

The Conscious and Unconscious Power in Pedagogy of Creative Writing: Liberation of Self

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the idea of creative writing as a stimulant for higher order thinking. In doing so, it examines the relationship between creative thinking and writing processes. Therefore, in elaborating the term creative thinking, the paper discusses in the light of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory – the unconscious mind. Under the influence and guidance of our unconscious mind, a liberating writing process occurs in a creative form. During this writing process, we develop a new identity as a result of the production of language. In which, this “new identity” has no influence or power over reader's knowledge, however noble the writing can be.

Keywords: Creative writing, critical thinking skills, psychoanalysis, discovering, engaging, thinking and mind

INTRODUCTION

The Unconscious Mind of Creative Writing

This paper forms a new discussion here – creative writing is a process writing which involves critically both the conscious and unconscious mind (discuss later), and eventually improves one's cognitive development in relation to development of higher-order thinking skills. It is due to this writing process, the conscious mind of the writer becomes deeply aware of his or her usage of words and other language expressions. So much so, it is an innate ability to involve an internal activity to produce what Chomsky notes it as “a reality of our own sum up” (Chomsky, 1972). Also, Sigmund Freud dictates in his early lectures about psychoanalysis that “conscious is attached to reality” (Freud, 1910). Conscious, therefore, as he postulates, is a total sum of our own life experiences with our existing environment – our emotions, memories, thoughts, perceptions, pre-dream stage and awareness (Freud, 1910). In creative writing, the writer is the visionary for his or her materials. Hence, he or she has to exercise the muscles of his or her mind to engage actively; and during this tumultuous exhortation, the access to our inner thoughts is made possible. To put it plainly, this is the moment we begin to train ourselves mindfully to select thoughts and set thinking in logical order. For this reason, the paper aims to discuss the aspects of how creative writing can bring new awareness to our roles as writers.

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It is difficult for us to draw specific relevant experiences to discuss the actual content of own unconsciousness. For one to even elaborate on actual unconsciousness activities can best be put forth speaking from one's own experiences – otherwise it is a non-introspective entity. However, one is better equipped with knowing the tapping into our consciousness purely derives from predecessors' philosophical theories or applications of theories closely related to readjust or alter our egos to fit into the challenging society. This paper henceforth dedicates the attention not discussing how the cultivation of positive mindful habits works but to shed light upon how we develop new identities throughout the writing process.

In the context of learning and producing language properties, there are some mental movements or, more specifically, an amount of logical thinking before leading to actual reasoning, making judgments, preparing and executing a public speech in the desired language. Chomsky denotes this as universal grammar, where “the set of possible signals and the set of possible semantic representations” are well represented in an environment (whether it is presented in a reading form or in an oral form) where the group of people have potential to recreate a similar set of semantic representations based on their personal perceptions or understanding about the subject mentioned (Chomsky, 1972). As much as it deals with our common sense, in this quiet moment of acquisition of knowledge (or rather executing it), we somehow rely on our fundamental thinking skills to recompose what has been constructed and executed (usually taken from other sources). In a creative writing context, writers make informed choices to make the best of its subject content. Flower and Hayes put forth to us four main points a writer go through at a conscious level: 1) orchestrate or organise a set of distinctive thinking process, 2) a hierarchical, highly embedded organisation of thought process, 3) a goal-directed thinking process, 4) create high-level goals and sub-goals (Flower & Hayes, 1981). This concludes that an individual, in fact, taps into his or her higher order of thinking during a writing process to improve three areas of his or her mental faculty unconsciously which we intend to build on in this paper:

- 1) Expression of language (daily or academic)
- 2) Articulation of thoughts, actions, behaviours and speeches
- 3) His or her personal mind of philosophical thinking and intelligence capacity

Not without surprising gestures, the sequence of language production during creative writing requires basic knowledge about the world to instrument the flow of narrative. Obviously for frequent novelist, short story writers or writers in general, one observes the flow of writing come naturally from experiences. However, these collective writing experiences do not stem out rigidly from writing skills alone. It is a combination of organisation and instruction of a thinking process in the desired language and the intelligence capacity to operate one's daily activities.

As Emig points out that writing is a human basic activity and its contents are fundamentally not a source originated by its own – but, through the influences of our daily activities, thoughts, behaviours and speeches in order to guide our writing (Emig, 1977). If Chomsky were right about his analysis that “human speech is distinguished by (the creation of linguistic expressions) qualities” and a human is less a human without the knowledge that “the normal use of language, is a creative activity”, then, the improvement on our mental faculty in specific three areas mentioned above might serve as an attribute to this paper and to his analogy (Chomsky, 1972).

