What makes writing academic:
an educational and philosophical response

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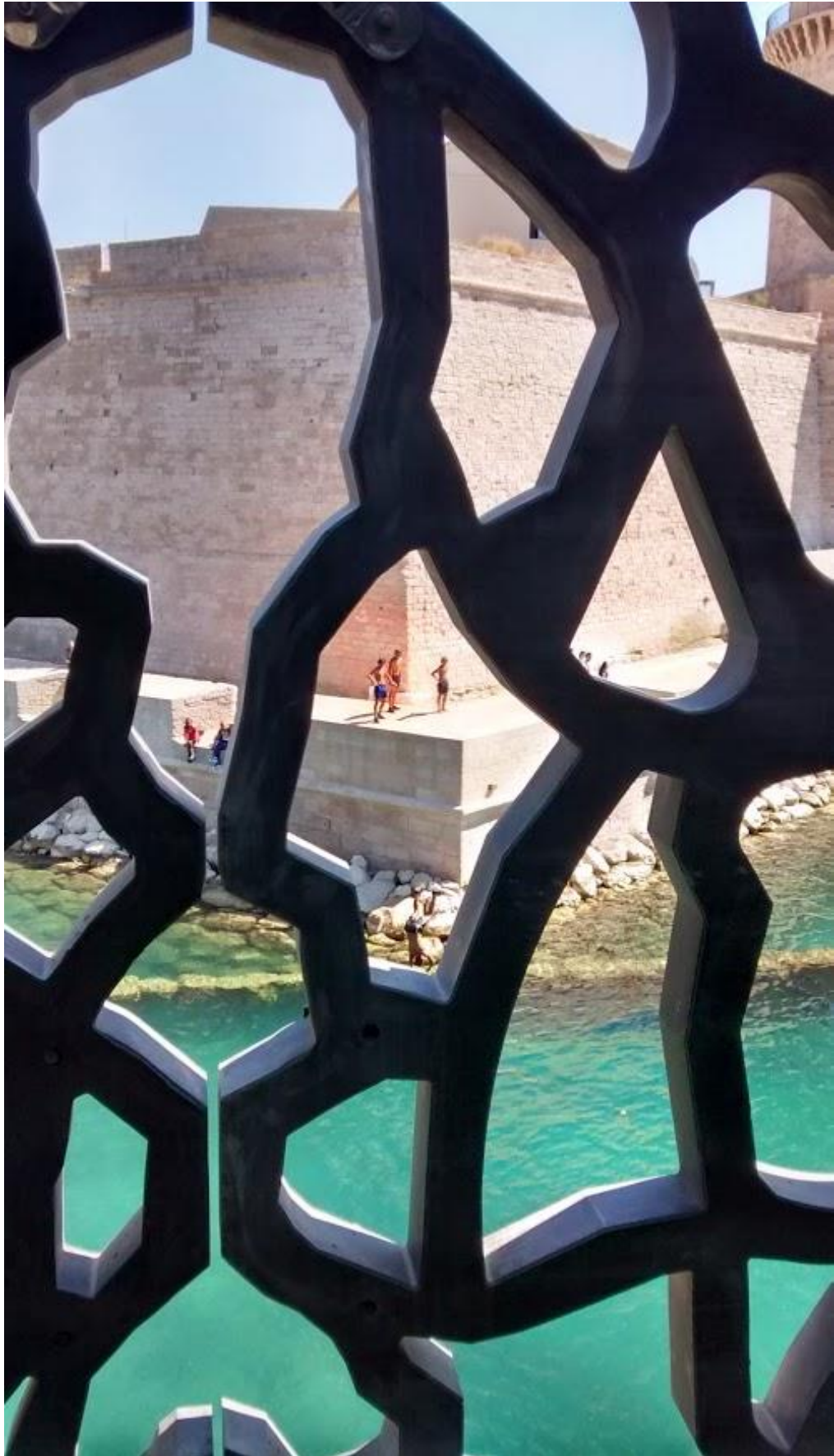
THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2019

Dedicated to Robert and Luay x

Preface

The many Things that Things Afford (or Freedoms and Constraints)
Free to dive between barriers
(Musée des Civilisations d'Europe et de Méditerranée (Marseille, Julia Molinari, 2016)

This thesis is my freedom and invitation to dive between barriers.

Rooted in a critical learning incident which took place in the academic year 1989/1990, my first year as an undergraduate at the University of St Andrews, my PhD is a promissory note to nurture understanding, respect and space for diverse literacies.

I entered university as a promising multilingual and multidisciplinary high achiever, whose European Baccalaureate grades had been exemplary. That first undergraduate year ruined everything. My grades nose-dived, dragging my confidence in tow. The new demands of monolingual and monodisciplinary writing, and the threshold concepts they required, were so disorientating that I very nearly dropped out. I didn't, but I was painfully alerted to the porous, permeable, fragile reality of being: just as human identities are multiple, often crashing against entrenched gate-keeping binaries that demand they be 'one or the other', so too are academic writings.

Yes, there are barriers to who we can be and how we can write, but so too are there freedoms.

Abstract

...exploring the boundaries of 'academicness'

...providing an account of what makes a text 'academic'

In April 1995, my article was accepted for publication in 'Social Text'; precisely a year later it appeared in print. I revealed the hoax a few weeks later (Sokal, 2008, p. xiii)

The publishers Springer and IEEE are removing more than 120 papers from their subscription services after a French researcher discovered that the works were computer-generated (Noorden, 2014)

Is Twitter academic?

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The world is all that is the case.
1.1
The world is the totality of facts, not of things.

Was the early Wittgenstein academic?

Is the IELTS exam academic?

This thesis contextualises academic writing in EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and subjects it to an interdisciplinary (educational and philosophical) analysis in order to argue that what makes writing academic are its socio-academic practices and values, not its conventional forms. In rejecting dominant discourses that frame academic writing as a transferable skill which can be reduced to conventional forms, I show that academic writings are varied and evolve alongside changing writer agencies and textual environments. This accounts for the emergence of a diverse academic writing landscape that enacts diverse socio-academic practices and that does not reduce writing to predictable static surface features. My methodology resists traditional disciplinary classifications and is in line with the reflective and interpretative approaches associated with the humanities. Rather than 'filling a gap' in academic writing research, I challenge writing conventions in EAP by questioning assumptions. This is because EAP is influential in shaping discourses about academic writing and, as such, it must not mislead students and practitioners about the evolving purposes, forms and possibilities for academic expression. The thesis is divided into three parts, each containing two chapters. Part 1 is concerned with explaining what academic writing is in EAP and how EAP can misrepresent it. Part 2 delves into the history of writing and literacy to tease out the ideologies shaping writing practices. Part 3 proposes a model based on philosophical theories of mind and sociology that lays the foundation for a macro theory of academic writing and a future writing pedagogy. The model re-imagines academic writing as an affordance within a non-linear, emergent and complex social open system. This system can be referred to as an organic unity and requires a shift from conceiving writing as a 'transferable skill'. When re-imagined as an affordance, change and diversity in academic writing practices become possible.

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Framing the research

Preliminaries

what is seen as 'academic' writing is contestable and always emergent (A. Archer & Breuer, 2016a, p. 2).

This thesis contextualises academic writing in my area of professional expertise, EAP (English for Academic Purposes, which I outline below), and provides a rationale for subjecting it to an educational and philosophical analysis. Essentially, it argues that what makes writing academic are its socio-academic practices, not its conventional forms. Since EAP tends to foreground forms, my critique begins here, but extends to all prescriptive and mechanistic approaches to academic writing.

Teaching context

My questioning of what makes writing 'academic' began when, in 2011, our presessional[1] EGAP unit (English for General Academic Purposes) decided to abandon its IELTS-inspired curriculum in favour of an academic literacies approach (Lea & Street, 1998; Scott & Lillis, 2007). IELTS is a commercial language proficiency test recognised by many universities; an academic literacies approach is a transformative, critical and educational

[1] Presessional courses in the UK enable access to undergraduate and postgraduate courses for which students typically (but not necessarily) have an offer that is conditional on passing an EAP course. These are different to insessional courses which offer EAP support alongside study on degree programmes. Both presessional and insessional courses provide academic communication support to international and home students.

approach to literacy. This change led to foregrounding a more exploratory pedagogy (Allwright & Hanks, 2009) centred around the learner's critical engagement with knowledge rather than around the transmission of disembodied language skills and written products. One key feature of our EAP programmes is that we have, to some extent, created genres to fit the research our EAP students want to engage with, rather than impose pre-existing templates. We consider these genres to be 'academic' in virtue of the academic ideas of the writer who generated them and not simply in virtue of their texts *displaying* conventional 'academic' skills and forms. Such 'displays' typically include, for example, the skill of summarising for its own sake rather than for a relevant purpose, or including generic vocabulary from 'academic lists' (Coxhead, 2011) rather than from the student's own disciplinary discourses.

It was this shift – from form to content – that sparked my reflections on what makes a text academic. My thesis is a manifestation of this reflection, rather than its conclusion, and essentially proposes a puzzle, rather than an answer, to what happens to the 'academicness' of writing when we start to play with its conventional forms.

When P. Bourdieu and Passeron (1994) claimed that 'academic language is a dead language for the majority of people and is nobody's mother tongue' (referring, specifically, to the French language), they were indexing concerns that underpin this thesis, namely that what makes language - and the texts that contain it - academic, requires ongoing reflection and revision.

Further teaching and learning exchanges confirmed in my mind that this was a real puzzle, not one that could be easily solved by following textbook advice or diligently doing classroom tasks. The

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following account fictionalises the essence of real conversations I have had with students over the years as they try to adapt to the writing expectations of their departments:

> I got 48% in my essay and I don't understand why. I got distinctions in my Access course and when I was writing this essay, I thought it was good. I put in references, I looked at different aspects of the research question, my friend, who is really good academically, advised me to start with some context and give some definitions, but my tutor said I had too many ideas and they weren't really connected to the main question. I also don't really know what a paragraph is or how long it should be and what should go in the introduction and conclusion? Is the conclusion just a summary? I need to start writing my second essay and I just don't know where to start now. I want to do it right, but I don't know how. How do you write an academic essay? How is it different to what they taught me on my Access course? I know people who have done A-Levels and they also say it is completely different to an A-Level essay.

What these student accounts suggest is that they perceive advice about what makes writing academic as conflicting and confusing, rather than as context-dependent and 'contestable and emergent'. Their evidence for this is that Access and A-level students are finding a mis-match between their understandings of paragraphs, conclusions and coherence ('too many ideas not connected') and their university tutors' understandings. Similarly, EAP students who have been instructed in IELTS, for example, come to university with beliefs about what makes a text academic that find limited resonance with disciplinary writing.

If academic writing were framed as 'contestable and emergent' from the outset, this might help writers tolerate its ambiguities, reflect on the choices they have (rather than the rules), and manage the uncertainty of a context-dependent writing process.

Without reflecting on what academic language is, why it is as it is and what purposes it serves, educational institutions risk perpetuating 'distancing mechanisms' whereby academic language alienates those who are not familiar with it. This unfamiliarity may stem from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, but not only: there are many academics who choose to represent knowledge in alternative ways, including non-linguistic ways (as I show in Chapter 4) and who may also feel excluded by conventional academic writing practices. Since academic language shapes how we represent the world (Bazerman, 1988, 2015), retaining a critical stance towards its affordances seems sensible. It is in this 'critical' sense that I will argue that what makes writing academic is not a static property of texts but one that is emergent and open to change.

Although knowledge and skills about what makes a text 'academic' remain necessary to operate within existing institutional conventions, a higher education also needs 'habits of mind' and 'attitudes' that ensure we remain "open to surprise and revision" (Warner, 2018, pp. 18-27). This is because 'existing' conventions may not always be relevant to the socio-academic practices that academic writers wish to enact.

Why start with EAP?

In this thesis, I question EAP's tendency to present academic writing as a transferable skill which can be reduced to universal rules. Instead, I re-orient the discourse to showcase that academic writings are varied and evolve alongside changing academic practices and writer agencies. This re-orientation can foster the emergence of a diverse academic writing landscape, one that may avoid reducing writing to predictable static surface features that are then easily standardised and replicated. When standardisation takes root, essay mills are more likely to thrive because they reproduce templates (Molinari, 2014); hoaxes (Cuthbert, 2018) find fertile soil to implant themselves because when writing is made to 'look like

writing' (Warner, 2018, p. 7), it merely mimics academic practices; and creativity risks being thwarted because uniformity is hostile to diversity (Tardy, 2016).

A brief introduction to what EAP is can explain why it lends itself to a discussion about the tensions involved in what makes writing academic. EAP is concerned with "assisting learners' study or research in that language [English]. In this sense, it is a broad term covering all areas of academic communicative practice such as [...] [s]tudent writing (from essays to exam papers and graduate theses)" (Hyland, 2006a, p. 1). EAP emerged from within the field of Applied Linguistics (Flowerdew, 2013) and has distilled its own selective understandings of the writing needs of Higher Education, often by conducting quantitative surveys on university writing genres to identify templates that can be taught by EAP teachers (Nesi & Gardner, 2012). However, such understandings do not systematically do justice to wider research in Writing Studies and Literacies which reveal writing to be far more varied in its forms than EAP suggests (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015).

EAP is further informed by theories of Second Language Acquisition (e.g. Ellis, 1997), including Sociolinguistics and Semiotics (Halliday, 1994a), and shares the principles of ESP pedagogies (English for Special or Specific Purposes, such as English for Business, Pilots, Nurses or Engineers), which in turn share features of the broader family of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) (Ding & Bruce, 2017, p. 83) (See Fig. 1). Although its specific aim is to engage learners in the broader discourses and literacies of academia (Coffin et al., 2002), it is not predominantly informed by writing research as is, for example, the US tradition of Composition Studies (Russell, 2002). Rather, its remit is to teach English for the specific purpose

of enabling non-native and, increasingly, native speakers, to join English-speaking higher education communities.
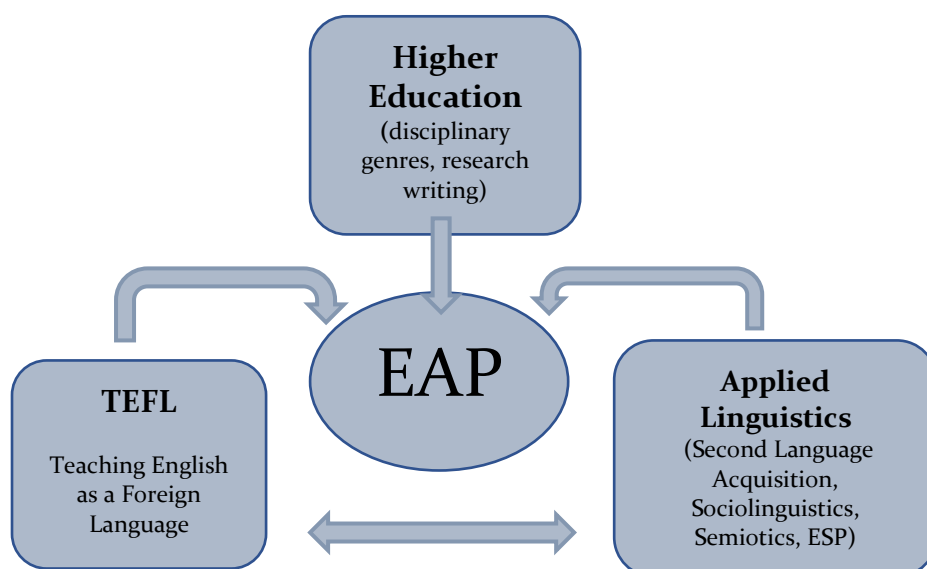
Figure 1: EAP evolved from TEFL and Applied Linguistics

Moreover, far from engaging with the notion that academic writing is a 'contestable and emergent' practice, EAP seems to be moving towards greater disciplinary specialisation by confining writing practices to disciplinary norms. For example, EAP courses increasingly offer discipline-specific writing instruction (such as law, engineering or nursing), possibly because of the perceived stability and homogeneity that disciplinary discourses provide (Hyland, 2002d) but also because of a textbook industry that fossilises conventions (Bennett, 2009) rather than engages critically with them.

Notwithstanding specialisation, general approaches to academic writing endure. Ken Hyland, for example, who has played an influential role in EAP's 50-year history, has drawn the field's attention to the 'Academic Purposes' of EAP (including disciplinary values and cultures) which have had a tendency to be overlooked in favour of a focus on teaching the 'English'. Specifically, Hyland's concerns with ensuring that the 'Academic

Purpose' of EAP be acknowledged draws on the principle that higher education is where knowledge is both learnt and transformed (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987), in other words where established knowledge is both consolidated and critiqued to enable new knowledge and perspectives to emerge. This requires engaging academically with knowledge, argument and critical thinking, not only language.

Moreover, language scholars such as Widdowson (1983) have differentiated the purpose of general EAP from that of specific EAP in terms of the former providing an 'education' and the latter providing 'training' (pp. 16-20). What he means by this is that general approaches to EAP can provide educational opportunities for questioning, interpreting and analysing underlying rationales whereas specialist approaches tend to encourage technical skills aimed at mastery.

The dualisms indexed by Widdowson and Hyland – educating *versus* training and academic purpose *versus* teaching English – raise questions relating to the extent to which EAP provision has been more concerned with the learning of established knowledge, norms and conventions (which might be better achieved through training) and less with transforming knowledge into new ways of understanding (which is a characteristic of education)[2]. As I suggest throughout Part 1, EAP seems more concerned with training students rather than educating them. This has led to descriptive and prescriptive programmes of study where students are *told* what the academic norms are, as if these were static, homogenous and non-negotiable. Moreover, since the norms being taught tend to be those associated with what has been called the 'scientific paradigm' (Bennett, 2015; Turner, 2010, 2018), EAP is presenting a particular form of academic writing that is not representative of all disciplines. Asking students to replicate norms and conventions leads to uncritical syllabi and assessment

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[2] I discuss the distinction between training and education in Chapter 2.

practices that do not require knowledge of the broader educational process of understanding why these norms prevail, what they can and cannot afford and what the implications of adopting these norms might be for them and for the academic knowledge communities they will be contributing to.

Given that writing is the preferred mode of academic assessment, as evidenced by the 'essay' remaining the default genre in the humanities and in many of the arts and social sciences (Womack, 1993), it is not surprising that it is student *writing* that receives a great deal of attention in higher education and EAP. This has been shown in Nesi and Gardner (2012) and Andrews (2003). As a consequence of the centrality of writing, the focus on norms and training mentioned above can be extended to how academic writing is also approached. This is despite a shift, in the last 20 years or so, from a narrow focus on text and its linguistic norms towards more multimodal forms of communication (Andrews, 2010, p. 93; Andrews, Borg, Davis Boyd, Domingo, & England, 2012; Paré, 2018; Roozen & Erickson, 2017). This shift has seen literacy *practices* (such as informed rhetorical choices about style and multimodality), as opposed to *skills* (such as the decontextualized and transferable mechanics of writing, like referencing or paragraphing), come to the fore in several areas of research writing, including Kamler and Thomson (2006) and A. Archer and Breuer (2015). EAP, however, has been slow to catch up with or embrace this trend, a trend that indexes the richness and possibilities academic writing practices afford.

This richness is being documented by writing and higher education scholars who recognise that university writing practices need to continue reflecting the range of purposes that these practices are intended to fulfil.

Such purposes include preparing students for the multimodal communication needed in the twenty-first century (Andrews et al., 2012; A. Archer & Breuer, 2016b; Mcculloch, 2017; Paré, 2017) and respecting the diverse literacies and identities that students bring with them to academia (Roozen & Erickson, 2017; Sperlinger, McLellan, & Pettigrew, 2018; Williams, 2017) .

Approach and aims

To answer my research question - what makes writing academic – I have chosen an interdisciplinary approach which draws on educational and philosophical theories. This means that my methodology resists traditional disciplinary classifications and is more in line with the reflective and interpretative approaches associated with the humanities, rather than the social sciences. This is partly to harness familiarity and continuity with my previous educational background in Philosophy and Education, but also because I would like this thesis to remain *part of* an ongoing reflective process, rather than its conclusion. Rather than 'filling a gap' or 'creating a research space' (Swales, 1990) - conventions which dominate traditional research writing paradigms and conjure up a comforting, bold and confident sense of closure (gaps get filled, spaces are finite, and researchers 'occupy territories and niches' staking their claim to *own* rather than share ideas) – I have chosen to challenge conventions in the field of EAP writing by simply questioning some of the assumptions it is founded on.

This allows my research to be *explorative* rather than *exploitative* (D'Agostino, 2012), meaning that it aims to 'discover and innovate' within the realm of what is possible, rather than 'add details and fill in gaps' (Krishnan, 2013, p. 19) within the boundaries of what already exists. In this

sense, it fulfils the socio-academic practice of being *imaginative* about 'future possibilities' (Barnett, 2012, 2013)'.

My approach further aligns with the kind of 'problematisation' discussed in Alvesson and Sandberg (2013), who also object to the uncritical adoption of the default 'gap-spotting' approach to research on the grounds that it posits an incremental approach to academic enquiry that often leaves the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions unchallenged. Rather, my aim is to 'unsettle' assumptions about academic writing in the sense outlined here by Barnett (1990, p. 155) with reference to 'higher learning':

> A genuine higher learning is subversive in the sense of subverting the student's taken-for-granted world, including the world of endeavour, scholarship, calculation or creativity, into which he or she has been initiated. A genuine higher education is unsettling; it is not meant to be a cosy experience. It is disturbing because, ultimately, the student comes to see that things could always be other than they are.

Similarly, monodisciplinary approaches to knowledge can lead to assumptions remaining unchallenged, allowing them to seem 'objective' and to then 'settle' into established, arguably complacent, ways of knowing. Such disciplinary objectivity and complacency, however, has its challengers. Because of such challenges (briefly outlined below), it is wise to question and reflect upon the extent to which the notion of 'objectivity' is indeed universal, historically and socially agreed upon, and whether it can be exclusively conflated with the purpose of epistemic enquiry, including mono and interdisciplinary pursuits.

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For example, there is, arguably, a plurality of different conceptions of objectivity. This has been documented historically by Daston and Galison (2007) who trace the etymological trajectory of epistemic virtues. They locate the naming of the epistemic virtue of 'objectivity' (understood as a mechanical conception of reality that does not require the subjective interpretation of a knower) within the mid-19th century (2007, pp. 17 and 31). Although they concede that etymology does not, in and of itself, bring reality into existence (i.e. naming something does not negate its previous existence), they argue that 'objectivity and epistemology do not coincide' (*ibid*) because the history of epistemology, namely of the ways in which we have come to know and interpret reality, has drawn on other epistemic virtues. These include the virtue of 'truth-to-nature' (an essentialist and universal representation of reality where scientist and artist work together to represent what they see (cf. early 18th century botanical drawings) and 'trained judgment' (whereby scientists make judgments about and interpret data) (Daston and Galison, 2007, pp. 20-21).

The socio-feminist theories of the 20th century have further broadened the range of what counts as an epistemic virtue. Feminist philosopher of science Harding (1995), for example, has argued that disciplinary assumptions that seem to be 'objective' are only so from the particular 'standpoint' of the researcher. Standpoint theory has been described as a 'political and social epistemology' and explicitly positions the knower as a legitimate source of epistemic justification (Wylie, 2003). This indexes a further epistemic virtue, namely one in which 'insider knowledge' (such as being a black maid in a white household) affords explanatory power not necessarily available to an outsider (such as a researcher investigating racism).

To illustrate standpoint theory, Harding refers to Aristotelian and Ptolomeic geocentricism (1995, p. 339), which claimed 'objectivity' from a particular empirical standpoint. Once that standpoint shifted, a new epistemology emerged. Similarly, in social science, "[m]arital rape was a legal and, for most people, conceptual impossibility until collective political struggle and theorising resulted in its articulation in the law" (1995, p. 343). Her point is that many disciplinary notions of 'strong objectivity' and claims to what is 'true' are built on 'standpoint' assumptions that obscure complexity.

Moreover, from a specifically interdisciplinary perspective, epistemologist D'Agostino (2012) recognises that disciplinary classifications can and do advance knowledge. Because of this epistemic pursuit, 'disciplinarity' could be said to count as an 'epistemic virtue', yet, for D'Agostino, what actually binds traditional disciplines is their 'shallow consensus' rather than the epistemic virtue of 'objectivity', for example. This 'shallow consensus' can be understood as a broad and abstract disciplinary assumption (or agreement), such as 'democracy is worthwhile'. However, a 'shallow consensus' can also go unchallenged when more fine-grained, technical analyses within disciplines - such as *which* countries can be classified as democratic or *which* electoral systems are more conducive to democracy – prevent researchers from questioning their initial assumptions, such as whether democracy is indeed a universally worthwhile pursuit. When academic communities syphon into specialised and technical sub-fields about *how* to implement democracy, for example, they are less likely to question their initial assumptions, namely the value of democracy itself. Such syphoning then avoids abstractions, inhibits non-specialist communication and encourages incremental approaches to knowledge that

can mask deep-rooted, and potentially erroneous assumptions. All of this points to what Wiley recognises as 'epistemic trade-offs' (2003, p. 34), namely that the objectivity-making properties of epistemic virtues cannot be 'simultaneously maximised'. What this means, to paraphrase Wiley, is that 'the commitment to maximise specialist understandings requires a trade-off of empirical depth against value judgments about democracy (for example)' (*ibid*).

An equivalent shallow consensus in EAP might be that 'academic writing is formal'. Fine-grained approaches to *how* to teach such formality then syphon EAP into its own sub-fields of discipline-specific writing, academic grammar and academic corpora, leaving the original assumption unchallenged and, in doing so, denying students the opportunity 'to see that things could always be other than they are'.

Although important, such incremental approaches can also hamper the advancement of knowledge because, as Krishnan (2013, p. 1) argues in his response to D'Agostino:

> The problem with disciplinarity [...] is that it results in the division of knowledge into compartments that resist easy access because the disciplines protect their body of knowledge through the invention and use of discipline-specific knowledge practices. This makes real interdisciplinarity more difficult and causes, as described by Donald T. Campbell, the "redundant piling up of highly similar specialties" separated in different disciplines and departments (1969, 361).

What this looks like in EAP is a 'piling up of highly similar textbooks and resources' on how to write an academic essay, for example, that 'resist' challenge from other disciplines, such as Composition Studies (Tardy & Jwa,

2016), Academic Literacies (Scott & Lillis, 2007), Multimodality (A. Archer & Breuer, 2015), post-Colonial Literacies (Thesen & Cooper, 2013) or Philosophy and Sociology (Judd, 2003) .

EAP is a fairly well-established field (it has its own journals, professional networks, conferences, publications, and all the trappings of what constitutes a field of study) and, as such, it, too, boasts its own shallow consensus and fine-grained specialisms, from building lexical corpora to analysing discipline-specific genres. Rather than add further to the process of disciplinary specialisation and incremental technicalisation admonished by Krishan, I have chosen to take a step back and challenge some of the shallow consensus that binds EAP with regards to academic writing.

I do this by asking a deceptively simple question: what makes writing academic, given its diversity and contingent history and given that what can seem to be academic may not be academic at all (as in the case of academic hoaxes)?

I have chosen Philosophy, broadly understood as a form of enquiry into the nature of things, as the main approach for this thesis because it allows me to step back from the traditional disciplinary specialisms and standpoints of EAP and engage more freely in considering alternative conceptualisations of academic writing (Chester, 2016, p. 21):

> In this situation, philosophy provides a radical freedom of thought – a real philosopher doesn't use a particular set of variables or defend a particular set of methodologies, a real philosopher enjoys a radical freedom to ask and answer in unprecedent ways.

Whilst I am not at all identifying with 'real philosophers' (or educationalists for that matter), nor do I share the view that the discipline of Philosophy

doesn't 'defend a particular set of methodologies', I adopt the spirit of the above quotation in order to claim that research into academic writing might benefit from resisting, or momentarily suspending, disciplinary and methodological classification. This is because researching writing in the field of EAP, where my thesis begins, has led me to raise broader questions that require educational and philosophical responses. Instead of deciding where I stand on any particular (specialist) theory of writing, by identifying putative gaps and limitations, I take a step back to look at writing as a broad and abstract social phenomenon, and then try to clarify questions regarding its nature, such as 'what is writing' and 'what makes it academic'. This steers me more towards a *theory* of academic writing, not to applied advice on 'how to write'.

I will theorise about how writing in general accounts for historical, cultural and individual differences and about what activities are so central and characteristic of writing that they become constitutive of writing. In other words what are the functions without the availability of which we would regard something as not academic writing? I draw on an open-ended and non-exhaustive list.

I have chosen a historical and analytic approach that allows me to 'dissect research problems into their parts' (Hobbs, 2014, p. 29) in order to address the central dualism of my research, namely that approaches to academic writing in EAP tend to be either skills-based or social practice-based (Part 1). Dualisms and binaries have had a tendency to characterise Western approaches to knowledge (for example, by privileging reason over emotion or theory over practice). I will address the dualism I have identified in EAP writing by framing it 'analytically' (M. Archer, 1995, pp. 15-16). This allows me to treat 'each pole separately and on its own terms' (Little, 2012) whilst

also recognising that their relation is real and can be understood independently of each part (Chapter 6).

An analytic approach allows me to address the epistemological and ontological dualism that underlies EAP's approach to academic writing. As introduced in Part 1, and discussed throughout the thesis, this dualism manifests itself as a binary between skills, which tell me *how* to achieve something, namely procedural knowledge; and practices, which are claims about *what* is the case, namely propositional knowledge (Fantl, 2017; Knorr Cetina, Schatzki, & von Savigny, 2001). EAP makes knowledge claims such as 'writing is formal, objective and linear' that collapse claims about *how* to write (procedural) with *what* writing is (propositional).

In doing so, EAP collapses epistemology into ontology by suggesting that an understanding of some basic constitutive elements of a composite (its putative formality, objectivity, and linearity) is sufficient for knowledge of the composite. In other words, by describing what academic writing is in terms of particular standpoints that enable us to know what it is composed of (i.e. skills and conventions that make it formal, objective and linear), we can know what academic writing is. But this is not the case. The fact that I have come *to know* academic writing as 'formal, objective and linear' does not tell me what academic writing *is* because there could be other kinds of academic writing that do not share these characteristics. Moreover, I may be using methods to determine what academic writing is that do not make visible alternative accounts of it.

In this sense, EAP conflates how it has come to *know* academic writing with what academic writing *is*. This amounts to an epistemic fallacy, discussed in Chapter 5, whereby 'how we come to know the world' gets equated with the

way the world is. That this is problematic can be evidenced by how, for example, definitions of IQ or literacy or numeracy or sex and gender differ according to the methods of enquiry used to establish their ontologies.

EAP makes further ontological claims, such as 'composites are nothing more than the sum of their basic constitutive elements' (Beckett & Hager, 2018, pp. 138-140). This is a reductionist claim that underscores mainstream approaches to EAP writing, and one which I will reject in this thesis.

My analytic approach attempts to expose these epistemological and ontological conflations by proposing a generative model of academic writing that allows for change in how instances of academic writing come to be classified in the first place and what academic writing is: the former requires empirical and inductive observation and includes a range of methodologies such as ethnography and corpus analysis to show how varied academic writings are. The latter demands a conceptual shift that does not conflate what something is composed of with what it is as a whole. This means that whatever our inductive observations tell us about what academic writing looks like may not be sufficient to determine what makes writing academic.

Organisation

I am ultimately interested in accounting for the academic nature of writing in the more general sense of 'academic'[3], but my starting point is to reflect on how academic writing has been conceptualised in the specific area of

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[3] I am aware of the research on the discipline-specificity of academic writing, research writing and writing for publication, but I am starting from the premise that there is a general sense in which we understand 'academic', not least because courses in general EAP exist (Turner, 2018, p. 50; 59; 118).

EAP with a view to broadening its meaning. To do this, I have divided the thesis into three main parts, each of which contains 2 chapters.

- Part 1 – What it is

This is where I establish that EAP frames writing dualistically as either a skill or as a social practice and show why this dualism is problematic.

Chapter 1 – The trouble with EAP

The opening chapter identifies three main problems with EAP writing and exemplifies these in terms of straightjacket approaches; inadequate qualifications; and servitude. I argue that a skills-based approach reduces writing in ways that erase writing's social practices and that textbooks contribute to this erasure. I also claim that, typically, EAP teachers, whilst qualified to teach English as a foreign language, may not be equally qualified to teach academic writing. This paves the way for discussing the implications.

Chapter 2 – The implications of all this trouble

Because of the way academic writing conventions have fossilised in EAP by being reduced to marketized rules and conventions nurtured by a lack of scholarly engagement, a particular kind of academic discourse has established itself and become universalised. This has led to the marginalisation of cognate fields and has standardised academic writing to a mono-culture that ignores the diversity of writers and textual environments.

- Part 2 – Why it is

The second part is concerned with historical contingencies and current practices. It showcases writing as a diverse and varied practice that is at

odds with the mono-culture portrayed by EAP. It contains the two largest chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 3 – Writing's origins and ideologies

This is where I show that the very notion of writing is contested by tracing its etymological origins and its conflation with the alphabet. I also condense the history of universities and their engagement with writing to show how writing and literacy are inextricably linked in Western societies and that this has ideological repercussions on epistemic representation, justice and inclusion.

Chapter 4 – What makes writing academic

The central claim of my thesis hinges on this chapter. It is where I propose that practices, not skills, make a text academic. I refer to studies in threshold concepts and showcase examples of alternative ways to represent academic knowledge. This allows me to scind the traditional umbilical bond between language and argument and suggest that multimodal forms of argumentation are more fitting for twenty first century academia.

- Part 3 – How it could be

The final part introduces my theoretical contribution to studies on academic writing. It locates academic writing within Complexity Theory (e.g. Byrne & Callaghan, 2014) and proposes four conceptual spaces in which to re-think writing as a socio-academic practice. What these four spaces have in common is their emphasis on the nature and interaction of parts and wholes. They show that there is no necessary connection between each.

Chapter 5 – Complexity

Complexity Theory allows me to propose a macro-theory of writing that positions academic writing within an open system that is generative of novelty and mindful of diverse approaches. This is because academic writing is non-linear, meaning that small changes in its micro-constituents (such as choice of words) can lead to big changes at the macro-level (such as epistemological and ontological representations). This indicates that the effects of a small change can be disproportionate to their causes and that the former cannot be reduced to the latter.

Chapter 6 – Academic emergence

The four conceptual spaces are drawn from philosophy of mind, sociology and aesthetics: they are affordance theory; organic unities, emergence; and program explanation. Each interacts as exemplified by the model proposed in Appendix A and reproduced below (Fig. 2). It forms an open system that accounts for novelty and change, allowing academic writing to be re-defined.
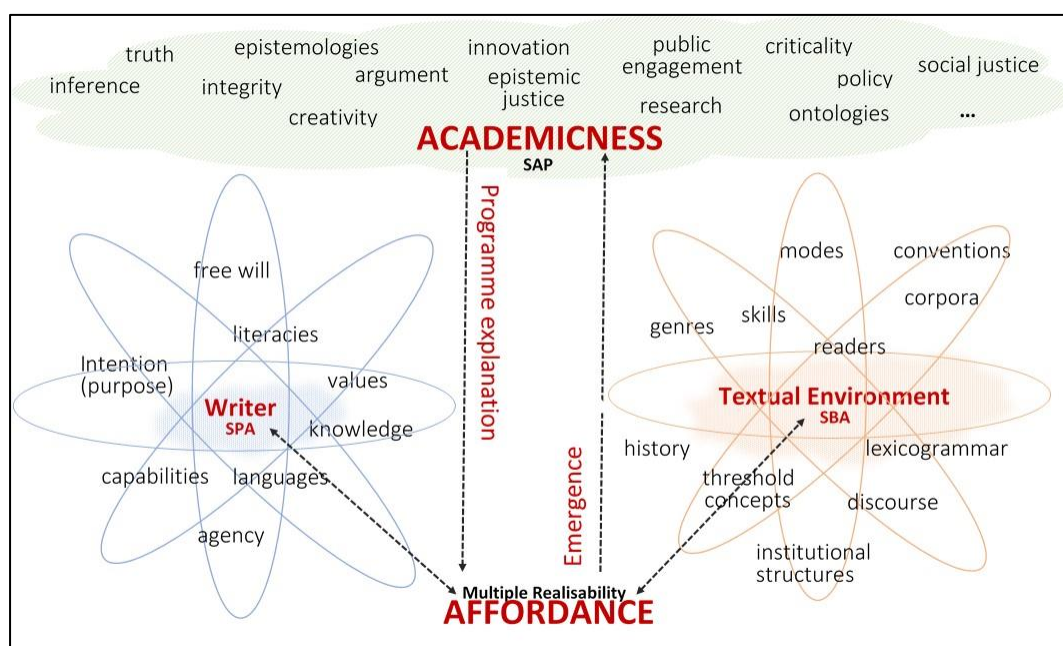
Figure 2: Appendix A - Affordance Model of Academic Writing

In summary, by showing that what makes writing academic are its socio-academic practices, not its rules and surface features, I will reconceptualise academic writing as an open and non-linear system. This allows for diverse academic practices to emerge and for novel forms of writing to count as 'academic'. This has implications for academic writing pedagogy and for developing the literacies of a diverse, international and multicultural academic community.

Notes on style

Because of the *inter*disciplinary (e.g. philosophy, education, history, sociology) readings that I have drawn on to write this thesis, the reader may notice some stylistic heterogeneity in my own academic prose as well some inconsistency, since I advocate multimodal approaches whilst adopting a traditional monomodal format. Since this is a thesis about what makes writing academic, I thought I'd better explain what makes my writing academic.

As an academic writer and regarding stylistic variations, although I have been mindful of what voice to project in my writing, the thesis reflects the heteroglossic (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981), multimodal (A. Archer & Breuer, 2015) and theoretical (Besley & Peters, 2013; Peters, 2009) discourses that have informed my thinking. By 'discourses' I mean the different ways that language is used in the different disciplines and in the social practices that they enact (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 62-72). This means that I swing between encyclopaedic tones, especially when trying to relay key historical events that have shaped writing, to ones that are didactic (when providing examples), analytic (when trying to convey key notions in the philosophy of

mind) and simplistic (when trying to retain a macro stance that glosses over micro analyses).

Regarding multimodality, my thesis is a manifestation of the skills and practices I am familiar with, of negotiations with my supervisors and informed choices about expectations. It reflects my agency in relation to the textual environments that have shaped me. What I advocate here is that academic writers should be writing, drawing or dancing their PhDs or other texts according to their (cap)abilities and in relation to what is structurally possible and institutionally negotiated with(in) the textual environment (see Appendix A). I am not advocating that writers engage in acts of 'arbitrary or radical defiance' (Sousanis, 2016), but that they be respected as agents who have a degree of freedom and knowledge to enact unique ways of expressing themselves academically. What follows represents my (cap)abilities in re-shaping (Bazerman, 1988) and transducting (i.e. translating from one mode to another) (Bezemer & Kress, 2008) the knowledge that I have developed over the past six years of part-time research and which came to me in the form of words, images, quotations, personal anecdotes, conversations with students, colleagues and critical friends, social media interactions, blog writing and conference presentations. My own bilingualism and background literacies (Italian and French) also explain idiosyncrasies in signposting and sentence structures. All of this has contributed to my style.

What It Is

It is ironic that some educational institutions [...] militate against the very higher-order thinking that they are supposed to encourage (Andrews, 2010, p. 53)

Chapter 1- The trouble with EAP writing

On the one hand, it would be in their learners' interests if they [teachers] could help them to conform to the expectations of the institution. On the other hand, by doing so, they are reproducing the ideologies and inequities of the institution and society at large (A. Archer and Breuer, 2016, p. 4)

Introduction

Chapter 1 highlights three distinct but inter-related problems with how EAP conceptualises academic writing. The linearity of the medium I am writing in obliges me to list these problems sequentially, but they are not sequential: they are co-occuring, co-causal and inter-connected. The first problem signals the conflation of academic writing with a set of transferable skills rather than with the enactment of social practices: this turns writing into a 'straightjacket'. I suggest that an over-reliance on and mis-use of textbooks foments this conflation.

Secondly, I trace the conflation to the disciplinary origins of EAP. These are in Applied Linguistics and EFLT (English Foreign Language Teaching) rather than in the literary, humanist, scientific and sociological fields of Sociolinguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Writing Studies, Research Writing, Science Writing, Sociology or Anthropology, which means EAP teachers are qualified to teach language skills and acquisition, not writing practices and discourses.

And thirdly, I foreground EAP's status as a 'handmaiden to the proper disciplines'. What this means is that it is both institutionally (dis)located (i.e. some EAP Units are part of Universities; some are not) and separated from the disciplines themselves (i.e. writing is taught as a separate skill).

This has led to EAP behaving more like a service industry than a field of study, creating the conditions for academic writing to become a standardised product instead of a process for learning and thinking about how it represents knowledge.

The straightjacket

Dominant models of EAP writing practices are frequently framed as dualistic. They are broadly referred to as either *skills-based* (Hyland, 2006, p. 17) and straightforwardly transferable to other academic contexts; or as *social practices* (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 159; Lillis & Curry, 2010a, p. 19)[4], which are less straightforwardly transferable because they are concerned with protean human activity that changes according to socio-academic contexts, purposes and intentions. References to this dualism resonate throughout the literatures in which writing is discussed from a UK EAP/Academic Literacies perspective (e.g. Hocking & Toh, 2010; Lea & Street, 1998; Scott & Lillis, 2007; Wingate & Tribble, 2012) and a US Composition Studies perspective (e.g. Anson & Moore, 2016; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Russell & Cortes, 2012).

Drawing on Hamilton and Pitt (2009), I will liken skills-based approaches to a straightjacket. First, however, I provide some background to the skills-practice divide.

Knowing how and knowing that

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[4] In EAP, a 'skill' can be understood as a mechanical ability to turn, for example, an active sentence into a passive one. This ability simply requires following rules. By contrast, a 'social practice' is knowing when and why a passive or an active voice is appropriate, which cannot be universalised.

Distinctions between skills and practices differentiate between 'knowing how' to do something (for example, how to spell a word) and 'knowing that' (for example, that words can have different meanings in different contexts). Skills thus become equated with 'technical knowledge' and social practices with 'practical knowledge': the former concerns knowledge of rules and techniques; the latter "consists of organised abilities to discern, judge and perform that are [...] rooted in understanding, beliefs, values and attitudes [...]. Practical knowledge is acquired by living within the organised social world"(Hirst, 1998, p. 152).

Broadly, this dualism maps onto the distinction between procedural knowledge (knowing how to do something) and propositional knowledge (knowing that something is the case), whereby skills are examples of the former and practices of the latter (Fantl, 2017). The roots of this dualism run deep and have evolved from translations of the ancient Greeks' distinction between *epistêmê* (science/theory) and *technê* (craft/practice). As such, the dichotomy of skills and practices is deeply embedded in Western understandings of human activity. It can be discerned in ancient philosophy, specifically in Aristotle's ethical theory. Aristotle describes as *poieis* those human actions that require a form of knowledge he called *technê*, which has been translated as a rule-governed 'ability to make' an artefact, product or craft, such as a ship, tool or pot. Because *poiesis* requires the maker to know in advance what the result of their activity will be, it is not the same as *praxis,* which is an action aimed at 'doing' some morally worthwhile 'good' and not at the production of an artefact. Within the Aristotelian tradition, political, social and educational activities, whose nature is open-ended, reflective (*phronesis* or wisdom, deliberation) and

explorative, falls under *praxis*, not *poiesis* (Carr, 1998, pp. 168-169; Hogan, 2015, p. 372).

The dualism remains current in philosophical, sociological and educational discussions about how theory relates to practice. For example, Mike Rose (2005) blurs these distinctions in his sociological accounts of the tacit propositional knowledge needed to perform the highly skilled labour of 'American workers'; Graff and Birkenstein (2006) do the same when they encourage the use of 'know how' templates as a way to 'demystify' the practice of academic writing; and Warner (2018, p. 20) goes further in subsuming 'skills' under 'practices' alongside 'knowledge', 'habits of mind' and 'attitudes'.

In EAP, the skills-practices dichotomy reveals similar binaries. On the one hand, it foregrounds an atomistic and technical understanding of what makes writing 'academic' in which skills-based approaches are conflated with discrete textual items – such as 'academic words' (Coxhead, 2011; Paquot, 2010) or the rules for achieving specific 'paragraph structures' (Bailey, 2006)- that then become markers of 'academicness'. This approach is problematic because, for example, it remains silent on the broader practice of finding an 'academic voice' (Elbow, 1994b; Matsuda & Tardy, 2008) or on the practice of cultivating an awareness of readership (audience) (Richardson, 1990b). On the other hand, the 'holistic' and complex understanding of literacy, associated with a practice approach, potentially loses sight of the particulars typically involved in or associated with making a text 'academic'. For example, a social practice approach downplays linguistic 'accuracy' or appropriate 'academic style' on the grounds that these vary or that they embody exclusionary ideologies and

powers that ignore the purpose of the writer and the experiences they bring with them (Lillis, 2001; Scott, 2013; Thesen & Cooper, 2013; Turner, 2018).

In this sense, both approaches – skills-based and social practice - are problematic as neither is satisfactory in pinning down what makes writing academic. In isolating textual and linguistic features from the wider social practices of having purposes and audiences, skills-based writing pedagogies can weaken the academic credibility of the resulting written text. This is what T. Moore and Morton (2005) have shown by arguing against the academic credibility of IELTS written tasks (such as the 250-word unreferenced essay) because these encourage de-contextualised language skills at the expense of evidence-based claims and referenced-research. This leads to 'hollow' and 'stilted' expressions aimed at displaying language instead of thought: this, combined with weak and unsupported arguments, can result in 'bad writing' (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003). Aware of the perils of the skills-based approach, Paltridge (1992) called for EAP to integrate its reading and writing tasks so that they become academically authentic, allowing student writers to read-to-write and draw on evidence from literature to back their claims. Despite this call, popular commercial EAP syllabi still tend to differentiate between the four discrete skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening (for example, Sowton, 2016) as do many EAP Units who still advertise their courses using the language of discrete skills.

On the other hand, when standard forms of English and of academic expression are being questioned (Jenkins, 2014), for example by being re-

genred[5] (English, 2011) or translanguaged[6] (Wei, 2016), then this can raise issues about where, how and whether we draw the boundaries between what counts and does not count as 'academic' (cf. Canagarajah and Lee (2013); Le Ha (2009); Scott (2013).

Despite there being no evidence that correlates grammatical and lexical accuracy *per se* with good academic writing (Hyland, 2016c, pp. 146-147; 151; Mike Rose, 1989, p. 141; Warner, 2018, pp. 106-110), prescriptive, skills-based, straight-jacket literacies - often referred to as 'essayist' literacies (see, for example, Andrews, 2003; Gimenez, 2008; Womack, 1993) that focus on language and accuracy have dominated the EAP approach to writing. Reasons for this vary and range from the ubiquity of commercial assessments (Leung, Lewkowicz, & Jenkins, 2016; Turner, 2004; 2018, p. 132) to pedagogy and its use of textbooks.

Whilst I recognise the contentions surrounding the skills-practice divide, such as the fact that propositional and procedural knowledge cannot always be seamlessly prised apart, for the purpose of my argument, I take the more negative stance that EAP has, historically, erred on the side of skills. This is because it has tended to propose templates as "formulaic devices [...] that

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[5] 'Re-genring' is a term used by English (2011) to describe the process of re-working an essay by using a different genre, for example, from prose to a dialogue. This allows "students to introduce new perspectives, debate new issues and show a greater sense of ownership over the topic than was apparent in their original essays" (2011, p. 1) and develops critical thinking in ways that are not text-centred.

[6] 'Translanguaging' is a term used by several socio-linguists, including Canagarajah (2011), Wei (2016) and Leung, Lewkowicz, & Jenkins (2016) to describe the multilingual practice of communicating by drawing on one's full linguistic repertoire to re-appropriate or re-define meanings. Translanguaging is viewed as a positive practice and signals a departure from framing 'interference' from other languages as negative.

encourage passive learning or lead students to put their writing on automatic pilot" (Graff & Birkenstein, 2006, p. xxii).

Skills

Within the field of Writing Studies (associated with the American tradition of Rhetoric and Composition; see, for example, Tardy and Jwa (2016), skills have been described as the art of "knowing what you are doing and making intelligent choices" (Bazerman, 1988, p. 321). However, such a broad and *positive* description is rare as well as applicable to countless other attainments (e.g. reason, wisdom and good sense). In the established disciplinary traditions of Education and Philosophy, skills are more readily seen as 'limitations' that encourage 'mere habits' (Dewey, 1916, pp. 78; 83; 310; 339-340). It is this negative labelling of skills as habit-forming rather than as conducive to or a manifestation of (as M. Rose (2005) would argue) thinking and reflection that underscores several literatures that critique EAP, including writings by Lillis, Harrington, Lea, and Mitchell (2015); Lillis and Tuck (2016); Paltridge (1992); Paltridge and Starfield (2016); Paltridge, Starfield, and Tardy (2016); Yun and Standish (2018).

Furthermore, skills-based approaches are associated with the 'myth of transience' (Russell, 2002, p. 50). The 'myth' consists in the mistaken belief that writing can be taught in transitory, temporary and isolated ways without an authentic purpose and that whatever skills are learnt in a writing class can be seamlessly transferred to all other contexts. Such approaches reflect the widespread perception that writing instruction can be out-sourced and learnt separately from the disciplines, a perception that has been challenged by Rose (1985, p. 355):

> ... the belief persists in the American university that if we can
> just do x, or y, the problem of poor student writing will be solved
> ... and higher education will be able to return to its real work.

The negative framing of skills-based approaches to literacy and learning can be further traced to what anthropologist and New Literacy scholar Brian Street (1984) called the 'ideological and autonomous approach'. This model "encourages a transparency approach to language and transmission understanding of language pedagogy" (A. Fischer, 2015, p. 83). What Fischer means by 'transparency' and 'transmission', respectively, is that the meaning of words is treated as unequivocal (i.e. clear) and that this meaning can be taught and learnt (i.e. passed on) without the need to interpret or negotiate how or why the words are used, by whom and in which contexts. As such, the autonomous model frames academic writing as a cognitive skill that exists independently of its contexts and which "does not recognise that learning rests on the integrated development of both writing and reading within the disciplinary discourse" (Turner, 2018, p. 134). Zamel (1998a, 1998b) has similarly argued that the autonomous model presents the learning of language in essentialist terms, namely as a skill that is decontextualized from the 'intellectual work' that it has to do. For example, learning how to compose a paragraph (a skill) is not the same as understanding the 'intellectual work' that paragraphs do (a practice), i.e. that they cumulatively build arguments and for this reason can vary in length and structure (Thomson, 2018a).

American educationalist and writing scholar Mike Rose (1985, 1989) has lamented the conflation of learning to write with the acquisition of cognitive skills (such as memorising rules). He claims that when we collapse the process of writing into the acquisition of skills, this risks side-

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lining the need to nurture every-day exploratory and personal literacies, the imagination (1989, p. 212) and a sense of 'wonder' (p. 223), all of which are more conducive to developing writing abilities. He traces this conflation back to the early twentieth-century writing curriculum which was influenced by studies in psychology. These were used to inform pedagogies based on 'memory and drill' and the mechanics of grammatical 'dos and don'ts' (Rose, 1989, p. 207). He labelled this socio-historical culturally decontextualized, mechanical and cognitive approach to literacy as 'essentialist' and 'exclusionary', further claiming that it assumes the meaning of words is straightforwardly accessible to all. Instead, he argues, it excludes learners who do not share its underlying conceptual frameworks. What better explains students' misunderstandings of academic discourse is often not their lack of specialist vocabulary but their ignorance of the 'semiotic' reach of academic words and of the conceptual frameworks and disciplinary traditions they belong to (1989, pp. 182-184).

One poignant example offered by Rose is of a student, Lucia, whose brother's mental illness drew her to a psychology degree. The specific jargon, such as 'alchemy', and abstract conceptual frameworks that are embedded in the disciplinary literatures of psychology, such as 'there is no such thing as mental illness', were not ones that she recognised from her personal experience of psychology. Despite her first-hand knowledge of mental illness, she began to feel excluded from the academic knowledge she wanted access to. This was because of her unfamiliarity with the language and what it referred to, not because of her inability to understand psychology. The university's response to Lucia's difficulties was to remove her from the psychology class and send her to language lessons that would 'fix' and 'remedy' her lack of understanding. Rose's point is that 'remedial'

approaches to developing academic literacy, which are frequently associated with skills-based approaches (Anson & Moore, 2016; Myers Zawacki & Cox, 2014; Russell, 2002) and which are couched in the language of medicalisation (*diagnose problems, drop-in clinic*) and failure (*fix, correct*), are unlikely to help students become writers. The reason for this is that academic terms refer to histories of concepts that form 'disciplinary conversations' and have a semiotic reach that extends beyond the word itself. This indicates that they cannot be understood outside the discipline by decontextualized rote learning and grammatical drills or gap-fills.

The following passage captures what is generally meant by 'decontextualised and autonomous' literacy skills (Rose, 1989, p. 192, emphasis added):

> The discourse of academics is marked by terms and expressions that represent an elaborate set of shared concepts and orientations: *alienation, authoritarian personality, the social construction of the self, determinism, hegemony, equilibrium, intentionality, recursion, reinforcement*, and so on. This language weaves through so many lectures and textbooks, is internal to so many learned discussions, that it's easy to forget what a foreign language it can be. Freshmen are often puzzled by the talk they hear in the classrooms, but what is important to note here is that their problem is *not simply one of limited vocabulary*. If we see that problem as knowing or not knowing a list of words, as some *quick-fix remedies* suggest, then we'll force glossaries on students and miss the complexity of the issue.

