gradually shifted to the participants through well-framed activities that give them the tools to prepare themselves psychologically, then the workshop space could indeed become an evolving space for the participants, even beyond the formal sessions.

In terms of writing in the workshop space, the link between the individual and the social could be forged in a way that echoed what Ivanič termed subject positions (1998:28). At the university, the 'social' context is the 'institutional' one in which students write essays and are evaluated. In this context, the 'subject positions' link the individual and the social, by offering students a space where they can articulate their multiple writer identities in ways that would be recognisable in the

institutional context. The workshop space opened possible 'subject positions' by encouraging students to display their writer identities and then showing them ways to negotiate these for an academic audience. The order matters here. The workshop space also did so by asking students to come up with their own subject positions in the 'image theatre' session and resolving certain internalised fears and challenges there, so that they could better interact with the institutional structures, express their aims (the 'ideal image'), needs and concerns and hence perform their writer identities fully within the acceptable institutional parameters. As such, the workshop space attempted to enable participants' writer identities as expressed in the workshops to evolve and find acceptable possibilities for expression in the institutional spaces.

### ***8.3.3 Playful space***

At the same time as the workshop focused on growth and character development, it was also playful in many ways.

In terms of facilitator-participants rapport, the hierarchy was deliberately flattened to enable freer sharing and engagement on both sides. The model was inspired from peer group settings, or in extreme cases, student subcultures. These settings were observed during the Masters study, and they had much merit in drawing students together, boosting their confidence and sense of belonging and addressing their socio-academic issues. On the latter point though, it should be noted that while the settings eased students' social challenges, they fared less well in the case of academic issues since the senior peers were not well-equipped to provide such assistance. On the other hand, a pedagogic space with adequately trained facilitators could address the academic issues as well, in the same safe and playful environment.

The boundaries of the workshop space were also deliberately made fluid so that participants could interact with texts across spaces and complete the dialogue of needs between the institutional and peer settings. The rules were kept to a minimum and these were stated at the outset in the consent form. The main ones were that the participants could withdraw at any point and were free to participate as they willed. There would be no homework or marks on assignments and all writing would be done in the venue. The venue itself often shifted from boardrooms to gardens to coffee shops to enhance students' learning experiences and interrogate any possible ritual sense of authority that got attached to spaces as they became repetitive. In other words, it shifted so that

the learning space remained a ‘creative gap’ in the participants’ imagination (Jackson, 2007). Yet, one physical venue was chosen per group as an anchoring meeting point. Here are examples of spaces that were used for the workshops. The spaces were lived in and experienced differently. The writing practices got infiltrated in them in multiple ways, through scribbles in the notebooks, white board and handouts. Here I share some photographs of the spaces used and their affordances.



Figure 13 CHED boardroom – Main venue for Saturday batch. The round table set up was ideal for discussion and writing tasks, but not necessarily for theatre performances.

Figure 14 IAPO quad – used for the ‘image theatre’

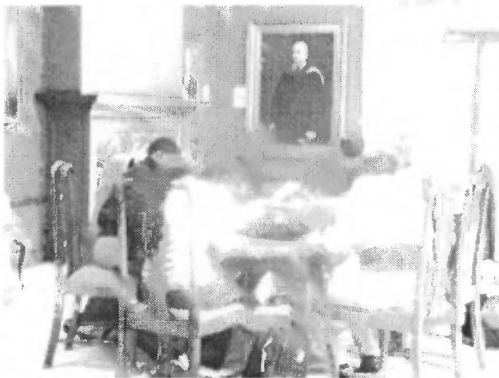


Figure 16 Vice-chancellor’s board room – Main venue for the vacation batch. Again, with a round table set up.

Figure 15 Jameson steps – where the speeches were written. They were delivered in front on Jameson plaza.

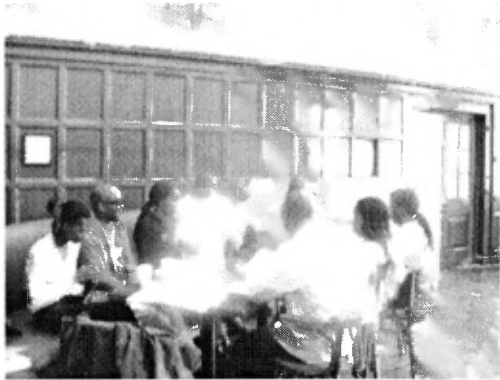


Figure 17 Frigo café, UCT. This space allowed for a relaxed discussion. Participants read through their handouts while sipping their hot drink.



Figure 18 Garden in UCT for image theatre session. The space allowed everyone to sit on the ground and brainstorm ideas for the performance. Hierarchies, once more, were flattened.



Figure 19 Real image – students cramped up in kombie

Some examples of writing practices and the possible subject positions they afforded in the workshop are as follows:

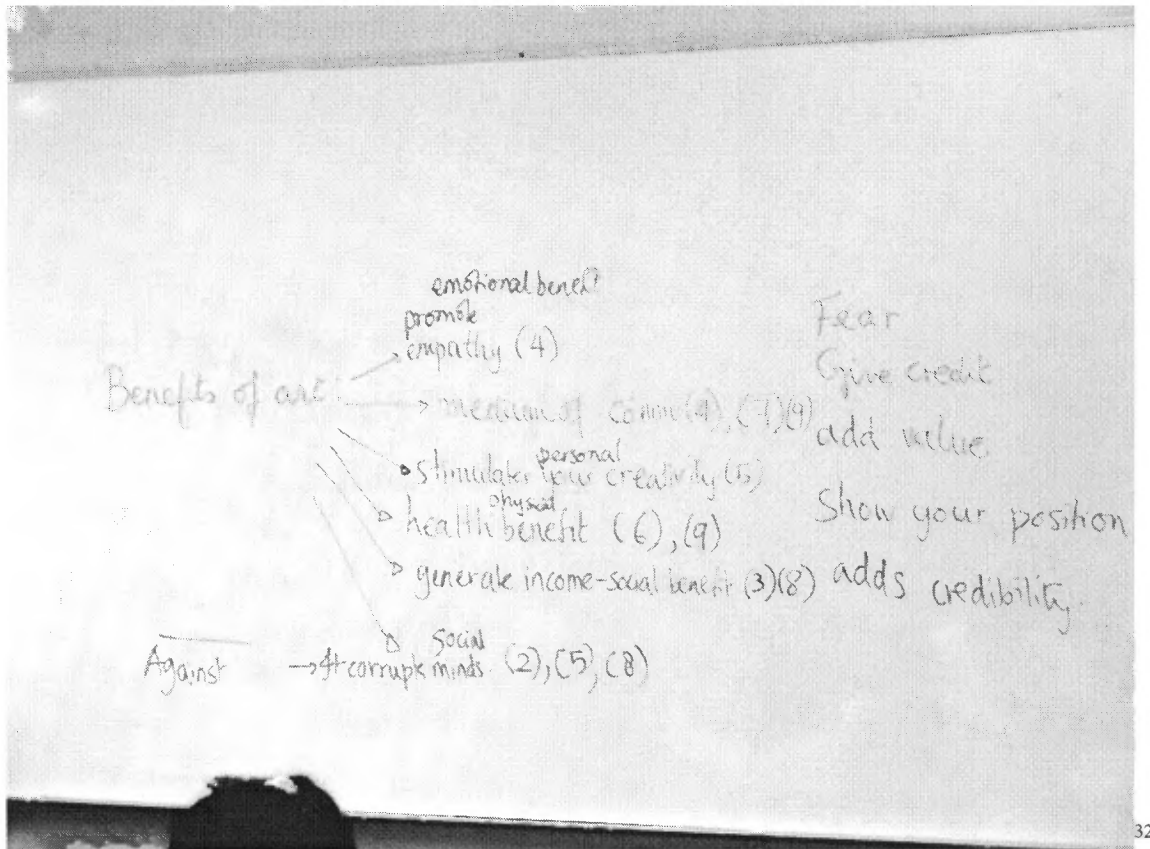
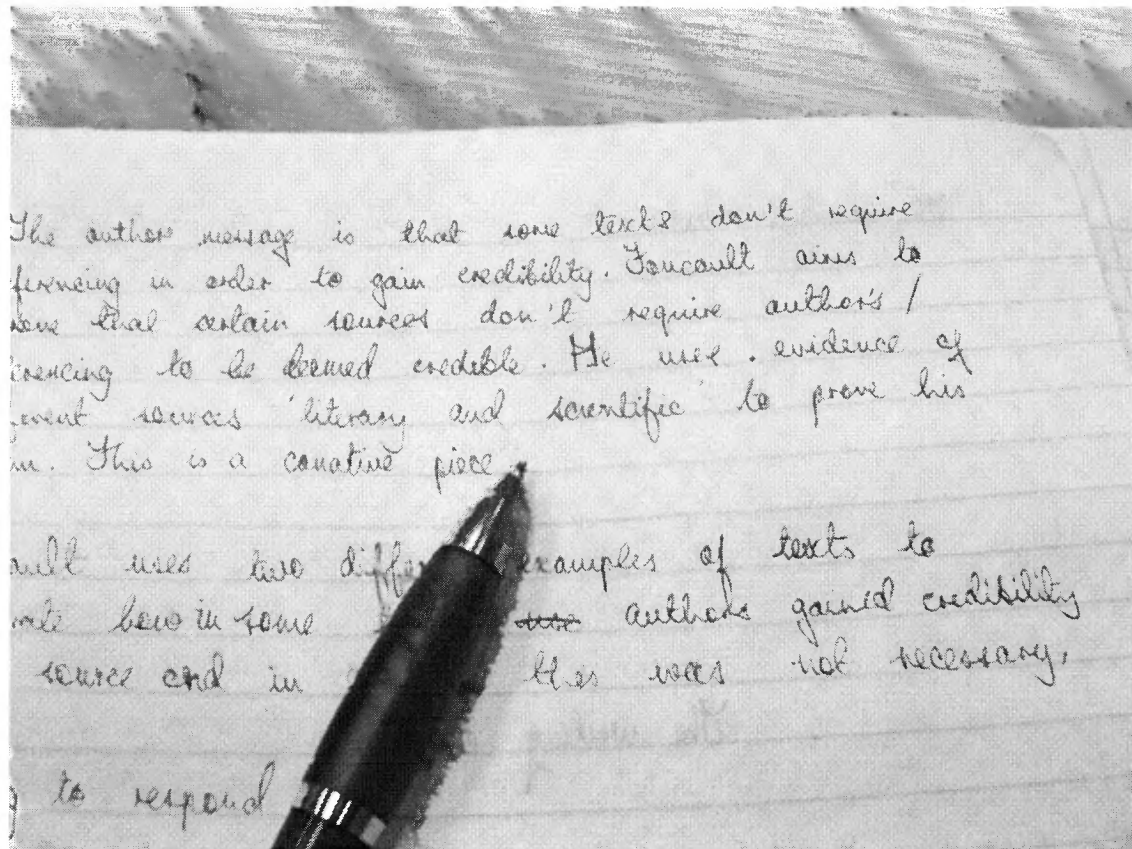


Figure 20 Brainstorming of ideas for an essay on the white board (see Appendix 6). The mapping allowed participants to link the ideas to evidence (the numbers) before they started writing the essay. Writing here took on more of a visual semiotic form.

<sup>32</sup> It would be interesting to explore the visual nature of textual/literary practices in forthcoming research and see how the materiality shapes text and 'voice'.



The author's message is that some texts don't require  
fencing in order to gain credibility. Foucault aims to  
show that certain sources don't require authors /  
credencing to be deemed credible. He uses evidence of  
various sources 'literary and scientific' to prove his  
point. This is a narrative piece.

will use two different examples of texts to  
compare how in some ~~cases~~ authors gained credibility  
source and in others was not necessary.

to respond

Figure 21 A participant's response to one of the early questions in the handout, where participants were asked to apply Jakobson's schema to a piece of text written by Foucault (see Appendix 10). This was more linear in presentation. At least structure-wise, she did not step out of the formal academic expectations. Content-wise, she began with 'The author's message is that' rather 'I think that the author's message is that'. She faithfully followed the guidelines and looked for examples from Foucault's text for each dimension of Jakobson's schema.

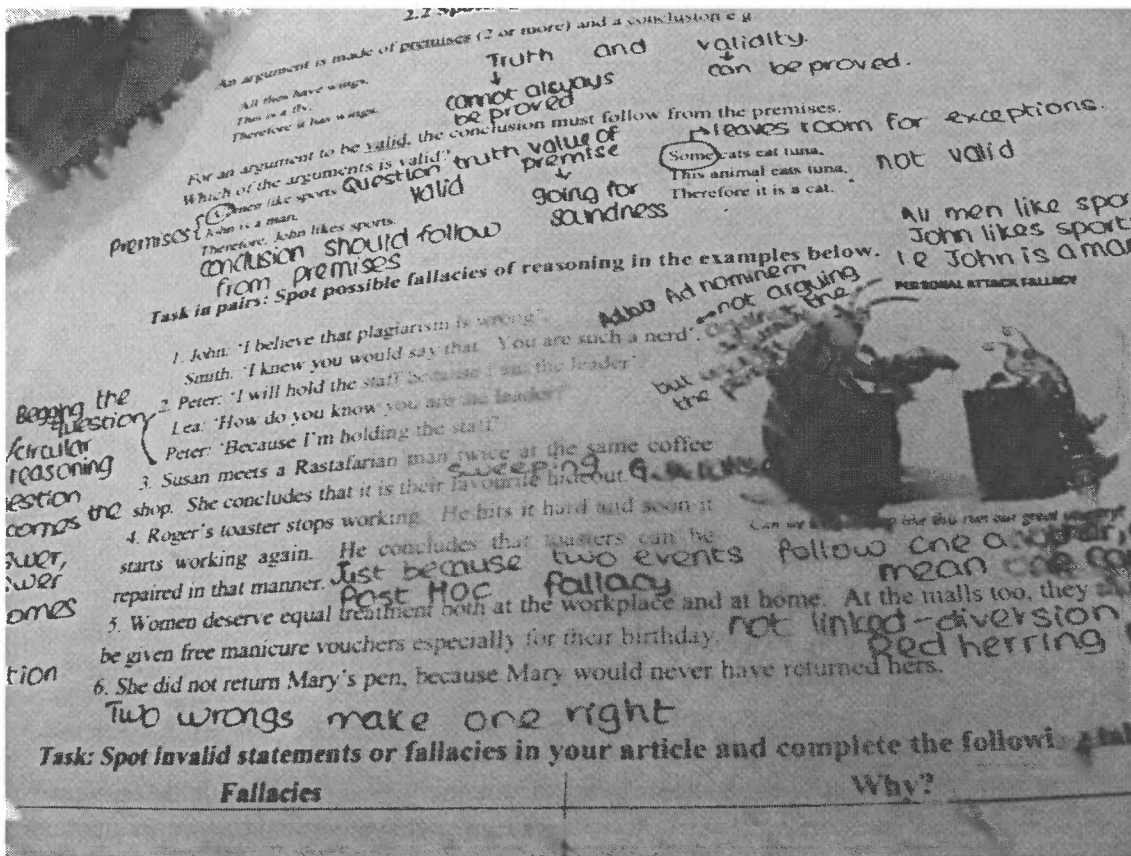


Figure 22 A participant's scribbles on the handout itself to detect possible fallacies. Here, the participant seems to have taken the subject position of the marker, encircling errors or writing over them.