Hence, we attempt to point out that any daily event that we choose to make highly dependable on the quality of the mind in which – the manner and approach of using the desired language not entirely from the production of it – however, through one's collective perceptions and knowledge stored up unconsciously. If we were to agree the language activity in above 1) derives directly from our daily activities, and; they have undergone a systematic process of decision making in the desired language, then we ought to link this connection to the cognitive development – higher-order thinking. In turn to this proposition, an individual having to undergo a creative writing process, could unleash better arguments or possess an improved socioemotional and cognitive development. As Elliott, Kratochwill, Littlefield Cook and Travers exemplify that cognitive processes engage with our “thinking, intelligence and language”, which as a result of proper training in this area could advance the development of thinking ability (Elliott & Travers, 2000). Socioemotional processes, as they further pointed out, are in response to our engagement with our internal emotions. This guides the individual to handle his or her emotions or feelings with people and environment not through an instinctive mode, but, utilising his or her higher thinking processes to adjust himself or herself appropriately (if by any chance being challenged).

Returning to the above mentioned 1), we are expressing with some frisson that under a creative writing moment or process, this individual leaves consciously behind a set of logical thinking while manipulating the narrative in the motions of language. Due to this reaction, the individual has heightened its awareness of language use –slightly more sensitive at beginning stage – however increased its level of sensitivity gradually. As a result, improvement in expressing oneself competently (in written or spoken) is undeniable.

If the above argument has its stand, then, what follows in above mentioned 2) ought to explain itself with much clarity. As we are consciously aware for a language to operate at a fluency degree heavily justifiable by the amount of time and experiences we live within it. For example, taking our view temporarily out of our expertise, say in order for a notable English judge to carry out his or her judicial duties in court mindfully, he or she must be well-versed in the language which is being used in court.

Furthermore, it is not just beholding legal knowledge and having the capability of translating that knowledge to a layman in court – more advance level of ordering the system of thoughts operate in his or her thought (while processing both knowledge + language). Needless to say language plays a pivotal role in his or her legal translating capacity, to highlight an importance to the latter annotation, the process of ensuring the language being executed to volatile listeners becomes his or her primary attention.

As an observer not from the legal perspective, in order for the judge to articulate the fluency of language in the legal aspects, training of the mind becomes an essential desire. Therefore, if one has improved in above 2), he or she must have undergone a routine practice in writing creatively or simply engaging himself or herself in a writing process. In this sense, a collective experience in organising thoughts and speeches eventually becomes an entity of a quality articulation in the mental aspect.

Let's study and analyse the creative writing thinking process and how at a conscious level, the writer chooses to express the narrative by taking a line from Flannery O' Connor's short story "*Everything that rises must converge*". This was a story written in her time of living condition back in the fifties where social upheaval in the southern part of United States was closely related to "racial disintegration". Hence, this story below narrates the conflicting behaviour and attitude of both Julian and his mother, displaying their personal differences in terms of their set of social beliefs and national identity.

"You remain what you are," she said. "Your great-grandfather had a plantation and two hundred slaves."

(O'Connor, 1965)

As one proceeds on with creative writing practice (by observing the illustrated example using Flannery O' Connor's short story), one could easily see the cognition improvement stages only when one has achieved 1) and 2) could lead this individual to 3) for further development in one's higher-order of thinking.

The crux of this proposition derives unswervingly from the regular performance in engaging and producing creative writing works. Having to put forth this notion, language in the mental faculty has become not only an entity of expressions; it has in its own way transforms into a system of careful and learned thoughts (well-organised). In making sense out of its comfort zone, the mind at present stage 3) ponders into deep thinking about the philosophical world and builds on knowledge upon his or her collected perceptions. Under this capacity of thinking, the mind enlarges to a degree where he or she dwells into philosophical arguments internally, and, probably at a later stage, produces them (articulated arguments) into writings.

At later stage in the experience of creative writing process, one would find himself or herself has the ability to articulate his or her own thoughts in a systematic manner, and as a result of this cause, he or she tends to make better decisions in life. So much has been illustrated here in regards to connection between language and internal thinking system, it is important to note that the ingredient to communicate effectively in the challenging society – is therefore the intelligent employment of a day- to-day language.

This notion of argument above advocates the indication that our minds are not manifested in a manner of our controlling our thoughts (in a form of language), however, it is the creative use of day-to-day language to operate and manage ourselves through our higher-order of thinking. A translated work of earlier philosophers of human minds back in 17th century Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole by Jill Vance Buroker navigates the contemporaries that the mind is "not born to spend their time measuring lines, examining the relations between angles or contemplating different motions of matter" (Arnauld & Nicole, 1996). If we follow this statement as true, then, the mind itself can manifest its power not in doing or guiding us to perform a task but expressing its quality in the form of language.

