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### **The spiral of leadership in the teaching of creative writing in New Zealand**

#### Abstract:

Judith Ross's (2007) business-based model identifies four characteristics of successful creative leadership. Four academic leaders in creative writing programmes in the New Zealand tertiary sector have demonstrated some or all of these four qualities of leadership in creative writing: Robert Neale, Bill Manhire, Albert Wendt and Witi Ihimaera. Each has shown vision, leadership and innovation in teaching and writing; and each has generated a wave of writing and creative writing research in successive generations of students, participating in—and perpetuating—the spiral of leadership.

#### Biographical note:

Gail Pittaway is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Media Arts, at Wintec, the Waikato Institute of Technology, in Hamilton, New Zealand. Her research interests include creative writing (poetry, short story and script writing) and the teaching of writing. She has edited two books and has had stories broadcast on National Radio, New Zealand. Gail is the theatre critic for the *Waikato Times* and contributes regular live book reviews for the *Nine to Noon* programme on Radio New Zealand, National. She is a member of the New Zealand Communication Association, Tertiary Writing Network and New Zealand Society of Authors, and has been an executive member of the Australasian Association of Writing Programs since 2004.

#### Keywords:

Leadership – Creative writing – New Zealand – Manhire – Ihimaera – Neale – Wendt

*Te torino haere whakamua, whakamuri.* At the same time as the spiral is going out, it is also going in ... At the same time as we are going forward, we are returning (Ihimaera 2005).

## Introduction

Among the many theories and practical guides on the subject of leadership in business, arts or education in the last twenty years (see, for example, DuBrin 1995; Hackman & Johnson 1996; Page & Zorn 2007), most would agree with Steven Covey's (1989, 1992) distinction between management as relating to operational routines and leadership as being concerned with a longer term vision. Stoll and Temperley (2009) define leadership as an imaginative and thought-through response to opportunities and to challenges and 'creative leadership' as referring to creating the opportunities, conditions and environment for others to be creative. J Donald Walter (1987) believes that leadership is 'supportive not coercive', and that a true leader 'leads others, [but] does not drive them' and is 'visionary' (22). In line with these ideas on leadership, Judith Ross (2007) believes that a leader of a work force or team can significantly influence that team's capacity to think innovatively. Although business-based, her model serves as a useful formula for identifying leaders in New Zealand's tertiary creative writing sector and might also serve aspiring great teachers in any academic discipline, as teaching is the focus of this discussion.

Ross identifies four characteristics of successful creative leadership. The first of these is that leaders establish clear goals and then 'let people find their own way' to these goals (2007: 3). Her second item of successful creative leadership suggests that leaders monitor their workers' progress from 'a distance' (ibid.: 4) to avoid stifling an individual's creativity through interference or micro-management. Thirdly, a 'true' leader is, in her terms, seen as a facilitator, with his or her influence not limited to internal guidance, but with contacts and networks to help the team succeed externally as well. Finally, good leaders create 'fruitful idea-generation and idea-evaluation' (ibid.: 5) as two distinct processes, offering not only both vision and opportunities for that vision to be shared, but also a safe environment for ideas to be challenged and evaluated. These characteristics can be applied to teaching practice in many disciplines in the tertiary sector, but here are specifically related to leadership in teaching in creative writing.

Four academic leaders in creative writing programmes in the New Zealand tertiary sector have demonstrated some or all of these qualities of leadership: Robert Neale, Bill Manhire, Albert Wendt and Witi Ihimaera. Each has shown vision, leadership and innovation in teaching and writing; and each has generated a wave of writing and creative writing research in successive generations of their students. There is not a strong tradition of writing about creative writing practice or pedagogy in New Zealand as this is a relatively new discipline in the tertiary sector. Accordingly, in researching their contributions, an appropriate methodology must be employed. In this case, I am using the sources which are available such as websites and interviews as well as journal articles.

## Robert Neale

New Zealand has a relatively small population of just over four million people. Despite this, there are currently over 200 tertiary institutions, most of which offer literacy courses if not full programmes, as they include service industry training (Pittaway 2011: 269). Programmes and courses in creative writing at certificate, diploma, degree and post-graduate level tend to be based in universities or polytechnics, but there are also a number of independent or private writing colleges, both site and online based. Not surprisingly, many established, published writers are associated with many of these institutions, if not partially or fully employed by them.