The CHED boardroom, the Vice-Chancellor's meeting room and the IAPO boardroom were used as the main venues, where most of the writing took place (figures 13 and 17). These venues were already ascribed with an official status, which could be assumed from their names, booking requirements and the facilities therein such as white boards, projectors, round-table seating arrangement and so on. Indeed, most of the formal writing tasks were done in them. The writing practices illustrated in figures 20-22 illustrate how the tasks allowed students to assume different subject positions.

At other times, the formal tasks were starting points to new ventures outside of writing or the writing space. For the performance-related tasks, we would move to new spaces that were less formal or institutional. The Jammie Plaza for instance was used by a small batch of participants

for the speech delivery task. After writing their speeches, they stood in the middle of Jameson Plaza and delivered them. The setting looked like an arena where the audience was positioned above the performer on the steps. I carefully chose these spaces to suit the task demands and allow for the enactment of more subject positions. Participants could suggest other possible locations too. Play hence came in the shape of a constant cruising across physical boundaries, between official and informal settings.

The spaces not only playful, but also involved playful modes. They illustrated Giroux's point that 'border crossings' were not only spatial but also pedagogical allowing the 'refiguring (of) disciplinary and pedagogical boundaries' (1992:89). The playful modes consisted of thought experiments, games, speaking about brought along objects, discussions, video screenings and so on. The 'play' method was that derived from Boal's 'Theatre of the oppressed'. It allowed students to perform their issues as well as the ideal and transition scenarios that would lead them to the resolution. Students themselves designed the script and how it would be performed. By moving out talk and chalk modes, the space became 'performative' and allowed them to playfully tackle some deep identity issues, or socio-academic ones.

At that stage, the pedagogy became more embodied; it was situated not only in space but also in the body (Fleckenstein, 1999; Condit, 1999). Participants learnt through the body, through their experiences and externalised their deep moments of angst, confusion and so on. The activity was designed with the belief that once students could think critically and resolve those issues through play, they would be able to write in more confident 'authorial' voice. This was demonstrated in the academic essays they wrote though one cannot necessarily ascribe a causal link to the workshops. Whenever they felt the possibility to step out of the 'discoursal' identity, they performed, at times over-performed their 'authorial self'. Hence, while the strictures of form at times foreclosed the creative expression of selfhood, the performative modes could make the critical elements re-surface.

More broadly than modes themselves, play was implicated in the genre moves made to teach participants academic writing, and again to encourage them to display elements of critical thinking. Creme (2008) for instance explored the value of the 'transitional' genres between the personal narrative and the academic essay genre in teaching particular writing forms. Likewise, in

this study, participants had the opportunity, through their multiple subject positions, to write personal narratives about their brought along objects, academic essays, speeches, play scenarios and reflective pieces. Each of these were designed to bring out elements of the critical which could then be incorporated into the more formal academic essay piece. What these forms did, was not only to demonstrate what 'academic writing' was not. They in fact did the ground work for participants to begin to display aspects of the critical writer self more openly. The other forms also served to demonstrate the link between voice and context. Some 'voices' had more purchase or currency in some contexts than others and subject positions had the important purpose of making the meaning transactions possible. Put bluntly, one could not be both a buyer and a seller unless one hopped back and forth to different sides of the counter and endorsed the roles that the positions afforded them.

It may be long before students learned fully about the parameters and affordances of their disciplinary contexts, but if they were offered a few genres and subject positions within which to express their views, they might endorse a confident writing self sooner, while being aware that even if their creative writing self were muzzled in some, it would be appreciated in others. English suggests based on her teaching experiences, that 'regenring' moves can allow 'for different kinds of responses and ways of relating to academic knowledge', if of course, the gatekeeping structures allow them to occur (English, forthcoming: 207).

Having said this, rich exposure to the different genres might gradually inspire students to write in more nuanced ways that incorporate different styles into academic writing, without overtly flouting any of its conventions. Signs of this were evident in Bob's academic essay title, which was reminiscent of the journalistic style.

'Distortions caused by Government Intervention. Is it helping in the growth of the maize market or is the maize market taking a Nose-Dive? Let us investigate'.

Bob was not marked down for the license he took there and at the same time, satisfied his wish to appropriate the knowledge as he liked. Further research is needed here to better grasp the impact of the playful use of genres upon the critical writer identities.

### ***8.3.4 Research-driven space***

This feature of the workshop space ties in with the other two. In fact, for the workshop to remain responsive to international students' needs and the institution, it would need to constantly develop to meet the growing demands and remain flexible and fluid to accommodate them. This is what Janks calls "reconstruction" and Kress (1996) calls "redesign". The seeds of deconstruction, reflection and re-design are in fact embedded in the design itself, they are part and parcel of its blueprint. The accompanying feature of design would be research, not in the dry scholarly sense, but in the critically engaged sense where even the little stories in the university's underlife would be given a voice. The methodology for the cyclical research processes could be action research or as in this study, broadly qualitative with a critical ethnographic lens. Action research would focus more on improving teaching practice upon several iterations of the design, while the critical ethnographic approaches would seek to grasp what the pedagogic moments created, indexed about broader contextual issues. The value in these methodologies is that they not only shed light on or question issues, but as Spivak would say necessarily 'turn them around' and respond to them (Spivak, 2011).

Thus, this chapter looked at the link between performance and the workshop space through two focus group activities with the participants after their end of year exams. It then suggests three main design principles for an EAL Writers' workshop, namely, evolving nature, playfulness and research-driven impetus.

## Chapter 9 – Conclusion

Conclusions serve as endings but also as the beginnings of new ventures. The French say ‘en guise de conclusion’, in the guise of a conclusion, perhaps to partially satisfy the methodical readers who like closure. But is closure always possible? In certain plays, irrecoverable complications can be resolved through the *deus ex machina* device, followed by song or marriage. Masks can be lifted, ploys revealed, poetic justice achieved and yet there are always some lingering questions. Perhaps that is why some stories have epilogues, messages have post-scripts, voices have echoes, words suffixes. The tale has a breath of its own and out of its footsteps, new sequels or stories germinate.

That is also the tale of this academic journey. The story of the “third space” or “safe house” has been told before in different contexts. They left their imprint and their questions. It is at their crossings *in media res* that this study began. Its aim was to explore a possible space at the intersection of formal institutional spaces and peer spaces at the University of Cape Town and possibly other internationalising universities, to teach academic writing to first year international students from the SADC region.

As the research evolved, the meanings of internationalisation were further refined. In the introduction, I pointed out that the notion of internationalisation was highly contested because it represented different ideas and priorities for certain Western and non-Western scholars. Without necessarily essentialising the geographical boundaries implied here, it did appear that the scholars’ positions tinted their views of the concept. Western writers such as Deem and Knight mostly saw it as a process whereby ideas got shared between countries, without directly reflecting on the nature of the relations between them, the currency of location in the valuation of those ideas, and by extension the geopolitical status assumed by some nations to determine the definitions and outcomes of the knowledge transaction. Some non-Western scholars pointed out that the African institutions did not always have sway over how the terms for this transaction would be defined and applied.

Over the past two years, my interactions with the international students from the SADC region prompted me to re-think the challenges which we claim to be due to external regulations, and

those that fall within one's internal locus of control. Students from the SADC region generally come from postcolonial African nations, often more peripheral than South Africa, the centre of African peripheries, as was the case with the participants of this study. Their experiences may differ from those of native English speaking American semester-abroad students who often come seeking the African experience. The experiences of SADC students however may not differ much from those of non-traditional (EAL) students studying at first world institutions. What we are likely to witness then is a form of situational irony. As the institution seeks to trade knowledge on equal terms with the West, due to its limited support structures for its international students especially from Africa, it seems to reproduce the centre-periphery divide at the microcosm. It is understandable that any such intervention may conflict with the local aims to close the racial or economic divide, as pointed out by some of our writing experts. I therefore think that in order to emerge confidently as an Afropolitan university, the institution will have to reconcile at least three strands of allegiances, firstly towards social redress, secondly towards gaining geopolitical status alongside Western giants, and thirdly towards creating support systems for students from emerging nations like itself.

In academic writing, the tensions become visible again. In fact, students' writings are indexical not only of their broader social identities but also performative of the ongoing conflicts between their past and emerging selves as they cross borders. Some, as the participants in the study, staunchly follow the norms of the new centre, in other words, they assume a strict 'discoursal' style, eschewing 'autobiographical' or 'authorial' elements that may have been more pronounced in their prior learning context. The newly emerging 'discoursal self' could however be in conflict with their prior 'discoursal self', both of which students may conflate and assume to be standard across borders (Bhabha, 1992; Lillis, 2001; Blommaert, 2005). As such, not only do the students begin to display excessively what they deem to be the expected 'discoursal self' at the expense of the other selves in writing, but only partially fulfil the 'discoursal self's' own requirements. Whether this is due to a lack of explicit guidelines about writing conventions, or an over-emphasis on procedural issues such as plagiarism and word count, a robust version of 'discoursal self' could smother any assertion of critical thought in writing.

As we are aware, critical thinking is a crucial requirement in academic writing, but also a tool by which the divides can be deliberately bridged. One still needs to acknowledge the "access

paradox” at play here (in Janks, 2000:178). Giving students access to the dominant discourses can favour their access to means of success but also reinforce the discourses’ own hegemonic status. This said, critical thinking is one such tool that can allow students to stretch the boundaries of what has been conventionally allowed via those dominant discourses. Unfortunately, gatekeeping practices in the form of course marks, deadlines, “duly performed” requirements, which are shaped along the departmental politics of difference, may again reinforce the divides by urging students to take less risk and hence display less critical agency in writing. In the case of international students, the differences are considerable enough for them to take lesser chances still. In this manner, unless suitable support structures are put in place, students’ writings may reflect and enact the cross border differences which institutions following the Afropolitan dream seek to reconcile.

This said, the standardisation or the essentialising of minority ways of doing to resolve the differences, may only be a partial solution. By slotting international students into groups for specifically crafted interventions, one runs the risk of not only labeling them as different, but making that difference marked and undesirable. This could be a reason why members of certain national societies prefer to share their challenges in the intimacy of their groups and not draw attention to their perceived inaptitude. In the workshops, the aim was to include students from different countries, so as to temporarily break the alliances along purely national identities. The community of practice hence shaped, was heterogeneous and members from different national identities continued to interact long after the end of the workshops. In addition, students were given guidelines about some of UCT’s writing conventions, and allowed to circulate texts across different contexts, such that they were seldom alienated from the official settings, where they wished to be accepted. At the same time, the workshop space was a rehearsal space where they could try out different subject positions and enact their identities using a variety of modes before translating them into writing. The text hence produced could index more writer identities than one where the template was narrowly framed.

What the internationalisation debate thus brings to the fore is the link between text, identities and context. In the study, the key heuristic tool to make the link between texts and identities explicit was Ivanič’s (1998) clover model of writer identities. It is noteworthy that the three types of writer identities were not viewed as discrete entities. At times, it was hard to dissociate them even

for analytic purposes; at other times, they were caught in obvious tension, as made apparent during the analysis. More important than identifying the types of writer identities in the text, was what these indexed about the context of production and how possible tensions could be addressed.

The link between writer identities and the context was explored using Ivanič's notion of subject positions. The subject positions were the roles afforded to the participants by the context of text production. The subject positions indexed not only what the context permitted in terms of content and modes of expression, but also indexed at the textual level why participants opted for one particular writer identity over the others. When the writer identities were in conflict or lively interaction, for instance in the image theatre session where the autobiographical and authorial elements were closely intermeshing, there the text produced took more of a performative role by re-enacting the tensions, and the subject position made available to the participants was one of the performer. In the study, I made the distinction between indexical and performative, the one reflecting broader or narrower contexts of text creation, the other enacting the contexts, and necessarily changing them through inevitable improvisations along the way.

Having sketched the larger debates related to writing, identities and context, I now outline the particular issues that the study explored. The specific research questions were as follows:

1. How do international students enact their identities in institutional settings especially with regards to writing?
2. What methods and teaching sites can be used in the workshop space to bridge the 'brought along' and expected academic writing forms?
3. What is the link between writing, performance and identity in the workshop space and beyond?
4. How can the workshop space be integrated into mainstream academic spaces at UCT and at other English-medium universities?
5. What are the design principles to develop similar EAL writing workshops?

To respond to these questions, and of course, the meta-question of the design principles for similar workshop spaces, the thesis was divided into three moments or aporias of 'suspension', 'undecidability' and 'urgency' (Derrida, 1992). Each section had its own prologue where writing experts shared their views on spaces and methods to teach academic writing at the University of Cape Town.

Each section then took the following course:

In the 'aporia of the suspension' section, the study analysed and synthesised theoretical and methodological resources and used them as a launching pad to explore new spaces and methods to teach academic writing. While there were studies using the "third space" construct, these were in varied disciplines. Gutierrez's (2005) study on third spaces seemed appealing though her focus was less on academic writing and more on classroom interactions and activity systems. Hence, the definitions of the "third space" were kept open, 'suspended' to be defined later as the workshops unfolded. In the course of the workshops, the term "performative space" became more apt to describe the workshop, as it shifted the focus away from mere situatedness to the practices therein. In terms of methods, the literature on EAL pedagogies tended towards broad approaches which needed to be refined in the study.