Throughout this thesis, I too take the more negative view that a skills-based approach to academic writing, as it is enacted in EAP, excludes diverse ways of approaching writing, inhibits thinking and reflection on conventions,

and encourages a one-size-fits-all approach which 'excludes' other potentially fruitful ways of representing knowledge. However, I go further. I argue that it also restricts possibilities for what makes writing academic because it *reduces* writing to a finite set of skills that become the *ends* of the writing process, not the *means* to a practice that is changing. In this respect, I agree with Hamilton and Pitt (2009, p. 63; 70; 76), who have claimed that in an evolving globalised and digitalised higher education landscape, academic genres – understood as 'conventionalised ways of acting and interacting' (2009, p. 63) - can function like a 'straightjacket' because they impose forms of writing that may not suit the content and purpose of the author or context.

Furthermore, the reduction of academic writing to a set of skills is at odds with how the broader field of writing research approaches academic writing, which is more questioning and critical, and more open to possibilities for representation. For example, A. Archer and Breuer (2016b) and Huang and Archer (2017) emphasise the multimodal nature of and possibilities for writing in higher education, often drawing on the socio-semiotic theories of Kress (2010); within the established tradition of sociological and anthropological concerns with representation (Becker, 2007; Geertz, 1973; Goody, 1977), Atkinson (2013) discusses the extent to which writing is able to adequately capture the deep ethnographies of social reality; Carter, Lillis, and Parkin (2009) bring together research on how identities shape and are shaped by academic writing practices, drawing specifically on the work of critical literacy theorist and feminist Roz Ivanič (1998); Thesen and Cooper (2013) have detailed ways in which writing in the South African context centres around negotiating diverse identities which come together in the 'contact zone': an academic melting pot where

multilingualism, diverse socio-economic, cultural and academic backgrounds as well as unequal material conditions frustrate access to and participation in higher education; and in the social sciences more generally, Law (2003, 2004) has described the 'messiness' of research methods and methodologies, which affects how these methods are reported in writing.

Generally, EAP's approach to writing does not seem to acknowledge or to have been informed by the above writing traditions, and although attempts to broaden its academic writing lens have been made, these have had little uptake (see, for example, the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* on Critical EAP (S. Benesch, 2009) and Gender (Lillis, McMullan, & Tuck, 2018), referred to again in the last part of this chapter).

Having sketched what is meant by a skills-based approach to literacy and likened it to a straightjacket, I now show how it stands in contrast to the 'transformative' approach associated with the field of Academic Literacies, a field concerned with writing practices, not skills.

Practices

As discussed in Knorr Cetina et al. (2001), practices can be broadly understood as "arrays of human activity" (2001, p. 11) organised around 'patterns', 'relations' and 'interdependencies' that cannot be reduced to the micro activities of the individual. Rather, since they are part of our propositional knowledge, they can guide and monitor our actions, including our procedural knowledge (i.e. skills), without which practices could not be enacted.

Practices are generally viewed more favourably than skills by literacy theorists (Scott & Lillis, 2007) and by philosophers (MacIntyre, 1985). They see them as *activities* that require reflection and thought, social interaction

and a sense of purpose that change to suit the aims, beliefs, values, experiences and choices of, in this case, writers (Scott, 2000; Williams, 2017).

For Lillis (2013, pp. 78, emphasis added):

> practice signals two key principles: an empirical commitment to *observe* and *explore* what, where and how people read and write, including their perspectives on what they do, as well as their *values* and *interests*; a theoretical interest in *seeking explanations* for the nature and consequences of what people do, including a focus on issues of *power* and *agency* drawing on notions from *sociological* and *critical* discourse theories.

The spirit of Lillis' sociological and ethnographic understanding of practice is also evident in the following quotation by moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre (cited in Hogan, 2015, pp. 372, emphasis added), who echoes similar views on the role played by 'human powers', 'agency', 'activity' and 'purpose' in 'social activity'. As such, his work has influenced both Ethics and the Philosophy of Education (see, for example, Noddings (2003):

> By a practice I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of *socially* established *co-operative human activity* through which goods internal to that form of *activity* are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of *activity*, with the result that *human powers* to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the *ends* and *goods* involved, are systematically extended.

What MacIntyre's understanding of practice indexes is its *processual* and *complex* nature whereby the standards of excellence in any given practice,

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such as the practice of writing academically, are relative to the practice itself, not to any specific token of writing, such as an essay. So, for example, as Fitzmaurice (2010, p. 47) illustrates, it is the practices that are the ends, not the skills deployed to achieve those ends. Her argument relates to teaching as a practice and shows how teaching requires human dispositions, values, virtues and qualities (*standards of excellence*) that transcend the application of techniques, skills and competencies. If practices are the end of human activity, then when these change, so must the skills required to achieve them. Fitzmaurice (*ibid*) illustrates what a practice is as follows:

> [t]he planting of crops is not a practice, but farming is, as are the enquiries of physics, chemistry, biology and the work of the historian, the musician and the painter. A practice involves standards of excellence and to enter into a practice is to accept these standards and to judge one's own performance against them. The goods internal to a practice can only be had by involvement in that practice unlike external goods such as money, status, prestige, which can be achieved in many ways.

When academic writing is understood as a practice, it too requires an understanding of a range of *standards of excellence*. These might include elusive qualities such as 'writtenness', discussed in Turner (2018), which refers to qualities of 'good writing' that are difficult to teach and understand, and that can be achieved in different ways. Qualities that experienced writers simply 'recognise' (Becker, 1986, pp. 71-72).

The practice of writing is also the practice of writing in and for institutional framings, constraints and policy, where *standards of excellence* vary (recalling Harding's discussion of 'strong objectivity') (1995) and where

communities of scholars are required to reach agreements about what counts as disciplinary writing, and about where and when to publish. Recent research on academic writing (Alvesson, Gabriel, & Paulsen, 2017; Mcculloch, 2017; Tusting, McCulloch, Bhatt, Hamilton, & Barton, 2019), for example, has showcased that disciplinary writing is wide-ranging and includes email correspondence, grant applications, book reviews and interdisciplinary variations. Equally, it laments the proliferation of formulaic writing at the expense of having 'something meaningful to say'. As indicated by Fitzmaurice, above, when the practices change, then so must the skills needed to enact the practice.

When writing for audit purposes (such as the REF, the 4-yearly UK Research Excellence Framework), academics face dilemmas that can require them to choose between publishing to a deadline or doing justice to a longitudinal research project. Taking the time necessary to undertake research and write it is more likely to achieve the 'standards of excellence' inherent in the practice of doing history, for example, than if the historian were to rush to write an article to meet the audit requirements of the university: rushing to meet such requirements would require more skills in time-management and journal genre-writing than excellence in historical research. And, finally, the practice of writing within such institutional confines also raises questions about "the degree of agency individuals have in making their own writing decisions" (Tusting et al., 2019, Preface), which indexes concerns that are central to this thesis.

Different genres also serve different purposes, with some, like the PhD thesis, possibly no longer being fit-for-purpose (Paré, 2017, 2018). Specifically, Paré argues that the traditional 'big book format' of the PhD requires skills that are obsolete, such as the ability to work alone when

much of academia, and other professions, require collaboration, co-authorship and versatility (Thomson, 2018b). The thesis as practice, rather than as skill, requires standards of excellence that adhere to the activity of research, namely enquiry, curiosity, evidence and relevance, and so on, not to the skills required to achieve these standards, such as knowledge of genres and of formatting (clearly, these skills are necessary, but they are the means to achieving the practice, not the ends of doing a PhD).

Whilst acknowledging that skills are needed to conduct any given practice, MacIntyre emphasises that the skills must not become *the ends* of the practice but *the means* to achieving the standards of the practice itself. This further entails that humans ('powers') are the agents of change ('transformations') in any given practice (MacIntyre, 1985, pp. 193, emphasis added):

> what is distinctive in a practice is the way in which conceptions of the relevant goods and ends which the technical skills serve - and every practice does require the exercise of practical skills - are *transformed* and enriched by those extensions of *human powers* and by that regard for its internal goods which are partially definitive of each particular practice or type of practice.

What this means for academic writing is that when writing is conceived as a practice, it is the writers (*human powers*), not the skills, who through reflection, deliberation and understanding (*by that regard for*) drive transformations and determine what writing could be. Clearly, institutional constraints and expectations influence the degree of agency that writers have (Fairclough, 1992, pp. 72-73; 80), but Fairclough also reminds us that subjects have the capacity "to act individually or collectively as agents" in opposing [ideological] practices (*ibid,* p. 91).

Textbooks

It is beyond my scope to analyse the complex relationship between pedagogy, textbooks and assessment, but some remarks on textbooks may further illustrate why academic writing in EAP is problematic and how it constrains practice.

The need to simplify the complexities of written communication and to provide model texts for those not proficient in the discourses of the academy (models which Bazerman, 1988, p. 8 calls a set of 'cookie cutters'; and which Nesi & Gardner, 2012, p. 2 call 'templates'), has bolstered a burgeoning industry of textbook publications (Bennett, 2009; Harwood, 2005; Tribble, 2009, 2015). These generally foreground skills rather than practices, and compound the conflation of achieving complex academic discourse with the ability to perform discrete skills.

John Swales (1980), in the first issue of *The English for Special Purposes Journal*, addressed the 'textbook problem' by claiming that it has been an educational failure in the field of EAP. This is because of several inter-related reasons, including the unclear role that textbooks have in EAP pedagogies, the way that they are mis-used by practitioners (as well as language learners), the commercial rather than educational motivations that determine their popularity (as I explain below), and their inability to keep up to date with research and development (Swales, 1980, p. 13, emphasis added):

> The ESP[7] textbook therefore stands or falls in terms of whether it
> is up-to-date in approach and methodology, at the present time

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[7] English for Special Purposes

how far it can attract such labels as communicative, functional, discoursal, and dealing with study *skills*.

A poignant example of how textbooks can 'fall' in this regard is given by Swales with reference to an ESP (English for Special Purposes) course book series on the language of General Science published by Oxford University Press and Longman. The books focused almost exclusively on the uses of the present tense in science because the aim of the series being published was to focus on 'the language of science', which is often correlated to the present tense because of its concerns with describing processes and experiments. However, what the series ignored were the equally ubiquitous uses of the past and perfect tenses in the *specific* sciences, such as Geology, where the present perfect is needed to explain 'present evidence' in relation to 'past geological events'. When Swales claims that "it is the series design, the imposition of a pure science paradigm, that has produced an unjustifiable syllabus position" (*ibid*), he is indexing the problem of foregrounding skills (in this case, the ability to use the present tense) at the expense of the practices, namely the scientific purposes (such as explaining the effect of the past on the present, which requires a perfect tense) for which tenses are intended.

Further examples of how textbooks encourage skills-based approaches are detailed in Harwood (2005), who catalogues several anti-textbooks views followed by several pro-textbook arguments. In arguing against textbooks, he highlights the unqualified status of many textbook writers who "rely far too much on intuition or folk beliefs when attempting to describe academic discourse norms" (2005, p. 150); the risk of practitioners equating textbook content with 'officially sanctioned knowledge' (2005, p.151), rather than engaging in deliberative and reflective *praxis*; and the fact that what

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motivates textbook production is commercial interest, not pedagogical concern (2005, p. 152). In arguing for the use of textbooks, he cites their function as 'proposals for action', as opposed to prescriptions, and as effective ways of not having to 're-invent the wheel' (*ibid*). He concludes that as long as EAP textbooks remain up-to-date, research-informed and evidenced-based, they have a positive role to play. He cites Swales (1995) and Swales and Feak (2000) as good examples of textbooks which draw on available research to encourage teachers to reflect on what they are asking students to do, thus avoiding "the sweeping generalisations about academic writing which other textbooks resort to" (Harwood, 2005, p. 158).

As with all publications, questions remain, however, as to *which* research one chooses to include in textbooks and *whether* to include it at all. For example, being 'up-to-date', 'informed' and 'evidence-based' does not rule out research that foregrounds the 'autonomous' view of language competency, as Bennett (2009, 2015, 2014) and Tribble (2009, 2015) have shown. Moreover, textbook publishers may opt to *not* include up-to-date research because this would require revising popular textbooks which may lead to alienating "instructors [...] comfortable with the previous edition, which, in turn, would negatively impact sales" (Feak & Swales, 2013, p. 309).

The fact it is generally agreed that EAP textbooks generate high income (Harwood, 2013) and that "none of these materials can be seen as contributing to Academic Literacies programmes"[8] (Tribble, 2009, p. 411) suggests that skills-based approaches remain more economically viable, and

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[8] One notable exception – which, surprisingly, Tribble does not mention - is Coffin et al. (2002), whose Academic Literacies approach to 'Teaching Academic Writing' has had little uptake, as far as I can tell, in EAP.

therefore more easily marketable. This then is likely to disincentivise attempts to include writing research that unsettles the *status quo* (Harwood, 2005, p. 152):

> Rather than viewing the textbook solely as a pedagogical tract, we need to realize it is also an economic commodity to be traded in a competitive marketplace [...] Marketability rather than pedagogical effectiveness is therefore said to be the publishers' main concern. Compared to publishers of fiction, textbook publishers produce relatively few titles, increasing the pressure on those that are published to be successful.

With the intention of obtaining actual sales figures to support the extent to which textbook production is as profitable as these, and other, quotations suggest, I have made some preliminary enquiries, which have so far proven to be unsuccessful. Bennett's research concluded that there is far too much on the market to be able to quantify what profits textbook sales generate for publishers and writers (Bennett, 2009, p. 44):

> The sheer number of books on the market designed to teach academic writing in English is staggering. An on-line search under 'academic writing' (performed on 3rd October 2007) yielded 216 hits for Waterstones.com, 2655 hits for Amazon.co.uk and an astounding 11,849 hits for Amazon.com. And even after these lists had been screened to eliminate irrelevant titles and multiple editions of the same work, a Bibliography of Academic Style Manuals compiled from the bestsellers on these on-line lists ran to over 250 titles.

My own tentative investigations into this area, through correspondence with Swales, have further revealed how sensitive obtaining sales figures actually is (Swales, 2018):

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> The relationship between EAP textbooks and in-house materials
> has always been tense. Back in 1980 in the first issue of "The ESP
> Journal" I raised some of the tensions and contradictions.
> Nothing much has changed.

The following Twitter exchange (Fig. 3), prompted by my enquiries on the BALEAP email forum, also indicates how hard it is to come by evidence, but it also confirms that the EAP community has concerns about the effect that textbook production has on the pedagogies and literacies of academic discourse, which is encouraging:
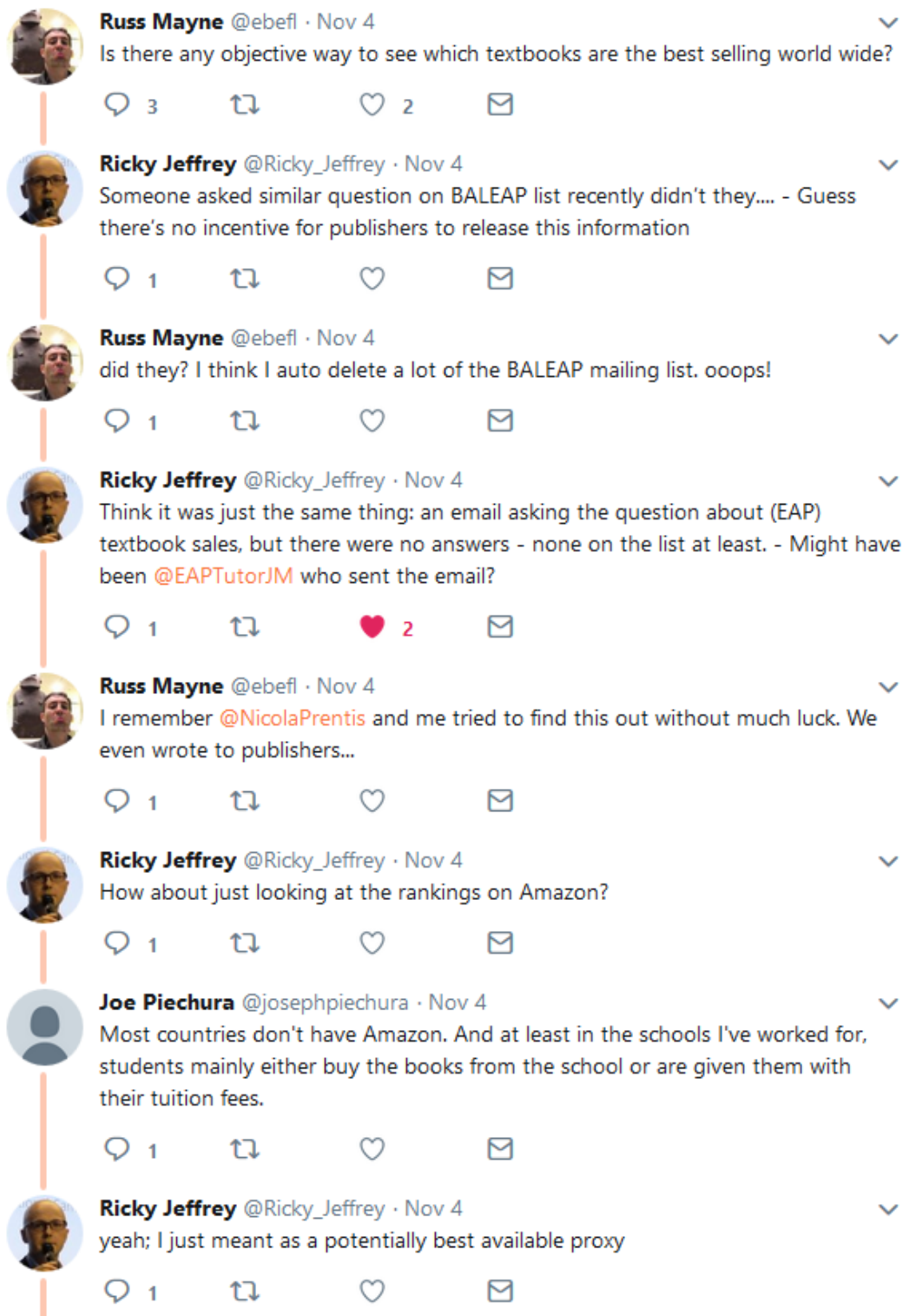
Figure 3: EAP Twitter exchange on textbook sales available at
https://twitter.com/Ricky_Jeffrey/status/1059063536117149697 [accessed 07/11/2018]

The qualifications

Defining EAP and what qualifications are needed to teach it is messy. Gillet (2011) is confident in his definition, which is that EAP teaches students the language they need to be in Anglophone higher education:

> EAP - English for Academic Purposes - refers to the language and associated practices that people need in order to undertake study or work in English medium higher education. The objective of an EAP course, then, is to help these people learn some of the linguistic and cultural – mainly institutional and disciplinary - practices involved in studying or working through the medium of English.

The question, however, is what is 'the language and culture of higher education', that Gillet refers to, given what has been said about the modern university's range of aims (Barnett, 2012; Besley & Peters, 2013; Collini, 2012), social practices, networked nature and actors, including its diversified student body (Sperlinger et al., 2018)?

Campion (2016, p. 60) draws attention to more divergent opinions about what constitutes EAP, but nevertheless narrows it down to language courses that are:

- Designed to meet the specific needs of learners

- Related in content to particular disciplines, occupations and activities

- Centred on the language appropriate to those activities

- In contrast with 'General English'

Her contention, however, is that, whatever EAP is, teachers of it may be unprepared to deal with the *linguistic, cultural, institutional and disciplinary needs* of learners because most EAP Units require General English Teaching qualifications such as DELTAs (Diploma in English Language Teaching) and, increasingly, MAs in TESOL (Teaching English to Students of Other Languages). In other words, they are not qualified to teach EAP, which requires more than teaching language because it also teaches writing.

Although there is evidence that EAP practitioners are able to draw on research from a range of writing communities, such as genre-analysis (including disciplinary differences), systemic functional linguistics, critical EAP and Academic Literacies (Benesch, 2001; Bruce, 2008; C. Coffin & J. P. Donohue, 2012; Devitt, 1996; Lynne Flowerdew, 2000; Hyland, 2002b; Johns, 2003; Swales, 1990), establishing the proper remit of a general EAP course, and by implication its dominant writing paradigms, remains unclear and challenging. This is as a result of a paucity of specific postgraduate EAP teaching qualifications (Ding & Campion, 2016), which is likely to be compounding the problem of how academic writing is understood. If, for example, there were MA-level degrees in EAP with dedicated writing modules, or MAs in Academic Writing[9], as there are MAs in Creative Writing, or PhDs researching Academic Writing, such as those in Rhetoric and Composition Studies in the US, then teachers would have the knowledge, confidence, theory and practice to explore the range of academic writing landscapes.

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[9] Notable exceptions in the UK are an [MSc in Chemistry and Scientific Writing](#) [accessed 27/12/2018] at the University of Warwick and an [MA in Academic Writing Development and Research](#) [accessed 27/12/2018] at Coventry University.

As Wardle (2007, p. 554) claims, "Having a major [...] dramatically changes a field's standing in the academy".

The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that EAP courses are run by very different providers whose knowledge of writing is likely to be drawn from disparate and fragmented sources. Many of these providers are private and outsourced (such as Study Group and Kaplan (US), INTO and Cambridge Education Group (UK) and Navitas (Australia); some are taught by university departments (such as the School of Education at the University of Nottingham or Modern Languages and Linguistics at the University of Southampton); and others are offered as part of 'library services', where advice on and support with academic writing is also offered (such as at the University of Leeds, the University of Nottingham and Middlesex University). Unlike the US and Europe, albeit with a handful of exceptions (e.g. the University of Coventry's Writing Centre), UK universities do not have a culture of 'writing centres' (Russell, 2002, p. 50), where qualified writing instructors guide student writers and which raise the profile of writing as a disciplinary practice.

This range and fragmentation of writing provision is also symptomatic of the unregulated status of the EAP practitioner, a status which in other professions is generally conferred by being part of a professional body (such as accountancy or translation) or by having a subject-specific academic qualification (such as English or Maths)[10]. Within such a disparate

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[10] BALEAP [accessed 08/01/2017] 'supports the professional development of those involved in learning, teaching, scholarship and research in English for Academic Purposes (EAP)'. It was formerly known as SELMOUS. The first meeting took place in 1972 to meet the growing demand for the professional recognition of EAP (Jordan 2002). BALEAP is a response to this need for professional status and has developed its own Competency

landscape, EAP providers can determine their 'essential qualification' requirements *ad hoc*, which may not include postgraduate degrees or any EAP study and where experience of EAP may only be a 'desirable'. Add to this that what counts as 'experience of EAP' also varies in quality and content, because of inconsistencies in its provision and theoretical underpinnings (are these critical EAP? ELT? Genre-analysis? Systemic Functional Linguistics? Applied Linguistics? TESOL? Academic Literacies?), it becomes clear why the 'status of EAP practitioners within the academy' is ambivalent (Ding & Bruce, 2017, p. 2).

As a consequence of this ambivalence, many EAP tutors may not have gone through any relevant academic writing process themselves because they may never have written a Master's dissertation or a PhD thesis. It is likely, therefore, that they will glean much of their understandings of academic writing from EAP textbooks. However, as discussed above, since these generally tend to foreground procedural skills rather than propositional practices (a notable exception being Coffin et al. (2002), they are unlikely to differentiate between kinds of academic writing and will be unevenly informed by writing research. As such, many textbooks are inadequate, such as popular textbooks like Bailey's (2006) *Academic Writing for International Students*, which fails to capture the diversity of student writers and the nuances of disciplinary discourses.

Reservations about EAP teaching qualifications extend to and are further embedded in the assessment culture that surrounds EAP and university

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Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes – CFTEAP. However, because of the fragmentation of providers, including their international presence, not all EAP centres abide by the same professional standards

entry requirements. Leung et al. (2016), for example, challenge the notion of an 'appropriate academic language' and indirectly criticise the field of EAP for ignoring recent research on multilingualism and English as a Lingua Franca in the global university. They do this by questioning the construct validity of commercial language proficiency tests, such as IELTS (developed by Cambridge English Language Assessment in collaboration with the British Council and the International Development Program in Australia) and TOEFL (developed by the US Educational Testing Service). These tests necessitate expensive preparatory courses (which further perpetuates a cycle of commercial, not necessarily pedagogic, interests) and are taught by General English teachers. They are then used by institutions of higher education who assume they are reliable predictors of academic success. IELTS and TOEFL dominate the English assessment market and being qualified to teach and test IELTS, in the UK, for example, is highly desirable for securing EAP jobs. This further blurs the boundaries between EAP and the teaching of language skills. In fact, Leung et al.'s critique centres around the fact that IELTS test constructs are designed to measure language skills, not socio-academic practices. Practices, they argue, would include 'effective communication', rather than 'appropriacy' or traditional notions of accuracy, whereby 'effective' means handling the complex nature of academic communication, including the confidence to share and critique ideas, to manage multimodal and social media communications (2016, p. 61) and to feel comfortable with the multilingualism that characterises the global university (2016, pp. 64-66).

Whilst a threshold of language skills may be a pre-requisite for academic writing, determining what that threshold is yields inconclusive findings (Trenkic & Warmington, 2018). Moreover, whilst having language skills is a

necessary condition for academic proficiency, it is not a sufficient one. Turner (2018), for example, argues that proficiency in English is unlikely to be the root cause of writing problems (2018, pp. 132-3) and that the test construct of IELTS as an *academic* entry exam encourages the conflation of good writing with language proficiency. Since IELTS does not integrate the practices of reading to write, of knowledge of academic discourses (including disciplinary discourses), and of developing research dispositions and attitudes to referencing and critical engagement, it does little to ensure that "lecturers will have no difficulty in reading students' work" (2018, p. 133).

EAP teachers are therefore left having to juggle decisions about what to teach: language or discourse and text analysis? Commercial testing or principled pedagogy? Authentic texts or textbook templates? This leaves them vulnerable to not developing a knowledgeable and scholarly identity of their own.

The handmaiden

Écrire est un acte d'amour. S'il ne l'est pas, il n'est qu'écriture (Cocteau, 1957, p. 151)

Cocteau's claim about the nature of writing is thoroughly lost in translation: "Writing is an act of love. If it is not, it is just writing" (Google Translate), which makes little sense. What *écrire* evokes is care and passion; *écriture* is simply script.

Yet, Cocteau's distinction between *écrire* (to write - verb, process) and *écriture* (writing - noun, product) is crucial to understanding how EAP has tended to represent academic writing: it conceptualises it as a product

stripped of love and feeling, cleansed of the impurities of Cocteau's *difficulté d'être* (difficulty of being). It is an object of standardised convention, structure, formality, clarity and logic, nothing but 'a dull read' that leads to 'literary boredom' (Wolff, 2007). Wolff further laments the genre's obsessive focus on 'clarity' and on 'making every move explicit', an act, he says, which kills suspense, removes surprise and saps joy. Certainly not an *act of love*.

Such joylessness is evident in the following (standard) characteristics deemed to make writing academic: *formal, logical, clear, concise, balanced, more algorithmic than human*, as Warner might describe it (2018, pp. 97-98) (Fig. 4):

Academic writing

What is academic writing?

CONTENTS

Academic writing is clear, concise, focussed, structured and backed up by evidence. Its purpose is to aid the reader's understanding.

It has a formal tone and style, but it is not complex and does not require the use of long sentences and complicated vocabulary.

Each subject discipline will have certain writing conventions, vocabulary and types of discourse that you will become familiar with over the course of your degree. However, there are some general characteristics of academic writing that are relevant across all disciplines.

Characteristics of academic writing

Academic writing is:

- **Planned and focused:** answers the question and demonstrates an understanding of the subject.
- **Structured:** is coherent, written in a logical order, and brings together related points and material.
- **Evidenced:** demonstrates knowledge of the subject area, supports opinions and arguments with evidence, and is referenced accurately.
- **Formal in tone and style:** uses appropriate language and tenses, and is clear, concise and balanced.

Figure 4: Characteristics of academic writing available at
https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/14011/writing/106/academic_writing [accessed 07/12/2018]

I also sense the distinction between *écrire* and *écriture* in Mike Rose's depiction of American literacy practices and in his discussion about who is responsible for teaching writing, understood as process and as product (Mike Rose, 1989, p. 207):

> Anything longer than the sentence (even two or three sentences
> strung together) is considered *writing* and the teaching of
> writing shall be the province of the English Department.
> Anything at the sentence level or smaller (like filling words and
> phrases into a workbook) is to be considered grammar review,
> and that falls within the domain of the remedial program.

Mike Rose, like other educationalists concerned with literacy, social justice and access to higher education (Lillis, 2001; Russell, 2002; Sperlinger et al., 2018), laments the disciplinary and institutional divides that create binaries between 'writing' as prose, taught by professors of English literature, and 'writing' as mechanical skill, taught by writing tutors. The former, *écriture,* is the domain of the erudite; the latter, *écrire,* is banished to corrective centres serving the academic disciplines their students want to join.

In an influential article published in 2001, Hyland intimated that the identity of the sector is in tension between being a 'humble servant' to the academy and being a 'transgressor'. He has since also labelled it a 'hand-maiden to those proper disciplines' (Hyland, 2006b, p. 34, emphasis added):

> Applied linguists, in fact, have generally been seen as inhabiting
> the less glamorous, low rent neighbourhoods of the academy,
> and this is particularly true of those concerned with English for
> Academic Purposes, which is generally regarded as *a hand-*
> *maiden to those 'proper' disciplines* which are more directly
> engaged in the serious business of constructing knowledge or
> discovering truth. EAP, in fact, has come to be regarded as an
> almost mercantile activity and attracted to itself negatively
> evaluative concepts such as *pragmatic, cost-effective* and
> *functional*, untroubled by theoretical issues or questions of
> power as it merrily seeks to accommodate students to the
> faceless and impersonal prose of their disciplines.

By describing EAP in terms of two contrasting identities, a 'servant'/'hand-maiden' and 'transgressor', he drew attention to the fact that EAP pedagogy has been conceived, on the one hand, as a means to an end in the sense that it has been designed to prepare students *for* academic study by following templates and prescribing formal language (the 'humble servant'); and, on the other, as *being* an academic study in its own right (Melles, Millar, Morton, & Fegan, 2005), where conventions can be discussed and choices encouraged. Hyland's distinction thus mirrors broader divisions within EAP that conceive of it as either a transferable *skill* or as a critically engaged *social practice*.

Another way of grasping the tense 'skills-servant' *versus* 'social practice-transgressor' binary that, to some extent, still underscores debates in EAP[11] (albeit with emerging exceptions[12]) is to consider the following. If we agree that the academy is a site of both learning and transforming knowledge (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987) and that the purpose of EAP is to facilitate access to the academy, then EAP should also be a site for both learning and transforming knowledge. Therefore, in addition to ensuring learners become knowledgeable about the norms of language and about who sets these norms and why, EAP also has a responsibility to ensure students

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[11] As recently as November 2018, Baleap held an event entitled '[Academic Literacies and EAP: Same or Different](#)?' [accessed 24/03/2019] signalling that the binary endures. This is six years on from Wingate and Tribble (2012)'s influential, and controversial, article on the same issues. Controversial because it was rebutted by Academic Literacies scholars Lillis and Tuck (2016), who distance themselves from EAP and align themselves to Critical EAP (Benesch, 1988, 2001; S. Benesch, 2009; Benesch, 2012) and the US-based field of Writing in the Disciplines (Bazerman, 1988) and Writing Across the Curriculum (Russell, 1991)

[12] The sociological theories of Basil Bernstein, via Maton (2013) are beginning to be heard in EAP via scholars such as Mark Brooke (2019), who argue for 'knowledge', rather than language, to be the purpose of EAP.

become knowledgeable about the norms of the academy, which require being autonomous and critical, including critical of norms. In order for EAP to facilitate this, it would need to critique its own practices, linguistic and academic, by *transgressing against* as well as *serving* the academic disciplines.

The binary is also manifest in academic writing. By presenting writing as a relatively non-negotiable set of transferable *skills*, EAP replicates and perpetuates, i.e. 'serves' rather than challenges, institutional writing norms without involving students in exploring the affordances of meaningful and creative alternatives. Without, that is, involving students in 'transgression'. Framing EAP through the Hyland lens of institutional servitude *versus* transgression highlights the ill-defined purpose of EAP writing culture: is it to 'serve' an *Other,* where 'other' stands for the disciplines, whose writing practices are as varied as the length of string?; or is it to be 'academic', in the sense of 'educational' and a beacon of "truth and critical thinking" where practices are questioned (Connell, 2013, p. 106)?

In the UK, at least, most EAP provision exists to serve the Academy in the sense that it is classified as an academic 'service' or 'business' (Ding & Bruce, 2017; Turner, 2004, p. 96) or 'major industry' (Hyland, 2012, p. 30) that can be bought from providers who are not academically accredited (by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), for example) and whose staff are not academics. These providers, as already mentioned, are generally private sector units whose EAP exiting exams have been recognised by universities or they can be non-credit-bearing units within the university itself that act as feeder-schools for accredited university degrees. Because of its profit-

making nature, EAP is a commodified[13] sector and is part of the marketisation of higher education, generally (Molesworth, Scullion, & Nixon, 2011). In some ways, skills-based approaches are both masters of and slaves to this marketisation because skills and products are easily measured, tested, transferred and monetised: they are masters because their easy transmission ends up determining what counts as academic writing, but also slaves because they then have to abide by the rules they themselves have created.

While many in higher education more broadly lament this trend where skills are valued more than practices (Collini, 2012, pp. 141-146), blaming an 'ascendancy of technicism, competencies and the proliferation of performance indicators that accompany audit cultures' (Smith, 1999, p. 327), many also seem to welcome it, as evidenced by the proliferation of 'study skills' publications.

In an apparent *volte-face* and notwithstanding his earlier recognition of EAP's servile status, Hyland's more recent defence of EAP (2018) largely supports the field's right to remain a 'hand-maiden'. His main reasons for this can be summarised as follows: firstly, alternative approaches to teaching academic writing have not worked (2018, p. 388, although he doesn't refer to which approaches), which means EAP is all we have to help students access higher education; secondly, EAP teachers take on the responsibility of preparing students who would otherwise be 'vulnerable' to

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[13] I use the term 'commodification' in the sense used by Connell (2013) to refer to the process of transforming principles into commodities, that is to say into 'things' that can be bought and sold within a free market and whose value is measured in monetary terms rather than in social or educational terms.

the challenging demands of academia (*ibid*), which implies we ought to be grateful to them rather than accuse them of being subservient 'butlers' (with reference to Raimes (1991); thirdly, precarious teaching contracts and the low service-technician status of EAP in the 'marketised higher education system' mean that EAP teachers cannot take on the risks of challenging writing conventions by engaging critically with their epistemic affordances (*ibid*): to do so would be like "blaming coal miners for air pollution" (Hyland, 2018, p. 389); and fourthly, critical approaches to EAP are ideological in the sense that they assume the teacher has a correct reading of any given socio-political situation as well as a right to share that reading in class. Rather, according to Hyland, students are likely to be more comfortable with the received wisdom of convention in order to pass their exams than with understanding the finer socio-semiotic opportunities of textual representation that a more critical writing pedagogy might afford (Hyland, 2018, p. 393):

> [t]he 'student consumer' of the twenty-first century, relatively
> austere, career-focused and laden with debt, is keen to get what
> he or she has paid for.

There are several difficulties with Hyland's line of defence, which I now address with the intention of showing that they perpetuate the problem of academic writing in EAP by accommodating deficit, skills-based models.

Firstly, claiming that EAP is the best approach we have to writing because 'alternative approaches' haven't worked does not exonerate EAP from criticism. It merely begs his claim. To adapt his own example, that would be

like stating fossil fuels are the best source of energy because alternative sources haven't worked: if an alternative source or approach 'doesn't work', the reasons may be structural, institutional or political rather than inherent. Moreover, that alternative approaches haven't worked or, indeed, that EAP itself 'works', is contentious since standards for measuring success and failure are dependent on assessment constructs (which, as evidenced in Leung et al. (2016), are not always valid), on writing tasks and genres, on learning aims and outcomes, on entry levels and wide-ranging disciplinary demands.

If one measures EAP's successes in relation to the IELTS writing task, for example, such as the 250-word 5-paragraph 'argumentative' essay that focuses on accuracy, not academic argument, then EAP is indeed likely to 'work' better than an Academic Literacies or Composition Studies approach, both of which teach and test extended pieces of research writing. If, on the other hand, one were to measure EAP's ability "to prepare students for the unpredictable new forms of communication that await them" (Huckin, 2003, p. 3) or for managing risk (Thesen & Cooper, 2013), developing voice (Matsuda & Tardy, 2008), writing multimodally (Andrews et al., 2012; Jewitt, 2013) and for research writing in the social sciences (Thomson & Kamler, 2011b), then an EAP approach that is uncritically anchored to its own academic writing skills and conventions may not 'work'.

It has also been recognised that alternative approaches to EAP, such as Academic Literacies and Critical EAP (Lillis & Tuck, 2016), have played an important role in "raising questions about and possibly extending the roles and responsibilities of practitioners" (Ding & Bruce, 2017, p. 120) to include "a responsibility to engage in promoting social justice and political change" (p. 121). Taking on such responsibilities might, in turn, affect the forms of

writing that teachers model and that students can choose from. For example, a recent special issue of the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* was dedicated to gender and academic writing, where the relationship between discourse, language choice, labour, access and gender is explored and the possibility of presenting students with alternatives to standard academic writing is raised (Lillis et al., 2018). The fact that this more questioning, critical role is being acknowledged as important by the field of EAP testifies to its success, not its failure.

Secondly, even if preparing students for academic study were the sole responsibility of EAP teachers, this does not exonerate them from adopting a critical and reflective stance towards what, who and how they teach. This point has been raised by Turner (2018, p. 242) who suggests that if teachers of writing were also researchers in their field, they would in fact be best-placed for educating the academy at large about writing because they could raise awareness of how varied, ideological and mobile writing landscapes are (2018, pp. 242; 252-3; 256-7). According to Turner, writing researchers are more disposed to interrogate the assumptions of Western cultural rhetoric than might be the case for academics reading texts for arguments within a specific disciplinary context. The reasons teachers may be adopting a 'butler' or 'handmaiden' stance, argues Turner, is in part because they are not qualified to do otherwise, but it may also amount to a choice dictated by convenience or ideology, or both.

Thirdly, however, there is an important sense in which this may not be a choice. Rather, it may be the result of institutional practices that prevent

EAP teachers from doing and keeping up to date with writing scholarship[14]. In support of his claim that the low status of EAP practitioners[15] prevents them from challenging writing practices, Hyland draws on Ding and Bruce (2017), who reflect on how the precarious status of EAP practitioners within the academy poses a 'fundamental conundrum' for how they are to "induct students into the literate practices and processes of the academic world despite their own ambivalent status within the academy" (2017, p. 2). Whilst recognising that "EAP has accumulated an extensive interdisciplinary knowledge base that draws upon different research streams" (2017, p. 5), Ding and Bruce also acknowledge the material and institutional difficulties that EAP practitioners face in endeavouring to do justice to such knowledge. These difficulties surface in what they call a 'conundrum': on the one hand, EAP is seen as a commodified 'support service' that relies on commercially available materials that lend themselves to being taught uncritically and within limited time frames; on the other hand, EAP sees itself as a 'field of study' that (2017, p. 8):

> involves developing students' ability as discourse analysts so that
> they can unravel and participate in the discourses of the
> particular academic community that they aspire to join.
> Furthermore, it involves developing awareness of critical

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[14] By 'scholarship' I mean "activities relating to *developing and refining one's overall knowledge of practice in EAP*". This is different to 'research' which "[is] *a planned, systematic investigation that aims to inform one specialised aspect of the knowledge base on which the field of EAP draws*" (Ding and Bruce, 2017, p. 111, emphasis in original)

[15] See Ding and Bruce (2017) for a detailed discussion on the use of the term 'practitioner' to designate the EAP 'teacher'

thinking as an evaluative judgment shaped by epistemology, research methods and communicative values and genres.

If the status of EAP practitioners, argue Ding and Bruce, were aligned with the status of being an academic, whereby time and resources for scholarship were built into permanent contractual terms and career progression, then greater critical and reflective autonomy might characterise the way they teach EAP, including writing. It is in this sense that blaming teachers for their inability to engage critically with writing research, and therefore potentially misguiding students about what writing is, does and can do, amounts to 'blaming coal miners for pollution'.

A recent article by Davis (2019), whose report of EAP practitioner responses to why they generally don't engage in research and publish their work, largely echoes the findings of Ding and Bruce (2017). Specifically, Davis' interviewees claim that they are actively *discouraged* from engaging in scholarship (2019, p. 78):

> All EAP professionals would like to say we are a profession, but you are not encouraged, once you get to a certain point, to take it any further. I find that contradictory really. The message from the department is 'it isn't your job to do research, this isn't what you're employed to do ... this does not benefit the ELC so you're not getting any time for that (Practitioner F).

> In an institution of quality, you would expect it to be legitimate to publish [...] I have encountered jealousy from certain managers, and have the feeling that management is sometimes unhappy about efforts to publish because it might undermine their authority (Practitioner H).

Davis' portrait of EAP further compounds its status of servitude and marginalisation whereby practitioners continue to operate 'on the edge of academia'.

To be fair, EAP has evolved since its more prescriptive beginnings (Jordan, 1996, 1997) to include a range of theories and teaching approaches (Hyland & Shaw, 2016) that recognise a range of written academic genres (Nesi & Gardner, 2012), including controversies surrounding the inclusion and exclusion of 'non-native' varieties (Hyland, 2016a, 2016b; Politzer-Ahles, Holliday, Girolamo, Spychalskae, & Harper Berksonf, 2016). This critical attention in EAP literatures might suggest that it is no longer the 'hand-maiden' it once was. Yet, doubts linger. These include concerns about what theories and pedagogies of writing are *actually* being enacted in EAP classrooms across the world (Jenkins, 2016, emphasis added):

> [ELFA[16], Critical EAP or Academic Literacies] are [...] challenging the practices in the real teaching approaches such as EAP, that were indeed quite prescriptive earlier on, but have now moved away from prescribing narrow templates of academic writing towards engaging learners in genre analysis. In the publications around these approaches there's no evidence that 'they conform by default to native academic English', *though I suspect this is what's going on in practice in the many EAP pre-sessional and in-sessional classes around the world*.

Similar concerns about what actually goes on in EAP classrooms and about the disjunction between theory and practice have also been voiced by Hyland (2016c, pp. 146-147; 151, my emphasis):

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[16] English as a Lingua Franca Academic (Tribble, 2016)

'what's the basis for believing that you can teach writing as a set of generic skills that prescribe accuracy and the avoidance of error? [A view that] is still very much *alive in many classrooms around the world*, especially where English is taught as a second or foreign language. In many schools, writing classes are grammar classes in disguise and students are asked to write simply to demonstrate their knowledge of syntactic rules. In these situations, grammatical accuracy and clear exposition are often the main criteria of good writing [...] This autonomous, decontextualised view of writing also carries over into the design of many large international exams [...] *focusing on accuracy is exactly the wrong place to look for writing competence, as there is little evidence to show that either syntactic complexity or grammatical accuracy are the best measures of good writing [...] no particular feature can be said to be a marker of good writing.*

What is being signalled by Jenkins and Hyland, above, is that there may be a mismatch between what EAP advocates in its guise of "a researched-informed *academic field of study*" (Ding & Bruce, 2017, p. 4, emphasis in original) and what it practises in its guise as a *support service.*

Conclusion

Despite EAP's positive aspirations to be a critically engaged and reflective field of academic study, it nonetheless continues to operate predominantly as a service sector. Because of its marketized status, it lends itself to adopting narrow and reductionist approaches to academic writing, thus failing to engage fully with writing research. Reductive approaches to writing, in turn, both lead to and are generated by several problems. These include the straight-jacket approach to genre, encouraged by the textbook industry; EAP teachers whose ELT backgrounds confer upon them an ambivalent identity that does not systematically qualify them to teach

academic writing; and to consolidating the hand-maiden, or butler, stance of EAP more generally as it grapples with its own ambivalent status within the academy.

Chapter 2 explores the broader implications of these problems.

Chapter 2- The implications of all this trouble

More than any other measure of the value of what writers do, even academic ones, is to provide companionship for further thought. Writing here is less an achievement that is measured extrinsically than an invitation to imagine beyond its own terms of reference. Books and essays here befriend and encourage thinking with interlocutors that remain anonymous. This value cannot be audited or cheapened through the mechanisms that aim to judge, measure and distribute repute and ultimately money (Back, 2016, p. 64).

Introduction

EAP's servitude to the academy, discussed in Chapter 1, has several problematic implications for the development of writing practices. In this chapter, I limit my focus to three implications. These are the tendency for EAP to universalise and standardise its own version of academic writing instead of teaching *about* writing. It does this by foregrounding the *mechanics* at the expense of the *content* (Murray & Sharpling, 2018) and of the *thinking* (Yun & Standish, 2018). Textbooks get instrumentalised to do this because they *prescribe* rules rather than *guide* towards possibilities. When skills, rules and conventions are foregrounded, the opportunities for academic misconduct (including plagiarism and ghostwriting) increase because templates are easily replicated and assessed.

The second implication of EAP's servitude is that it marginalises studies in cognate fields such as Writing Studies and Academic Literacies, all of which are shaping and critiquing academic writing practices. And finally, but not least, the hand-maiden approach to academic writing risks standardising

written communication to a mono-culture instead of internationalising to include a multiple-culture. This has educational, academic, social, economic, ethical and epistemological consequences.

Universalising academic discourse

The way EAP universalises academic discourse can be inferred from the following quotation taken from a study on 'what academics value in student writing' in which applied linguists Murray and Sharpling (2018, p. 9) argue that:

> academic writing programmes such as pre-sessional and credit- and non-credit-bearing in-sessional courses should focus less on language per se and more on other aspects of writing such as students' understanding of subject-specific content and their critical engagement.

The authors challenge standard perceptions of what counts as 'good' academic writing and conclude that linguistic accuracy and form are less important than content and critical engagement. This conclusion is shared by others who challenge the conflation of good writing with accurate or appropriate forms (C. E. Ball & Loewe, 2017; Pullman, 2009) and who resist foregrounding the mechanics of writing at the expense of the content (Yun & Standish, 2018). Yet, despite widespread consensus in the literatures that good writing cannot be reduced to linguistic skills, many EAP textbooks still foreground textual form, often drawing on lexical corpora (Gardner & Davies, 2014; Nesi & Gardner, 2012), ascribing academic meaning-making powers to some language forms rather than others (Fig. 5).

As argued in Chapter 1, this is now explained and exemplified.

Figure 5: Text Inspector available at
https://twitter.com/i/moments/1010897901923467264 [accessed 27/12/2018]

Academic Words

For example, EAP has enthusiastically embraced the teaching of Academic
Word Lists (AWLs) (Coxhead, 2011; Gardner & Davies, 2014)[17]. These are
lexical corpora compiled from samples of academic texts designed to
establish the frequency with which certain words occur in disciplinary
writings (such as journal articles). AWLs are often included or referred to in

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[17] Available from https://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/sublists
[accessed 19/11/2018]

EAP textbooks, teaching materials and writing advice literatures, too, such as online Text Inspector tools (Fig. 5) which show how corpora (academic word lists) and lexical frequencies are being used commercially to assess academic writing. This particular tool boasts that it is informed by extensive research in applied linguistics and academic word lists, despite the fact that their relevance to the development of academic writing competence has been questioned by Paquot (2010) and Hyland and Tse (2007), *inter alia*, on the grounds that these lists are incomplete, inconsistent, irrelevant or imprecise indicators of what constitutes and contributes to the characteristics of academic discourses.

Turner has argued that the use of such corpora is "the continuation of the long-standing cultural concern to choose words in the interests of precision and economy" (2018, p. 46), a legacy inherited from seventeenth century Enlightenment philosopher John Locke. This notion has since evolved into the Orwellian trope that good prose is 'like a window pane' (2018, pp. 36 and 48), that it should be so clear and transparent that its meaning is apparent. And precision and economy are indeed valued in EAP discourses, as evidenced by Bennett (2009, 2015), for example. However, since general words like 'sex' and 'team' are also on the academic word lists (Sublists 3 and 9, respectively), it is unclear how these lists contribute to developing academic discourse. My own EAP classroom experience has revealed that AWLs become easily misused and reified to the status of official academic discourse, and are deferred to by teachers and students as indicators of whether a text is academic or not. In fact, a common refrain amongst students who are asked to learn the AWLs is '*how many* academic words should my essay include to make it 'academic'?, which suggests they think that it is the words, not the ideas they stand for or the discourses to which

they belong, that matters. Furthermore, narrowing what counts as academic to a finite list inevitably excludes what is not on the list making the list incomplete from the outset.

A different approach to the teaching of academic writing can be found in Graff and Birkenstein (2006). Here, the *purpose* of writing remains firmly in the foreground, namely that academic writers are, from the outset, entering into conversations with literatures past and looking for their own voices to respond to the ideas they engage with. Rather than providing lists of prescribed words, Graff and Birkenstein encourage student writers, in particular, to approach their texts as places where they are 'doing things' rather than simply saying them. For example, writers *explain* why things matter, *introduce* what sceptics might say and *provide* meta-commentaries to orient the reader's understanding. Once writers have made decisions about what they want to do, they can then choose language that best achieves this aim. In turn, having sentence templates that can then enable such functional moves enables writers to bring into focus what they want to say.

Paragraphs

EAP also tends to prescribe, and universalise, understandings of paragraph structures and their functions rather than describe their range and explain the reasons for why they vary in length, structure and content. For example, the following is a common understanding of paragraph structures in EAP, but also in standard writing instruction, including IELTS: 'a paragraph must deal with one subject or main idea at a time, it must have a topic sentence and be of a certain length' (Bailey, 2006, p. 111; 169; Basbøll, 2014; Bennett, 2009, p. 46; Turner, 2018). This is despite evidence that academic writing

displays significant variety when it comes to paragraphs (Bodle, 2015; Pinker, 2014, p. 26) and that some even claim that 'there is no such thing as a paragraph' (Pinker, 2014, p. 145):

> Many writing guides provide detailed instructions on how to write a paragraph. But the instructions are misguided, because there is no such thing as a paragraph. That is, there is no item in an outline, no branch in a tree, no unit of discourse that consistently corresponds to a block of text delimitated by a blank line or an indentation. What does exist is the paragraph *break*: a visual bookmark that allows the reader to pause, to take a breather, assimilate what he has heard, and then find his place again on the page.

Moreover, whilst many academic paragraphs seem to meet the topic sentence/main idea/one topic requirement found in EAP textbooks, as well as in classic style guides such as Strunk and White (2000) – now discredited because of its outdated advice (Hayot, 2014; Pinker, 2014) - many do not, and can be used instead to develop an author's *critique* of and *reflection* on evidence rather than as an opportunity to *display* evidence (Fig. 6):

Margaret Thatcher's infamous statement that 'there is no such thing as society. ... There are individual men and women, and there are families'[8] reflected both the moral anxieties of those on the political right but also the undeniable interdependencies of individuals particularly towards the beginning and end of life. Even the most ardent individualist cannot transcend the inevitability of human frailty. More pertinent to this argument, human beings are not born 'entrepreneurs of the self' but must be made into self-governing entities within the social realm of family. This recognition has profoundly shaped neoliberal reconfigurations of the state and society, and can be traced right through into the narrow and anaemic biological conceptions of the social operationalized within the laboratory. As Rose and Abi-Rached (2013) acknowledge, broad arrays of childhood interactions are routinely scaled down to the level of inter-personal primary caregiver relations, with 'the social' reduced to the common denominator of mother–child interactions.

Figure 6: Paragraph with no obvious topic sentence (Gillies et al., 2016)

Alternatives to the topic sentence/main idea approach, can be found in Hayot (2014, pp. 59-73), for example. Hayot frames the paragraph in more reader-enticing terms as: "an opening promise, a move towards detail and then a building up from the detail outward to a conclusion that supersedes the first sentence" (*ibid* 2014, p. 67).

Stance

EAP also tends to over-conflate personal pronouns with writer stance, identity or self-mention (Hyland, 2002c, p. 208). This has led to downplaying the role of other linguistic, rhetorical and disciplinary features (Bennett, 2009, pp. 48-50) such as content-related nouns (Stock & Lea Eik-Nes, 2016) or adverbials (Swales, 2011) to indicate the writer's position and orientation (Hyland, 2002a). It also ignores the intentionality and agency of the writer who may have chosen to use an active or passive for an overall rhetorical effect rather than for reasons of subjectivity/objectivity: sometimes, the use of a passive can have more force as a marker of agency, attitude and subjectivity than the use of the active.

This can be illustrated with reference to a sociology paper that won a prize for outstanding scholarship and which tackled the highly controversial issue of how biology and neuroscience have informed the UK government's policy on early years intervention. This social policy involved 'teaching' socially marginalised, poor and disaffected mothers how to parent their children (Gillies et al., 2016).

At first glance, the paper displays the conventional features of a scientific academic text, features that EAP is likely to highlight and encourage students to emulate: nominalisations, post-modifications, noun phrases, paragraphing, referencing, and several words from the academic word lists.