Linguist Benjamin Whorf in his book “Language, Thought and Reality” believes strongly that our language capacity connects us to our inner thinking, and, in this particular position we project, shares similarity to what he preached – language itself shapes “the idea, the program and guide the individual’s mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade” (Whorf, 1963). To emphasise on this point, the practice of creative writing allows the language to enter our minds with an impact on perfecting a language skill - while engaging our deeper thoughts during the entire process. All in all, even when one has completed the process, the formulation of ideas or developing any form of relationships with the linguistics compartment, our mind does not cease to perform.

Discover “You” as an Author in Writing Creatively with Consciousness

Who are You as a Creative Writer/Author?

The second part of argument bending towards the idea of creative writing as a methodology to construe meanings from the struggling “self” (we as individuals) with text and language attempts to answer one significant question (written above in italics) over the creative writer’s conscious thinking and behaviour towards the text, which would be further discussed below in detail. This draws from Rosendale’s article calling for the need to construct a writer’s identity through a writing platform for students called Basic Writing Journal. Here, she points out that “1) the Basic Writer was perceived as incapable of propelling her /himself to the next" cognitive" or neurological level alone, requiring instead the teacher/scholar's aid in order to accomplish this feat” (Rosendale, 1999).

Hence, this leads the paper to define the creative writer’s identity with much fervent to inform like-minded that through writing creatively is to learn and know one’s self better. “There is no one way to design a piece of writing” as Murrays clearly understands that it is the role and duty of the writer to make the writing works for the audience (D. M. Murray, 1985). Therefore, the question raises here is to determine what type of practical role a creative writer or author plays during the writing process and how does this affect the way we interpret ourselves or others in the process of thinking.

Before the paper takes the stance to develop the creative writer role on Jenkins’s idea of cultivation on a writing habit – “a new dimension of thinking of the” individual and expanding “the mind to new lengths, accompanied perhaps by a new perception of beauty and perception of beauty and humanity”, and, also drawing upon Harper’s concept of a creative writer as an investigator on topics or a theme; it is preminent to present the four main roles in the lights of these two researchers (Harper, 2013; Jenkins, 1965). Below is a belief Harper sees in a creative writer during a research process of work, but this is to draw your attention towards what the paper intends to present, hitherto he composes that:

A creative writer might be interested in how a subject can be investigated or a theme explored in light of their personal history or in light of a cultural or social position – in other words, undertaking creative writing with a micro or macro focus on issues, ideas, attitudes. Or a creative writer might focus on structural or formal characteristics \ of the practice of creative writing itself, with theme and/or subject being secondary or somehow less focal than questions relating to process or composition or relationships in text, language or graphic design, for example. These are merely some possibilities.

(Harper, 2013)

From this revelation of a prospectus, we can part the creative writer’s various roles into main themes for discussion – the theme explorer, the attitude shaper, the composer and the relationship discussant. This aspect of narrowing down to define the roles in simple agent nouns can shift our attention directly to their actions rather than carry coal to Newcastle while expressing it descriptively. In other words, we direct our focal point in defining the creative writer’s identity in terms actions instead of the thinking process which can be an illusionary debate. Therefore, at this stage, the paper focuses on the roles mentioned above and exemplifies on their essence of labour.

The Theme Explorer

Theme, as Stelle illustrates in her essay on the meaning of theme, is “the container for your story. Theme will attempt to hold all the elements of your story in place” (Steele, 2003). Stelle further draws out the gist of theme as a characteristic in making and producing meanings that matter to us at some emotional levels. It is an element where human values and beliefs are

exploited under the works and crafts of a story. To point it out clearly to gauge a deeper sense of this role in a creative writer, it contains messages you may attend to it mindfully after a story telling – be it in a movie form or written text form. That message you may think over for days – is the theme of a story. Therefore, the theme explorer, describes implicitly here, is someone who observes and makes new meaning out of everyday living and routines, however, at the same time reproduces the meaning in his or her definitions.