In the 'aporia of undecidability' section, students' brought along resources were analysed in order to design a pedagogy generated from the grassroots, based on students' identities and perceived needs. This pedagogy took as a starting point students' socio-cultural and academic baggage, and gave them their due importance in different modes of expression, including academic writing. Hence it was much aligned with the 'academic literacies' model described in the literature (Lea and Street, 2000; Lillis and Scott, 2007). Some of the earlier approaches were also used during the specifically writing-related activities. Here, the process approach to teaching academic writing was favoured over the genre approach which only gained importance at later stages. This is because the process approach allowed the facilitator to attend to participants' needs at every point in their writing journey and allowed them agency in the shaping of their script. For instance, mind maps were drawn on the board to brainstorm one of the prior stages of essay writing. The research still lurked in the moment of 'undecidability' since the students' brought along resources opened several teaching options. However, one had to 'decide' on appropriate methods jointly with the participants.

In the 'aporia of urgency' section, subsequent practices were chosen for the Writers' workshop, implemented and evaluated. The main practice here made use of Boal's 'image theatre' technique. This technique not only allowed international students to express and resolve identity issues in a playful manner, but also served as an entry point into critical thought in speech and writing. Initially, some participants did feel shy or have inhibitions to perform, but through

scaffolding, began to gain more confidence. The shift from performance to speech was a smooth one, since participants were generally very excited after the performance and wished to share their experiences. Writings about the performance appeared more engaging and embodied too. In fact, in the workshop space, performance enabled participants to reconcile the 'authorial' and 'discoursal selves', which were often at loggerheads in more formal academic settings. It did so by opening up subject positions where premium was placed less strictly on conventions and more on acting out one's thoughts and views. In fact, the convention then was to be outgoing and creative.

During these activities and thereafter, the workshop space became more than a mere 'in-between' 'stairwell' (Bhabha, 1994), and took on a performative role. In other words, it generated its own 'creative gaps' (Jackson, 2007) that could be filled by the users of the space. The writing generated in these spaces could be performative as well. The study offers examples of speeches, brainstorming, reflective pieces and other genres used by participants that could enable them to fill 'creative gaps' in their assertion as writers in a socio-academic context.

From participants' responses and their level of confidence in academic tasks outside in the institutional spaces, as well as their social engagement with others in the contact zone, it would appear that the performative space allowed them to experiment more with their new academic identities and resolve possible tensions between their multiple identities even beyond the workshop. It was a rehearsal space where they could reinforce desirable identities and make them 'congeal' into shape (Butler, 1990). They even displayed aspirational values which could partly be an outcome of who they were: member of a warrior tribe or karate student and so on, but also partly be an outcome of the way the tasks in the workshop had been framed. In one task, they were asked to write about someone they admired the most, in another, they were asked to come up with 'ideal' scenarios. All of these possibly compelled them to move out of the reflection and at times dejection mode, and look for solutions, aspire for greatness. Could the tasks have been different? It is quite unlikely because at the very core, they were driven by the aporias, where suspension and undecidability could not last.

Research findings also revealed that participants became more confident in their interactions with others and in academic writing. When participants' academic essays from the formal academic

space were analysed over the year (2011), they showed more signs of critical thinking than they did at the beginning of the workshop series. However, it was also noted that because participants were new to their disciplines, they over-acted the conventional 'discoursal self', to the detriment of the 'autobiographical' and 'authorial' selves.

To attribute these developments solely to the Writers' workshop's intervention would be to make a sweeping generalisation. The purpose of the research was centered on generating design principles to develop pedagogic sites more suited to the needs of international students. The fact that the methods developed closely responded to students' and faculties' expectations (in terms of WAC features e.g. critical thinking, more than WID features), that students were actively participating in them, and that one was able to better grasp and theorise the tacit links between writing and performance, especially in a globalising academic context, was the extent of this research focus. The ability to quantify or attribute this success to particular objects of scrutiny lay beyond the scope of this research.

Nonetheless, whenever participants felt they were permitted to display their authorial voice in writing, they did so with considerable poise. One is tempted to believe that as participants became more aware of the 'staged' act of writing and more familiar with their audience, the rule setters and other relevant parties, they would 'find the balance' between their authorial and discoursal selves in writing. In fact, at the end of the focus group activity on 'the best academic essay of the year', participants realised that they could be more active 'stage directors' in their 'academic writing play'.

As mentioned, the enactment of writer identities was analysed using the clover model and the affordances of space, using the 'subject positions' heuristic. When applied to theatre performance and performative writing tasks, this tool allowed one to grasp why acting as a stage performer or a writer was inevitably stage/context bound, with particular conventions and why writing or theatrical acts on other more formal stages did not lead to similar uninhibited displays of identities unless these were expected by the gatekeepers. I somehow prefer the verb "encouraged" to "expected".

Based on participants' activities and responses in the performative space, the emerging three key design principles for this space to teach academic writing to heterogeneous groups of international students were as follows:

1. Evolving nature: The space needs to evolve as well as allow the participants to evolve with it by providing 'subject positions' or 'available possibilities for self-hood' (Clark & Ivanič, 1997) where participants can strengthen the links between the mind, the individual and the social, and across modes. The notion of modes was expanded to encompass objects or images on stage, which were performative of participants' challenges in their first year of study. It was suggested that once participants find subject positions from where their voices can be heard and appraised, they would be able to find their place in the often overwhelming contact zone of the university.

2. Playfulness: The space and its boundaries need to be flexible enough to allow the enactment of social and academic identities. At the level of the disciplines, playfulness would come with an ongoing experimentation with genres and their affordances to facilitate the teaching of academic writing and bring the authorial voice to the surface (Creme, 2008; English, forthcoming).

3. Research-driven impetus: The space needs to constantly adapt to the growing needs of the international students and faculty expectations. For this, it has to engage in research at the grassroots using methodologies such as action research or other qualitative ones with a critical ethnographic stance.

In short, the workshop space to teach academic writing is seen as a performative stage, constantly in the process of becoming. It questions the role/s of different players on and off stage and the very margins of the stage.

At this point, looking back at the study more globally, we again find ourselves where we started, in the 'aporia of suspension', this time animated with other questions and emerging future journeys:

1. In what ways would the performative space be relevant to the cohort of postgraduate international students engaged in knowledge production? One would imagine that first year postgraduate students would encounter similar socio-cultural and academic adjustment

issues. A writing intervention conducted with postgraduate students, outside the purview of this research, gave some reasons to believe so.

2. A longitudinal study of how the participants perform their social and academic identities over time.

3. An exploration of other experiential methods that can be used for EAL international students in the performative space.

These would require further research. On the other hand, the 'aporia of suspension' could push us into a new aporia, which I would call the "fourth aporia", 'the aporia of action'. It is inspired by the study's final research question: How can the workshop space be integrated into academic spaces at UCT and at other English-medium universities? And further, can it in fact be integrated into the formal structures?

Based on the study's findings, one can argue that if the workshop space is integrated in the formal mainstream at any stage, it would lose the playfulness and performativity that constituted its essence. It would still be responsive to the faculty, but to the detriment of students' identities and needs. This is why the study offers the three design principles that could be adapted to different students' needs each time the workshops is iterated. This said, the workshop space would need to operate from particular institutional settings such as the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO) or the Writing Centre for reasons related to policy, funding and accountability.

The writing experts agree that if hypothetically speaking they had to fund a university project, they would focus on writing support or on academic resources to support writing. As W.N pointed out that 'the need for the latter is underestimated because of the emphasis on throughput. Students are finding that academic life can be very stressful'.

Having said this, while the workshop's performative space would use the formal settings to anchor its operations, it would necessarily design its own methods and learning sites, both conceptual and physical, by constantly pushing the frontiers of the 'creative gaps' with its participants.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Archer, A. 2006. A multimodal approach to academic 'literacies': problematizing the visual/verbal divide. *Language and Education*. 20, 6:449 - 462.
- Ashcroft, B. Griffiths, G., Tiffin, H. 1989. *The empire writes back*. London: Routledge.
- Atwood, M. 1988. *Cat's Eye*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.
- Austin, J.L. 1975. *How to do things with words*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Bachelard, G. 1950. *L'air et les songes: essai sur l'imagination du mouvement*. Paris: J. Corti.
- Badger, R. G., & G. White. 2000. A process genre approach to teaching writing. *ELT Journal* 54 (2): 153–60.
- Baker, F. J. 2007. *Internationalisation in higher education : implications and challenges for the University of Cape Town*. Masters Thesis. University of Cape Town (unpublished).
- Bakhtin, M. M. 1984. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Edited and trans. by Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Michigan Press.
- Bakhtin, M. M. 1986. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Trans. by Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Ball, S. J. 2008. *The Education Debate*. UK: Policy Press.
- Bangeni, B. & Kapp, R. 2006. "I want to write about the Dalai Lama...": Literacies in transition. In Thesen, L and van Pletzen, E (Eds). *Academic Literacy and the Languages of Change*. London: Continuum.
- Barnett, R. 2000. *Realising the university in an age of supercomplexity*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.
- Barton, D., Hamilton, M. & Ivanič, R. 1999. *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context*. London: Routledge.
- Baudrillard, J. 1994. *Simulcra and simulation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Bazerman, C. 1988. *Shaping Written Knowledge: The Genre and Activity of the Experimental Articles in Science*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bazerman, C. & Russell, D. (Eds.) 1994. *Landmark Essays in Writing Across the Curriculum*. Davis: Hermagoras Press.

- Bazerman, C. 2004. Speech acts, genres, and activity systems: How texts organize activities and people. In Bazerman, C. & Prior, P. (Eds). *What writing does and how it does it: An introduction to analysing texts and textual practices*. New Jersey: Erlbaum.
- Bazerman, C. 2009. Genre and cognitive development: Beyond writing to learn. In Bazerman, C., Bonini, A., Figueiredo, D. (Eds). *Genre in a changing world. Perspectives on writing*. Colorado: WAC Clearinghouse/Parlor Press.
- Beauvoir, S. 1984. *The Second Sex*, translated by H. M. Pashley, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Bernstein, B. 2000. *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Bhabha, H. 1992. The world and the home. *Social Text*. 31(2), 141-53.
- Bhabha, H. 1994. *The location of culture*. London: Routledge.
- Biesta, G. & Egéa-Kuehne, D. 2001. *Derrida & education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Blommaert, J. 2004. Writing as a problem: African grassroots writing, economies of literacy, and globalization. *Language in society*. 33(5), 643-671.
- Blommaert, J. 2005. *Discourse: A critical introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Blommaert, J. 2010. *The sociolinguistics of globalization*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Boal, A. 1979. *Theatre of the oppressed*. London : Pluto Press.
- Boal, A. 1995. *The rainbow of desire: The Boal method of theatre and therapy*. New York: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. 1977. *An Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Translated by Nice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1991. *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Britton, J., Burgess, T., Martin, N., McLeod, A., & Rosen, H. 1975. *The development of writing abilities*. London: Macmillan.
- Brookfield, S.D. 1987. *Developing Critical Thinkers: Challenging Adults To Explore Alternative Ways of Thinking and Acting*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

- Bryant, I. 1996. Action research and reflective practice. In *Understanding educational research* by Scott, D. & Usher, R. 1996. London: Routledge.
- Burn, A. and Parker, D. 2003. Tiger's big plan: multimodality and the moving image. In C. Jewitt and G. Kress (Eds). *Multimodal Literacy*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Butler, J. 1990. *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Cahen, D. 2001. Derrida and the question of education: a new space for philosophy. In Biesta, G. & Egéa-Kuehne, D. 2001. *Derrida & education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Cameron, D. 1992. *Researching language: Issues of power and method*. London: Routledge.
- Canagarajah, S. 1997. Safe houses in the contact zone: Coping strategies of African-American students in the academy. *College Composition and Communication*. 48(2), 173-196.
- Canagarajah, S. 2006. Understanding critical thinking. In Matsuda, P.K., et al. 2006. *Second-language writing in the composition classroom: a critical sourcebook*. Bedford: St Martin's Press.
- Canagarajah, S. 2004. 'Subversive identities, pedagogical safe houses' in Norton, B and Toohey, K. (Eds). *Critical Pedagogies and Languages of Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carlson, M. A. 2006. *Speaking in tongues: language at play in the theatre*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Carter, M. 2007. Ways of knowing, doing, and writing in the disciplines. *CCC – National Council of Teachers of English*. 58(3), 385-418.
- Carter, M., Ferzli, M. & Weibe, E. 2004. Teaching genres to English first language adults: A study of the laboratory report. *Research in the teaching of English*. 38(4), 395-413.
- Castells, M. 1997. *The power of identity*. Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell.
- Chafe, W. 1982. Integration and Involvement in Speaking, Writing, and Oral Literature. In Tannen, D. *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy*. Norwood: Ablex.
- Clark, R. & Ivanič, R. 1997. *The politics of writing*. London: Routledge.
- Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. 1993. *The Powers of Literacy: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. 2000. *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. London: Routledge.

- Crete and Hunt, 2002. Creative participation in the essay writing process. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*. 1(2), 145-166.
- Crete, P. 2008. A space of academic play: Student learning journals as transitional writing. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*. 7(1), 49-64.
- Culler, J. 1981. *The pursuit of signs: Semiotics, literature, deconstruction*. London: Routledge.
- Curry, M. J. & Lillis, T. M. 2004. Multilingual scholars and the imperative to publish in English: Negotiating interests, demands, and rewards. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(4), 663–688.
- Danielson, D. 1965. Teaching composition at the intermediate level. In Allen, V. (Ed). *TESOL 1964*, 143-145. Champaign, III.: National Council of Teachers of English.
- De Souza, M. 2008. Beyond 'here's a culture, here's a literacy'. In Prinsloo, M & Baynham, M. (Eds). *Literacies, Global and Local*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Deem, R. 2001. Globalisation, New Managerialism, Academic Capitalism and Entrepreneurialism in Universities: is the local dimension still important? *Comparative Education*. 37(1), 7-20.
- Denzin, N. K. 2001. The reflexive interview and a performative social science. *Qualitative Research*. 1(1), 23-46.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. Eds. 1998. *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Derrida, J. 1976. *Of grammatology*. California: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Derrida, J. 1992. 'Force of Law: The "Mystical Foundation of Authority"'. In D. Cornell (Ed), *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*. London and New York: Routledge
- Derrida, J. 2004. *Dissemination*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Devitt, A. J. 2004. *Writing genres*. Carbondale: Illinois University Press.
- Duranti, A. 1997. *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Edgoose, J. 2001. Just decide! Derrida and the ethical aporias of education. In Biesta, G. & Egéa-Kuehne, D. (Eds). *Derrida & education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Elbow, P. 1998. *Writing with power: techniques for mastering the writing process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Elliott, J. 1991. *Action research for educational change*. Bristol: Open University Press.
- English, F. Forthcoming. *Student writing and genre: Reconfiguring academic knowledge*. London: Continuum.

