



Bridging a Divide or Dividing a Bridge?: Style, Disciplinarity, and Creative Writing Studies

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ABSTRACT

Considering the role style may play in helping those of us in Creative Writing Studies think through questions of disciplinarity entails considering the ways so-called disciplinary divides implicate writers, material practices of writing, and writing-centric fields of study. Despite scholarship seeking to find consonance between the two (see, e.g., Mayers 2005; Hesse 2010; Koehler 2017; Horner 2018), one such disciplinary divide is still often thought to remain between Creative Writing and Writing Studies.

A discourse around style, however, can help us bridge this divide by helping us understand that, in a sense, there is no divide to bridge. Such a discourse can facilitate deliberation on, first, how and in what ways these disciplines have taken up particular, shared conceptions of style as a form of writing knowledge and, second, how this shared conception may trouble the existence of this divide. To wit: as either a Writing Studies or Writing Studies-adjacent field, Creative Writing may find that aforementioned consonance when understood through a *techne* of writing that treats style as a production of difference, as well as a product of labor (see Pender 2011). Acknowledging that theories of production across many writing disciplines share this common take-off point can help us see that these disciplines are not as epistemologically incompatible as some would argue.

By going this route we may quickly see instead that questions of disciplinary difference are often questions about individuals or groups of individuals and their statuses as professionals ensconced within institutions and iterations of program types (see Thaiss & Zawacki 2006): the ways they/we create and recognize knowledge, how they/we guard knowledge, and how they/we use knowledge to perpetuate their statuses as disciplinary autonomous professionals (see Olinger, forthcoming). Put another way, this divide is better informed by what we say about these disciplines' stances toward stylistic knowledge than about any specific methodological approaches to the production of writing in or for those disciplines.

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