



Title : Scribing the writer: implications of the social construction of writer identity for pedagogy and paradigms of written composition

Name: Paul Gardner

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SCRIBING THE WRITER: IMPLICATIONS
OF THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF
WRITER IDENTITY FOR PEDAGOGY
AND PARADIGMS OF WRITTEN
COMPOSITION

Paul Douglas Gardner.

PhD

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University of Bedfordshire

SCRIBING THE WRITER: IMPLICATIONS OF
THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF WRITER
IDENTITY FOR PEDAGOGY AND
PARADIGMS OF WRITTEN COMPOSITION

by

P. D. Gardner

A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire,
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Works.

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Scribing the Writer

Paul Gardner

Abstract

A reflexive analysis of five peer reviewed published papers reveals how socio-cultural and political discourses and individual agency compete to shape the identity of the learner-writer. It is posited that although hegemonic political discourses construct 'schooling literacy' (Meek 1988) which frame the socio-cultural contexts in which texts, authors, teachers and learners develop; the socio-cultural standpoint of the individual makes possible conscious construction of counter discourses. Writer identity is integral to the compositional process. However, writer identity is mediated by, on the one hand, dominant discourses of literacy that inform current pedagogies of writing (Paper One) and on the other by socio-cultural narratives that shape identity (Paper Three). A synthesis of Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is used to explain the constraining function of dominant discourses in literacy education.

These works largely fall within a qualitative paradigm, although a mixed-method approach was adopted for the data collection of Papers Four and Five. The methods these papers had in common were the use of survey and documentary analysis of reflective journals. A semi-structured interview with a focus group was the third method used to collect data for Paper Five. Individual semi-structured interviews were used to collect partial life-histories for Paper Two and textual analysis of pupils' narrative writing was the main method used for Paper One. Paper Three involved a rhizotextual auto-ethnographic analysis of original poetry.

Findings suggest pedagogies which minimise or negate the identity of the writer are counter-productive in facilitating writer efficacy. It is suggested, the teaching of writing should be premised on approaches that encourage the writer to draw upon personal, inherited and secondary narratives. In this conceptualisation of writing, the writer is simultaneously composing and exploring aspects of self. However, the self is not a fixed entity and writing is viewed as a process by which

identity emerges through reflexive engagement with the compositional process. The corollary is that pedagogy of writing needs to embrace the identity of the writer, whilst also allowing space for the writer's 'becoming'.

Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Published Works at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of candidate:

Signature:

Date:

Co-author's declaration

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Co-author declaration

Note: *This form is to be included, as part of a submission for PhD by published work, where publications involving joint or co- authorship are to be considered. A copy of this form must be submitted for each individual work, and by each individual author involved (other than the candidate for the degree).*

1. The Applicant

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Title of research area of submission:

Scribing the Writer: implications of the social construction of writer identity for pedagogy and paradigms of written composition.

2 The Publication

Names of all authors: Paul Gardner and Chris Rix

Title and details of publication:

Gardner, P. & Rix, C. (2012) The Life Trajectories of Primary Student Teachers; a cross-cultural comparison. *Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol 8 Issue 2, pp135-142.

A comparative cross-cultural investigation involving life history narrative methodology was used to elicit the academic and professional aspirations of pre-service primary school teachers in the UK and Malawi. Findings show that socio-cultural behaviour and the different national political discourses strongly influenced students' reasons for choosing teaching as a career. Furthermore, their identities, as student teachers, and their perceptions of their future functions, as teacher practitioners, also emanated from the socio-cultural and political tenor of their respective countries.

3 Contribution

(Please give concise information about the contribution made by the candidate to the above publication. An indication of the nature of the contribution - qualitative or quantitative - may be provided where appropriate, as well as an indication of the contribution in percentage terms if appropriate)

Paul Gardner, made a substantial contribution to the above paper. The data collection and analysis were shared evenly between the two authors but Paul

wrote 60% of the paper and contributed the theoretical perspective that was used to frame the discussion.

4 Declaration

I am in agreement that, with regard to the details provided in section 3 above, this is an accurate reflection of the candidate's contribution to the publication specified and being submitted here, in partial fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by published work at the University of Bedfordshire. The publication has not, to my knowledge, been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Signed: *Christopher Rice*

Date: *5th April 2014*

Dedication

These works are dedicated to my fiancée, Sonja Kuzich, who has been the inspiration and driving force behind their completion.

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Scribing the Writer

Paul Gardner

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I wish to give heartfelt thanks for the support of my supervisor, Professor Janice Wearmouth. I especially appreciate her efficiency, constructive advice, good humour, strength of character and advocacy. I would also like to thank Professor Uvanney Maylor for her belief and encouragement. To Michelle Miskelly and Marion Anderson, I give thanks for advice and administrative assistance, respectively.

Introduction: Synopses of Papers

Submitted papers

Paper One: Gardner, P (2012) Paradigms and Pedagogy: Revisiting D’Arcy’s critique of the teaching and assessment of writing. *English in Education* Vol. 46 No. 2 pp135-154

This paper draws on empirical research in which the narrative writing of primary age pupils was assessed against two contrasting assessment paradigms. Findings show the application of contrasting assessment criteria result in different judgements of pupils’ writing, which subsequently influence feedback and pedagogic choices. The corollary is pupils’ identities, as writers, and teachers’ identities, as teachers of writing, can be framed both by the pedagogy and assessment paradigms used.

The paper contributes to knowledge by extending D’Arcy’s discussion around the dichotomy of secretarial and compositional skills in the teaching and assessment of writing by means of a synthesis of ecological systems theory and the concept of hegemonic discourse. This synthesis provides an explanation of how writer identity is socially constructed by means of the filtration of dominant educational discourse through specific paradigms of writing and, ultimately, to classroom pedagogy.

Paper Two: Gardner, P. & Rix, C. (2012) The Life Trajectories of Primary Student Teachers; a cross-cultural comparison. *Journal of Social Sciences*. Vol 8 Issue 2, pp135-142.

A comparative cross-cultural investigation involving life history narrative methodology was used to elicit the academic and professional aspirations of pre-service primary school teachers in the UK and Malawi. Findings show that socio-

cultural behaviour and the different national political discourses strongly influenced students' reasons for choosing teaching as a career. Furthermore, their identities, as student teachers, and their perceptions of their future functions, as teacher practitioners, also emanated from the socio-cultural and political tenor of their respective countries. (Form RSPP2 confirms that 60% of the paper was written by Paul Gardner, who also contributed the paper's theoretical perspective).

The findings of this paper contribute to knowledge by demonstrating how what appear to be individual professional choices are in fact normalised actions influenced by dominant socio-political discourses. This paper resonates with the theoretical perspective in Paper One and supports its contribution to knowledge.

Paper Three: Gardner, P. (In Press 2013a) Who Am I? Compositions of the self: an autoethnographic, rhizotextual analysis of two poetic texts. *English in Education*. DOI: 101111/eie. 12032

By means of autoethnographic, rhizotextual analysis the compositional process is explored in two original poems. The analysis reveals that the composition can be tracked across the socio-cultural standpoint and identity of the author. It is posited that rhizotextual analysis also demonstrates that the 'secondary worlds' of others can be implicated in the compositional process when the author has formed an empathic relationship to the 'Other' and thereby incorporated the 'Other' in narratives of 'Self'.

The findings of this paper contribute to knowledge in two ways: firstly, by means of the application of a unique theoretical perspective to the analysis of written composition and, secondly, in terms of its implications for the teaching of writing. It is suggested that by employing an autoethnographic, rhizotextual approach, the process of composition enable writers' personal insights into the self. This approach has implications for classroom practice, particularly for writing around issues of identity located in social class, gender, 'race', disability

and sexual orientation, as well as the growing body of work on the teacher as a writer.

Paper Four: Gardner, P (2013b) Writing in Context: Reluctant Writers and Their Writing at Home and at School. *English in Australia* Vol. 48 No. 1 pp71-81

By means of empirical research, responses to writing of 106 reluctant writers in the contexts of home and school were investigated. Findings reveal that social context, access to adult help and audience, influenced writer identity. A socio-cultural perspective was used to explain the discontinuity of writing behaviours between home and school.

This investigation contributes to knowledge in several ways. It is one of few studies devoted to the study of reluctant writers in the primary school and is unique in its finding that writer identity is not singular but plural and that the compositional process for primary age pupils is influenced by social context. The paper advocates the notion of teacher as ethnographer as a means of capturing more holistic views of pupils' writer identities. The paper also complements the contributions to knowledge of Paper One in positing that prescriptive writing curricula, in which transcriptional writing skills are privileged over creativity and compositional processes, constrain writer identity in the classroom.

Paper Five: Gardner, P. (In Press 2014) Becoming a Teacher of Writing: Primary student teachers reviewing their relationship with writing. *English in Education*. DOI:101111/eie. 12039

A multi-method approach was used to investigate the self-perceptions and confidence as writers of Primary B.Ed students in their first year of undergraduate study. The paper argues that to consciously engage student teachers in the writing process and to require them to reflect on that process can lead to self-efficacy as writers. Evidence from this study suggests one's self-confidence, as a writer, can be enhanced by explicitly engaging in self-reflection of one's own approaches to writing.

This is one of a growing number of studies internationally to investigate student teachers as writers. It contributes to knowledge through the finding that significant numbers of student teachers possess negative writer identities due to 'schooling literacy' in which transcriptional skills were privileged over the compositional process. The paper posits a need for a paradigm shift in writing pedagogy in teacher education as a means of equipping student teachers with the prerequisite knowledge, confidence and enthusiasm to become effective teachers of writing.

Supplementary Chapters not for Assessment.

