

Establishing Creative Writing as an Academic Discipline in the Higher Education Sector of Pakistan

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Abstract

At various points in their thought processes, researchers often probe deep into the justification for particular research. A recurrent question that one frequently comes across has to do with the motivation to follow a path that may not only be relatively new and almost completely unknown, but could also comprise of dynamics that may or may not necessarily fall under the criteria of current research practice. What do such investigations expect to gain from such research? Could it possibly be to lead to the generation of new knowledge in its respective field? And if yes, than of what kind? For this article, the answers to the above have three justifications:

- a) The need for research conducted in the field of CreativeWriting Studies as a means to add new dimensions to the scholarly reshaping and a definite grounding of the arena as a proper academic discipline.*
- b) The need to establish CreativeWriting Studies in higher education institutes as a means of fostering a different variety of student learning, where the student works as his own teacher, in his own rights.*
- c) Despite occupying a pertinent place in the Western higher education, the discipline remains to serve as a rather marginalized and an invisible 'component' of the Pakistani academic profession.*

Contrary to the decades-long establishment of a critical pedigree in literary studies and the theoretical landscape of linguistic analysis within the English departments in Pakistan, various research inquiries have been unable to detect a concrete presence of CreativeWriting pedagogy in higher education institutes and universities. Even in instances where the same is not the case, that is institutes wherein the form is practiced as a subject, it appears to be

an academic discipline that is hardly ever driven by intellectual rigor, practice oriented innovative work, and is therefore often unreceptive to its own pedagogical structure. Given the context, this article identifies a persistent need for CreativeWriting to be acknowledged as an academic discipline, and establish a strong hold in the university academic circles in Pakistan. Taking the discipline's micro and macro environment analysis into account, the article will set out to demonstrate how conducting further research in its pedagogy can benefit CreativeWriting as a discipline by adding further knowledge in its context, both within the university sector in Pakistan, and anywhere across the world.

Key words: Creative writing, Teaching Creative Writing, Higher Education Reform, Textbooks

Introduction

For a long time now, higher education learners have been flocking to join the CreativeWriting programmes in various parts of the world, intending to become writers. Trying to match up with their enthusiastic pace, a vast majority of institutes today have come to the forefront to offer CreativeWriting Courses, most of them offering the workshop as a part of that course (James, 2009; Monteith & Miles, 1992). The academic teaching of CreativeWriting is therefore no longer given an alienated status. With the pedagogical mechanism of developing creativity in students contextualized with immense response, numerous academics have grasped the importance of an underlying standard which informs their teaching of CreativeWriting skills to learners (Bell & Magrs, 2001; Harper & Kroll, 2008). In universities and colleges all over North America, Australia, the United Kingdom, 'and elsewhere beyond the Western world,' the field has seen a gradual expansion in its 'genetic and research makeup' (Harper, 2006, p.1). Amidst this varied and diversified range of the CreativeWriting research context, there has been an on going quest among academics and the research community to inquire into teaching materials and pedagogical practices, quintessentially revealing such strategies that might provide meaningful support to our diverse student body. See, for instance, Atkinson (2003), Donnelly (2010a; 2012b; 2012c), Dawson (1999a;

2005b; 2007c), Ritter (1999a; 2007b), Khan (2011a; 2012b), Krauth (2008), Lim (2003), Mahony (2008), Mansoor (2010), Vanderslice (2006a; 2008b; 2010c; 2011d) and York (2008). With the concept of 'CreativeWriting' as an academic discipline being cross-examined more thoroughly, classifications about the 'production of type and forms of knowledge CreativeWriting generates have begun to filter down to affect how CreativeWriting is taught at higher education levels' (Harper & Kroll, 2008, p.1).