A closer textual analysis, however, reveals features that a traditional skills-based EAP approach to academic writing is likely to miss. The article displays the highly charged and personal language of scientific controversies (Bazerman, 1988) and the intention of the authors, who are sociologists, to foreground these through the use of frequent quotations (where EAP would normally encourage paraphrasing), flippancy and dismissiveness (marked by the use of the colloquial *ain't*) at the suggestion that government policy is embarking on eugenics ("biology *ain't* what it used to be"; "the thing that made eugenics *so scary*" and "we *really don't* live in that kind of world anymore"), but also recognition that eugenics may be a reality ("*horrifying* legacy of eugenics", 2016, p. 220) and that modern-day sociology has become a "mangy-looking beast" (2016, p. 221).

The paper's abstract relies heavily on the passive, which on an EAP reading might simply suggest an 'objective distancing to focus on the result' (Fig. 7):

significance in accounts of social brains and environmentally reactive genomes. This is highlighted through a discussion of 'early intervention' as a heavily biologized policy rationale framing opportunities for biosocial collaboration. It is argued that late capitalist objectives of personal investment and optimization are driving this

Figure 7: Passive voice (Gillies, Edwards, & Horsley, 2016)

However, on a rhetorical or socially-oriented reading, it might indicate the authors' strategic decision to abide by the conventions of scientific academic prose (the paper does draw on and question biological and neuroscientific evidence, but it is not a scientific paper) thereby appeasing the initial reading expectations of the scientific community and 'luring' them into the text. The initial use of the conventional academic passive might, however, be interpreted as a 'hook' to introduce what soon becomes a hard-hitting and impassioned sociological critique of how science is instrumentalised to engineer socio-political agendas.

Sociological Review Editor Marie-Andrée Jacob (2018) has described the paper in terms of a performative, in terms, that is, of what it does and the impact it has on the reader . She has called the paper:

> a beautifully written and stern warning [...]. a hell of a ride. It has fast rhythms [...]. The paper is an invitation to look at the backstage of [...] powerful coalitions [...] The language of the paper ... it is effective how you use the language, you don't spare us, you make it hard, it's not gentle, it is an orgy of Newspeak ... the paper is full of Newspeak, it is *the hope that nurture can change nature.*

This is because, as the paper develops, personal pronouns (Fig. 8) and *newspeak* – such as 'biologized policy trope' or ' the grip of neoliberal moralization of hope' (Gillies et al., 2016, p. 221) give energy and momentum to the argument as the writers sharpen their critiques:

In the midst of this enthusiasm for the biosocial we wish to sound a note of caution. Without doubting the relevance of a corporal material perspective or the potential for fruitful cross-disciplinary collaboration, we call for a more critical consideration of the assumptions and politics underlying calls for sociologists to connect with a life sciences agenda. More specifically, we consider the repercussions for the 'certain classes of people' living under a contemporary 'biopolitics of life'. Drawing in particular on the biologized policy trope of early years intervention, we show how biosocial visions tend to solidify and make normative specific relational practices and behaviours. The shift from the selfish gene to the social brain has been characterized by new understandings of *homo economicus* as socially incubated, reinforcing gendered, classed and racialized accounts of family competence and individual value. Building on this analysis we question the role that sociologists might play in realizing an emancipatory biosocial politics from within the grip of neoliberal moralization of hope and self-transformation.

Figure 8: Personal pronouns (Gillies et al., 2016)

As Helen Sword (2009, p. 334) reminds us, "energetic engaged prose fosters energetic engaged reading, for better or for worse": it is risky as it may lead

to failure and rejection, but it does exist and as such is part of the academic writing landscape.

A general EAP reading of such a text, by contrast, is likely to focus on surface grammar and lexis, such as the passive/active voice and frequency of 'academic words'. In other words, the skills. Such a reductive reading, however, would miss the range of semiotic resources that the authors mobilise to further their argument and communicate their stance. It is highly unlikely that an EAP writing approach would highlight the performative qualities of the text, and in ignoring these, it would miss the overall academic practice that is enacted through this text, namely its critical engagement with a controversy.

Monomodality and monolingualism

EAP universalises monomodality at the expense of multimodality. This is despite the fact that Canagarajah, along with many others, has shown that (2013a, p. 1, my emphasis):

> Writing is multimodal, with multiple semiotic features (space, visuals), ecological resources (objects, people, texts), and modalities (oral, visual, and aural) contributing to its production and interpretation. Language is therefore *only one* of the resources that goes into writing. If text construction, circulation, and reception involve diverse social, semiotic, and ecological resources, we have to ask if we should continue to define writing according to language considerations alone.

The terms 'multimodal' and 'monomodal' refer to the range of socio-semiotic, or symbolic, properties of text rather than to vocabulary, text structure or grammar, understood as features typically associated with language. These properties include different media such as images, video,

sound (including speech), symbols, colours, fonts, layout and space, all of which create meaning.

Work focused on modality and its socially-embedded, meaning-making nature includes the 'grammar' of images, exemplified in Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) to show how meanings are created by sequences and juxtapositions of images. Building on this work, Bezemer and Kress (2008) explore the affordances of different modes of communication, or 'what is lost and what is gained through transduction', i.e. when meaning moves between visual and written modes. English (2011) has explored the concept of 're-genring' as a way of helping students make meaning academically in ways that do not include traditional essays: for example, students can write in the genre of dialogues or produce radio programmes to explore academic issues and develop critical stances. Halliday (1994b) has explored the semiotics of spoken and written modes, specifically, and shown how the grammar of each produces different meanings. The work of Harris (2000) re-thinks writing as a semiotic system of spaces, marks and drawings, retracing the etymology of writing to drawing itself (I discuss this further in Chapter 3). The handbooks of Jewitt (2009) and Andrews et al. (2012), respectively, examine the use of multimodality in a range of contexts, including the PhD thesis. And multimodality is further documented by A. Archer and Breuer (2016b) and A. Archer and Breuer (2015), who examine its affordances in higher education and writing, respectively.

For my present purposes, which are to show that EAP universalises monomodality at the expense of multimodality, it is sufficient to refer to the clarifications of C. E. Ball and Charlton (2015, pp. 42-43):

[T]here are still two major misconceptions associated with multimodality. First, some assume all multimodal texts are digital [...]. Second, some assume that the opposite of multimodal is monomodal. In fact, there is no such thing as a monomodal text [e.g. the five-paragraph essay uses visual and spatial modes such as fonts, margins, spacing, etc., in addition to the linguistic mode]. [...] Monomodality, then, is used (incorrectly) to signify a lack of multiple media or modes when really what a user might mean is that a structure like a five-paragraph essay privileges the linguistic mode over the spatial or visual modes.

Framing all writing as multimodal involves recognising the meaning-making potential of a diverse range of interacting modes on the *page* because "[i]t is the *page* that illustrates, argues and elaborates by combining text, graphics, diagrams and tables" (Hippala, 2016, p. 55). This is not the same as reducing the meaning of a text to a finite set of modes, as EAP textbooks tend to.

Despite general agreement by writing researchers that writing is multimodal, an online search (27/12/2016) of the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* using 'multimodal' as the key word, generated just 34 articles and book reviews published between 2001 and 2017. However, the only search item with 'multimodal' in its title was a book review: the focus of the remaining 33 items was not multimodality.

Similarly, when searching for articles on multilingualism in EAP, most articles tended to focus on the differences between first and second language or on the hegemony of English as a *lingua franca*. This is different to multilingualism understood as the extent to which a learner's first language can be accommodated or *meshed* with English to mobilise all the

communication resources available to a writer (Canagarajah, 2013b; Zenger, Mullin, & Peterson Haviland, 2014) or as the ways a writer's many languages could be meshed to enhance meaning-making potential.

This, too, is despite what Leung et al. (2016, pp. 64, emphasis added) have referred to as the 'multilingual turn' in applied linguistics. This "involves a move away from notions such as 'native speaker competence', 'L1 interference', and monolingual approaches to languages more generally, to a focus on language as *social practice* and multilingualism as a valuable resource rather than a problem". The authors go on to argue that by breaking down the dichotomy between first and second language to allow both to find their space in academic communication, 'new creative possibilities' for making meaning emerge. Examples of this can be found in Mao (2005), who documents the use of American Chinese rhetorical features in meaning-making or in Canagarajah (2011), who explores strategies for enabling student writers to bring their own languages into the text.

This paucity of multilingual and multimodal content in EAP literature is at odds with the protean, mobile nature of written communication (Blommaert & Horner, 2017; Turner, 2018). Instead, EAP frames the writing of academic texts as linear, monomodal (in the sense of privileging the linguistic mode) and English language-oriented as opposed to opening its lens to a wider range of academic discourses and possibilities which could provide opportunities for framing knowledge differently. Work by, for example, Fiona English on re-genring (2011) and Karen Bennett on Portuguese academic discourse (2010) raises critical awareness of creative and knowledge-shaping textual possibilities. Specifically, English calls for academic communication to explore a far greater range of genres, including

dialogues and story-telling, whilst Bennett contends that since the aim of EAP is to reduce and eliminate interference from a writer's first language, English Academic Discourse suffers because it ignores the fact that there are "alternative ways of construing knowledge". As a consequence of this narrowing, epistemic representation becomes limited (Bennett, 2010, p. 22).

Conventions

The academic writing textbook industry plays its part in universalising and standardising EAP writing practices by allowing conventions, such as the avoidance of the first person pronoun 'I', to become entrenched (Agaoglu, Friday 19 April 2013):

> Some practices are so longstanding [...] they have solidified in our subconscious – impossible to change, or even question. This irony is not lost on me. Academia is supposed to be a place to question everything, yet every day I'm surrounded by silent rules that are not up for questioning.

One such 'silent rule' can be found in Bailey (2006, p. 105), a popular and widely referred to resource in EAP:

> Academic writing attempts to be *precise, semi-formal, impersonal* and *objective*. This does not mean that pronouns like *I* and *we* are never used, but in general, the focus is on presenting information as clearly and accurately as possible.

There exist at least two misguided assumptions in this quotation: firstly, that 'precision', 'formality', 'impersonality' and 'objectivity' are defining properties of academic writing. They are not, as shown in Hayot (2014); Peters (2009); Pinker (2014); Sword (2012), at least. And secondly, that these properties are prevented from emerging when personal forms are used,

which, again, they are not:: "Often the pronouns I, me, and you are not just harmless but downright helpful" (Pinker, 2014, p. 53). Scientific writing also challenges the convention to be 'objective and impersonal', such as the seminal article announcing the discovery of DNA by Watson and Crick (1953), which relied on academically 'inappropriate' personal pronouns to achieve academic persuasion (Moore, 2000, p. 23; Bazerman, 1998, pp. 27-34).

The product description of another commercially available EAP textbook re-enforces atomistic and reductionist approaches to writing by foregrounding the surface features of lexis and grammar and by collapsing the notion of 'academic' with the essay genre. It also arrogates to itself a universal notion of 'contemporary academic writing' that has no equivalent outside of EAP (Sowton, 2016, pp., emphasis added):

> 'Contemporary Academic Writing' represents a new and
> *interesting approach* to writing *academic* essays, providing
> staged support and guidance *from the sentence level right*
> *through to whole text*. There is a strong focus on the *high-*
> *frequency language* and *grammatical structures* which are found
> in academic writing.

What the book does not address is the role played in academic writing by referencing, argumentation, genre, multimodality, or anything resembling the threshold concepts discussed in Adler-Kassner and Wardle (2015), such as the fact that writing is an activity that enables things to happen. The book also remains silent on the fact that *actual* 'contemporary academic writing' includes research that requires knowledge of literatures in a disciplinary field and that academic writing is pivotal in what Thomson and Kamler (2011a) call 'identity work', namely establishing oneself within

disciplinary conversations. Rather, the sample 'academic' texts offered as examples of academic writing are five-paragraph essays with no referencing. For example, p. 82 proposes a *textbook* genre ('Is too much social media dangerous'), whereby knowledge is presented as fact with no source (Friesen, 2017, p. 144).

The complex and troubled notion of 'voice' in academic writing, especially with regards to second-language writing (Elbow, 1994a, 1994b, 1998, 2012; Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007, 2008) is mentioned on pages 65 and 66 of Sowton's 'interesting approach to writing'. However, this key and complex feature of academic writing is reduced to a grammatical feature, not a rhetorical, discursive, critical or identity-building process.

When it ossifies models that airbrush novelty, diversity and variety, pedagogy also contributes to the universalistion of EAP writing, as do standardisation in both teaching and assessment practices. 'Standardisation' was the focus of a plenary talk given by John Swales[18] in 2015 during which he argued, on his final slide, that:

> as academic and research English becomes a lingua franca, both
> in its forms and in its varieties, as well as in terms of its
> participants, experimentation in both *style and substance* should
> be open to all the bolder-hearted, to all the discontents of

[18] Emphasis in original closing plenary 'Standardization and its Discontents (with *apologies to Sigmund Freud*)', 1 November, 2015, at the PRISEAL 3 conference on academic writing and publishing entitled *Researching, teaching and supporting research communication: Perspectives and prospects* at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Coimbra, Portugal.

excessive and stultifying standardisation, whoever they are and wherever they be.

He further claimed that teachers are prone to dismissing examples of innovative or non-conventional academic writing as being one-off events that deviate from the norm. Yet, as also pointed out by Swales, both Bakhtin's *The Problem with Speech Genres* (1953, 1987) and Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), published in the same year, were highly influential academic texts (in philology and philosophy, respectively) and both testify to a 'heterogeneity of speech genres (both oral and written)' (Bakhtin, 1953, 1987, p. 60) indicating that however stable the conventions may be at any given time, this stability is contingent on who the writer is and what their academic intent amounts to.

Reflecting the contingency of conventions, however, remains a challenge for EAP. This is understandable given the generic, commercial nature of textbook resources, and the fact that time constraints coupled with the service status of EAP practitioners limits possibilities for critical engagement, as highlighted by Ding and Bruce (2017, pp. 8, emphasis added):

> These two competing conceptualisations of EAP [a service industry and a field of study] also influence the external inputs of *time and materials* that also shape the practitioner's role. The support service approach sees EAP as taking place within *limited (and often quite unrealistic) time frames* whereas the academic field of study approach sees the development of students' discourse competence as a longer-term enterprise. In relation to pedagogic materials, the 'support service' approach sees EAP as a commodified subject, teachable from *finite commercial courses*, while the 'academic field of study' approach requires the

practitioner to draw upon a wide range of resources. *Certainly the commercially produced materials may constitute a vital, core element, but so too is the practitioner's own ongoing and developing knowledge of EAP research.*

A recent exchange on social media debating the use of textbooks in teaching and learning (in the context of EAP and ELT) shows this debate continues to divide opinions with time being cited as a constraint to developing knowledge beyond the textbook (Fig. 9).
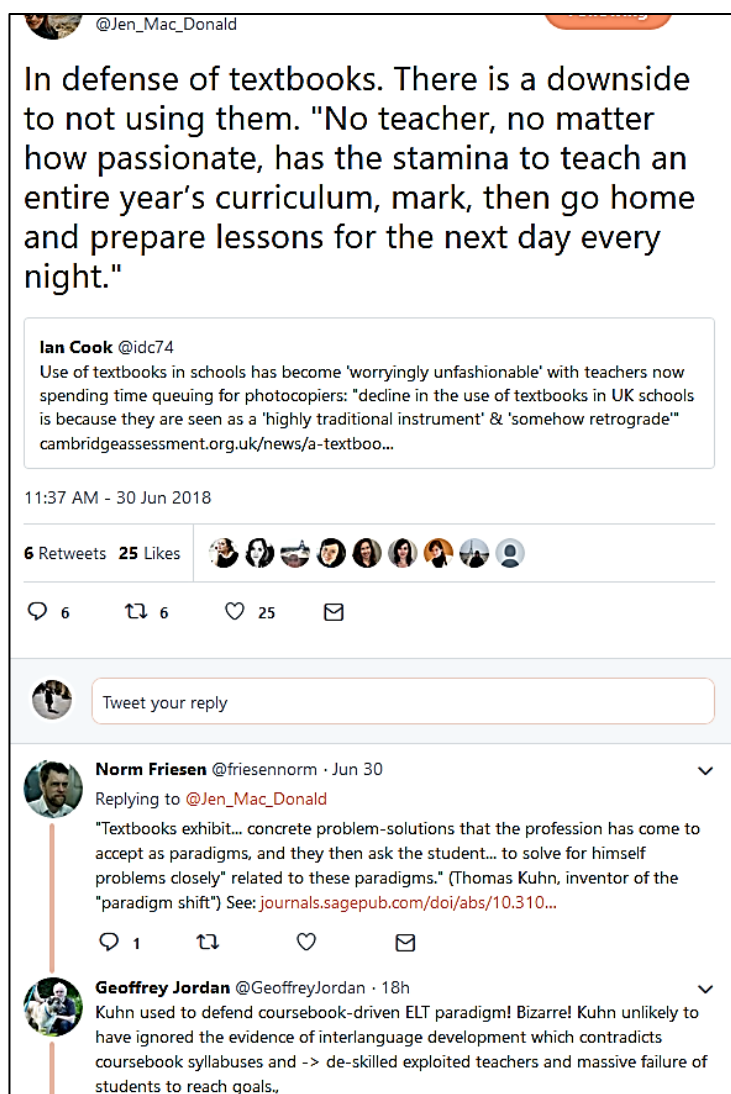
Figure 9: Debating the use of textbooks available at https://twitter.com/Jen_Mac_Donald/status/1013129525729873920 [accessed 07/07/2018]

My concerns, however, rest with the reductionist approaches to academic writing which textbook and other textbook-like resources encourage (Pinker, 2014; Pullman, 2009; Volokh, 2015, pp. 1-2) and which risk universalising academic discourse by impacting on 'what is going on in

practice in the many pre-sessional and in-sessional classes around the world', as Jenkins (2016) and Hyland (2016c) noted.

American sociologist C. W. Mills (1959, pp. 156-158) has shown that the social sciences have siloed themselves into discrete bureaucratic disciplines that have lost sight of the range of approaches needed to understand social phenomena. Similarly, textbooks present 'tinfoil Concepts' which artificially silo disciplinary boundaries. In the case of writing in EAP, what has been artificially siloed is the practice of academic writing from its naturally occurring contexts. Instead, writing has been artificially reduced to norms and conventions that lose sight of the social practices that writing fulfils. This reduction is then reified to a misguided universal paradigm of what makes writing academic.

Such misguided assumptions about what makes writing academic continue to underlie widely referred to web sources such as the one authored by Andy Gillet[19], an independent EAP consultant. He has been referred to as the 'Guardian of the EAP Temple' (in a *Panel discussion on the History of EAP and of BALEAP* at the 2013 BALEAP Conference[20]), the implication being that Gillet upholds some of the most established conventions of EAP writing. These include, from the *Introductory page[21]*, the following claims, which I report or paraphrase below (my emphasis, followed by my commentary):

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[19] http://www.uefap.com/writing/ [accessed 03/07/ 2013]

[20] This accolade is consistent with a comment made by Andy Gillet in which he apparently sees no difficulties with mainstream EAP assessment content and constructs (http://teachingeap.wordpress.com/2013/04/25/assessment-in-eap-a-continuously-improved-means-to-carelessly-examined-ends/#comments)

[21] http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm [accessed 03/07/ 2013]

> Academic writing is *a social practice.* By a social practice I mean
> that it is what people do together

Gillet's definition is more aligned to 'collaborative writing' and betrays a serious mis-understanding of the way *writing as social practice* is understood by, *inter alia*, Lea and Street (1998), Lillis (2013) or Paltridge et al. (2016), and discussed in Chapter 1.

Gillet further claims that:

> Academic writing in English is clearly *defined* by having an
> *obvious audience*; a *clear* purpose, either an exam question to
> answer or a research project to report on. It is also clearly
> structured. Academic writing in English is *linear*: *it starts at the*
> *beginning and finishes at the end,* with every part contributing to
> the main line of argument, *without digression or repetition.* This
> line of argument must be made clear *whatever kind of writing*
> *you are producing* and you, the writer, are responsible for
> making this line of argument clear and presenting it in an
> *orderly* fashion so that *the reader* can follow.

This is problematic on at least three fronts: firstly, 'an audience' is never 'obvious, nor is it a unitary, homogenous entity. It is made up of motley readers who, at different stages of the writing process, can be other students, tutors, examiners or editors all of whom have different expectations, topic knowledge and motives for reading; secondly, writers do not always know in advance who is going to read their work at different stages of its production (for example, a tutor–reader may be replaced by an examiner-reader who does not know the student); thirdly, because of the contested notion of 'clarity' discussed later in this chapter, there are some who call for a re-framing of the reader's position *vis à vis* the text and who

argue that the reader should cooperate more with the writer in order to understand their intentions. This view shifts the onus of writer responsibility (to be 'clear') onto the reader, who must also make an effort to understand (Turner, 2018, pp. 258-259).

There are several examples of academic writing that challenge Gillet's claim that *whatever kind of writing you are producing* it has to be 'clear' to your reader, where being 'clear' presupposes a wide range of implicit and explicit cultural assumptions about literacy, disciplinary knowledge, even irony and sarcasm, as well as the reader's cooperation. This can be illustrated with reference to the following economics paper (Maddock & Carter, 1982), which playfully defies standard academic writing conventions by expounding competing theories as a dramatic dialogue, in an act of what English (2011) calls 're-genring' (Fig 10):
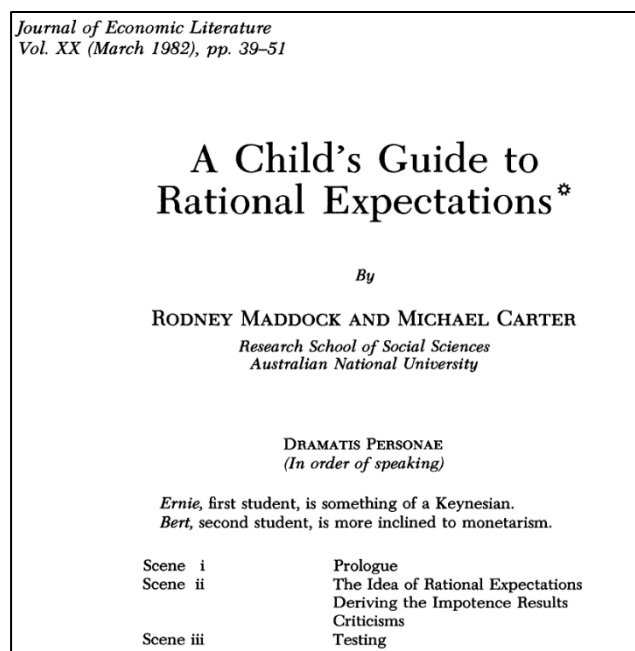
Figure 10: Economics Paper written as a dialogue
(Maddock and Carter, 1982)

I conclude this commentary on how EAP universalises its own version of academic writing by invoking the work of Karen Bennett, a strong advocate of approaching academic writing as a complex interplay of discourses as opposed to "a massive impersonal machine, where individual quirks are ironed out in the quest for uniformity and where there is no place for the 'personal voice' of the kind that prevails in more humanistic cultures" (Bennett, 2009, p. 43).

Bennett argues that academic discourse is not a homogenous entity and that a significant body of research has shown it to be so varied as to warrant descriptive rather than prescriptive pedagogic approaches (2009, p. 44). She presents the findings of an extensive study aimed at establishing the extent to which EAP textbooks, despite evidence of academic genre variety, reinforce the notion that academic discourse constitutes 'a single uniform entity' (*ibid*). She concludes that, bar very few exceptions, EAP has a prescriptive approach to writing (*ibid*, p. 52, emphasis in original):

> the single most important factor to have emerged from this survey of style manuals is the remarkable degree of consistency that exists as regards the general principles and main features of academic discourse in English. Despite the differences in target readership, genre and discipline, the works analysed all present a very similar picture of what academic discourse is understood to be, within the prescriptive (pedagogical) tradition.

and that it universalises one kind of academic writing (emphasised in original):

> it is clear from the emphasis upon clarity, economy, rational argument supported by evidence, caution and restraint, and the incorporation of accepted theory through referencing and

citation, that the <u>scientific paradigm</u> still dominates, even in subjects like literature, history and law [...] we inevitably conclude that academic writers in English have very little leeway as regards the way they present their findings (at least when compared with the great diversity of models found in some other countries).

Bennett goes on to question the motives underlying the need for clarity, precision and economy of style that are associated with the 'scientific paradigm'. The historical origins of English writing style, she argues, are *puritanical*, and culturally-bound, a view also held by Turner, who notes that descriptions of 'pristine prose' often draw on metaphoric collocations of 'cleanliness' and 'purity' (Turner, 2018, p. 97). However, since these origins are historical, Bennett claims, they also leave open the possibility for change (Bennett, 2009, p. 53) because they are contingent rather than necessary. And, as I intimated earlier, given the protean multilingual and multimodal landscapes that academic writings currently occupy, there may be new historical influences at play that could shift these dominant academic writing paradigms.

Marginalising cognate fields

As already mentioned, EAP as a field of research (Hyland & Shaw, 2016) draws on several cognate fields, especially Applied/Corpus Linguistics and Swalsian Genre Studies, even though textbooks may struggle to adequately keep up to date (Feak & Swales, 2013). Equally, however, it marginalises other fields, including Critical EAP, Academic Literacies and Systemic Functional Linguistics; Composition Studies; Sociology; and Education and Philosophy, which I focus on below.

Critical EAP, Academic Literacies and Systemic Functional Linguistics

Two Special Issues of the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* (S. E. Benesch, 2009; C. Coffin & J. Donohue, 2012), on Critical EAP (an advocate of rights-based and socially just pedagogies) and Academic Literacies (where writing is approached as a social practice) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (a socio-semiotic theory of language where meaning is understood to be highly content-bound) respectively, have had little uptake, especially in relation to Critical EAP (Hamp-Lyons, 2015, p. A2). Notwithstanding the relatively 'little uptake', controversies have ensued. Despite attempts to 'bring both worlds together' (Hathaway, 2015; Wingate & Tribble, 2012) or to subsume Academic Literacies, for instance, under other writing traditions such as Social Genres (Tribble, 2009), tensions between Academic Literacies and EAP endure (Lillis & Tuck, 2016, p. 37; Scott & Lillis, 2007; Tribble, 2009, p. 403; Wingate, 2012b; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). Attempts to diffuse the controversy, however, have been rebutted by Academic Literacies scholars such as Lillis and Tuck (2016, pp. 37-39), who insist their remit is ideological (meaning it is committed to ideals of inclusion and social justice) and not skills-based and text-focused:

> Rather than assume the two fields [EAP and Academic
> Literacies] can straightforwardly be combined or their
> differences collapsed (as in Wingate and Tribble, 2012), it's
> important to be aware of where convergences between EAP and
> Ac Lits [Academic Literacies] lie. The key convergence is in
> ideological orientation, signalled by the use of 'critical' EAP and
> 'literacies' in Ac Lits.

In other words, Academic Literacies explicitly aligns itself with Critical EAP pedagogies, those which "consider the overall political and social implications of their profession" (Macallister, 2016, p. 283). It does not align

itself with the literatures on Social Genres, which, according to Tribble (2009, p. 403), are also concerned with 'social implications' but which Academic Literacies theorists, claims Tribble, are "either unaware of, or fail to fully acknowledge". Feuding aside, however, Hyland (2018) reminds us that alternative approaches to EAP are not mainstream, so in this sense, they have been marginalised. However, the price EAP pays for marginalising Academic Literacies is, as discussed in Chapter 1, that it loses its focus on the *social practice* of writing.

Composition Studies and Genre Theory: learning about writing

With regards to other, more established international traditions of writing instruction, research and theory (Castello, Donahue, & Rijlaarsdam, 2012), EAP distinguishes itself, from the American field of Composition Studies (also referred to as Writing Studies and Rhetoric and Composition, or First Year Writing) (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015; Bazerman, 1988; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Russell, 2002; Tardy & Jwa, 2016) and Genre Theory (Devitt, 1996). This is mainly because EAP has evolved from the field of Applied Linguistics, unlike Composition Studies which grew around the need to help first year university students transition from school to academia (Tardy & Jwa, 2016, p. 57). Its theorisation of writing has drawn on more literary and humanities-inspired fields such as literary criticism, rhetoric and English studies, aligning it more closely to Academic Literacies than to EAP (Ding & Bruce, 2017, pp. 78-80).

For historical reasons (Russell, 2002), US Composition Studies embraced a more process and activity-oriented approach to written communication revealing the "tangible ways in which learning to write within a discipline involves much more than learning particular forms or vocabularies but

rather relates to socially preferred ways of knowing and acting" (Tardy & Jwa, 2016, p. 61). So much so, that recent trends in Composition Studies are increasingly focusing on teaching students *about* writing, the assumption being that teaching students *to* write academically is potentially self-defeating. This is because of the "the impossibility of teaching a universal academic discourse" (Downs & Wardle, 2007, p. 552) and of "teaching genres out of context" given that writing is a disciplinary activity that requires a purpose, or 'exigence' (Wardle, 2009, p. 767). EAP does not provide this exigence because it exists to serve the purposes of other disciplines, not to be a discipline in its own right with its own purposes. Similar arguments are advanced by Williams (2016, p. 132), for whom the "goal of teaching writing in university must be to develop students' abilities to negotiate unfamiliar writing situations", echoing claims made by Huckin (2003).

What many in the American field of Composition Studies argue is that since genres are 'forms of social knowledge that make sense to those who create them and use them' they cannot be taken out of context (Wardle, 2009, p. 768). Moreover, since teachers of academic writing are unlikely to be knowledgeable of every academic genre, even if they are familiar with studies that have identified what students are required to write at university, it is hard to know what a general academic writing course should select and prioritise. One answer provided by Wardle (2017) is that students be taught general principles about writing and what it means to be an author so that they can critically transfer knowledge, rather than skills, to other contexts. This would avoid the 'rigid' and 'inappropriate' application of rules from one context to another and would educate

students in a reflective and mindful approach to writing whereby they notice what they read and infer patterns rather than rules.

One of the writing scholars who has shaped the field of Composition Studies is blogger and author Andrea Lunsford, an advocate of multimodal approaches to writing, writing for social media, and collaborative writing. Her approach is practice-oriented in the sense that it looks at what and how students are already writing. Rather than imposing genres and modalities on students, Lunsford's approach is to enable students to bring their genres to bear and to see themselves as authors. This is because the digital world is open to all and everybody is writing themselves into it, meaning that their literacies are being continually exercised. This in turn impacts on academic writing choices, which for Lunsford et al. (2013), require ways of analysing and organising arguments that are easily overlooked in EAP, for example, the ways in which authors weave images into their texts for rhetorical and argumentative effect (2013, pp. 305-324).

Indeed, rhetoric plays a central role in the American approach to writing, but as far as I know, is not a feature of EAP textbooks or literatures. In Rhetoric and Composition Studies it is explored critically for its meaning-making potential rather than suspiciously as the art of deceit (following the tradition of Plato's *Phaedrus*). As Roberts-Miller (2017) reminds us, even seemingly 'simple' and 'plain' sentences like the 'cat is on the mat' are stylistic choices, even 'moral' ones, since the sentence may not even be true (in the sense that there may be 'no cat on the mat') (2017, p. 8):

> philosophers of language insisted that language works by sentences having propositional content—"the cat is on the mat"—which can be expressed in various ways. Rhetoric is what we layer onto the proposition. Or, as the old saying goes,

"Rhetoric is clothing on the idea." In an Edenic world, we would all wander around naked, and we would all simply and clearly speak our thoughts; rhetoric is something we must have in this fallen world.

Being plain and simple, naked and transparent does not guarantee the truth of a claim. Yet, when EAP aspires to a discourse of transparency and objectivity which, as Bennett has argued (2015), is a trope (since all linguistic propositions are rhetorical), it misleads students into thinking their writing can be 'objective'.

The relationship between Composition Studies and Genre Studies is a close and creative one. Although EAP has devoted much attention to genre through the work of John Swales (1990) and Ian Bruce (2008), in particular, it has had a tendency to portray genre as restrictive (L. Flowerdew, 2000; Hamilton & Pitt, 2009; Nesi & Gardner, 2012) rather than generative (Gröppel-Wegener & English, 2018; Tardy, 2016). Or, at least, the pedagogic/textbook uptake has foregrounded a restrictive conceptualisation of genre because of the way that it promotes 'templates' (Nesi and Gardner, 2012, p. 2) and 'cookie cutters' (Bazerman, 1998, p. 8).

From a philosophical perspective, too, templates are problematic (Yun & Standish, 2018) because 'thinking and understanding', not only 'accuracy and discipline', need to be the focus of a writing programme. Yun and Standish (2018) argue that writing instruction needs to allow thinking to emerge. They make explicit reference to EAP (2018, p. 129) and the internationalisation of UK universities, arguing for the 'exercise of imagination' to be cultivated (2018, p.130):

> If the university is to think, it should not rest comfortably with practices of this kind [template learning]. Writing templates or rubrics of standard research procedure can become constraints on disciplined thought itself. For disciplined exploration of the territory of enquiry often requires not railway tracks of procedure but trekking back and forth across an open, less well-charted landscape, gradually revealing the lie of the land.
>
> Even in technical subjects there is a need not simply to rely on standard techniques and procedures but to be ready to approach the problem from a different point of view. A readiness for this and the exercise of imagination constitute a more rigorous disciplining of thought.

An alternative approach to 'railway track' approaches to writing is one where choices are available to writers who are seen as "[s]ituated at the intersection between acting and being acted upon" in their textual environments (Bawarshi, 2003, p. x). This suggests that although writers operate in pre-existing genre environments, they are also agents and are able to 'act upon' existing textual structures. One way of understanding this freedom is to consider the work of Paré (2018), who questions whether the PhD thesis is fit for current research and professional purposes and urges both researchers and their supervisors to reconsider the traditional 'big book' format. Similarly, Paltridge and Starfield (2016) and Ravelli, Paltridge, Starfield, and Tuckwell (2013) paint rich ethnographies of academic writing genres and in doing so, capture the diversity of writer motivations and intentions, indicating that writers have choices.

Sociology and Philosophy: writers as agents of change

The vexed question of choice, change and creativity in academic writing is the focus of much sociological and philosophical attention, yet these fields

have been ignored in EAP. I return to this in my final chapters on Complexity (Chapter 5) and Emergence (Chapter 6), but for now it will suffice to note that since academic writing landscapes are varied and belong to complex social systems where genres enact different ways of shaping knowledge (Bazerman, 1988, 2015; Blommaert & Horner, 2017; Bruce, 2008; Christie, 1999; Devitt, 1996; English, 2011), an account is needed of the role that choice, agency and change play in establishing what makes writing academic. This is because, as I show in Chapter 3, the forms that writing takes are historically and socially contingent and, as such, open to change.

What explains this change? Writing scholars Deirdre Pratt (2011), working in the multilingual context of South African academia, and Donald Judd (2003), working in the field of composition studies in the US, have drawn on the social philosophy of critical realism (M. Archer, 1998, 2000; Bhaskar, 1979, 1989a, 1989b) to situate writing as a social practice and human science. Changes in practices are possible because of this. Very simply put, critical realism posits that social structures exist, they are real and historical, and humans are born into them. In this sense, we are determined by our environments.

However, these structures can be changed through practical, self-reflective and critical engagement. Pratt and Judd have applied critical realist theories to explain the protean nature of academic writing by showing that writing belongs to social structures within which writers have some agency, namely, the power to influence and change these structures. These structures include several institutional constraints, including those documented in Hadley (2015), who argues that EAP is part of a neoliberal higher education agenda which, to some extent, limits scope for agency. Yet, as discussed in Chapter 1 with reference to Ding and Bruce (2017), a

more hopeful note can be struck by arguing that EAP practitioners can become agents of change when they engage in scholarship (although Davis (2019) reminds us of the several institutional constraints that prevent EAP practitioners from doing research and publishing).

Change cannot occur unless we understand the structures that operate the events that lead to how things are (Bhaskar, 1989a, p. 2). Since humans are reflexive beings whose self-consciousness develops through practical action, our humanity lies in our capacity to evaluate our concerns and these concerns include the forms our writings take. Change in existing structures becomes possible when we enact our humanity (M. Archer, 2000, p. 50), including our emotions, which for Archer are "commentaries on human concerns" (*ibid,* pp. 193-221*).*

By ignoring social theories on structure and agency, EAP marginalises ways of thinking that could challenge accommodationist and gatekeeping approaches such as Hyland's defence of EAP (Hyland, 2018).

Education and Philosophy: educating about and training to write

With its emphasis on mechanical skills at the expense of social practices, EAP betrays its marginalisation of Education and Philosophy. Widdowson (1983) has attempted to reclaim the learning purpose that language use achieves, but like Academic Literacies and Critical EAP, his ideas have had little uptake. He has argued for framing general EAP around educative purposes (as opposed to ESP, which 'trains' for disciplinary specialisms) claiming that EAP "has to be conceived of in educational terms, as a formulation of objectives which will achieve a potential" (1983, p. 6). That the aim of learning is to realise potential rather than acquire skills resonates

throughout Dewey's philosophy of education (1916, 1938), but also underpins contemporary theorising in higher education, as outlined below.

Sperlinger et al. (2018), in *Who are Universities for?*, argue that universities should be founded on social justice (2018, pp. 123-137) and prioritise access to those who have the *potential* to benefit more from a higher education (such as people who have missed out on secondary education or on a nurturing family background), rather than to those who are likely to be high achievers (based on predicted grades) (2018, p. 111). Collini (2012, p. 104) seems to suggest this, too, in *What are Universities for?* when he questions the value of university admission procedures that rely on prior school achievements (such as UK A-levels) instead of student 'potential': he claims this as part of a broader argument in favour of diversity and of framing higher education as a public good that benefits society as a whole, not just the elites. More generally, in *What is Education for?*, Biesta (2015) argues for the 'purpose' of learning to be made more explicit by drawing attention to its multidimensional characteristics. These include 'qualification' (namely, knowledge, skills and dispositions); 'socialisation' (namely, ways of being and doing with others); and 'subjectification' (where individuals learn to see themselves as subjects, rather than objects, who can take responsibility and initiatives that require active engagement).

Knowledge of such debates should be informing the field of EAP because to deny practitioners and their students opportunities to understand what kind of higher education system they are part of, could be part of and who it is for, means denying them epistemic access (Morrow, 2009; Wheelahan, 2010). Having access to such knowledge would enable them to make informed choices about the kind of higher education they want, allowing them to shape it by engaging in practices that reflect their concerns. These

practices include choices about the kinds of academic writing they wish to communicate through.

Standardising to a mono-culture

A further implication of EAP's reductionist approach to writing is that it standardises to a mono-culture of writing that looks the same regardless of who has written it and why. This has broader consequences, including socio-cultural, educational, epistemic, linguistic, economic and ethical repercussions. I now explain these in turn.

Socio-cultural consequences

Advocates of multimodal approaches to literacy draw attention to how conventions both endure and are flouted chronotopically (i.e. in time and space) across fluid and changing social contexts. They remind us that norms and conventions change, and that universalising standards and rules is at odds with multiculturalism (Björkvall, 2016, p. 28):

> [...] in unstable social environments conventions disappear [...]
> convention is actually an expression, which comes from a period
> of relative semiotic stability where the exercise of power, not
> normally even noticed because it is very subtle, leads to a kind of
> agreement to do things in a certain way. But in a deeply
> multicultural world – a hugely diverse world – there are no such
> agreements. And, as you know, in Anglophone PhDs in many
> places you can now use the first person, 'I', which you could not
> do 25 years ago. So, what is that about? It is another symptom,
> or rather an effect, of those kinds of social changes.

Pedagogically, there is a commonly-held assumption that conventions are necessary and that second language learners need to 'learn the rules before they can break them'. This forms the basis of what has been called the

'deficit model' of academic writing (by Bennett, 2009, p. 51; Hathaway, 2015, p. 507; Turner, 2004, p. 99; Wingate & Tribble, 2012, p. 491). This model often tells writers they must 'take themselves out of their writing and never use 'I' (Parker, 2017; Rodríguez, 2017) or that the five-paragraph essay (Bernstein & Lowry, 2017) sets the standard for what counts as academic writing (see Sowton, 2016, whose model 'academic' texts are five-paragraph essays).

The Aristotelian-Quintilian five-part argument essay has distinguished roots. These can be traced to classical (spoken and then written) rhetoric where what counted as *argument* in the public fora of ancient Rome was narrowed down to five parts: the *exordium* (the introduction), the *narratio* (the events in question), the *confirmatio* (the argument/claims), the *refutatio* (the counter-argument/claims), and the *peroratio* (summary) (Andrews 2010, p. 37). This model has clearly stood the test of time, but as I show in Chapter 4, arguments take many forms, especially when expressed multimodally.

Interestingly, and in relation to the question of what makes writing academic, the familiar form of the five-paragraph essay is a sign of 'bad student writing' for US Composition Studies "whereas in the EAP program the same form is considered 'an extremely serviceable template'" (Tardy & Jwa, 2016, p. 59). Similarly, Warner (2018) sets out to 'kill' the five-paragraph essay on the grounds that it encourages students to 'perform as writers' rather than to write authentically (2018, pp. 6-8).

We now begin to see that since the rules themselves are contested, uncritical assumptions about 'learning them before breaking them' are unfounded.

Tardy and Jwa explain the predilection for having standard models as follows: "students and teachers [...] desire a tool that can quickly and easily be applied to immediate writing needs" (2016, p. 59). While the desire for standardisation and applicability may be the prerogative of commodified service industries whose 'products' need to provide immediate gratification, this is not appropriate in a teaching and learning environment, such as higher education: the 'learn the rules before you can break them' is a comforting and seductive meme that panders to popular conservative understandings of education, but that also whitewashes critical engagement with what these rules are, who sets them and why, which should be applied, when and by whom.

For example, Turner (2018, pp. 99-100) reminds us of inconsistencies in the advice given by academic style guide books themselves, which should immediately alert us to why rules need to be critically engaged with. On the one hand, guide books tell writers to avoid colourful words and the use of the personal pronoun 'I'; on the other, they encourage the use of vivid language and avoidance of the passive (Sword, 2012). Similarly, as shown in C. E. Ball and Loewe (2017), the very existence of unqualified, or 'bad', writing advice should suffice to undermine uncritical acceptance of what the rules of good writing are. Because judgments of what counts as good writing vary, the intuitive appeal of 'we need to know rules before we can break them' seems to flounder, even though, as Hayot (2014, p. 80) cautions, it may work at a broader or more 'abstract' level of advice:

> The purpose of abstraction is to eliminate clutter [...]. The
> somewhat violent clarifications [about definitions and norms]
> aim to make the process of academic writing easier to
> understand. You should feel free to follow these lessons and

rules as they were, for now, norms of some kind. But the final rule is ... break the rules! The best writing is the best because it upends standards in some way [...].

As long as higher education remains dependent on (and reduced to) monolingual (English) and monomodal (language) proficiency and as long as we continue to measure academic success (almost) exclusively against language proficiency, then we will necessarily judge students who come to university with diverse repertoires and capabilities (multilingual, multimodal, dyslexic, autistic, artistic, social and cultural) as 'deficient'. If language is an expression of socio-cultural identity (Evans, 2014; Holmes, 1992), then by insisting on linguistic homogeneity, we are asking for 'cultural and social' homogeneity. And by asking everybody to speak and write in the same way, just as was once the case with RP (Received Pronunciation), we are creating the conditions for a homogenised academy that communicates via a mono-literacy.

When grammatical and linguistic accuracy become the focus of rule-learning, controversies ignite around *which* standards and *whose* standards of 'good' English and writing are being set. Turner has likened discussions about what counts as 'good writing' (an elusive quality that she calls 'writtenness') to debates about what counts as good pronunciation. But unlike the socio-politics and sociolinguistics of what counts as correct pronunciation and why, the socio-politics of *writtenness* have not received the same attention (2018, p. 7):

> writtenness is a cultural ideal, whose values are implicit rather than explicitly espoused. Indexed by evaluative tropes such as 'polished prose' [...] and assumptions of precision, accuracy and stylistic elegance, it is saturated with ideological and cultural

value. As such, it is similar to the position of RP (received pronunciation) in spoken language. However, unlike RP, whose ideological resonance has been extensively commented upon in sociolinguistics [...], the ideologies, social identifications and linguistic assumptions of written language have generated much less concern.

Allowing rules and conventions to establish themselves uncritically is problematic because academic practices are rarely homogenous because students, and the knowledge they bring, are diverse (Thesen & Cooper, 2013, p. 4):

> 'How to Books' on academic writing [...] tend to over-generalise, over-simplify, de-skill students [...] implicitly and explicitly perpetuating a restricted and deficit model of student competence and language use. The Guides [...] tend to focus on how students can imitate existing conventions based on massively problematic assumptions about student homogeneity and the stability of the disciplines.

Deficit models signal that the knowledge which students bring with them is inadequate and needs to be replaced with the 'correct' conventions and rules so that the learner can be 'socialised' into their academic community (Lea & Street, 1998). Since the "overall aim of an EAP course is to help students towards membership of their chosen academic community" (Alexander, Argent, & Spencer, 2008, p. 80), the assumption is that student 'deficits' need eliminating. There are, however, several reasons to *not* adopt deficit approaches.

For example, the deficit view has been challenged on the grounds that in a global (super)diverse higher educational context, *diversity*, and not homogeneity, is the norm (Blommaert & Horner, 2017). This diversity

extends to academic writings. Specifically, diversity is manifest in the varieties of English academic discourse, disciplinary diversity, multilingualism and multiculturalism that are an established part of the academic landscape. It is hard to imagine how such diversity can thrive if conforming to the conventions of a monolingual and monocultural university remains the focus of academic writing practices (Canagarajah, 2002, 2013b, 2013c; Lillis & Curry, 2010a; Vertovec, 2007). Moreover, diversity, it has been argued, provides higher education with *opportunities* rather than *constraints* in so far as it allows the academy to shift from a 'difference-as-deficit' model to a 'difference-as-resource' *consciousness* (Cox, 2014, pp. 303-304). This shift ensures students can bring their multiliteracies and identities to the classroom and create new ways of thinking, writing and representing knowledge (Thesen & Cooper, 2013).

Despite the recognition that linguistic and cultural diversity is enriching, it remains "a dividing factor when textual norms and directions for student writing are in question" (Kruse, 2006, p. 38). This means that academic prose continues to be "a massive impersonal machine, where individual quirks are ironed out in the quest for uniformity and where there is no place for the 'personal voice'" (Bennett, 2009, p. 43). For academic literacies, this points to a problematic disjunct in how universities portray themselves (Scott & Lillis, 2007, p. 8):

> whilst [...] diversity is rhetorically celebrated in mission statements, diversity as a fundamental dimension to communicative practices is often viewed as problematic.

This further echoes Andrews' Part 1 opening quotation on the way universities 'militate against' their own thinking (2010, p. 53).

Epistemic-cognitive consequences

Turner also challenges the conflation of 'good writing' with 'good thinking', a conflation she describes as 'ontological complicity' (2018, p. 181). She argues that this complicity indexes a "culture of expectation surrounding what written texts should look like" (2018, p. 147) and that it excludes writers, especially second language writers, whose style and prose differ from the English academic standard of 'good' writing.

Turner's views on what counts as 'good' writing echo those of Peters who claims that "within academia [...] there are competing standards of what constitutes 'good writing' that refer to a set of values and assumptions on the relation of language, truth and logic that go largely unquestioned" (2008, p. 828) . Specifically, Peters has in mind the writings of French philosopher Jacques Derrida, who was deemed unworthy of an honorary degree in Philosophy - by philosophers trained in the analytic tradition of Cambridge University - for not meeting the 'accepted standards of clarity and rigour' of 'normal and universal' writing.

While it could be argued that Derrida's writing belonged to the French tradition of critical theory, sharing its style with his contemporaries and therefore not a candidate for comparison with his British contemporaries, when translated into English, it continues to elicit derision because of its 'lack of clarity'. This suggests that 'clarity' in academic writing is being held to a universal standard that transcends context and purpose.

However, as Peters rightly goes on to note:

> 'clarity' in philosophical discourse also has its history and [...]
> 'normal forms of academic scholarship' have become
> 'normalised' or institutionalized and are in the process of

changing again, especially in response to the rise of the electronic journal. The use of 'normal' here betrays a politics of philosophy writing and a deep history of the politics of writing in philosophy that still embraces the false dichotomy of Analytic and Continental philosophy in its material forms and perpetuates the myth of a universal form of writing and the dream of a universal form of language called philosophy.

Similar ideas were debated in a 2015 seminar organised by the Philosophy of Education Society (Fig. 11). The seminar questioned whether writing can ever be 'too clear'.

Below, I report *verbatim* some of the claims made at this talk by the panellists, all of whom are philosophers and educationalists (Phillips, Biesta, Smith, Masschelein, & Hobbs, 2015), including their responses to questions from the audience. My intention is to highlight that debates about standard forms of writing are ongoing and contentious in higher education generally (not just EAP). This is further evidenced in Standish (2018), who reflects on philosophy's 'ancient quarrel' about 'banishing the poets' and the extent to which literary and poetic forms of writing are 'rigorous and scientific'.

The uncritical assumption that academic writing can and should always be 'clear and precise' was debated in the following terms (from my seminar notes):

Figure 11: 'Can writing ever be too clear?' PESGB seminar, UCL/IoE, London, 2015. Panel from left to right: Professors Denis Phillips, Gert Biesta, Richard Smith, Jan Masschelein and Angie Hobbs (photo Julia Molinari, 2015)

The desire for clarity is an immature desire: it assumes that the world can be clear

Clarity is about the conditions for understanding

Clarity is in the eye of the beholder

I want these people (Kant, Hegel, etc.) to write even if they don't have a clear toolkit, even if the writing is opaque

If you want to connect with people emotionally then you need poetry, and lack of clarity. This helps you to inspire, not just get students to write down bullet points

There is no moral obligation to be clear, but there is a logical obligation to be so

Clarity is a political trope to include and exclude (with reference to Derrida)

Clarity helps others see what you can see, because policy-makers are idiots and philosophers of education need to help them understand that

If Wittgenstein had been my student, I would have failed him

No journal has ever published someone for being obscure

There is some room for obscurity, but NOT for our ego or to keep knowledge to ourselves

If we had obscurity, it would engage discussion and unsettle students (an audience member)

Confusion is the first step towards wisdom

I'd be pedagogically more excited about confusion and obscurity

My understanding of Derrida is that he chose his writing style to fit his content. It was a case of knowledge shaping the written form (Bazerman, 1998), of the dog wagging its tail. Had he worked with 'cookie cutter templates', allowing the tail to wag the dog instead, he might not have achieved his linguistic project. This project consisted in developing a 'science of writing' (via his 1967 trilogy of *Speech and Phenomena, Of Grammatology* and *Writing and Difference* (1973; 2001; 1976) to show the limits of language (Wittgenstein similarly shaped the forms of his writing, as aphorisms, to fit his philosophy of language). This forms the basis of Derrida's rejection of Western logocentrism, which he considers to be ill-founded because it is based on the incommensurability of phonemes and graphemes with what they stand for (or refer to). Derrida's concept of *dissémination* indexes this. It shows the ways in which meanings cannot be reduced to the sounds, phonemes, words and grammar that generate them: it signals the "non-reducible plurality of *different* understandings of the *same* text" (Glendinning, 2011, pp. 57, emphasis in original). Meanings thus become 'dispersed', 'deferred' and 'differed/differentiated' from their

physical materiality and form. So, for example, the meaning of *pharmakon* (a medicine/drug/poison), discussed in *Of Grammatology*, cannot be reduced to its phonetic or graphic materiality. Its meaning is both *different* from its form but also *deferred* from it, because to establish what it means, we need to appeal to its etymology and context of use, not its form.

Trying to explain this incommensurability led Derrida to create several neologisms, including the word *différance* (with an 'a') to capture the synchronicity of meaning as both 'different' and 'deferred'. However, using language to show its limits is problematic. This is why it requires a '*sous-rature*', a graphic ruse of *erasure* that allows Derrida (and Heidegger before him) to deconstruct (Derrida's term for 'critiquing' and 'analysing') a concept (like *being*) without actually referring to it because by referring to it, we presuppose its meaning in advance. But we cannot presuppose the meaning of the very thing ~~being~~ (how '*sous-rature*' is represented graphically) deconstructed (Derrida & Spivak, 1976, pp. xv-xviii). Derrida's philosophy is rooted in the metaphysics of *being*, in trying to understand the nature of *what is* without invoking the very thing *that is*, i.e. *being*. His metaphysics evolves from the phenomenologies of Husserl and Heidegger, whose philosophies centred around what it means 'to be'. Derrida extended their disquisitions to language and writing and mobilised metaphors ('trace') and neologisms ('différance') to differ and defer his own linguistic tools to refer to the un-referable. This is why his writings are so difficult to penetrate and require extraordinary levels of reader concentration. But this doesn't mean they aren't 'clear': it simply means they are difficult because of the knowledge they are dealing with.

So, returning to the vexed question of what 'clarity' means in academic writing. It is a concept that rests on 'unquestioned assumptions about the

relation of truth and logic to language', as Peters has argued. If we read Derrida in the knowledge of what he was trying to do and how he came to be doing it, then his writing is clear. What is unclear is how he could have done otherwise. When one of the panellists said *I want these people (Kant, Hegel, etc.) to write even if they don't have a clear toolkit, even if the writing is opaque*, she was referring to the fact that certain knowledge, including 'difficult' knowledge, like understanding the nature of language, and certain ways of thinking and approaching knowledge would be lost if we standardised writing to a single form. This is because 'objective and impersonal prose', for example, may not have allowed Hegel, Kant or Derrida to say what they have said.

Training, not educating

Deficit models have negative educational and academic repercussions because they risk eclipsing prior knowledge, which in so-called 'progressive' education is valued (Russell, 2002, p. 74). A progressive education is one in which learners are not "perceived [...] as empty vessels, ready to be filled with new knowledge" (Shaughnessy, 1998, p. 3) but one in which learning is viewed "as a constant and often troubling reformulation of the world [that encompasses] new knowledge" rather than "a steady flow of truth into a void" (*ibid*). The 'flow of truth into a void' is more reminiscent of a project to train, not educate.