Supplementary Paper One: Gardner, P. (2010) English as a creative process, in P. Gardner, *Creative English Creative Curriculum*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Following a critique of centralised curricular initiatives, a holistic model of English, integrating the four modes of language, is posited. Writing pedagogy is discussed, leading to a creative approach which advocates that teachers require knowledge of writing embedded in praxis. Writing is identified as a social process with writing pedagogy located in pupils' experiences and implicit knowledge of language.

Supplementary Paper Two: Gardner, P. (2007) Living and learning in different communities; cross-cultural comparisons, in P. Zwozdiak-Myers Ed, *Childhood and Youth Studies*, Exeter: Learning Matters.

This chapter discusses the tension between identity as a social construct and individual agency. It introduces theoretical models that influence later works and concludes that identity is a plural phenomenon influenced by intra and inter-cultural factors in a dynamic and shifting social landscape.

Chapter One: Focus of work, methodologies and contribution to knowledge.

‘Writing is a phenomenon that seems... connected to who we are and who we will become.’

(Prior 2006: 64)

Introduction.

In a brief history of writing research, Nystrand (2006) charts paradigmatic moments in the chronology of studies of written composition. He notes the early dominance of cognitive process models (Emig 1971; Flower and Hayes 1981; Applebee 1981; Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987); the emergence of socio-cultural investigations, largely located in the social contexts of speech communities (Shaughnessy 1977; Nystrand 1982, Flower 1994), and posits that a post-modern, inter-disciplinary paradigm, drawing upon socio-cultural, historical, political and institutional contexts, has been in evidence since the 1990s. Cognitive process models explicate the mental functioning of writers in the act of composition. Andrews (2011:53) prefers the term composition to writing because the latter implies ‘..a medium of instruction and a system to be learned’ whereas composition means ‘..putting in place..’ as a creative act. Cognitive process models attend to the cognitive complexity of writing and the function of memory as an organisational tool, at various stages of the writing process (Gathercole and Baddeley 1993 cited in Hayes 2006; Kellogg 1999 cited in Hayes 2006; Hayes 2006). One criticism of such models is their treatment of writing as an intra-subjective, asocial process occurring in individual minds (Prior 2006). In contrast, Activity Theory investigates the social context (Hayes 2006) in which writing occurs. However, this tends to focus on micro-cosmic social contexts with

an emphasis on goal-orientated outcomes. A broader view of social context is offered through sociocultural investigations of writing, encompassing such areas as: anthropological studies of literacy practices; cross-cultural studies; multi-modality and pedagogy, which collectively form the current, dominant paradigm for writing research (Prior 2006:54). Within the heterogeneity of sociocultural perspectives, Prior (2006:55) identifies six components essential to the paradigm. These are: *situatedness*, *improvisation*, *mediation*, *externalisation*, *co-action* and *internalization*. In sociocultural theory:

‘...activity is *situated* in concrete interactions that are simultaneously *improvised* locally and *mediated* by prefabricated, historically provided tools and practices, which range from machines, made objects, semiotic meansand institutions to structured environments... and people. *Mediated* activity involves externalisation (speech, writing etc.) and *co-action* (with other people, artefacts and elements of the social-material environment) as well as *internalization* (perception, learning).’

(Prior 2006:55)

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In a sociocultural paradigm the writer is located in a dynamic matrix of interactive social, cultural, ontological, diachronic and political influences, making writing, even by the isolated writer, simultaneously mediated and collaborative. Drawing on Vygotskian theory, Prior (2006:55) suggests external forces do not operate deterministically but that the world is ‘personalised’ through the enactment of individual agency, informed by biographical trajectories. Hence, human activity, including learning and more particularly writing, is a mode of inter-subjective social action (Prior 2006:58). The writing event, therefore, is more than a singular intra-personal cognitive process oriented towards a communicative goal; is more than purpose and audience. It is in this complex mix of sociocultural perspectives that the works underpinning this thesis are situated. By means of reflexive analysis, this thesis identifies key themes in five peer-reviewed published papers based on a ‘sub-stratum’ of

antecedent scholarly works. Taken together, the works form a continuum of thought.

The body of works adopt a pluralist theoretical perspective which synthesises Bronfenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, Gramsci's (1971) concept of 'cultural hegemony' and an adaptation of standpoint theory: an aspect of post-modern feminist theory (Harding 2004), with the over-arching theoretical perspective of post-modernism. This perspective is evident in the methodological paradigm as well as the content of the discussion. This synthesis posits a fresh way of conceptualising the writer. It is a dynamic that requires teachers to be fully aware of how dominant political discourses filtrate educational paradigms and pedagogy (Paper One). As Soler and Lambirth (2011: 101) state '...politics is at the heart of education..' and, therefore, classrooms are political arenas and teachers are political activists. As activist, the teacher is a mediator of discourses of literacy and is, therefore, in a position to either constrain or liberate the learner by means of affirmation or denial of identity. However, I posit that cognisance of the political dimension of writing pedagogy may enable teachers to circumnavigate deleterious educational policies in order to normalise teaching and learning as creative modes of inquiry and negotiated meanings.

Central to these themes is narrative as a marker of social-identity and the influence of narrative, as well as other social discourses, in the construction of the biography of the learner-writer, which impacts on the compositional process (Paper Three). I posit that competing discourses around the learner-writer create tensions in which writer identity can be destabilised, leading to poor self-esteem, as a writer, and disinterest in the writing process (Paper One; Paper Four). However, I apply a post-modern perspective to suggest identity is far from uni-dimensional. One finding to emerge from my work was that learner-writers exhibit different writer identities in different social contexts, (Paper Four) which can be explained by socio-cultural theory of mind (Wertsch 1998; Westsch et al 1995 cited in Paper Four: 71).

The place of the teacher, as 'more expert other', and the pedagogic approach to writing adopted by the teacher is critical to the learner-writer's engagement with writing (Paper One; Paper Four). However, teachers operate within paradigms of literacy influenced by dominant social discourses which impact on pedagogy and assessment (Paper One; Paper Two). This is not to intend a deterministic perspective. Rather, creative teachers' agency to subvert 'official' pedagogies premised upon flawed research, or no research is recognised. Nevertheless, the hegemonic nature of dominant discourses constructs localised 'regimes of power' that covertly 'police' teacher behaviour, thereby constraining professional action. Analysis of student-teachers' relationships to writing suggests a significant proportion of them did not possess positive writer identities (Paper Five). If teachers lack authentic insider knowledge of the writing process, as writers themselves, it is posited they are prone to adopt technicist approaches to writing that are influenced by dominant, 'State' pedagogies of literacy which may negate, or minimise, the identity and biography of the learner-writer (Paper One). Elsewhere, I suggest teachers need to develop subject knowledge of writing through praxis which involves not just a knowledge of the compositional process but also insider knowledge of the affective and cognitive conditions of being a writer (Gardner 2010: 26). It is also suggested that knowledge through praxis is one means of assisting those student-teachers who possess negative writer identities to re-configure their relationship with writing (Paper Five). Auto-ethnographic, rhizotextual analysis was used to deconstruct my own poetic writing to reveal how writer identity is implicated in the compositional process and how such analysis may offer an alternative pedagogy of writing; one that acknowledges the social narratives that frame the identity of the writer (Paper Three). The corollary is a paradigm of literacy that places the identity of the learner-writer at the centre of the process of written composition, rather than peripheral to it.

By undertaking this reflexive narrative, my intention is to explore the socio-cultural and political discourses that influence the positioning of the learner-

writer, through pedagogies of writing and paradigms of assessment (Paper One). In so doing, I acknowledge that I, the author, reside inside competing political discourses and that my texts, as articulations of my thinking, my consciousness, are projections of my identity as an individual, as a teacher and as a writer. Self-reflection of one's work can reveal to one's self both the personal and the political (Paper Three). This reflexivity is methodologically closest to autoethnography (Marechal 2010) which involves connections between the personal and the socio-political (Ellis 2004: ix), avoiding binary oppositions (Ellingson and Ellis 2008: 450).

Research Questions.

As is suggested in the ensuing discussion, what is often missing from models and theories of writing, even socio-cultural ones, is the personal and social identity of the writer. The questions that underpin my work are: How is writer identity constructed and how is writer identity implicated in the compositional process? For those of us concerned with the development of young writers in the classroom, a third question arises once we have answered the first question, which is: what are the implications for writing pedagogy?

Methods and Methodology.

Investigations of the writing process involved the elicitation of writers' attitudes and subjective responses. For these reasons, the research methods used in the submitted works are predominantly located in an interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivist research explores lived experience, focusing on where the individual's beliefs and actions interact with culture (Denzin and Lincoln 2008). The intent of interpretivist research is to capture and reproduce the authentic voices of respondents (Denzin 1997:32), in order to think about experience, emotions, events, processes, performance, narratives, poetics and the politics of possibility (Denzin 2009: 142) and thereby develop insightful understanding of human perspectives (Trumbull 2005:101). This perspective implies a theoretical

orientation towards a constructionist epistemology, premised upon ontology in which social reality is contingent upon perception and the interaction of mind and the social world inhabited by the individual (Crotty 1998). Even when data collection involved the use of questionnaires, a method often associated with positivist research and quantitative research methods, questions were oriented towards capturing the respondents' view of aspects of their world. For example, in Paper Four children were asked to identify several elements they thought made for good writing, and the questionnaire used for Paper Five included questions about respondents' view of themselves as writers and how they had acquired such views. Hence, the data sought involved the elicitation of respondents' perceptions. What was being quantified was the extent to which views of writing as social practice were shared across the sample. In this sense then, a method conventionally used in quantitative research was utilised to pursue a research question framed within an interpretivist paradigm, in order to discern patterns across multiple subjective entities. In their discussion of mixed methods research as the 'third paradigm', Burke-Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004: 17) suggest the use of eclectic methods is purposeful when it is considered chosen methods offer the best chance to obtain answers to research questions.