Massey University, based in Palmerston North in the North Island, enrolled 1,877 students in its official first year, 1964—959 internal and 918 extramural or distance learning students—according to their website (Massey 2011). By December 1992, the University's total student enrolment was 24,675 students, of whom 9,088 were internal and 15,687 were extramural (*ibid.*). Although most renowned for its research achievements in agricultural and biological sciences, by the 1990s Massey had the strongest extramural facility in New Zealand and also boasted highly respected schools of Humanities, Business and Social Sciences (*ibid.*). The English Department at Massey began teaching writing courses to internal and external students in the 1970s.

The course known as 39.106 Writing: Theory and Practice has run at Massey University for more than 20 years. It is founded upon the belief that the overwhelming bulk of the world's writing is transactional, (i.e. a vehicle for informing, educating, entertaining, edifying, or persuading an audience) having been developed initially for 'prosaic' purposes like business and administration and later, creative writing. It has been offered both internally to on site students of the university (10,100 in 1990) and externally to the 15,100 or so extra mural students across the entire country (Laurs & Neale 2001: 225-28).

In 1968 Robert Neale, a British born graduate of Oxford and Michigan universities, was employed to teach in the newly established English department at Massey, and stayed there for thirty years until his retirement in 1999 (Kirk 2010). He served as the University's Public Orator for twenty years and his contribution to 'education and the community' was recognised in January 2011, when he was awarded Membership of the New Zealand Order of Merit (Office of the Governor General 2011). As a lecturer he is said to have 'made poetry accessible, and was a regular guest on Radio New Zealand National's Saturday morning programme' (*ibid.*), discussing a wide range of writers and literary texts in an informal yet edifying way. He is widely recognised as having pioneered the teaching of writing at university level in New Zealand (*ibid.*). With a special interest in English literature and poetry, he was known as

a charismatic and motivating teacher, who was generous with his time and support. But it was still a surprise to him when he found out that substantially more people were attending his classes than were listed on the roll (*ibid.*).

In terms of Ross's characteristics of leadership, Neale clearly demonstrates the first—establishing 'clear goals' and then allowing people to 'find their own way'—in the

teaching methodology he established for students of writing. His innovative writing course used process writing techniques, transactional case studies and peer reviewing techniques—devices which were so successful they are still in evidence today in the *English Programme Guide Book* (Broughton 2011) that is used across several disciplines and programmes at Massey University. A combination of grammatical exercise book with collections of exemplars and discussion points, the above invites reading, reflection and evaluation on the part of its student readers, as well as providing practical punctuation and formatting advice and a glossary of relevant terms. Perhaps arising out of this basic teaching workbook, but with additional and enhanced theoretical discussions of meaning and ambiguity, comes Neale's *The Common Writer: Theory and Practice for Writers and Teachers* (1992), which stresses that the act of writing shows 'humanity at its most creative, taking the building blocks (images) of the world and rearranging them into new structures, altering reality as we know it' (16). This small book includes an historical overview of English language and literature, a useful chapter on the teaching of writing and concludes with exercises for writing and peer review. As an example of Ross's fourth characteristic of 'fruitful idea-generation and idea-evaluation', Neale's companion anthology, *Writers on Writing* (1992), is based on the principle that the people most worth listening to about the craft of writing are those who do it best—the writers themselves. As editor, Neale gathered together what great writers—historical, international and contemporary—had written in prose and verse about the problems and techniques, as well as the frustrations and fulfilments, of their craft. Including works from Aristotle to Janet Frame, Neale has selected extracts and essays which explore the process and craft of writing from the point of view of writers themselves. It serves as a record of writing practice across time and place while also demonstrating entertaining and well-chosen representations of 'good writing' (Schuler 2004: 1).

Finally, as a facilitator and supporter of his 'team', to apply Ross's term, Neale's teaching practice has directly influenced his students both in terms of their individual successes and the growth of the writing discipline locally and nationally. One such student was Dr Lisa Emerson (now an Associate Professor in the School of English and Media Studies at Massey University), who has been a leader in the national peak body, the Tertiary Writing Network in New Zealand, and is herself a pioneer in both teaching writing and in researching its pedagogy. She acknowledges the influence of Neale and colleagues in the introduction to her PhD thesis, stating that their influence gave her 'a curiosity about language' which has been the 'bedrock' of her studies (Emerson 1999: iii).