Unfortunately, in a country like Pakistan, not a lot is being done to make people perceive the importance of attaining CreativeWriting skills in English language to compose fiction (Imtiaz, 2010a; Khan, 2011a). In this part of the world, Kamila Shamsie propounds the presence of a vast majority amongst us who aspire to compose literary fiction in English, so as to promote Pakistani culture throughout the world as many cultures have been doing for a long time. Driven by their personal interest in the arena of CreativeWriting, she believes many among the average Pakistani masses possess some degree of innate natural talent necessary to create fiction, yet are still unable to do so due to limited exposure to proper CreativeWriting skills, especially when it comes to the English language (Shamsie, 2004a).

The same holds equally true for public sector universities within the country, where CreativeWriting is not only side-lined as a discipline, but is in fact left out altogether (Siddiqui, 2007). On the other hand, as Harper & Kroll (2008) point out, CreativeWriting is a 'still-expanding' area of study, which would suffice to explain why 'too little has been exchanged about the variety of *pedagogical* programs, methodologies and theories' in the area, internationally (p.1).

As plausible as the explanation would seem, certain facts still remain. The integration of CreativeWriting into a Pakistani university syllabi, whether in terms of it forming a part of the regular literature courses, or a subject in its own right aimed towards offering students a chance to develop as writers per se, is in many ways an uncharted territory (Mansoor, 2010). Additionally, even in higher education institutes where the same is not the case, Khan (2011a; 2012b) believes CreativeWriting is mostly recognized as a 'theoretical' rather

than as a ‘practice’ oriented discipline, and there also learners are neither ‘being provided with sufficient classroom practice in various genres of CreativeWriting’ (2011a, p.111) nor are their activities being assessed as per the assessment protocol of the Creative arts. The researcher also observes in this context how, just like their students, even Pakistani teachers tend to be some what ‘confused about the term ‘CreativeWriting’ and so tensions arise in the class-room’ (2011a, p. 112). Given this lack of exposure to and development of CreativeWriting skills, especially in our university students, it is excessively necessary to discover productive means to having our learners acquainted with CreativeWriting skills accordingly (Mansoor, 2010; Khan, 2012b). The present article intends to justify the rationale for establishing ‘CreativeWriting’ as a proper academic discipline in Pakistani universities, and will build on the same premise by surveying the arena in its native socio-educational context.

The Academic Teaching of CreativeWriting in Pakistan

On a serious investigation into CreativeWriting pedagogy in Pakistan, it would quickly become evident that this is one field that is not only marginalized within the literature courses in universities throughout the country, but is in fact excluded altogether (Khan, 2012b). Recent statistics indicate, that the twin fields of Mathematics and Information Technology across Pakistani universities foster the highest number of applicants for postgraduate scholarship examination, while Creative Arts is left with the lowest number of applicants, which reflects on the state of education (both in terms of quality, and quantity) in this field. ‘There are very few institutions that impart education in Creative Arts and again they are limited to only major cities of Pakistan, i.e. Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad’ (Siddiqui, 2007). Additionally, even in the cities mentioned above, Khan (2011a) believes CreativeWriting is mostly recognized in schools, and there also learners are neither being trained in a holistic or practical manner to create original Creative work(2011a, p. 111), nor are their activities being assessed as per the assessment protocol of Creative arts. The researcher notes how ‘the assessment system in Pakistan has marred students’ ability in CreativeWriting,’while the teaching of Writing itself focuses more on ‘memorisation of ready-made answers from help books, rather than on

the development of Creative abilities' (p. 111). The researcher further argues that the teaching of Creative Writing these days is mostly assimilated with an English Literature course, where it is confined to the works of classical authors such as 'Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge, Shakespeare, Charles Dickens,' with emphasis being placed on the authors' biographical sketches, the eras in which they lived, and the related trends and movements, and therefore teaching about literature rather than composing literature itself (Khan, 2011a, p. 113). In comprehensive terms 'the students do not write the stories themselves. They are not taught to develop the plot, characterisation or dialogue' (2011a, p. 114). The same thought is voiced by Yagelski (2000) and Zubair (2003a; cited in Zubair, 2006b), and Khan (2012b). The writers contend English Literature, as it is being taught in contemporary higher education sector in Pakistan, has lost its former prestige and productivity since canonical British texts continue being administered in the class room in 'a traditional pedagogical style focusing on themes, character and genre analysis, in contrast to the current trends of developing critical literacy awareness among students in order to challenge and deconstruct the texts' (Zubair, 2006b, p. 251). The researchers have evidently, therefore, been unable to detect a concrete presence of Creative Writing pedagogy or a proper practice in the higher education institutes. Emphasizing this rather ambiguous position occupied by Creative Writing, both as a practice and discipline, within the context of higher education in Pakistan. Imtiaz (2010a) cites Bilal Tanweer, currently a teacher conducting a Mechanics of Fiction course at Lahore University of Management Sciences, and states the reason why Pakistan is not producing enough writers is because education is being driven away from the humanities. 'We don't have enough of a literary culture' (Imtiaz, 2010a).