The data collection methods used for the remaining studies are located at different points along what might be described as an interpretivist continuum with rhizotextual auto-ethnography located at one extreme (Paper 3). A fuller discussion of rhizotextuality can be found below and in Paper Three.

In order to fully explicate the methods used, the research design of each paper together with a critique of methods, is discussed below.

Paper One.

Double documentary analysis was the method used to interrogate the narrative writing of young writers. What is meant by double documentary analysis is the interrogation of each script using two contrasting assessment criteria. One set of

criteria, the Assessment of Pupil Progress, privileges technical accuracy, in terms of transcriptional skills, and knowledge of grammatical structure. Whilst the second set of criteria, the Assessment of Narrative Writing, also acknowledges the writer's knowledge of story structure, emphasis is placed on the writer's creativity in terms of narration and the effect on the reader. Essentially then, the criteria require the assessor to look for different skills and qualities in the writer. Hence, the two sets of criteria are located in contrasting paradigms of writing. The purpose of using the different criteria was to evaluate the extent to which outcomes differed from assessments of the same scripts. Two experienced KS1/KS2 teachers were employed to undertake the assessment of each of three scripts of narrative writing produced by pupils, using both criteria. The two sets of assessment criteria provided analytical categories against which each script was evaluated. Each script was assigned a numerical assessment level. Each level had three sub-divisions. So, it was possible to measure even slight changes in performance across scripts by the same writer over time. Any disparities in marks were resolved by means of joint moderation by the two teachers. Ipsative assessment outcomes for each pupil across three scripts were recorded. Aggregated changes in performance across the cohort produced quantitative data in the form of performance patterns, which were then analysed in order to compare general outcomes against both sets of criteria.

The data were derived from a relatively small sample of pupils (N=69) and their teachers (N= 19). In addition, sample sizes across the project differed, with the second and third samples being smaller than the first sample (N=42 and N=37, respectively). A larger and more stable sample across assessed pieces of writing might have made findings more robust.

The two independent assessors brought to the research experience of assessment using the Assessment of Pupil Progress (APP) criteria. However, as the Assessment of Narrative Writing (ANW) was designed specifically for the research project, they were less familiar with these criteria. The intention of the assessment of scripts by colleagues independent of the research process was to

strengthen the trustworthiness of findings and to negate unintentional bias that might have occurred if the researcher, who designed the ANW criteria, had assessed the scripts. In retrospect validity might have been further enhanced had additional time been allocated to the assessors' familiarisation with the ANW criteria, combined with a mock moderation process prior to the actual assessment of scripts.

Parental permission was granted for all participants. Scripts were anonymised and assigned numerical codes prior to assessment by the independent assessors.

Paper Two

Semi-structured interviews in the form of naturalistic 'non-directive' discussion (Plummer 1983: 94) of an equal number of English and Malawian Primary Student Teachers (N=12) were used by Gardner and Rix to elicit partial life-histories. Life history is concerned with the '...phenomenal role of lived experience..' and the way in which experience and the social world is interpreted by individuals (Plummer 1983:67). Audio-recordings of discussions were transcribed and one researcher began the initial coding of data, identifying influences in the students' lives as they emerged from the data, including significant others, such as parents and teachers, and epiphanies, such as the moment when teaching was chosen as the preferred career. Themes were highlighted in different colours to make for ease of analysis later. After completing three transcripts the two researchers met to discuss emerging patterns across the data. Both researchers then completed an analysis of the remaining transcripts, identifying the most significant categories that had emerged in the initial coding process and adding new ones of relevance. The researchers met again to further interrogate patterns in the data and applied axial coding in order to construct themes across categories of data (Bryman 2012:569). Green et al (2007: 549) define themes as 'explanations' or interpretations of issues under investigation in relation to theoretical concepts relevant to the study. Thomas and Znaniecki (1958: 1832 cited in Plummer 1983:64) state:

“In analysing the experiences and attitudes of an individual we always reach data and elementary facts which are not exclusively limited to this individual’s personality, but can be treated as mere instances of more or less general classes of data or facts, and can thus be used for the determination of social becoming.”

It was the ‘... instances of [...] general classes of data..’ coded and common to all participants that provided generalizable information thereby revealing the inter-relationship of individual subjectivity and dominant social discourses.

This cross-cultural study required sensitivity to linguistic difference within a common language. The use of a semi-structured schedule allowed sufficient flexibility to alter the wording of questions, to re-phrase and to use supplementary question to probe and clarify meanings.

Both sets of students were self-selecting. The English group volunteered for the Malawian Project and had been informed of the proposed research. Their Malawian counterparts also volunteered to be interviewed. Given that the cohort was exclusively female, it might be argued by some that the participants were unrepresentative of student teachers, generally. However, primary education in both the UK and Malawi is predominantly female and the partner teacher training college in Malawi was a single sex denominational institution.

The English students were ‘interviewed’ by two of the lecturers involved in the project, prior to the trip to Malawi. Although the issue of researcher positioning and the micro-politics of research is discussed below, it is worth noting at this point that time constraints in Malawi meant it was more efficient for the English student teachers to ‘interview’ their Malawian counterparts, following a comprehensive briefing around the conduct of informal interviews. In so doing, two potential constraints were eradicated from the interviews with Malawian students. Both lecturers were White males, who were significantly older than the Malawian students. By utilising the English students gender and age, as potentially impeding factors, were neutralised. However, ‘racial’ difference may

have remained an influential factor, although there was one Black English student. The fluidity of the above research is acknowledged by Maxwell (2013:3) as a positive feature of the interpretivist paradigm.

Paper Three.

In Paper Three, which is the most theoretical of all the papers, I use poetry as a mode of autoethnographic inquiry. Poetry is recognised as a legitimate mode of qualitative inquiry, where ‘.. responses to the poem are more important than the poem itself..’ (Finley 2003:288). The linguistic economy of poetry illumines the essential voice of the subject, whilst also incorporating the ‘..subjective responses of the researcher..’ (Langer and Furman 2004). Speedy (2005) refers to ‘writing as inquiry’ as:

‘... the relationships between human beings, their worlds and their practices of making or reproducing meanings through language...’

Hence, written composition is a ‘..cognitive/conceptual, emotional and/or political act..’ (Andrews 2011). Burnier (2006) challenges Anderson’s early dichotomised view of autoethnography in preference for a holistic perspective, combining evocative and analytical forms of writing. Similarly Ellis and Bochner (2006: 431) seek to preserve emotion, experience, knowledge and theory as integral elements in the autoethnographer’s narrative and add that the ‘ethical domain’ of autoethnography resides in its ability to construct lived experience. (439). Denzin (1997:200) suggests that auto-ethnography reveals the inter-relatedness of biography situated in the social and political world. Hence, the personal is political (Olesen 2008). One salient feature of auto-ethnography is the positioning of the researcher inside the research process as the subject of the research (Duncan 2004:3) as a means of accessing ‘...insider meaning’ (Anderson 2006:389 cited in Burnier 2006: 415). In so doing, the genre not only exposes connections between individual consciousness and the cultural world in which the individual is situated (Ellis and Bochner 2000: 739), making aspects of ‘...culture familiar for insiders and outsiders’ (Ellis et al 2011), it also lays bare the

'soul' of the researcher, leading to feelings of vulnerability, which must be overcome. This is the first challenge of autoethnography. Unless the autoethnographer is true to her/himself and represents her/his place in the world truthfully, writing is tainted by fabrication and hence the social world is distorted. Whilst autoethnography might imply the primacy of authentic voice, we are reminded that most experiences in personal, as well as collective lives, are forgotten, (Best 2006: 466; Ellis et al 2011), which suggests meanings we attribute to the social world are interpretations of remembered details, or personal '...maps of reality' (Dyson 2007: 37). Denzin and Giardina (2008) suggest it is a matter that applies equally to quantitative research in the social sciences and is not exclusive to qualitative research. However, it might be argued that memories captured through auto-ethnography are qualitatively significant in that they are 'epiphanies' (Denzin 1997; Ellis et al 2011). The two poems in the paper then might be described as extended epiphanies in which my 'take' on the world is (re) presented through metaphor. By placing myself in the research as both subject and researcher, I re-experienced the past as I wrote (Denzin 2006: 423). Validity in autoethnography is achieved through verisimilitude, a coherence in which what is represented is '...believable and possible...' (Ellis et al 2011). Through self-reflexivity then, one's world view is elucidated, but because it is a world view situated in a particular socio-cultural and political context this methodology also reveals aspects of one's society. The researcher is a visible member of the research group or setting and the published texts, committed to producing theoretical understandings of wider social phenomena (Anderson 2006).

For autoethnography to move beyond mere descriptive evocation of personal experience, a mode of analysis is required (Anderson 2006; Burnier 2006). The two original poems were interrogated by applying a rhizotextual analysis, defined as:

'...an investigation of the intertextual linkages not only between different texts but also between texts and the sociocultural and political 'stems' that adhere to the creation and reading of the text.'

(Paper Three: 4)

It should be noted that rhizotextuality subsumes intertextuality by its incorporation of everything that might be defined as text, including the individual. Wiley (1994) provides substance for this view by suggesting identity is the sum total of everything in the individual's life, including material objects. Barthes (1987a) takes us beyond the conventional view of text as a purely print medium. For Barthes, text is a space in which matrixes of symbols cohere to produce plurality of meaning without closure; it is a semiotic configuration, a representational artefact encoded with meanings subject to continual interpretation and re-interpretation. Text is, therefore, a social construct whose materiality has to be deciphered, leading to plurality of meanings. Hence, the process of reading makes all texts polysemic (Barthes 1987b).