There is little other academic evidence of Neale's leadership apart from the accolades he has received for his contribution to the development of Massey University and the discipline of creative writing in the academy (Office of the Governor General 2011a). However, his legacy as instigator of the first writing course in New Zealand, which became a component of programmes across disciplines for internal and external students, and which led to the creation of a creative writing major and then programmes at undergraduate and graduate level, is well established. Neale's leadership in teaching English literature, documenting his ideas of 'good writing' and

creating a strong grounding for the teaching of writing offers a strong model of the spiral of leadership; inclusive, informative and inviting reflection.

### **Bill Manhire**

If Massey University initiated the first writing course in New Zealand, and Neale the first example of creative leadership in university-based creative writing (in being innovative, supportive and visionary), Victoria University in Wellington claims New Zealand's 'oldest and most prestigious creative writing programme' (IIML website 2011). A small undergraduate creative writing course first offered at Victoria University in 1975 has grown since then into a range of specialised workshops and programmes. Victoria University developed New Zealand's first Master of Arts in Creative Writing in 1997 followed by the first Doctor of Philosophy in Creative Writing in 2008 (ibid.). In 2000, Glenn Schaeffer, a philanthropist from the USA, offered financial support to further develop the writing programme at Victoria University and the New Zealand headquarters of the International Institute of Modern Letters (IIML) was launched there in March 2001. At this time, partnerships were developed with a series of American institutions and programmes, and links were established with 'the Iowa Writers Workshop, the International Center for Writing and Translation at the University of California Irvine, and the creative writing programme at the University of Nevada Las Vegas' (ibid.).

Overseeing these rapid achievements, and while also generating a public profile on national radio and television and sustaining a prolific rate of publication, has been the poet Bill Manhire, Professor of English and Director of the IIML. Instigator, founder, teacher, writer and public speaker for poetry, Manhire has demonstrated all of Ross's four points of creative leadership. *Mutes & Earthquakes* (1997), edited by Manhire, an anthology of work by former students, many of whom are now well established New Zealand poets, fiction and script writers, serves as a showcase of his inviting and non-interventionist style of creative leadership. The introduction and his own chapter on the workshop method outlines this approach. His introduction begins with two pieces of advice: '1. Write what you know and 2. Write what you don't know' (9). In elaboration, in describing how this course evolved, Manhire reflects on the value of the set exercise:

Exercises are a way of encouraging new writers to stay open and ignorant, to write what they don't know. Constraints seem to prompt inventiveness; we use our imaginations because we need to solve problems; we don't simply put on paper the things we knew we knew already (ibid.: 9).

Manhire's own verse and prose, where words are 'instruments of exploration' in a 'process of discovery', achieve 'this difficult balancing act' (Robinson & Wattie 1998: 1). A tribute volume, *Manhire at 60: A Book for Bill* (2007), recognises his inspirational influence. In the introduction, the volume's editors Fergus Barrowman and Damien Wilkins state:

Published in a limited edition of 500 copies for Bill's birthday, this is an anthology including memoirs, essays, poems, stories and extracts from a work-in-progress which

have been contributed by over 40 writers who have been inspired by Bill as writer, teacher and friend (qtd. in NZ Book Council 2011b).

In an article announcing Manhire's imminent retirement at the end of 2011, by Kimberly Rothwell, an IIML graduate now working for the *Dominion Post* newspaper, Schaeffer is quoted on Manhire's creative leadership:

Bill's a true coach of that most elusive quality in writing—the mystery of your own voice, expressed with honesty and passion and verve. I've seldom encountered the whole package like Bill Manhire, elegant poet of substance on one hand, selfless promoter of new talent on the other (Rothwell 2011).

In the same article, Manhire himself is quoted, speaking of founding the programme which has expanded into an institute:

There's something just as creative in building a small entity like this, which can do a range of really interesting things, as there is in maybe writing a poem or filming *Lord of the Rings* (ibid.).

In a near paraphrase of one of Ross' characteristics, 'to set clear goals and then let people find their own way' (2007: 3), Damien Wilkins, currently the IIML senior lecturer in fiction writing, and who has deputed for Manhire as director, believes that Manhire's style of leadership and teaching in the creative writing class is 'an almost non-violent intervention but allied to really rigorous deadlines' (Rothwell 2011).