The marginal status of Creative Writing within the Pakistani literary academy more broadly and within Pakistani universities' curriculum, specifically, is further evident in that as yet there is hardly any university in the country that offers a course comprising of either Pakistani or even African, West Indian or Indian Creative artefacts in English (Naeem, 2010), let alone fostering development of Creative Writing skills among students (Imtiaz, 2010b). Additionally, our 'university research journals scarcely contain articles on Pakistani

literature in English and there is no equivalent of the prestigious Indian academic journals such as the Journal of Indian Writing in English' (Naeem, 2010); very few resources, both electronic or print, contain reference to universities in Pakistan in which Creative Writing is a formal specialization, and that too only pertaining to the three major cities mentioned above.

On the other hand, Ahmad (2011) observes it would be unwise for academics to undermine the efforts of various Pakistani authors who have nevertheless come to the Creative Writing pedagogical forefront and who actually do conduct occasional workshops. Various English novelists, such as Zulfiqar Ghose, H. M. Naqvi, Mohammed Hanif, Kamila Shamsie and Daniyal Mueenuddin, at times even teach Creative Writing as an adjunct to their primary roles as teachers of, for example, American, British, and/or postcolonial literature, and they do so under the aegis of art based institutes in some of the major parts of the country (Ahmad, 2011). The Four biggest names in this regard are Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in Karachi, British Council with its numerous Arts projects, PENPC (*P.E.N. Pakistan Centre*), and ASR Publications Pakistan, with the majority being non-governmental and non-profit organizations. Each organization purposefully aimed to initiate an opportunity for Creative writers to get their skills modified, unhindered by the decrees of conventional writers or the prowess of mainstream Pakistan (British Council, 2004; Jawaid, 2010; Pen Pakistan, 2011) and further, 'as an attempt not only to increase the body of knowledge within the country, but also to expose the works of Pakistani writers outside Pakistan, and to encourage hundreds of individuals to create pieces of Writing hitherto obscured and hidden from literary processes' (ASR Group, 2012). Other than the mechanism of these NGOs, a few universities in Pakistan have also come to the front that not only offer courses in Creative Writing but hold workshops as well. Thus the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Kinnaird College, Beaconhouse National University (BNU), and Lahore School of Economics now offer frequent courses in Creative Writing; whereas the Department of English at the University of Punjab has been holding several Creative Writing workshops, with Zulfiqar Ghose as the session leader, for the last three years (Ahmad, 2011). However, the tutorial

sessions and workshops are part of short-term courses, while ‘a full-time degree course in the country has yet to materialise’ (Ahmad, 2011).

Other than these few examples, there still remain today a vast majority of scholars who wish to practice Creative Writing, and master the skills informing the art, but have simply been unable to find any difference in the mainstream achievement and a proper place in workshops (Shamsie, 2004a). Consequently, our students are left with fewer choices other than getting enrolled in English Literature courses, or taking up Linguistics, with instructors likewise setting out to apply for positions as specialists in English literature, or ELT (Memon & Badger, 2007; Shah, 2011).