In his book *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, which is associated with progressive and secular instruction (as opposed to authoritarian and religious), John Dewey defines education as "the reconstruction or reorganisation of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of

subsequent experience" (Dewey, 1938, p. 76). If EAP wants to fulfil its higher educational ambition of helping students "understand their disciplines and [...] successfully navigate their learning" (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002, p. 1) then, based on a Deweyan understanding of education, recognition is needed of the experiences they bring with them. These include their past and present literacies, the academic knowledge they have already and their agencies, understood as the freedom to act (Schlosser, 2015) and to choose (Sartre, 1967).

In this regard, Dewey is concerned with distinguishing education from training. Whilst this distinction is contentious and can become something of a 'red herring', leading to hard and fast binaries that are not always appropriate, the distinction in contemporary debates about EAP is relevant to the extent that skills tend to be associated with training and practices with eduation (as I discuss below).

Dewey argues that training is the proper term for describing what we ask of (non-human) animals. Education, on the other hand, is what is proper to human beings (1938, p. 13). Training is the blind response to a *stimulus* whereas education involves mental acts that respond to *meanings* (1938, p. 29). Training is 'less intellectual or educative' and can be understood as follows (1938, pp.64-65):

> the more specialized the reaction, the less is the skill acquired in practicing and perfecting it transferable to other modes of behaviour. According to the orthodox theory of formal discipline, a pupil in studying his spelling lesson acquires, besides ability to spell those particular words, an increase of power of observation, attention and recollection which may be employed whenever these powers are needed. As a matter of

fact, the more he confines himself to noticing and fixating the forms of words, irrespective of connection with other things (such as the meaning of the words, the context in which they are habitually used, the derivation and the classification of the verbal form, etc.) the less likely he is to acquire the ability which can be used for anything *except* the mere noting of verbal visual forms.

A similar point is made in Warner, who, in discussing the purpose of education, talks about the ways in which 'deep learning' allows students "to extend something they've encountered in one situation to another situation, even when those situations may not obviously be related" (2018, pp. 127-128).

If we apply Dewey's reasoning to EAP, then when we over-specialise and focus on forms and conventions, we are training students rather than educating them. By *training* to write academically, we may be limiting students' ability to notice and make broader connections, such as how words that fall outside of academic word lists are used and how those that fall within it are not. Equating writing with a set of standardised skills rests on the assumption that these can be transferred to any context. However, this assumption has problematic implications (Law, 2004, p. 6):

Regularities and standardisations are incredibly powerful tools but they set limits. Indeed, that is part of their (double-edged) power. And they set even firmer limits when they try to orchestrate themselves hegemonically into purported coherence.

Similarly, Dewey warns against the dangers of foregrounding routines and skills in discussions about education claiming that these lead to 'ineptitude'

rather than understanding meanings and making connections (Dewey, 1938, p. 78):

> Routine action, action which is automatic, may increase skill to do a *particular* thing. In so far, it might be said to have an educative effect. But it does not lead to new perceptions of bearings and connections; it limits rather than widens the meaning horizon. And since the environment changes and our way of acting has to be modified in order to successfully keep a balanced connection with things, an isolated uniform way of acting becomes disastrous at some critical moment. The vaunted "skill" turns out to be gross ineptitude.

Dewey was writing at a time when America was engaging in fierce debates about how to educate children (Hildebrand, 2018). The traditionalists, or 'old' educationalists, objected to Dewey's child-centred, liberal and democratic approach to education which valued the *experiences* that learners brought with them by focusing on their *current* learning development more than on preparing them for their *future* working lives (Dewey, 1938). However, *contra* Dewey, there is a sense in which some routine is needed in developing specific skill sets (such as playing musical scales) because it can lead to creative practice. In the case of EAP, it can help students gain some knowledge of future academic writing requirements. Nevertheless, Dewey's claims remain relevant as warnings against the tendencies, reported in Chapter 1, of modern-day EAP to develop skills at the expense of practices.

If EAP were to educate *about* writing by explaining the diversity of writing genres and practices rather than by teaching *to* write some conventional forms of academic writing at the expense of others, then it might avoid the

mechanistic 'routine actions that limit' the meaning-making potential that emerges from engaging with a far broader range of academic texts. In this regard, both Hyland and Jenkins, discussed earlier, have signalled a mismatch between what EAP might be preaching in its scholarly publications and what it is actually teaching in its classrooms. For example, although Nesi and Gardner (2012) describe a wide range of academic genres, they also single out the academic essay as being the most prevailing. This has likely compounded EAP's privileging of developing a skill in 'a particular thing', namely the academic essay, over and above other genres. That Nesi and Gardner have also claimed that they are offering templates (2012, p. 2) for teachers to follow, further betrays an acceptance of the standardising role that EAP plays within the academy. This standardising role ignores the many forms that argumentation takes and narrows the modes and genres needed to represent reality (see, for example, Thomson (2018c) for an overview of literatures on ethnographic representations of educational and anthropological phenomena).

In this sense, EAP narrows educational development because it generally tends to focus on conventions and students' 'future' academic selves. Hamp-Lyons' *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* editorial broadly glosses over students' 'past and present' academic selves (2015, p. A2) by not considering the views held by those who tend to frame writing socio-semiotically and as part of a broader educational experience that cares about and integrates students' previous and current literacies, as in Wardle (2017), Williams (2017) and Parnell (2012). EAP thus projects itself as a perpetrator of functional transferable skills continually aimed at future 'target situations' (Ding & Bruce, 2017, p. 97):

EAP as an offshoot of ESP is a more specifically needs-driven approach to ELT. The notion of the gap between the *present situation analysis* (where students are now) and the *target situation analysis*—what students are required to know in the future in terms of academic language knowledge and skills—is an important concept that drives much of EAP and strongly influences pedagogy. Therefore, pedagogic goals in EAP tend to centre on the types of conventionalised communication—spoken and written—that students must process and master in university contexts.

However, nurturing present literacies is a way to shape the future since it is the students who will be inhabiting their own future 'target situations' long after their teachers. Students' future needs and their capabilities (Robeyns, 2016) could therefore be better tended to by seeing past and previous literacies as conducive to learning and not as 'interference' (Bennett, 2010). The EAP student-writer could be reconceptualised as someone who brings writing experience, knowledge and literacy to the classroom so that new threshold concepts (Deverson, 2017) about what makes writing academic can be introduced and old ones updated. This understanding of the writer-learner who *brings* experience and who is not a *tabula rasa* echoes a Deweyan philosophy of education which is concerned with tending to learner's *present* knowledge and needs so that they can cope with the *unknowns* of the future (Dewey, 1938, p. 56):

> It is not a question of whether education should prepare for the future. If education is growth, it must progressively realise present possibilities, and thus make individuals better fitted to cope with later requirements.

An alternative EAP approach, as advocated by Turner (2018), and C. E. Ball and Loewe (2017), writing from a UK and US perspective, respectively, might be to lead, shape, engage with and challenge the values of dominant genres and of 'bad writing advice' and to ensure the voices of a broad range of writing scholars are heard across higher education. This knowledge might reassure those who lament a sense of loss or nostalgia for vanishing 'values' and 'standards' in writing practices because it would provide evidence that literacies are *wide-ranging* as opposed to *declining* and afford *diverse* rather than *waning* academic values (Hamp-Lyons, 2011, pp. 3-4, my emphasis):

> Since young people are creating text more, rather than less, in this time of SMSing and 'tweeting', how can literacy be declining? Does the problem lie in our (ie., academics) beliefs about what "literacy" is? Do we need to change our vales [*sic*], expectations, or standards? And, how does this dilemma relate to the specific issues of English for Academic Purposes? *It is clear that the potential of modern forms of electronically-mediated interaction is barely acknowledged in most EAP courses: this is a failure we may come to regret.* As Ken and I wrote in our first Editorial [...] "What is clear is that we need to understand the changes that these new genres imply for academic literacy practices and to either address them or be left behind by them." (Hyland & Hamp-Lyons, 2002, p. 9).

While it is reassuring to read that diverse literacies should not constitute a threat to EAP and its conventions, it is somewhat disconcerting to note what Hamp-Lyons' own understandings of literacy practices betray.

Firstly, she seems to downplay the importance of social media in modern society and its growing popularity amongst academics (Carrigan, 2016). And

secondly, Hamp-Lyons has placed 'tweeting' in inverted commas, as if to suggest that it is not a real or proper literary phenomenon. Such comments betray a narrowing of the academic writing remit because they exclude the broader academic literacies landscape and further indicate how the academy militates against its own practices (Andrews, 2010).

Ethical consequences

Ignoring the background literacies, capabilities and agencies of individual writers also raises concerns about the fairness of EAP practices (Matthews, 2014):

> Global neoliberal trends "[...] have had astonishing success in creating markets for things whose commodification was once almost unimaginable: drinking water, body parts and social welfare among them" (Connell, 2013, p. 100). It is within this broader economic and political climate that the specifics of EAP commodification have attracted the attention of and also generated debate in the media by raising concerns around the ethics of taking money from foreign students who already pay significant amounts for their British degrees.

The commodification of EAP (Ding & Bruce, 2017; Hadley, 2015) may also be having implications for fairness towards and inclusiveness of a diverse student population. The requirement that all students learn dominant modes of English literacy is, arguably, unfair to mature students who have become unaccustomed to academic writing (Grove, 2016); to students with a range of learning needs and backgrounds (Sperlinger et al., 2018); to academic writers who communicate or who might want to communicate and publish in English as a *lingua franca*; and to students who cannot afford the high costs of learning English: entry exams such as IELTS and

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presessional EAP courses, and the burgeoning textbook industry that supports them, are expensive.

Turner (2018, p. 134) further points out that students who fail their language proficiency tests, such as IELTS, and by implication EAP courses inspired by the IELTS format, may be able and intelligent writers, but "[f]rom the perspective of writing teachers such students are being denied the opportunity to develop their academic writing, as well as their studies".

Charging for an education is also at odds with the educational values of social inclusion, such as those reported in the *Alternative White Paper: in Defence of Public Higher Education* (2011), a document signed by leading academics responding to a government White Paper on Higher Education. The Alternative White Paper claimed that "Public universities have a social mission, contributing to the amelioration of social inequality, which is the corollary of the promotion of social mobility".

The lack of attention that most EAP writing instruction has for diversity, including income and social, may have consequences for what A. King (2010, p. 256), writing from a critical realist and humanist perspective, calls the 'dignity of the self'. Indeed, according to Sir Alan Tuckett (2013), President of the International Council for Adult Education and formerly Chief Executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (at the time of writing), international widening participation calls for a reflection on what the 'social mission' of a global university is, what values of social justice it is promoting and who it is including and excluding. Currently, it is mainly the elite international student body who has access to UK HE, which raises parallel concerns to those voiced by Lillis (2001) in reporting on the challenges posed by national widening participation. Lillis

specifically reports on the difficulties faced by non-traditional entrants to the system in both accessing and then acculturating to the academic discourse: by endorsing one-size-fits-all EAP programmes that 'serve' institutional norms and generate profit, we risk excluding many international students who do not have the means and resources to pay for an international education.

Economic consequences

An approach to academic writing that reduces it to skills in linguistic accuracy and genre templates fosters a culture of commodification (Turner, 2018, pp. 190-191), where profits can be made from writing essays. This is because templates can be replicated and reproduced, copied and sold, downloaded and programmed algorithmically (Collins, 2019; Introna, 2106) or even generated entirely by computer, as fakes (Labbé & Labbé, 2012; Van Noorden, 2014). The use of essay mills (Aitchison, 2017; Medway, Roper, & Gillooly, 2018; Peters, 2018) and the occurrence of academic writing hoaxes (Alvesson et al., 2017; Cuthbert, 2018) are symptoms of an academic writing culture that readily relies on the surface features of a genre in order to deem that a text is *bona fide* academic. I discuss hoaxes further in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 in relation to 'academicness', but for now, my intention is to link their existence to standardisation.

Russell (2002) also deals with plagiarism and ghostwriting, a centuries-old blight that was already firmly established in the mediaeval university (Rüegg & Ridder-Symoens, 1992-2011, p. 376, Vol. 2). Russell explains how this area of activity became lucrative (p. 88):

> infamous "literary gentlemen" began selling papers to students
> nationwide (...). The term paper-industry grew up with higher

education, and today there are several companies offering a sophisticated array of "research assistance". One Chicago-based company, for example, boasts a catalog of over 16,000 papers, indexed not only by number of pages, footnotes, and references, but also by grade, level, high school to graduate school.

One possible explanation for why writing services became, and remain, lucrative is that many people were excluded from the elite inner circle of excellence and therefore received inconsistent writing instruction. A second explanation might be that, as the genre of academic writing, in the guise of the research genre, began to standardise into predictable and recurring patterns, it became easier to create templates that students could fill in or copy or buy because writing manifested certain mechanical features that were easily measurable (Russell, 2002, p. 91; cf 100):

> The term 'paper' became fundamentally another means of acquiring and displaying factual knowledge, not the means of entering the rhetorical universe of a discipline, and the formal features of the genre reflected that function: the emphasis on mechanical correctness of form, on length of text, and on the number of sources.

Such mechanical standardisation is a far cry from the kind of writing that Les Back asks us to imagine in the opening quotation to this chapter.

Conclusion

A skills-based prescriptive and atomistic conception of writing misses opportunities for harnessing learners' capabilities and agencies and for developing the educational scope of teaching *about* writing. The trouble with approaching academic writing as an 'autonomous and transparent' set of skills that can be reduced to 'academic' vocabulary or specific paragraph

structures is that it has far-reaching implications. These include the universalising of an academic discourse that is 'objective and impersonal', monomodal and monolingual; the marginalising of cognate fields such as sociology, philosophy and education; and the standardising to a mono-culture that militates against the international aspirations of modern universities.

The next chapter turns to the history of writing to showcase the contingency of the forms we privilege.

Why It Is

whether a person says that a thing is or becomes, he must say that it is or becomes to or of or in relation to something else; but he must not say or allow anyone else to say that anything is or becomes absolutely: such is our conclusion (Plato, 360 BCE 2014, available online)

Chapter 3- Writing's origins and ideologies

the evidence has begun to accumulate that our beliefs about literacy are a blend of fact and supposition, in a word a mythology, a selective way of viewing the facts that not only justifies the advantages of the literate but also assigns the failings of the society, indeed of the world, to the illiterate (D. Olson, 1994, p. 2).

Introduction

In Part 1, I argued that EAP writing is not approached multimodally or multilingually, which means it misses opportunities for representing knowledge. Instead, EAP universalises its own version of writing as a stable, rules-driven skill, not a protean social practice.

What follows is a historical sketch that highlights the complex ways in which writing is a practice. I overview the difficulty of defining it and, by extension, of fixing what then makes it 'academic'. I do this to show that how writing becomes conceptualised, in both EAP and in UK skills-driven academia more generally (Collini, 2012), is historically contingent and could be otherwise. This prepares for Chapter 4, where I exemplify how else academic writings could be.

After some introductory remarks on why I use history to explain current practices, I suggest that the orthodox conflation of writing with the alphabet and with cognition is misguided and, because of this, writing should be re-positioned as *one of several* modes for communicating and thinking. I then evidence how and why academic knowledge has been communicated in diverse ways with the intention of suggesting it could change further. Finally, I refer to how the Enlightenment scientific

paradigm and European colonial practices have imposed their own forms of literacy to the exclusion of others. This serves to remind us that writing practices are also ideological (Henderson, 2018; Lillis & Tuck, 2016; Russell, 2002; Street, 1984; Turner, 2010, 2018).

Using history to understand the present

History shows it could all have been different. In his *Representations of the Intellectual* (which document his 1993 BBC Reith Lectures), Palestinian critical theorist, secular humanist, historian and intellectual Edward Said (1994) claims that history, not God or similarly unaccountable entities, allows us to see why things are the way they are and helps us reflect on how they could have been. In Said's thinking, humanism is a response to social injustices and is a way of 'speaking truth to power' (1994, p. xiv). In this sense, 'humans are the measures of all things' and can therefore (Said, 1994, p. 45):

> [l]ook at situations as contingent, not as inevitable, look at them as a result of a series of historical choices made by men and women, as facts of society made by human beings, and not as natural or god-given, therefore unchangeable, permanent, irreversible.

Said identifies with the legacy of Giambattista Vico (1959 (1725, 1730, 1744, 1928)), the eighteenth century Italian professor of Rhetoric whose seminal work *La Scienza Nuova* was a response to the rational hypothetico-deductive Cartesian philosophy of the time. Vico argued against Descartes' method on the grounds that "it renders phenomena which cannot be expressed logically or mathematically as illusions" (Costelloe, 2018). Instead, Vico proposed that (Said, 1994, p. 45):

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> [t]he proper way to understand reality is to understand it as a process generated from its point of origin, which one can always locate in extremely humble circumstances. This [...] meant seeing things as having evolved from definite beginnings, as the adult human being derives from the babbling child.

History thus allows us to see connections between our present practices and those of our past. According to, *inter alia*, Foucault (1972, p. 7), critical theorist and historian, "history is one way in which a society recognises and develops a mass of documentation with which it is inextricably linked". Our social practices - of which writing is one - are also 'inextricably linked' to our past.

The history of writing similarly becomes an inseparable part of the writing itself. With knowledge of why writing practices have evolved as they have, present and future practices can involve choices and possibilities, not straightjackets. In fact, genres evolve for a host of reasons ranging from changes in technology (Dunleavy, 2014; Eisenstein, 1983; Shanahan, 2015) to conceptual shifts in which writing is no longer seen as a set of transferable skills (Scott, 2013) but as an affordance that requires the writer to perceive 'text' as both a means to an end (English, 2011) and as 'a way of doing' generated by anthropological, namely human, change (Barton & Papen, 2010). Once these reasons are visible, writers, and their teachers, are more likely to knowingly enact communicative choices because they become able to discern "what might be gained and what might be lost in changes of mode" (Bezemer and Kress, 2008, 169) and to hold rules to account.

A misguided conflation: the alphabet and cognition

Pettersson (1994) has argued, from a philological and semiological perspective, that attempts to provide core definitions of writing are

'fallacies' (1994, pp. 143-145) and therefore doomed to fail. This is because of three, interconnected reasons. Firstly, in order to decide what counts and does not count as writing, we would need to have a pre-agreed notion of what writing is before being able to recognise instances of it (1994, p. 144). But we don't, as shown below. Secondly, even if an antecedent definition were possible, countless problems would arise in trying to classify new instances that do not sit comfortably with the definition. For example, do non-alphabetical scripts such as pictorial rebuses or Chinese logographs count as 'writing' (DeFrancis, 1989; Harris, 1986)? And thirdly, by extracting a definition from what is an *ad hoc* classification based on putatively 'uniquely identifying' features (such as a mark on a surface, an alphabet or a syntax), we are, on the one hand, conflating what are contested defining properties with what is a *post hoc* classification, and on the other, begging a whole series of other questions such as 'what counts as a *mark,* a *surface,* an *alphabet,* a *syntax*'?

Writing is not just alphabetic

What has been labelled as 'writing' has varied in form, content, purpose and interpretation (D. R. Olson, 2001; Schmandt-Besserat, 2001; Woodard, 2001). Some argue that 'real writing' must be alphabetical, i.e. based on phonological representation and, over time, on being associated with *literacy* (DeFrancis, 1989; Gelb, 1952; Havelock, 1976). Others, that it must not, because what counts as writing depends on who is doing the counting and why (Coulmas, 1989; Harris, 1986, 2000).

The debate assumes that there was a key moment in time that separates non-writing communities from writing ones. It also rests on the contention of whether writing functions as a *representation* of the objects it refers to

and if so, what this representation consists of – a one-to-one pictorial correspondence with the referent or a symbolic correspondence that 'stands for' something?

The watershed moment in the debate is usually identified with the pre-writing stage of clay tokens during the early Mesopotamian era of 8000-3000 BC (R. S. Fischer, 2005). These tokens were counters shaped geometrically and functioned as recording devices to inventory goods. They *re-presented* the goods functionally, had nothing in common with speech and had no syntax. Clay tokens simply 'stood for' an object or measure, e.g. of grain, not a sound (as the alphabet is said to do). By 3000 BC, the Sumerian populations of the current Middle-East seemed to have traded in the tokens for incisions on wet clay tablets which resembled the geometric shapes of the tokens. These incisions were referred to as 'cuneiform' (from the Latin) because they were wedge-shaped. Once these cuneiform ideograms (representations of *ideas*) became directly inscribed by styli, they were said to retain the same trading and book-keeping functions as the physical tokens (Schmandt-Besserat, 2001).

In this sense, Cuneiform script came to be understood as an *extension* and *evolution* of the token system. Subsequent moves towards pictographs (pictures representing ideas, such as ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs or ancient Chinese characters) are a move away from one-to-one correspondence with an object and *numerosity* of tokens is no longer necessarily expressed. This leads into logographs, of which both ancient and modern Chinese are examples, whereby a sign *represents* a sound or word. In philology, it is generally agreed that the emergence of logograms marks the shift from the visual (a mark standing for an object) to the aural

(a mark standing for a sound) representation of language (Schmandt-Besserat, 2001, p. 16622).

Cuneiform 'writing' has come to be known as *representational,* a view of how language works that has endured over centuries and that forms the basis of many influential theories from Socrates through to modern-day structural linguistics (Harris, 2000; Harris & Taylor, 1989; Orman, 2016). It does not seem to have evolved from pictures or drawings but rather from symbols (geometric shapes) and it co-evolved with certain arithmetic notations (Damerow, 2006).

Syllabic scripts (where signs represent syllables) are concurrent (2600-2500BC) with logographic ones (R. S. Fischer, 2005, pp. 296-297). Current Indian, Japanese, Arabic and Hebrew are all examples of syllabic languages. All of these varied languages and their written representations are said to have converged in the invention of what is commonly referred to as the 'Greek' alphabet in 2000 BC. This moment is said to have marked a seismic shift in the way phonetic languages came to be represented in writing and in the way literacy subsequently developed.

More accurately, the alphabet is Proto-Sinaitic-Phoenician-Palestinian-Greek-Lebanese and dates to between 2000-1000 BC (R. S. Fischer, 2005; Goody, 1977, p. 16623; Harris, 1986, pp. 30-31; Schmandt-Besserat, 2001). Its designation as 'Greek' and has having been 'invented' at one moment in time, i.e. 2000 BC, is therefore inaccurate because of the vast geographical area where the alphabet developed and because it established itself over one thousand years.

Some historians (e.g. Harris, 1986) have shown that writing systems developed incrementally, synchronously and serendipitously alongside other writing systems. This suggests that it may be misleading to reduce all writing to 'alphabetic' writing because rather than having evolved in a linear fashion, from pictograms to ideograms to logograms, to syllabic representations and finally to the phonetic representations of the alphabet, writing systems co-existed. And during this co-existence, they are likely to have borrowed and (erroneously) copied from each other, adapting these borrowings to specific needs (R. S. Fischer, 2005, pp. 296-297).

In this sense, 'alphabetic' writing is just one of many kinds of writing.

However, the alphabet has become co-extensive with many definitions of 'writing', including our own, since it forms the basis of world writing systems such as Latin, Arabic, Hebrew and Cyrillic. Unlike pictographic and logographic forms of notation, the 'Greek' alphabet had 22 letters "each standing for a single sound of voice, which, combined in innumerable ways, brought an unprecedented flexibility to transcribe speech" (Schmandt-Besserat, 2001, p. 16624). It is this flexibility that is said to explain why alphabetic script formed the basis of so many languages.

Gradually, the assumption prevailed that writing could 'record a linguistic utterance directly' whereas a picture could not (Woodard, 2001, p. 16633):

> The term 'writing system' specifically denotes a set of symbols
> which is used for the graphic (written) recording of language
> [...]. Forms of graphic expression which may have some semantic
> content – such as cave drawings, petroglyphs, icons, and even
> sophisticated picture messages – but which do not or could not
> record a linguistic utterance directly, are thus excluded from the
> realm of *writing.*

Thus, the co-existence of pictorial and alphabetical symbols led philologists to create different categories with which to include and exclude different forms of graphic representations. These categories included distinctions between non-writing systems, as noted by Woodward, above, partial writing systems[22] and full writing systems (DeFrancis, 1989, p. 5):

> Partial writing is a system of graphic symbols that can be used to convey only some thought. Full writing is a system of graphic symbols that can be used to convey any and all thought.

To side-step the difficulty of creating categories to include and exclude what does and does not count as writing, others, such as Erard (2018), began framing writing in functional terms, not graphic ones. Erard sees writing as a 'layered' concept that has explosive effects. His conception further unsettles the idea that for writing to be classified as 'writing', it needs to be reduced to any specific form:

> I like to think of writing as a layered invention. First there's the graphic invention: the notion of making a durable mark on a surface. Humans have been doing this for at least 100,000 years [...]. Then the symbolic invention: let's make this mark different from all other marks and assign it a meaning that we can all agree on. Humans have been doing this for a long time, too. Then there's the linguistic one: let's realise that a sound, a syllable and a word are all things in the world that can be assigned a graphic symbol. This invention depends on the previous ones, and itself is made of innovations, realisations, solutions and hacks. Then comes the functional invention: let's

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[22] For DeFrancis, mathematics and rebuses are forms of 'partial writing' because they are not based on the sounds of speech.

> use this set of symbols to write a list of captives' names, or a
> contract about feeding workers, or a letter to a distant garrison
> commander. All these moves belong to an alchemy of life that
> makes things go boom.

The comforting evolutionary and linear account of how clay tokens transformed into symbols which became scripts that morphed into the representation of the specific phonemes of the Greek language has been disrupted by many, including D. R. Olson (2001, p. 16640) and Harris (1986) who have argued that rather than an evolution from mark to picture to sound, changes in scripts reflect borrowings and adaptations from several co-occuring scripts. A modern-day example of such borrowings and errors is English spelling, a system which more often than not bears little or erratic resemblance to its phonology, has been so significantly influenced by Latin, French and Anglo-Saxon that it defies linear evolutionary explanations and has resisted any attempt to systematisation via an Academy of Language (like French and Italian). This means that it has remained a porous and open system that can swiftly accommodate neologisms and changes in meaning (Barber, 1993; Crystal, 1988). Harris, Olson and others have therefore argued that similar borrowings and unsystematic uses are likely to have occurred in ancient times, too, especially over the course of the thousand years that culminated in the establishment of a 'Greek' alphabet.

What this less linear account implies is that the orthodox conflation of 'writing' with the alphabet (a *putative* sound system that is possibly equally the result of transcription errors) may be unwarranted (Harris, 1986, pp. 29-30):

writing was originally merely a term designating the process of scoring or outlining a shape on a surface of some kind. (In this very broad sense, writing ought to include drawing, and even the art of the silhouette. Nowadays, it does not, although that original use of the verb write survives in English as late as the sixteenth century). Ancient Egyptian had one word meaning both 'writing' and 'drawing'. Similarly, the Greek verb γράφω ('to write') originally meant in Homer 'engrave', 'scratch', 'scrape'. The later restriction of such words to designate alphabetic writing hardly warrants the narrow perspective adopted by those historians of the subject who take for granted that graphic signs count as writing only when used for purposes which alphabetic writing was later to fulfil.

Writing, therefore, can include drawing and, in principle, other forms of representation.

Harris (1986) and Halverson (1992) argue that many enduring assumptions about how writing originated need challenging. In particular, Harris refutes the classical Aristotelian and De Saussurean thesis that the alphabet, understood as a precursor to writing, evolved as a substitute for speech with each letter (*grapheme*) representing a sound (*phoneme*). Rather, he argued, since an alphabet cannot capture all the nuances of speech, writing cannot be a surrogate of speech (Harris, 1986, 1989; 2000, p. 18). The thesis that the alphabet is a surrogate of speech is unwarranted because: a) we do not know what ancient Greek sounded like; and b) languages that have adopted the Greek alphabet as a basis for their written codes have a far greater range of sounds in their speech than the alphabet can account for. Moreover, the traditional view that writing evolved out of the Greek alphabet simply assumes that all writing is alphabetic, ignoring that Chinese characters, for instance, are an example of a writing system that can be processed

semantically without an intermediate phonetic stage (although, as I indicate below, this is precisely why Chinese was *not* considered to be a writing system).

Moreover, if alphabetic writing were indeed a representation of speech, it would be an inherently inadequate representation (D. R. Olson, 2001, p. 16641). This inadequacy becomes clear when we consider the vast range of non-alphabetic ways that have developed to try and compensate for the fact that the alphabet cannot fully represent speech:

> The history of writing is largely the history of inventing devices, such as punctuation and text structures, as well as rules for interpretation that have taken sometimes as long as millennia to develop.

If the 'alphabet cannot fully represent speech', and by implication, writing, then it becomes as (in)adequate as drawing in representing human thought. This is one reason why Harris (1986, 2000) and Coulmas (1989) see no difference between writing and drawing (D. R. Olson, 2001, p. 16641). In fact, for both Harris and Coulmas, semasiographic systems, such as road signs and mathematics, are systems of writing capable of representing meaning without relying on a prior link to spoken forms.

A further difficulty with reducing the function of writing to a representation of speech is that it assumes 'speech' is synonymous with 'language'. But this is also problematic (see Evans (2014), not least because if 'speech' is equal to 'language', this would mean that deaf/mute people don't communicate linguistically (since they can't hear/speak). And since they can't hear/speak, then presumably they can't read either (since writing equals speech) because reading would require hearing sounds that a deaf/mute person

doesn't have access to. The fact that a deaf /mute person can read, write and understand alphabetic script suggests that it is *meanings*, rather than *sounds*, that are conveyed by the graphic sign, whether alphabetic or not. This is because there is nothing phonologically inherent in the letter 'c', for example, that it has to be pronounced /k/ in order to be understood as a letter; nor is there anything phonologically inherent in 'cat' that it needs to be heard or pronounced as /kæt/ to be understood as meaning 'cat'. Pictographic and logographic scripts can be said to convey meanings in similar, holistic, semantic and cognitive ways that do not rely on alphabetic script or sound. Similar arguments are developed in Evans (2009) and Malpas (2002).

Nevertheless, prominent historians of writing, like Gelb (1963), have defended the thesis that for a script to count as 'writing' it needs to be alphabetic. Gelb claimed that pictures cannot be considered part of writing because the urge to draw is aesthetic, not communicative (Pettersson, 1994, p. 131), but he ran into several difficulties when attempting to "lay a foundation for a full science of writing" (Gelb, 1963, p. 23 cited in Pettersson, 1994, p. 138). Not only did Gelb equate writing with the alphabet, and therefore speech, but he also insisted that for writing to be considered 'writing' it had to consist of a 'mark on an object' rather than 'be' that object (as a token or a drawing might be, in the sense that they re-present that object). However, since some writing systems are not alphabetic but pictographic (e.g. Chinese[23]), Gelb's definition of writing

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[23] In an attempt to assuage the divisive polemic that has surrounded dismissive Western attitudes to Chinese (cf Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Joseph Priestley in Harris 2000, p.2), DeFrancis (1989) has argued that although Chinese is not alphabetic, it is nonetheless 'phonetic' in the sense that the early pictograms and the later stylised signs of Chinese

would exclude Chinese as a written form of that language. Gelb therefore revised the definitions he gave in *A History of Writing* by omitting reference to the alphabet (Gelb, 1980, pp. 21-22 cited in Pettersson (1994, p. 144):

> The proposed new definition of writing is as follows: Writing in its broadest sense is a recording system or device by means of conventional markings or shapes or colour of objects, achieved by the motor action of the hand of an individual and received visually by another.

This broad non-alphabetical definition of writing would now include picto/logographic languages such as Chinese but it still remains problematic for at least the following reasons:

a) 'conventional markings' would now cover the entire field of semiotics, including semasiography (whereby communication is achieved entirely without words, such as in road signs);

b) the requirement for writing to be 'achieved by the motor action of the hand' would rule out Stephen Hawkin's 'writing' because he used eye movement to write;

c) and the condition that the marks be 'received visually by another' excludes braille from the definition.

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characters represent phonic elements (such as morphemes and syllables) or whole words. This, according to B. King (1991) is, however, a trivial observation that can be applied to all written forms because they can all be pronounced whether they are alphabetical or not. In this sense, then, DeFrancis does little to extinguish the polemic. Rather, Chinese characters, whilst having originated as pictograms have since become so stylised and far removed from their original pictorial depiction that Chinese cannot meaningfully be said to be a pictorial language any more. This is because the original representation can no longer be discerned.

Harris and Coulmas get around these problems by arguing, simply, that "what makes a writing system is its adequacy in conveying information visually rather than its purported links to speech" (D. R. Olson, 2001, p. 16640). This broader definition would justify calling Chinese a written system because it 'coveys meaning visually', and would resolve a), above, allowing for semiotics to count as writing. The issue of *how* writing is achieved (b), above, would become irrelevant, since what matters is how writing is 'received', not how it is produced. And a system such as braille would count as 'writing' if we included haptic (tactile) reception of meaning, not just eidetic (visual), so c), above, would no longer be a problem.

What this cursory[24] discussion has served to highlight is that there are reasons to challenge the conflation of writing with the alphabet because there exist writing systems that are non-alphabetic and because the symbolic and functional purposes that writing serves can be achieved non-alphabetically. This means that, in principle, meaning emerges from signs, images and other marks, not just sounds and letters, and that what counts as writing is therefore not restricted to the alphabet.

The relationship between writing, literacy and cognition

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[24] Key linguistic theories of the twentieth century have been necessarily omitted because the scope of this chapter is to provide a very brief historical foundation for justifying the possibility, in principle, of diverse forms of (academic) writing. I am, however, aware of De Saussure's structuralism, which distinguishes between writing and speech by drawing attention to the diachronic contingencies of the latter (*parole*) and the synchronic stability of the former (*langue*) (Harris & Taylor, 1989; Saussure, Baskin, Meisel, & Saussy, 2011) and with Derrida's deconstruction of Western logocentrism, which de-centres language and meaning and re-positions them as differential relationships involving absences, differences and defferals (Derrida & Spivak, 1976).

Despite challenges to the theory that writing represents speech via the alphabet, the alphabetic theory of writing has prevailed and continues to form the basis of what counts as *literacy*. As noted by Olson, opening this chapter, being or not being 'literate' has implications for social inclusion and exclusion. It is noteworthy, in this sense, that both the Italian and French languages use the term 'analfabeta' and 'analphabète', respectively, to mean 'illiterate', i.e. having 'no alphabet' or 'no letters'. The English equivalent would be 'knowing your ABC', i.e. your alphabet.

Many studies on 'Western literacy' centre around the transition from oral to written culture. They include work by Havelock (1976, 1982), who has dated the origins of Western literacy to the Greek alphabet (which, as we have seen, is problematic and covers an immense geographical area which is not even 'Western' – cf. Appiah (2016a)'s Reith Lectures and de Sousa Santos (2009)'s 'A Non-Occidentalist West' for a discussion of the mis-appropriation of 'Western' by the 'West'). Yet, Havelock's influence on how we have come to understand literacy has been significant because he has contributed to the belief that oral culture restricts thought and leads to indoctrination whereas written culture frees thought from rote repetition. His views, however, are problematic, as I show below.

Havelock claims that the 'psychological and epistemological revolution' brought about by written, i.e. alphabetised, prose, "inheres only in an alphabet" (Halverson, 1992, p. 151). He shows this by explaining that it is during the Roman reign that the word 'literate' (*litteratus*) acquires the valence of 'educated' as in 'a man of letters' as opposed to a man who could simply read but was not necessarily educated (the Greek *grammatikos*) (Havelock, 1976, p. 3). Writing is also an 'act' (1976, p. 17) that becomes important in the context of social urbanisation because literacy is social,

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not solipsistic (*ibid,* p. 29). Havelock argues that there is a law that governs all texts, namely that they are all written with a reader and their expectations in mind and that this law explains why expected and recognisable discourses become traditional in form and content (what Devitt (1996); Hyland (2002b); Martin (1992); Swales (1990) might call 'genres'). This kind of predictable and expected writing is what he calls a 'craft' that can be learnt via instruction and schooling; it is writing that has "echoes of other works". Writing that does not fall into such predictable and recognisable patterns, such as new writing, is left to the interpretation of experts (Havelock, 1976, p. 38). He also claims that if all the written word can do is 'fall into predictable patterns' by explaining, refuting and affirming, then novel ideas will never emerge: Dante's and Chaucer's vernacular is committed to endure on paper because it broke with predictable patterns (1976, p. 84-85).

All of this, for Havelock, is evidence of the 'inherent' qualities of the alphabet. An obvious objection to this is that civilisations that are non-alphabetic, but nonetheless 'written', have also generated their own 'psychological and epistemological revolutions' – China's millennial history of medicine, philosophy and literature being a case in point (Van Norden, 2017).

Despite such objections, the shift from oral to written societies (where 'written' always seems to be equated with 'alphabetic') has been credited with developing a 'logical' mind because it has allowed us to 'see' language, enabling us to do what Havelock calls 'backward scanning', whereby we can reflect on how a text is organised, categorise the topics that it deals with and create logical ordering. This has allowed us to turn language into an

object of study which has generated grammatical concepts such as 'clause' and 'sentence' (D. Olson, 1994, p. 68, Chapter 6).

In addition to providing opportunities for reifying language as an object of study, the shift from oral to written has also freed us from the need to preserve cultural wisdom through repetition, proverbs and prescriptive metrics – associated with oral prose - so that we can create novel statements through writing. Havelock illustrates this shift through a detailed analysis of the socially unifying and culturally preserving function of Homeric prose, which used repetition, proverbs and prescriptive metrics as way to preserve cultural wisdom. By having a writing culture, we are no longer bound by the need to memorise familiar ideas and to be 'indoctrinated' in the way that Homeric prose did by creating regular, repetitive rhythms and metrics to generate memorable and memorisable knowledge.

In short, according to Havelock, "The Greeks did not just invent an alphabet; they invented literacy and the literate basis of modern thought" (cited in Halverson, 1992, p. 152). This view has had negative repercussions on how the 'West' has treated non-Western civilisations, 'mistaking' the alphabetically literate identity with a *superior* way of being, rather than one that is simply *different* (Appiah, 2016b; Said, 1978, 1993)

However, Havelock's account of what constituted orality and writing in ancient civilisations and of how we transitioned from one to the other may be mistaken. Firstly, even if the development of writing has afforded the development of a systematised grammar, it does not follow that thinking in ordered ways would not have happened if alphabetical writing had not

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developed. This leaves open the possibility for other forms of representation, including images, to produce ordered ways of thinking.

Secondly, according to Halverson, Havelock based his arguments that the Greek alphabet has shaped Western thought on some unfounded assumptions about Homeric prose (600-500 BC) and about the primacy of orality over the written word. Essentially, Halverson argues that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that Homer's ballads were indeed spoken first and then transcribed: they could just as easily have been written and co-existed with an oral tradition. If Halverson is right, this would undermine the orthodox view that society transitioned from orality to writing, and that the latter is a thought-structuring substitute for the former.

If writing did not substitute speech but co-existed with it instead, then the arguments that suggest writing is superior to speech are weakened. Rather, as Olson has argued, writing and speaking may make us think *differently*, not better or worse (1994, p. 258).

Thirdly, even if it were true that writing preceded logical alphabetical thought, this would not entail that writing *caused* logical thought (*post hoc propter hoc* fallacy) since, for example, logical thought was clearly already happening with Socrates before Plato transcribed it. Indeed, argues Halverson (1992, p. 161), because there is no evidence for the need to memorise spoken language in the first place, it is hard to see what role writing played at all. Rather, it is possible that alphabetic writing functioned as cuneiform writing in corresponding to and recording astronomical-mathematical observations or accounting. In other words, the function of writing was to create social unity, facilitate economic

accountability and allow knowledge to travel, without its agent, rather than make us better thinkers. That new thoughts were possible because of the structures and societies that developed as a result of writing is not the same as saying that writing caused us to think 'better'. This implication goes some way towards dethroning theories that writing structures thought in ways that are *superior* to other forms of communication.

However, Ong (1982, 1986), who was greatly influenced by Havelock, is credited with the cognitive theory that writing *is* superior to speech because it raises consciousness by developing reasoning in ways that orality does not. Ong's most cited work, *Orality and Literacy* (1982), argued that the transition from speech to writing in literate societies had a profound impact on the ways in which people thought and argued.

Specifically, in Chapter 4 of his influential book, 'Writing restructures consciousness', as well as in a later article titled 'Writing is a technology that restructures thought' (Ong, 1986), Ong seems to make the quite reasonable claim that the technological advent of writing simply *shapes* the way we think, suggesting that it is comparatively, rather than qualitatively, different to other ways of communicating (1986, p. 24):

> Without writing, the literate mind would not and could not
> think as it does, not only when engaged in writing but even
> when it is composing its thoughts in oral form.

But he soon betrays value judgments relating to the *superiority* of literate thinking (writing-influenced) over non-literate thinking (oral) (1986, pp. 29 and 32, emphasis added to indicate his value judgements):

> We know that totally oral peoples, *intelligent and wise though*
> *they often are*, are *incapable* of the protracted, intensive linear
> analysis that we have from Plato's Socrates. [...] Like other
> artificial creations and indeed more than any other, writing is
> utterly *invaluable* and indeed *essential* for the realization of
> *fuller*, interior, human potentials [...] By distancing thought,
> alienating it from its original habitat in sounded words, *writing*
> *raises consciousness*. Alienation from a natural milieu can be
> good for us and indeed is in many ways essential for *fuller*
> human life. To live and to understand *fully*, we need not only
> proximity but also distance. This writing provides for, thereby
> accelerating the *evolution of consciousness* as nothing else
> before it does (1986, p. 32).

The idea that writing is objective and impersonal also begins to emerge.
Ong draws attention to the "cool, analytic processes generated by writing",
with reference to Plato's shunning of the oral poets in *Phaedrus* (Ong, 1986,
p. 29). In the *Laws,* Plato praises writings on the grounds that they function
as precepts, namely rules to regulate behaviour, but since they are texts
without law-makers or subjects (Harris, 1989, p. 105), this consolidates the
reputation of writing as impersonal, as a representation of reality that is
devoid of human intentionality. Ong goes on to observe that because we
also take for granted the technological effort of producing parchment and
that current technology obscures the processes involved in producing
writing, writing has an impersonal quality because it 'separates the world
from the living present' in the way that speech doesn't.

Ong's references to writing being 'impersonal', 'cool', 'detached', 'distant'
and as providing a 'full consciousness' echo modern-day understandings of
academic writing as autonomous, objective, impersonal (in the sense that

author intentionality does not play a part in the interpretation of the text), 'detached' and 'precise' (e.g. lacking 'evanescence') (see references in Part 1, e.g. Bailey (2006) and Bennett (2009, 2015), all of which further conflates writing with thinking that is 'precise and scientific'.

Goody (1977) has attempted to heal the traditional anthropological dichotomies between societies that are oral and written by showing that elements of both have co-existed in oral and written communities (Goody, 1977, pp. 148-149) and that many of the achievements attributed to literate societies can be explained in terms of the "cumulative growth of systematic knowledge' (1977, p. 150) rather than by singling out writing as a key trigger. However, like Ong, Goody ultimately endorses the view that 'linear, logical explanation depends on writing' (D. R. Olson, 2001, p. 16642).

Despite acknowledging that oral cultures are potentially more 'open-minded' because they are not constrained by the permanence of thought that writing affords (1977, p. 43), Goody remains committed to the view that literate societies are better than non-literate ones because writing makes us more attentive, more 'logical' and aware of 'alternatives' (1977, p. 44, emphasis added):

> the *form* in which the alternatives are presented makes one
> aware of the differences, forces one to consider contradiction,
> makes one conscious of the 'rules' of argument, forces one to
> develop such 'logic'. And the form is determined by the literary
> or written mode. Why? Because when an utterance is put in
> writing it can be inspected in much greater detail, in its parts as
> well as in its whole, backwards as well as forwards, out of
> context as well as in its setting; in other words, it can be
> subjected to a quite different type of scrutiny and critique than
> is possible with purely verbal communication. Speech is no

longer tied to an 'occasion'; it becomes timeless. Nor is it attached to a person; on paper, it becomes more abstract, more *depersonalised*.

The conflation of writing with the alphabet and with higher-order thinking clearly has deep historical roots which endure (e.g., Emig, 1977) and explains why Turner has referred to it as an 'ontological complicity' (2018, p. 181): it is a 'complicity' because it assumes 'good' thinking cannot take place without 'good' writing and it has become influential because Western society has built its science, economy and entire identity around literacy. Yet, as we have seen, there are reasons to question the *qualitative* supremacy of 'Western' literacy over other forms of social practice, where ideographic scripts and orality are the basis of communication (Harris, 1986, 1989, 2000) and where thinking may take *different*, not *inferior* forms (D. Olson, 1994, p. 258).

Next, I consider how writing came to dominate academic practices.

Variations in academic writings

The history of academic writing is as complex as the history of writing. It, too, has contested origins and purposes, yet has established itself as a marker of a 'higher' education.

History of 'Western' academia

One way of approaching the history of English academic writing is to locate it within academia and specifically around the time when universities, as we might recognise them today, were founded. The first 'Western' European universities are one thousand years old and were late-comers to the world's academic scene.

Indeed, ancient European universities appeared after those in Africa (de Sousa Santos, 2017), testifying to the well-established non-European 'ecology of knowledge' that pre-dates current 'Western' academic hegemonies (de Sousa Santos, 2009): Al-Qarawwiyyin, in Fez, Morocco, 859 AD, which is still a university; the University of Timbuktu (West Africa) founded in 982 AD "and attended, throughout the 12th century, by about 25,000 students" (de Sousa Santos, 2017, p. ix) and Al-Azhar University, Cairo, 970 AD. And earlier still, China, where the *Dà xué,* the *Great Academy,* was founded in 200 BC by Emperor Wu Di of the Han Dynasty (Peters, 2017, p. 4); India, where ancient centres of learning existed in 300 AD; the Gukhak in Korea was founded in 682 AD and the Daigaku-no kami in the Japanese Imperial Court existed before 794 AD (Peters, 2017, p. 5).

Today, it is the European academies that dominate the global stage, alongside their American and Australian progenies, which are younger still. In Europe, Bologna and Paris were founded in 1088 and 1150, respectively, although these dates are contested (Rüegg & Ridder-Symoens, 1992-2011, Vol. 1), followed by Oxford 1150 (where teaching occurred as early as 1096[25]) and Cambridge in 1209 (Collini, 2012, p. 23).

These early mediaeval universities did not require students to write. Teaching and learning were informal arrangements and their official establishment as universities grew out of a need to ensure the financial security of their students and teachers, to promote rationality in the belief of God as a way of combatting heresy and to cultivate *la vita contemplativa,* which involved reading, rehearsing and interpreting scriptures. These universities also provided practical social solutions to trade and commerce,

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[25] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Oxford [accessed 30/11/2018]

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especially at Bologna University, which built its reputation around the study of Law and Padova University around the study of Medicine. This can be said to have established the early tradition of 'town and gown', whereby the aim of university was to serve local needs as well as cultivate the mind, but also because funding came from different stakeholders, including the Church, so universities were accountable to their funders, as they are today (Collini, 2012), and had to further their interests. The lecture, where a professor would literally lecture and read from books for several hours, and the oral *disputatio,* not writing, where students discussed and displayed their knowledge mnemonically rather than interpretatively, were the main forms of academic communication (Clark, 2006; Friesen, 2017; Leedham-Green, 1996).

The Early Modern/Renaissance university (1500-1800)

This period is said to coincide with the advent of the printing press (1450-1700) which allowed the knowledge, languages and vernaculars of pre-print society to become visible and widespread. It became easier to classify information and collect data, which explains why botany was able to establish itself in the 1500s, later to become a science in 1735 (Eisenstein, 1983, p. 130); to create index pages and multiple maps (1983, p. 204); and to circulate portraits of leading cultural figures such as Erasmus and Luther, whose faces became well-known at this time (1983, p. 132-133).

The Gutenberg Bible – which lent its name to the 'Gutenberg Revolution', aka 'The Printing Revolution' - was the first Bible to be printed between 1450 and 1460 using a system of *incunabula* (movable print), allowing for several reprints which facilitated the dissemination of religion and individual, unmediated reading practices (i.e. individuals could access God

directly, as intended by Martin Luther). A new, smaller pocket-sized format for books, called the *octavo*, also emerged during this time, making books more portable by re-shaping writing on the page. This format became known as the 'Aldine' edition named after its Venetian printer-inventor, Aldus Manutius. It was smaller than the previous Gothic formats because it used the *italic* typeface invented by Manutius' punchcutter and typefounder, Francesco Griffo, which reduced the space taken on the page allowing more books to be printed more cheaply (1000 rather than 250 in a single print run), including many translations of the classics, thus further contributing to the dissemination of knowledge[26].

However, Eisenstein (1983, p. 131; 151) has argued that what is commonly referred to as the 'Renaissance' took place before the advent of printing[27] and that print simply allowed existing knowledge to be distributed rather than to be created *ex novo*. Eisenstein's views are a response to commonly held beliefs that the invention of the printing press took Europe out of the 'dark ages' and into a 're-birth' (Renaissance) where reason evolved because knowledge and information became accessible via print. Rather, according to Eisenstein, print simply made visible what was already there. The conflation between print and knowledge has clear echoes of the conflation between writing and reason, discussed above.

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[26] See http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/firstimpressions/Pioneers-of-Print/Aldus-Manutius/ (accessed 12 October 2016] and https://marciana.venezia.sbn.it/eventi/aldo-manuzio-e-la-costruzione-del-mito-aldus-manutius-and-making-myth [accessed 30 April 2016]

[27] Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374), commonly referred as a Renaissance poet, died before printing was invented.

By now, writing and reading were firmly established in European cultures because of print and this triggered significant social and cultural consequences. For example, between 1500 and 1600, the Reformation movement of the German Friar and Professor of Theology at Wittenberg University in Saxony (Northern Germany) Martin Luther toppled the dominance of the Catholic Church. This was made possible because Luther's Protestant message spread via 'academic' writings called 'theses', despite the fact that they were not intended to be read by 'the people' (Martin Luther cited in Eisenstein (1983, p. 151) and Postman (1993, pp. 64-65):

> It is a mystery to me how my theses, more so than my other writings, indeed, those of other professors were spread to so many places. They were meant exclusively for our academic circle here … They were written in such a language that the common people could hardly understand them. They … use academic categories.

On the 31st of October 1517, Luther famously nailed his 95 theses to Wittenberg's church door. Each thesis argued against the Catholic Church's practice of 'indulgences', payments whereby 'sinners' could 'indulge' the Catholic Church in exchange for a pardon and a place in heaven. Luther challenged this practice, arguing instead that people's ascent to heaven was through reading the bible and through their faith in and direct accountability to God, not to the Church. Luther's writings, his 'theses' became full-blown 'performatives', namely writings that 'made things happen' (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015, pp. 43-44; 48-50; Austin, 1962) because they sparked social and religious revolt (The University of Manchester Library, 2018).

Writing for Luther becomes a powerful revolutionary tool, allowing his Reformation to gather momentum. To further ensure more people had direct access to the Scriptures without recourse to the interpretations of a priest, Latin, the official language of the Church and of Academia, ceded to German and local vernacular varieties. Luther's religious disputations were translated, transcribed and divulged, allowing ever greater numbers of 'common people', who were outside of the 'academic circle', to partake in the Reformation (Postman, 1993, p. 65):

> What Luther overlooked was the sheer *portability* of printed books. Although his theses were written in academic Latin, they were easily transported throughout Germany and other countries by printers who just as easily had them translated into vernaculars.

Luther's academic writings, nailed as they were to a door and fairly standard practice, at the time,, re-genred as disputations and distributed as pamphlets in non-standard vernaculars to be read by non-academics, possibly had more 'impact', to use modern jargon, than if they had been curated into a traditional book.

Further social and cultural consequences included the rise of individualism and standardisation. A sense of individual empowerment spread throughout Europe as knowledge became multilingual and accessible, yet also standardised by being easily replicated in print. A new era in reading practices emerged whereby "the role played by mnemonic aids was diminished" because "[r]hyme and cadence were no longer required to preserve certain formulas and recipes" since books could be referred back to (Eisenstein, 1983, p. 35). It was also an era in which silent, individual reading became possible (1983, p. 92). However, the need for images

(illuminations) did not diminish with the rise of typography because xylography (engraving), which was advancing technically in the arts, ensured that illustrators remained as gainfully employed as the scribes, and because the Reformation movement continued to rely on imagery to spread its message.

The influence of Montaigne on writing

Tensions between individuality and standardisation preoccupied both the pre-print and post-print era (as they do in current academic writing practices). A tangible manifestation of this tension was in how subjects and landscapes were reproduced in print. This skill relied on the patience of artists and copiers to faithfully reproduce (self)portraits and locations. However, it was not uncommon for different cities and different persons to be replicated by the same woodcut and engraving (Eisenstein, 1983, pp. 61-62), thus erasing personalisation. Possible reasons for this are that copiers tired of paying attention to differences in the subjects they were replicating and for ease of duplication, they simply used the same woodcut to represent different people or different cities. Another reason may have been that, depending on the publication, an illustration served to represent a topic rather than an individual person or location.

According to Eisenstein, these "impersonal images did not disappear when print replaced script" because the increased standardisation that was afforded by the print typeface facilitated the replication of diversity. This is evident in the publication and popularisation of thousands of books depicting costumes, maps and cities from all over the world, especially in Venice, where a cosmopolitan printing industry thrived. So, although information was being standardised, it was also being replicated which

meant it could reach multiple audiences: the same map was being reprinted and widely distributed, thus disseminating knowledge of a wider world.