A rhizotextual analysis of autoethnographic writing charts the matrix of linkages between on the one hand the personal, the experiential, and on the other the socio-cultural and political world inhabited by the individual. However, the text is a representational construction through language of an interpretation of the social world from the perspective of the author. This raises issues around researcher positioning, objectivity and bias, which are discussed further below.

Paper Four

The genesis of this paper emerged during discussion between the lead researcher and teachers involved in a research project investigating the use of mind mapping with of 106 reluctant writers. The meeting was one of a regular series of half-termly symposia. Teachers had been positioned as co-researchers and the half-termly symposia were opportunities for discussion around patterns and issues emerging out of the accumulation of data. The meetings also enabled checks on the various contexts in which data from different schools were

collected, with a view to reinforcing the need for a consistent approach. Patterns in the data, derived from reflective logs kept by the teachers together with pupils' writing, were discussed and potential findings were clarified. Naturalistic discussion involved the lead researcher framing questions, which, for the purposes of this paper, involved issues around pupils' concepts of writing. For the most part, the lead researcher took the role of attentive listener, only speaking when requesting clarification or asking probing questions to elicit richer information. Mindful of the ethnographic work of Heath (1983), which demonstrated that some children experience discontinuities in literacy practices between the home and school, the lead researcher asked a question about what was known of the pupils' writing outside school. In view of the fact very little was known, the teachers and lead researcher decided to investigate this aspect of children's literacy lives.

Colleagues discussed how to investigate the above aspect and it was decided that questionnaires provided the most pragmatic method for answering the research question (Burke- Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004: 16). A structured, 'child friendly' questionnaire was presented to the teachers who applied their experience of working with children in the age group in order to evaluate its design. Following discussion the questionnaire was piloted in one class and minor modifications were made to questions, making the language more understandable to children. In discussion a procedure for implementing the questionnaire was agreed in order to ensure a consistent, systematic approach.

The intention was to elicit children's attitudes to, and understanding of, writing, as well as their writing behaviour in the home. The data provided numerical trends and patterns, which revealed significant findings about children's dichotomised writer identities in the home and the classroom. In addition, the reflective journals of nineteen teachers were also analysed to identify significant observations that corroborated survey findings. Although useful for identifying patterns in behaviour, data from questionnaires were somewhat limited in the extent to which they provided explanations of that behaviour.. Questions such

as: how children felt when asked to write; what features they thought made for a good piece of writing and types of writing they did in the home required further probing in order to explore deeper reasons for their responses. In retrospect, the use of interviews or case studies might have enhanced quantitative findings by exploring underlying reasons why children constructed views of writing in the way they did. Also, these methods have the potential to investigate the possibility of pupils' multiple interpretations and the complexities of their construction of meanings in the different social contexts of home and classroom, thereby shifting the investigation closer to an interpretivist paradigm and the intended investigation of pupils' perceptions of writing and their writing behaviours. The reasons why these reluctant writers chose to write so readily in the home environment but not in school provides scope for further research.

Paper Five.

Mindful of the comment in relation to Paper Four concerning the need for qualitative methods to complement survey data in order to explore reasons why subjects think and act the way they do, the two surveys used with Year One B.Ed students for this paper were accompanied by discussion with a focus group, using a semi-structured schedule, together with analysis of ninety-eight reflective journals. The sample size for the first survey was 115 students and the second was 111.

The fact the lead researcher was the students' main lecturer implicates the potential for inequitable power relations, within institutional structures, to influence student responses. However, the cohort was informed that involvement in the research was voluntary and that individual confidentiality was assured due to anonymised questionnaires and journals. Random sampling was used to select members for focus groups, who were then emailed an invitation with a reminder that involvement was voluntary. Initially, the intention was to have two focus groups of eight students per group. However, only ten of the sixteen students invited volunteered and it was decided to organise a single focus group, which met twice. Focus group meetings were held after the cohort

had completed each questionnaire. The group was reminded of a commitment to confidentiality and that responses would not be attributed to individuals by name. Edmunds (1999: 1) suggests that by means of naturalistic discussion the purpose of focus groups is to elicit in-depth understanding of the target group's perceptions or opinions. Data derived from questionnaires were analysed to identify emergent patterns around students' identities as writers and their attitudes to writing. These patterns were arrived at by identifying and coding themes within responses to questions, such as: 'what view did you have of yourself as a writer before coming to university?' and 'How would you describe your feelings towards writing?' The purpose of the focus group was to give richer descriptive evidence and substance to the generalized quantitative data. The physical environment in which focus groups are situated has been found to be a critical factor in the success of the method. The most successful environments are non-threatening and assure participants emotional security in free flowing non-evaluative interactions (Stewart 2014 et al). For this reason, the setting was made as informal as possible and included soft drinks and finger food. The group sat in a circle and I sat with them. My questions to the group were followed by long periods of silence on my part. Hence, I adopted what Stewart (2014) refers to as the moderator role with my contributions being largely non-directive allowing me to ask probing questions in order to clarify meanings and to elicit further data. One drawback of focus groups is that responses occur in the context of the group's ensuing discussion with the possibility they may not be entirely individual ones (Edmunds 1999: 7). In an attempt to obviate such influences, when an individual introduced a new trend into the discussion the group was asked their view, or if anyone else wanted to add their view. In so doing, I attempted to establish a context of free flowing discussion that allowed for divergent views to be expressed. The inclusion of a second focus group might have enhanced internal validity by means of a comparative analysis of transcripts from both groups. However, a third method of analysis in the form of reflective

logs, which were anonymised according to university policy, provided corroborative evidence.

Reflective logs were coded by applying themes derived from key findings found in consistent patterns that had emerged from data in both the surveys and focus group responses, the latter of which had been coded by applying descriptive labels to key words and segments of text, using 'constant comparative analysis' (Thorne 2000). Some of the key themes for coding included: students initial self perceptions as writers; how students had acquired their initial self perceptions; changes in self perception during the course of the project and differing views of the writing process. Themes are more significant than categories because they move analysis from description to analysis in relation to theory and thereby lead to explanations for the patterns that emerged at the descriptive level (Green et al 2007: 549). Differing paradigms of writing and constructions of writer identity provided theoretical perspectives as frames for analysis.

At the reporting stage, qualitative data were used to illustrate and give meaning to statistical evidence. In a discursive meta-analysis of mixed methods approaches, Bryman (2006: 105) draws upon schemes devised by Greene et al (1989) and Niglas (2004). The benefits of mixed method research common to both schemes include: triangulation, complementarity and development where triangulation involves the corroboration of evidence across methods; complementarity entails the use of illustration to clarify results across methods and development involves the use of results from one method to develop a second method.

Researcher Positioning and the Research Process.

The challenge 'thrown down' by positivists before the interpretivist researcher is to prove objectivity, validity and reliability. However, Denzin and Lincoln (2000:5) assert that objective reality is a chimera and that we come to know a thing through representation only. This is a dilemma for interpretivist researchers and perhaps of researchers more generally. The positivist researcher attempts to

capture reality by quantifying responses. However, as suggested above, this can lead to descriptions of behaviour that can be directly evidenced, rather than rich explanations for behaviour, which is the province of the qualitative researcher. The quantitative researcher claims neutrality through pseudo scientific approaches, including the use of control groups, in an attempt to demonstrate direct cause and effect relationships. Whereas qualitative research, informed by feminist standpoint epistemology, critiques positivism as a Eurocentric masculine view of the world (Denzin 1997: 53) and hence biased. In contrast, the qualitative researcher acknowledges the location of self in the research process. (S)he works from an ontological position in which the world cannot be known in any pure form but is always a '...transaction between the qualities of the world [...] and the frames of reference, personal skills and individual histories we bring to them' (Eisner 1993: 53). Eisner also recognises that personal histories are framed by personal and social culture (53). Eisner is not alone in stating experience of the social world is always subject to the individual's interpretation (Taylor 1987:46; Guba and Lincoln 1988:81). Brophy (2009:22) also adds that although reality is only discernible through the eyes of the observer, observation is culturally, historically and socially situated and therefore the socio-cultural context of lived experience influences interpretation. Hammersley (1992:44) extends this further by adding that the social world is constructed both through individual interpretation and action based on interpretation. Hence, as Dewey (1916:408) put it, 'the self is.. in a continuous formation through choice of action'. Interpretation and praxis feed the construction of self in relation to the social world. We might say that individual agency is a performative function, a praxis, in time and space that is triggered by interpretations of the social world but that interpretive choices are bound by the socio-cultural and political parameters of lived experience. Interpretation and experience then co-exist in ontological symbiosis.

Reflecting on my own use of surveys in papers four and five, it is noteworthy that there was a strong qualitative dimension to the analysis of findings, which

involved a search for explanations in relation to a matrix of interpretations drawn from other texts in the field. Hence, it might be concluded that all research, even positivist research, is, to some degree, interpretative. In attempting to draw conclusions the researcher/writer must elucidate common patterns in the data's narrative and, as implied above, the narrative is always intertextual; that is, it is always interpreted in relation to its continuity or discontinuity to other research narratives. In turn, these narratives are socially and culturally situated.

The interrogation of meanings in, and between, my texts is at the heart of this exegesis. I approach the texts as both the writer and the reader, which involves scrutiny of socio-cultural and socio-political narratives which position the author, imbuing the writing with particular socio-cultural and political perspectives (Paper Three). Positioning is defined as a relational juxtaposition to others within competing discourses (Jameson 2002). As we might define discourse as the linguistic 'lens' through which the world is viewed. Where we stand in the world influences how we see it. Discourses comprise their own ideological narratives through which the 'world view' is cohered through language. As a socio-cultural being the author is in a continual state of 'becoming' and, therefore, a reflexive narrative of the author's own works requires analysis of the author's social positioning at the time of writing as well as his/her positioning at the epicentre of the reflexive process.