So to speak, in order to conceptualise a workable theme to relate to readers, the writer ought to have been a sharp and regular observer of life and meanings in relationships between everything. It is justifiable to arch us think that the writer's labour of craft expands from writing to analysing of his or her observations of life (refer to Table 1 summary of the four main identities below). Under the moment of creating, the creative writer ponders over the meanings in which reproducing materials utilising one's experience and knowledge. For example, if one would to write about a war story, the writer would seek within himself or herself – searching in the scope of work, school, one's relationship and etc, and bring out a theme out from one's experience. Now, let's say, the writer wants to talk about war in his or her work. The writer must then raise a few questions about what is the significance of discussing about the war matter, then relate an important message revolving around the topic war. In brief, the questions could be either one of these two:

- a) Would this war be about human's internal war with oneself? If it is so, what is the message the prose you would like to relate to the readers?
- b) Would this war be about consumers' rights in a particular product? If this is so, what could be generating the heat amongst the consumers and what could be the message?

Having established some formal answers to these questions, the writer would then present his or her perceptions of things into a prose structure – not directly relating facts or opinions. In this form, the writer engages with a deeper thinking on how those well-thought answers connect into paragraphs. During this time, the writer explores the range of relationships occurring between two mental states of zones discussed below. Patiently, he or she finds out more about these relationships and define the settling themes at the end (refer to Table 1 summary of the four main identities below).

For instance, the two mental states of zones are the conformity zone (where we obey rules and principles in life), whereas the other, the opposing zone (where we escape from the previous zone to play around with rules and principles). They are two zones which represent our perceptions of the world, in which, they constitute of moral values, human belief system (the conventional and unconventional) and personal knowledge. Arguably, the writer retrieves information from these two zones in order to facilitate him or her to express a particular theme in the prose.

The Attitude Shaper

As the coined name suggests, the writer, you, is at the same time, lending the themes to the readers so to shape and build on their current knowledge about the world. Although attitude shaping can come directly from the developing the themes and leave a strong message behind so for the readers to engage into a conscious level of thinking. However, it is the writer, at this stage to separate unrelated personal facts and opinions from his or her work, so in order, not to mislead the readers to arrive a point of misunderstanding (refer to Table 1 summary of the four main identities below). It is a fictitious material after all, unless it is a piece of academic writing employing creative writing techniques, then one might write a prose exposing one's views or opinions.

For example, taking the above theme a) on war – an internal war with oneself, the outcome of your written prose weaving tightly along the theme, can produce an effect to the readers post-reading behaviour. Therefore, during which the writing and thinking process, the writer must have thought carefully leave unrelated facts and opinions out of the prose. The writer is therefore someone who not only well-versed with words and sentences but also projects his or her work to a level to alter attitudes (if there is any). Also, the writer shapes others not through the words or paragraphs but working gently with ideas under the umbrella of themes (refer to Table 1 summary of the four main identities below).

The Composer

As long as the writer has shaped the prose to an engaging level, the prose must have been refined, of course, at a discussable level. Here, in the discussion of the writer being the composer of the prose, he or she must have accomplished some skillful polishing skills. The writer as a composer, with a degree of tolerance in allowing the work to operate loosely at the beginning, and then structuring the work to a meaningful conclusion, hence evolves as the coined name suggests. While construction of work upscaling its structure to “answer a reader’s question”, it comports the writer to perform to somewhat close to a utopian level ((D. M. Murray, 1985) 21. Therefore, at this time, the writer has taken up the role as a composer to produce a lyrical pattern, which, sensitive to omit or add details, so in order to answer the reader’s question properly (refer to Table 1 summary of the four main identities below).

To add, this is the moment, the writer composes the piece to bring the readers closer to the themes in the text. In terms of composing, the writer would seem to talk to his or her audience in the form of oral presentation – a voice – in which, Murray notes that “voice is the quality, more than any other,” and this, the writer is therefore necessary to think about having this strong voice. So, through the creative writing process, the writer develops this voice in order to relate the themes or whatever has been produced in the prose clearly.

For example, the writer has worked on the theme, let’s say, the theme on internal war with oneself is this – don’t beat up yourself too much, learn to let go. Having the theme in mind, the writer would have to invent events and tie in the theme concurrently. Now, the composer would then step in and advance the development of this voice. During the advancement of this voice, the composer would have attempted to try different voices – through writing them out in different styles (refer to Table 1 summary of the four main identities below). As a result, the writer has assumed the role a little more than just producing ideas, but at the same time, drawing out the sentences sufficient to answer a reader’s question.

The Relationship Discussant

The creative writer does not simply prove his or her point and then punctuates with a beautiful closing. However, in practice the writer unlocks the room for himself or herself to step in to observe relationships in which he or she understands better (refer to Table 1 summary of the four main identities below). The writer takes this opportunity to discuss about relationships between subjects and objects in life which matter to the world. For example, drawing from O’ Connor’s preparation of the prose mentioned above, she takes the opportunity to discuss a negative relationship happening at the time of racial integration in the United States. In that, she brings out two subjects – the mother and son – and then exploits the third relationship occurred in and during their conversation. In this attempt, she allures the readers to discuss this relationship within them as well as with the text, without dominating readers’ thinking, however, allowing them to explore and discuss freely (if there is any).