In turn, such impersonal standardisation created a "heightened appreciation of individuality" (Eisenstein, 1983, p. 133; Good (1988), which helps to explain the success of humanist philosopher and essayist Michel de Montaigne (1533-1593). His *Essais* proposed a new informal essay style that reclaimed a sense of the personal, private self as a way of counteracting the increasingly standardised, public self enabled by print. Montaigne's personal, introspective and contemplative style became popular because it spoke to the needs of an ever wider, geographically scattered and impersonal readership (Eisenstein, 1986, p. 58):

> Traditional rhetorical conventions had allowed for the difference in tone between addressing a large assemblage in a public arena, where strong lungs and broad strokes were required, and pleading a case in a courtroom, which called for careful attention to detail and a more soft-spoken, clearly argued, intimate approach. But no precedent existed for addressing a large crowd of people who were not gathered together in one place but were scattered in separate dwellings and who, as solitary individuals with divergent interests, were more receptive to intimate interchanges than to broad-gauged rhetorical effects. The informal essay which was devised by Montaigne was a most ingenious method for coping with this new situation. He thus established a new basis for achieving intimate contact with unknown readers [...] provided a welcome assurance that the isolated sense of singularity which was felt by the solitary reader had been experienced by another human being and was [...] capable of being shared.

Montaigne's essay format was to greatly influence the genre of the scientific experimental article (discussed below) because of the way it represented human experience as being both narcissistically personal and distantly objective (Eisenstein, 1986, p. 58):

> Its [the essai] abbreviated structure reflects both a prescriptive world view, empirical in spirit and observational in method, and a sceptical despair of achieving any unified cosmological view. The kind of discursive informalism and ordinary subject matter epitomized by the French familiar essay had immense philosophical appeal for growing scientific interests in seventeen-century England, which, Bacon had cautioned, would not succeed without a profound literary reform (Paradis, 1987, p. 60).

At the same time as Montaigne was challenging standardisation and reclaiming individual expression, standards were being reclaimed by religious and political authorities via attempts to reclaim, stabilise and sanitise language: Latin, the language of authority and catholicism, had been increasingly co-existing with local 'vulgar' vernaculars, as evidenced by Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* written in Florentine vernacular in 1320 as an attack on and parody of the corruption and double-standards of the Church. The quest for linguistic standards culminated in the establishment, in 1584, of the Italian *Accademia della Crusca*, the first and still active Academy of the Italian Language, which published the 'Vocabolario degli accademici della Crusca', a dictionary recording words supported by the "written authority of great works rather than by current usage" (Lillis, 2013,

p. 6)[28]. Later, in 1635, came the French *Académie Française* which boasted a similar language-preserving and tradition-entrenching mission (Rüegg & Ridder-Symoens, 1992-2011, p. 11, Vol. 2):

> For the French humanist the correct cultivation of language was the heart of the new educational movement [...], in the mediaeval universities, language was raw and barbarous; scholastic textbooks darkened the intellect. It was through reading the ancient and biblical writings in the original languages that light was brought into university education.

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[28] In 2016, *the Accademia della Crusca* – which is notoriously reluctant to include new lexis into its official dictionary – broke with its tradition of excluding words of 'current usage' and approved the entry of a new word coined by an 8-year-old boy during a school poetry recital. The word was *petaloso*, an adjective to describe a flower that has many petals (as in 'petally'), such as a daisy. The reasons given for this unusual inclusion were that the word was grammatically well-formed, was likely to have significant uptake, and clearly described its referent (Dal Monte & Morosi, 24 February 2016).

The English *Royal Society* was founded in 1660 with the aim of improving 'natural knowledge' (science) rather than preserving language[29]: in this regard, it is noteworthy that the English language has, to date, never managed to establish its own language academy (Crystal, 2003, p. 73; 81; 187). As a consequence of this lack of language policing, it has evolved into a more porous and flexible system

Figure 12: Standard and non-standard usage available at https://twitter.com/GregMyers/status/1013370743 256768513 [accessed 01/09/2018]

able to accommodate new lexis (Fig. 12). Yet, despite its porousness (Yun & Standish, 2018, p. 130), the English language still lends itself to heated controversies about standards and correct usage, as previously discussed in relation to EAP.

The modern university was also projected towards action and novelty. It nurtured *la vita activa*, pushing the boundaries of knowledge through human discovery and technology (e.g. ship-building and engineering) rather than divine intervention (Rüegg & Ridder-Symoens, 1992-2011, pp. 7-8; 30, Vol. 2). Famously, Columbus' explorations of the Americas in 1492 sparked a wave of 'humanism', understood as the waning of mediaeval and divine reverence and as the waxing of human reason and capacity to

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[29] See https://royalsociety.org/about-us/history/ [accessed 25 January 2017]

understand, explore, and conquer, the world. In 1503, Amerigo Vespucci's *Mundus Novus* chronicled Columbus' earthly travels and, thanks to the printing press, became rapidly available in Latin, German, Dutch and Czech editions (*ibid*, p. 12). Forty years later, 'knowledge of the heavens' reached unprecedented heights with Copernicus' 1543 publication of *De orbium coelstium revolutionibus*, heralding the heliocentric revolution that culminated in Galileo's controversial 1638 *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*.

The emergence of new genres

Three important academic literary and scientific genres emerged during this period, the Chronicle, the Dialogue and the Letters (Bazerman, 1988, p. 130; Eisenstein, 1983, pp. 21-27).

Chronicles were used to record the travels of explorers such as Columbus because this format lent itself to being written on the move and to recording un-analysed geographic, anthropologic and botanical observations.

The dialogue afforded opportunities to engage in conversion and discussion *with* the classics rather than showing uncritical deference to them by reporting or transcribing them *verbatim.* This genre was revived by Galileo's well-known literary outputs. Crucially, Galileo broke away from the established scientific writing conventions of his time, including his own, to re-propose the discredited Copernican heliocentric theory in both dialogue form and in Tuscan, the local vernacular of Pisa (where he taught). In doing so, he too broke away from the use of Latin and was able to reach non-academic and non-scientific audiences who proved to be more open to

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persuasion than his recalcitrant and sceptical scientific colleagues (Eisenstein, 1983, pp. 251-253):

> Galileo's *Dialogue on Two World Systems* was such a provocative and polemical treatise, however, it almost seemed to court censorship in a way that is quite typical of most serious scientific work. The same thing cannot be said of his later treatise which helped to found classical physics: the *Discourses on Two New Sciences*. [...] No great cosmic or philosophical questions intrude into this unimpassioned treatise ... it is about as controversial and stirring as some freshman lecture on mechanics, of which indeed, it is the ultimate source. [...] The crowing irony of Galileo's career is that the failure of the great *Dialogues* should be so much more interesting than the success of the unobjectionable *Discourses*.

Other sixteenth-century scientists, such as philosopher Francis Bacon and mathematician Johannes Kepler, also broke with the tradition of using Latin, preferring instead to use vernaculars which lent themselves to greater dissemination via the printed word "in an effort to convey the new spirit and methods of scientific philosophy" (Postman, 1993, p. 64).

A possible reason for why the dialogic structure favoured by Galileo became popular at this time is that it had its roots in Cartesian rationalism, where the dualisms of mind mirrored dualisms of opinion. This dualism was also visible in the "unresolvable contradictions between science and theology, that is, between intellectual and moral points of view" (Postman, 1993, p. 32) as well as in the quest for knowledge through exploration and discovery instead of God (Rüegg & Ridder-Symoens, 1992-2011, pp. 8-9, Vol 4) (Fig. 13):

For the mathematician Descartes and other scientists, the dialogic structure, which also manifested itself in the style of academic publications, changed not only the educational basis of the European elites, but also the concept of academic research itself. Whereas in the vertical perspective of the Middle Ages the academics sat like dwarves on the shoulders of giants and only in this way were able to see further, the humanist dialogue with the authors of the past enables scholars to undertake voyages of discovery on the high seas, in order to discover new worlds, for which the title page of Francis Bacon's *Instauratio magna* of 1620 provides both an illustration and commentary.
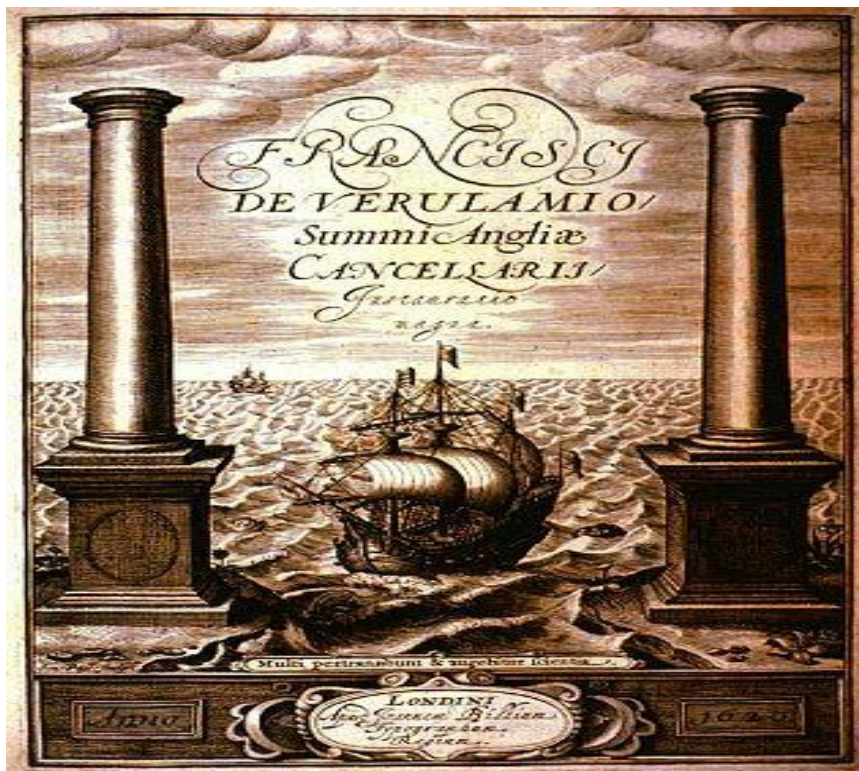
Figure 13: Francis Bacon's 1620 frontispiece
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=francis+bacon+instauratio+magna&title=Special:Search&go=Go&searchToken=a30dzr15zhf1zooxuuno9e7dy#/media/File:Bacon_Great_Instauration_frontispiece.jpg]

And finally, the epistolary genre also thrived during these centuries as academics and natural philosophers (later to be called scientists[30]) began to

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[30] The term 'scientist' wasn't coined until 1833 by William Whewell (Ross, 1962, p. 71)

publish work in and correspond via the two most influential academic journals of the time, the *Journal des Savan(t)s* and the *Philosophical Transactions*, both established in 1665.

In particular, Henry Oldenburg, the first editor of the *Philosophical Transactions*, was keen to encourage correspondence and debate. He became known for being a 'present' editor who enthusiastically mediated between the readers and the article writers, publishing letters that became scientific documents in their own right, and gradually allowing contributors to have more voice (Bazerman, 1988). Significantly, he published the work of international scientists, such as biologist Marcello Malpighi (Eisenstein, 1983, pp. 243-244), who were being ignored or censored in their native countries, and published the correspondence with Isaac Newton in both English and Latin (Bazerman, 1988, p. 84), consolidating multilingualism in the scientific community.

The significance of the *Philosophical Transactions* as a historical record of how the scientific genre of the experimental article has evolved into current academic writing practices has been meticulously documented by Charles Bazerman (1988) in *Shaping Written Knowledge*. Bazerman tracks this evolution from its early reports and descriptions of unusual events using the language of 'curiosity and wonder', where science was reported as uncontested and devoid of theory or methodology (Volumes 1-20 of the *Philosophical Transactions*), to the increasingly careful illustration and reporting of methods and experiments. Attention to how methods were reported signalled the need to dispel controversies that were beginning to emerge as scientists were no longer individuals working alone to describe and report what they saw in nature. Instead, they were increasingly being

held to account publicly via the journals they corresponded in (Volumes 20-50) and in their presentations to learned societies.

The function of drawings and illustrations also changed. Hitherto, they had been deployed to *represent* nature. By the 1700s, they became the methods and instruments for *understanding* it, as explained below with reference to Robert Boyle and his physico-mechanical experiments with pneumatics in the 1600s (Shapin, 1984, p. 492):

> The sort of naturalistic images that Boyle favoured provided a greater density of circumstantial detail than would have been proffered by more schematic representations. The images served to announce that 'this was really done' and that it was done in the way stipulated; they allayed distrust and facilitated virtual witnessing. Therefore, understanding the role of pictorial representations offers a way of appreciating what Boyle was trying to achieve with his literary technology.

Along with images, language also developed to reflect greater attention to how methods were reported. In 1672, Newton writes with the intention of eliminating uncertainty in his optical findings. He develops a new rhetorical style to deal with criticisms, a form of compelling argument which becomes a closed system reducing opposing arguments to errors. He writes with the intention of making his writing appear as fact, not controversy, and finds ways of shaping it to avoid ambiguity by artfully guiding the reader step-by-step through an experiment expressed in self-referential language - recalling the meandering, explorative and tentative style of Montaigne – all the while intending to report what he believes to be an objectively observable phenomenon: the style evoked is that of a neutral observer 'stumbling across a fact' (see also Turner (2010, pp. 61-62).

In his Chapter 4, Bazerman (1988, p. 91) compellingly analyses a section of the carefully-crafted rhetorical style of Newton's "A New Theory of Light and Colours", an article published in the *Transactions* in 1672, where first person pronouns feature significantly to reflect the careful discoveries of the author-scientist (emphasis added):

> This earlier part of the article relies heavily on the *language of personal thought* and *agency* as it unfolds the attempts of a baffled investigator to come to terms with a robustly visible phenomenon. *The first person* followed by an active verb forms the armature of most sentences: "I suspected," "I thought," "I took another Prisme," "I then proceeded to examine more critically," "Having made these observations, I first computed from them." At key moments he offers quantitative descriptions of his experiments, switching to *third person* existential statements: "Its distance from the hole or Prisme was 22 feet; its utmost length 13¼ inches." But even experimental quantities are framed by his limited *agency*: "The refractions were as near as I could make them, equal and consequently about 54 deg. 4'" (93). The orderliness with which he pursues and isolates the phenomenon gives rhetorical warrant to the degree of facticity of language Newton allows himself in this section. That is, the credibility of the investigation helps establish the credibility of the fact and the credibility of the investigator.

The procedure Newton follows is exactly that of 'exclusions', as prescribed by Bacon: "What the sciences stand in need of is a form of induction which shall analyse experience and take it to pieces, and by a due process of exclusion and rejection lead to an inevitable conclusion" (Great Instauration B, 1,137).

By now, language has evolved into a conduit for channelling mental thoughts from the mind of the truth-knowing writer/observer to the mind of the sceptical reader, rather than a representation of speech (Russell, 2002; Turner, 2010, pp. 56-57). It becomes instrumental during this time because it needs to *persuade* as well as *report* what the scientist sees as an objective natural reality. The mnemonic verses of Homer, Pindar and Aeschylus required no reporting verbs, despite being transcriptions of oral poems[31] which suggests that for the pre-Socratics, reality did not need to be interpreted: it needed to be told (D. Olson, 1994, p. 193).

By the 1400s, the term 'verbatim' had been coined, suggesting that a new linguistic awareness was dawning, relating to how a text could fix and stabilise meaning (*ibid*, p. 106). English began to borrow reporting verbs from Latin, such as *imply,* to signal mental state verbs which indicated that an interpretation was taking place as opposed to an unhedged factual description of nature (D. Olson, 1994, pp. 108-109). With the 1700s came the development of theories of interpretation to understand what was 'in' the text, not what could be 'read' into it (hermeneutics).

Because knowledge was becoming increasingly contested, the following features begin to emerge in scientific writing: the use of nominalisations as grammatical metaphors to reify and de-personalise activities, presenting them as facts rather than processes; acknowledgments and criticisms to build allegiances but also to comply with the new 1710 intellectual property copyright encoded into British law (Pennycook, 1996, p. 205); hedging language such as *probably* and *might be* to indicate speculation before a

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[31] Although some have questioned whether Homer's ballads were indeed oral (Halverson (1992).

bold conclusion. Botany becomes an established scientific discipline in 1735 because plants could be classified by names which could be printed and circulated; and introductions to conflicts between theories began appearing in Volume 40 of the *Transactions* (1737) to signal that a hypothesis preceded the account of the experiment, even when there was no contention (Bazerman (1988, p. 76); Halliday in Olson, p. 118; 173-174).

The need to report accurately and clearly meant that language became "invested with the role of 'mapping' knowledge, without drawing attention to itself as part of the map. In other words, it has to be transparent" (Turner, 2010, p. 63).

However, notwithstanding even Newton's painstaking attempts to ensure that his language was precise and transparent enough to ensure his readers could clearly see the Book of Nature and reach the same 'inevitable conclusion' as him, fellow scientists continued to subject Newton's claims to intense scrutiny. Eventually, Newton became so averse to criticism that he refused to publish in the *Transactions* (Bazerman, 1988, p. 82):

> From a biographical perspective, Newton seems to have dallied only once with journal publication, got burned badly, and never returned. That is, he first published his optical findings in a 1672 *Transactions* article, entitled "A New Theory of Light and Colours," which sparked a controversy with much of the correspondence printed in later issues of the *Transactions;* afterward Newton refused to publish in journals and withheld further publication of his optical findings for thirty years until the *Opticks* appeared in 1704.

Humboldtian influence (1800s and beyond)

A period of great university expansion occurred during the 1900s following their decline during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. Of immense significance during this time was the influence of Wilhelm von Humboldt, a German scholar and statesman credited with founding, in 1810, the modern Western concept of the research university, which has particularly influenced US universities and Oxbridge (Rüegg & Ridder-Symoens, 1992-2011, pp. 5;11-12, Vols. 3 and 4; Russell, 2002).

The Humboldtian university fully embraced the growing faith in science, reason, discovery and empiricism of the previous centuries making 'research' its core, essential nuclear foundation (Vol. 3, p. 15). According to Friedrich Schleiermacher, the liberal theologian and philosopher who inspired Humboldt (Vol. 3, p. 5):

> [T]he function of the university was not to pass on recognised and directly usable knowledge such as the schools and colleges did, but rather to demonstrate how this knowledge is discovered, to stimulate the idea of science in the minds of the students, to encourage them to take into account the fundamental laws of science in all their thinking.

Questions arose as to how the university was to achieve this function and Humboldt argued strongly that the State had a pivotal role in enabling universities to fulfil their research mission (Vol. 4, p. 12):

> And in order for this aim to be achievable, "[i]t was Humboldt's belief that the state had only two tasks with regard to the university: 'to ensure the richness (strength and variety) of intellectual resources through the selection of staff, and to guarantee their freedom to carry out their work'".

At the same time, the increased professionalisation of research and of salaried university staff, coupled with an increase in standardisation processes and widening participation - compared with the 1700s, when no academic qualifications were needed to study at university (Vol. 2, pp. 289; 328) and no written exams existed before 1820 (Leedham-Green, 1996, p. 125)[32] - led to a steep rise in assessment procedures with written assignments, rather than oral seminars or the more traditional *disputatio*, becoming the main means through which to assess students.

This, according to Kruse (2006, p. 348), "turned writing into a constraint that threatened to exclude [students] if they did not master the writing assignments", echoing Turner's (2018) concerns.

In terms of content and the structure of language, the written research paper began to stabilise and increasingly emphasise methods, a phenomenon that had begun in the early 1700s, at least by the time Volume 25 of the *Philosophical Transactions* had been published. Findings and conclusions, especially in Medicine, discussed consequences of hypotheses and experiments at the end of a paper in terms of logical deductions of the facts. These were presented using impersonal language such as nominalisations and making explicit reference to methods; citations began to develop into codified networks of acknowledgments and sentence structure became increasingly complex: noun and subordinate clauses increased, suggesting increasing intellectual complexity, even while sentence length and syntactical complexity remained stable at around 70%

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[32] The grading of papers had been introduced for the first time in 1792 at Cambridge University (Postman, 1993, p. 13)

simple and 30% complex (Bazerman, 1988, pp. 167-168). All this suggests that scientific discourse was fairly homogenous during this time.

Relative stability endures to this day. This is because fixed forms have become 'encapsulated' by a dependency on the way knowledge is produced whereby findings and bold claims are foregrounded to serve the interests of (Bazerman, 2015, p. 267):

> [U]niversity departments and professional societies (with their structures of rewards and advancements), government and business interests and funding (based on perceived needs for scientific and technological knowledge), knowledge-based professions that pervade contemporary society (with their reliance on systems of authority and credentials), expanding educated populations who look toward science for knowledge, and evolving technologies and systems for the production and distributions of texts (including cheap printing, commercial publishing companies, university and professional libraries, national mail systems and international agreements), despite advances in digital technology.[33]

But just as the Modern humanist University was characterised by the contradictory dualisms of expressive individualism (epitomised by Montaigne) and technological standardisation (triggered by print), so too was the university of the 20th century caught between competing ways of thinking: on the one hand, a staunch faith in the precision and exactitude of science meant that hitherto 'unscientific' disciplines such as philology

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[33] Despite the stability of genres described by Bazerman, Hyland and Feng (Kevin) (2017, p. 47) have begun to detect some linguistic informality in academic writing in what they call 'illicit initials', i.e. starting a sentence with 'and', 'but' or 'so'.

and (applied) linguistics became scientised (Orman, 2016), systematised (Harris & Taylor, 1989) and unified into an object of study that assumes language lies outside of us and can be a conduit for thought that is independent of its users (Yun & Standish, 2018, p. 128). On the other, the emphasis on clarity, transparency of language and logic as opposed to the open, digressive system of rhetoric (see Turner 2010, pp.77-76), triggered a literary 'relativist turn'. This encouraged the reader to bring their own understanding to the text and to question the authority of both the author and the written word (D. Olson, 1994, p. 193). Writers, historians, social critics and philosophers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes, Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend, even the Ludwig Wittgenstein of *The Philosophical Investigations* (Sigmund, 2017), became controversially known as the post-modernists who 'relativised' knowledge, reified 'discourse' and generally questioned the ability of language to 'refer' to reality. In so doing, they developed an influential rhetorical style of their own which, unlike the grammar of the research article, privileged sentence length and syntactical subordination[34] as a way of displaying *through form* the complex interconnectedness of reality, particularly social, psychological and philosophical reality.

Writing and its ideologies

The word 'ideology' is often associated with controversial, but historically defining and influential theories, such as 'socialism' or 'conservatism'. Here, I take it to mean a 'worldview', as reported in Wikipedia[35]:

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[34] Wittgenstein's aphoristic style is clearly an exception to this.

[35] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ideology [accessed 01/12/2018]

An ideology is a collection of normative beliefs and values that an individual or group holds for other than purely epistemic reasons. The term was coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy in 1796, who conceived it as the "science of ideas". In contemporary philosophy it is narrower in scope than that original concept, or the ideas expressed in broad concepts such as *worldview*, *imaginary* and *ontology*".

Because of how writing shapes knowledge, several scholars are concerned with how it enacts political and social 'worldviews'.

In his history of the American university curriculum, Russell (2002) documents how academic writings enact *ideal* social practices. When these are dictated by the needs of industry, writing becomes specialised and technical (2002, pp. 123-124; 127; 129). When they are dominated by a research ideal, such as the Humboldtian faith in the fundamental laws of science (Rüegg & Ridder-Symoens, 1992-2011, p. 5; 15, Vol. 3), not only do they prevent any other genre from taking root, but they impose a straightjacket on the genres of all disciplines (Russell, 2002, p. 71; 79; 85, emphasis added):

[T]o understand why certain forms of student writing endured and others faded, or why certain pedagogies included writing and others did not, one must look to the character of the research *ideal* and the ways it interacted with writing in the new mass education system [...]. German scholarship rapidly set a new standard for academic writing, not only in the sciences but also in the emerging humanities and social sciences because disciplines viewed student writing through the narrow lens of their own research writing, they rarely explored other possibilities [...].

Russell then suggests that *ideals* can become *ideologies* (2002, p. 269). He shows how two progressive US writing programmes in the 1950s and 60s were abolished because they prioritised the developmental and learning potential of writing over its specialised, skills-based technical nature. These programmes drew significantly on the progressive ideas of Arthur N. Applebee, an educationalist who regarded writing as integral to the learning process and was associated with left-wing political ideals of equality and inclusion. According to Russell (2002, p. 269), this might explain, given the political tendencies of the United States at the time, why such programmes were not maintained.

Other scholars, too, have claimed that writing "reproduces the ideologies and inequities of the institution and society" (A. Archer & Breuer, 2016b, p. 42); that its approach is 'ideological, transparent, objective and autonomous' (Bennett, 2015; Lea & Street, 1998; Street, 1984); that it embodies 'exclusionary ideologies' (Lillis, 2001; Scott, 2013; Thesen & Cooper, 2013; Turner, 2018) and that by focusing on accuracy and standards it privileges conservative, elitist and undemocratic 'ideologies' (Mike Rose, 1985; Russell, 2002).

Because of word constraints, the next section limits itself to signposting, rather than developing, the argument about why writing is equated with ideology.

Literacy and cognition

Literacy is ideological in the sense that its different understandings reflect different worldviews. This transpires from the above discussion where I showed how being literate conflates with being able to write rather than, for example, draw. This 'worldview' contrasts with other worldviews where

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literacies are not reduced to the alphabet, but are multiple and creative (Kara, 2015; Kuttner, Sousanis, & Weaver-Hightower, 2017).

Writing is also equated with the ability to think correctly. However, this can lead to 'exclusionary' practices such as assuming that if someone cannot write (in ways deemed to be 'correct' which assume standards that in turn assume worldviews), then they are unable to think (correctly). This contrasts with visual cognitive theories, such as those examined in Arnheim (1969), and further suggests that non-alphabetic (such as Chinese) cultures are illiterate and therefore unable to think (Dabashi, 2015).

Language and power

As shown by Fairclough (2001) and Pierre Bourdieu and Thompson (1991), language has the power to enact ideologies.

The 1900s witnessed the emergence of English as the *lingua franca* of academic research, replacing French and German (and Latin). This signalled a shift in economic and political power from mainland Europe (once the heart of academia) to the UK and the US (now setting higher education agendas). The key events that cemented the shift to English include: the establishment of the American university based on the German research model (Russell, 2002); the two World Wars, which intensified and prioritised scientific research to serve the war industry (*ibid*); the consequences of nineteenth century colonialism (Mbembe, 2008; Morris, 2010; Said, 1978), then of de-colonialism (such as India gaining its independence in 1947) and then again of post-colonialism, which meant that European countries, including the UK, had obligations to educate those it had colonised but also to maintain a form of 'soft power' to ensure allegiances (Peters, 2017). The ensuing economic and political dominance of

the United States and British Imperialism has ensured that English continues to be the main language through which research is conducted and disseminated (Altbach, September 8 2007; Genç & Bada, 2010; Turner, 2010, p. 54; 62).

Since English is the language of academia, it has power to enact its 'worldview'. If Portuguese, for example, were the *lingua franca* of the academy, then different ideologies might emerge (Bennett, 2010). However, as documented in Turner (2010), Politzer-Ahles et al. (2016), Lillis and Curry (2010b, 2015) and more recently in Hanauer, Sheridan, and Englander (2019), the dominance of English as the language of academia enacts linguistic injustices that exclude many from global academic conversations. This is why Turner, in discussing EAP, claims (2010, p. 78):

> Academic writing should not be seen as autonomous or given. It is not an autonomous set of skills or a discrete set of rhetorical values that have been arrived independently, or been designated as such by some kind of decree. It is rather a cultural practice that has been invested in rhetorical values that are themselves the effects of wider cultural processes.

Gender, science and objectivity

Ideologies are gendered because worldviews reflect the values of all individuals. Feminist writings enact ideologies that are 'situated' (Haraway, 1998), meaning that they acknowledge, through language, the bodies that produce them, the emotions that accompany them and the processes, constraints and locations that engendered them. They are typically contrasted with the confident certitude of male-authored objective, rational, impersonal scientific texts. They include the kind of passionate

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writing redacted by Le Ha (2009) and the playful stylistic surprises of Sword (2009).

For feminist scholar Haraway, discourses of 'objectivity' are "enshrined in elementary textbooks and technoscience booster literature" (*ibid,* p. 576), yet even scientists know that this is not how science is 'actually made', because the history of science tells us that science is achieved through trial, error and incertitude (T. Kuhn, 1962). Instead, Haraway (1988, pp. 589-590) argues, in an academic style that EAP textbooks don't showcase (and which I quote at length deliberately, to 'take the reader there' (Back, 2018), that feminism embraces uncertainty, interpretations, diversity and multiplicity:

> Feminism loves another science: the sciences and politics of interpretation, translation, stuttering, and the partly understood. Feminism is about the sciences of the multiple subject with (at least) double vision. Feminism is about a critical vision consequent upon a critical positioning in unhomogeneous gendered social space. Translation is always interpretive, critical, and partial. Here is a ground for conversation, rationality, and objectivity - which is power-sensitive, not pluralist, "conversation." It is not even the mythic cartoons of physics and mathematics - incorrectly caricatured in anti-science ideology as exact, hyper-simple knowledges - that have come to represent the hostile other to feminist paradigmatic models of scientific knowledge, but the dreams of the perfectly known in high-technology, permanently militarized scientific productions and positionings, the god trick of a Star Wars paradigm of rational knowledge. So location is about vulnerability; location resists the politics of closure, finality, or to borrow from Althusser, feminist objectivity resists "simplification in the last instance." That is because feminist embodiment resists fixation and is insatiably curious about the webs of differential positioning. There is no

single feminist standpoint because our maps require too many dimensions for that metaphor to ground our visions. But the feminist standpoint theorists' goal of an epistemology and politics of engaged, accountable positioning remains eminently potent. The goal is better accounts of the world, that is, "science."

Haraway's writing style defies the 'scientific' academic writing paradigms of exactitude and reduction by using repetition and even omitting referencing details [*sic*], something EAP would disallow. Arguably, she is writing in a tradition that has its own conventions, but EAP students are unlikely to be exposed this kind of writing on the grounds that it does not display the features of academicness that EAP requires.

Modality

The tension between writing and drawing has already been referred to (Harris, 1986, pp. 29-30), but Postman (1993, p. 16, emphasis added) describes it as a form of 'competition' that reflects ideologies and world views rather than any inherent superiority or inferiority of one medium or another:

[N]ew technologies compete with old ones—for time, for attention, for money, for prestige, but mostly for dominance of their *world-view*. This competition is implicit once we acknowledge that a medium contains an *ideological* bias. And it is a fierce competition, as only *ideological* competitions can be. It is not merely a matter of tool against tool—the alphabet attacking ideographic writing, the printing press attacking the illuminated manuscript, the photograph attacking the art of painting, television attacking the printed word. When media make war against each other, it is a case of *world-views* in collision.

Framing modes as being in 'ideological competition' with each other, goes some way towards explaining resistance to forms of literacy that are non-written, multilingual, or non-standard. This resistance takes place in EAP, but also seems to exist more broadly in education, as highlighted by *Times Higher Education* journalist Grove (2016), who, contentiously, suggests that the privileging of writing in academic assessments may lead to inequalities and discrimination. For example, mature students who have been out of education for a while but who have developed skills in other areas of communication might benefit from alternative forms of assessment. Some of the comments following Grove's article reveal just how controversial this suggestion is:

> [#2](#) Submitted by Descartes on October 3, 2016 - 11:06am
>
> *"[...] It seems UEL is willing and happy to award 2:1s and 1sts to students who are unable to use the most basic of scholarly skills ... writing [...]*

Epistemic injustice

A further way in which ideology can be enacted through writing is by measuring academic competence almost exclusively through the written form and through varieties of writing (and language choice) deemed to be better than others. Since academic writing is used to assess academic competence, it is high stakes, especially for those uncomfortable with writing or who prefer to express themselves using different forms (as I show in Chapter 4). In this sense, excluding literacies that embody knowledge and ways of thinking not traditionally communicated in writing could amount to a form of 'epistemic injustice' (Carel & Kidd, 2014), namely an unfairness towards the way somebody communicates their knowledge

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because their background, interests and abilities differ from the standard and because *we* (the receivers) don't understand why somebody is communicating the way they are.

The phrase 'epistemic injustice' was coined by moral philosopher Miranda Fricker (2007) to refer to the ways in which the words of a speaker (in this case, a writer) are ignored, derided or simply misunderstood because the hearer (or the reader) is negatively or ignorantly pre-disposed towards the speaker (writer). This negative predisposition could involve racist, sexist or educational biases, such as those implied by Rose (1989) when discussing Lucia's exclusion from the psychology class (see Chapter 1). She was excluded on the grounds that she didn't have the language and conceptual frameworks of academic psychology, yet she was knowledgeable because of her personal experience of mental illness.

Instances of epistemic injustice also resonate throughout Sperlinger et al. (2018), who argue that higher education should be made accessible to a far greater range of people and throughout life, not only at 18. One example, specifically, seems to capture what might count as epistemic injustice in writing practices.

In a classroom reading of Spivak's essay *Can the Subaltern Speak* (in Morris (2010), in which the feminist writer and academic argues against the West's racist and colonial attitudes, most students struggled to understand the text. Possibly influenced by the fact that the essay had famously won a 'bad writing award' from the *Journal of Philosophy and Literature* (Sperlinger et al., p. 55), the majority of students did not understand this essay. One student, Nina, however, did. She claimed to 'like *what* Spivak' was saying and as a consequence of connecting with the content, understood Spivak's

writing style. Since Nina was also a non-traditional student whose background literacies were not those of the academy, she found most standard academic writing 'difficult' anyway. Spivak touched on themes that resonated with her experience of life and was therefore able to access its knowledge. I see two potential counts of epistemic injustice in this story.

The first is towards Spivak herself, whose traditional white, male Western academic reader may simply have dismissed her knowledge on the grounds of *how* she expressed it and out of ignorance of her experiences as a non-white female anti-colonial academic. As Turner (2018, pp. 258-259) argues, readers must also make an effort to understand the writer. The second is towards the student population at large. If the range of what counts as 'academic' writing is narrowed and students are denied exposure to a range of writing styles, then some knowledge becomes excluded from the curriculum. This, too, becomes a form of injustice.

Conclusion

Understanding the history of writing generally and of academic writing specifically frames writing as a contingent practice, one that could have been otherwise and that can evolve to reflect social needs and values. This chapter has highlighted some of the contested narratives surrounding the supremacy of the alphabetic script by challenging its conflation with writing. I have suggested instead that drawing and semasiography, including mathematics, are forms of writing because the etymology of writing includes the concept of drawing and because there are inherent flaws in alternative definitions of writing. I have also challenged the belief that written expression affords better thinking than other modes, such as the visual and the aural, with reference to Olson, who has shown that

writing shapes thinking in ways that are comparatively, rather than qualitatively, different. Specifically, I have highlighted a possible misinterpretation of the commonly held view that orality gave way to literacy suggesting that orality and literacy coexisted and afforded different ways of representing reality. If literacy, specifically Western literacy, came to be seen as the superior form of representation, this may have more to do with ideologies than with inherent qualities.

The next chapter showcases diversity in current academic writing practices in order to exemplify that academicness has many shapes and forms.

Chapter 4- What makes writing academic

what is academic writing (...)? What is an academic community? ...As Rose concludes: "Wide-ranging change will occur only if the academy redefines writing for itself, changes the terms of the argument, (and) sees instruction in writing as one of its central concerns (Mike Rose, 1985, p. 359).

Introduction

I open this chapter on what makes writing academic with Rose's related question: 'what is academic writing?'. Like Rose, I am calling for a re-conceptualisation of academic writing that is more inclusive and diverse. Specifically, in this and the remaining chapters, I will argue that what makes writing academic are the varied, current and future *practices* of the academy, including its values[36].

This follows from my questioning in Chapter 3 of what writing itself is. With reference to Roy Harris and others, I suggested that writing be re-thought as pictorial as well as alphabetic and that demarcating what counts and does not count as writing is problematic and ideological. Because the historical purposes and genres of writing are multiple and cannot be reduced to one single aim or form, namely book-keeping or religion or

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[36] Compare the similarly titled advice (discussed in Chapter 1) on 'What is academic writing?', where formality, logic, clarity, balance and concision are valued (https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/14011/writing/106/academic_writing [accessed 11/12/2018])

science, attempts to provide core definitions of writing are 'fallacies' (Pettersson, 1994, p. 171).

Since diverse purposes and practices shape the forms that writing takes, and since what it means to be 'academic' is similarly diverse, then what makes writing academic is likely to be varied. For example, the transformative agendas of American Composition Studies and Academic Literacies have shown that writing is more than a display of grammatical and lexical conventions. This is because it involves questions of equity and access that expand the ways in which writers engage with the world and that shape the way writers write.

When there is consensus about what makes a text academic, this generally clusters around the idea that for writing to be 'academic' it has to present an argument (Fish, 2017, pp. 159-190). However, when there is controversy, this generally clusters around the fact that academic writing can go 'beyond argument' and be about essaying instead (S. Allen, 2015), namely exploring, understanding and digressing. And, as I will show, even when it is all about the argument, the shape and form that argument embodies can be disrupted.

Chapter 4 underscores some of this debate firstly by considering that what makes writing academic, namely its 'academicness', cannot be reduced to any particular feature. I will showcase this academicness with examples of diverse texts that do not display conventional features of academic writing. Secondly, I will explain some of this diversity by referring to Adler-Kassner and Wardle (2015)'s threshold concepts in writing studies, which I have located in the textual environment from which writers draw to make decisions about how to write (see Appendix A). The reason for doing this is

to show that what makes writing academic emerges from the interaction of multiple purposes (i.e. *writers* have multiple purposes) and from diverse forms (e.g. language, genres, conventions), which, when taken together, invite us "to imagine beyond [their] own terms of reference" (Back, 2016, p. 64). I take this to mean that something 'beyond the writer and the textual environment' emerges from the text. This, thirdly, involves recognising that argument is *a* feature of what makes writing academic (but not the only one). This is because it emerges from the choices that writers make when considering what the textual environment offers them. Since it is a marker of academicness, language becomes just one of several modes in the textual environment that writers draw on to do their arguing.

Academicness

I use the term 'academicness' to refer to a holistic property of a text, i.e. the totality of what makes it academic rather than, for example, legal or poetic. A property is a quality that can be predicated of *whole* objects, like colour, shape, sound or taste. It is a quality that does not pick out any single or uniquely identifying *part* of the whole object (Sellars, 1963). In this sense, academicness is like 'meaning'. It only makes sense within a context and cannot be reduced to a 'single element that stands alone' because it is 'relational' and 'holistic' in structure (Malpas, 2002, p. 407).

In this sense, what makes a text academic, namely its 'academicness', is not the presence or absence of specific features relating to language, genre moves or argument. If what made writing academic could be reduced to these specific features, then hoaxes such as Alan Sokal (Cuthbert, 2018; Franca & Lloyd, 2000; Sokal, 1996, 2008) (Fig. 14) and Ike Antkare (Labbé,
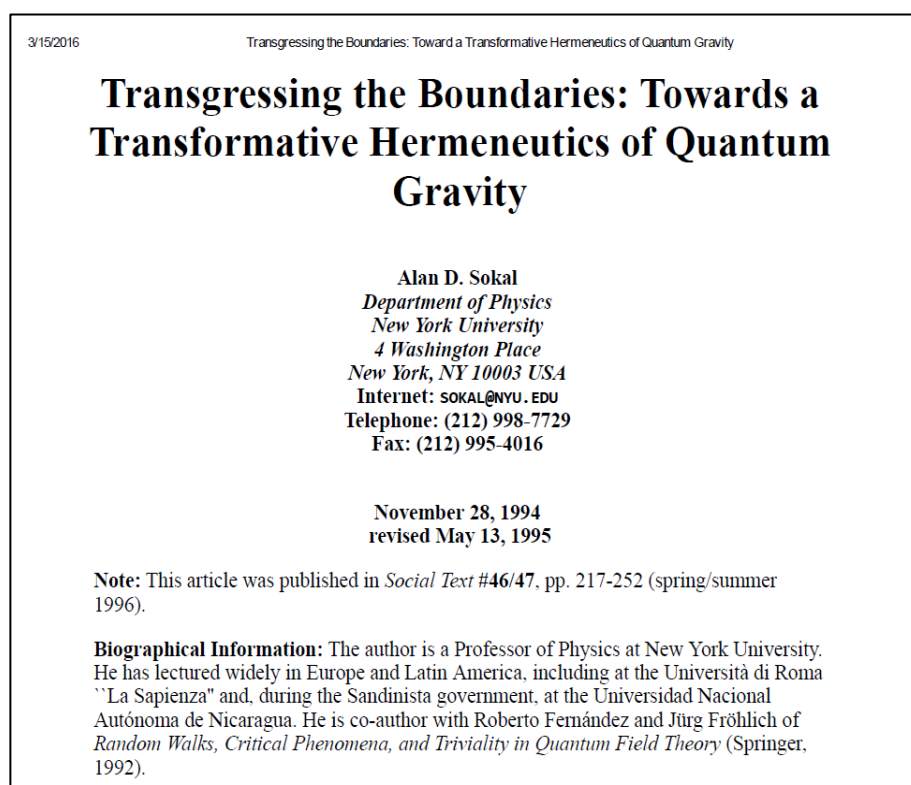
Figure 14: Sokal hoax

2010; Labbé & Labbé, 2012; Van Noorden, 2014) (Fig. 15) would count as academic in virtue of the fact that they display the features that EAP classifies as 'academic'.

Figure 15: Antkare fake

However, whilst displaying conventional academic *forms* - which is likely to explain why they are so readily published - hoaxes promulgate 'nonsense' (Alvesson et al., 2017, pp. 4-5) and in so doing, fail to adhere to the standards of socio-academic practices (SAPs in Appendix A). Socio-academic practices include a commitment to the truth (Connell, 2013), to academic integrity (Zgaga, 2009), to social justice (Case, 2013, pp. 19-25) and to innovation and research (Warnock, 1989). Such commitments require an ethical orientation towards honesty and the active volition of an agent. Neither an automated generator of academic jargon (Labbé, 2014; Labbé & Labbé, 2012) nor the deliberate human intention to mislead and distort disciplinary knowledge (Sokal, 2008) are commensurate with the spirit of such aims.

It is in this sense that academic hoaxes do not count as academic.

Clearly, however, those who published these articles, the editor-readers of *Social Text* and Springer (for Sokal and Antkare, respectively) believed them to be genuinely academic. Sokal (2008) has documented these reasons. They include the editors' appreciation of post-modern academic jargon and relativist conclusions which suggested to them that the text was *bona fide*. Similarly, Van Noorden (2014) has indicated that the fake papers published by *Springer* (and detected by Labbé) had 'characteristic vocabulary', meaning the kind of recognisable academic jargon that the fake text generator SCIgen had been programmed to produce.

Sokal has since also admitted that some of his readers felt his thesis was 'defensible' (Sokal, 2014, personal communication). This further suggests that the form in which these texts were written contributed to the *perception* that they were legitimate. In Sellars (1963)'s sense, their *manifest image* was that of an academic text.

If the text itself, i.e. its form, has the power to generate this level of confidence in the reader, then this might suggest that the academicness of a text resides in the text itself and/or in the reader's perception of it. Accordingly, hoaxes might indeed count as academic in virtue of the reader's *perception* of their academicness. However, this is an uncomfortable position to reach because readers can be wrong, in the sense of being misled, as was also the case of art critics believing that Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain/Urinal* was 'art' when in fact it, too, was a hoax generated by the artist/author (Grant, 2011).

Alternatively, rather than relying on the reader's perception, the academicness of a text might reside in the author's intent (Fish, 2017, pp.

162-166). For example, whether Wittgenstein's writings count as examples of academic writing, is contentious. Yet, they are established in the disciplinary (academic) practices of analytic philosophy (Sigmund, 2017, p. 128):

> Wittgenstein confided to Russell [one of his PhD supervisors (the other was G. E. Moore)] that no one would ever understand the book, although it was, as he put it, "crystal clear." Elsewhere, however, he noted: "I am aware that all these sentences are unclear." As he seemed to realize at least to some extent, his style struck an odd balance between moments of dazzling lucidity and moments of total opacity, reflecting the tension between his yearning for clear expression and his awareness that some things simply cannot be expressed [...] Wittgenstein's style was at once cryptic and crystalline.

How could this be? One possible reason is that Wittgenstein was well-known and sufficiently well-regarded in his intellectual circles for his ideas to be trusted and his writing respected (compare with my earlier discussion about Derrida). This suggests that knowing who the author is, what they might have intended and, possibly, agreeing with them may have some bearing on whether a text is deemed to be academic or not. At the same time, though, Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was rejected by several publishers because of its cryptic style (Sigmund, 2017, p. 127). This, then, suggests that a judgment about the text was made on the basis of the text itself and/or the reader's perception of it. Eventually, it was accepted for publication thanks to Bertrand Russell's introduction and endorsement, which signals that 'knowing who the author is and their intentions' does have bearing on what is considered 'academic'.

The relationship between authorial intent, reader perception and text meaning has an established literary history which I cannot do full justice to. However, a brief reference to key issues in this debate can show that the binaries it sets up are unsatisfactory.

That the author's intended meaning is *irrelevant* to the interpretation of a text, is referred to in literary theory as the 'intentional fallacy'. Proponents of this fallacy are Barthes (1967); Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) and Foucault (1969). Strictly speaking, on their account, it would not matter that Sokal and Antkare are hoaxes because if the academicness (or meaning) resides in the text, not the author, then nothing more than the text is needed to judge its academicness.

Conversely, proponents of the thesis that authorial intent *does* matter include Knapp and Michaels (1982) and Fish (2017). Knapp and Michaels collapse 'the author's intended meaning' with 'the text meaning' arguing that we cannot "derive one term from the other, since to have one is already to have both" (1982, p. 724). For them, only authorial intent establishes text meaning in the sense that the intent *is* the text.

Fish points to the culture of plagiarism as evidence that authorial intent and originality *are* measures of academicness. If intent didn't matter, he argues, then why would the 'West' be so concerned with plagiarism and originality (see Pennycook, 1996 for a history of Western conceptions of plagiarism)? Recent controversies surrounding the work of Italian mafia writer/journalist Roberto Saviano (Moynihan, 2015) and critical theorist/philosopher Slavoj Žižek (Jones, 2014) are cases in point: both authors deny the intent to plagiarise and claim that it is what their texts say that matters, not where the information comes from. This would suggest

that Saviano and Žižek align themselves with proponents of the 'intentionalist fallacy' because they deny that author intent matters. Yet, this does not seem to be an acceptable stance in current Western conceptions of authorship (see, for example, university statements about what counts as 'academic misconduct'), where the 'intent' to copy remains significant in establishing the trustworthiness (or academicness) of a text.

The Sokal and Atkare texts complicate matters further. Despite both being hoaxes, they differ in at least one crucial way: one was written by a human and the other by a computer. If we appeal to author intent, following Knapp and Michaels (1982) and Fish (2017), then Antkare is not academic because it cannot enact any socio-academic practices (SAPs) since it is generated by a computer and, typically, computers do not have intent. But following Barthes and other proponents of the 'intentionalist fallacy', Sokal's article could count as 'academic' because it displays 'predictable and recognisable patterns' that readers would normally expect in an academic text: it is researched in the traditional sense of 'referring to relevant literature'; it made sense to its intended audience; and (worryingly) it is still in circulation and available in *Social Text* via an established academic publisher, JSTOR (Sokal, 1996). This further confers institutional legitimacy to the text, giving it academic credibility. Moreover, at the time, the article generated genuine academic debate around what counts as knowledge (see for example Dawkins 1998). What makes us reluctant to call it 'academic', however, is not its content but the *intention* with which it was produced, and perhaps more importantly, the dishonesty of this intention: Sokal intended to parody and discredit critical theory and did not believe his own arguments.

In this sense, intent becomes a contributing factor in whether a text is deemed to be academic (i.e. a *dishonest* intent detracts from academicness). But this, too, is an uncomfortable conclusion to reach because it suggests that intent matters: if the intent were honest, would this change our perception of whether the text is academic?

Both the hoax and Sokal's subsequent justification for it raise uncomfortable issues: on the one hand, the hoax was read as an 'academic' text, but none of it was 'true'. If we accept that one of the values of higher education is at least a *commitment* to 'truth' (Connell, p.106) or to 'realness' (understood broadly from a critical realist perspective as the recognition that external ontologies exist (Bengtsen & Barnett, 2017), then the hoax was not academic. However, if we accept this, then we would also have to accept that the IELTS and Pearson Tests of Academic English are not academic either. This is because they are written to display language and mimic essay forms, not to advance truthful, or real, accounts of the world.

The articles published by Springer and IEEE also display many of the features that EAP and popular writing advice literature would classify as 'academic'. These include the fact that they may have been read and cited by their intended audience (thus meeting criteria of citation impact (Collini, 2012, p. 1; 4; Labbé & Labbé, 2012) and may even, albeit unintentionally, contain established scientific truths in so far as they were generated by a computer corpus of genuine scientific articles. Yet, it is the fact that they were computer-generated and devoid of human agency that negatively influences our judgement about their 'academicness', not the fact that their structure (i.e. their form) conforms to a standard. This indicates that writer agency, in the sense of there being an intention, is playing a part in determining the academicness of a text.

To sum up, what I am claiming so far is that when we invoke the structural markers of academicness as standards by which to judge whether a text is academic or not, hoaxes would count as academic but unconventional texts would not. This is because unconventional texts display the 'wrong' sort of language and moves, and certainly not the kind of academic language that EAP writing programmes and textbooks are likely to engage with. However, when we invoke the writer's agency to determine whether a text is *bona fide* academic, this involves an appeal to their intention. But intention alone could potentially allow anything to be academic.

Since reductive appeals to either structure or agency are unsatisfactory in explaining academicness, an account of their interaction is needed. This is further developed in Chapter 6 with reference to Appendix A.

Examples of unconventional texts that would not pass a modern standard 'structural test' of academicness include the graphic doctoral dissertation of Nick Sousanis (2015) (Fig. 18), the musical PhD exegesis of A.D. Carson (2017) (Fig. 17), the playful and feminist PhD thesis of Harron (2016) (Fig. 20), the aphorisms of Ludwig Wittgenstein' *Tractatus* (also his PhD thesis (Sigmund, 2017, p. 135) (Wittgenstein & Russell, 1922) (Fig. 19) and the scientific dialogues of Galileo Galilei's *Two Chief World Systems*[37] (Galilei, Drake, & Einstein, 1967) (Fig. 16).

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[37] Clearly, Galilei's dialogues were written before modern academic conventions existed. My point here, however, is that Galilei chose the dialogue genre to propose his heliocentric thesis as opposed to the more conventional prose and less controversial thesis of his other work on classical physics (cf. Chapter 2).

Figure 18: Sousanis' non-linear graphic EdD dissertation

Figure 17: Carson's socially-committed rap PhD
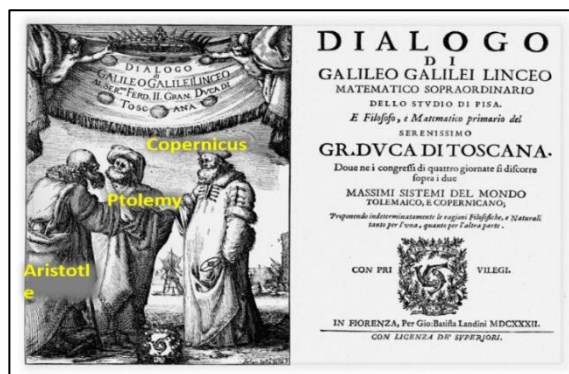
Figure 16: Galilei's helio-centric paradigm-changing *Dialogue*

1
The world is all that is the case.
1.1
The world is the totality of facts, not of things.

Figure 19: Wittgenstein's aphoristic PhD
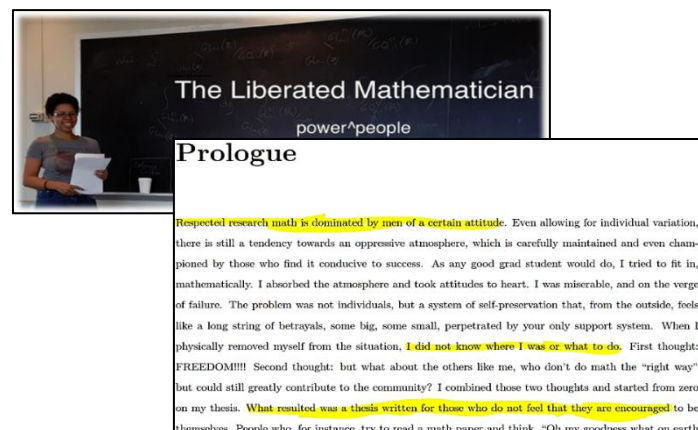
Figure 20: Harron's socially-inclusive and playful PhD

Other examples of recent unconventional academic texts come from theoretical physicist Daniel Shanahan. Shanahan (2015) argues that scientific journals need to become 'living documents' that allow more space to report methods rather than results because what matters most in

scientific research is the appropriateness of the methods used and the extent to which these can be replicated. By not giving due space to methods and by granting more visibility to the findings of scientific research, the 'form' of the academic paper amounts to a 'fraud'. This fraud can be further compounded by superlative language that inflates the significance of the findings (Vinkers, Tijdink, & Otte, 2015). Shanahan's example allows me to start illustrating how the academicness of a text can be reconceptualised as an interaction between the structural elements available in the textual environment (such as form, grammar, genre and reader expectations) and the disciplinary knowledge, values and intentions of the writer who has agency in shaping the text. What makes Shanahan's living document academic is an interaction between the writer's disciplinary values and intentions to give more space to methods and what the textual environment affords in terms of structures that enable this to happen. As such, what makes the text academic is not reduced to either the writer's intentions or to the structural form of the text.