In contrast to the aforementioned situation, numerous other scholars from all over the world have conducted tangible studies focusing on training learners in adopting better Creative Writing skills, so they can explore various dimensions of their thought process pertaining to their particular traditions (Anderson, 2007; Baranay, 2008; Brophy, 2008; Brophy, 2010; Cole et al., 1999; Gureghian, 2010; Hardy, 2008; Harves, 2012; Krauth, 2008; Mahony, 2008; Mansoor, 2010; Vanderslice, 2008b; York, 2008; Webb, 2008). At the same time, among the various strategic inquiries that *have* been conducted in the field, many allude to the establishment of Creative Writing as an academic discipline as a calculated approach adopted by contemporary universities to meet various global demands in the present times (Almilia, 2007; Andrews et al., 2006; Biggs, 1979a; De Corte, 1995; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Materu, 2007). What follows is a detailed examination of factors deeming the establishment of Creative Writing as a full-fledged independent discipline necessary, thereby occupying a concrete place in the Pakistani academia.

Infusing Creative Writing as a Discipline in the Higher education Sector in Pakistan

It has become a contemporary axiom that universities today are facing an extensive assortment of competitive pressures, in terms of demand for better infrastructure, better business, and a better means of assimilating and disseminating knowledge bank, than ever before

(Toohey, 1999). To try to keep up with the pace, university administrations believe they cannot afford to do what they have always done the traditional way. This drives them naturally to seek a persistent change and innovation, reinventing themselves at an exhilarating speed to stay ahead of technological variables, competition from every corner of the globe, and the continually shifting demands of higher education curriculum (Degraff & Lawrence, 2002). Additionally, rather than repudiating this accelerated pace of change, it would be better to reinforce the same by an acceptance of its recurring nature. Thus in one sense Degraff & Lawrence (2002) contemplate that the challenges we face today are nothing new. 'Organizations have always faced multiple and disjointed—sometimes even opposing—pressures to create value for their customers' (2002, p.1). But what is slightly more conflicting is coming across the same in the context of global implications of education, such as the ones we face today. These are:

- a. The maintenance and enhancement of the developmental prowess and competence of a university,
- b. Research to ensure increase in student participation and
- c. Improved standards in higher education, especially in terms of its curriculum.

See, for instance, Almilia (2007), Andrews et al. (2006), Biggs (1979a), De Corte (1995), Entwistle & Ramsden (1983), Materu (2007). To match the 'development speed of today's global era' and the present implications of education, Almilia sees the inevitability of a situation that 'demands the emerging of new paradigm of a higher education institution' (Almilia, 2007, p.76). A similar course of engagement is followed by Materu (2007), who likewise proposes an expansion in the very fabric of higher education and an introduction of a new range of competencies in an HE institute critical in today's competitive and globalized knowledgeable society.

In order to improve the 'Higher Education/Research Relations and to strengthen the strategic basis of the ERA (European Research Area),' the 2003 European Commission Report resonates the concept of an effective educated society; a society that thrives on actual practice of knowledge 'in all sorts of areas and at all sorts of levels ... spanning the range of human experience' (Busquin, 2003). In absence

thereof, a 'Second Renaissance', or a re-revival of innovative knowledge, inevitably becomes 'a more ambitious and proactive scenario' in which the higher education system can be 'asked to play a fundamental structuring role, supporting new notions of competitiveness and social cohesion in the face of the aforementioned global educational dilemma. This would appear to be the central point for the development of a Creative society, and a key priority for educational policies' (Busquin, 2003). The report therefore asserts a 'long term public policy in the field of Higher Education and Research' as being based upon two related intents:

- Strengthening the HE/R system itself, (through all possible resources available),
- Enhancing the relation of the HE/R system with its environment, and especially with the other forces shaping the knowledge society (Busquin, 2003).

The aforementioned proposition in the field of education and research is hardly something new. The same had been resonated by the European Union as far back as the year 1999, with the emergence of the Bologna Declaration, also referred to as the Bologna Accord, a documented agreement signed by forty European states, assenting to reform higher education (Devlin, 2010). Among the list of their stated objectives was the notion that higher education must venture out to 'promote student mobility among different fields of study, institutions, and in different nations' (2010, p.10). Devlin supports the academicisation suggested above, and states a positive contribution of Creative arts institutions can be helpful vehicles for HEIs to meet their broader agendas such as 'widening access, knowledge transfer and innovation,' among many other things (2010, p.11).