As a creative writer who plays the role of a relationship discussant, he or she does not point out the issue directly but invent characters, events and plots; and then show the causal relationship between the characters, events and plots. In actual practice, the writer does not establish an intermediate relationship with the prose; however his or her role is to let the readers grasp the gist of narration. Ultimately, through this process, the writer can discuss about these relationships openly without appearing too forceful in facilitating a direct conversation (refer to Table 1 summary of the four main identities below).

Table 1 Summary of the four main identities

Types of Identities	Qualities	Characteristics
Theme Explorer	Patient, attention to human details and displays understanding about the world	A life observer opens for new establishment of values
Attitude Shaper	Gentle with words, treat each idea with no audience in mind	A carer separates facts and opinions, avoid misunderstanding
Composer	Sensitive, tolerable to messy work of first and ability to fix later	A listener listens to readers' questions sensitively
Relationship Discussant	Understanding and care about human affairs	A mediator mediates relationships only through expression of words

The Significance of Learning About This New Identity

As Morley makes his point “self-knowledge helps you understand the shaping and fledging of your abilities” and therefore explained the above mentioned four major key role (Morley, 2007). Hence, it is pivotal to note the “self” enters the picture properly functioning as an entity of discussion with a foothold that you shape yourself along the flow of creating and imagining besides writing. He also mentions that during this writing time, you write for yourself and “it is a working affairs between you and the words” (Morley, 2007). At this present juncture, we can pinpoint that you have roles to act upon to justify your creative endeavor as it is purely you whom you are dealing with in the room alone.

Due to the amount of work and effort the creative writer has to deal with, he or she must be aware of this development in order to unveil his or her potential in thinking and writing freely (noting that there is no hindrance while writing any themes), as Foucault augments the idea “the-man-and-his-work criticism”(Michel, 1984). In which, he is suggesting the author must cultivate a sensible relationship with the text, in order for the writer to be able to access to his or her own writing with the audience’s in mind. It is in true practice that as creative writer one steps back to absorb what had gone through in the piece of prose – the structure, the characters in play their own specific roles in the designed plots and events and language that spurs the entire domain of story.

Through understanding one’s work and roles as a creative writer shapes you a better thinker, reader, writer and communicator. It is this discovery can lead one to be free from the entanglement of language barriers – conversing your materials with the audience, relating facts or opinions, presenting fresh ideas from conventional point of view. Conclusively, the new identities provide the writers to develop themselves further with goals in mind.

CONCLUSION

Murray writes “not overnight, for writing is a demanding, intellectual process; but sooner than you think, for the process can be put to work to produce a product which may be worth reading” (D. Murray, 1972). From this view, the energy put through during creative writing beckons a new light of understanding. In the annals of experienced writers, we might have forgotten the process of attaining these valuable thinking and writing skills, as well as crafts embedded within.

Although creative writing has been observed that it appeals only to the talented ones or those who are passionate about expressing themselves through language, it does not demarcate the idea of employing it as an instrument to develop ourselves on an intellectual outlook – cognitive development. It is clearly, expressed here within, any form of cognitive development requires some form of formal trainings and usually it takes the form of language. One is either given some of readings or writing activities in a distance of time and at the end of it – he or she ought to be given some room for articulation of his or her own

understanding – eventually depending on his or her higher- order thinking skills, this individual could be free in expressing himself or herself.

It is a pragmatic approach to ask for a different point of view in this form of writing not only to create characters in fictional events, but, extract ourselves out from the phantom of myth associates with it (usually its production genre) – which is an understatement not well defined – *it is only story writing and terribly understood by many*. We may be subjected to conventional way of developing ourselves cognitively; however, to bring this paper to a conclusive argument would be the amount of freedom we discussed above is incomparable to search within oneself. If there were an inquiry on a better approach to increase one's mental intelligence capacity without much cost, this paper might be a good lead to one's search.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deepest gratitude towards two very important people throughout this work. They are both my supervisor Dr. Tina Abdullah and my mother Lee Ah Moi. Dr Tina has shown me the light of seeing things in a clearer perspective and allowed me to explore without limit. My mother has been a primary figure in my academic studies and without her endless support and her invisible guiding spirit, this paper does not have a path to begin with. Most of all, the spark of these ideas has a gentle affair wholly with Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

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