Shanahan further claims that by allowing more published space for methods, scientists would curb the unscientific drive that publishers' have towards prioritising controversial or trending results which are more likely to capture the attention of a superficial audience than satisfy the needs of the scientific community. Shanahan, therefore, advocates that we re-genre the scientific article so that we can:

> move beyond the now-obsolete print model and truly embrace
> the freedom that online publication gives us, moving towards
> living documents that can be updated, amended, extended and
> indeed directly linked to other articles and data.

Shanahan's *living document* is an example of what Bazerman (1988) means by 'shaping' knowledge or of what Lunsford means when she claims that writing is 'epistemic', namely that it doesn't "simply record thought or knowledge but [...] has the capacity to actually produce thought and knowledge" (2015). By accusing scientific papers of being 'frauds' because they give more space to findings than to methods, Shanahan is also highlighting the need for there to be integrity in the writer's intentions, which suggests that the 'right sort of intentions' can justify the forms that shape a text.

Another example of how writers interact with their textual environments to shape knowledge comes in the guise of a 17-year-old ruse deployed by a Swedish medical team to get their research noticed (Grow, 2014; Michaels, 2014). In an effort to promote the importance of their work and make it more retrievable on search engines (as well as showcase their sense of humour), they introduced lyrics from the singer-songwriter Bob Dylan into the titles of their writings. Lundberg, Lundberg, Alving, and Weitzberg (1997) published a paper entitled "Nitric oxide and inflammation: The answer is blowing in the wind". The paper was on flatulence.

Interestingly, "the researchers also point out that it is primarily in review articles and commentaries that it is possible to use quotations since these articles are often slightly lighter in tone (less heavyweight) than others" and "it's important that the quotation is linked to the scientific content, that it reinforces the message and raises the quality of the article as such, not the reverse" (Sjöblom, 2014). I would argue that their use of Dylan lyrics should be welcomed in 'heavyweight' academic writings, too, because their imagery affords the communication of an important scientific message in ways that a more traditional title might not. This affordance forms part of the broader

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academic practice of being understood and critiqued by a wider audience than would otherwise be possible. Consequently, their use of lyrics remains academically relevant in the sense that it affords a socio-academic practice (SAP), namely the practice of communicating knowledge to the wider public (i.e. public engagement).

These examples could be dismissed as *hapax legomena*, namely one-off instances that are not representative of academic discourse as a whole. While this may be true, it does not alter that fact that they exist and that they have established themselves within the knowledge discourses of their disciplinary communities. In so doing, they are enacting diverse socio-academic practices (SAPs).

Examples of socio-academic practices (SAPs)

Since such texts exist, I am concerned with understanding why this might be so. Because their existence can't be explained by recourse to any isolated conventional form or writer intent or institutional requirement, I will suggest that what makes these texts academic are the socio-academic practices that emerge from an interaction *between* the writer (their knowledge, intentions, values and abilities) *and* the textual environment. It is the textual environment that includes the reader and the institutional, social and linguistic structures about which writers need to be knowledgeable so that they can make informed decisions (see Appendix A).

Mindful of the fact that, as Tardy (2016, p. 76) reminds us, issues of 'symbolic and cultural' capital are also involved, I am not downplaying the role of the reader or of institutional expectations in establishing the academicness of texts. This is because I recognise that (*ibid*):

> In the traditional academic classroom, clearly defined roles of
> the teacher (as expert and assessor) and the student (as novice
> and learner) shape how student texts are both written and read,
> and they limit the likelihood that a student will depart from
> genre expectations.

However, innovation, even at a relatively novice level, does occur, as the student writings referred to above exemplify. And in occurring, it gives rise to a range of socio-academic practices.

Examples of what I am calling socio-academic practices include commitments to truth and inquiry; problem-solving and problem-generating research; understanding, imagination and interpretation; care, wisdom and thinking; social and epistemic justice (such as activism (Spivak, 1987); ideologies and identities; creativity and reflection; inclusion and diversity, *phronesis* and *eudamonia*; risk-taking and public engagement (references to which can be found throughout the following literatures: Barnett, 2012; Bengtsen & Barnett, 2018; Besley & Peters, 2013; Biesta, Filippakou, Wainwright, & Aldridge, 2019; de Sousa Santos, 2017; Nixon, 2012; Sperlinger et al., 2018; Thesen & Cooper, 2013; Warnock, 1989).

Instead of these practices being 'encapsulated' (Bazerman, 2015) in any specific or prescribed set of lexical or grammatical items, or forms, it is possible that they emerge from an interaction between the *writer* and the range of properties available to them in the *textual environment*. This is because neither the writer nor the textual environment, each in isolation from the other, can establish the academicness of a text. Rather, the textual environment affords the writer a range of possibilities, including knowledge of their readers and threshold concepts (Appendix A), which can shape the academic text. By perceiving the affordance of the textual environment, the

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writer can orient their readers' perceptions in a world where readers also *cooperate* in the understanding of a text (Turner, 2018). Tardy (2016, p. 61) might describe this as an 'innovation' that builds rapport between the writer and the reader. Thus, it can be the writer who, in a performative act, *wilfully intends* the disruption of certain disciplinary attitudes, such as attitudes to Mathematics, and who *chooses* elements from the textual environment that can include playful and innovative language to further ideological purposes.

For example, Harron (2016, p. 8) uses language to disrupt readers' expectations and to enact a social practice of inclusion: this is signalled by the claim that "Respected research math is dominated by men of a certain attitude" (2016, p. 1). Harron is using her academic writing to establish her 'identity' as a female mathematician and advance her 'ideology' of social inclusion (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015, pp. 48-58). This is further compounded by writing her PhD thesis with three different readers in mind: the lay person, the initiated person and the expert. Harron is knowledgeably both anticipating and orienting her readers' expectations by disrupting the traditional genre of the PhD thesis that assumes one type of reader. She does this because she wants to write a thesis that is "as mathematically complete as I could honestly make it" (*ibid*) and for a community of mathematicians that includes those who "do not feel that they are encouraged to be themselves" (*ibid*). By interacting with her textual environment and choosing the form and genre that allows her to express her identity and ideology, she is enacting a socio-academic practice (of inclusion and social justice).

Threshold concepts

Having argued that academicness is a holistic and relational socio-academic practice that cannot be reduced to any single element in the text or to a writer's intent, the following section draws on threshold concepts in writing studies (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015) to further argue that what makes writing academic may emerge from the ways in which writers conceptualise their written texts.

The model proposed in Appendix A, and further explained in Chapters 5 and 6, classifies threshold concepts within the textual environment. This is because they are part of the affordance relation that allows socio-academic practices (SAPs) to emerge.

 'Threshold concepts' is a phrase mobilised by Meyer and Land (2006) to designate a powerful heuristic in higher education. In an interview with Deverson (2017), Ray Land explains that a threshold concept acts like a 'portal' that opens "a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something" (Meyer & Land, 2006, p. 4). This new way of thinking has a 'transformative function' because 'once students have understood a key disciplinary concept, they are taken into a new intellectual and emotional space'. For example, Reimann and Jackson (2006, p. 166) discuss the threshold concept of 'opportunity cost' in Economics. This is explained as 'the sacrifice made, when resources are scarce, to seek opportunities between competing uses of finite resources'. An 'opportunity cost' is therefore not actually a cost. It is a ratio that measures 'the best alternative' in the range of resources available. It is a 'relative cost of one opportunity set against an alternative or competing economic activity'. Understanding this, for an Economics student, is part of a 'liminal' state in their learning

whereby they may feel confused, stuck and challenged (Kiley & Wisker, 2009, p. 432) as they try to 'integrate' their previous understandings with the new 'troublesome' understandings that seem "conceptually difficult, counter-intuitive or even 'alien'" (Meyer & Land, 2006, p. 39). It is a state that can be "likened to that which adolescents inhabit: not yet adults; not quite children" (Cousin, 2006, p. 1). Once they have crossed the 'threshold' that separates this liminal state from their understanding of the new concept, their knowledge becomes 'irreversible', meaning "that the change of perspective occasioned by acquisition of a threshold concept is unlikely to be forgotten" (Meyer and Land, 2006, p. 7).

Understanding that what makes writing academic may not amount to a set of prescribed conventions similarly requires entering a liminal state where the familiar comfort of previous knowledge (e.g. predictable paragraph patterns and IELTS essays) becomes troublesome. Although threshold concepts are referred to as 'troublesome' because they disrupt previously-held understandings, this does not presuppose that there is a 'correct way' to understand a concept: the point is that *any* shift in conceptual understandings is likely to be troublesome.

This point is implied by Cousin (2006, p. 1) when she reminds us that threshold concepts are 'bounded' (meaning that concepts border with other concepts that index new conceptual areas). Their boundedness requires us to resist 'essentialist readings' by remaining open to questioning the concepts themselves. This is because of the 'provisional explanatory capacity' of disciplinary concepts rather than because of any 'congealed property' that might be defining them. For example, understanding that in Economics an 'opportunity cost' is not actually a 'cost' but a 'ratio' does not mean that understanding it as a 'ratio' is correct: this, too, may be a

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'provisional explanation'. But the conceptual shift in crossing the threshold that allows the student to rethink it as a 'ratio' instead of a 'cost' is necessary for disciplinary understanding.

In what follows, I am proposing that a conceptual *shift* is needed to understand what makes writing academic. I am not (necessarily) prescribing new 'congealed' concepts to replace the old ones, but I am foregrounding conceptual shifts that might be included in the textual environments that writers can then draw on when making decisions about what forms their writings 'encapsulate'.

One such shift is the recognition that when writing is reduced to a relatively finite set of skills it may fail to 'encapsulate' *new* socio-academic practices that might otherwise emerge from the more open, mobile and fluid interaction of the writer and the textual environment. Shanahan (2015)'s 'living document' is an example of a new socio-academic practice, one where science reclaims its focus on methods.

Socio-academic practices, unlike autonomous transferable skills, cannot be googled, downloaded, copied, collated and then measured against big data banks of lexical corpora. Nor can they be used to create 'link farms', namely search engine algorithms that artificially increase rankings and citations by inflating the prominence of articles that may not be *bona fide* (Labbé & Labbé, 2012) but which boost audit metrics.

Fish (2017, p. 212) implies that big data exonerates us from thinking, and that this may well be seductive in an 'accelerated academy'[38]. Moreover,

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[38] See http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/the-accelerated-academy-series/ and http://sociologicalimagination.org/archives/category/accelerated-academy [accessed 29/12/2018]

since language is inherently corrupt – because of its interpretative ambiguities – we might all be better off avoiding it, allowing big data to communicate on our behalf instead:

> we will have raw data untainted by the corruption of subjectivity and therefore capable of generating meaning and agreement simply by virtue of getting bigger and bigger. Language, always vulnerable to manipulation, kills, but big data saveth.

The problem with this is that it strips humans of their creativity and agency to choose, change, mix and adapt languages and modes. In an effort to reclaim a role for writer agency in determining academicness, I'd like to propose threshold concepts as a way to 'saveth' us instead because these can extend the affordances of the textual environment which writers draw upon, adding to the skills set needed to write academically.

In *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts in Writing Studies*, Adler-Kassner and Wardle (2015) articulate thirty seven threshold concepts of academic writing. These threshold concepts foreground the diversity, the affordances, the social practices and the mobility of both writing and writers in ways that EAP, typically, does not.

An example of a threshold concept in writing includes its *performativity* (Lunsford, 2015), meaning that written texts can make things happen 'beyond their own terms of reference' (Back, 2016, p. 64), such as a policy change (an emergent SAP). Another example is the power of texts to build *identities* (Villanueva, 2015), such as feminist writings (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1995) and ecologies of knowledge (de Sousa Santos, 2009), which allow different epistemologies and ontologies (also emergent SAPs) to become visible. When a writer is knowledgeable about what the textual

environment affords, they can then make informed choices about the shape of their written text.

Academicness emerges from this interaction.

Below, I have listed some of these concepts and provided examples of how they can make writing academic in ways that differ from standard conventions. In each example, the academicness of the text emerges from how the writer perceives the affordance of any given threshold concept.

Concept 1: Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Activity

1.1 Writing is a Knowledge-Making Activity (by Heidi Estrem)

"Understanding and identifying how writing is in itself an act of thinking can help people more intentionally recognise and engage with writing as a creative activity, inextricably linked to thought. We don't simply think first and

Figure 21: Law's messy methods make knowledge and thinking visible.

then write. We write *to* think" (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015, p. 19).

In this sense, what makes writing *academic* is its capacity to make us *think*. The academicness of the text emerges from how the writer perceives the affordance of this threshold concept. An example of such a text might be

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Law (2003), who uses a graphic abstract to embody the inherent messiness of research methods, the difficulties of deciding what is relevant and what order to present them in (Fig. 21). By choosing to write his methods a he did (i.e. as a graphic rather than a paragraph), Law is perceiving his writing as a 'Knowledge-Making Activity'.

1.5 Writing Mediates Activity (by David R. Russell)

"The concept that writing mediates activity [eg a STOP sign or a performative] is troublesome because it goes against the usual concepts of writing as 'just' transcribing [...] thought or speech." (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015, p. 27).

What would make writing *academic* here is its capacity to make things *happen*. An example of such a text might be O'Dwyer, Pinto, and McDonough (2018), who invite us to resist the pressures of academia by *performing* a manifesto (Fig. 22). By choosing to write a manifesto, the authors are perceiving their writing as

Figure 22: Writing performing as Self Care

a 'Mediating Activity'. The academicness emerges from perceiving the affordance of such a concept.

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Concept 3: Writing Enacts and Creates Identities and Ideologies

> 3.0 Writing Enacts and Creates Identities and Ideologies (by
> Tony Scott)

"When we seek to 'apprentice' students into academic writing, what ideological imperatives are being asserted in the ways we choose to conceive of academic writers and writing?" (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015, p. 50).

What can make writing *academic* is its capacity to respect that *writers are different*. Examples of such a text include Harron (2016), Carson (2017) and Kunju (2017), the latter having chosen to write his thesis in isiXhosa, one of South Africa's eleven languages. In doing this, he is enacting an ideological stance that consisted in reclaiming as academic an indigenous language and in challenging the dominant geopolitics of academic English (Lillis & Curry, 2010a). By choosing to write in isiXhosa, Kunju is perceiving his writing as a way to 'Enact and Create Identities and Ideologies'. The academicness emerges from this perception.

> 4.3 Learning to Write Effectively Requires Different Kinds of
> Practice, Time, and Effort (by Kathleen Blake Yancey)

" [W]riters necessarily also work in multiple modalities – whether the modality be on the page through document design or on the networked screen bringing words, images, videos, and sound into a single text. In an age when so many spaces and affordances are available, writers need considerable practice keyed not only to fluidity and technique but also to differentiated practice across different spaces of writing, working with different technologies of writing" (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015, p. 65).

In other words, for a text to count as *academic*, it has to be understood as an *affordance*. This will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Concept 5: Writing is (Also Always) a Cognitive Activity

> 5.4 Reflection is Critical for Writers' Development (by Kara Taczak)

"Reflection has the unique ability to connect across the various threshold concepts because it offers writers the ability to be active agents of change, making meaningful contributions to any rhetorical exchange" (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015, p. 79).

Here, what makes writing *academic* is its capacity to make us *reflect*. This capacity can be provided by the rhetoric of visuals which can "prompt sustained reflective thinking" (Hill, 2008, p. 38) and which can remove 'the walls that words create' to free our understandings and 'imagine an education that encourages and cultivates the different ways in which each of us operates and finds meaning' (Sousanis, 2018). Ryan (2014, p. 61) also frames writing as an opportunity to reflect and to "consider the writer as a self-conscious designer of text, which foregrounds their reflexive and agentic position".

When read cumulatively, threshold concepts afford creative possibilities for academic writing to emerge in diverse ways and broaden what the textual environment can offer.

Argument, and its problem with language

Having so far suggested that academicness is neither in the text nor in the intention of the writer but that it emerges from how writers perceive and understand the textual environments from which they draw (including

knowledge of their readers and of threshold concepts), I now propose that argument is an example of academicness because it emerges from the writer's purpose and their perception of what the textual environment affords.

I provide definitions of argument towards the end of this section to illustrate how it can be non-linguistic, but I begin by assuming a generic understanding of argument as the means through which we persuade others (Fish, 2017).

Adler-Kassner and Wardle (2015) seem to have very little to say about argument. This is at odds with the centrality of argument to scholarly work. Although some claim that academic communication doesn't need to be about argumentation (S. Allen, 2015; Bammer & Joeres, 2015), generally, argument is deemed to be a marker of academicness (as discussed throughout Andrews, 2010; A. Archer, 2016; Björkvall, 2016; Fish, 2017; Gourlay, 2016; Wingate, 2012a). What might explain this omission is the fact that argument *emerges* from the threshold concept that the writer has *chosen* (i.e. intended).

In this section, I consider argument to be one of the properties emerging from the interaction between the writer and their textual environment. I also focus on the ways in which 'argument' has been conflated with language to show that this conflation has led to the multimodal affordances of argument being neglected. This enables me to highlight that what is meant by 'argument' has changed over time, is discipline-specific and is multimodal. It further allows me to propose that language, and its associated conventional academic genres, be re-cast as *one of several* modes

through which argument and argumentation can be achieved (cf. Threshold 4.3, above).

I conclude by claiming that an over-reliance on language limits our ability to argue and that a multimodal approach to argument affords greater academicness. By re-casting language as one of several modes from which academicness can emerge, I am drawing attention to the richness of the textual environment and to the opportunities that it affords writers.

How language came to define argument

Linguistically, the dominance of EAP writing models that tend to overemphasise both language and its formal features can be explained with reference to the established tradition which considers language, and language alone, to be the conduit or enabler of complex, higher order thinking that 'raises consciousness' (Emig, 1977; Gourlay, 2016; Ong, 1982, 1986; Turner, 2018). This 'higher order thinking' is associated with 'argumentation', which can be briefly understood as the 'art of persuasion' (Fish, 2017, p. 6) and which, because of its persuasive intent, defines academic communication (Andrews, 2010; Wingate, 2012a).

However, since scripts vary in the ways they represent the world, it is reductive to claim that only writing can 'raise consciousness' (D. Olson 1994, p. 275, my emphasis):

> by examining the diversity of scripts [maps, diagrams,
> illustrations] and the ways they are used and what they provide
> models of, we have been able to specify *a set of relations*
> between literacy and cognition

This suggests, as already indexed in Chapter 3, that writing and cognition are *related* and may make us think *differently* (1994, p. 258) compared to other relations, but not necessarily think *better.*

That language is fallible in capturing and, therefore, doing justice to the ontologies we seek to represent and cognitively engage with has been highlighted by philosopher Miranda Fricker (2007, pp. 150-151). She describes several social situations in which knowers who do not have the linguistic resources to interpret and then describe a social event can become victims of a 'hermeneutical injustice'. This is when somebody (a knower) becomes disempowered and then disadvantaged by social realities that have not developed the linguistic repertoires to describe an event. Some of her examples relate to instances of sexual harassment whereby women must develop the language needed to describe situations that may not be adequately captured by previously established words, such as sexual 'coercion', 'intimidation' or 'exploitation': in the contexts that Fricker describes, 'harassment' helps women describe behaviours that were not obviously captured by the other terms. She shows that language can create conceptual spaces to frame thoughts and experiences in new ways, but, in doing so, she equally indexes how readily language fails to describe what is happening[39].

For my present purposes, this leaves open the possibility that human cognition can develop through a range of representations whereby reality is not captured through the use of one single mode, namely language. When

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[39] Interestingly, the word 'harassment' does not exist in Italian. It is generally translated as *molestia* (as in 'being molested'). However, since the #MeToo scandal, whereby several women took to social media to call out male harassment, the English word is used in Italian media, often untranslated.

argument is allowed to draw on the *most fitting* modes rather than the *most conventional,* the richness and fullness of socio-academic practices are more likely to emerge. As artist and psychologist Rudolf Arnheim reminds us (1974, p. 2):

> The scientist builds conceptual models he wants to understand about a given phenomenon. But he knows that there is no such thing as the full representation of an individual instance.

Latour and Woolgar (1986) are also aware of the limits of relying on a single mode, language, to capture the nature of socio-scientific work (1989, p. 28):

> there has been a growing dissatisfaction with outside observers' reliance on scientists' own statements about the nature of their work. Some participants have themselves argued that printed scientific communications systematically misrepresent the activity that gives rise to published reports.

Their sociological investigations of science, through anthropological observations of a chemistry laboratory, highlight how much can get lost in translating the phenomenology of this work into linguistic statements. Law (2004), in the context of trying to linguistically capture the methods of social science, describes this loss in terms of the 'messiness' of social reality and the challenge of capturing it in language. Since language is ontologically distinct from the reality it describes, the onus of representing reality cannot fall entirely on its shoulders.

The idea that language is best-suited to being a transparent carrier of our thoughts, a conduit for reality rather than constitutive of it - in the Orwellian sense of being a 'window pane' through which we view and represent the outside world - has had many challenges. These include

socio-semiotic integrationist linguists, such as Harris (2011), who claim that such a view of language falls into what he calls the 'fallacy of telementation'.

This fallacy assumes that words are adequate carriers of our thoughts and that our listeners and hearers are able to intend our words as we intended them to be understood, as though the meaning of these words were transparent and complete, needing no further integration with the context in which they were uttered or with the receiver's own understanding of those words. Rather, argues Harris, traditional linguistics is *segregationist* (in the tradition of De Saussure, Wittgenstein and Chomsky) and has failed to recognise that 'languages must be conceived as systems that are entirely *dependent* on their use in communication' (Harris, 2011) and that meaning emerges from the *integration*, rather than the segregation, of the word and the social context it is uttered in by the speaker or writer. This explains why writers need knowledge of their readers by interacting with their textual environments and integrating meanings accordingly to allow academicness to emerge.

Wittgenstein, too, captures the problem of signification when he wonders what it means to 'point to something', in the sense of trying to give an ostensive definition. He asks (1953, #33):

> [W]hat does 'pointing to the shape', 'pointing to the colour'
> consist in? Point to a piece of paper. – And now point to its
> shape – now to its colour – now to its number (that sounds
> queer) – How did you do it? You will say that you 'meant' a
> different thing each time you pointed. And if I ask you how that
> is done, you will say you concentrated your attention on the
> colour, the shape, etc.

The difficulty that Wittgenstein raises refers to what one might 'mean' when they point to a feature in the external world and how that meaning is then received by an interlocutor. Rather than looking for meaning internally, or mentally, within the individual mind, he argues that "these matters be settled by looking at what goes on *outside* the mind [and by] thinking of meaning in terms of activities in which people engage" (Verheggen, 2000, p. 206). In other words, Wittgenstein proposes that we think of meanings in terms of 'language in use' (*ibid*), which frames language as a social practice and not the mental representations of referents (Wittgenstein & Russell, 1922).

Defining meaning, fixing referents and ensuring we all understand what we mean is a very troubled process (Kripke, 1972). This is why we cannot take what it means for a text to be 'academic' for granted and why diverse scripts can be 'academic'. This is because, as Harris (2011, pp. 68-69) claims, the 'semiological value' of using any linguistic structure 'depends on the circumstances and activities in which they fulfil an integrational function' rather than on external referents. Harris gives the example of how the word 'tree' can refer both to a plant and to a landmark that signals 'the need to turn left': to understand 'tree' as 'landmark', we need to integrate a wide range of signs, circumstances and activities in order to understand the meaning of 'tree'.

As such, the visual literacies of Sousanis (2015), the messy methods of Law (2003) and the call by English (2015) to conceive of academic writing as a creative venture all have 'academic semiological value' because they depend on the academic 'circumstances and activities', namely the *practices*, that generated them and not because the writing conforms to prevailing academic conventions.

Despite this, the burden of a 'full representation' has historically been on language (Blair, 2008, p. 44):

> Arguments are traditionally associated with speech, either written or oral, for a couple of linked reasons. First, because the reasons they use are propositions. Second, because propositions are standardly expressed by propositions in language.

Like language, what is meant by 'argument' is also contested and varies according to its purpose (Fish, 2017), its disciplinary norms[40] (Andrews, 2010; Toulmin, 1958) and its cultural forms (Galtung, 1981; Kaplan, 1980 [1966]). The inter-related fields of anthropology (Everett, 2008; Hymes, 1964), linguistics (Chomsky, 2006; Pinker, 2000, 2008), socio-linguistics (Evans, 2014; Fairclough, 2001; Holmes, 1992), sociology (Pierre Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991), discourse and cultural theory (Foucault, 1970) all testify to the complex relationship between language, thought and reality.

Once we start to draw attention to some of the structural diversity of propositional arguments and how this might affect representations of reality, questions arise about how form and content relate to each other. Nussbaum (1990, p. 3, emphasis added) has a particular interest in this area and has focused on how form, i.e. not language (although she argues using language) and content influence each other in the field of philosophy:

> How should one write, what words should one select, what forms and structures and organisation, if one is pursuing understanding? [...] *Style itself makes its claims, expresses its own sense of what matters*. Literary form is not separable from

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[40] For example, a deductive mathematical argument is different to an inductive historical argument.

philosophical content, but is, itself, a part of content – an integral part, then, of the search for and the statement of truth.

I now highlight how the meaning of argument has changed over time and how it becomes conflated with language. I refer to Toulmin (1958), Andrews (2010) and finally Blair (2008), Gilbert (1994) and Groarke (2015) in order to show that arguments can be non-linguistic and can emerge from visual and aural modes. This opens up possibilities for argument in academic writing that go beyond language and can be inclusive of 'ecologies of knowledges' (de Sousa Santos, 2017), 'intellectual styles' (Galtung, 1981) and 'creativity' (Besley & Peters, 2013) which might enable higher education, and EAP, to widen access and participation (Sperlinger et al., 2018) in their pursuit of understanding.

Why language alone cannot do the arguing

Stephen Toulmin (1958) was a turning point in the way argumentation is currently understood in academia. This is because Toulmin repudiated the logical positivist reduction of argument to a series of symbols that divorced argument from natural, or ordinary, language. Instead, he proposed that we re-think what we mean by logic and asked "What sort of science is logic?" (1958, p. 6). His answer consisted in recognising that argumentation shares some of the features of psychology, understood as the study of 'healthy laws of thought', and of sociology, namely the study of "habits and practices developed in the course of social evolution and passed on by parents and teachers from one generation to another" (1958, p. 3). Language is but one of the ways of achieving all this.

However, he was also concerned that framing argument in terms of psychology and sociology imbued the thinking process with a subjective

and relative quality as well as a reliance on induction that 'proper' deductive logic did not (Toulmin, 1958, p. 5):

> [I]t cannot be custom alone that gives validity and authority to a form of argument, or the logician would have to wait upon the results of the anthropologist's researches.

At the same time, however, Toulmin objects to the kind of logic that posits formal relations between propositions and that reduces the validity of an argument to its deductive form. This is because logic is not concerned with the thinking process *per se* but with statements about logic itself. The mistake of equating logic with correct and rational thinking is one of 'qualified psychologism[41]', namely the assumption that logic, rather than psychology, is the study of thought. He quotes logical positivist Rudolf Carnap in this regard (Toulmin, pp. 86-87):

> The characterisation of logic in terms of correct or rational or justified beliefs is as right but not more enlightening that to say that mineralogy tells us how to think correctly about minerals. The reference to thinking may just as well be dropped in both cases. Then we say simply: mineralogy makes statements about minerals, and logic makes statements about logical relations. The activity in any field of knowledge involves, of course, thinking. But this does not mean that thinking belongs to the subject matter of all fields. It belongs to the subject matter of psychology but not to that of logic any more than to that of mineralogy.

Rather, Toulmin proposes that we shift our conflation of logic with correct and rational thinking to thinking of logic as a way of making sound claims

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[41] Cf. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/psychologism/ [accessed 14/12/2018]

that give prominence to warrants instead of prominence to form and truth (Toulmin, 1958, p. 7):

> Logic is concerned with the soundness of the claims we make – with the solidity of the grounds we produce to support them, the firmness of the backing we provide for them – or, to change the metaphor, with the sort of *case* we present in defence of our claims. The legal analogy implied in this last way of putting the point can for once be a real help. So let us forget about psychology, sociology, technology and mathematics, ignore the echoes of structural engineering and *collage* in the words 'grounds' and 'backing' and take as our model the discipline of jurisprudence. Logic (we may say) is generalised jurisprudence.

In re-framing logic as jurisprudence, where what persuades is a convincing and reasonable case, not the truth, Toulmin discards much of the language associated with logic (1958, p. 98), such as 'premise' or 'proposition', and replaces it with legal terminology, such as 'data' (D), 'warrants' (W) and 'qualifiers' (Q): data are the situations we wish to make a claim (C) about; warrants are legitimate 'steps' that act as 'bridges' which 'authorise' further 'steps' culminating in further 'claims'; and 'qualifiers' provide conditions under which a claim can be considered reasonable. By introducing this terminology, he shows that what constitutes an argument is not its reliance on logic and language (propositions) but its reliance on the legitimacy of the warrant.

Toulmin also reminds us that non-mathematical and non-logical arguments are substantial. This makes their truth and validity contingent on external, not internal, conditions. Since the majority of meaningful academic arguments, ones that extend our knowledge - in the sciences, social sciences and humanities - are substantial and inductive, they require

warrants and qualifiers as well as modalities for expressing attitudes of probability, possibility and necessity, rather than formal logic (Toulmin, p. 154):

> The only arguments we can fairly judge by 'deductive' standards are those held out as and intended to be analytic, necessary and formally valid. All arguments which are confessedly substantial will be 'non-deductive', and by implication not formally valid. But for the analytic syllogism validity can be identified with formal validity, and this is just what the logician wants to be possible universally. It follows at once that for substantial arguments, whose cogency cannot be displayed in a purely formal way, even *validity* is something entirely out of reach and unobtainable.

A further key move in Toulmin's critique of classical logic, and its arrogation of argument, is that substantive arguments require more than a reliance on the univocal meaning of language. He develops this thesis by drawing attention to the *field-dependency* of arguments (1958, p. 15):

> How far, for instance, can one compare the standards of argument relevant in a court of law with those relevant when judging a paper in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, or those relevant to a mathematical proof or a prediction about the composition of a tennis team?

A specific example of 'standards of argument', in this discussion, might be that what counts as evidence for a Warrant or Qualifier in each discipline will differ. In a court of law, a *blood-stained garment*, rather than a linguistic proposition about how the victim had blood on his clothes, may provide a Warrant for claiming that the victim had been injured; in a scientific paper, *references* to previous studies can serve to Qualify a new

theory; in mathematics, an *axiom* such as $A=\prod r^2$ to calculate the surface area of a generic circle can provide the Warrant for establishing the surface area of a specific circle; in tennis, the use of past *performance statistics* can establish which players are the most competent for the formation of a new team.

The point being that by narrowing and reducing the meaning of argument to propositional logic, we fail to capture the wider-ranging uses of argument that occur in other fields of human enquiry, uses which may or may not include language itself.

Toulmin's focus on warrants and qualifiers thus creates space for arguments to be non-linguistic, since neither warrants or qualifiers need be expressed in language.

Language is field-dependent rather than clear, precise or transparent

The notion of 'linearity' is frequently referred to in discussions about writing and thinking (in EAP and in literacy), yet few attempts are made to acknowledge its field dependency (cf. 'linearity' in mathematics, which can mean 'sequentiality'; and 'linearity' in writing, which can mean being 'orderly'). In this sense, words are unreliable. The fact that disciplinary fields go to great lengths in establishing the meaning of their terms, with no guarantee of unanimous agreement, shows that language is at best a blurry lens through which to view reality and at worst a blunt tool with which to re-present it. Words are not *conduits to* reality, because if they were, they would not fail to unequivocally represent it or correspond to it; nor *are* they reality itself, because reality can exist without them. If we accept that words do not hold exclusive or privileged monopoly on how we describe or refer to reality, then this leaves open the possibility for other modes and media

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to play their part in describing the world and our thoughts (perceptions) of it.

The case for non-linguistic argumentation

Richard Andrews, building on the seminal work of Toulmin, has been influential in studies on Higher Education and in EAP because of his work on clarifying what constitutes an academic argument, how it must be understood as field-dependent, and crucially for my purposes, how "arguments may be of different kinds" (Toulmin, 1958, pp. 158-159). These can include, but need not be reduced to, the linear and logical characterisations favoured by EAP (Part 1) and the Enlightenment experimental genres (Chapter 3).

From the outset, Andrews clarifies his distinction between 'argument' and 'argumentation' as being one of 'product' and 'process' (2010, p. 2), but that often the two are conflated:

> 'Argument' and 'Argumentation' are sometimes used interchangeably. In this book, a distinction is made between argument as an overarching, more general, everyday term that refers largely to the products or manifestations of argumentation, like debates, essays, position papers, research papers, and dissertations. It is also used to embrace a wider range of forms in spoken, written, and other (e.g. visual, spatial) modes. Argumentation is seen as part of argument and suggests a sequence or exchange of arguments. It refers to something more technical. It is the process of arguing in educational, political, business, legal, and other contexts.

He goes on to show that, etymologically, 'argument' has evolved from its Aristotelian association with rhetoric, language, logic and deductive

syllogism to its current field-dependency and multimodality (2010, pp. 50-52; 96-115) and claims that argument is about "composition: the putting together of elements to communicate" (2010, p. 29). When framed in the context of composition and communication, argument comes to mean 'show', 'accuse', 'prove', 'provide evidence' and 'summarise contents'. Early on, it was associated with navigation and mathematics whereby a third point between two given points is identified[42]; it is also a means of disagreement and dispute, but can also mean the summary of a narrative (2010, p. 109). Argument is a 'discussion with edge' (Andrews, 2010, pp. 2-3) and does not have to be about competing ideas (2010, p. 43).

Dialogisation is another way that argument has been framed. This is a form of literary critique associated with Bakhtin (Holquist, Bakhtin, & McGee, 1987) who has shown that what underpins argumentation is the plurivocal nature of texts. Writing is not the product of a single voice but of many inter-connected traces of what others have said and arguments are a manifestation of this (Andrews, 2010, pp. 12-14).

For historians, the argument 'is the discipline' and the presentation of historical knowledge amounts to the argument itself (Andrews, 2010, p. 19). Indeed, the rhetorical use of footnotes in the field of History functions as "the humanist's rough equivalent of the scientist's report on data: they offer the empirical support for the stories told and arguments presented" (Grafton, 1997, p. vii). This clashes with most EAP advice to use in-text paragraphs to provide evidence and to avoid footnotes.

Argumentation is interdisciplinary (Andrews, 2010, p. 21). This means that the form and the aim of an argument are not paradigmatic, they cannot be

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[42] This is the deductive method favoured by Descartes in his geometric proofs.

held as transferable universal exemplars for how arguments function. Because arguments are not paradigmatic, Andrews leaves open the possibility for arguments to be non-linguistic and dedicates an entire chapter of his book *Argumentation in Higher Education* to multimodal arguments to show that these "can operate inductively, not just as evidence for a verbally conceived set of propositions but as a set of propositions in [their] own right" (Andrews, 2010, p. 52).

Academic arguments, and the texts that contain them, need to fulfil a far broader range of requirements than those of prescriptive 'linear' academic writing instruction. These include requirements that are usually ascribed to creative writing but that are also important in academic writing, such as the need to be 'refreshing', 'modest' and 'curious' (Andrews, 2010, pp. 99-101). But also the need to leave space for interpretation (Marin, Masschelein, & Simons, 2018) and develop authorial identities (Ivanič, 1998; Kamler & Thomson, 2006). In order to achieve such qualities, propositional arguments themselves frequently rely on non-propositional forms, such as implicit or unstated premises. Enthymemes are an example of this. These are the 'missing parts' of an argument, such as a premise or conclusion (Hurley, 2000) that require readers' knowledge or interpretation to 'fill in the gaps'. They rely, that is, on the reader's 'cooperation' (Turner, 2018).

Given the enduring recognition of the fallibility of language, it seems reasonable to question why academia continues to privilege the linguistic mode of argumentation over other modes. Could our socio-academic options for representing reality benefit from widening the range of modes through which we argue?

According to Andrews (2010), they could. He claims that using visual argumentation creates more opportunities for *inference* (2010, p. 51), which matters in education. This is what Dewey (cited in
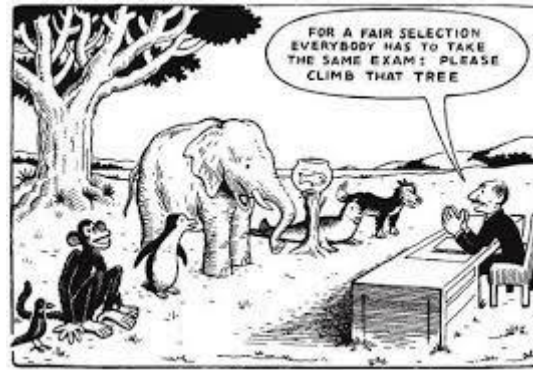
Figure 24: A fair education (widely available online)

d'Agnese, 2017, p. 451) calls a 'forecast', a 'leap from the unknown', a 'creative incursion'. For a visual argument to be 'implicitly present', there "must be either some tension within a single image (Fig. 24) or, there must be at least two images juxtaposed so that tensions can be explored and a 'point' can be inferred" (2010, p. 51) (Fig. 23). He goes on to state that "a sequence of images can
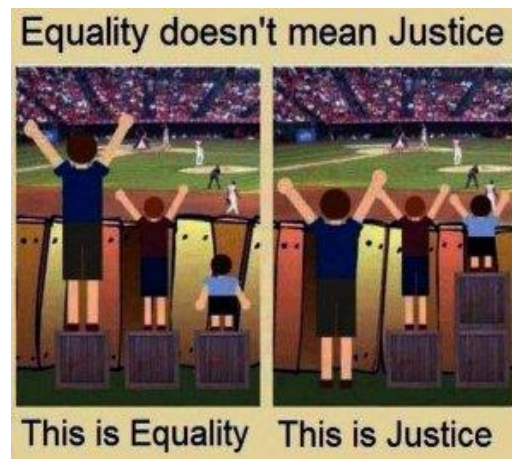
Figure 23: Equality v fairness (widely available online)

develop and secure an argument further" (*ibid*). In this sense, the juxtaposition of images can function like punctuation in writing, where pause, suspense and segmentation of ideas are techniques which create 'parts in an argument', with one part representing a claim ('this is equality'), the other evidence ('this is justice'), and the final conclusion ('Equality doesn't mean justice').

He also refers to a paper by Tarnay (2002), who argues that moving images can argue without being reduced to propositional content. An example of this might be *Fuocoammare* (2016) (Fig. 25).

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Figure 25: [Fire at Sea (Fuocoammare)](link) (widely available online)

Within the full context of Gianfranco Rosi's 2016 documentary about the plight of refugees arriving on the small island of Lampedusa in Sicily, this short clip suggests that although ordinary life continues on the island - with the two young boys shown playing together throughout the documentary while rescue boats, helicopters and medical services concurrently deal with migrant emergencies - Lampedusa's children are being affected by what they see and hear around them. Conversation, i.e. language, is sparse in the young boys' lives, so at no point is the viewer explicitly told that their young lives are being affected. Yet, the inference that their lives *are* being affected is there and the viewer cannot help but make that inference.

This documentary film meets the conditions for what Toulmin (1958) calls substantive arguments. It provides data of migrants arriving on a small island (D) and claims that this has an effect on the local children (C). The steps the director takes in moving from D to C are realised by the editing and juxtaposition of images and overlay of sounds to provide warrants (W), or bridges, between the data and the claim. A full analysis of this documentary might further show that backing and qualifications are also present in the film when it is considered as a whole.

The reason we can make inductive inferences, rather than formal deductions, from the data to the claims is because images and motion are being arranged according to what Tanay (2002, p. 4) calls intentional 'compositional' features (in the sense of *intended by* the director) that cannot be reduced to propositions that merely guide the eye in a linear and sequential way or that are left open to unqualified interpretation. Such

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features include 'depth', 'motion', 'distance', and, following Groarke (2015), 'non-verbal sounds', which are 'perceived' by the viewer through the senses rather than directly processed as propositions (Tanay, p. 5):

> [T]he operation of our sense organs (or whatever it is that computes and processes sense data) can be described as an inferential activity under the level of phenomenal consciousness (The strongest version that our eyes 'argue' can be found in Bonfantini, 1987). [...]. The retrieval of arguments should not be confined to higher – semantic and pragmatic – level of processing, but it should be grounded on certain 'automatic' processes.

Some in academia contest that a documentary such as *Fuocoammare* would count as an academic argument (Gourlay, 2012). There are several reasons for this. Firstly, as discussed above, argument is traditionally understood as a propositional endeavour. In the case of *Fuocoammare*, the scope for interpretation is, arguably, far wider than it might be in a traditional academic format. A film or an image allows the viewer to see much more in a single frame or panel than does a
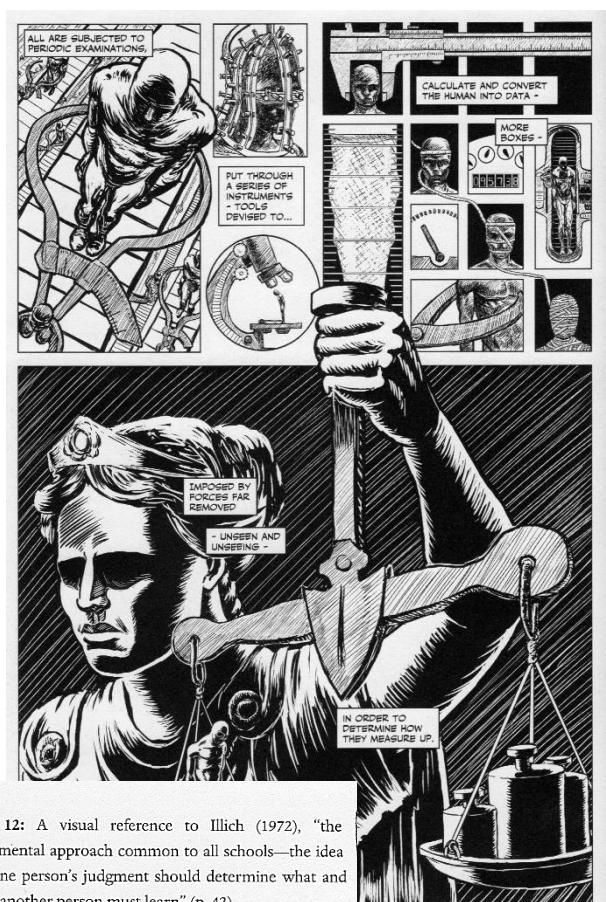
Page 12: A visual reference to Illich (1972), "the fundamental approach common to all schools—the idea that one person's judgment should determine what and when another person must learn" (p. 42).

Figure 26: Visual and propositional reference to standardising assessment practices

sentence containing a proposition (Fig. 26, Sousanis, 2015, p. 12).

Secondly, whilst acknowledging that language is 'unstable', Gourlay (2016, p. 88) remains of the view that "written text is still more suited than visual images" to the complex requirements of argumentation and critique, especially within the context of a literature review (Gourlay, 2016, p. 87, emphasis added):

> The dense, precise and closely-argued nature of much academic argumentation in reference to other academic texts seems to demand a system which delivers nuance and can be readily and unambiguously shared with a readership beyond the immediate context of text production – *the complexity of language still appears better suited to the task than images alone.*

Thirdly, films and images tell stories which rely on narrative rather than argument to do this. This third contention creates a binary division between argument and narrative by suggesting that by doing the former one is not doing the latter, and vice-versa. This binary re-enforces the unfounded idea that there is only one way to argue. The contention indexes that since narrative is not *traditionally* valued by as a method of inquiry[43], the documentary genre which relies on narrative to advance a thesis is less likely to be accepted by EAP. This has been discussed by Ingraham (2005, p. 49) with reference to a BBC documentary entitled *Walking with Beasts* who claims that:

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[43] This is despite the fact that narrative methods are used in academic research (for example, Chanock (2014); Richardson (1990a), especially ethnographic methods in anthropology, sociology and education. But the academic canon of EAP, as shown in Part 1, does not typically present narrative as a valid form of argumentation.

> [A]n obvious way in which documentary often differs from
> conventional scholarly discourse is in the use of narrative.
> Documentary programmes are much more likely to use narrative
> as a strategy to maintain and direct an audience's attention than
> are scholarly articles or books. There is nothing intrinsically
> wrong with using narrative within the context of scholarly
> discourse. Many historical and biographical studies almost
> inevitably involve narrative.

The extent to which Ingraham's documentary can be considered as a 'carrier of academic argument' has been further analysed by Gourlay (2012, p. 95) who concludes that it cannot because academic argument should be explicit, something narrative would not seem to be, and unambiguous, something only words can be (Gourlay, 2012, p. 97).

The above three contentions that a documentary and non-verbal forms of argumentation cannot be academic can be challenged in the following three ways.

Firstly, by reminding ourselves that even traditional argument, and its investment in language, is fallible and requires constant refining clarifications. If linguistic argument were as precise and clear as Gourlay and others claim, then why is so much academic time spent on revisiting and surmising over the meanings of academic writers? As Fish (2017, p. 19) reminds us:

> if we could confine ourselves to a language that did not admit
> [uncertainties], there would be no need for argument; for
> argument is required when there are competing accounts of
> what is the case. If everyone agreed on how a set of facts should
> be characterised, there would be no competing accounts and
> there would be nothing to argue about. And such agreement

would be assured if there were prior agreement about the
correct vocabulary for stating things.

Secondly, Toulmin has shown that traditional propositional logic fails to capture the rich range of human argumentation which includes understanding argument as an 'invitation to inference' (Pinto, 2001 cited in Groarke (2015, p. 135). Similarly, Tseronis (May 22, 2013) shows that argumentation is a social and discursive activity in which images, in addition to playing a role in conveying premises and conclusions, communicate something about the argumentative process that goes beyond mere representation to include the ways in which images contribute to the context in which they are being used. The scene where the two Sicilian boys in *Fuocommmare* are pretending to shoot down targets in an imaginary war is therefore not to be viewed for its representational value, namely two boys shooting, but as contributing to the overall narrative argument, namely that migration is affecting life on the island.

Crucially, though, Tseronis (May 22, 2013, p. 8) reminds us that meaning and truth are distinct concepts and that "the meaning of a proposition cannot be reduced to its truth-evaluable propositional content". In other words, establishing a meaning rather than the truth can be the aim of an argument. This is because "[t]he social sciences concern themselves with people, and [...] people argue in an intricate matrix composed of numerous forms of communicative methods" (Gilbert, 1994, p. 3). To quote Fish again (2017, p. 8):

> Argument is protean – ever changing, mutable, kaleidoscopic,
> voracious – and almost anything can be its vehicle, swinging a
> big stick, putting on a badge, intoning a holy phrase, making the
> sign of a cross, wearing a uniform, speaking in a stentorian tone.

Thirdly, since academia is, or ought to be, moving on from the discredited logical-positivist endeavour of establishing a strict correspondence between word and object, what counts as an academic argument and how to communicate it also need to move on (Paré, 2017). One way of moving on is to recognise that privileging monomodal practices narrows what can and cannot be said (Bezemer & Kress, 2008; Laurillard, 2000 (2)). This is because our meaning-making capacities and ability to think in abstract conceptual ways do not exclude language but extend beyond it (Arnheim, 1969, p. 228):

> [L]anguage is widely assumed to be a much better vehicle of thought than other shapes or sounds [...]. Nobody denies that language helps thinking. What needs to be questioned is whether it performs this service substantially by means of properties inherent in the verbal medium itself or whether it functions indirectly, namely by pointing to the referents of words and propositions, that is to facts given in an entirely different medium. Also, we need to know whether language is indispensable to thought. The answer [...] is "no".

Roque (2015) extends this reasoning further by questioning whether visuals need to be propositional at all to count as arguments and rejects reductionist views that claim that they do. He claims that both images and words, from a formal logic perspective, have no truth-value and that we have to look beyond 'truth' as our criterion for establishing the soundness of an argument (Roque, 2015, p. 193):

> We must therefore dissociate arguments and truth conditions and, accordingly, abandon the concept of proposition, since propositions are "the primary bearers of truth-value" (McGrath 2012, p. 1). After all, there are many other ways of defining

arguments that do not require them to be true or false, and it is well known that the field of argumentation has evolved, since the late fifties, to oppose a strict logical conception (Perelman, Toulmin).

If there is a sense in which 'both words and images have no truth-value' and that we need to 'look beyond truth' in understanding what an argument can be, then this potentially allows writers far greater choices in judging what the textual environment might offer them in developing an argument. Argument, then, becomes a manifestation of academicness that is not reduced to any single mode or other element in the textual environment. Instead, it can be seen as emerging from the knowledge a writer has of what their textual environment can afford.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that what makes writing academic cannot be reduced to formal features of language and grammar because doing so would allow hoaxes and IELTS essays to count as academic. These are not academic because they transgress the values of academic integrity, which is an emergent socio-academic practice. Rather, what makes writing academic are the ways in which writers knowledgeably interact with their textual environments to allow socio-academic practices to emerge. These environments include threshold concepts about writing, such as the expression of identities and ideologies.

I then considered the role that argument plays in our understandings of what makes writing academic. I claimed, with reference to Toulmin and Andrews, that although argument is generally associated with academicness, the notion of argument itself is nevertheless contested. This

is because it cannot be reduced to any particular feature (word or image, genre or structure), nor can it be confined to its associations with logic and truth because most arguments are substantive and inductive. As such, argument can be considered a socio-academic practice that emerges from the interaction of the writer with their textual environment.

The remaining two chapters in Part 3 further propose ways to avoid reducing academic writing to its forms so that it can remain open to change.

How it could be
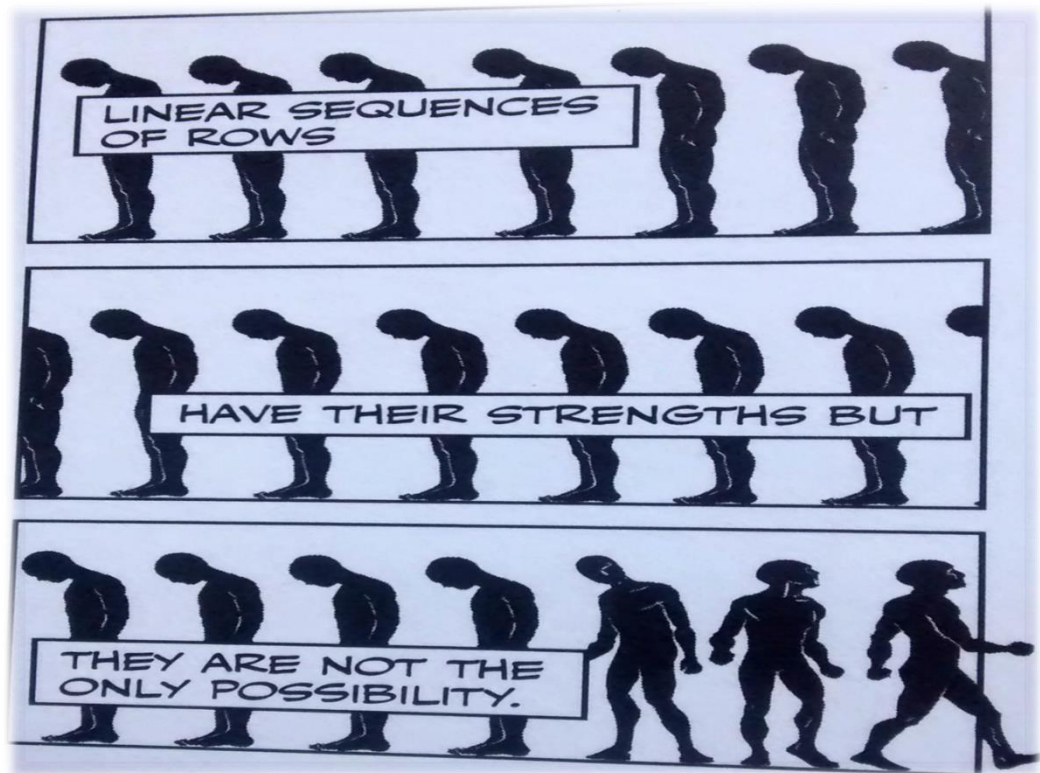
Sousanis (2015, p. 66)

Chapter 5- Complexity

A complex system is one in which there is a multiplicity of causal factors contributing to the dynamics of the system, in which there are causal interactions among the underlying causal factors, and in which causal interactions are often non-linear. Non-linearity is important here, because it implies that a small change in one or more factors may lead to very large changes in the outcome (Little, 2018b).

Introduction

To explain why academicness cannot be reduced to any specific characteristic of the writer or to any single feature of the textual environment, this chapter proposes that academic writing, understood as a socio-academic practice, be re-imagined as a non-linear, generative complex open system. Thinking of writing in this way allows me to also explain change and innovation in academic writing because complexity acknowledges the interactions between a significantly large range of variables which enable novelty to emerge. To do this, I draw on complexity theory (L. Kuhn, 2008; Mason, 2008a; Parnell, 2012) and the philosophy of critical realism (M. Archer, 1995, 1998; Bhaskar, 1989b, 1998; Collier, 1994; Sawyer, 2001).