Of numerous fundamental improvements being introduced in the teaching arena of public sector colleges and universities in recent times, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) is attempting to challenge and alter the very infrastructure of higher education in the country. Under its supervision, various universities have developed exciting academic practices, learning centers, and various other programs such as 'Quality Enhancement Cell' (QEC) to 'enhance the standard of education in teaching and research' especially through workshops (Sindh Study, 2011). One of its departments, i.e.

the Learning Innovation Division of HEC, (LID) Pakistan, has launched numerous projects to impart cutting-edge teaching skills and methodologies, diverse learning strategies, and problem centered approach to teaching especially amongst the new faculty members in order to enhance their teaching methodology throughout Pakistan (LID, HEC, 2011). The basic stress of its programs is on the notion that this is the age of research and the universities should focus their attention on the new ways of doing things. To recapitulate LID's summary of its key objectives (HEC, 2011), that is;

- To intellectually empower and professionally develop young faculty members of the Pakistani society.
- To reinforce faculty members who can use innovative teaching strategies in their respective faculties.
- To encourage and clear the concepts of curriculum development, planning, assessment strategies and to further implement the issues regarding it.
- To elevate their management skills and utilize them in teaching and learning situations.
- To strengthen teachers communication skills along with counselling skills.
- To mature research skills for contributing and discovering the existing knowledge in their respective fields

In light of the above objectives, and as a strategy to encourage the professional development of educationalists throughout Pakistan, it is therefore being asserted that in order to improve the higher education system, various implications of education, as proposed by Almilia (2007), Andrews et al. (2006), Biggs (1979a), De Corte (1995), Entwistle & Ramsden (1983), and Materu (2007), will have to be taken into account, and consequently will form the basic premises for the need of Creative Writing Pedagogy to be introduced in a higher education institute in Pakistan, where it has not been a part of the curriculum thus far.

a) The Developmental Prowess and Competence of a University

Due to an increasing onslaught of competition in the higher education sector of developed countries, higher education institutions have

become more competitive in the developing countries as well (Materu, 2007). To this end Almilia (2007) believes one of the basic ‘problems of university development today is how the university is able to optimize its role’ especially with respect to maintaining and enhancing its prowess and competency, ‘with the resources it has’ in the present world (p.77). To combat this global concern, Rahman (2011) and Ravitch (2011) have come up with a number of rational and dynamic policies such as the establishment of ‘multi-disciplinary institutes’ in the universities, with a broad array of courses being taught there; a thought fostered by the implementation of ‘University’s Resources Revitalization’ strategy as mentioned by Soekartawi (2005; cited in Almilia, 2007). The significant aspect to ponder over in the former regard points to an acknowledgement that ‘students have different purposes and different goals. Higher education best serves them and the nation if it includes institutions designed to meet different purposes’ (Ravitch, 2011). At the same instance, in order to improve standards in higher education, and to have a ‘high competitive power’, Soekartawi claims a university ‘does not have to wait for having ‘sufficient’ resources since such a role can also be performed by optimizing the resources revitalization that is available today’ (Almilia, 2007, p.76). Any institution that continues to remain indifferent to these kinds of innovative strategies may derail in the wake of enormous ‘globalization acceleration continuously improved along with the rapid progress’ of advanced needs and resources (Almilia, 2007).