- Erazmus, E. 1960. Second language composition teaching at the intermediate level. *Language learning*, 10(25), 25-31.
- Fernsten, L. A. 2008. Writer identity and ESL learners. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 52(1), 44-52.
- Fine, M. 1994. *Chartering urban school reform: Reflections on public high schools in the midst of change*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Franks, A. 2003. Palmers' kiss: Shakespeare, school drama and semiotics. In G. Kress and C. Jewitt (Eds). *Multimodal Literacy*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Freire, P. 1970. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed, trans.* New York: Continuum.
- Gee, J. P. 1996. *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in Discourses*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Gee, J. P. 2008. *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gee, J. P. 1990. *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in discourse*. London: Falwer Press.
- Geertz, C: 2003. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Geiser, J. 2009. *How international students navigate the social and academic practices of a South African university*. MPhil Thesis. University of Cape Town (unpublished).
- Giroux, Henry A. 1992. *Border crossings: cultural workers and the politics of education*. London: Routledge.
- Goffman, E. 1975. *Frame analysis: an essay on the organization of experience*. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Goffman, E. 1981. *Forms of talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Goodwin, C. J. 1995. *Research in psychology: methods and design*. New York: Wiley.
- Green, J. & Bloome, D. 1997. Ethnography and ethnographers of and in education: A situated perspective. In Flood, J., Heath, S. & Lapp, D. (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching Literacy Through the Communicative and Visual Arts*. New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.
- Greenblatt, S. 2003. (Ed). *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Romantic Period*. W. W. New York: Norton and Company.
- Greenwood, D.J. & Levin, M. 1998. *Introduction to action research: Social research for social change*. California: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. 1992. 'Beyond Culture: Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference' in *Cultural Anthropology*, 7(1), 6-23.
- Gutierrez, K., Rymes, B., Larson, J. 1995. Script, Counterscript, and Underlife in the Classroom: James Brown versus *Brown v. Board of Education*. *Harvard Educational Review*. 65(3), 445-472.
- Gutierrez, K. 2005. The persistence of inequality: English-language learners and educational reform. In J. Flood & P. Anders (Eds). *Literacy Development of Students in Urban Schools*. Newark, DE.: International Reading Association.
- Gutierrez, K. 2008. Developing a Sociocritical Literacy in the Third Space. *Reading Research Quarterly*. 43(2), 148-164.
- Hall, S & Jefferson, T. 1993. *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*. London: Routledge.
- Halliday, M. A. K. and Martin, J. R., 1993. Introduction. In Halliday, M.A.K. and Martin, J.R. (Eds). *Writing science*, London: The Falmer Press.
- Hammersley, M. 1992. Deconstructing the qualitative-quantitative divide. In Brannen, J. (ed.) *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Hammersley, M. 1992. *What's wrong with ethnography?: methodological explorations*. London: Routledge.
- Hammersley, M. 1995. Deconstructing the qualitative - quantitative divide. In Brannen, J. (Ed). *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and quantitative research*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Hammersley, M. 2008. *Questioning Qualitative Inquiry*. London: Sage.
- Hawisher, G. E. & Selfe, C. L. (Eds.) *Passions, pedagogies, and 21st century technologies*. Logan: Utah State University Press and NCTE.
- Hegel, W. G. F. 1998. *Phenomenology of spirit*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publications.
- Heisenberg, W. 1998. *Physical principles of the quantum theory*. United States: Dover Publications.
- Herrington, A. & Moran, C. 2005. *Genre across the curriculum*. Utah: Utah University Press.
- Horowitz, I. 1986. What professors actually require: Academic tasks for the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20, 445-462.
- Hunma, A. 2009. *Identities and coping strategies in writing: an ethnographic study of first year Mauritian students at a South African university*. Unpublished MPhil thesis. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

- Ivanič, R. & Simpson, J. 1992. 'Who's who in academic writing' in Fairclough, N. (Ed). *Critical Language Awareness*. Singapore: Longman.
- Ivanič, R. 1998. *Writing and identity: The discursual construction of identity in academic writing*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ivanič, R. 2004. Discourses of writing and learning to write. *Language and education*. 18(3), 220-245.
- Jackson, A. 2007. *Theatre, Education and the Making of Meanings: Art or Instrument?* Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Jackson, J. 1995. Deja Entendu: The Liminal Qualities of Anthropological Fieldnotes. In Van Maanen (Ed.). *Representation in Ethnography*. Michigan: Sage Publications.
- Janks, H. 2000. Domination, access, diversity and design: A synthesis for critical literacy education. *Educational review*. 52(2), 175-186.
- Janks, H. 2009. *Literacy and Power*. New York: Routledge.
- Jansen, J. 2004. Changes and continuities in South Africa's higher education system, 1994 to 2004. In Chisholm, L. *Changing Class: Education and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.
- Juriens, 2001. *Cultural Travel and Migrancy, The Artistic (Re)Presentation of Globalisation in the Electronic Media of West Java*. Leiden:CNWS.
- Kachru, B. B. 1985. Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism: the English language in the outer circle. In Quirk, R. and Widdowson, H.G. (Eds), *English in the world: Teaching and learning the language and literatures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kafai, Y. B. & Resnick, M. 1996. *Constructionism in practice: Designing, thinking, and learning in a digital world*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Kaplan, R. 1967. Contrastive rhetoric and the teaching of composition. *TESOL Quarterly*, 1(10): 10-16.
- Kapp, R. & Bangeni, B. 2005. "I was just never exposed to this argument thing": Using a genre approach to teach academic writing to ESL students in the Humanities. In Herrington, A. & Moran, C. 2005. *Genre across the curriculum*. Utah: Utah University Press.
- Kishun, R. 2007, The Internationalisation of Higher Education in South Africa: Progress and Challenges'. In *Journal for Studies in Higher Education* Vol. 11(3), 455-469.
- Knight, J. 2004. Internationalisation remodeled: Definition, approaches, and rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education*. 8(1), 5.

- Knoblauch, C. H. & Brannon, L. 1983. Writing as learning through the curriculum. *College English*. 45(5), 465-474.
- Krashen, S.D. 1985. *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. New York: Longman.
- Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T. 1999. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Kress, G. 1996. Internationalisation and globalisation: Rethinking a curriculum of communication. *Comparative Education*, 32(2), 185-196.
- Kumaradivelu, B. 2008. *Cultural Globalization and Language Education*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lather, P. 1992. Critical Frames in Educational Research: Feminist and Post-Structural Perspectives. *Theory into Practice, Qualitative Issues in Educational Research*. 31(2), 87-99.
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. 1991. *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Law, J. 2004. *After-method: mess in social science research*. New York: Routledge.
- Lawson-Tancred, H (Ed) 1991. *Aristotle. The Art of Rhetoric*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Lea, M. 2012. New genres in the academy: issues of practice, meaning making and identity. In Castello, M. & Donahue, C. (Eds). *University writing: selves and texts in academic societies*. Bingley: Emerald.
- Lea, M. & Nicoll, K. 2002. *Distributed learning: Social and cultural approaches to practice*. London: Routledge.
- Lea, M. & Street, B. 2000. 'Student writing and staff feedback in higher education: an academic literacies approach', in Lea, W.N. & Stierer, B. (Eds). *Student Writing in Higher Education: New Contexts*. Florence: Taylor & Francis, Inc.
- LeCompte, M. D., Millroy, W. and Preissle, J. 1992. (Eds). *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Leki, I. 1995. Coping strategies of ESL students in writing tasks across the curriculum. *Tesol Quarterly*. 29(2), 235-260.
- Lillis, T. 2006. Moving towards an 'academic literacies' pedagogy: dialogues of participation. In Ganobcsik-Williams, L. (Ed). *Teaching Academic Writing in UK Higher Education: Theories, Practices and Models*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Lillis, T. 2008. Ethnography as method, methodology, and "Deep Theorizing": Closing the gap between text and context in academic writing research. In *Written Communication*, 25(3), pp. 353–388.
- Lillis, T. M and Curry, M. J. 2010. *Academic Writing in a Global Context: The politics and practices of publishing in English*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Lillis, T.M. & Scott, M. 2007. Defining academic literacies research: issues of epistemology, ideology and strategy. In *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 5–32.
- Lillis, T.M. 2001. *Student writing: Access, regulation, desire*. London: Routledge.
- Lodge, H. 1997. *Providing access to academic literacy in the Arts Foundation Programme at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1996—the theory behind the practice*. Master's Research Report, University of the Witwatersrand (unpublished).
- Lossau, J. 2009. Pitfalls of (Third) Space: Rethinking the Ambivalent Logic of Spatial Semantics. In Ikas and Wagner (Eds). *Communicating in the Third Space*. New York: Routledge.
- Luhmann, N. 1993. Deconstruction as second-order observing. *New Literary History*. 24(4), 763-782.
- Luke, A. 1995. When basic skills and information processing just aren't enough: Rethinking reading in new times. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 95-115.
- Madison, D. S. 1995. *Critical Ethnography: Methods, Ethics, and Performance*. USA: Sage Publications..
- Maryns, K. & Blommaert, J. 2002. Pretextuality and pretextual gaps: On de/refining linguistic inequality. *Pragmatics*. 12(1), 11-30.
- Matsuda, P. K & Silva, T. 2006. Cross-cultural composition: mediated integration of US and international students. In Matsuda, P.K., et al. 2006. *Second-language writing in the composition classroom: a critical sourcebook*. Bedford: St Martin's Press.
- Matsuda, P. K., et al. 2006. *Second-language writing in the composition classroom: a critical sourcebook*. Bedford: St Martin's Press.
- Maybin, J. 1994. Teaching writing: Process or genre. In Brindley, Sue ed. *Teaching English*. London: Routledge.
- McCarthy, S.J. & Garcia, G.E. 2005. English language learners' writing practices and attitudes. In *Written Communication*. 22(1), 36-75.
- McLeod, S. H. & Soven, M. 1992. *Writing across the curriculum: A guide to developing programs*. California: Sage Publications.

- Miles, M and Huberman, M. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.
- Miller, C. R. 1984. Genre as Social Action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 70, 151-167.
- Mitchell, W. J. T. 1994. *Picture Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Montaigne, M. 1993. *The Complete Essays*, translated by M.A. Screech, London: Penguin.
- Moja, T. & Cloete, N. 2001. Vanishing borders and new boundaries. In Miller, J., Cloete, N. & Badat, S. (Eds). *Challenges of globalisation, South Africa debates with Manuel Castells*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Morgan, D. L. 1997. *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research. (2nd Ed)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mthembu, T. 2004. Creating a niche in internationalisation for (South) African higher education institutions. *Journal of Studies in International Education*. 8(3), 282.
- Myers, G. 1991. Stories and styles in two molecular biology articles." In C. Bazerman and J. Paradis (Eds). *Textual Dynamics of the Professions*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Nagel, T. 1974. What it's like to be a bat? *Philosophical Review*, 435-50.
- Newfield, D., & Stein, P. 2000. The Multiliteracies Project: South African teachers respond. In Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (Eds). *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. London: Routledge.
- Nomdo, G. 2006. 'Identity, power and discourse: The socio-political self-representations of successful 'black' students' in Thesen, L. and van Pletzen, E. (Eds). *Academic Literacy and the Languages of Change*. London: Continuum.
- Norton, B. 1995. Social Identity, Investment, and Language Learning. *TESOL Quarterly*. 29(1), 9-31.
- Norton, B. 1997. Language, identity, and the ownership of English. *TESOL Quarterly*. 31, 409-429.
- Ochsner, R. & Fowler, J. 2004. Playing devil's advocate: Evaluating the literature of the wac/wid movement. *Review of educational research*. 74(2), 117-140.
- Parkinson, J. & Adendorff, R 2004. The use of popular science articles in teaching scientific language. *English for Specific Purposes*. 23(4), 379-396.
- Paulson, C. 1967. The use of model passages in a program of guided com-position. In Robinett, B. (Ed). *TESOL 1966*, 149-153.

- Paulson, C. 1972. Teaching writing in the ESOL classroom: Techniques of controlled composition. *TESOL Quarterly*, 6, 33-59.
- Paxton, M. 2007. Students' interim literacies as a dynamic resource for teaching and transformation, *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*. 25(1), 45-55.
- Pennington, M.C. 2010. Writing Pedagogy Without Borders. *Writing & Pedagogy*. 2(1):1-11.
- Pennycook, A. 2001. *Critical Applied Linguistics: A Critical Introduction*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Pincas, A. 1962. Structural linguistics and systemic composition teaching to students of English as a second language. *Language Learning*, 12, 185-194.
- Pollock, D. 1998. Performative Writing, In Phelan, P and Lane, J. (Eds). *The Ends of Performance*. New York: New York University Press.
- Pratt, M. L. 1991. *Arts of the Contact Zone*. New York: MLA.
- Quantz, R. 1992. On critical ethnography (with some postmodern considerations). In LeCompte, M.D., Millroy, W. and Preissle, J. (Eds). *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Raimes A. 1983. *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Raimes, A. 1978. *Problems and teaching strategies in ESL composition*. Arlington, Va: Centre for Applied Linguistics.
- Reason, P. & Bradbury, H. 2006. *The SAGE handbook of action research: participative inquiry: participative inquiry and practice*. California: Sage Publications.
- Reid, J. & Kroll, B. 1995. Designing and assessing effective classroom writing assignments for NES and ESL students. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. 4(1), 17-41.
- Reid, J. 1984. ESL composition: The expectations of the academic audience. *TESOL Newsletter*. 21(2), 34.
- Robinson-Pant, A. & Street, B. 2012. Students' and tutors' understanding of 'new' academic literacy practices. In Castello, M. & Donahue, C. (Eds). *University writing: selves nad texts in academic societies*. Bingley: Emerald.
- Rudduck, J. 1993. The Theatre of Daylight: Qualitative Research and School Profile Studies. In Schratz (Ed). *Qualitative Voices in Educational Research*. London: Falmer Press.
- Russell, D. R. 1997. Rethinking genre in school and society: An activity theory analysis. In *Written Communication*. 14(4), 504-554.