Complexity is non-linear

A 'complex' system is not the same as one that is 'complicated'. A complicated system can be explained in terms of its constituent parts whereas a complex one cannot. For example, a bicycle is complicated, but it is not complex. This is because although it is intricate and is made of many inter-connected mechanical parts, a full understanding of what these parts are and how they connect to each other is sufficient to explain how

the bicycle, as a whole system, will work. This allows us to predict what will happen when we turn the pedal or move the handlebars.

Complex systems, on the other hand, do not allow for such predictions because their 'whole is greater than the sum of their parts' (Beckett & Hager, 2018, p. 138). Complex systems include social phenomena, such as education and economics, whose constituent parts inter-relate to such an extent that they cannot be explained in isolation and without a full account of how they relate to other parts: the reasons for rising inflation rest as much on human purchasing behaviour and psychology as they do on the mechanics of price increases and the value of national currencies. This means that in a complex system, changes in the constituent causal parts are not directly proportional to changes in the whole, i.e. changes in individual spending habits do not provide a full explanatory account of why inflation occurs[44].

This is what is meant by a complex system being *non-linear*: cause and effect are disproportionate in the sense that the whole effect cannot be explained by an isolated cause. For example, the seemingly simple act of dropping a single coin in a fairground coin pusher can lead to a disproportionate effect whereby the entire mass of accumulated coins suddenly drops. What caused the drop, though, was also the cumulative pressure of the mass of coins, not just that single coin. Moreover, the effect of this huge drop results in the player winning a prize that exceeds the value of the initial coin. It is in this sense that cause and effect are disproportionate.

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[44] This disproportionality between constituent parts and the whole is also what characterises the notion of an Organic Unity discussed further in Chapter 6.

By contrast, a complicated system is said to be *linear* because a change in a constituent part can more straightforwardly explain a change in the whole. For example, by taking the pedal off the bike, the crankshaft can't properly turn.

Rather than an aggregate composed of concatenated parts that add up to a whole, as skills-based, cookie-cutter and template approaches to writing encourage, academic writing can be seen as a social system of dynamic inter-relations whose multiple causes cannot be reduced to its constituent parts in a linear, i.e. mechanistic, manner. What makes Harron (2016)'s PhD thesis academic (the whole), for example, cannot be traced back in a linear way to any specific words or arrangement of her text (the parts), as might be done in an IELTS essay or academic hoax, for example. Instead, and if we agree that Harron's work is academic (as discussed in Chapter 4), then what makes it academic are the socio-academic practices that emerge from the interaction of her values and agency as a writer and a range of threshold concepts available in the textual environment, including ideology and identity, as well as her academic need to meet the requirements of a doctorate in Mathematics. What emerges from this interaction is a novel entity, a thesis that is unique and could not have been predicted from its constituent parts, and interactions thereof. It is also a thesis that *re-sets* the 'requirements of a doctorate in mathematics'.

As discussed in Part 1, when writing is conceptualised as a socio-academic practice rather than as a skill what tends to be foregrounded are its dynamic, interactive, transformative and relational qualities rather than its static materiality, ahistoricity and transferable conventions. Complexity theory can therefore be mobilised to explain these relational qualities because it shows how systems and networks comprising of several agents,

competing interests and multi-level domains operate. Because of its explanatory appeal, the theory is well-established in the History of Education (Osberg & Biesta, 2010), including Applied Linguistics; the Sciences (Chaos Theory and Quantum Mechanics) (P. Ball, 2004); and the Social Sciences (Economics) (Mason, 2008b, p. 36).

The reason complexity theory has gained traction in Applied Linguistics, for example, is that it deals with the dynamism of language and offers multi-level explanations for language development (Cameron & Larsen-Freeman, 2007, p. 227, emphasis added):

> Complex systems are composed of elements or agents that *interact* in different ways. Their interactions lead to self-organization and the *emergence* of new patterns at different levels and timescales. Such systems are also adaptive and dynamic. The elements and agents change over time, but crucially so also do the ways in which they influence each other, the relations among them. Complex systems are *open* rather than closed; energy and matter can come into the system. The dynamic nature of element interactions and the *openness of a system* to the outside lead to *non-linearity*, which in complex systems theory signifies that *the effect is disproportionate to the cause*.

Complexity theory is compelling because it recognises the nuances and multiple factors that are required in explaining phenomena. It also attempts to explain how change and novelty (L. Kuhn, 2008, p. 182) occur within established or dominant paradigms (T. Kuhn, 1962) by confronting the historical and generative mechanisms, such as those showcased in Part 2, that allow new phenomena to emerge from a 'particular environment' (Mason, 2008b, p. 38, emphasis added):

> Complexity theory seeks the *levers of history*, the sources and reasons for change, in the dynamic complexity of interactions among elements or agents that constitute a *particular environment*. It is in this sense that seemingly trivial *accidents of history* may increase dramatically in significance when their interactions with other apparently minute events combine to produce significant redirections in the course of history, significant shifts in the prevailing balance of power.

On a complexity account, academic writing becomes *non-linear* because what makes it academic as a whole (the effect) cannot be reduced to any specific part (the cause). This can be illustrated with reference to the effect that conventional academic forms (the causes) can have on representations of knowledge (the effect). For instance, the use of personal or non-personal language (discussed in Part 1), such as the active or passive, can have a disproportionate effect on how knowledge is re-presented. The personal, active voice in ethnography, realised by the use of 'I', for example, indexes that the researcher, not the 'reality', influences what counts and does not count as 'data': data isn't 'out there', it is the researcher who confers upon their samples the status of 'data'. As Thomson (2013) reminds us, "[t]hey aren't data until we make them data", and it is our choice of personal or impersonal language that can be mobilised to signal where we stand in this regard. So, when I claim "these are samples of x, y, z" without recourse to any personal pronouns, my choice of language signals an objective stance towards the data. In so doing, an ontological stance emerges, namely that 'data are out there', they exist. On the other hand, when I claim "here is how I have established that these samples of x, y, z can be part of my data", an epistemological stance emerges, namely 'this is how I know they are data'.

Paltridge and Starfield (2007, p. 129) remind us of this, too, in considering how researchers represent themselves in academic writing:

> Academic writing is typically viewed as largely depersonalised. Textbooks tell students that for scientific writing to be objective, it should be impersonal and use the passive voice – thus removing or reducing the presence of the researcher in the text.

This sensitivity is further evident in the following remarks by sociologist Becker (2017), who worries about the disproportionate effect of using the passive to describe social phenomena which may be better represented by an active voice telling us 'who has done what'. Becker admonishes academic sociology journals for insisting "on the most academic prose, for no reason that anyone can explain very well":

> I [...] mentioned the fault of using passive grammatical constructions, in which the verb in the sentence is some form of "to be." Stylistically, this flattens the prose, makes it dull and boring to read. Well, who said sociology was supposed to produce exciting, lively prose? The fault lies much deeper. In an era when people argue endlessly about the relative importance of "structure" and "agency," this stylistic convention systematically hides agency when everyone knows that it operates in the situation we're studying.

What Thomson, Paltridge and Starfield, and Becker are signalling is non-linearity: small changes in language choice that generate disproportionate effects at the level of how we re-present reality.

The more general point being, that thinking about language, and by extension, writing, in this way, draws attention to the fact that the relationship between the parts and the whole can have unexpected

consequences and that this can allow new socio-academic practices to emerge.

In order to further locate academic writing within complexity theory, I revisit some of the *levers of history* (with reference to Mason, above) that make writing complex.

Historical and linguistic reasons for complexity

In his Enlightenment treatise on what a university should be, Cardinal Newman considers the nature of writing a worthy object of reflection and ponders the rationales for classifying it according to genres. In a lecture to the School of Philosophy and Letters, he asks what kind of writing counts as Literature, Philosophy or Science (Newman, 2009, pp. 268-269):

> [I] attempt to determine what we are to understand by Letters or Literature, in what Literature consists, and how it stands relatively to Science. We speak, for instance, of ancient and modern literature, the literature of the day, sacred literature, light literature; and our lectures in this place are devoted to classical literature and English literature. Are Letters, then, synonymous with books? This cannot be, or they would include in their range Philosophy, Law, and, in short, the teaching of all the other Faculties. Far from confusing these various studies, we view the works of Plato or Cicero sometimes as philosophy, sometimes as literature; on the other hand, no one would ever be tempted to speak of Euclid as literature, or of Matthiæ's Greek Grammar. Is, then, literature synonymous with composition? With books written with an attention to style? Is literature fine writing? Again, is it studied and artificial writing?

Cardinal Newman goes on to say that Literature and Science should remain distinct because Literature expresses personal thoughts and, as such,

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requires eloquence, whereas Science deals with objective truths and, as such, requires symbols (2009, p. 275, emphasis added):

> Science, then, has to do with *things*, literature with *thoughts*; science is *universal*, literature is *personal*; science uses words merely as symbols, but literature uses language in its full compass, as including phraseology, idiom, style, composition, rhythm, eloquence, and whatever other properties are included in it.

Newman emphasises that Science and Mathematics use words and symbols as 'mere vehicles of things, not of thoughts' (2009, p. 274), meaning that Science and Maths are mimetic and express 'true things' about the world. All other subjects, including Law, Metaphysics, Political Economy and Theology, can be subjected to 'severe scientific treatment' (2009, p. 275), but when they are not, then they remain in the domain of 'language and literature', which is prone to the 'slang and personal sentiments' of their authors and 'decked in conceits, fancies, and prettiness' (2009, p. 269).

With such distinguished history on its side, it is little wonder that EAP has chosen to conflate the 'objective, universal and impersonal' language and genres of science with the language and genres of academic writing.

However, as is being showcased throughout this thesis, academic writings, including the writings of Science, Mathematics and Economics, are varied, and, *pace* Newman, they too rely on language and its 'fancies' to convey their meanings: 'string theory', 'black holes' and 'dark matter', and countless other scientific metaphors, are a reminder that language is 'fanciful' in its effort to correspond to 'true' things.

The *levers of history* are notably played out in the 500-year-old-writings of the *Philosophical Transactions*, which, through the lens of language change, document the transition from merely reporting phenomena as they were seen by the single observer to detailing how experiments were set up and how conclusions were reached (Bazerman, 1988). These shifts testify to why language changed from personal narratives (and personal pronouns) to accounts that were conscious of a more critical readership who required details of diagnostic methods (and impersonal voices). They show that small changes in language choice have disproportionate effects on how we express our view of the world.

Gunnarsson (2001) provides detailed evidence of such a shift by tracking language changes in the Swedish medical genre across three centuries (eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth). She documents how the highly personalised accounts of care in the patient-doctor relationship, evidenced by the use of personal pronouns and a focus on the patient's feelings, gradually ceded to more impersonal accounts, evidenced by the use of the passive voice and a focus on the illness.

The *personal* account is representative of eighteenth century medical prose and is exemplified in a 1782 medical article by a doctor describing a visit to his consumptive patient (2001, p. 122):

> She could see her husband's concern for her, she thought about her small children, of whom she was so fond; she contemplated her weak and decrepit condition.

The following *impersonal* account is representative of current medical academic prose and is from a 1980 medical journal (Gunnarsson, 2001, p. 128):

> What <u>was recommended</u> previously was a period of waiting for
> 4-6 weeks if there was <u>no valvular pneumo-thorax.</u>

In each case, what is being enacted through the choice of language is a social practice, and value, motivated by the writer's orientations and concerns with what counts as a 'medical matter': in the 1782 article, what seems to matter to the doctor is that the experience of the patient is what it means to have that illness; in the 1980 article, what seems to matter is the clinical condition disembodied from the patient. The doctor who foregrounds the *patient's experience* of their illness, rather than the *illness itself*, is committed to understanding the illness through the experience of the patient. This is different to understanding the illness by examining cells in a laboratory.

It is in this sense that language reflects our ideologies, our world views, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Clearly, both approaches advance knowledge of the illness: when understood through the patient's experience, we develop a social understanding of what illness is because of how it affects others; when understood in a laboratory, we develop a chemical understanding. Each approach to the illness enacts a certain kind of social practice because it becomes one of several ways of knowing about the phenomenon.

Such nuances and expressive choices are usually lost in EAP whereas critical discourse theorists in the tradition of Fairclough (1992, 2001), following Michel Foucault, and Ivanič and Simpson (1992) foreground the effects that language choice has on how social structures, particularly those that lead to power imbalance, are created and maintained. Academic writing scholars, like Helen Sword, have similarly shone a spotlight on flattened,

depersonalised prose (Sword, 2012) arguing in her 'manifesto on style' that higher education should be writing 'differently' (Sword, 2009) because there are different ways of representing knowledge of the world (also developed in Honan and Bright (2016); Richardson (1990a).

What all of the above discussion indexes is, once more, that language choice allows meanings to emerge in ways that are complex and could not have been explained by a linear account of how parts and wholes relate to each other. When EAP encourages the use of academic word lists or discourages writers from using personal forms (as discussed in Part 1) without engaging students with what consequences this might have on the socio-academic practices they wish to communicate, it is narrowing possibilities for 're-defining writing' (following Rose) and restricting writer agency.

When viewed through a critical discourse lens, linguistic practices and choices are understood as embodying values, in the sense that it is through these actions and choices, through our practices, that we manifest and communicate to others what we hold to be important. Our practices, then,

including our written ones, affect the realisation of these values to greater or lesser extents. For example, when we value imagination, creativity, inclusiveness or innovation in the communication of knowledge, then a single standard mode or genre is unlikely to be effective in achieving these values. This might explain why Thomas (2018, emphasis added) chose the graphic essay genre to comment on research into gendered experiences of academia (Fig. 27):
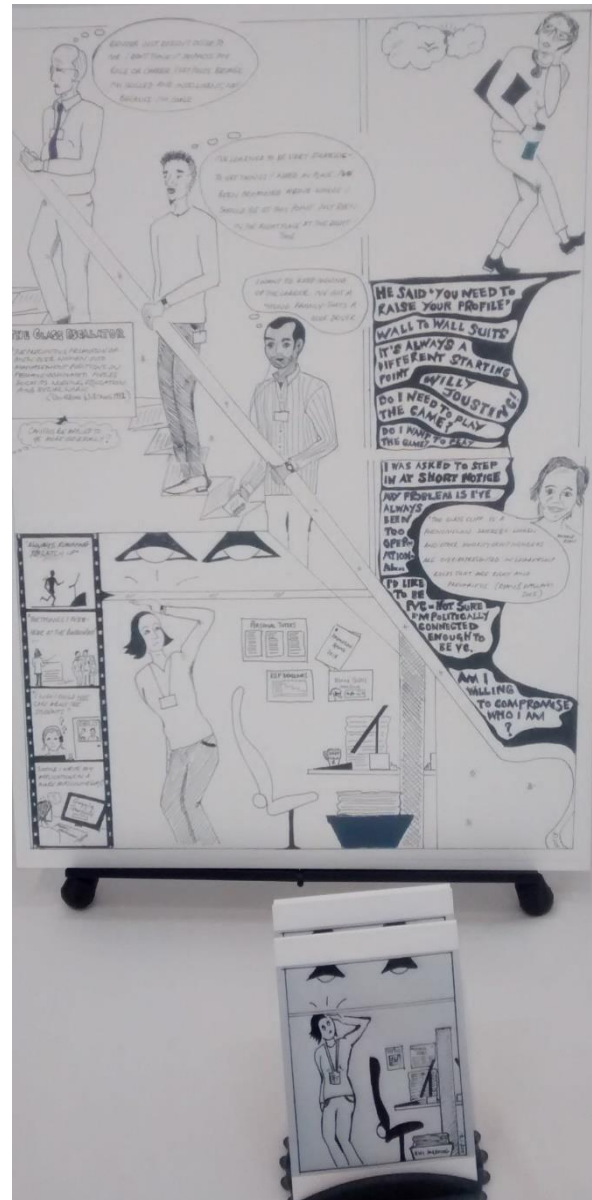
Figure 27: 'Glass ceiling' (graphic essay) Undisciplining Conference, Gateshead, 2018 (photo Julia Molinari, 2018)

A graphic essay uses text and image to explore a specific topic. Graphic essays often look like graphic novels, magazines, or artist books but generally convey non-fictional histories, cases and/or arguments. Learning the craft of the graphic essay involves learning to structure and manipulate content within individual frames and across pages; judging the combination of textual and visual to communicate meaning to the reader/viewer; gaining confidence to know when to let the visual 'speak' for itself - through caricature, metaphor, broadbrush or detail. My laborious progress provides *unexpected opportunity to reflect* on participant narratives and make

connections across them. Perhaps this is my most satisfying discovering, that the meticulous practice of creating a graphic essay *enriches the process of data analysis*, indeed that comics creation is *a way of thinking*. It is also particularly satisfying, in a project focusing on gendered experience, to have the ability to *make female theorists literally visible* and to place myself, as researcher, narrator, interpreter, in the research.

The graphic mode afforded Thomas several academic opportunities that the linguistic mode did not, including 'unexpected opportunities to reflect'; an 'enriched process of data analysis'; and a 'way of thinking and making women *literally* visible', which signals her endorsement of the values of feminism.

What this indexes is the non-linearity, the disproportionate effect that changes in mode (and within modes) can have on academicness.

Defending complexity

That academic writing is complex has been *implied* in literatures on EAP (C. Coffin & J. P. Donohue, 2012), Composition Studies (Judd, 2003), Academic Literacies (Scott, 2004) and Research Writing (Parnell, 2012). Surprisingly, nobody seems to have *explicitly* explained writing in relation to complexity theory, despite the attention that complexity theory has had in its cognate field, namely language acquisition and development. What follows draws out possible parallels between a complexity account of language acquisition and a complexity account of academic writing.

Several theorists, most notably Diane Larsen-Freeman, explain language acquisition in terms of complexity theory (Ortega & Han, 2017)[45] in an attempt to: a) reconcile the socio-cognitive divide that such theories cluster around (e.g. socio-constructivist theorists such as Vygotsky (1986), Halliday (1978) and Evans (2014) compared to cognitive-innatist ones in Chomsky (1968) and Pinker (2000); and b), situate language development within an ecological framework (van Lier, 2000, p. 246, emphasis added) that:

> shifts the emphasis from scientific *reductionism* to the notion of *emergence*. Instead of assuming that every phenomenon can be explained in terms of simpler phenomena or components, [an ecological approach] says that at every level of development properties emerge that cannot be reduced to those of prior levels. [...] From an ecological perspective, the learner is immersed in an environment full of *potential meanings*.

Specifically, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) have called for language acquisition (and development) to be framed in terms of 'dynamic social interactions' rather than cognitive functional input-output models (e.g. Krashen (1981) that explain acquisition as a *function* of what language learners are exposed to (what goes in) and what language they then produce (what comes out) (van Lier, 2000, p. 257):

> The ecological perspective questions the common assumption that language, cognition, memories, and intelligence are uniquely contained inside the brain, and that learning consists of various ways of putting them there. We have to learn to

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[45] See also 2006 Special Issue of *Applied Linguistics* 27 (4) on Emergentism and Complex Systems and 2008 *Modern Language Journal* 92 (2) on Complexity Theory and Dynamic Systems

understand what Harold Garfinkel meant when he said that, to find answers to our questions, 'there is no reason to look under the skull since nothing of interest is to be found there but brains' (1963:190).

To curtail such functional approaches, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, together with the contributors to Ortega and Han (2017), propose a complexity model of language development and draw on ecological approaches which rely on the notion of *affordance* to explain how language is acquired and developed (van Lier, 2000, pp. 252-253, discussed further in Chapter 6). This requires placing significant emphasis on the learner as an autonomous agent and innovator who can perceive opportunities in the linguistic environment. Since each learner is different, they will perceive and cognitively process different linguistic inputs from the particular contexts they find themselves in. This suggests that there can be no guarantee that any two learners will be learning the same content in the same way even though the input (from a teacher or other source) appears to be the same (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, p. 124):

> Viewing language development as self-organisation or structure formation in a dynamical system means that different learners may develop different language resources even when the ambient language is similar [...]. As Mohanan (1992: 653-654) puts it, 'Suppose we free ourselves from the idea that [first] language development is the deduction of the adult grammar from the input data, and think of it as the formation of patterns triggered by the data'.

By foregrounding the richness and networked complexity of the linguistic environment (which provides formal and informal opportunities for social interactions and for directed instruction) and by showing how the learner

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makes sense of this environment (for example, by cognitively processing *patterns* of usage, rather than isolated instances (Cameron & Deignan, 2006; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), complexity theorists give prominence to the learner (the agent) who becomes an active and creative meaning-maker and not a passive recipient of inputs.

Since academic writing is the principal medium through which diverse practices and values are communicated and established, and since a key aim of EAP is to prepare students for academic study, it seems reasonable to posit that students learning to write academically should also be learning about the affordances of different modes and genres within a complex theory of writing.

Is Complexity Theory redundant?

Notwithstanding the intuitive allure of complexity theory (in the common sense sense that 'everything is complex'), critics contend that its scope is far too broad, abstract and vague to be a useful explanatory theory of how social phenomena work. Viewed from the perspective of educational philosophy, Mason (2008a, p. 6), for example, argues that problems

> lie in complexity theory's nature, status, methodology, utility and contribution to the philosophy of education, in that it is a descriptive theory that is easily misunderstood as a prescriptive theory, that it is silent on key issues of values and ethics that educational philosophy should embrace, that it is of questionable internal consistency, and that it currently adds limited further value to educational philosophy.

Critics in the field of Applied Linguistics, such as Gregg (2010), argue along similar lines, adding that we commit an unjustifiable category mistake in

trying to explain social phenomena using models from the physical sciences (cf. Sokal, 2008) and that the very social phenomena that are being described as dynamic and non-linear (in this case 'language') are actually stable (or steady) and predictable (Gregg, 2010, p. 553):

> When I say steady state, I mean steady: I have been using
> English for more years than I am going to let on, and since
> puberty at least, pretty much nothing has happened to my
> phonological, semantic, or syntactic knowledge [...]. A set of
> speakers is a dynamical system, or [...] the acquisition process is;
> but not language.

Gregg (2010, p. 556) further highlights what he considers to be 'inconsistencies' in the way in which Cameron and Larsen-Freeman (2007), in particular, apply complexity theory to language learning. He does this by emphasising what he claims to be their initial misunderstandings of innatist theories of first language acquisition (the theory that the neurology can explain language acquisition and development) and accuses them of setting up a straw man, namely a problem that only they perceive (Gregg, p. 554):

> the position that their complexity perspective supposedly leads
> them to criticize is a straw man; [their] exposition of innatist
> linguistics is simply mistaken, across the board.

Like Gregg, I too recognise the relative stability and predictability of our language systems and, by analogy, of academic writing genres. Despite evidence of changes in the way we write since the printing press was established (Eisenstein, 1983) and since the digital impact of the Internet (Bazerman, 2015), academic writing has remained relatively recognisable as a genre that distinguishes itself from, say, literature or journalism. This is

because writing becomes 'encapsulated' by the way knowledge is produced within stable and reliable publishing and institutional systems and distributed according to commercial imperatives, despite advances in technology or social changes that inspire writers to innovate (Bazerman, 2015, p. 267).

Why complexity theory is not redundant

However, recognising that there is 'relative stability' does not mean that things are stable nor does it mean we can ignore the changes that do and could exist. Things may be stable for periods of time, in certain contexts and for certain reasons (e.g. re-prints of up-to-date grammar textbooks take time and are costly), but the *levers of history*, as we have seen, allow language and genres to evolve. Gunnarsson (2001)'s medical genre, referred to above, is evidence of this, as are more recent erosions to the formality and rules of academic writing, which are undergoing increases in 'illicit sentence initials' such as 'But', 'And' and 'So' (Hyland & Feng (Kevin), 2017, p. 47) and as signalled in the need to re-think traditional genres of dissertation writing (Paré, 2018).

Moreover, framing academic writings in terms of social practices and threshold concepts, which foreground the identities and ideologies of writers and the social media through which they communicate (Carrigan, 2016), further opens up possibilities for change: humans are diverse, creative and unpredictable, and their writings reflect this. This is why writing landscapes are varied and mobile (Blommaert & Horner, 2017) and include multilingual (Wei, 2016) and multimodal forms (A. Archer & Breuer, 2015) within 'superdiverse' global societies (Vertovec, 2007).

As for the charge that complexity theorists are making a category mistake by drawing on science to explain a social phenomenon, then the same charge can be levelled at all those who use science to explain non-scientific phenomena. This doesn't invalidate the charge *per se*, but it does weaken it, because it begs the question of what might be wrong with drawing on other disciplines, such as science, to understand social phenomena, such as academic writing.

Dismissing a complex approach to explaining sociolinguistic phenomena on the grounds that it is 'unscientific' because it commits a category mistake further betrays a misunderstanding of scientific enquiry and ignores the fact that boundaries between science and non-science are historically blurred. This is evident in nomenclature change that signalled the transition from 'natural philosophy' to 'science' (cf. the *Royal Society Philosophical Transactions* and Ross (1962) and in current disciplinary classifications that impose methodological, rather than substantial, divisions on the sciences, social sciences and humanities (for example, is Psychology part of the physical sciences or is it a humanity, like Philosophy?).

All enquiry seeks explanations for phenomena the reality of which is not a given, even in science: Einstein's theory of relativity and its quantum implications were considered heretic and to have threatened the whole 'edifice of physics' with his "purely theoretical and non-empirical claims", shattering confidence in what counts as 'real' (Sigmund, 2017, pp. 48-49, emphasis added):

> Planck's idea, which restricted the ways that material objects
> could vibrate, was the first quantum hypothesis ever, and

although it was surprising and hard to reconcile with previous laws, it did not seem profoundly *threatening to the entire edifice of physics*. [...] But to suggest that light had a particle nature [as well as wave] was definitely *threatening*. Thanks to James Clerk Maxwell's great equations, published in the mid-1860s, and Heinrich Hertz's great experiments roughly twenty years later (and countless other pieces of evidence), anyone who knew anything about light was convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that light was waves; indeed, that fact was an unshakable pillar on which huge amounts of the physics of the day rested. It was therefore a complete and radical break with virtually all of classical physics when Einstein proposed that light might consist of particles. This heresy really did *threaten the entire edifice*.

Since knowledge is interdisciplinary (Chettiparamb, 2007), and since science itself deals with quantum dualisms that challenge our *understandings* of reality (not necessarily reality itself), shared processes and theories of enquiry to explain phenomena can, at least in principle, be explored.

This does not amount to a 'category mistake', but to the humble admission that reality is complex and that a wide-angled approach is more likely to yield understanding. Whilst I agree with linguists such as Orman (2016) and Harris (1989), who lament the 'scientisation of language' and its 'segregation from' rather than 'integration with' social behaviour, I don't object in principle to interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge if these enhance and broaden understanding rather than narrow it by reducing it to finite and exclusive definitions. As signalled in my preliminary introduction, finite and exclusive definitions yield 'shallow consensuses'.

In this regard, I share the views of L. Kuhn (2008, p. 182, emphasis added) who argues that approaching phenomena through complexity theory is not

redundant because it amounts to an 'orientation' that affords 'reflective and thoughtful engagement' with the uncertainty of social phenomena. She sees:

> complexity as constituting a *paradigmatic orientation,* functioning as an intellectual successor of other previously favoured frameworks for explaining how novelty, order and evolution are present in the world. Extrapolating out from precise scientific and mathematical enterprises, the complexity sciences, or complexity theory, presents particular habits of thought about the nature of the organisation of the world, with complexity narratives and vocabularies generating *alternative habits of explanation* to those deriving from linear, objective, positivist accounts of the natural and social world. Complexity as paradigm offers evocative *metaphors for making sense that are not bound to linearity or certainty* (Kuhn, 2005).

Gregg (2010) further accuses Applied Linguists who invoke complexity theory to dismantle innatist approaches to language acquisition of setting up a straw man. Specifically, he accuses them of misunderstanding innatists and of misrepresenting their claims regarding the social dimension of language. The innatist-social controversy (commonly referred to as the nature *versus* nurture debate) has been notably played out in Evans (2014), a sociolinguist who has painstakingly undermined Pinker (2000)'s innatist theory of 'language as instinct' on the grounds that it doesn't explain language novelty, creativity and change, nor does it account for non-human language, such as the communication of bees, who are highly socialised. It is beyond my present scope to articulate the details of this controversy, but, judging by the relatively little uptake that sociolinguistic approaches to language acquisition have had in curricula, assessments and textbooks (in

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EAP, for example (Hyland, 2018), it is understandable that innatists bear the brunt of sociolinguistic critique.

I would further argue, in response to Gregg, (2010) that language needs to be explained as a complex system because a 'narrow interpretation of language' (van Lier, 2000, pp. 258-259) that reduces it to cognitive processes and functional models of explanation, which innatist theories tend to do, misses causes that may be equally relevant and efficacious in accounting for acquisition and development. For example, my choice of passive or active voice is more fruitfully explained by epistemological commitments and orientations than by 'what goes on beneath my skull'.

Finally, the charge by Mason that complexity theory is silent on ethics can be met by recognising that it does not have to be. This clearly doesn't alter the charge *per se*, but it does open a space for ethics to be considered, which suggests that complexity theory and ethics are not mutually exclusive. For example, research on the ethics of affordances, which are integral to understanding complexity theory (van Lier, 2000), could be further developed (I discuss affordance in the next chapter, but not in relation to ethics, which is my present focus). In Sociology, Winner (1980) reflects on how urban design can enact, or *afford*, the politics of discrimination. He does this by offering an *ideological* explanation for the design of a bridge in a wealthy city. The bridge is not merely a point of transit linking one part of the city to another, i.e. it does not simply *afford a passage*. This is because it has been designed in such a way that buses are unable to pass under it. The social consequences of this are that poorer citizens, who are more likely to rely on public transport to reach the city centre, become excluded from social life. In this ideological sense, the bridge *affords social exclusion*. A non-complexity analysis of this might

ignore the ideological intentions driving the design or simply be blind to its unintended, unforeseen consequences. This is because a linear and reductive explanation of how the bridge came into being might focus only on mechanical or economic reasons, such as the availability of materials or costs.

Unpicking whether language acquisition and development can be explained by complexity theory, whether language theorists in this tradition are setting up straw men or what areas complexity theory is silent on is beyond my present scope. I do, nevertheless, read these criticisms as potentially applicable to my own thesis which proposes a complexity approach to academic writing. For example, what might complexity add to existing theories on the sociolinguistic and ethnographic richness of writing (Barton & Papen, 2010; Blommaert & Horner, 2017; Scott & Lillis, 2007); or the Socio-cognitive Genre approaches that systematise how learners process language (Bruce, 2008); or Multimodal and Threshold Concept analyses (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015; A. Archer & Breuer, 2015), which extend our horizons on what writing does; or the expanding field of Composition Studies (Gross & Ruehl, 2016; Judd, 2003; Russell, 2002), where previous literacies are celebrated rather than ignored?

What complexity theory adds, or rather, does, is provide a macro-theory (Jackson & Pettit, 1992), as introduced below and further developed in Chapter 6.

Complexity as Macro Theory

A complexity approach to academic writing can provide an account of why all these theories exist. The all-encompassing scope of such an account is what makes it macro. Complexity theory can act as a *heuristic* and as a

paradigmatic orientation towards academic writing that does not collapse the social phenomenon that is academic writing into one or other theory, or domain (Lillis, 2013). This is because each theory, or domain, has reason to exist: the text-focused structural tradition of De Saussure and Chomsky accounts for text-centred analyses (Hyland, 2016c, p. 4); the writer-focused and expressivist traditions of Elbow account for the fact that writer intention matters (*ibid*, p. 12); the reader-focused social constructivist traditions of Fairclough account for the fact that readers bring their own interpretations to a text (*ibid*, pp. 21-30). A complexity approach to academic writing can show that each approach contributes to understanding the whole phenomenon that writing is. This is because the phenomenon requires an account of:

- the social practices enacted by a text (such as social justice, a commitment to the truth, creativity, diversity, argument and inclusion);
- the writer's purpose;
- the textual modes available to achieve such a text (such as vocabulary, grammar, genre and image);
- the discrete skills needed to compose the text (such as the craft of paragraphing, sequencing or editing).

Each interacts with the other to allow academicness to emerge but neither can be reduced to the other, nor can one exist without the other. Because of this, as discussed in Part 1, 'there is no universal academic discourse' (Downs & Wardle, 2007), which means that social practices, modes and skills require negotiation, and not what Mike Rose calls 'the myth of transience'.

Macro-theories are better-suited than micro-theories to explain social practices, such as writing. By foregrounding the social and transformative nature of writing, social practice writing theorists are drawing on sociologies of education (structures) and of human flourishing (agency). In different ways, all the following social practice theorists of writing implicitly assume the tenets of complexity theory in their approaches: Ivanič (1998) sees writing as building identities; Lillis (2013) and Paltridge et al. (2016) focus on the transformative and generative effects of writing within an Academic Literacies tradition; and Judd (2003), Pratt (2011) and Williams (2017) highlight the importance of agency (understood as choice) based on previous and present literacies, in the tradition of Composition Studies.

However, although they draw on or imply sociological theories, several writing theorists avoid being explicit about where they stand in relation to fundamental sociological concerns. One such concern relates to structure and agency. This can be understood as the tension that arises from trying to explain the behaviour of individuals in relation to the society they live in and, conversely, from trying to explain the nature of society in terms of the individuals that make up that society. This tension can be illustrated as follows: do we explain a phenomenon, such as someone's racist or compassionate behaviour, in terms of the society they live in (structure) or do we explain the phenomenon in terms of individual choices (agency)? Common-sensically, the answer is both, but sociologically, the answer is highly complex.

According to Sawyer (2001), sociology divides thinkers into two broad camps: the methodological collectivists (such as M. Archer (1995); Bhaskar (1979, 1998), who argue that phenomena such as racism cannot be reduced to the individual because they are emergent phenomena; and the

methodological individualists (Rom Harré), who accept that social phenomena like racism are emergent but who also argue that these phenomena can be reduced to, and therefore explained by, individual behaviours.

Translated into the debate about what makes a text academic, how do we explain the social phenomenon of 'academicness'? Do we explain the academicness of a text in terms of 'domains' (Lillis, 2013, pp. 162-163) of academic discourse (i.e. the institutional and disciplinary structures that establish norms) or do we explain the academicness of a text in terms of the intentions of the writer (agency)? Specifically, do we explain the scientific report genre or the historical monograph, understood as exemplars of academicness, in terms of the discourses they belong to (structures) or do we explain them in terms of the intentions of who has written them (agency)? If Wittgenstein's writings are academic, in the sense of enacting academic values and practices, are they academic in virtue of who he was (agency) or of how he expressed himself (structure)? If they are not academic, then on what basis are they not?

Critical Realism, and academic writing as an Open System

While textbook writers will typically ignore such tensions by foregrounding rules and conventions, more nuanced writing scholars tend to embrace the complexity by providing rich descriptions of how texts vary and of how this variation can be explained by and reconciled with the needs of specific contexts and purposes. However, few writing theorists have ventured into the philosophical and sociological intricacies of how one might analytically explain the structure-agency binary. Those who have tend to view writing as an open system, as I explain below.

Recalling Mike Rose's plea for change in the academy and for a re-definition of writing (1985, p. 359), Pratt (2011) and Judd (2003) can be said to have developed a sociological theory of academic writing that can 'change the terms of the argument'. They share the sociological concerns of Academic Literacy theorists, although they are less visible in the literatures on academic writing and certainly not referred to in EAP. They have contributed to South African and American literacy practices, respectively, where issues of multilingualism, multiculturalism and fair access to academia are crucial. Their focus, however, is not so much on exposing diversity and injustice (with which they are ultimately concerned), but on how institutional writing practices can change to address these. They turn to the Critical Realism of M. Archer (1998, 2000); Bhaskar (1989a, 1989b) and Collier (1994) to do this, and specifically to the concept of 'open systems', which I explain below, after a cursory overview of what critical realism is.

Critical Realism is a philosophical approach to social theory that attempts to explain social change and novelty by avoiding overly deterministic and reductionist accounts of how structure and culture determine what agents can and cannot do. Structures include the material, institutional and social resources that make up our environments, including policies that determine the roles of gender, race, ability, inclusion and exclusion; culture includes the realm of ideas and is non-material; agency refers to the ability of humans to act freely according to their intentions (Case, 2013, p. 31). Critical realist philosophy is also a response to postmodern tendencies to conflate subjective perception and experience, including 'discourse', with reality (M. Archer, 2000, pp. 33-44), a tendency which can easily slide into epistemic relativism and its associated problems (Boghossian, 2006).

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Critical realism recognises that humans are born into pre-existing historical structures that they did not choose and that they have no immediate individual control over. These pre-existing structures affect their ability to act on and change the world. For example, an EAP student (writer-agent) will find it difficult to individually act on and change the conventions (structure) she is being asked to follow.

However, critical realism also posits that because the world is made up of and linked by a 'stratified ontology' – where subjective (cultural, empirical and transitive), objective (structural, actual and intransitive) and mechanical (real) layers, or strata, make up human existence – these cannot be reduced to each other. Instead, these provide an 'emergent' space between strata where humans have agency to change structures because they are 'rooted in them', not 'determined by them' (Collier, 1994, pp. 110-111). This is because the world is made up of distinct strata: what we perceive (culture, the realm of ideas, subjective and transitive experiences, i.e. these can change); what is independent of us (material structures, objective and intransitive facts, i.e. these cannot change) and what is unobservable, namely the underlying mechanisms of the subjective and objective, i.e., the *reality*. Although unobservable, these mechanisms are *real* in the sense that "they have causal effects" (Case, 2013, p. 41).

For critical realists, therefore, our knowledge and experience of reality - the subjective and objective - are not the same as reality - the mechanisms underlying each and which explain knowledge and experience: to conflate reality with our knowledge and experience of reality amounts to committing an 'epistemic fallacy' (M. Archer, 2002, p. 12):

> Realism can never endorse the 'epistemic fallacy' and, in this connection, it must necessarily insist that how the world is has a regulatory effect upon what we make of it and, in turn, what it makes of us. These effects are independent of our full discursive penetration, just as gravity influenced us, and the projects we could entertain, long before we conceptualised it.

According to Bhaskar, the epistemic fallacy is a legacy of Cartesian rationality where it is our thinking that determines what there is. It is also a relic of Kantian idealism whereby the categories of our mind (space and time) impose structures on a world that may not exist (or at least not exist outside of our cognitive categories). Critical realism flips this dualism by asking 'what must the world be like for humans to have knowledge of it?' instead of 'what must humans be like in order for the world to be as it is?' (Collier, 1994, pp. 137-168).

Rather, reality consists of a 'depth ontology' composed of layers of causal powers (mechanisms) and emergent phenomena (such as language, justice, knowledge and humanity) that can be analytically isolated in order to account for the causal workings of each stratum. In this 'depth ontology', humans have agency and are practical, social beings with discursive knowledge (M. Archer, 2000, p. 162). This allows them to act on the world by exerting their 'critical', i.e. emancipatory, concerns (such as a concern for social justice). For example, an EAP student (agent), in conversation with a writing teacher who is knowledgeable about academic writing conventions and possibilities (that is, about both structure and culture) has choices. This aligns critical realism with theorists like Fairclough who are concerned with the deterministic powers of unjust discourses, but it also allows for the existence of a structural reality, such as conventions, which agents can

change (see Case (2013, pp. 28-63) for a concise and precise summary of critical realist social philosophy and of its proponents).

Because of its focus on a stratified and emergent 'depth ontology', Critical Realism conceives the human sciences as complex *open systems* that can change, a phrase also used by applied linguists to describe language (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 31-33) and by philosophers to describe education (Morrison, 2008, p. 20).

One way of understanding what is meant by an open system is to compare it to a closed one. Closed systems are artificially created conditions designed to isolate mechanisms so that they can be observed in the absence of putatively irrelevant causal variables: for example, if I want to know what causes light to refract, all I need is a source of light and a medium through which it can pass, such as a prism of glass jar, to show that light changes speed and refracts depending on the medium it passes through. I don't need trees, houses, rain or anything else that co-occurs *naturally* when light refracts in the environment because these elements are not causally relevant to the refraction of light.

Open systems, by contrast, are characterised by several variables which have varying degrees of causal relevance, including agents and structures. So, for example, if I want to know what poverty, a social phenomenon, is and what causes it, I will need a rich explanatory toolkit that is unlikely to involve a linear reduction to a finite set of causes. Similarly, if I want to know what academic writing is, also a social phenomenon, and what causes it, I will need more than a list of conventions to establish this. This is because scholarly writing is a practice affected by co-occurring, inter-related and evolving phenomena, such as author agency (Scott, 2000;

Williams, 2017) and structures that are historical (Bazerman, 1988, 2015; Russell, 2002; Russell & Cortes, 2012), audit and policy-related (Mcculloch, 2017) and algorithmic (Introna, 2106).

To illustrate how Critical Realism understands open and closed systems, Collier asks the following questions (1994, pp. 34-35, but see also pp. 62-63; 121; 161):

> how can experiments inform us about nature when they are very special processes produced by us, in which things happen differently from the way they do in the open systems of the world outside the laboratory? What if experimental results can only tell us what happens under experimental conditions? If they don't tell us how things happen in the open systems of nature at all, then they lack all epistemic value and are no more than interesting tricks. I have heard an eminent scientist argue that this is just how the ancient Greeks would have regarded them – as telling us no more about the real tendencies of things than the tricks of a circus animal tell us about the real tendencies of its species […]. The whole purpose of experiments is to isolate some mechanism which normally operates alongside others. In its normal operation, it has effects: it makes different things happen from what would have happened in its absence. But since what happens in an open system is the effect of a conjunction of forces, it is not what one would have predicted from any one of those forces taken in isolation.

Prescriptive accounts of what makes a text academic, such as those found in textbooks and IELTS exams, portray academic writing as a closed system because they set, and therefore limit, the range of variables that account for the academicness of a text, isolating the text from environmental distortions, such as the writer's creativity, literacies, intentions or emotions,

or negotiations with tutors, supervisors, publishers and policy-makers. In behaving like a closed system, academic writing aligns itself to laboratory science which is designed to eliminate the white noise of context and isolate phenomena from the systems in which they naturally co-occur. Mcculloch (2017) and Collini (2012), for example, have shown that the varied writing practices and genres of academics are tendentially airbrushed out of audit systems, such as the Research Excellence Framework, in an effort to standardise what counts as 'excellence'. Similarly, the geopolitics of writing, including its injustices, do not generally count as factors in determining academicness (Lillis & Curry, 2010b).

The appeal of critical realism for writing studies gradually emerges because it requires us to start asking how, adapting Collier, textbook templates and cookie cutters can inform us about the nature of academic writing when they are very special processes produced by us, in which things happen differently from the way they do in the open systems of the world outside the classroom.

This is why Judd (2003, p. 14) explicitly positions academic writing (composition studies) as an open system:

> Roy Bhaskar's critical realism has been borrowed by such academic disciplines as sociology, economics and psychology. All of these disciplines fall under the heading human sciences as qualified by Bhaskar's *Possibility of Naturalism* (1979). Composition Studies clearly qualifies as part of the human sciences because it operates in open systems, does not have access to predictive experimentation, and utilises explanatory justifications in its production of knowledge.

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Pratt (2011) has similarly invoked critical realism and its focus on open systems to explain academic writing. She claims that an open system (2011, p. 18), although relatively stable, is ultimately more generative than static (or deterministic) because it can be changed by agents who have free will (2011, pp. 27-28):

> Critical realism offers an appropriate perspective from which to view the complex processes involved in composing [writing]. The critical realist philosophy represents reality as complex and dynamic, and inquires into the way things work – particularly the deep-structure causes of events and social processes [...]. The participant focus is also favoured by critical realism, which views human action not as governed by behaviouristic laws, nor as a conditioned response to pre-determined social structures, but as individual agency (M. Archer 2002) with a fair amount of free will within any given social order. Human agency is both enabled and limited by the opportunities and constraints afforded by social structures, at the same time maintaining the fabric of these social structures, which are fairly stable, but capable of gradual change, usually by one or more of the complex social mechanisms which maintain these structures rather than as the result of individual human agency (or specific interest groups) per se. This means that, while learner writers often find themselves operating in a "given" (but not fixed or static) context, where academic writing is an undisputed fact of academic life, they are able to make efforts to empower themselves by gaining insight into and expertise in academic composing, in spite of the constraints set by academic requirements and other factors (e.g. lack of experience and/or background knowledge).

What both Judd and Pratt are saying is that writers are agents who can change the practices they engage with because these are open and generative social systems.

Conclusion

The historical and linguistic levers of academic writing index its complexity because of the inter-play between the structures that generate writing and the agencies that author it. This inter-play constitutes a relation that needs to be accounted for in explanations of what makes writing academic. This explanation cannot be reduced in a linear way to either structure or agency (represented in Appendix A as 'textual environment' and 'writer', respectively) because to do so would restrict accounts of what counts as academic writing: strictly structural explanations would only include writings that follow conventions; wholly agentic explanations would include anything that a writer decrees by fiat. By locating academic writing within complexity theory, texts can become social and critical open systems that are generative of novelty and change, but also bound by historical structures and continuity.

The following final chapter further elucidates the notion of complexity by proposing four conceptual spaces in which to re-think what makes writing academic.

Chapter 6- Academic emergence

any general complexity social science has to get beyond micro-determined emergence. It has to allow for structures with causal powers and it has to address human agency as capable of transcending narrow rules for behaviour (Byrne & Callaghan, 2014, p. 56).

Introduction

Having positioned academic writing as a complex open system that cannot be explained by reducing it to its constituent parts (Chapter 5), I now articulate the detail of what it means for a text to be academic in the absence or presence of specific textual features. This brings together Part 1 (what academic writing is in EAP) and Part 2 (why it is so) to show how else it could be. I propose an original model that draws on four concepts:

<div align="center">

Affordance Theory

Organic Unity

Emergence Theory

Program Explanation

</div>

These can show that having a *prima facie* resemblance to academic writing, as hoaxes do, does not mean *being* academic. They are also relevant within broader metaphysical debates about the ways that whole entities, or phenomena, such as social ones, relate to their constituent parts without being reduced to them. For example, they create spaces to explore the extent to which the academicness of a text is a function of its constituent parts, in a mechanistic sense, and to what extent it is not, in the complex

sense of academicness being a novel non-linear property that defies reduction, as discussed in Chapter 5.

As shown in Part 1 and Part 2 respectively, EAP writing practices are broadly dualistic: skills-based approaches, which for convenience in this Chapter, I label SBA, foreground transferable rules and conventions; social practice approaches, labelled SPA, foreground transformation and ideologies. What I am claiming is that for a text to be 'academic', each approach must interact in optimal ways to allow socio-academic practices to emerge. I label these 'SAP'. They refer to the property of 'academicness' introduced in Chapter 4.

To do this, I have chosen a conceptual toolkit that stems from the Philosophy of Social Science, Art and Mind. This is because all three traditions seek to understand complexity (of society, of beauty, and of consciousness, respectively) in ways that enable me to articulate the academic writing dualism analytically, thus unpacking and disentangling complexity without conflating and collapsing parts and wholes. In this regard, Margaret Archer's reasons for approaching the complexity inherent in structure-agency critiques are helpful because they provide a space for framing each part of the binary on its own terms whilst recognising their inter-relational cause and effect (M. Archer, 1995, pp. 165-170).

In other words, for there to be a relation at all between parts, it must be possible to make independent claims about each. So, for example, to make sense of the Sokal and Labbé hoaxes as wholes, we need to be able to make claims about their form (their parts), that are independent of their whole.

I open and close this chapter by proposing that academic writing is a *whole-part relationship* which cannot be reduced to either a skill or a social

practice because it emerges from a relational multiply realisable base that integrates the capabilities, values and literacies of writers (the Writer (SPA) in Appendix A) with the skills, conventions and genres of textual environments (The Textual Environment (SBA) in Appendix A).

The (dis)unity of parts and wholes

Philosopher Jerry Fodor (1974, 1997), *inter alia*, has articulated the debate about how parts and wholes relate to each other in terms that can help illustrate where the conceptual difficulties lie. He discusses how the special sciences, like psychology, relate to the physical sciences, like physics and chemistry, and asks how the special sciences can remain autonomous from the physical sciences when many reductionist physicalists persuasively argue that they cannot (e.g. McCauley, Churchland, and Churchland (1996). By 'autonomous', he means having independent laws and predicates that are not reducible to the laws and predicates of the physical sciences. He explains this autonomy in functional terms, as opposed to substantial ones because to invoke substance would require referring to physical matter, which would invalidate his anti-reductionism. Rather, Fodor argues that each science serves distinct purposes that need not be nomologically reduced to the other to count as 'real'.

This means that while pains and beliefs (psychological states), for example, can be *described* in terms of the laws and predicates of the physical sciences, they *cannot be reduced* to them because they are *functionally* distinct. The 'disunity' of the sciences, as Fodor calls it, consists in the fact that "pain states are nomologically homogenous under their functional description *despite the physical heterogeneity of their realizers*" (Fodor, 1997, p. 153, emphasis in original). What follows is that we feel and respond to

pain as a single, homogenous phenomenon, as a psychological phenomenon, as *unity*. This is in spite of the fact that it is realized, or generated, by a wide (multiple) range of physical and chemical phenomena each of which has its own rules and predicates: we do not describe and respond to pain by describing it chemically and physically as, for example, 'lactose acid is causing my muscles to contract' but we describe and respond to it psychologically as 'my leg hurts'. In this sense, each science, the physical one and the special (psychological) one, says something different and meaningful about the same phenomenon (Fodor, 1974, p. 103). Importantly, each is 'real' because it causes other events to happen: knowing it is lactose acid means I can make decisions about which pain killer to take; knowing it hurts, means I can't work.

This allows for macrostructural regularity, unity and stability at the psychological level to co-exist with what Fodor has since referred to as the physical 'to-ings and fro-ings of bits and pieces that buzz and bloom with confusion at the micro-level' (1997, pp. 160-161).

Fodor's mereology (namely, his account of how parts and wholes relate to each other) resonates with references to stratification and emergence, recalling a critical realist ontology where wholes (macrostructural regularities) can do things that parts (micro-level to-ings and fro-ings) cannot: a dog barks, but its cells do not (Collier, 1994, pp. 107-108).

Academicness can be similarly understood as a macro-level phenomenon composed of and multiply realised by micro-level 'buzzing and blooming confusions' which we perceive as a stable whole but which is a teeming cacophony of disparate parts whose individual properties are incommensurate with the whole: knowing or not knowing that lactose or

any other infinite combination of chemical reactions is causing my pain is different to how I experience that pain; similarly, knowing or not knowing which skill produced my text is different to how I perceive that text.

This opens up several scenarios including problematic ones such as the possibility for a hoax to be academic. This is because Fodor's disunities potentially eliminate causal links between the micro and the macro: for example, phantom pains are perceived as real even though no limb exists to allow the micro-level physics to exist. Similarly, a hoax is perceived as real, even though one of its generative constituents, the need for a commitment to the truth, for example, is missing. However, in the case of academic writing, when links in the causal chain are broken or even non-existent, academicness can still emerge because of our 'judgments' (Smith, 1999) about writing practices and because of what we 'care' about (Dall'Alba, 2012), such as nurturing diversity.

So far, however, I have suggested that what makes writing 'academic' cannot be reduced to either the mechanical textual features of SBA or the social dimension of SPA. This is because the consequences of reducing to the SBA would commit us to: a) excluding scholarly work by Sousanis and others on the grounds that they use the 'wrong' modes and genres, and don't have a conventional academic reader in mind; and b) to including hoaxes, which would count as academic because they manifest conventional genres. On the other hand, the consequences of reducing to an SPA account would make a text both academic *and* non-academic: academic because of the socio-academic practices enacted by Sokal were real (after all, he was being 'critical' and generated much academic debate around what counts as knowledge); non-academic, because if honesty and

truth are to count in what makes writing academic, then his integrity is certainly questionable.

I now introduce four philosophical theories that can be used as a toolkit to frame how the parts relate to the whole[46]. By parts, I mean the writer and their textual environment (SPA and SBA). These parts are composed of individuals (WRITER) and their interactions with structures (TEXTUAL ENVIRONMENT). In this sense, the parts constitute a relation (AFFORDANCE). By whole, I mean the ACADEMICNESS that emerges from the AFFORDANCE (Appendix A).

Affordance

Since we cannot rely exclusively on either the writer's intention or on the features of a text to establish whether the writing is academic or not, but still need both a writer and a text, we need an account of the nature of their interaction. The psychological, philosophical, educational and socio-political concept of affordance can provide such an account.

Affordances have their origins in ecological psychology and in philosophies of perception (Bonderup Dohn, 2009; Gibson, 1977; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). They have since become a key tenet of theories of educational technology (Hammond, 2010) and communication (Hutchby, 2001, 2014); of complexity theory, as developed in Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008); and are invoked by the literatures that frame writing as a social practice (English,

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[46] In Chapter 4, I claimed, with reference to threshold concepts, that a shift in how EAP conceptualises academic writing is needed, such as the recognition 'that when writing is reduced to a relatively finite set of skills it may fail to 'encapsulate' *new* socio-academic practices'. The four theories outlined in this chapter are examples of such shift and could be understood as threshold concepts of academic writing.

2011). They have also been explored in social theories to show that they embody 'political powers' (Winner, 1980).

A first reading of the literatures provides a fairly straightforward account of what affordance means. I have tailored the original quotations below to writing (in square brackets) (Gibson, 1977, pp. 67-68):

> the affordance of anything [a text] is a specific combination of the properties of its substance [topic] and its surfaces [vocabulary] taken with reference to an animal [the writer].

> The affordances of the environment [the textual environment] are what it offers animals [writers], what it provides or furnishes for good or ill [the realisation of academicness].