In recognition of his contribution and achievements, the Arts Foundation of New Zealand, an independent body which awards grants to established as well as emerging artists across all the arts, named Manhire an Arts Laureate in 2005. The Foundation identifies many of his literary accomplishments on their website. One of these reveals innovative achievement in his practice of establishing collaborations between scientists and poets, eventuating with the Manhire Prize for Science Essay Writing, which he sponsors in conjunction with the Royal Society of New Zealand. In tandem with work with his students and other teachers, Manhire's highly awarded own creative practice serves as a model of working process and high achievement. A four-time winner of the New Zealand Book Award for poetry in 1978, 1992, 1996 and 2005 (Arts Foundation of New Zealand 2011a), he was awarded the Meridian Energy Katherine Mansfield Memorial Fellowship in Menton in 2004 and received an Honorary Doctorate of Literature from the University of Otago in 2005 (ibid.). Through his creative leadership (whether in teaching, promotion, public appearances or his own production), Manhire has given poetry a strong voice, nationally and internationally, a vital and accepted place in contemporary New Zealand society and provided a secure point of departure for several generations of writers. The spiral of his leadership out to students and the arts community returns to him in the esteem of the public as well as that of his national and international peers.

### **Albert Wendt**

Leadership in creative writing for Maori and Pacific people in New Zealand is worthy of a separate study, however, in the academic context, Albert Wendt and Witi

Ihimaera must be acknowledged. Although English is the official language of New Zealand, there is a strong sense of preservation and advocacy for the Maori language, from both Maori and *Pakeha* (non-Maori) New Zealanders. There are Maori language radio stations, television channels (one of which is nationally funded), newsletters, magazines and a growing number of practitioners of the language. Educational institutions from early childhood centres to universities offer courses and qualifications in *Te Reo Maori* (Maori language) in addition to the teaching of other subjects in Maori, including education, social sciences, and English with a Maori cultural focus (Keightly 2008). Interestingly, it is only in song writing and performing arts that creative writing in Maori language has flourished in the academy and in public performance.

Since the late twentieth century, at all levels of education, there has also been a particularly strong relationship with the Pacific, with streams of immigrants from New Zealand's immediate neighbours into the country. As the New Zealand government information on ethnicity explains:

The seven largest ethnicities among Pacific peoples are Cook Island Maori, Fijian, Niuean, Samoan, Tokelauan, Tongan and Tuvaluan peoples. In New Zealand, ethnicity is self-defined and people can and do belong to more than one (NZ Government 2011).

Albert Wendt was born in Apia, Western Samoa and, after a distinguished career combining writing and being published with teaching at both schools and the newly established University of the South Pacific in Fiji, came to Auckland University as Professor of New Zealand and Pacific Literature in 1988. His six novels, four poetry collections and four collections of short stories are an important stage in the development of a specifically Samoan literature, drawing as they do upon oral tradition and myths, and then fusing these with contemporary concerns of identity, exile and belonging often in subversive, surprising ways (Robinson & Wattie 1998: 1). As a writer of novels, short stories and verse, as well as an illustrator and visual artist, Wendt has created stories of his Pacific home while living and working elsewhere. In his edited anthologies of Pacific writing, he both asserts and demonstrates that Pacific writers have 'indigenised and enriched the language of the colonizers, and used it to declare [their] independence and uniqueness' (ibid.: 1). The titles of his essays and anthologies speak of his concerns: 'Towards a new Oceania' (1976), *Lali* (1980) and *Nuanua* (1995). The anthology, *Mauri Ola: Contemporary Polynesian Poems in English—Whetu Moana II* (2010), edited by Wendt, Reina Whaitiri and Robert Sullivan, was a finalist in the poetry category of the 2011 New Zealand Post Book Awards, showing that his collaboration, which included his own poetry, achieved the most prestigious national level of recognition for literature in New Zealand.

The Pacific Island critic, Subramani, writes of Wendt's leadership and achievements:

No other writer in the South Pacific has yet attained Wendt's imaginative and artistic range. His is an astounding career in two respects: first ... [in his capacity] to confront vitally the essential questions raised by the socioeconomic environment; and second the direction he has given to South Pacific literature as an artist and a teacher (1985: 158).

In an interview in the *Pacific Star Map* website, Wendt demonstrates the spiral of leadership in action when he notes that he was, himself, influenced by the work of indigenous New Zealand writers Alistair Campbell, Hone Tuwhare and Jacqui Sturm, just as now his work is influencing others' writing. He has stated that the 'best thing Pacific writers can do is read the work of other indigenous writers in Aotearoa, the Pacific and the world' (Pacific Star Map 2007: 1).