- Russell, D. R., Lea, M., Parker, J., Street, B., Donahue, T. 2009. Exploring notions of genre in 'academic literacies' and 'writing across the curriculum': approaches across countries and contexts. In Bazerman, C., Bonini, A., Figueiredo, D. (Eds). *Genre in a changing world. Perspectives on writing*. Colorado: WAC Clearinghouse/Parlor Press.
- Sarangi, S. 2005. The conditions and consequences of professional discourse studies. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*. 2(3), 371-394.
- Schryer, C. F. 1993. Records as genre. *Written Communication*. 10(2), 200-234.
- Schryer, C. F. 1993. Records as genre. *Written Communication*. 10(2), 200-234.
- Scott, P. 2000. Globalisation and Higher Education: Challenges for the 21st Century. *Journal of Studies in International Education*. 4(1), 3-10.
- Scott, I., Yeld, N., McMillan, J., Hall, M., 2005. Equity and Excellence in Higher Education: The Case of the University of Cape Town. In Bowen, W., Kurzweil, M., Tobin, E., 2005. *Equity and Excellence in American Higher Education*. Virginia: University of Virginia Press.
- Scott, J. C. 1991. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*. Yale: Yale University Press.
- Shakespeare, W. 1982. *The Illustrated Stratford Shakespeare*. London: Chancellor Press.
- Shklovsky, V. 1998. "Art as Technique." In Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (Eds). *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Silva, T. 1990. Second language composition instruction: Developments, issues and directions. In B. Kxoll (Ed). *Second language writing* (pp. 11-23). New York: Cambridge.
- Silva, T. 1997. On the ethical treatment of ESL writers. *Tesol Quarterly*. 31, 359-363.
- Simon, R. I., & Dippo, D. 1986. On critical ethnographic work. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*. 17(4), 195-202.
- Singh, P. and Doherty, C. 2004. Global Cultural Flows and Pedagogic Dilemmas: Teaching in the Global University Contact Zone. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38(1), 9-42.
- Soja, E.W. 1996. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Sontag, S. 1999. The image-world. In J. Evans & S. Hall (Eds.), *Visual culture: the reader*. London: Sage Publications.
- Spivak, G. 2011. The tradition of critique and feminist writing. *Vice-Chancellor's Open lecture*. University of Cape Town [27 Sept 2011].

- Stein, P. 2004. Representation, rights, and resources: Multimodal pedagogies in the language and literacy classroom. In Norton, B. & Toohey, K. (Eds.). *Critical pedagogies and language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stein, P. 2008. *Multimodal pedagogies in diverse classrooms: representation, rights and resources*. London: Routledge.
- Stein, P. and Newfield, D. 2006. Multiliteracies and multimodality in English in education in Africa: Mapping the Terrain. *English Studies in Africa*. 49(1), 1–22.
- Stenhouse, L. 1979. *New Directions in Curriculum Studies*. Lewes: Falmer Press.
- Street, B. 1993. *Cross-cultural approaches to literacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, B. 1976. Teaching composition of low level ESL students. *TESOL Quarterly*. 10, 309-313.
- Taylor, B. P. 1981. Content and Written Form: A two-way Street. *TESOL Quarterly*. 15 (1), 5-13.
- Thesen, L. & Van Pletzen, E. 2006. *Academic literacy and the languages of change*. London: Continuum.
- Thesen, L. 1994. *Voices in discourse: Rethinking shared meaning in academic writing*. Unpublished Masters thesis. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.
- Thesen, L. 1997. Voices, discourses and transition: In search of new categories in EAP. *TESOL Quarterly*, 31(3), 487–511.
- Usher, R. 1996. A critique of the neglected epistemological assumptions of educational research. In Scott, D. & Usher, R. (Eds). *Understanding educational research*. London: Routledge.
- Van Alphen, E. 2002. Imagined Homelands: Re-Mapping Cultural Identity. In Vertraete, G & Cresswell, T (Eds). *Mobilizing Place, Placing Mobility: The Politics of Representation in a Globalized World*. New York 2002: Rodopi.
- Van Wyk, A. 2007. Action research as a means of course development in higher education: a case study. *South African Journal of Higher Education*. 20(3), 558-572.
- Voloshinov, V.N. 1973. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Trans. by L. Matejka and I.R. Titunik. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. 1978. Interaction between learning and development. In *mind and society* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wenger, E. 2000. Communities of practice and social learning systems. *Organization*. 7(2), 225-246.

Zamel, V. 1976. Teaching composition in the ESL classroom: What can we learn from research in the teaching of English. *TESOL Quarterly*. 10, 67-76.

Zamel, V. 1983. The composing processes of advanced ESL students: Six case studies. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17 (2), 165-187.

**Online electronic resources:**

Fisher, T. 2009. *Story compositions: famous musical quotes*. Available online: <http://www.storycompositions.com/2008/06/famous-musical-quotes.html>. Accessed on 12 Dec 2012.

'*IAPO International students statistics*'. Available online: [www.uct.ac.za/about/iapo/overview/statistics/](http://www.uct.ac.za/about/iapo/overview/statistics/). Accessed on 3 May 2010.

'*Inside higherEd*', June 2012. Available online: <http://www.insidehighered.com>. Accessed on 1 August 2012.

'*Installation address*'. Available online: [http://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/about/management/vcinstallation/installation\\_address.pdf](http://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/about/management/vcinstallation/installation_address.pdf). Accessed on 4 May 2010.

'*Internationalisation is not just about revenues, it is a political strategy*', 25 June 2012. Available online: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/higher-education-network/blog/2012/jun/25/alain-beretz-university-of-strasbourg?newsfeed=true>. Accessed on 1 August 2012.

'*Introducing UCT*'. Available online: <http://www.uct.ac.za/about/intro/>. Accessed on 3 May 2010.

'*Online etymology dictionary*'. Available online: <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=educate>. Accessed on 12 August 2012.

'*Rhetoric versus reality*', 22 July 2012. Available online: <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20120718152610930>. Accessed on 1 August 2012.

'*The drive to internationalise*, June 2012. Available online: <http://www.helsinki.fi/news/archive/6-2012/25-14-25-23.html>. Accessed on 1 August 2012.

'*The Nation (Thailand)*, June 2012. Available online: <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national>. Accessed on 1 August 2012.

'*UCT policy on internationalisation, 2009*. Available online: [www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/about/iapo/internat\\_pol.doc](http://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/about/iapo/internat_pol.doc). Accessed on 4 July 2011.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – Writers' workshop brochure

#### Expectations and outcomes

**From the coordinator:**

- > Sensitive to your needs
- > Organised
- > Goal focused
- > Flexible and understanding

**From you:**

- > Open-mindedness
- > Focus
- > Eager participation
- > Sincere feedback

#### Dates and duration

The Writers' Workshop will start in the second week of March and will run over four weeks.

The times and place will be communicated to you via email.

We are open to your ideas and suggestions.

**Join our facebook group today:**

*UCT Writers' space*

To allow you to share your experience and engage in lively exchanges with your first year peers at UCT.

#### Contact details

*Coordinator: Adin Humma*

*Phone:*

*Email:*



## What is the Workshop about?



*Imagination is more important than Knowledge  
Education*

The Writers' Workshop is specially designed to induct international students into UCT's academic mores, with a particular focus on writing. The aim is make you **agents** of your own learning.

The need for the workshop emerged following a Masters study in 2009. The study revealed that high-achieving international students scored mediocre marks in their first year essays at UCT. This was mainly due to a lack of university preparedness.

What the Writers' Workshop aims to address this issue at the core.

The bottom line is: At the end of the day, you will walk into lectures with confidence and poise, write your essays like veterans. More importantly, the workshop will give you a head start in your academic journey towards success.

## How is it run?

The Writers' Workshop is run over a period of 4 weeks at a rate of 2 sessions per week.

The sessions consist of fun, round the table group activities and exercises around the following topics:

- > *Types of academic essays*
- > *Ethics of citation*
- > *Structures – a creative journey*
- > *Writing styles – Spanish, English*
- > *Critical thinking – discover your own voice*
- > *The art of persuasion – motivate your point*

The sessions contain an evaluative component purely for academic research purposes, not for credit.

The set up is also an ideal, relaxed space to meet like-minded proactive individuals with academic backgrounds similar to yours. Refreshments are served at the end of each

## Benefits of the Workshop

The benefits of the Writers' Workshop are as follows:

### Academic

- > Greater familiarity with UCT's academic conventions
- > Confidence in academic writing and argumentation
- > Improved critical thinking
- > Improved referencing

### Social

- > Opportunity to meet students from similar academic backgrounds
- > Opportunity to share and learn from group members
- > Sharpening of team building skills

### Individual

- > More confidence
- > More proactive
- > Expanding your circle of influence in your learning

## Appendix 2 – Workshop structure

<b>Workshop structure</b>		
<b>Session 1</b>	Introduction Types of essays	10 March
<b>Session 2</b>	Ethics of citation Writing style	17 March
<b>Session 3</b>	Image theatre session (Guest lecturer) Critical thinking	24 March
<b>Session 4</b>	Essay writing Art of persuasion	31 March

### **Preparation**

**To bring at the sessions:**

**Session 1:** An object that best describes you.

**Session 2:** A magazine article, which you believe contains unfounded facts.

**Session 3:** A verse from any national song/poem of your choice.

**Session 4:** To be announced.

**Appendix 3 – Lesson plan excerpt**

Session Two Topic	Structure	Objective	Lesson aid	Material	Involvement	Duration
<b>2. ETHICS OF RESEARCH</b> (i) Writing and referencing	<b>Ice breaker</b>				All	5 min
	<b>Summarise an article and reference the authors</b>	<i>To identify what students know about referencing</i>		Handout	Individual	15 min
	(ii) Why reference?	<i>To raise awareness about the ethics of referencing, academic integrity.</i>	White board		All	10 min
	(iii) How to reference?	<b>Guidelines</b>	<i>To provide referencing guidelines</i>	White board	All	10 min
<b>3. ESSAY STRUCTURE</b>	<b>Spot the errors</b>	<i>Allow students to put their knowledge into practice</i>		Handout	Group	5 min
		<b>BREAK</b>				5 min
	<b>Video screening and discussion</b>	<i>Allow students to visualize the essay writing task as a process</i>	Pc, projector		All	5 min
(i) What's the message? Intro and conclusion	<b>Respond to an essay question and write intro and conclusion. Discussion</b>	<i>Offer students guidelines based on what they have written</i>	White board	Handout	Individual	15 min

(ii) Coherence and cohesion	<b>Video screening.</b> Discussion of a carelessly structured essay.	<i>Offer students guidelines and discuss the importance of link words.</i>	Pc, projector	Handout	All Group	5 min 20 min
(iii) Evaluation						5 min
<b>Session Three Topic</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Lesson aid</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Involvement</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>3. WRITING STYLE</b>	<b>Icebreaker</b>					
(i) Linguistic interference	<b>Video screening (Spanglish) and discussion.</b> Examiners' reports	<i>To make students aware of how their linguistic style esp. in the mother tongue may impact on their academic writing.</i>	Pc, projector,	report	All	5 min 10 min
(ii) Common mistakes to avoid	<b>Asking students to enumerate some common mistakes they make</b>		White board		All	5 min
(iii) Academic style	<b>Responding to an essay written in colloquial style. Group presentation</b>	<i>Make students aware of the stylistic conventions of academic writing.</i>		Handout	Group	20 min
		<b>BREAK</b>				5 min

<b>4. CRITICAL THINKING</b>						
(i) Logic	<b>Spotting the fallacies</b>	<i>To make students aware of logical fallacies and how to avoid them</i>	White board	Handout	Group	30 min
(ii) Argument	<b>How to construct an argument. Short debate</b>	<i>Guidelines + application.</i>		Large sheets of paper, markers	Group	15 min
(iii) Evaluation				Handout		5 min

**Appendix 4 - Consent form**

**University of Cape Town  
Faculty of Humanities  
Consent Form**

**Names of principal researcher:** Aditi Hunma

**Department:** Education

**Telephone:**

**Email:**

**Name of participant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Faculty:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Degree:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nature of the research:** Writers' workshop

**Participant's involvement:** Attendance in workshop sessions run over four consecutive Saturdays.

*What's involved:* Writing exercises, character development activities

*Risks:* None

*Benefits:* More confidence in academic writing, character development

*Costs:* None

*Payment:* None

- I agree to participate in this research project.
- I have read this consent form and the information it contains and had the opportunity to ask questions about them.
- I agree to my responses being used for education and research on condition my privacy is respected, subject to the following:
  - I understand that my personal details will be used in aggregate form only, so that I will not be personally identifiable.
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.
- I understand I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Signature of Participant:

Researcher's signature:

Date:

## Appendix 5 – Expectations from the workshop

### 1. Your key concerns around academic writing:

- what if I'm unable to write as per university ~~requirement~~ demand
- what if I don't meet the standards expected in my writing.
- referencing/plagiarism is such a mission!

### 2. Any other concerns (socio-academic)?:

- EBW essay writing & their arguments & qualifications, logical
- economic 10107 essay.

### 3. Your perceived strengths:

### 4. How would you rate your performance in writing this semester? What was your average mark in your essays?

Excellent Very good Good Average Poor

Average mark: u 70.

### 5. Where and how could you improve your writing?

reading & practising writing

### 6. Your expectations from the workshop in terms of:

1. content – <sup>so that</sup> I may understand where to get content for my research work
2. structure – how to structure paragraph, sentence, important especially for EBW.
3. facilitator's input –
4. your participation –
5. feedback –
6. any other criteria -

**Appendix 6 - Handout example**

**Handout 2 – Ethics of citation**

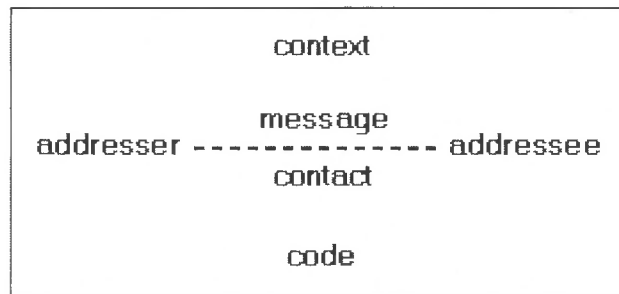


**Name:**

**Degree:**

## 2.1 Texts and ways of reading

### The text as a mode of interpersonal communication



For Jakobson (1960), interpersonal communication relies on the presence of these six elements. Communication can play various functions namely, referential, expressive, conative, phatic, metalingual and poetic. How then can one respond to texts without reading beyond the message?