In Paper Three (p 6) I provide a brief description of my social background, and although it might be argued that professional status involves a process of embourgeoisement, which, in objective terms, re-positions me socially and culturally, I would contend that from my perspective the narrative of adulthood is mediated by interpretations of the narratives of childhood and, therefore, my 'becoming' is subjectively and politically framed by recursive reference to past narratives. Mead (1934) refers to 'the reflexive self'; the 'I' of the present, a conscious active agent that interprets meanings in context and the 'Me', as

object of the sum of past behaviour. Therefore, one's 'becoming', whilst being a movement forward is always followed by the shadow of the past self.

I partially addressed the third of Plummer's categories, the issue of context, in the discussion of Paper Five, but only in terms of setting. In addition to the influence of researcher positioning in the interpretation of data, there is a second issue in relation to context. Most qualitative methods involve face to face interaction with subjects who are aware of the role of the researcher as inquirer. This is a micro socio-political context in which the subject may feel subordinate to the researcher with the effect that data is tainted, either because the subject fails to disclose; fabricates evidence, or else states what they think the researcher wants to hear. Teachers and lecturers, as researchers, are always in danger of creating such contexts when working with their own pupils and students. It is possible that some students with whom I worked for Paper Five provided false data. However, triangulation of multiple methods was used to corroborate evidence. In addition, as stated above, I sought to create a physical and discursive context that minimised any differential relations of power between students and myself. My overriding intention as a researcher is to capture, as accurately as possible, the voice(s) of respondents.

Future Research.

In future research I would avoid an exclusively quantitative approach as in Paper Four but would complement surveys with qualitative methods, such as: interviews; case studies; observations etc. Surveys may provide a 'broad sweep' perspective across large populations with the potential to capture generalised data. However, qualitative methods have the potential to capture voices; ways of seeing; motives and affective triggers that help to explain underlying reasons for generalised behaviour. Conversely, autoethnography (Paper Three) elicits rich subjective data, revealing ontological perspective from a specific standpoint. The application of rhizotextuality as a mode of analysis helps reveal connections between the personal and the socio-political world. I now want to use the method with other writers in order to assess its general efficacy for tracking

discourse connections between their creative artefacts and the socio-cultural contexts in which they are created. In extending the findings of Paper Four, I want to explore reasons for the choices children make when writing at home and how cultural resources stimulate and support writing. There is scope for further empirical work in relation to the use of assessment criteria; the identity of teachers of writing and writing pedagogy, which emerges from Paper One. The findings of Paper Five suggest the need for a follow-up study to evaluate the extent to which students' reflections on themselves as writers during Initial Teacher Education impacted on their writing pedagogy as qualified practitioners.

Reflexive Narrative.

A reflexive account of one's own works is methodologically akin to auto-ethnography in which the author must acknowledge her/his own 'positioning.' Analytic auto-ethnography (Anderson 2006) of one's texts constructs a montage of meanings not only across the works themselves but which also implicate the author /teacher/researcher's biography.

This reflexive narrative involves an investigation of the intertextual relationships of texts but also their connection to the network of texts beyond themselves. In addition, reflexive narrative ignites the potential to re-interpret meanings. The distance between the compositional process and reading re-positions the individual from author to reader. In their discussion of ethnographic writing, of which reflexive narrative is a form, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000: 171) note that reading is a creative act in which, '...interesting readings may be divorced from the possible intentions of the author.' There are resonances here with Reader Response Theory (Rosenblatt 1983; 1978; Paper Three). However, due to their 'primary' knowledge of the text the author/reader is never as divorced from the text as a reader coming to a text for the first time. As auto-ethnographer, the author, makes intertextual and rhizotextual connections in a widening frame of interpretations.

The analysis of one's own texts is both emic and etic (Headland 1990). What is meant here is that at the time of writing, the author is inside the writing process and is 'distilled' in thought; thought which stems from the myriad narratives and texts (s)he has experienced. This is the point at which the author is behaving emically. However, reviewing one's own texts, as the reader brings a degree of objectivity to the analysis. In this sense the author behaves etically.

Wiley's (1994: 15) scheme of self, involves three semiotic facets; firstly, individual signs – thoughts; secondly, systemic complexes of signs, such as ethnic, class, gender identities, which resonates with my discussion of socially ascribed identity (Gardner 2007: p), and which is also evident in the rhizotextual auto-ethnographic analysis of my poetry (Paper Three) and, finally '...the generic capacity for semiosis, anchored in what he calls the 'I-you-me..' triad. The triadic 'I-you-me' distinction involves temporal separation, with the past-me as object; the present-I as sign; and the future-you, as interpretant (Wiley 1994: 27). Hence an etic reading of one's own works involves a reflexive view of self through the recursive lens from the present self to past self. Applying Wiley's perspective, the present self is not the same as the past self. This involves more than a temporal dislocation. In the process of 'becoming', fresh narratives are superimposed on existing ones, which can reinforce, alter or dislodge them, leading to new ways of seeing. Hence, self-reflexivity involves a retrospective of oneself, or in this case, one's works with fresh perspectives, offering possibilities for new meanings. Ramifications become apparent that were not realized during act of composition. It is the realization that emerges through the reflexive process that forms the new ground on which the present study is based.

Collaborative Research.

Data collection for three papers involved collaboration with colleagues (Paper One; Paper Two; Paper Four). Gardner and Rix (Paper Two) collaborated over a six month period in the design, implementation, analysis and reporting of findings; whereas the other two papers emerged from a three year research

project funded by the Bedford Charity (Harpur Trust), involving nineteen teachers in nine schools. I took a lead in the design and implementation of the research in conjunction with a management committee, consisting of headteachers, Local Authority representatives and representatives of the funding body. Integral to the research design was the positioning of teachers as co-researchers. Teachers provided data derived from observation notes and pupil's writing. Trends in the data were reported at half-termly meetings and were verified by means of naturalistic dialogue amongst the group, instigated by probing questions from the lead researcher. Issues were identified which informed further investigation. To this extent, the research adopted a quasi-action research model.

Identification of Themes in the Five Papers.

Themes in my work are categorised along two competing axes, signifying possible divergent write identities. The two axes can be seen in the model in Figure One. The juxtaposition of vertical and horizontal axes signifies their competing nature. The nodal point locates the identity of the writer. In the case of learner writers this point is situated at the confluence of 'schooling literacy' and personal lived experience, which is stored as narratives.

Schooling Literacy.

The vertical axis is the dimension of schooling literacy, a term coined by Meek (1988:7) to imply literacy embedded in pedagogy which assumes the learner has no prior knowledge. Schooling literacy is privileged, both as valued knowledge and as an accompanying pedagogy, in a system where teaching is highly visible and subject knowledge is strongly classified (Bernstein 1977 cited in Gardner 2010: 3). In Figure One schooling literacy is conceptualised from a synthesis of

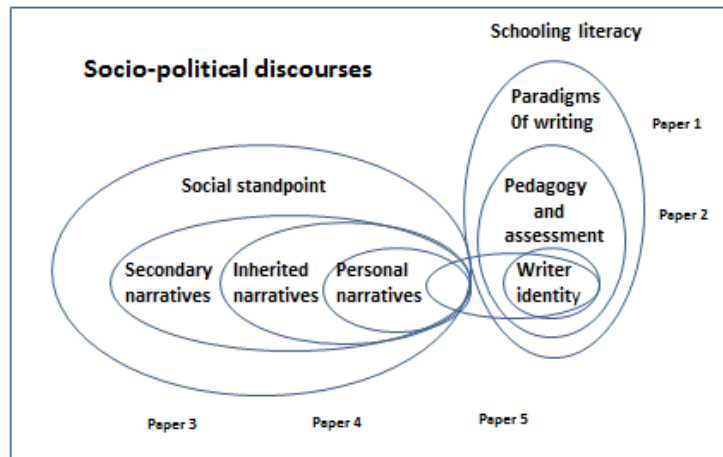


Figure One. A model of the confluence of socio-political discourses, writer identity and the compositional process in schooling and personal literacy.

Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory (Paper Two p.136) and Gramsci's concept of 'cultural hegemony' (Paper One pp. 136-138). The synthesis demonstrates how socio-political discourses, educational paradigms and pedagogy form a nested system of ideological influence which flows from macro-systemic policy to the microcosm of the classroom. In Paper Two it was found that individual career choices and trajectories of student teachers were framed by socio-political discourses mediated by institutional practices and that personal-professional identity was strongly bound by cultural values embedded in the dominant socio-political discourses of the State. Paper One discusses the connection between socio-political discourses of writing and the identity of the pupil, as a writer. It is argued that where learning objectives and pedagogy are prescribed by a writing curriculum in which transcriptional features are privileged, the identity of the writer is framed by transcriptional imperatives. It is further suggested that teachers are accordingly positioned as adjudicators of the learner's technical accuracy rather than as authentic readers of the learner's written composition (Paper One: 139).

According to Ball (1993:111 cited in Wang 2011:143), this positioning of teachers emanates from the 1988 Education Act which exacted three forms of control, constraining teacher autonomy. The control mechanisms are: technical features in the curriculum; the testing regime and policy discourses that privilege the 'customer' and absent the teacher, rendering the professional voice mute. Ball refers to this process as the 'micro-technology of control' (Ball 1993:111 cited in Wang 2011: 143) which is policed not just by the state but by colleagues who view professional counter discourses as damaging to the 'survival of the institution'. Hence, creative teachers are often 'strait-jacketed' by hegemonic discourses (Gramsci 1971 cited in Papers One; Paper Two) that seek to normalise thought and action. The net effect of these constraints is their impact on learning which involves the mastery of a set of technical skills. McEwan (2011) traces the genealogy of teaching as technical skill to the sophist Protagoras. This conception of teaching posits, '..that teaching was a one way affair with the teacher always in control...In effect the sophists treated their pupils as little more than customers to be pleased rather than co-inquires in search of truth' (Mcewan 2011:129). However, as Ball attests, it is not teachers that are in control in our time, but the State, or rather the Secretary of State for Education, whose framing of policy evokes the dominant discourse, which implicates educational paradigms and then classroom practice as suggested in Figure One, based on Papers One and Two. The acquisition of pupils' restricted identities as writers in the classroom is supported by the study of children as writers in the home and at school (Paper Four: 73), which is discussed below.