As well as the previously cited anthologies and publications, Wendt has edited a series of five volumes of contemporary poetry from Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and the New Hebrides for Mana Publications, with English being the unifying language. Odden finds that 'Wendt has not only been a key contributor to Pacific literature, but he has [also] been a major force in its promotion both within and beyond the academy' (1998). In an interview Wendt declares:

Pacific Islanders should write their own histories, their own versions of their history. Histories written by outsiders, no matter how fair they've been, are still views of foreigners, still views of other people about us. In many ways, those histories have imposed on us views of ourselves that added to our colonization. We should write our own histories in order to be free of those histories written about us, those images created by other people about us, not only in history books but in fictions they've written about us (qtd. in Hereniko & Hanlon 1999).

As a teacher, editor, writer and founder of courses, programmes and professional societies in creative writing, Wendt has creatively led his students and peers, shaped and inspired innovation in the discipline and offered opportunities for the publication, dissemination, evaluation of and reflection upon Pacific writing; all characteristics of creative leadership as defined by Ross.

One of the next generation of Pacific writers in New Zealand and a former student of Wendt is Selina Tusitila Marsh, who was the University of Auckland's first Pacific Islander to graduate with a PhD in English, in 2005 (NZ Book Council 2011a). She currently teaches on New Zealand and Pacific Literature at Auckland University, while building a reputation as a performance poet and writer. Marsh continues Wendt's leadership role in establishing bibliographies and guides for teachers to use with texts by Pacific writers in classrooms. In one of these works, she calls Wendt's work 'canonical' for readers of Pacific literature (Marsh 2010). Once again the leadership spiral of giving receives a return of acknowledgement and generosity.

## **Witi Ihimarea**

Marsh also acknowledges Witi Ihimarea by interviewing him in the anthology, *Words Chosen Carefully* (Harvey 2010). With the publications of his works *Pounamu Pounamu* (1972) and *Tangi* (1973), Ihimarea was the first Maori writer to publish both short stories and a novel, and is seen as a world 'leader in indigenous writing' (Arts Foundation of New Zealand 2011b). By the time his novel *The Whale Rider* (1987) was released as a film titled *Whale Rider* (Caro & Ihimarea) in 2003 'to international acclaim' (ibid.), Ihimarea was already a much read writer in New Zealand, having had his earlier publications taught in New Zealand schools for a



decade. For many Maori children, this was the first time they had encountered characters like themselves in fiction; for European and non-Maori readers, these stories were a gentle, humorous introduction to Maori family and *marae* (local tribal meeting place) cultural events.

After working in the New Zealand civil service, and then as a cultural ambassador overseas for the Department of Foreign Affairs, and already with an international reputation as a writer, in 1990 Ihimaera took up a position at the University of Auckland as Professor of English and Distinguished Creative Fellow in Maori Literature. He has also held several international academic positions—as Fulbright Fellow at George Washington University and Visiting Fellow at the universities of Tasmania and Hawaii. At home in New Zealand, he has also been honoured with receipt of the Katherine Mansfield Award in 1993 and an Honorary Doctorate from Victoria University, as well as being made a Distinguished Companion in the New Zealand order of Merit in 2004 (Arts Foundation of New Zealand 2011b).

In 2009 he achieved the highest award in Maoridom in the arts, the Te Tohutiketike a Te Waka Toi Award, at a ceremony at his home marae, Rongopai. The New Zealand Book Council explains that this ‘premiere award acknowledges the work of individuals who are exemplary in their chosen field of artistic endeavour’ (2011). With characteristic grace Ihimaera made the following acknowledgement:

To be given Maoridom’s highest cultural award, well, it’s recognition of the iwi [tribal family]. Without them, I would have nothing to write about and there would be no Ihimaera. So this award is for all those ancestors who have made us all the people we are. It is also for the generations to come, to show them that even when you aren’t looking, destiny has a job for you to do (ibid.).

While accepting a position of leadership as recipient of the award, Ihimarea here demonstrates Ross’s principle of networking, of being part of a greater organism, in this case, his tribe.