**Ways of reading:** 'Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed...' Francis Bacon.

**General tip** – for the first reading: Look for the main claim in the introduction. Skim through the first line of each paragraph for a grasp of the arguments deployed. Read the conclusion.

**Close reading:**

**1. Reading to decode** – What is the message? What is the author's attitude/intention? What is the desired outcome? How is the author aligning himself to the reader/others? What is the nature/genus of this interaction? What are the linguistic strategies used?

**2. Reading to understand** – Why/how?

**3. Reading to respond** – athletic reading. Texts can be 'readerly' or 'writerly': In a 'readerly' text, the reader simply understands and absorbs the message. In the 'writerly' text, the reader becomes an active creator of meaning.

**Task:** Read the following excerpt closely:

In our civilization, it has not always been the same types of texts which have required attribution to an author. There was a time when the texts that we today call “literary” (narratives, stories, epics, tragedies, comedies) were accepted, put into circulation, and valorized without any question about the identity of their author; their anonymity caused no difficulties since their ancientness, whether real or imagined, was regarded as a sufficient guarantee of their status. On the other hand, those texts that we now would call scientific – those dealing with cosmology and the heavens, medicine and illnesses, natural sciences and geography – were accepted in the Middle Ages, and accepted as “true”, only when marked with the name of their author. “Hippocrates said,” “Pliny recounts,” were not really formulas of an argument based on authority, they were the markers inserted in discourses that were supported to be received as statements of demonstrated truth (Foucault, 1998:240).



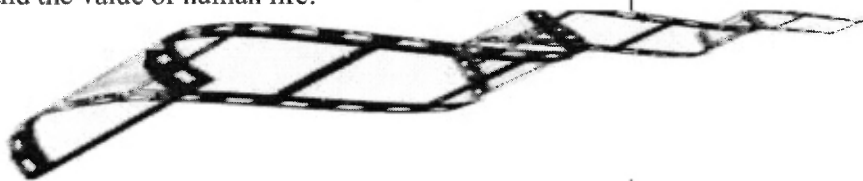
**In a paragraph of your own, interpret the author’s message, intention, alignment etc.**

#### **Food for thought – reading of images**

Consider Carter’s controversial image of a Sudanese girl in 1994. It received the Pulitzer award but caused an outcry because Carter preferred to take the picture, rather than step into the field and save the child.

(I have not included the picture).

Do you think he was right? Consider the role of journalism, the power of images to influence minds and the value of human life.



An argument is made of premises (2 or more) and a conclusion e.g.

All flies have wings,  
This is a fly,  
Therefore it has wings.

For an argument to be valid, the conclusion must follow from the premises.

Which of the arguments is valid?

All men like sports  
John is a man,  
Therefore, John likes sports.

Some cats eat tuna,  
This animal eats tuna,  
Therefore it is a cat.

**Task in pairs: Spot possible fallacies of reasoning in the examples below.**

1. John: 'I believe that plagiarism is wrong'.  
Smith: 'I knew you would say that. You are such a nerd'.
2. Peter: 'I will hold the staff because I am the leader'.  
Lea: 'How do you know you are the leader?'  
Peter: 'Because I'm holding the staff'.
3. Susan meets a Rastafarian man twice at the same coffee shop. She concludes that it is their favourite hideout.
4. Roger's toaster stops working. He hits it hard and soon it starts working again. He concludes that toasters can be repaired in that manner.
5. Women deserve equal treatment both at the workplace and at home. At the malls too, they should be given free manicure vouchers especially on their birthdays.
6. She did not return Mary's pen, because Mary would never have returned hers.



**Task: Spot invalid statements or fallacies in your article and complete the following table.**

Fallacies	Why?

### 2.3 Managing your sources

**Research:** 'It is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought'  
Albert Szent-Gyorgyi.

### **Video screening: Music conductor**

Imagine yourself as a music conductor harmonizing different tunes to create an ensemble, a rich and unified melody.

Similarly, your sources are the voices that you need to reconcile or pit against each other, so that in the end, they tell a unified story. Your story. After all, the sources are here to strengthen your argument.

#### **Ways of presenting your source:**

1. Introduce at the onset of the paragraph  
e.g.: According to Eco (1995),
2. Use to support the point you make earlier in the paragraph  
e.g.: Brooks (2000) would agree that/also demonstrate the fact that/concurs...

#### **Constructing a paragraph:**

1. Topic sentence – state clearly what your paragraph is about
2. Elaborate
3. Give examples
4. Provide evidence – quote/statistics.

### **Task - reorder the following parts into a coherent paragraph:**

More recently, the kulula.com/kicks product has been launched to offer a 'triple X-treme' extreme sports adventure package to the thrill-lovers (Simpson, 2007:498). According to Long, Kulula.com's has been able to secure customers as a result of 'effective market research and sensitivity to customers' need for variety and improved quality' (2010:19). These include kulula.com/cars, kulula.com/cabs, kulula.com/beds. Kulula.com achieves customer loyalty by offering brand extensions that would give the customer a wholesome and cheap travelling package.

### **Discussion: Referencing – What is the point?**

Harvard referencing: Surname, Initial:date. *Title*. Place of publication:publishing house.

In-text referencing: (Author, date:page) [See handout]

### **Task: Spot possible errors**

According to Russells, factories are filled with cyborgs, who are strapped with parasitic limbs to increase their productivity (Russells, R:2010).

Russells, R. 2010. 'The double life of factory workers'. New York, Penguin Press.

## 2.4 The writing process

### Assess the benefits of art in our society

**Task 1: Using the pieces of information and evidence, complete the table below.**

1. Art is an expression and a stimulus of imaginative life, which is separated from actual life by the absence of responsive action.

2. On imitative art: 'That kind of art seems to be a corruption of the mind of all listeners who do not possess as an antidote, a knowledge of its real nature.'

3. Residents of Dores, near Inverness, set up a trust to manage the £100,000 donated by RockNess since it started four years ago in a nearby field.

4. It is on this capacity of man to receive another man's expression of feeling, and experience those feelings himself, that the activity of art is based.

5. The poem is not the critic's own and not the author's (it is detached from the author at birth and goes about the world beyond his power to intend about it and control it). The poem belongs to the public.

6. Music has helped elite tri-athletes in Australia increase their endurance by 15%, researchers say. Synchronous music, where stride length is matched to musical tempo, can have metronomic effects on the body by allowing athletes to run for longer, they say.

7. Tragedy, says Aristotle, is a mimesis of a serious and complete action, having magnitude, which through pity and fear brings about a catharsis of such emotions... Catharsis is a purgation of the emotions.

8. Art is at the service of man.

9. Northern Ireland: Six hundred children and young people with severe learning disabilities across NI could lose their music service because of budget cuts. Paula Dillon whose daughter Anna, 10, benefits from music at Knockevin School, Downpatrick, said: 'Music therapy makes a significant impact for children who have such limited understanding and difficulty with communication'

Author	Key argument

**Task 2: Reorder the authors' arguments, and group those with similar views.**

**Task 3: Make a plan.**

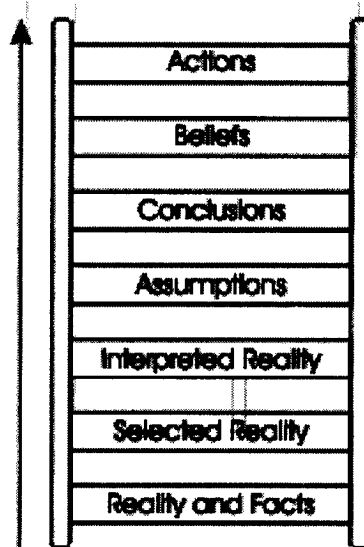
My ideas ----- Elaboration ----- Examples ----- Evidence

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Task 4: Write a page answering the question. It should consist of a paragraph per idea, an introduction and conclusion.**

**Food for thought – reading of the ‘other’**

The ladder of inference illustrates how we often move from selected facts to decisions and action.



- We select relevant facts based on our beliefs and prior experience.
- We interpret what they mean.
- We apply our existing assumptions, sometimes without considering them.
- We draw conclusions based on the interpreted facts and our assumptions.
- We develop beliefs based on these conclusions.  
We take actions that seem "right" because they are based on what we believe. (Mind tools, 2011)

Could we be mistaken?

## **Appendix 7 - Participants' profiles**

### ***Tahini's profile***

I was born in Mauritius, and I lived in a town called Vacoas. Our mother tongue is the Creole, which is a mixture of several languages spoken by the early inhabitants of the country at the time of colonization. I am an avid reader and passionate about Japanese martial arts and microscopic organisms, which I am studying.

During my schooling years I learnt English and French, and later on I studied a bit of Urdu and Arabic while going for Islamic lessons. I was born in a Muslim family and raised according to Islamic principles, but my country, being a mixture of cultures from India, China, Africa, and certain European countries, compels us to be open to variety and diversity. We learn to protect our own culture by keeping the traditions and values and behaving as per the norms, while respecting and honoring the other cultures. My parents have always encouraged us to be open and understanding about people from other religions.

After getting 100% on a biology exam when I was fourteen, I decided that this would be my career, making me choose the science subjects at school: chemistry, physics and biology. After completing high school, I moved to Cape Town to study at UCT where I am majoring in Genetics and Microbiology.

My first year at the University of Cape Town has been very profitable. I was forced to become independent and to learn how to cope with being on my own, studying and balancing my social life. Also I have gained maturity on my work, I tend to write more structured essays where I take my time, plan properly and then write.

My writing skills have greatly improved during my first year, and with the increase in the level of difficulty of essays and assignments in university, I have to put more effort in my work. High school was mostly a race towards good marks and bursaries, failed to teach students the language, but instead forced them to follow a certain writing pattern where no personal opinion and thought can be put into words. The best students are those who diligently follow the method imposed by teachers, themselves governed by an impenitent system, a vicious circle impervious to any sort of criticism.

I believe that high school was only a means to access an acceptance letter from a university. Only after I joined this institution that I realized how much I didn't learn about language and writing skills at school.

### ***Simba's profile***

My name is Simba. I live in Lesotho in the Leribe district and I was born in 1990, the two official languages spoken in my country are Sesotho and English. I am Mokoena by clan, with the crocodile having symbolic meaning to us.

The crocodile is an animal which the "Bakoena" mythically have its attributes, especially strength, a very strong will to power, and its being respected by other animals in its habitat as if it were king, it is also used on the national flag because the royal family are also "Bakoena". Of course there are several clans in my country, and most of them are attached to animals or places of origin, but "Bakoena", those that swim upstream against

even the most raging currents, the kings themselves, are said to be destined for greatness. “koena e sesa e nyoloha maliboho” – a crocodile swims upstream against raging currents, that is how the “Bakoena” brag.

I went to school at Leribe English Medium School [abbreviated as L.E.M.S] from primary level to high school. In general, I have always been a hard-worker and I managed to achieve very good results when I left that school. It was a very tense learning environment, where discipline was a very important factor, and corporal punishment was still allowed. Although this may have seemed to be wrong, it made everyone to take the education they offered very seriously and most of my colleagues passed very well too, and they were not ill-mannered, all thanks to that. I used to study mathematics, science, geography, English language, Sesotho language, English literature, and principles of accounts [accounting]. I then went to the National University of Lesotho and completed the first year of BSc General and obtained a merit pass, after which I transferred to the University of Cape Town to study Electrical Engineering.

I grew up in a village called Sebothoane, with my brother and two sisters. My father is a commercial farmer, he has inspired me all my life, his story of how he rose to success is a very touching one, hard worker and an optimist, he is. On weekends and during the holidays I always help in both in the fields during harvest time and sowing time, and at home [by milking cows, and feeding the animals (sheep, chickens, cattle)], and I still do it up to this day. During my spare time I listen to music or read novels and some of the literary works that I admire the most are – *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, and *Beyond Good and Evil* by Friedrich Nietzsche. Considering the environment that I grew up in, it might seem very strange that I decided to study engineering, well, it is all due to the fact that I like challenges and that I would like my name to be remembered in my country as one of the people who brought great technological innovations in it, and bearing in mind that it is a third world country.

During this year that I have been at the University of Cape Town, I found it very hard to keep up with the pace that was used in academics, but I got used to it as time went by, and still try my best. When I first got there, I found it hard to interact with people, and this also became better with time. I also like the characters of most people I met and live around, non-judgemental, friendly, good people indeed.

When I was in high school we were always encouraged to use idiomatic expressions in our writings. We had a book that had a list of these expressions and their definitions, failure to use them would result in very low marks. These phrases would result in good literary work but they were a very inefficient way for a scientist or an engineer to communicate information, this is a fact I learned when I got to the National University of Lesotho in a course I took called communication skills. When I went to UCT, I used to attend writers workshops on weekends, they then opened a new door altogether and introduced me to rather vast methods of not only communicating information but analysing literary works. One of the methods I learned that intrigued me very much was what I would call: “The non-face-value analysis”, it involved deeper analysis in which a phrase might have either multiple meanings or a single meaning, that a reader would not get by thinking of it at face-value.

### ***Bob's profile***

My name is Bob. I am a 2<sup>nd</sup> year Computer Science major from the Land of the Brave. Yes, I know you aren't too sure where that is, it's Namibia. It's the South Western African nation, with a beautiful desert and bright blue sea. I grew up in a small town called Rundu in the Northern part of the country.

Rundu arguably one of the smallest towns in the country had developed slower than most of the other towns and cities. I went to an ex all white school where I learned Afrikaans and other cool foreign languages and cultures. I am Kavango by birth and hence have a rich heritage in terms of cultural beliefs and norms. My father who also studied and trained in South Africa during his time was the spear header towards my successful acceptance into UCT.