It is the synthesis of eco-systemic theory and cultural hegemony, developed in my work and applied to the teaching and assessment of writing in the English education system, leading to the positioning of pupil identity as a writer that makes the theoretical perspective unique.

Writer Identity in 'schooling literacy'.

We might contend that the 'subjugation of knowledge' (Foucault 1980) discussed above is also a subjugation of the socio-cultural identity of the learner because the learner's cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) is subordinate to the socially ascribed and privileged epistemology that is institutionalised by national curricula; schooling practices and procedures and institutional values. By failing to acknowledge, and indeed value, the learner's cultural capital we negate the learner-writer's richest resource for writing; their personal, social and cultural narratives.

As the findings of Paper Four demonstrate pupils have active literacy lives outside of school which, if not acknowledged in school and not valued as valid knowledge, negates this aspect of the writer's identity. Sociocultural research in education also demonstrates significant dis-junctures between knowledge, including linguistic knowledge, acquired in out-of-school contexts and 'schooled' knowledge (Tizard and Hughes 2002; Gonzalez et al 2005; Heath 1983). A further significance of this body of research is that dis-continuities in the acquisition of knowledge or language between home and school are often situated in social class or ethnic difference (Tizard and Hughes, social class; Gonzalez, ethnicity; Heath, social class and ethnicity).

As pupil comments about themselves as writers demonstrate (Paper Four: 77) narrow conceptualisation of writing around transcriptional skills can lead to the acquisition of negative and even personally damaging identities as writers. Once a negative self-view as a writer has been internalised it may be difficult to eradicate without ameliorative intervention. In one study of student-teachers as writers, the longevity of such negative self-views was evident in testimonies reported in Paper Five (p. 14). Forty-six per cent of First Year B.Ed students in one institution claimed their dislike of writing emanated from past experiences of 'schooling literacy' characterised by functional and prescriptive approaches to writing and negative teacher feedback, in relation to secretarial skills. Along with

Paper Four, this study provides a nodal connection with the horizontal dimension in Figure One. However, as the findings in Paper Five suggest, it is possible and indeed imperative that student teachers re-conceptualise their self-identity as writers and the writing process by being positioned as 'authentic' writers through workshop and co-curricular activities that scaffold the development of writer efficacy.

The pupils investigated in Paper Four are located in both the vertical and the horizontal axes because their writer identities situated in 'schooling literacy' practices were different to their identities in the home. These pupils demonstrated the capacity to subvert schooling literacies by asserting their agency as writers in the home environment. With reference to Wertsch (1991; 1995; 1998 cited in Paper Four), it is posited that '.. the cultural tools available to the learner in different social contexts give rise to differentiated thinking in these contexts...' (p.71). Similarly, the identities of almost half the student teachers (Paper Five) are also situated at the pivotal point. In this instance their identities as writers prior to intervention were influenced by 'schooling literacy', whereas after intervention their identities were re-located along the horizontal axis because they were given time and space to explore personal and social narratives (Paper Five: 10), which both empowered them and ignited fresh relationships with writing.

Two key findings emerge from these papers. The first is that writing pedagogy requires ethnographic work, involving research around the learner-writer in out-of-school contexts (Paper Four). The second supports the reconceptualization of teaching about writing in teacher education, favouring epistemology of writing through praxis along the lines advocated in Paper Five.

Narrative and Identity.

The above discussion leads us to the horizontal axis. Narrative is central to human communication, culture and society (Brophy 2009: ix cited in Paper Three). As a component of ethnographic study, Brophy (2009) traces the lineage

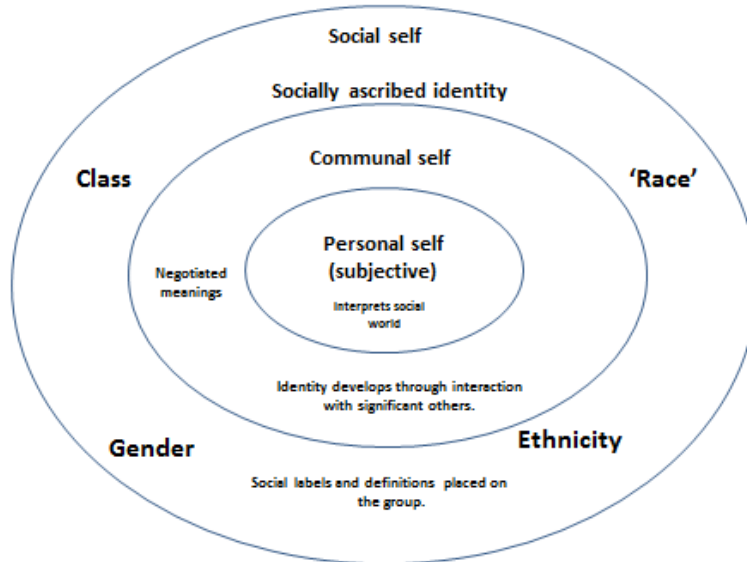
of personal narrative as a 'lens on the world' from the present day through Wittgenstein (1953) to Plato (360 BC). This perspective is also implicated in the conceptual underpinning of 'standpoint theory, (Harding 2004). As Webster and Mertova (2007:2) assert 'people make sense of their lives according to the narratives open to them'

In the auto-ethnographic account of my own writing (Paper Three), it is suggested narratives fall into three categories: personal, inherited and secondary. These socio-cultural narratives form an aspect of the individual's positioning in the world and are, therefore, integral to their identity, shaping not only who they are but also how they see and experience the world. Indeed, the narratives emerge *from* their experience of the world. Primary narratives represent the stored memories of lived experience, whereas 'inherited narratives' are stories and anecdotes imparted by family and community that extend identity from the personal to the social. Secondary narratives, however, come from outside personal or inherited experience but to some extent become subsumed in consciousness. It is suggested that due to the interpretive faculties constructed by 'primary' and 'secondary' narratives, we are able to develop empathic sensitivity to others who have parallel socio-political standpoints that make possible the accommodation of their narratives (Paper Three: 10-14). These secondary narratives may be socially constructed narratives or the personal narratives of others. In essence all narrative is social but the narratives that touch our lives either directly, as in the case of 'personal narratives,' or vicariously, as in the case of 'inherited' and 'secondary narratives', become personal, internalised 'lenses' that inform how we see and interpret the world. This position is exemplified in Paper Two but is more fully explored in Paper Three. Stories then, '...are the codes that frame memory, the intimate reflections of [...] who we have been...' (Grurgeon and Gardner 2000:79) and indeed, who we are. From this perspective the identity of the writer can also be viewed as text. I explore this point in the following explication of the horizontal dimension.

In his thesis on literary texts, Jameson (2002: 20) notes that cultural artefacts may appear to be based on, ‘..an individual’s symbolic enterprise..’ but that ‘...there is nothing that is not social and historical...everything is in the last analysis political.’ What is true of the literary text is true of all texts. Hence, the text is embedded in a network of texts, which, in their entirety, are framed by, and imbued with, the socio-historical and socio-political milieu in which they were created. The writer, as text, is located socially, culturally and politically in a dynamic network of narratives. My first exploration of narrative, as a marker of social identity, occurred in Grugeon and Gardner (2000:107) but the place of narrative in the shaping of individual identity and the socio-cultural positioning of the individual in terms of socially ascribed identities was formalised in the concentric model of social reality and identity (Figure Two), which also comes from an antecedent work (Supplementary Paper Two: 17). The model resonates with perspectives in Papers One and Two and, as discussed above, synthesised with Gramsci’s cultural hegemony provides a theoretical construct for explaining how macro-social discourses filtrate society to influence human thought and behaviour at the microcosmic level (Paper One; Paper Two). However, the model is also pertinent to the ensuing discussion of narrative.

‘Race’, social class, gender etc. are social constructs with inequitable relations; that is each category comprises a hierarchy of superordinate and subordinate positions. Each group has an ascribed identity which is framed by its respective socially constructed narrative. In the main, the social narratives of the most subordinate groups, historically, have been pejorative. Hence the hegemonic discourse of ‘race’ is the historic narrative of racism; the hegemonic discourse of gender is the narrative of sexism. Deficit theories of language and culture, along with eugenics, have been used to explain the subordinate position of the working classes, along with women and Black and minority ethnic groups. One key feature of these narratives is stereotype, which functions as an oppressive collective semiotic. Hence, all members of a social group have to some extent a shared identity because they are framed within the politically ascribed socio-

historical narrative of that group. However, the fact that each person inhabits more than one social group means that their individual experience is mediated by the confluence of two or more narratives, which suggests a non-essentialist perspective. At the level of the communal self, in Figure Two, stereotypes can either be replicated or challenged through interactions between the self and significant others.



(Gardner 2007:17)

Figure Two: Concentric Model of Social Reality and Identity.

There is an implicit influence of 'Symbolic Interactionism' (Mead 1934) at this point. At the centre of the model is the 'self'; the individual agent with the potential to think and act independently. However, such powers may be subsumed within the dominant social discourse, which defines the nature of the group and the individual, in which case the 'self' is a restricted agent. Conversely, as an active agent, the 'self' challenges the prevailing social constructs of the group(s) of which the Individual is a member. The will to challenge may be conscious or unwitting. In the case of the latter, the individual is unaware of the exact nature of the constraining process of the dominant discourse and, therefore, lacks the necessary analytical devices and language to articulate challenge. The result is unfocussed behaviour likely to be labelled deviant or aberrant; behaviour that possibly feeds the stereotype embedded in the dominant discourse.