The establishment of new and innovative courses in various fields, such as in art based or architectural departments, can give an institute a great benefit in the advanced world of education in Pakistan (Belgaumi, 2008). It would serve the twin purposes of infusing the above notions of ‘enriched knowledge,’ and ‘innovative Creative ideas,’ in various ‘multi-disciplinary areas of education.’ This would automatically give a ‘new life’ to an institute, and better chances of ‘competitive prowess’ to a university.

b) Research to Ensure Increase in Student Participation

As regards to the second global aspect of education, i.e. to cater the needs of our students, to create value for them, and to evaluate whether

an organization is providing course guidance to students as per their needs, which would then lead to better participation, much research has been carried out on improving teaching and learning in higher education over the last 20 years. See, for instance, Biggs (1979a; 1987b; 1989c; 1999d; 2003e; 2003f), De Corte (1995), Entwistle & Ramsden (1983), Gabel (1999), Marton (1988) cited in Andrews et al. (2006). Some researchers have argued that 'dissatisfied students may cut back on the number of courses or drop out of college completely. Hence, the satisfaction -- intention -- retention link for students in higher education should be studied and carefully managed' (Kara & DeShields, 2004, p.1).

Taking up the public discussion on education in the similar student-based-satisfaction context, as also expounded by Tinto (1975a; 1993b), Reichheld (1996), Keaveney & Young, (1997; cited in Kara & DeShields, 2004), Fulcher supports the contrary view of education, in that it should not be taken as a source of economic usability, or some essential human resource purposefully aimed at achieving prestige in terms of global competition, not to mention 'the smooth functioning of social partial systems' (Fulcher, 2008, p.20). In actuality our purpose should be to establish the education of former times, which was associated with 'the development of individuality and reflection, the unfolding of the muse and creativity, the refinement of perception, expression, taste and judgment,' rather than the mere acquisition of competence for the sake of receiving global accreditation (Lauridsen, 2008). This seems to imply research to be conducted involving post-modern students to ascertain their needs and desires with respect to introducing new courses, such as Creative Writing, to a higher education institute or its present curriculum. The same would validate whether students in an institute are looking forward to a change, which may ultimately result in an increase in better participation. Furthermore, this could be the first step that would lead to introducing 'improved standards in higher education curriculum,' which is the third need of our global educational realm in the present context.

In trying to keep up with these recent tides, the higher education system has been subjected to major developments in Pakistan. The number of institutions of higher learning has dramatically grown in the past decade to accommodate the ever-

increasing number of students (Siddiqui, 2007; Hameed & Amjad, 2011; Rahman, 2011). Statistics produced by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan (2010) show the estimated enrolment figure in Pakistan for the year 2009-2010 to be approximately 948364 students as compared to the 741092 students only four years back. Additionally, the subsequent increase in enrolment has forced higher education institutions all across the country to satisfy admitted students' needs and expectations, based upon the quality they are demanding at this level, as a means to strengthening the institution's strong reputation and powerful existence, as reported by Hameed & Amjad (2011) and Rahman (2011). But in spite of the same, there is a huge lack of research conducted to interpret the satisfaction level of higher education students in Pakistan (Haider, 2008) and (Abbasi et al., 2011).

The situation emphasized above seems especially crucial to the present research project in the arena of Creative arts, especially in the context of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, one of the only two universities present at the time of creation of Pakistan in 1947 (HEC Pakistan, 2008), which at present does not employ a single scholar who specializes in Creative Writing or has been employed for the primary purpose of teaching and studying, or fostering research in Creative Writing in English. Additionally, the only research conducted so far has been in the twin arenas of English Language and Literature. See, for instance, Sangi (2011), and Shah (2011). Consequently, to ensure active participation by students in higher education institutions, it is imperative that research be conducted in various arenas and various subjects should be scrutinized to the extent that the gathered information could be utilized to produce a highly intellectual and well informed body of students (Zajda & Rust, 2009; GUNI, 2008).

c) Improved Standards in Higher Education Curriculum

There is a widespread concern among various educational institutions regarding the quality of higher education curriculum, and 'in particular a feeling that degree courses concentrate too much on academic knowledge and too little on the practical skills and development of personal attributes' instead (Bowden & Masters, 1993; Harvey & Knight, 1996; cited in Toohey, 1999, p.7). Attempts to ensure quality

in teaching methods and learning outcomes, and endeavours to incorporate a wider assortment of skills and abilities will have to take into account an innovative manner leading to the design of courses in higher education institutions, without which the current problem of imparting better instruction would remain unsolved (Toohey, 1999).