At school I enjoyed writing very much. It was a way that I could express myself and my inner thought clearly without fear of being judged. I did very well in my class and thus continued to write and to write and to write. It was never a tough task for me, until I got to University. In my final year of high school, I wrote the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE). I then opted for degree in the Commerce faculty at UCT.

Upon my arrival at UCT I was glad that I still had the opportunity to write more, because it's something that I really enjoyed doing. Unfortunately to my surprise the writing I knew and was excitingly fond of was very different from what was expected of me here. I did very poorly in my first writing assignment and then I met Aditi and her string of workshops changed my writing ways forever!

The workshops have allowed expression. When we found something hard to say, it allowed us to show things instead. It allowed me to come more out. To say more to the tutor and ask questions. When I'm given an essay topic, I think about it first. I construct different images in my mind. These help me build my ideas around the topic. I then draw a mind map for the essay. Theatre also allows you to open up in the process. It frees your mind, allows you to be creative. If you want to write, you need to enjoy it, to be creative. It all worked like magic and for my next writing assignment I scored a first, yes 80% ☺. Being new in this country, it was hard for me to speak the language. The workshops gave me a chance to express my issues and to be open about them. Over time, I've managed to overcome those issues. I now have friends in residence and on campus. I've also been voted into the House committee 2012 in my residence. It actually turned out to be an awesome year.

## Appendix 8 - Tahini's essay in the workshop

- (e) Facebook is a widely used social network and has millions and millions of users from all around the world. It started as a network where people with common interests could share their opinions and news and gather more information on what they like, but Facebook became a dialogue platform, where people communicate, express random feelings, or even share photos and videos.

The rising popularity of Facebook has made it possible for people to keep in touch with their friends and family, who reside in other parts of the world, or who they do not meet often. People with similar hobbies still use Facebook for that purpose, and are able to meet more and more people in the same situations. Facebook is cheap and internet, being available to most people nowadays, makes it an easy and reliable way to communicate. It also gives users the opportunity to get together and express their opinions on particular matters.

On the other hand, Facebook does have drawbacks. Facebook users make their life public, that is, their details are exposed to the whole world. People from every corner of the world see their pictures, their contact details and personal information, and not everyone is simply interested in making new friends and sharing useful information. Dangerous people look out for ways to use Facebook to get to their goals.

Also, since very recently, Facebook has become like a network for growing masses of people with similar opinions to get together and try to make or cause a change. The power that Facebook has today is so big that it can overturn a country's political system.

Facebook is a very useful social network and has proved to be very easy to use, but it may also ruin people's lives, and cause certain people to do stuff that they will regret.

## Appendix 9 - Fiona's essay in the workshop

"Describe a day in the life of an international student"

Being an international <sup>or a new</sup> student is often a difficult <sup>and distressing</sup> situation. Because firstly you have to find a place where to stay; to learn the language of the country if it is different ~~to~~ than your mother tongue or the language that you used to speak; you then have to get information about your new university, where is it located, what are the rules of the university, how things are done there (assignment, essays, exams, tests, tutorials, ~~if you have~~ books); you have to study hard to avoid failing and be pulled out or kicked out of the university.

~~To conclude, it is even though being an international student is difficult, often difficult, people heart~~

An international student must know that he/she must be <sup>careful</sup> ~~careful~~, ~~hard worker~~ or be courageous and hard worker.

## Appendix 10 – Bob's essay in the workshop

The benefits and drawbacks of Facebook.

Facebook is a social Networking site that allows users to actively communicate with each other. It has millions of users and is very common among teenagers.

The site acts as a strong marketing tool for some businesses, as many potential customers are often online. This is one huge advantage of Facebook. It is also a fast, easy and cheap method of communication as it is free for anyone to sign up. It helps connect people who are in different countries at the same time.

Unfortunately the popular site also has a relative number of drawbacks. Since the site accommodates over a million users, some people use this to their advantage and pass deceiving and often misleading messages. Some people are also conned online by unscrupulous users. It's often common that young children upload highly revealing and disturbing pictures and funny videos. This diminishes their moral standards and social wellbeing.

To a greater extent, Facebook is a positive tool for both communication and entertainment. This is evident in its forever increasing rate of popularity. If used correctly and appropriately, Facebook can be certainly one resource most people can not live without.

## **Appendix 11 – Tahini’s group project, discussion section**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### *Comparison of intertidal algal and animal life in False Bay with other regions along the South African coastline*

80% of the coastline of South Africa, which is about 3000 km long consists of beaches and dunes, the rest shelters rocky shores, kelp beds, coral reefs, and even open sea. The coastline is very rich in fish, algal and other animal species.

The East Coast is dominated by the warm Agulhas currents coming from the Indian Ocean, which flow downwards, and the West Coast is characterized by the upwelling of cold, nutrient-rich Benguela currents which are in the Atlantic Ocean. False Bay is situated at a point where it gets influenced by both of these major currents and is thus exceptionally rich in species.

Due to this difference in current direction and water temperature, different parts of the coastline harbor different kinds of ecosystems. In False Bay, there is a quite rocky shore, where there are mostly small animals and algae, that live between the slits in the rocks, giving rise to a quite diverse ecosystem. The Eastern Coast, mostly characterized by warmer waters, consists of sandy beaches, where it is hot, and the sand does not make a stable bottom layer, so other kinds of animals live there, like the plough snail and the white mussel, which are of the same colour of the sand and burrow in the sand. They come out at feeding times to minimize contact with predators. Sandy environments also tend to be habitats to large animals. The Eastern coast, precisely in the KwaZulu-Natal province, has coral reefs and subtropical temperatures, thus being habitats to a large variety of fish species, and also algal forests. The algae are very large and can go up to 30 m. The animal species tend to be very big also, and many sea mammals live there also. Sea turtles prefer sandy beaches to lay their eggs compared to rocky shores where they have nowhere to bury their eggs until hatching.

However False Bay is situated On the Western Coast and consists of a rocky shore which provides a firm foundation for the attachment of plants and animals. The fact that the shores’ ecosystem is influenced by wave actions and the tides, False Bay supports a great diversity of marine organisms, like mussels, seaweed, limpets, and sea urchins, among others.

Increased wave action in the Western Coast causes a greater average biomass than the other regions.

These small organisms on the shore provide fish with food, and the intertidal zone also has some species of fish. The rocky shores can be divided into five different zones, namely: the Littorina, the Upper Balanoid, the Lower Balanoid, the Cochlear, and the Infratidal zones. Each of these zone contains different spreads of organisms. The Eastern Coast, on the other hand, consisting of sandy beaches, has a relatively constant type of ecosystem along and up or down the shore.

While the Eastern coast is dominated by algal forests, the Western coast consists of kelp beds, which may extend to as much as 3 km. The kelp is a major source of food to a lot of animal species, some of which are important commercially, like the lobster and the shrimp that live in kelp forests.

The tides cause competition between animals, and thus the Western coast, unlike the Eastern coast, has a lot of animal species that are quite basal, sessile and feed by filtration, like barnacles, which attach themselves to the

rocks and grow on those rocks, while feeding with the tides, the sea water from the Benguela currents that are very rich in nutrients. This is because large consumers may be environmentally constrained, as biological interactions with their food are limited as tidal times are not very frequent.

The main difference between False Bay and other regions is according to their geography, the Western Coast has influences from cold and warm waters, and thus houses smaller species of organisms, the Southern Coast is mostly open sea, and harbors large mammals, like the whales or the dolphins which can swim. The Southern Coast consists of very few types of organisms, but they occur in large numbers. As for the Eastern Coast, the warm water, causes fish to live there mainly, and the coral reef is a habitat for a large variety of corals.

False Bay has an exposed shore, which decreases the number of animals feeding on animals, instead, filter feeding organisms are there, and dominate the upper shore, whereas the other regions are the habitats of herbivores as the sheltered shores allow large algal species to grow; this thus makes up the majority of their biomass.

*Patterns in diversity and biomass between the Infratidal and Littorina zones*

The results presented in the form of bar charts above show a clear difference between the two regions that are furthest apart, the Littorina zone and the Infratidal region. The Littorina zone is the highest region up the shore and the most exposed one, whereas the Infratidal zone is the most sheltered one and closest to the water.

Region	Mean number of species	Standard deviation for number of species	Mean Biomass	Standard deviation for biomass	Mean Size
Littorina	10	0.972	302.544	68.035	18
Infratidal	91.6	1.912	17356.752	1572.298	137.12

Table 4 : The summary of figures from the Results section

The above table shows that there is a big difference between the number, biomass and size of species in the Littorina and Infratidal zones.

The differences arise due to a variety of factors, including, temperature, exposure to sun, wind, nutrient availability water currents and wave action.

The Littorina is the most exposed zone to wind and sun, and houses the least number of organisms. This is because there is a lot of competition between organisms to reach the water, and so they try to get closer and closer to the Infratidal zone. However, certain animals have adapted and so they just live on the upper shore. Their feeding mechanisms are very basic, they filter water when there is high tide. As the water is very rich in nutrients, they obtain their food easily.

These organisms are mostly exposed to harsh environmental conditions, and they are well adapted to live. Mussels are clams that form part of the *Mollusca* family, and they have very hard shells that allow them to reduce loss of water. They live in groups, and they stick very close to one another, also to reduce water loss, and being blown away by the wind. They are filter feeders and mostly consume zooplankton that are brought by the seawater.

Barnacles are another species that live in the Littorina zone. These belong to the subphylum Crustacea, They are sessile, attach themselves to the rocks and grow on them. They form rings of calcified plates and they possess cement glands that allow them to stick to the rock. They are also filter feeders, and so, feed very easily

during high tides, when water brings in nutrients. They live on an exposed part of the shore, and their strong shell allows them to reduce water loss, especially during strong winds, protect themselves against very cold temperatures, and predators. They stick to the rocks and it is very difficult to move them.

The very few species of seaweed or algae that live in that part of the shore, are the coralline algae. They have very pale and unattractive colors and can survive without much water. Their structures retain water at high tides and they also absorb nutrients, and they carry out photosynthesis. As they are very thin and also attach themselves firmly to the rocks, herbivores do not reach them very easily.

The Littorina zone has a very small biomass.

The Infratidal zone, however contains a wide variety of both animal and algal species. The size of the species is more than those from the upper shore. The Infratidal zone is rich in sea urchins, starfish, seaweeds, anemones, but barnacles are quite rare.

These organisms live in the sheltered zone, and thus their feeding methods are not so basal. They do not have adaptations against dehydration or high wind speed, instead, the species are colorful, motile, and quite large, for example the algae *Gigartina stiriata*, and animal species that feed on kelp or algae or on other small animals that live in the water.

Being close to the water, makes them vulnerable to waves, and sea currents, that is why, the plant species have complex root systems that allow them to grip and stay firmly on the rocks. The animal species also have legs that allow them to attach to the rocks. They live between rocks, and thus they are always protected from sea currents.

The water is at quite a low temperature or, being a mixture of warm and cold currents, may be favorable to suit the organisms. As the sea water gets closer, the number of herbivores increases, the organisms feeding on kelp or any kind of photosynthetic algae increases.

As the organisms get suitable conditions to live, their feeding mechanisms get more and more complex, and their size also increases. The mean biomass in the Infratidal zone is around 57 times greater than the biomass of the organisms in the Littorina zone.

Wave actions can be both beneficial and disadvantageous. As waves increase, the mean biomass increases. So, the organisms at the lower shore have greater biomass to resist damage from waves and cling to the rocks to survive, and they get more nutrients at the same time. Those on the upper shore enhance their gripping adaptations, by producing even more cemented shells or larger legs that do not slip, but they get more nutrients at the same time also.

## **Appendix 12 – Simba’s essay**

The Gods must be crazy is a 1980 film directed by Jacobus Johannes Uys, a South African man. The setting of the film is Botswana and South Africa and its main theme is the contrast between a modern or rather “westernised” society and a primitive African society, with the main actor Xi (N!xau). A typical image of Africa is portrayed in the film, the image is characterised by primitivity (animalistic behaviour and an unorganised lifestyle), illiteracy accompanied by lower intellectual abilities, partial nudity not being an issue. Another “fact” that is exhibited by the film is that : Africa is an object of exploitation, and to wrap up, exaggeration versus reality of the Africans in the film will be explored. A stereotypical view of Africa and its inhabitants.

The film starts off by creating a primitive picture of Africans, still living in thatch-roofed houses, making fires outside and hunting wild animals to get food and uprooting certain plants to get water, they also live in the wilderness along with the animals (even dangerous predators). This clearly exhibits an animalistic attribute that Africans have by them having “adapted” to the nurture of nature – a parallel to the way animals adapt to their habitat, a typical example would be that of Xi using a tranquiliser arrow to capture an antelope and their knowledge of which roots could store water. Another picture portrayed in the film is that of a typical African being unorganised in terms of time and lack of ownership, as showed in the film Xi and his tribe-mates lead lives that are not governed by time as opposed to the “westernised” man who does things in an organised manner controlled by time. It is also observed that in Xi’s homeland no one owns anything and they live in a territory where they have equal ownership upon everything. And all these emphasise to some extent the inhumanity and primitiveness of an African society.

The concept of Africans being illiterate and them having low intellectual abilities is also another image created of Africa. This is shown by Xi actually talking to two animals, first an antelope he tranquilised and was asking for forgiveness and then it was a baboon which had taken a bottle which he was to dispose of, and in the latter incident Xi gets into “deliberations” with the animal. Xi and his people’s first encounter with a bottle shows another level of illiteracy, them becoming obsessed with the object and clearly showing that a typical African introduced to even to slightest sense of ownership becomes violent, jealous and willing to share and intellect also shows up in this paradigm in that they cannot adjust to change. A bottle, just a bottle, destroys the homogeneity they had always had. Xi then decides to go to the “end of the world” to get rid of this “evil object” displaying another level of illiteracy in them thinking there actually is the end of the world. Xi’s first encounter with white people where he thought that they were gods not humans like him, and him thinking that mechanical devices like cars and aeroplanes are animals, are other portrayals of very low intellect.

We then see Africans who have not embraced the western culture in the film shown half-naked (partially nude), women showing their breast and men displaying their buttocks, these are images which we would expect to be censored in a normal film which is meant for all audiences, but they are not, just to show how nudity among an

uncivilised society is not an issue. Xi is surprised when he sees “civilised” people , wearing clothes and this shows that, him being half-nude did not matter, and a primitive mentality and animalistic behaviour is also portrayed in this paradigm. This picture is painted into the minds of an audience, as an image of Africans, and that of Africa, sad is it not?