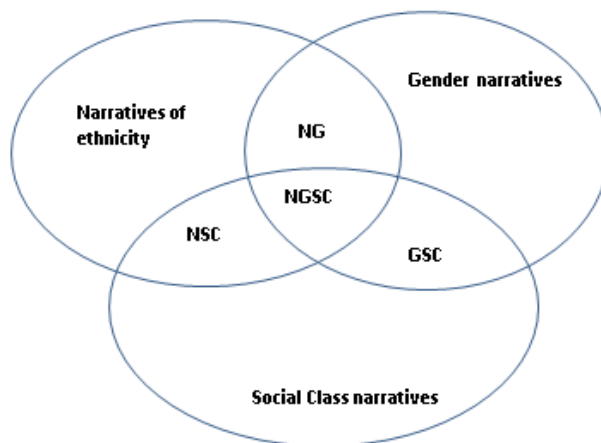
The converse is behaviour based on clarity of awareness and the ability to articulate one's view. Others may also view this as deviant behaviour but the 'self' is more assured and more able to circumnavigate stereotype, due to clarity of vision and articulation. There are resonances here with standpoint theory, as envisaged by (Harding 2004).

So, the social narratives that influence our personal ones and, therefore, our lives, as well as our perceptions of the social world, are those that touch our lives most. How we are positioned in the social world locates us amongst the narratives with which we engage. Ascribed identities, such as: gender, 'race', ethnicity and social class, are powerful influences in social positioning. However, this politically located identity is not unitary but subject to the discursive patterns of all socially ascribed identities, which obviate the determinism suggested by a single political hegemony. These identities have 'fluid boundaries' (Marsh and Millard 2000, cited Supplementary Paper Two: 21; Paper Four: 72), suggesting the individual occupies, simultaneously and diachronically, different socio-cultural identities, implicating several social narratives (Supplementary Paper Two: 17; Paper Three; Paper Four: 72). This positioning across several social identities simultaneously makes meanings subjective and variable (Beck and Purcell 2010: 38).

From this perspective, the learner-writer is a social being with socially ascribed identities which are mediated through lived and vicarious experience. Personal narratives refer to lived experience whereas inherited and secondary narratives are vicarious. The interactive nature of socially constructed identity and attendant narratives is represented in Figure Three (Interactional Model of Social Narratives).

In the interests of simplicity the model depicts only three types of social narrative an individual might occupy, but it is recognised that in reality identity assumes a wider range of narratives than the model suggests. These other narratives include: religion, 'race', sexual orientation etc. The intersections show where social categories overlap denoting both similarity and difference. For

example, working class women share a class narrative with working class men (GSC) but their gender narratives differ, resulting in differential experiences, standpoints and perceptions of the world. The model evolves its complexity when the heterogeneity of each social category is also factored in. Hence, individual identity is subject to multiple positions which change according to fluctuating social narratives, making the 'self' both fluid but contained within socio-cultural and political parameters, such as history and economic conditions. Auto-ethnography, drawing on rhizotextual approaches, is one means by which writers can explore the complexity of personal and social identity (Paper Three; Paper Four). Being conscious of one's position and the causes of such positioning, as well as the ways in which one's standpoint influence one's view of



(adapted from Gardner 2007; Paper Four)

Figure Three: Interactional Model of Social Narratives.

the world, allows for the possibility of empowerment. Empowerment is the ally of 'voice' and praxis. The learner is, therefore, positioned within a matrix of changing socio-cultural identities and choices (Gardner 2007:22). This perspective is used to explain why some children may be reluctant to write in

school but possess more positive identities as writers in the home (Paper Four). It is possible that in the former they are framed within a restrictive paradigm of writing (Paper One) in which they see themselves as poor writers, but the home offers a more liberating context which allows them freedom to choose from a matrix of personal, inherited and secondary narratives which include a variety of texts.

It is within multiple positions of gender, 'race', class, etc. that the individual writer negotiates meaning, making it possible to view the world with insights that challenge dominant or orthodox discourses (Bartowski and Kolmer 2005: 45). Just as the reading of texts is open to individual transaction, subject to the particular experiences of individual readers (Rosenblatt 1995, 2005 cited in Gardner 2010: 117; Smith 2005 cited in Gardner 2010: 118), my thesis is that parallel processes occur during the composition of texts. That is, the identity of the writer is situated in knowledge constructed through the social positioning of the 'self'. This thesis, exemplified in auto-ethnographic, rhizotextual analysis (Paper Three), demonstrates that the writer is not entirely conscious of the full extent of meanings (s)he constructs during the compositional process and that retrospective analysis is required, by the writer, in order to elicit the text's complex rhizomic semantic.

It is perhaps this 'veil' across the text that perplexes writers, making the compositional processes mysterious, even to themselves. If the compositional process were completely transparent, writing might prove less of a struggle, even to established writers. As the poet/lyricist Leonard Cohen (2011) states, '...if I knew where the good songs came from I would go there more often...' The text's semantic is only partially contained within the text itself. In order to reveal the fully populated semantic of the text, the writer must interrogate the socio-cultural and personal narratives that inhabit the text. In so doing, the writer is able to reveal aspects of the self that have driven the compositional process. This is far from suggesting that texts are auto-biographical, but rather that self-analysis of our own texts, reveal the interplay of narratives that frame writer

identity and situate us within socio-political frames of reference. As Webster and Mertora (2007) posit individual experience is influenced by social positioning and, therefore, the writer interprets the world through the bi-focal lenses of experience unique to the individual and experience that is common to the social groups to which the individual belongs. So it is that we experience the world in two ways; firstly, by means of interpretations of directly lived experience and, secondly, through the narratives that touch our lives.

Jameson (2002) notes texts are read through the ‘..sedimented layers of previous interpretations..’. Lives too may be read as texts with an individual’s narrative imbued with the biographies of others (Stanley 1992; Langer and Furman 2004). The process of writing places the author in a dual position; situated at the nexus of communication and learning. Hence, the construction of the text is scholarly activity. Individual texts do not exist in isolation of other texts, nor are they ever completed works. In this sense the text is never stable; it is always subject to transaction, to interpretation, even by its own author. Such interpretation is not just diachronic but political also. As Jameson (2002: 20) states ‘.. there is nothing that is not social and historical...everything is in the last analysis political.’ He advocates ‘..political interpretation...as the absolute horizon of all reading and all interpretation’ (Jameson 2002: 17). What Jameson suggests of the literary may apply equally to all texts, indeed to all constructions of ideational being, including human consciousness.

Implications.

As suggested above, the cultural plurality of the learner allows for multiple identities necessitating a continual need for ethnographic study by teachers (Supplementary Paper Two: 22; Paper One: 148; Paper Four: 80; Paper Five: 13) and auto-ethnography by the writer (Paper Three). The meanings that children co-construct derive from narratives acquired from home and community; from tele-visual and digital narratives. It requires teachers to acquaint themselves with the social and cultural narratives of the children they teach and their

communities so that they can utilise lived experience as a resource for writing, as Chris Searle did (1971 cited in Paper Three). There are resonances here with the work of Gonzalez et al (2005) on 'funds of knowledge' and Street's (2005) New Literacy Studies.

This requires teaching for empowerment, involving scope for multiple interpretations (Gardner 2001:37) and the potential to challenge dominant discourses (Bartowski and Kolmer 2005: 45), leading to critical literacy (Freebody and Luke 2003). If teachers have knowledge of both the lived experience of pupils, accompanied by knowledge of writing through praxis (Supplementary Paper One: 26; Paper Five), a pedagogy encouraging self and social awareness, on the part of learner-writers, is possible. Such pedagogy is framed by the auto-ethnographic rhizotextual approach explored in Paper Three and is evident in the realisations made by student writers in Paper Four. Philosophically, this approach to the teaching of writing resonates with post-modernism which rejects, '...grand narratives, as incredulous propositions,' (Lyotard 1984: 37; 1994: 28). For Lyotard 'small narratives' allow us to present and re-present the world.

'...each time we hold a mirror up to the world we see a slightly different view, perceived through the lens of changing perspectives.'

(Gardner 2000: 58).

Narrative is the cultural transmitter, positioning writers kaleidoscopically, including learner-writers, offering the possibility of multiple perspectives (Paper Three: 72; Paper Four and also Gardner 2000:66; 2007:21). These fluctuating perspectives imply an unstable world, leading Deleuze (1995: 113) to suggest the individual is in a 'continual state of becoming.' Implying subjectivity is never fixed. Deleuze identifies two ways in which the 'self' is produced and re-produced; it can either be docilely shaped or 'self-produced'. Papers One and Two draw on Gramsci's cultural hegemony and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to suggest how dominant social perceptions can shape individuals as passive subjects, thereby perpetuating normative perspectives encapsulated in dominant discourses. The antecedent of this view might be

traced to Locke's concept of the individual as a 'tabula rasa'; a receptor of experience. In Paper Two this perspective is applied to student teachers to show how socio-political discourses influence professional identities, whereas in Paper One it is used to demonstrate how assessment paradigms reflect discourses of writing and then translate into a pedagogy which frames the writer's identity. There are similar resonances in Paper Five which found that the identities of student teachers, as writers, could be traced to schooling literacy. Similarly, Paper Four suggests that the identities of 'reluctant writers' is a construct situated in classroom literacy practices that privilege the acquisition of skills over authorial choice.