Whether as a writer, ambassador, educator or in his role as a Director on the Board of the Learning Media Organisation, Ihimaera has also demonstrated ‘evaluative’ leadership in how he asks and explores difficult questions about identity and belonging, sexuality and art, culture and family, through his work in these roles. However, this questioning has not been without risk. In academia, he created a serious controversy over plagiarism in the same year as he received a lucrative Arts Laureate Award from the independent Arts Foundation of New Zealand, of NZ\$50,000. The controversy arose over the publication of *The Trowenna Sea* (2009), a fictionalised historical account of five Maori transported to Tasmania in 1840 for taking up arms against the newly formed New Zealand government. After reviewer Jolisa Gracewood identified sixteen phrases of unacknowledged direct quotations from historical sources (2009: 40), Ihimaera’s publishers, Penguin Books, recalled the 2009 stock from booksellers and Ihimaera himself purchased the remaining warehouse stock of the book, some 1,800 volumes, in order, he asserted, ‘to preserve the mana [personal power] and integrity of the novel’ (Casinader 2009). According to another interview, Ihimaera offered to return the Arts Laureate Award money and cancel the ceremony,

but this offer was declined by the Foundation's directors (Knight 2010). A media scandal ensued, with calls on the University of Auckland to dismiss him. Although this did not occur, he retired from the university the following year but continues to publish and teach creative writing community classes (Casinder 2009). From a position of 'iconisation' (ibid.) to disgrace, Ihimaera's twenty year term in academia was based upon his outstanding success as a writer, that is, as an exemplar, as well as his role as a teacher. The work of one year and one book reversed much of this reputation in the academy, yet he was one of the most written about New Zealand writers in the academy before the scandal and many of the general public failed to understand the academic outrage which ensued. However, in the manner of receiving both acclaim and repudiation, Ihimaera has consistently remained dignified and true to the cultural values of his people. He is not the first visionary leader to have been disparaged by history and, in the manner of receiving approbation, he has been respectful and solemn, demonstrating Ross's fourth characteristic of leaders 'offering evaluation and reflection' under extreme pressure.

In a speech of acceptance and acknowledgment for the Fulbright fellowship in 2005 Ihimaera made reference to a Maori metaphor, *te taura tangata*, 'the Rope of Man'. Ever changing, the Rope is a magnificent icon spiralling from one aeon to the next, charting the history of humankind' (Fulbright NZ 2011). His speech also alludes to the Maori proverb which is epigrammatic for this article, linking the notion of the Rope of Man, which could be likened to the Elizabethan Great Chain of Being, to its effect of spiralling across and through life, people, creativity, and generations—in the process always nurturing beliefs, dreams and ambitions.

In my opinion, our New Zealand dreams today are the dreams of the Rope of Man. They are no longer just Maori dreams or Pakeha dreams. They are also the dreams of our other migrants, Polynesian, Asian, American and African in Aotearoa New Zealand. They have become blended, laminated. And the answer to 'what may yet be seen' surely lies in the quality of the ideas that have been woven into the Rope. They are in the hope, the optimism, the leadership and integrity of a younger generation who should not be constrained by race, nation and location but, instead be energised by them (ibid.).

Ihimaera's creative leadership has been innovative and unconventional, more visionary than purely as teacher, although his short stories have been read in the English classroom and inspired their readers since they first appeared in print in 1972. Outside of the academy, his influence has had a wider reach than the other subjects of this article, for his work has been widely disseminated and enjoyed in popular culture, and particularly in films.

### **Concluding remarks**

As Patrick Evans notes in the *Penguin History of New Zealand Literature*, 'to make an account of beginnings, of the ways different groups or individuals have tried ... to assert their own importance by creating ideologies in which they are central' is 'the best way' to reflect on a 'literature that is trying to begin itself' (1990: 9). Ross's four

characteristics of leadership: vision, inclusiveness with the freedom to experiment, creating networks and, finally, offering opportunities for reflection and evaluation, have here been employed to evaluate the contribution of creative leadership of four founding educators in the New Zealand academy. In the case of the subjects of this article—Neale, Manhire, Wendt and Ihimaera—I believe that each has been central to the creation of the new discipline of creative writing in New Zealand. Each has worked with a dream or goal which has driven his leadership and influenced the ‘young people’ mentioned in Ihimaera’s speech, whether these be their students or peers (Fulbright NZ 2011). Each has pioneered a new development in the teaching of creative writing in the tertiary sector in New Zealand. In the process, they have created environments for students to flourish independently, to move beyond their studies to become successful writers. Other students have been influenced to take up roles of teaching in schools, tertiary institutions and the community. These four leaders have generously launched themselves into the spiral of writing, editing, teaching and providing mentorship with great tenacity, while incidentally receiving appreciation and recognition from their students, peers and the wider community in return. The outcome of such leadership in teaching is the success of the student, not that of the individual leader. In this way, in this dedicated spiral of leadership, each has generated a wave of writing, of teaching about writing and creative writing research, in successive generations of students who too go forward and progress.

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