For the grand finale, a deeper look into the director of the film is taken, him using a caricature of exaggerated “clicks” as a form of comedy in a film that seems to be a documentary depicting the life of that African tribe, and showing that Africa is still an object of exploitation as a parallel to African slaves that were “exported” in the past. The film having made over a hundred million dollars, the main actor N!xau only receives about three hundred dollars. This is also becomes a bit satirical when we look at the fact the director Jacobus Johannes Uys is a South African, an African man exploiting African people, an ultimate depiction of a lack of conscience. And this film was regarded by Recharad lee et al (1999:205) (an anthropologist) to be a “romanticized” way of life of the Ju’hoansi (Xi and his people),not even close to reality.

The film is a rather sad and false depiction of Africa, full of exaggeration and one of the ultimate mockery of mockeries, meant to feed the mind of the stereotypes.

**Bibliography:**

Jacobus Johannes Uys .1980. *The Gods Must be Crazy(the motion picture)* . South Africa.

*Bibliography for N!xau.* [online]. Available: <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0618452/bio> [accessed 2011 September 2 17:13 hrs]

Richard B. Lee et al. 1999. *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers*. United Kingdom : University press, Cambridge.

## **Appendix 13 – Bob’s essay**

### **Distortions caused by Government Intervention. Is it helping in the growth of the maize market or is the maize market taking a Nose-Dive? Let us investigate.**

I strongly argue that government intervention in the South African maize agricultural market has greater positive implications than negative effects. In this essay I explore the various distortions that the government brings into being and the effects of such distortions. I will focus on maize as an agricultural commodity in South Africa.

Government intervention in the maize market sets out to attain two major goals these are; social efficiency and economic equity. These two objectives are best achieved together and this is the way the state works through it.

The citizenry of the country deserves to have access to their most basic needs. These are catered for by the public goods which include water, food, housing and basic education. “Markets work best when government provides public goods.” (Wheelan, 2005). State activity ensures that most people in the country get the abovementioned public goods for free or at the most affordable prices. Since maize is a staple food, it is a necessity for most poor people and owing to this the government has to make sure its provision is flawless.

The provision of public goods by the state helps the nation to have greater confidence in the country’s administration. However if the responsibility of providing these goods is left in the hands of the private sector, most businesses will exploit the maize market. This is because most private firms practice on a profit maximisation motive. The government thus strives to provide these goods directly to its citizens.

The government also intervenes in order to help rural firms and communities operating in the maize agricultural market, to remain economically viable. The state may set a Price Ceiling. This involves setting a standard low price for maize, above which maize producers are unable to sell their produce. Accordingly all maize producers will be selling at a similar price. On most occasions price ceilings are employed on maize at the beginning of the planting season, with the aim of keeping prices of agricultural goods at a level that all South Africans can afford.

Again the government may help reduce imports from other maize producing countries in order to give local firms a chance at making it in the market. This it does through increasing taxes on imports, especially of maize and other related commodities. This discourages exports from other countries. It may also charge higher corporate tax on multinational private maize-producing firms in South Africa. In so doing, the local businesses are placed at a better chance of succeeding in the competitive market.

Intervention by the state through its monetary and fiscal policies further helps to ensure that there is ample amount of funds in the economy. This creates a good commercial environment for businesses that are in their start-up phase and other smaller struggling firms. As a result more native firms are encouraged to start-up business ventures in the maize market. This will lead to an absence of large monopolising businesses that exploit the market. This ascertains that prices are stabilized and native maize producers have a greater chance of succeeding in the market.

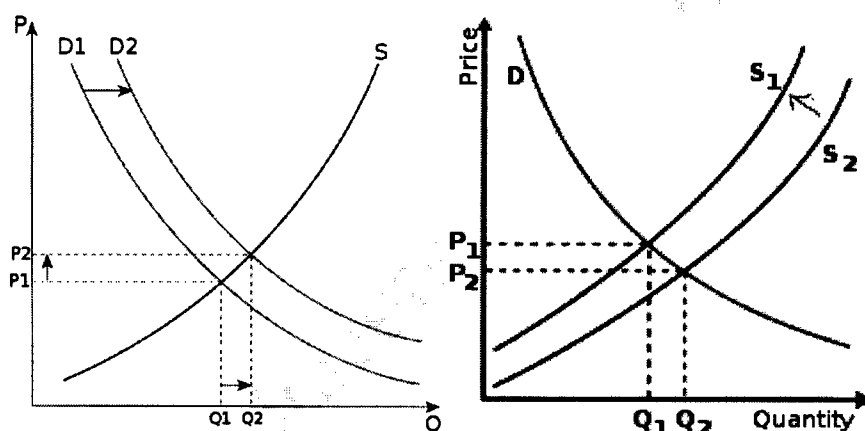
The state may also help increase the efficiency and strengths of the local firms in the maize market. This can be done by making various resources such as fertilisers, combine harvesters, irrigation systems and well-trained labour available to them. It may also aid in trying its level best to provide relevant data and information which may include

economic indicators, price fluctuations, and aggregate demand and supply. Their output will raise both in terms of quality and utmost quantity. In the same light state presence may help improve economic facilities and related infrastructure such as roads, railway lines, academics, communication.

Moreover as our resident firms become more economically strong, their ability to compete in foreign markets increases. Since local producers become more efficient, they produce better quality maize that is suitable for international consumption. The government may also help in the marketing of these highly performing maize producers. This can be done through the provision of monetary, capital and entrepreneurial resources. This inevitable increase in competitiveness and efficiency of local maize producers and sellers, may lead to an expansion in the export of maize and thus adding to the GNP and GDP of South Africa.

One other significant role that the government plays by intervening is to respond to food production problems. Small farmers in South Africa face numerous production challenges which include; land degradation, scarcity of water, poor soil fertility and heavy weed infestations. (Chiduza, 2007).

Economic theory dictates that when any one of these events occurs, the demand for maize sky-rockets since its supply diminishes.



An increase in supply

a decrease in supply

As depicted in the graphs above, a decrease in supply from curve S<sub>2</sub> TO S<sub>1</sub> shows a decrease in output supplied. This leads to a decrease in demand from curve D<sub>1</sub> to D<sub>2</sub>. In order to restore the optimum supply levels of maize, the government in such instances may offer fertiliser subsidies, irrigation subsidies, grants or loan rebates. These resources help the maize farmers to at least maintain appropriate levels of output suitable for the market.

Government influence on the maize agricultural market, also aids in the protection and conservation of the environment. The economic theory of the firm supports my claim as it assumes that the average private business operates on the profit-maximization motive. "The firm's primary objective in producing output is to maximize profits." (Anderson, 2001) Consequently most producers of maize, especially the big firms and the ones from abroad, will care less about the environment but more on reaping the most monetary rewards. The government with

an aim of implementing social justice may therefore offer subsidies, for instance financial incentives, to environment-friendly farmers. This in the long run helps to maintain the productivity of the land and the community's environment as a whole.

However, it can be argued that businesses are most effective and productive if governed by the invisible hand. The French economic doctrine, "*laissez faire*", argues that; "an economy is most productive, if it can pursue its own economic interests freely". (Blecher, 2009). It is well known that throughout the world, very few people apply the aforementioned ideology. Still it does not allow for equal distribution of resources, but rather allows the rich to get richer and the less fortunate to drown deeper into the sea of poverty. For this reason in a much needed attempt to (Richard, 2007)eliminate this huge gap, the government steps in to help grow a more balanced distribution of assets and wealth so as to eventually achieve economic growth and prosperity.

In short, I believe that distortions caused by government intervention in the South African maize market do way more good than damage. This is because state presence ensures equal distribution of both maize as food and its rewards as an economic commodity. Local firms are made more functional by state incentives and general control of the economy.

**Appendix 14 – Evaluation form (last session) by participant**

Nationality: ZIMBABWEAN

1. What did you like most about this session?

> Speeches

2. What did you like least about it?

N/A

3. Was the session informative?

Yes

4. Comment on the facilitator's input.

It was extra-ordinary

5. How did you find the learning space?

It was ok, and seem like they are improving workshop by workshop

6. Comment on the teaching methods.

They were effective

7. Any other comments/suggestions?

Keep on the workshops, they really help a lot

8. Rate the session (tick)

Excellent

Very good

Good

Average

Poor

✓

9. Comment in general about the whole series:

It was educational and worth it. Learned a lot.

10. In which areas do you think your writing has improved? In which ways have you changed as a person?

Writing has especially helped me in viewing a situation from various angles and also being able to think critically.

11. Comment on the spaces used. Which ones do you prefer? How do they differ from the lectures? Do you think they are effective? Suggest other spaces.

I think the outdoor space, once in a while is efficient. Sometimes in the boardroom its like its too formal though its good though for most lectures.

12. Comment on the methods used. Which ones work best? Why? Suggest other methods.

Use of videos is really effective as today's students now are more interested learning through multimedia.

13. Any other comments:

Thank you

Appendix 15 – Evaluation form (last session) by observer

Writers' workshop - Evaluation form

31 March 2011

Nationality:

1. What did you like most about this session?

Giving of the speeches. And Churchill's speech.

2. What did you like least about it?

It's a pity not everyone was there; more people would have made it more fun, I think.

3. Was the session informative?

Very, as always. The bit about the type of speeches & how to make was really informative, well presented introduced &

4. Comment on the facilitator's input. Useful.

Good.

5. How did you find the learning space?

Being outside was nice. It was just getting progressively chilly & overall it was good.

6. Comment on the teaching methods.

Good.

7. Any other comments/suggestions?

Again, I do think it is important to always point out the direct relevance of the activity to the writing process. I-E

8. Rate the session (tick)

Excellent

Very good

Good

Average

Poor

that academic writing is no different from giving a speech - & being persuasive

9. Comment in general about the whole series:

As a whole, I think it worked. But - strange I know - I think I would have made the last lecture/workshop first... Writing is all about persuasion & getting that in early makes sense to me. Followed by that 1st lecture, followed by the essay writing lecture & closing off with the drama... I don't know. The drama lecture is strange for me because although it was probably the most exciting it was also tied to a person? The workshops were useful for me too! I particularly liked the ones that didn't have immediately apparent relation to writing (drama + speech workshops) but that, in turn, could be mind explicitly to show that relevance. I liked also the "think on your feet" approach; writing in class as in exams, something I don't do enough of unless it's a diary or notebook entry.

least when together is relevant to the other think why? think it can go last.

10. In which areas do you think your writing has improved? In which ways have you changed as a person? Comment on the spaces used. Which ones do you prefer? How do they differ from the lectures? Do you think they are effective? Suggest other spaces.

Better than lectures, no doubt. If you do decide to use these spaces I'm not sure what impact they will have on your teaching style. Although your pedagogical approaches differ to conventional methods, you still do rely on classroom - like aids: desks, projector, watching videos, writing, etc - & if the space becomes too cluttered it might not be too accommodating to what needs to be accomplished.

11. Comment on the methods used. Which ones work best? Why? Suggest other methods.

I think you need to expand on your participatory methods - students doing more stuff in class (giving speeches, active reading, etc) - these worked well & were fun & got to test the responses of the students. I also think you need to include an exam of bad writing; all that you had was good but it would help to have a sample of what is not working in a text.

13. Any other comments:

I think that next time you run such workshops, the observer (my role) should be non-participating or not so much. You all to somehow discuss this in detail or how that relationship is going to work but I do think (the) I got to be too much part of the group. You could just introduce the observer at the start as "such to the group" He will be observing the class, etc. The observer (also) can then get to function as the camera person as well when/if you need things recorded as you did on several occasions, or photos taken, etc.

### Appendix 16 – The best academic essay of the year

Categories	Who/What	Roles <sup>33</sup>
Stage	<i>Home, library, lecture theatre, exam room</i>	<i>Provides material and assistance (well-documented)</i>
Script	<i>Department decides on the script, debatable issues, opinion piece</i>	<i>To persuade people, show opinions, get marks, test students' understanding, provide information</i>
Script writer	<i>Students</i>	<i>Deliver the information, summarise, take and create</i>
Language	<i>English (formal academic), jargon (specific to the topic), structure</i>	<i>Medium of communication</i>
Stage director	<i>Myself, tutor</i>	<i>Eliminating irrelevant material, criticizing, analyzing information</i>
Actors	<i>Thinkers, scholars, myself, friends</i>	<i>Protagonist (thinkers), antagonist (myself), supportive friend (scholars, myself)</i>
Audience	<i>Marker (tutor or lecturer)</i>	<i>Criticize, judge/mark, supplement ideas.</i>
Theme	<i>Historical, contemporary issues, theoretical topics</i>	<i>Creates one main focus.</i>
Special effects	<i>Emphasis, presentation, charts, image, examples, satire, structure, bring in one's opinions</i>	<i>More interesting, attracts attention of the marker, show relevant ideas, highlight more important ideas.</i>
Rule setters	<i>Department</i>	<i>Ensure that the essay meets the requirements. Sometimes the rule setters choose a very narrow topic that is hard to expand. Act as speedbreakers.</i>
Others	<i>mood<sup>34</sup></i>	<i>Gives the essay life Take it on a tangent Both moods (good or bad) can affect the essay.</i>

<sup>33</sup> This was hand written by participants after much deliberation in the grids provided (see chapters 8 and 9). I have typed them out. Participants' responses are in italics. See next page for a hand written sample (third column).

<sup>34</sup> During the conversation, participants stated that 'mood' was an actor.

- Provides material and assistance (well-documented)

## ROLES

- To persuade people
- Show opinions
- Get marks
- Test students' understanding
- Define the information
- Summarise
- takes and creates
- medium of communication

- Eliminating irrelevant material
- Criticising
- Analyzing information

protagonist, antagonist, supportive friend  
 (Thinkers) (myself) (Scholars)  
 (myself)

- Criticise
- Judge/mark
- Supplement ideas
- Creates one's <sup>main</sup> focus (idea)

- more interesting
- attracts attention of the marker
- show relevant ideas
- highlight more important ideas
- Ensure that the essay meets the requirements
- Sometimes the auto-selectors choose a very narrow topic that is hard to expand
- Act as speedbreakers
- Gives the essay life
- Take it on a tangent
- Both moods (good/bad) can affect the essay