However, Deleuze's second production of self, the ability to self-produce one's subjectivity by being outside hegemonic semiotic forces, supports the synthesis of all five papers presented here. Self-production, according to Deleuze, occurs at the interface of power and resistance. Indeed, self-production is '...inspired by resistance.' (Wang 2011: 153). This implies a subject who is conscious of the way in which power functions to privilege some whilst subordinating others. The synthesis of a rhizotextual approach to writing (Paper Three) and the acquisition of subject knowledge through reflective practice (Paper Five) offer a way in which the compositional process may empower the writer and open the door to self-production.

Wang (2011: 153) interprets Deleuze's self-production of subjectivity as, '...the reflexive force of power...the force of resistance in order to think otherwise.' This point is suggested in the findings of Paper Five which saw student teachers' self-perceptions change in positive ways through conscious exploration of writing. Scaffolded opportunities allowed them to '...think otherwise...'. The ability to think 'otherwise' and to resist hegemonic discourses is a necessary condition of being a professional, which implies the ability to make reasoned judgements and to take appropriate action, arising out of a personal and collective dialogic based on epistemological evidence. That an epistemology of writing necessitates a dialogic of self is a key finding from the synthesis of the five papers. The auto-

ethnographic account of my own writing (Gardner Paper Three) is one means of undertaking such a dialogic. As Prior (2006:64) asserts, writing connects us to ‘.. who we are and who we will become..’. Hence, the conclusion of Paper Five is that a pre-requisite for future teachers of writing is knowledge in praxis (Supplementary Paper One: 26). By engaging in writing, the practitioner acquires not only self-knowledge but knowledge that writing is a vehicle for self-knowledge. Hence, it is suggested there is a need for a paradigm of writing pedagogy that validates the efficacy of the writer by means of reflexive, rhizotextual practice.

Whereas some pedagogies of writing are premised upon communicative practice through cognitive processes or the manipulation of skills oriented towards a pre-determined audience, reflexive, rhizotextual practice opens a door to new vistas; ones in which writing and the writer are socially and culturally, even politically, situated. Although this is a position that can be found in other socio-cultural perspectives of literacy such as New Literacy Studies (Street 2005) and Critical Literacy (Luke and Freebody 1997), both of which acknowledge writing as social and political practice, what is advocated in this thesis is a socio-cultural perspective in which the writer, by means of reflexivity is able to explore, not only the text in relation to the outer world, but also the emerging self as text formed by, and resistant to, dominant socio-political discourses. By exploring socio-cultural perspectives in the submitted works a new stream has emerged in my mental landscape; rhizotextual analysis of writing, which situates the writer as an active social agent in textual construction, rather than an individual cognitive actor processing lexico-grammatical structures. It is posited that an epistemology of writing embedded in rhizomic approaches may lead to teachers of writing, and through them pupils as writers, who are able to ‘..think otherwise..’; who are able to resist ‘top-down’ discourses of writing and of thinking, which lead to reductionist pedagogies of writing located in the acquisition of skills and techniques.

In reviewing my work, I acknowledge that my writing is situated not just in an academic perspective but also in the socio-cultural and political narratives that affect my life and my world view. My works synthesise a social constructivist pedagogy, which implicates my educational philosophy, alongside a political perspective located in my socio-cultural positioning. I realise these elements combine to shape my identity as an author and a teacher. The conclusion I reach, by virtue of this reflexivity, is as Socrates (ref 470-399BC) put it that a man's (sic) first duty is to know himself. In a profession such as teaching, which is as reliant upon the quality of social interaction, social discourse and inter-personal relations, as it is upon teaching techniques, skills and subject knowledge, there is an imperative for the teacher to know her/himself. However, such knowledge goes beyond, 'knowing oneself as a person' and includes 'knowing oneself as a socio-cultural being'. This implies knowledge of the narratives and discourses that 'shape' the individual. It involves the deconstruction of one-self as a 'social text;' an examination of the rhizotextuality that situate the individual in a particular socio-cultural location, on a particular socio-cultural trajectory. It also requires realisation of how hegemonic political discourses function to create apparently consensual views of society and of education. From my personal reflexivity the questions that arise concern the place of personal-social narratives in the construction of the 'self' as writer and teacher. Just as the researcher must acknowledge their positioning, should the same not apply to the teacher, as an integral aspect of their professionalism? Furthermore, would analysis of teaching as an implicitly political practice enable teachers to situate themselves better as professionals who are able to exercise professional autonomy and creativity? The investigative approach (auto-ethnography), used to interrogate the author located in Paper Three is the same methodology being proposed for reflexive practice in teacher education (Paper Four). In paper Four, I discuss how self-reflexivity as writers helped students acquire knowledge of their own writing trajectories, leading to a re-conceptualisation of the writing process, as well as their own processes of composition. As in other studies (Cremin 2006; 2008;

Locke and Dix 2011) ,findings suggest that knowledge of one-self as a writer may assist teachers to better scaffold children’s development as writers and that the acquisition of knowledge in praxis, involving reflexivity, leads to deep pedagogic knowledge (Supplementary Paper One; Paper Five). This is in contrast to classroom practice based on a descriptive technician approach encapsulated in derivative professional standards.

Contribution to Knowledge.

In addition to the individual contributions to knowledge of each of the five papers, which is considered above (see synopses), the papers collectively make a new contribution to our understanding of writers and the writing process. A synthesis of findings, outlined in the above discussion, produces a theoretical overview of the socio-political and cultural construction of writer identity and the impact of identity on the compositional process. Previous theoretical perspectives view written composition as either intra-organismic processes or else as microcosmic social transactions in which the context of the writing event, purpose and audience are the salient features that shape writing. The perspective offered in this thesis, however, considers how macro socio-political discourses and social narratives either enhance or restrict the writer’s identity with a consequent impact on the compositional process. That is not to say that social context is unimportant. Paper Four clearly demonstrates that writers can have dual identities, each of which is activated by the particularities of social context. Paper One discusses how pedagogy and assessment, as specific features of the classroom, impinge on composition and Paper Five demonstrates how by altering the social context writer identity can be transformed. However, specific social contexts reside in broader social perspectives which give rise to competing discourses that frame writer identity. This broader perspective is modelled in Figure One. It is posited that schooling literacies in which technical aspects of writing are privileged constrain, if not negate, the writers identity, which is embedded in the writer’s social narratives. The corollary of this contribution to

knowledge is a praxis which places writer identity and concomitant social narratives at the centre of a pedagogy of writing. It is posited that by allowing developing writers to draw upon their social narratives, not only is the compositional process enhanced but so too is the writer's capacity to reflect upon the 'Self'. In such pedagogy, the writer is the first audience in the sense that writing becomes a means of revelation of the self and attendant relations to the social world, as suggested in Paper Three. Hence writing becomes the means of knowing who we are in order to shape who we will become.

Conclusion.

In this retrospective of my work, I discern a parallel relationship between the study of a text and the analysis of the individual. There is a sense in which the individual is a 'text' encoded by the script of the socio-cultural world they inhabit. The difference being that the individual, unlike a written text, is a conscious agent, who is able to interpret both the social world and the action of that world on the self. However, 'agency' implies the reflexive capacity to analyse, critique and consciously act upon experience. Without praxis reflexivity is impotent 'navel gazing'. In this study, therefore, there is a consensual resonance between the content of the study and the methodological approach adopted.

A post-modern perspective is conceptually pluralistic. My work fuses aspects of Gramsci's Marxist analysis and; Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory with an interpretation of Feminist Standpoint Theory (Bartowski and Kolmer: 2005), but there are also resonances of Reader Response Theory (Rosenblatt: 1995, 2005) and critical literacy (Freebody and Luke: 2003; Lankshear and Knobel: 2004). This synthesis, devoid of meta-narrative (Lyotard: 1984), is a post-modern epistemological vantage point from which to revise our understanding of the learner-writer positioned within a matrix of discourses that filtrate and influence writer identity.

What is true of one individual is true of all. Therefore, teacher and learner identity, as well as author identity, is socially and politically located; subject to hegemonic educational paradigms which translate into classroom pedagogy (Paper One). Teaching is, therefore, ultimately a political act, yet under the guise of professionalism it is construed as a neutral social activity. This falsehood is the conclusion I have reached via the meta-analysis of my work. I am not alone in this conclusion. Recent commentaries on developments in literacy education have discounted its political neutrality (Soler and Lambirth 2011: 101). The corollary is that teachers of literacy must un-mask themselves; divest themselves of this pseudo-neutrality by, on the one hand, coming to understand their socio-politically located identities and, on the other, realise that pedagogies, and the paradigms from which pedagogies emanate, are political constructs (Paper One; Paper Two). Hence, the curriculum, teaching, learning, educational texts, national strategies, Ofsted etc. are ultimately political and are open to competing interpretations. We might consider an interpretive continuum, with the orthodox at one end and the radical at the other. Orthodox interpretation is framed by hegemony, whilst the radical is influenced by a counter discourse or discourses. Hence, writing, reading, teaching and learning are socially enacted expressions of the writer's, reader's, teacher's and learner's, politically located identity.

The key theme that permeates these works revolves around discussion of socio-cultural and political discourses and individual agency that compete to shape the identity of the learner, which I apply to the learner-writer. I posit a dichotomy in the compositional process caused by a tension between, on the one hand, dominant discourses that inform current pedagogies of writing and on the other by socio-cultural narratives that shape the identity of the writer. The corollary of the findings from empirical investigations presented in the peer-reviewed papers demonstrate that pedagogies which minimise or negate the identity of the writer, as an integral aspect of the compositional process, prove to be counter-productive as effective means of facilitating writer efficacy. What emerges from the autoethnography of my work is the need for a paradigmatic shift in the

pedagogy of literacy education away from technicist approaches to the exploration of the learner-writer's narratives, otherwise teachers are prone to being compliant agents of hegemonic policy discourses (Kuzich 2011:115 cited in Paper One).

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