As further means to adapt to the modern demands of education, Materu (2007) holds it extremely crucial for higher education institutions to adjust their program structures, especially their curricula, in addition to the teaching and learning methods. To this end Allan (1996; cited in Can & Ozdemir, 2006) sees one of the major principles of higher education as inducing students to acquire 'new knowledge in subject areas,' apart from improving their critical and reasoning faculties, and written and oral communicative abilities (2006, p.5). Although there can never actually be a definite way, as such, of prescribing how an institute can create a tradition of advanced knowledge; it should be aware nevertheless of its educational responsibility of encouraging creativity and in fostering a culture that expedites innovative ideas being executed (Busquin, 2003).

Building up on the notion, Treherne (2008) claims there to be a remarkable need for every higher education institute to introduce Creative arts in its curriculum, so as to 'lead students into this exciting area of study, which is an excellent way to enrich their engagement with the culture in which they are living.' Cummins (2009) believes creative writing tasks can not only help students associate with and establish a better understanding of literary processing but can also aid them in 'adapting, extending, and responding to literary texts,' in a better fashion (2009, p.42). Another way in which students can benefit from the whole creative writing experience is through its self-analysis (Cummins, 2009). On account of her critical review and her experience as a Literature academic, Cummins gives us five reasons that rationalize a utilization of creative writing in class rooms:

- Creativity and innovation are required in twenty-first century workplaces.
- Literature is perceived freshly when the method of analysis requires both creative and critical responses.
- The importance of literary genre, structure, style, and narrative perspective become clearer when one is crafting

narrative, and characters can be comprehended more deeply when one imagines their unstated thoughts.

- Writing in various genres provides practice for students who will write as part of their careers.
- Evaluation of new assignments invigorates the professor, while creative activities provide a variety and change of pace appreciated by contemporary college students.

Excerpted from Cummins (2009, p.43).

Quoting from several English Literature Professionals, Cummins (2009) further informs us how in-class creative writing tasks can prove beneficial for students on more than one front. Thus Austen (2005) sees creative writing as a power that can enable students achieve more self-confidence through their active participation; whereas Bloom (1998) gives an equal importance to the writing of, apart from the reading of, literature, to reach a holistic dimension in literary learning.

On various occasions throughout his research, Ahmed (2009) stresses the need to critically examine and acknowledge the contribution of the Pakistani English Creative writers 'both on the national and the international level.' He further asserts how 'writers from other countries of South Asia have been the subject of many critical studies, when Pakistani writers, unfortunately, have seldom been in the critical limelight' (2009, p.14). At the same time, there is an even stronger need for popularizing and institutionalizing the trend of Creative Writing practice in English in especially the higher education sector of Pakistan, and its curriculum. It is one of the least studied areas in the development of English literature in Pakistan; the dearth of studies on this subject being another reason due to which our students have not yet been able to receive a lot of guidance in this arena (Ahmed, 2009; Imtiaz, 2010b; Naeem, 2010). Writing workshops – or any kind of forums for writers to come together – are a rarity here (Shamsie, 2004a). And as far as the higher education curriculum is concerned, at this point in time the pedagogical practice of Creative Writing has been established to be on somewhat shaky grounds (Khan, 2011a).

Conclusion

In Pakistan, much planning and policy mapping by the Higher Education Commission in recent times involves an up-gradation of the existing curriculum due to the recent onslaught of diverse subject areas all over the world, and with respect to the contextual mandates of novel courses (Azerbaijan University of Languages and UNESCO, 2010). With this intention as their basic rationale, the National Curriculum Revision Committee (NCRC) set forth to achieve a revamp of various ‘existing courses in vogue’ in the public and private sector universities throughout the country, and ‘made very significant recommendations’ in their periodic meetings during the years 2006 and 2008 accordingly (Karim & Shaikh, 2012, p. 106). One of the most significant suggestions issued by them pertained to the endowment of varied courses, and ‘adequate material resources like books for uniform implementation of the scheme of studies across the universities;’ a set of recommendations which, like various other set of suggestions proposed by the NCRC, has not been ‘fully addressed in the universities, and a lot of work needs to be done before the aforementioned changes could be accommodated and implemented uniformly in the country higher education institutes’ (2012, p. 107). Coincidentally, the learning of students can hardly be facilitated unless their instructor or the kind of reading and Writing texts being incorporated by them across various disciplines are aligned properly, or their major subject selection is on the right path (Nicosia, 2005).