The focus on interaction as a feature of affordance is given in Greeno (1994, p. 338):

> In any interaction involving an agent [the writer] with some other system [the textual environment], conditions that enable that interaction include some properties of the agent [intentions] along with some properties of the other system [vocabulary] [...]. The term affordance refers to whatever it is about the environment [the textual environment] that contributes to the kind of interaction that occurs.

An example of this can be found in Sousanis (2015)'s *Unflattening*. Sousanis perceives several affordances in the textual environment, such as cartoons, which he uses to further his academic values and to harness his background in visual literacy. The image mode in the textual environment is perceived by him as academic because of his interests, scholarly knowledge and

abilities. The cartoon affords *him* an informed opportunity to advance his thesis, but it does not afford *me* that same opportunity because my interests, scholarly knowledge and abilities are different.

There are several metaphysical problems with the concept of affordance. These can be briefly stated as relating to their ontological and epistemological status. Ontologically, it is not clear whether they are to be classified as perceptions, opportunities, capabilities, or relations (Bonderup Dohn, 2006). Epistemologically, this poses constraints on how we explain their existence and their usefulness. Educationalists such as Martin Oliver argue that affordances are "not reassuring for educationalists" (2005, p. 404) because the writer (the 'perceiver' of the affordance) could be mistaken by what they perceive in the text (the 'environment') and therefore the notion of 'affordance' loses its practical use as an analytical tool for understanding the ontology of the objects around us. Another objection that Oliver advances is that 'affordance' is not a single entity or aspect but rather a complex that arises from "hierarchies of simpler affordances" (2005, p. 408) and that, once again, this doesn't make it a helpful educational heuristic.

However, notwithstanding such metaphysical criticisms, the notion of affordance can serve as a philosophical heuristic, a place-holder, a metaphor or paradigmatic orientation that enables me to locate academicness *between* the writer (their intentions and capabilities, knowledge of the audience, context, and so on) and the textual environment. This allows me to discuss academicness in terms of a property of an *interaction*, not of a writer or of a text, but of their *relations*. It also allows me to side-step, and potentially resolve, the binaries that pertain to the intentional fallacy mentioned in Chapter 4, because what now matters

is neither the writer nor the text, but their interaction. This presupposes that both the writer and the text exist.

Organic Unity

This theory claims that a 'whole' is perceived as a unity that is independent of its parts. We can understand ACADEMICNESS as the 'whole' and the AFFORDANCE as the 'parts' (i.e. the interaction of the WRITER and the TEXTUAL ENVIRONMENT). The affordance allows the whole to emerge. According to the theory of Organic Unities, ACADEMICNESS cannot be reduced to the AFFORDANCE.

In connection with the subject of *reduction* and *emergence* – discussed below - a more familiar notion needs unpacking. This is the notion there occurs in nature an important type of individual wholes (which may be physical, biological, psychological, or social) that are *not simply 'aggregates' of independent members*, but are 'organic unities'; and such wholes are often characterized by the familiar dictum that they possess an organization which makes each of them '*more than the sum of its parts*'. Examples of wholes that are 'organic', and which allegedly also illustrate this dictum, can be cited from many fields of inquiry. Such alleged facts are sometimes taken as indications of *limits to the possibility of reduction* and to the scope of the methods of the physical sciences (Nagel, 1952, p. 17).

The idea of organic unities might therefore be of use here[47] because they give a further option within this discussion on how wholes can relate to parts without being reduced to them. For example, if Nagel is right, then

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[47]This reminds me of Gestalt theory (e.g. Köhler (1970) – in particular, the relation between parts and whole in perception. However, I do not develop this separate theme here.

using the idea of organic unities, we could limit the possibility of reduction from ACADEMICNESS to AFFORDANCE.

There is an ongoing debate about the coherence of the notion of organic unities. However, I assume, for the sake of argument, that some understanding of organic unities is coherent and outline one broad description of these unities to ask how they might help in the discussion regarding academic writing.

A number of writers have discussed 'organic unities' (e.g. Dancy (2003); Hurka (1998) G. E. Moore and Baldwin (1993). To understand these, we can consider a Moore inspired example regarding the *consciousness of beauty* (1993, pp. 28-29). This example is merely illustrative. That is, the notion of organic unities is about a *way* of thinking about a relationship, a conceptual toolkit - and doesn't need to make reference to, for example, consciousness of things, nor aesthetic properties such as beauty.

Moore thinks that the mere existence of an unobserved beautiful object is of little or no intrinsic value. He also thinks that consciousness is of little or no intrinsic value. But when we have both these states, that is, when there is a consciousness *of* the existence of a beautiful thing, we get a state of great value. Specifically, we get a value far exceeding the combined value of the nearly worthless parts. Other examples of organic wholes, according to Moore, include personal affection, courage and compassion (J. Allen, 2003). Thinking of and describing water or wind as organic unities rather than as reductive aggregates of H_2O or flows of atmospheric pressure, respectively, is another way of comprehending what philosophers mean by organic unities.

Before applying this to academic writing, let's consider two other key features.

First, whatever we mean by 'parts' of organic unities, there need be *no causal relationship* between them. Something doesn't get to be called an 'organic unity' in virtue of the casual relationships that the parts have. There is no 'causal recipe' for creating an organic unity. This will be important when we think of how the AFFORDANCE (the parts) may or may not be related to the ACADEMICNESS (the whole).

Second, there is no requirement that we can only understand the 'parts' of an organic unity in virtue of the unity itself. Each part can have significance and meaning independent from the whole just as each part is conceivable independently from the whole (this is what M. Archer means by 'analytic dualism').

Organic unities can thus help in the discussion about academic writing by considering the relationship between ACADEMICNESS and AFFORDANCE in a way which isn't simply additive or reductive.

For example, imagine a world in which there is ACADEMICNESS (e.g. argument) but in which there are none of its typically associated AFFORDANCE features (e.g. no hedges or modality or human writer). Imagine such a world having value AC. Furthermore, imagine a world where there are AFFORDANCE features but no ACADEMICNESS features – call the value of that world AF.[48]

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[48]Although this is harder to imagine it is conceptually possible. That is, we can imagine a possible world such that it isn't the case that the AFFORDANCE features have given rise to the ACADEMICNESS analysis: the computer generated hoax could be an example of this.

My suggestion is that if we think of ACADEMICNESS and AFFORDANCE *as an organic unity,* we can say that ACADEMICNESS + AFFORDANCE, considered as a whole, isn't exhaustively understood simply in terms of ACADEMICNESS + AFFORDANCE. The *value* of AF and AC, IS the 'academicness', understood as a whole, – it is not simply the value of AF plus the value of AC.

Because AFFORDANCE plus AC (the whole value) is the organic unity, we *cannot reduce* ACADEMICNESS to any specific item, or combination thereof. If we tried, we would always have a 'remainder' and that remainder is precisely 'academicness'. So, this anti-reductive account *preserves the need* for both AFFORDANCE and ACADEMICNESS whilst at the same time *favouring neither*.

Moreover, given the qualifications regarding organic unities, there need be no strict causal relationship between any specific parts of AFFORDANCE or how they relate to ACADEMICNESS. That is, ACADEMICNESS plus AFFORDANCE aren't an organic unity simply in virtue of the casual relationships AFFORDANCE and ACADEMICNESS have[49].

Furthermore, ACADEMICNESS and AFFORDANCE each have significance and meaning independently of academic writing. Both are conceivable independently from the whole. For example, the Sokal hoax or an IELTS essay are devoid of ACADEMICNESS (the whole) because, as claimed in Chapter 4, they are devoid of the socio-academic practice (SAP) of integrity or commitment to the truth. Yet, the AFFORDANCE is there because in each case there is a writer and a textual environment from which the writer

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[49]Of course there remains a story to be told in virtue of which they do earn the label 'organic unity'. But this is beyond my present scope.

drew his resources. However, no ACADEMICNESS emerged. This indicates that AFFORDANCE and ACADEMICNESS can be conceived of independently of each other.

So, if we can motivate this approach of organic unities, then we can justify moving away from a predictive or mechanistic approach to academic writing. This is because there is no possibility of extracting a universal formula linked to AFFORDANCE and ACADEMICNESS in virtue of 'academicness' being an organic unity; rather than a mechanistic approach, we can only take the organic unity of academic writing *as it is*[50]. Consider this adapted quotation summing up this point (G. E. Moore & Baldwin, 1993, p. 87):

> A chief part of [teaching academic writing] should be occupied in comparing the relative values of various [pieces of academic writing]; and the grossest errors will be committed in such comparison if it be assumed that whenever two things form a whole [ACADEMICNESS and AFFORDANCE], the value of that whole [ACADEMICNESS] is merely the sum of the values of those two things [ACADEMICNESS and AFFORDANCE].

On an Organic Unity account, Sokal's hoax was considered academic because it was perceived as such by an academic community who ignored the affordance, namely how the writer and his textual environment interacted: specifically, Sokal's intentions and values as a writer were overlooked. Conversely, a comic dissertation or *Tractatus* is *unlikely* to be perceived as an academic whole if the affordance *is* ignored. This is because

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[50]This ties into the phenomenological point of students describing things as 'clicking'. Again, this reminds us of the Gestalt point that a perceiver sees something *as a whole* rather than via the active composition of parts.

the academicness, the AC value, of such a text *requires* an account of the relations between academicness and its realisers, namely the affordance base. In the latter case, AFFORDANCE and ACADEMICNESS would need to be perceived as an aggregate and not a unity in order for the academicness to be explained.

While an Organic Unities account can help us avoid recourse to a reductive explanation of how we come to perceive the value of a whole, it says little about the kinds of constraints that the affordance, i.e. the parts or realisers of academicness, necessitates in order to restrict what counts and does not count as academic.

I now turn to the third theory which, unlike Organic Unities, allows us to understand the whole whilst also trying to account for its constituent parts.

Emergence

Emergence is a concept that can be understood in the terms outlined by Kim[51] (2006, p. 548):

> a purely physical system, composed exclusively of bits of matter, when it reaches a certain degree of complexity in its structural organisation, can begin to exhibit genuinely novel properties not possessed by its simpler constituents.

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[51] Although Kim engages actively in debates about emergence, it is not clear where he stands on the issue. Some suggest that for Kim, explanations of non-physical phenomena are entirely exhausted at the physical level (Fodor, 1997); others (Marras, 2006) seem to read Kim as a functional emergentist, which would align him with Fodor. The subtleties of this debate are far too nuanced for my present purposes so I am framing my discussion as an overview in order to create an introductory conceptual space.

Examples of emergent properties include water, pain and consciousness. Water, a liquid, emerges from two gases, hydrogen and oxygen. The psycho-physical property (Wongsriruksa, Howes, Conreen, & Miodownik, 2012) of liquidity is not contained in the property of gas. As such, liquidity is a novel property that is not possessed by its gaseous constituents. Water is therefore said to be an emergent property. Pain can be felt regardless of whether it can be physically located in or reduced to the body (van Gulick, 2001). There is no identifiable location in the body that corresponds to pain and pain can occur in parts of the body even when those body parts are missing: a common example of this is 'phantom pains', when patients have had a limb amputated yet report feeling pain in it. Pain is said to be an emergent property because it is novel compared to its supervenient physical base. Consciousness is also an emergent property (Chalmers, 1996). What it *feels like* to be me or what it means to *be aware* that I am in pain is not the same as *being me* or *being in pain*. An 'awareness of being' is a psychological (or other) state which is qualitatively and quantitatively different to the physical state of being. Therefore, consciousness emerges or arises from a physical state but cannot be located in or made to correspond to anything in that physical state.

Theories of emergence are associated with the philosophies of mind and science (Chalmers, 1996, 2006; Hohwy & Kallestrup, 2008; Kim, 2006; Marras, 2006; Taylor, 2015) and of art (Eaton, 1994; Sibley, 1965). They are used to try and explain how physical matter, like the brain, can give rise to non-physical entities, like thoughts. They are also used in sociology to explain how complex economic social phenomena, like poverty, arise from the micro individual actions of agents and from macro social structures (Sawyer, 2001) as well as from relations between agents and social

structures (Emirbayer, 1997), and in economics and statistics to explain the difficulty of predicting the effects of individual human behaviours on complex social phenomena, like traffic flows and jams (P. Ball, 2004).

According to these theories, what would make a text 'academic' is an account of how academic properties *arise* from non-academic properties without being *reduced* to them, but all the while still being connected. Such theories may offer a further conceptual space in which to think about how writers and their textual environments interact to allow academic wholes to emerge (Kim, 2006, p. 547):

> The term 'emergence' seems to have a special appeal for many people; it has an uplifting, expansive ring to it, unlike 'reduction' which sounds constrictive and overbearing.

An early example of emergence is offered by Ablowitz (1939). Imagine we want to build a house. In order to do this, we need a number of bricks. We then need to place one brick on top of the other following an architectural design until the total sum of the bricks arranged according to the design results in a house. The analogy with SBA should be apparent: if we want to produce a text, we need a series of academic skills which, taken together within a genre, result in a piece of writing.

However, Ablowitz also asks us whether the placing of one brick on top of the other can result in a 'home', not merely a house. His answer is that it cannot because a home *emerges* from its constituent parts whereas a house results from these. He refers to the house as a resultant of the sum of the bricks and to the home as an emergent property of the bricks. A home emerges from the bricks in the sense that the mere presence of bricks and of purposeful design cannot predict the way the final building is perceived.

We can now begin to make analogies with writing. SBA, understood as the sum of academic skills, may *result* in 'writing' but not necessarily in 'academic' writing. For writing to be 'academic', 'academicness' has to *emerge* from its constituent parts, not *result* from them. A hoax might be an example of academicness *resulting* but not *emerging*.

On the other hand, when we frame academic writing in terms of an AFFORDANCE, genuinely novel properties emerge from that affordance that could not have been predicted from its underlying constituent parts (the writer and the textual environment).

Furthermore, according to Kim (2006, p. 547), for a property to be emergent, two conditions must be met, both of which are difficult to reconcile. The first is supervenience. The second is irreducibility.

Each condition attempts to capture the need, on the one hand, for novel properties to be explained in terms of a constituent base (supervenience), and, on the other, for novel properties to be autonomous of their parts (irreducibility).

(Recall Fodor's 'disunity of science' and the need for each science to be functionally autonomous whilst being physically dependent).

Supervenience

Chalmers (1996), like others who are averse to making analogies between scientific phenomena and social phenomena, warns against the misapplication of emergence theory to the social sciences or humanities where value judgments (1996, p. 34), rather than causality, are more adept at explaining social events. This is because, with qualification, in the

sciences we establish correlations and causal chains between properties using the notion of *supervenience* (Chalmers, 1996, p. 32):

> The notion of supervenience formalizes the intuitive idea that one set of facts can fully determine another set of facts. The physical facts about the world seem to determine the biological facts, for instance, in that once all the physical facts about the world are fixed, there is no room for the biological facts to vary.

So, for example, when we have full knowledge of the internal physical workings of a plant (such as gravity, chemistry, cause and effect), we can predict its biological behavior (growth, flowering, reproduction). In this sense, plants are a 'complicated', rather than 'complex', system, where linear and reductive explanations suffice. Chalmers explains that we can predict such behaviour by understanding it in terms of 'facts supervening[52] on other facts', namely certain biological facts (higher-level B-properties) *supervening* on certain physical facts (lower-level A-properties) (Chalmers, 1996, p. 33):

> B-properties supervene on A-properties if no two possible situations are identical with respect to their A-properties while differing in their B-properties.

In other words, to stick with the plant analogy, two flowers will be biologically identical as long as their physical properties are identical. That is to say, their biology (growth, reproduction, i.e. the effect) will not differ as long their physics (gravity, pollination, i.e. the cause) are the same. In

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[52] Chalmers further distinguishes between local and global supervenience, and logical and natural supervenience.

this sense, the physics (lower-level A-properties) determine the biology (higher-level B-properties).

Another example of supervenience relates to shape. Shape supervenes on any two objects that are identical with respect to their physical properties: two footballs being physically identical in respect of their diameter, circumference and volume of air cannot *but* be round (Chalmers, 1996).

While the notion of supervenience seems intuitive for physical and biological properties it becomes less so as we shift along the continuum towards what Fodor (1974, 1997) calls the 'special sciences', namely those domains of enquiry that include physical phenomena but are mainly concerned with the *effects* that such phenomena generate: for example, biochemistry moves beyond physical descriptions of matter to describe processes and life (vitalism) and this, in turn, calls for neurological explanations which then become predominantly focused on synaptic connections and processes to then form the supervenient (physical) base that explains psychology (special science).

However, psychology is a behavioural science that requires external observations of social and verbal interactions as much as it requires internal physical observations of its explananda: we know somebody is in pain by observing their behavior, e.g. wincing, as well as by the physical evidence of a cut. By arguing that we cannot reduce the special sciences to the physical sciences - because each science deploys predicates that refer to and describe novel phenomena that 'have things to say' independently of each other[53] –

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[53] For example, 'I feel a sharp pain in my leg' (psychological predicate/claim) means something different to 'there are C-fibres firing in my calf muscle' (physical predicate/claim).

Fodor highlights the inherent difficulty (and futility?) of explaining in what sense properties supervene when the physical supervenient base is located further and further away from the non-physical phenomena that emerge.

As we move even further along the spectrum and into the domains of the social sciences, where we find sociology and academic writing, the difficulty is magnified because we are yet further removed from any supervenient physical base[54], and, indeed, the very need for a supervenient physical base may not even be relevant, as an Organic Unity account might suggest, because it allows us to conceive of ACADEMICNESS (the whole, emergent property) without AFFORDANCE (the parts, or base from which the whole emerges).

For example, what higher and lower-level properties might be relevant in explaining economic poverty or academic argument? To illustrate the difficulty of establishing what properties might be relevant in explaining non-physical phenomena, Chalmers uses the example of making value judgements. He claims that 'value' does not supervene locally on anything physical. Two physically identical pictures of the Mona Lisa – one real and one fake - would not be identical in value because value judgments depend on social and historical factors, not physical ones (Chalmers, 1996, p. 34):

> An exact physical replica of the Mona Lisa is not worth as much
> as the Mona Lisa. In general, local supervenience of a property
> on the physical fails if that property is somehow context-
> dependent – that is, if an object's possession of that property
> depends not only on the object's physical constitution but also
> on its environment and its history. The Mona Lisa is more

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[54] For example, from neurolinguistics to linguistics (speech, vocabulary, grammar, syntax, language), discourse, communication, academic writing, society?

valuable than its replica because of a difference in their historical context: the Mona Lisa was painted by Leonardo, whereas the replica was not.

The difficulty with fixing a stable base from which higher-level properties can emerge, is further captured by Eaton (1994, p. 389), who, in her argument that aesthetic properties are non-supervenient, claims that aesthetic properties need a *relational base* that includes contextual 'facts' such as when a painting was created and who is judging it:

> The intuition behind supervenience is that when all base properties remain stable, the supervening properties must remain stable. All aesthetic attributions must remain stable if the underlying non-aesthetic attributions remain stable. But if relational truths ("made in the sixteenth century" or "seen by Jane," for instance) are included in the base, the test for supervenience breaks down – and we are no longer in the possession of a helpful tool.

Despite the evident difficulty, and possible futility, of trying to explain how higher-level *social* or *aesthetic* properties supervene on lower-level properties, EAP academic writing instruction and assessment practices seem to assume that this *is* possible, as we saw in Part 1. This is because textbooks, classroom instruction and assessment criteria prescribe a fixed and finite set of skills (SBA) - a supervenient base - claiming that these lead to the creation of, or conditions for judging, an academic text. In reality, the range of relations and variables of this lower-level base make it too unstable to act as a 'helpful tool', as Eaton laments. Perhaps a supervenient base is not needed after all, but if it is not, then how do we know which criteria and skills to draw on in order to write an academic text? And if it is needed,

then what sort of lower-level realisers do we need to ensure that academicness emerges?

Irreducibility

Kim's requirement that a theory of emergence necessitates an account of how higher-level properties supervene on lower level ones places a huge burden on the explanatory usefulness of emergence theory for social phenomena, like academic writing. This is because supervenience seems to simultaneously demand that higher-level phenomena be explained by the lower-level ones, as in the physical sciences, but not be reduced to them, as in the social sciences and aesthetics.

The incompatibility between supervenience, which seems to conceptually assume reduction, and irreducibility, which conceptually assumes non-reduction, has led some philosophers to claim that "[a]n emergent property is not necessitated by the features, laws and combinations of the parts (it does not supervene from its base)" (Van Gulick in Kim: 549), which might explain the lure of side-stepping all physicalist endeavours that collapse the novel emergent property into physical terms, such as the requirement to have a supervenient base.

Fodor's functionalism is one way of avoiding such reductive physicalism because it simply eliminates physical explanations, replacing them instead with functional ones: i.e. pain is both physical ('c-fibres firing') and functional ('it hurts, I can't work') just as writing might be (it is physically composed of vocabulary and grammar and functionally aimed at social justice).

Weak and strong emergence

A third way of understanding emergence may might lie in the distinction between a weak and a strong form of emergence, the former allowing for supervenience, the latter not. The stronger form may, arguably, avoid the strict requirement for a supervenient base and for irreducibility

Chalmers initially excluded value judgments and socio-economic phenomena from explanations requiring supervenience and emergence because he was mainly concerned with establishing the phenomenon of consciousness as a form of strong emergence that cannot be predicted from its physical supervenient base (Chalmers, 1996, p. 49). However, he later conceded that socio-economic phenomena can be explained by *weak* emergence (Chalmers, 2006, p. 250). This move is compatible with emergence theories that have been used to explain social phenomena, as shown by Sawyer (2001, p. 553):

> Although philosophical arguments about emergence and reducibility have focused on the mind-brain relation, they can be generalised to apply to any hierarchically ordered set of properties.

I explain the difference between strong and weak emergence below and then relate it to my model.

The most fitting theory of emergence, for my illustrative purposes, is one that has been referred to as 'weak emergence' (Bedau, 1997; Chalmers, 2006). This way of describing emergence can help us to explain the fact that academic writing requires a (supervenient) base from which it can be assessed (e.g. in terms of nominalised forms and passive/active agency), but

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to which it cannot be reduced and from which 'academicness' cannot be predicted.

Weak emergence can be understood as follows: certain phenomena, such as crowd behavior (in sociology) or mental states such as pain (in psychology), are novel and real. They are novel because they are different to their constituent parts and they are real because they cause other phenomena to happen (such as new mental states, e.g. fear). However, whilst their identity cannot be *reduced* to a physical base[55] (because of Fodor's disunity of science), it can still *emerge* from it in the sense that it is then possible to deduce the existence of lower-level phenomena from the higher-level ones because *deduction* is not the same as *reduction*.

Weak emergence occurs when a new phenomenon arises from a lower-level phenomenon in such a way that *we would not have expected* the new phenomenon to occur by simply looking at the phenomenon which gave rise to it in the first place. However, once the new phenomenon has emerged, it is possible to deduce its originating lower-level phenomena. For example, H_2O (liquid) is *weakly* emergent because it is genuinely novel compared to its constituent properties (gases). However, we can deduce its constituent properties by applying the laws of physics and chemistry without reducing water to mere molecules and motion (Chalmers, 2006, p. 246, emphasis added):

> by showing how a simple starting point can have unexpected
> consequences, the existence of weakly emergent phenomena can
> be seen as showing that an ultimately physicalist picture of the

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[55]Something that would be worth further research – but is beyond the scope of the thesis - is using the 'emergence' theory as a way of conceptualizing organic unities.

world need not be *overly* reductionist, but rather can accommodate all sorts of unexpected *richness* at higher levels, *as long as explanations are given at the appropriate level*.

A weakly emergent account allows us to give 'explanations at the appropriate level' by erasing the conflation that seems to be a source of confusion, namely that reduction and deduction are synonymous. The former is a physical process that collapses one state into another; the latter is a form of reasoning that is substantive, it generates new propositions and predicates. A cooking analogy might explain this distinction. By *reducing* a tomato sauce to a paste, I am enacting a physico-chemical transformation that allows me to make the following claim: my tomato sauce is composed of fibre, citric acid, and so on. By *deducing* its basic composition, I am engaged in a process of observation and analysis of its current liquid state, taste and colour to explain what might have given rise to its 'sauciness', namely an emergent property that has qualities that its lower-level base does not possess, qualities such as 'deliciousness' and 'comforting umaminess'. Reduction and deduction explain the same phenomenon but at a level that is 'appropriate' to my needs.

With reference to academic writing, I can reduce any text to discrete lower-level grammatical, lexical, eidetic or haptic units by physically deconstructing the text. In turn, I can make claims about each of these properties. For example, I can say the use of the passive is objective. However, deducing these lower-level properties from the higher level does not mean I can make the same claims about the text as a whole. In this sense, the whole is ontologically distinct from its parts meaning that it cannot be reduced to them. However, the parts can be deduced from the whole. In each case, the parts exist and are related to the whole. In this

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sense, the parts form a supervenient base and can explain the existence of the whole. However, the whole cannot be reduced to its parts.

This can be illustrated by recalling the sociology article by Gillies et al. (2016) in Chapter 2, which received a scholarship award for challenging social perceptions about how mothers raised their children. It displayed many of the conventional academic features reified by EAP, such as the use of the passive to convey scientific objectivity at the lower supervenient level, but at the higher emergent level, it conveyed a powerful subjective stance described by the judges as a "hell of a ride" and a "stern warning" that was characteristic of the whole, not of the parts.

However, despite the uplifting allure of emergence, deep divisions exist in how it is understood, which is one reason why it is inconsistently applied (Sawyer, 2001). For example, according to Kim (2006, p. 551), you cannot explain the whole by deducing it from its constituent microstructure because deduction entails reduction.

The physicalist objections to emergence (which posit that all higher-level properties can be reduced to the micro-level) could be side-stepped by appeal to a functionalist explanation of how parts and wholes relate. This does away with the reference to physics. For example, although we can claim that 'water is refreshing' (the whole), we can't claim that 'hydrogen and oxygen are refreshing', even though the phenomenon we are referring to is the same. This is because 'water' (i.e. what we mean by 'water' as opposed to what we mean by 'H_2O' Chalmers (1996, p. 69) manifests novel properties that can be described functionally, i.e. 'water is for drinking'. Although it is physically reducible to the atomic bonding of hydrogen and oxygen, it is not functionally so.

In terms of academic writing, this would allow us to make separate meaningful claims about a text such as *Unflattening* (2015). Academicness is achieved because the whole is academic, not because the author used a drawing of his dog (2015, p. 40), for example. This is because as a whole, the dissertation can be said to have a function that is different to the function of its parts. As a whole, the dissertation is academic because it functions as an argument about visual literacies. When reduced to its parts, however, the use of an image can be dismissed as non-academic.

Similarly, with reference to Chalmer's own academic writing style, we could say that *The Conscious Mind* is academic as a whole, but his frequent use of bracketed paragraphs, clipped prose and inclusion of Calvin and Hobbes cartoons, is not academic *in and of itself.*

Implications of the theory of emergence for academic writing

Leaving aside the technicalities of different types of emergence, what is of interest in this debate is that novel properties, such as criticality (ACADEMICNESS), can arise from a physical supervenient base (an AFFORDANCE) that is, in turn, composed of multiply realisable and wildly disjunctive components (Sawyer, 2001, p. 556). Multiple-realisabability indexes the multiple ways that a phenomenon can be realised: an emergent state, such as a mental state, can be realised by several physical states. These physical states may also be 'wildly disjunctive', meaning that 'the supervenient base of a higher-level property is made up of an unrelated combination of concepts and items' *(ibid)*. So, a WRITER and a TEXTUAL ENVIRONMENT can combine in multiple and potentially unpredictable ways. This is why academic writing can be novel and diverse, whilst drawing on a relatively finite supervenient base.

Academic writing in EAP, as we have seen, tends to be understood in terms of discrete skills. This has involved, for example, claiming that personal forms are inappropriate 'constituent parts' in the creation of an 'academic' whole (Bailey, 2006). By framing 'academicness' as an emergent property we go some way to explaining why the Watson and Crick article is academic despite its constituent parts (e.g. its personal pronouns) not being classified as such: it is 'academic' *not* because its 'academicness' can be reduced to its constituent properties (i.e. we cannot predict its academicness from the use of its personal pronouns), but because its constituent textual properties interact with the relevant dispositions of the writer (knowledge, abilities, understanding of the reader) which allow the academicness to emerge.

By contrast, the *Springer* (Antkare) fake papers would be an example of 'academicness' *not* emerging, despite their constituent textual parts being 'academic', in a strictly skills-based EAP sense. These fakes are not 'academic' because the properties of the constituent parts, however academic these may be in an SBA sense, are not interacting with any relevant writer dispositions thus preventing the novel property of 'academicness' from emerging.

Program Explanation

This theory turns my model on its head in the sense that it attempts to explain how the whole (ACADEMICNESS) can help us to understand the parts (AFFORDANCE) by 'programming' them to become academic. For example, the use of the passive (a lower-level supervenient property) is not academic, in and of itself. However, the academic need to avoid agency is an academic need and this need programmes the grammatical base to serve an agency-avoiding function.

The theory of Program Explanation allows for ACADEMICNESS to *academically program* the AFFORDANCE. According to this theory, which is macro-structural (Jackson & Pettit, 1992, pp. 98-99), what would make a text 'academic' is the identification of *relevant* causes in the ongoing social practices of the academy, such as a need to be objective or the need to make an original contribution to knowledge or the need to engage with a wider public. Program explanation is used in social theory to advance the idea that downward causation is possible. It posits that higher-level entities have causal powers "that influence the behavior and even the constitution of the entities of which they are composed" (Little, 2018a).

Specifically, in my model, PROGRAM EXPLANATION is a non-epiphenomenal account (i.e., downward causation, from the macro to the micro, is possible) of how ACADEMICNESS – once it has emerged and is 'out there in the world', so to speak (for example the texts of Sousanis, Carson, Piper, Wittgenstein and Galileo) can cause the AFFORDANCE to generate academic properties.

Jackson and Pettit (1990) have mobilised Program Explanation to conclude that something can be *causally relevant* without being *causally efficacious.*

To understand this, we first need to consider their conditions under which a property is *not* causally efficacious:

A property F is *not* causally efficacious in the production of an effect 'e' if the following sub-conditions are fulfilled (1990, p. 108, emphasis added):

(i)   there is a family of distinct properties $G_1,..,G_n$ such that F is efficacious in the production of e *only if* some G_i ($1 \leq i \leq n$) is efficacious in its production

(ii)   the F-instance and the G-instance are not *sequential* causal factors

(iii)   the F-instance and the G-instance are not *co-ordinate* causal factors.

This is rather abstract and it is unclear what the issue is, so let's consider one of their examples. Suppose that we boil water in a closed glass container and the container cracks. If we were asked *why* the container cracked we would likely say that the high temperature caused the cracking. However, this sort of answer is actually hard to justify given what we have just said[56].

Why did it crack? First answer: because of the temperature of the water. Second answer, in simplified form: because of the momentum of such and such a molecule (group of molecules) in striking such and such a molecular bond in the container surface. The *temperature property* was efficacious *only if* the *momentum property* was efficacious: hence 3(i). But the temperature of the water – an aggregate statistic – did not help to *produce* the momentum of the molecules in the way in which it, if efficacious, helped to produce the cracking: hence 3(ii). And neither did the temperature *combined* with the momentum help in the same sense to produce the cracking: *one could have predicted the cracking just from full information about the molecule and the relevant laws* (1990, p. 110, emphasis added).

So what? Well, if we assume that the only way in which a property can be causally relevant to an effect is by being causally efficacious in its

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[56] Jackson and Pettit (1990, p. 8) set out the conditions under which a property is/is not causally efficacious. I have omitted this due to space.

production, we get the conclusion that because the temperature of the water is *not* causally efficacious in the cracking of the glass (that was the job of the momentum, etc.) it is *not* causally relevant to the cracking of the glass. Of course, that is a very odd conclusion precisely because of where we started. Namely, it seems correct and perfectly natural to say that it was the high temperature that caused the glass to crack.

Jackson and Pettit's response to this worry about the cracking beaker is to say that the *temperature is relevant in the causal explanation* even though the temperature *isn't causally efficacious*. How? Well because they claim the temperature *programs* for the existence of distinct, lower-level properties that *are* causally efficacious. As they say (1990, p. 114, emphasis added):

> Although not efficacious itself, the temperature property was such that its realization ensured that there was an efficacious property in the offing: the property, we may presume, involving such and such molecules. *The realization of the higher order property did not produce the cracking in the manner of the lower order. But it meant that there would be a suitably efficacious property available*, perhaps that involving such and such particular molecule, perhaps one involving others. So the temperature was causally relevant to the cracking of the glass, under a perfectly relevant sense of relevance, though it was not efficacious. It did not do any work in producing the cracking of the glass...but it has relevance of ensuring that there would be some property there to exercise the efficacy required).

Carrying on with their example, Jackson and Pettit say program explanation is useful because it gives more information than one would get simply by

citing underlying mechanisms. Because it could be true that (1990, pp. 116-117):

> The momentum of the water molecule can *crack* a container *without* the water's being at boiling temperature. Thus, to know that the temperature is explanatory, programming for the result in question, it has to have *information which is not available* for the [other] explanations.

Program Explanation, academicness and affordance

Jackson and Pettit's program explanation might help in working out the relationship between ACADEMICNESS and AFFORDANCE. This is because ACADEMICNESS is *causally relevant* in explaining why someone takes some work to be 'academic'. However, ACADEMICNESS itself isn't causally efficacious in this explanation. Rather, its realization ensures that there is a set of efficacious properties in the offing: the properties described by the AFFORDANCE.

For example, I read an essay and form the belief that this is an academic piece of work. Is there any explanation of the belief in terms of ACADEMICNESS? Yes. However, it is not that ACADEMICNESS is *efficacious* in causing the belief that it is academic: rather, it is that ACADEMICNESS *is* causally *relevant* to my forming that belief.

That is to say - and taken from the AFFORDANCE this time - the AFFORDANCE model will highlight many parts (sentence structure, use of pronouns, writer's intention): what the ACADEMICNESS does is *program for a certain way of understanding* the AFFORDANCE. The atomisation associated with the AFFORDANCE is important because it codifies what is causally efficacious, whilst the holistic approach of ACADEMICNESS is

important because it allows us to make sense of which causally efficacious properties are causally relevant in thinking about what is academic.

So, to use the phrasing of Jackson and Pettit above, to know that ACADEMICNESS is explanatory relevant, i.e. programming for the academicness of the AFFORDANCE, is to have information which is not available from simply thinking about the AFFORDANCE alone.

Apart from trying to make sense of the relation between ACADEMICNESS and AFFORDANCE, there are other reasons why Program Explanation might be important in the area of academic writing. One reason relates to the realism/anti-realism debate. There is a general question regarding whether showing that one set of properties depends on another is in some way undermining the reality of the 'higher-level' properties. For example, we might think that by showing that 'wrongness' is in some sense dependent on pain, we undermine the claim that 'wrongness' is a real property.

However, what program explanation might allow us to do is to say that wrongness is real *even though* moral properties *aren't* causally efficacious in the way that the underlying property(s) - such as pain - are[57].

This discussion about program explanation might then have some *ontological* consequences in the debate about academic writing. That is, we might be able to say that ACADEMICNESS is real. It is real because it has a *relevant* causal role in the explanation of why we form the belief that certain things are academic. However, that doesn't commit us to saying that

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[57] See Miller (2003) for an excellent discussion of this in ethics.

ACADEMICNESS is causally efficacious in a way which would be more suitable to talk about in relation to the AFFORDANCE.

A related and exciting implication then is one of peace resolution. If 'explanation' can be disambiguated into (i), explanation in terms of causal relevance; and (ii), explanation in terms of causal efficaciousness, then there is space for *both* the AFFORDANCE and ACADEMICNESS in explaining what makes a text academic. In fact, program explanation might go further. For this approach suggests that far from being in conflict, ACADEMICNESS and AFFORDANCE are *dependent* on one another in discussions about the academicness of a piece of work. The causal explanation in terms of causal efficacy (AFFORDANCE) requires a story in terms of causal relevance (ACADEMICNESS).

Reflections

Firstly, how might these three theories relate to one another? For example, perhaps we can understand the notion of 'organic' unity by using *emergence* as a way of explaining how the whole can be greater than its parts.

Secondly, how does program explanation add an extra layer of explanation, one which is not exhausted by a fine-grained account at the AFFORDANCE level? Or, in terms of emergence, *how* can a work's constituent textual properties interact with the relevant writer dispositions towards audience, purpose, and criticality thus allowing the academicness to emerge

Thirdly, there are the broader implications that each theory has, both practically and theoretically. If an organic unity approach leads to a rejection of a codification of 'academicness' and to a more 'particularist' approach, then it is an interesting question how this might be played out within the political and assessment-driven academic context. One such

critical question would relate to the effectiveness of analytic test scoring, which prevails in EAP. Analytic scoring assumes that the whole can be deconstructed into its constituent parts and that the totality of parts constructs an academic whole (Davies, 2008; Weigle, 2002). However, this process of deconstruction/construction does not, as we have seen, guarantee the 'academicness' of either the parts (cf. Watson and Crick) or the whole (cf. computer hoaxes).

More generally, the lack of predictability from a constituent base of textual properties (skills), to emergent, holistic, and social academic properties,- leaves open the possibility, in theory, for any, or all or no particular lower-level textual property to bring about a higher-level academic property. This, in turn, paves the way for exploring the sense in which diverse forms of writing, such as blogs and multimodal texts, can be classified as 'academic'.

Conclusion

Set in the context of EAP's dualistic approach to writing, I suggested that a fruitful way of understanding the relationship between SBA (skills-based approach) and SPA (social practice approach) was to borrow four theories from the philosophy of mind, aesthetics and sociology: affordance, organic unities, emergence and program explanation. This allows me to move towards a discourse of academic writing that is less mechanistic and linear, framing it instead as a *non-reductive part-whole emergent relationship,* a conceptual description that could have implications for classroom discourses and resources on academic writing.

This framing leads to critical questions about the extent to which the whole depends on - or can be predicted from - the parts. I proposed that for a text to be considered academic, there needs to be open interaction between the

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Writer (SPA) and the Textual Environment (SBA). This constitutes an Affordance, whereby the Writer interacts with the Textual Environment by perceiving and judging what is available for the creation of a Text. The affordance constitutes a Multiply Realisable supervenient base from which the academic properties of the text Emerge. The supervenient base becomes causally efficacious in making a text academic because adopting a weak form of emergence allows me to claim that emergent properties can be *rooted* in a cause rather than *reduced* to one. Moreover, the multiply realisable nature of the supervenient base makes it difficult to trace token-token correlations between cause and effect allowing instead for infinite combinations of SBA and SPA variables to interact and ensure novelty can emerge. In turn, once the Academicness (SAP) of a text has emerged, it becomes causally relevant in Programming the supervenient base to be causally efficacious in achieving Academicness. By being causally relevant, Academicness forms an Organic Unity that cannot be reduced to the Affordance.

This weakly emergent and multiply realisable conceptualization of academic writing allows us to account for the 'academicness' of new and emergent forms of writing, such as comics, weblogs, multimodality and multilingualism, because it broadens the pool of variables and interactions thereof in the supervenient base.

Explaining the research

What's next?

Summary

Set in the context of twenty first century neo-liberal educational practices and commodification, I have argued that what makes writing academic are its emerging socio-academic practices, not the unhinged will of the writer or the decontextualized rules and surface features of the textual environment. Having framed academic writing in the field of EAP, which is influential in shaping academic writing discourses, I endorsed the view that academic writing is a social practice that has a history and is therefore contingent. This contingency implies that it can be different to how it is conventionally portrayed by EAP and prevailing study skill approaches.

Moreover, its contingency suggests that it can evolve to reflect changing academic needs and to disrupt ossified institutional constraints and imperatives (structure). This would make more space for writer capabilities (agency), such as the need for creativity (Besley & Peters, 2013), imagination (Barnett, 2013), diversity (Thesen & Cooper, 2013) and a future generation of thinkers (Bengtsen & Barnett, 2018). For such changes and disruptions to be possible, academic writing needs to embody a wide range of threshold concepts (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015; Kiley & Wisker, 2009) that extend its narrow framing as an autonomous and transferable skill (Mike Rose, 1985; Street, 1984) to embrace a broader conceptualisation of academic writing that includes images and diverse literacies (such as rap and performance poetry).

To achieve this, I have re-conceptualised academic writing by arguing against reductive skills-based approaches in favour of rethinking it as an open system in which the academicness of a text emerges as a socio-academic practice within a non-linear, non-reductive complex system. This

forms a whole which can be described as an organic unity. This shift in thinking could be considered as a new threshold concept which is troublesome because it disrupts previous conceptualisations of writing in EAP.

The philosophical and sociological tradition of critical realism allowed me to make this shift (Collier, 1994; Judd, 2003; Pratt, 2011). For a text to be considered academic, there needs to be open interaction between the writer and the textual environment. This constitutes an affordance (Bonderup Dohn, 2006; Gibson, 1977), whereby the writer interacts with the textual environment by perceiving and judging what is available for the creation of a text. The affordance constitutes a multiply realisable supervenient base from which the academic properties of the text emerge and is causally efficacious in making a text academic. In turn, once the academicness of a text has emerged, it becomes causally relevant in programming the supervenient base to be causally efficacious in achieving academicness. By being causally relevant, academicness forms an organic unity that cannot be reduced to the affordance. I have drawn on the philosophies of mind (Chalmers, 1996, 2006; Fodor, 1974, 1997; Hohwy & Kallestrup, 2008; Jackson & Pettit, 1990, 1992) and social science (Sawyer, 2001; Winch, 1990) to argue for this emergence.

This re-conceptualisation ensures that hoaxes and IELTS essays cannot be considered academic. They are not academic because their perceived academicness is the result of a crude reduction of the text to its surface forms and does not take into account writer integrity or the properties of the textual environment with which the writer knowledgeably interacts. By contrast, open systems - which characterise complex systems whereby social phenomena like academic writing become non-reductive - are emergent, and the emergence of academicness can only occur when the writer interacts appropriately with their textual environment. This appropriateness includes an optimal interaction between writer intentions (including integrity) and capabilities (including background literacies).

With such optimal interaction, forms of writing that rely on visual thinking (Arnheim, 1969) and multimodal argumentation (Blair, 2008; Gilbert, 1994; Tarnay, 2002) can be just as academic as a traditional essay.

Contribution

The contribution of my research can be summarised as threefold and is further explained below:

- It provides a macro theory of academic writing that accounts for diversity and change in writing
- It lays the foundations for a future pedagogy of EAP writing
- It begins to clarify writing terminology and concepts that have become tired

By framing academic writing as a complex open system where change can occur, I have contributed to existent theories of writing by offering a macro generative account that offers conceptual and discursive tools to overcome encapsulation (Bazerman, 2015) and fraudulent (Shanahan, 2015) writing practices. Encapsulation is the metaphor used by Bazerman to describe how writing becomes trapped in its forms because of institutional audit systems that demand standardisation. Fraudulence is Shanahan's way of indexing how scientific texts inflate findings over methods because this increases the chances of publication. A complex macro theory of writing exposes the multiply-realisable ways in which writers can interact with their environments to generate academic texts that do not have to be encapsulated or fraudulent (they can be, of course, but they *do not have to be* – this is the point, i.e. that we have choices and are not wholly determined by structure).

The creativity that also emerges within an open system, namely an account of how diversity in academic writings can exist as the norm, not the exception, potentially lays the foundation for a future pedagogy whereby teachers and learners can engage in discussions *about* writing (Downs & Wardle, 2007) rather than simply prescribe rules and follow instructions.

This would open up avenues of possibility, creativity and confidence in the classroom and for how knowledge and research are re-presented in the twenty-first century global academy (Barnett, 2012).

What this research has further contributed is an initial step towards clarifying some of the tired and unquestioned terminology associated with academic writing. For example, its labelling writing as 'linear' closes down opportunities to re-think what the concept of linearity means. I have proposed that when it means 'sequential' and 'orderly', as I suggested in Chapter 4, it narrows opportunities for it to evolve. This is because linearity is a feature of closed systems that are 'complicated', not 'complex' (Chapter 5). In closed systems, we can predict the effects of causes mechanically. Is this what we want academic writing to be? A complicated mechanical system where the effect of a passive is always objectivity? If so, we perpetuate the transparency tropes berated by Bennett (2015). In a complex system, however, non-linearity means that 'the effects are disproportionate to its causes', meaning that small changes in its forms generate huge variation in its impact (for example, small changes in personal pronouns generate disproportionate effects at the level of epistemological and ontological stance).

Implications and future research

Several implications emerge from my thinking. These can be broadly classified as follows and all potentially form the basis for future research:

- Philosophical
- Educational
- Ideological

Philosophically, by framing academic writing as an open system, there is potential to fine-tune some emerging but undeveloped notions. For example, within critical realism and the philosophy of social phenomena, what might be the relationship between the stratification of emergent social

properties and the multiple-realisability needed for a theory of weak emergence, as discussed in the literatures on the philosophy of mind? What might constitute each stratum in the academic writing system and what would the relationship between strata be: causal or rooted? If causal, then how can determinism be meaningfully avoided? If rooted, then rooted to what? What new language and concepts might we need to describe how parts relate to wholes?

One possible route to a new explanatory discourse that avoids recourse to deterministic causes might be to root academicness in the notion of practical wisdom and judgment (Smith, 1999), care (Dall'Alba, 2012) and capabilities (Case, 2013, pp. 10-11) where what determines the academicness of our writing are our human values, not textual forms. This might allow us to counter the trend of deferring authorship of our knowledge and academic writing to systems of artificial intelligence (Collins, 2019).

A second philosophical implication, and further building on the reflections concluding Chapter 6, is whether there is an incompatibility between the notion of Organic Unity as a perception that is more than the sum of its parts and the dis-Unity of science that I appealed to with reference to Fodor in order to explain emergence.

Thirdly, if Organic Unities are possible, then does this entail that hoaxes are academic? They ought to be, because on an Organic Unity account, they would be perceived as academic wholes that do not necessitate an account of how that unity is constituted. This, however, might undermine the thesis that a supervenient base is needed for the emergence of SAPs.

Educationally, my research has the potential to shift prescriptive and deterministic approaches to the teaching of writing away from *training* and

towards *educating*, in the sense proposed by John Dewey. This would ensure teachers and learners were engaged in discourses *about* writing – its history, its threshold concepts, its possibilities - and provide opportunities for scholarship, research and continuous professional development. Educating *about* writing would ensure we were able to re-define what writing means to us and for us, in the way imagined by Mike Rose (1985, p. 359), namely as a practice that respects writer agency and structural affordances, such as the possibility of *negotiating* choices with teachers and supervisors.

A further practical consequence of re-imagining academic writing as an open creative practice is that it may reduce the need for students to plagiarise and rely on ghostwriters. This is because a culture of writing that respects writers' agencies and literacies is more likely to foster trust, communication and collaboration, rather than competition. Moreover, new assessment constructs could be designed to reflect these new and diverse forms of writing.

Ideologically, there are several exciting implications for future research. Firstly, the kind of writing culture I envisage forces us to ask what kind of higher education we want. Do we want university students to replicate templates or do we want them to innovate and critique? An open writing culture assumes the latter. Work that is already re-imagining what universities are for (Besley & Peters, 2013; Collini, 2012), who they are for (Sperlinger et al., 2018) and where they are heading (Barnett, 2012; Bengtsen & Barnett, 2018) is already underway. It signals hope for re-shaping higher education as a creative, reflective and socially just endeavour.
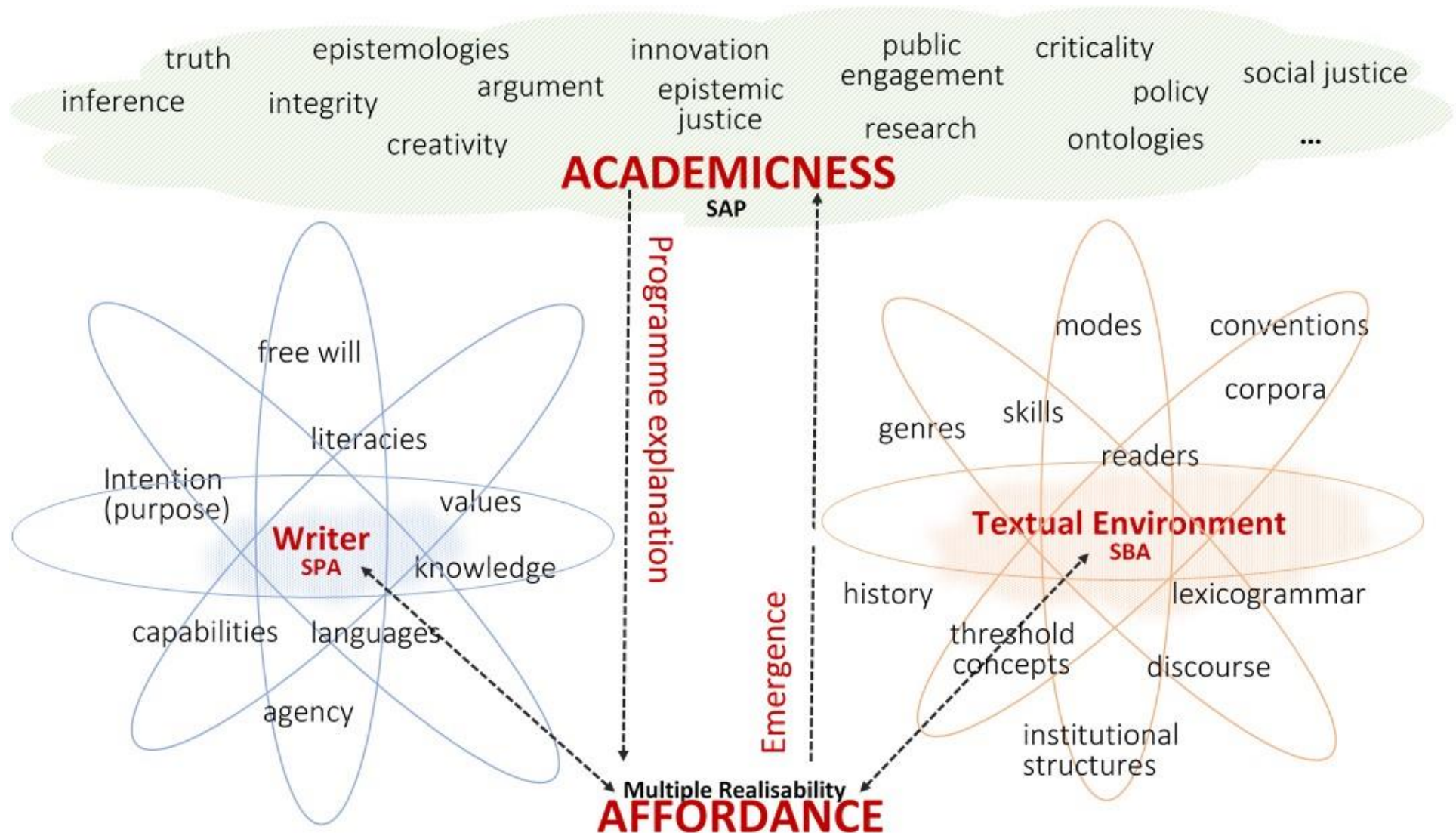
Secondly, this further allows us to imagine a university where different ways of approaching knowledge are explored (Badat, 2002; Morrow, 2009) and included in a diverse, multicultural and post-colonial landscape (de Sousa Santos, 2017) that avoids epistemic injustices (Fricker, 2007) and respects capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011; Robeyns, 2016) as part of a broader pedagogy of human rights.

Limits

I consider the main limitation of this thesis to be its glossing of the finer nuances that inform the huge area of research that is academic writing. In order to propose a macro theory, I have had to make sweeping generalisations about linguistics, argument and EAP, as well as cherry-pick historical narratives and philosophical theories, ignoring the vast amount of precise thinking that each disciplinary tradition embodies. I see this as part of the collateral damage that comes with adopting an interdisciplinary approach that attempts to capture 'the big picture'. I hope the spirit of my interdisciplinary intentions, which was to retain a panoramic and broad ecological perspective, outweighs occasional superficialities.

Final reflection

This PhD has raised far more questions than I intended it to answer, and because of this, it has been both excruciatingly frustrating and addictively exhilarating. As pre-empted in the preliminary framing of the thesis, it has been explorative, rather than exploitative, which means it remains open-ended and a site of fertile potential for future research.

ACADEMICNESS

truth · epistemologies · innovation · public engagement · criticality · social justice · inference · integrity · argument · epistemic justice · policy · research · ontologies · creativity · ...

SAP

Programme explanation

Emergence

Writer SPA — free will, literacies, Intention (purpose), values, knowledge, capabilities, languages, agency

Textual Environment SBA — modes, conventions, corpora, skills, genres, readers, history, threshold concepts, lexicogrammar, discourse, institutional structures

Multiple Realisability
AFFORDANCE

Appendix A – Affordance Model of Academic Writing (forming an Organic Unity)
This model represents Academicness, a socio-academic practice (SAP) of writing that forms an Open, non-Linear, non-Reductive Complex System. For a text to be considered academic, there needs to be open interaction between the Writer (SPA-Propositional Knowledge) and the Textual Environment (SBA-Procedural Knowledge). This constitutes an Affordance, whereby the Writer interacts with the Textual Environment by perceiving and judging what is available for the creation of a Text. The Affordance constitutes a Multiply Realisable supervenient base from which the academic properties of the text Emerge. The supervenient base is causally efficacious in making a text academic. In turn, once the Academicness (SAP) of a text has emerged, it becomes causally relevant in Programming the

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