The sign of an effective educator, states Salandanan (2009), ‘who has grown in his/her chosen area of specialization, is their ability to organize and develop curriculum materials suited to children’s level of readiness and understanding... Complete learning packages and home study modules are definitely here to stay. Their use for either enrichment or remediation cannot be overemphasized’ (2009, p. 160). The researcher further stresses the necessary requirement for instructors to remain well informed of the current momentums in their particular discipline, together with guided logic, readily available strategies and activities, and a motivation to facilitate learners in their acquisition of basic content skills, to enable them prepare and produce self-instructional course modules. Much of this is in turn supported by Birol, et al. (2006), Bucjan (2011), and Parsons (1975), who

acknowledge the need for instructors to develop educational courses and modules, especially when faced with a scarcity or absence of main textual material or prescribed books to be utilized in the classroom. Their rationale for the same is to facilitate the learning process by providing students with instant and easily accessed course material when required.

In wake of the relegated status of Creative Writing courses within the Pakistani universities' curriculum, as advocated by Ahmad (2011), Imtiaz (2010b), Khan (2011a), Naeem (2010), and Siddiqui (2007), with the present reading material on Creative Writing skills development being scarce (British Council, 2004) or often 'reduced to mere ornaments of a library' (Mansoor, 2010), there is an increasing demand for the availability of valid and balanced educational material in this area. Given that Creative Writing is a poorly researched and non-specialized field in Pakistani academia, there is an equally cognisant need for the area to fully develop and be measured as an academic discipline. Additionally, since Creative Writing is neither a major nor a minor component of the curriculum at higher education institutes, it is imperative to plan a basic research into the more practical genre of creative processing. Seeing as the academic staff members who conduct academic courses at our educational institutes confine their teaching to literature studies or language analysis, all they tend to aim for is helping students comprehend fundamentals of English language acquisition, English language teaching, and of critical study of processed works, without ever collaborating with Creative Writing process. Therefore, any study encompassing an exploration into the nature and complexities of various Creative Writing pedagogical approaches, thereby presenting students with a practice oriented atmosphere properly based on the utilization of course modules, could mean a strategic establishment of Creative Writing practice in Pakistani universities. The same could be seen as a gateway to a more holistic curriculum design, with emphasis on craft and technique, that would build students' creative thinking and an enhanced means of grasping literary information on both graduate and undergraduate levels. This would contribute to an enhancement of their practical skills, which is what the current academia lacks.

As to the broader impact of establishing the same, there is the premise that engaging in an interactive examination of literature and the practice of creating fiction, especially, is a source of intellectual contentment and an academic challenge (Cummins, 2009). For one thing, as various research investigations have concluded from time to time, students are able to attain a deepened understanding of the power of literary art and thought, the diversified world of literary production, the manifold aspects of literary work, and the cultural contexts of literary traditions. See, for instance, Peterson (2008), Muecke (2010), and Young & Fulwiler (1986; cited by Rocco, 2010). On an academic and intellectual front, these researchers have based their studies on a view that sees writing as a process which allows Creative Art students to develop as more prolific readers, thinkers, researchers, and writers (Austen, 2005; Bloom, 1998; Mills, 2008). Eventually, students undertaking Creative Writing study tend to draw more actively on literary analysis and discussion, foster the critical skills needed during the course of their generalized academic studies, grasp the hidden complexities of varied literary texts and write with an acute perception that naturally develops comparatively healthier than ordinary learners due to their critical self-reflection (Donnelly, 2012c).

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