Hélène Edberg

CREATIVE WRITING FOR CRITICAL THINKING

Creating a Discoursal Identity

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Preface

Can creative writing serve as a method to develop critical thinking? Many writing researchers and university lecturers are engaged in various programmes to enhance students' writing performances and their capacity to reflect and think critically. In this book, I suggest a new approach to creative writing, emphasizing the learning potential inherent in creative writing as a sociocritical method for learning critical metareflection.

Researchers and lecturers spend huge amounts of time and energy trying to understand the writing process and to find best practices. Yet the question remains: Why do some students learn a lot and others little when they write to learn? It is a fascinating question indeed, and this book is an invitation to discuss it. My aim is to explore how the narrative imagination may be used for critical thinking purposes, to open up for new insights into the possibilities of creative writing as a method to develop writers' critical metareflection. In particular, I explore the potential of creative writing in terms of writers' sense of critical self-reflection and awareness of language as a carrier of cultural beliefs and value ground.

The book also attempts to suggest some new ways of interpreting variations in learning outcomes that result from writing. In two case studies, I analyse students' learning trajectories through the patterns these trajectories leave in the reflection texts that they write. Such patterns may be interpreted as resulting from a negotiation between individual motives and perceptions of identity and motives and objectives found in the

context of the learning environment. The negotiations have impacts on the learning outcomes. It turns out that certain ideas about writing and dreams about future identities quite outside of the seminar room exert influences on what writers *choose* to learn within the academic context. I illustrate some of the ways through which this complex web of circumstances plays out in the book. Readers who ponder about the enigmatic learning processes that are involved in writing will gain, I hope, food for further thought.

Is it possible to transfer a creative writing method to any writing course? This is another interesting question addressed in the book. The answer must be yes. There are some very promising possibilities and scopes, although the learning outcomes will vary depending on the context and the learners.

Last, but not least, readers who are on the lookout for educational and instructional advice will find some in the final chapter, which addresses pedagogical implications of working with creative writing. Some practical approaches are sketched out, and a few applications are discussed.

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Contents

List of Figures

1

Introduction

The aim of this book is to present a new, sociocritical approach to a methodology for creative writing for critical thinking, emphasizing a social view on learning through writing. The reader is introduced to theoretical as well as practical perspectives on creative writing for critical thinking and results from research where a method was tried in two different educational settings. This volume is based on an in-depth case study where writing was used as a method for working with critical thinking within a creative writing course. To test the potential of the method outside of the original setting, it was tested in an academic writing course, with a similar assignment but designed for one seminar discussion. The main data is comprised of student texts, which are analysed in order to increase insights into students' thoughts about what it means to work with expressive writing to practise critical thinking. Thus, an empirical research aim is to try out a writing assignment built on a creative writing method and then to apply a text-analytical model to describe the learning outcomes that result when two perspectives, that of the students and that of the university, meet, expressed in the students' texts. Thus, the text-analytical model is tested on textual data, which is a theoretical research aim discussed in the book.

The results of the studies give rise to ideas about pedagogical approaches to creative writing and to approaches of textual analysis for tracing signs of learning in students' texts. The book explains how learning through writing can be theorized as a contextualized identification process and how notions of identity interact with learning, embedded in the specific context in which the identities are staged. Finally, the book discusses some practical implications of working with creative writing in a sociocritical paradigm, aimed at enhancing students' critical thinking skills. The writing pedagogy presented is based on sociocultural writing theory, which introduces methods for creative writing that combine narrative imagination with critical metareflection. In a writing context, new possibilities for selfhood emerge for writers, possibilities that open up new ways of thinking critically, as an outcome of the growth and changes that result from the identification processes involved in learning through writing.

1.1   Critical Thinking and Creative Writing

A lack of critical thinking skills among university students has given rise to the concern of university lecturers in many European countries, in the United States, and elsewhere. There is an urgent need for theories that contribute to new ways of understanding how students learn, and methods that can help them in their efforts. This book is a contribution to such research.[1]

One of the main objectives of first cycle higher education is to develop students' ability to make independent and critical judgements. But what does this really mean? The moment anyone tries to apply general rules and requirements in situated educational practices, epistemologies and traditions affect the interpretations, with different consequences for practical teaching and learning and for what knowledge and skills will be taught. In fact, critical thinking is a notoriously complex concept, grounded in the history of ideas, with traditions dating back to antiquity and embracing a wide spectrum of theoretical and practical aspects. (See Brodin 2007; Davies 2015 for an overview.) In the American postwar tradition for example, critical thinking is described in terms of a first

wave (Walters 1994), where focus is on logical reasoning. Within the tradition, scientific theory, methodology, and argument analyses are treated as informal logic/logical-deductive thinking, as a general skill that can function regardless of context. In the second wave, the concept of critical thinking gets a broader definition, to include perspectives such as democracy and citizenship, as described by Stephen Brookfield (1987), Brookfield and Preskill (2005), and Brookfield (2012), or with a focus on the ability to change perspective, as in theories about transformative learning by Jack Mezirow (1997).

A somewhat related American tradition, but one that emphasizes the development of moral judgement, or *fronesis*, can be found in the writings of the neo-Aristotelian moral philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum. Her definition of critical thinking involves not only rational reasoning but also the narrative imagination as a tool for empathy and critical self-reflection (Nussbaum 1997). The definition of critical thinking in this book is influenced by Nussbaum and linked to the capacity to see cultural stereotypes expressed in narrative texts. Thus, a linguistic aspect of critical thinking is emphasized here. Such a definition opens up possibilities for writing as a method based in a creative writing tradition, as described by the American creative writing educationalist Peter Elbow in his theories about exploratory writing. (See Chap. 2.) In other words, this book belongs in the intersection between rhetoric, linguistics, and teaching and learning in higher education.

Little, if any, research about pedagogical approaches in higher education explores creative writing, the narrative imagination, or the narrative text type as the basis for a method for critical thinking. The narrative text type is associated with elementary school, even among teachers. (See Holmberg 2008: 125.) In comparative literature studies, literature is a central research object, of course, and there is extensive research including studies of narratives. However, research in literature is not specialized in the persuasive, rhetorical functions of narrative texts, or their place in different types of argument structures or situations, nor as an educational resource for practising critical thinking, which is what is in focus in this book.

By highlighting expressive, subjective writing, the relational perspective between a writing *subject* and the social environment is emphasized. This approach makes it clear that learning through writing can be seen as

a negotiation between the writing subject and a particular sociocultural context. The metaphor for this type of relationship outside of rhetoric is often dialogue; this is the approach taken by, for example, the linguist and researcher Per Linell (2009) and the writing researcher and educator Olga Dysthe (1996), an approach inspired by the Russian literature and language theorist Mikhail Bachtin (1981, 1986: 94f). Bakhtin's theories of dialogism[2] in literature have informed much Scandinavian research on writing and on dialogic learning.

This bakhtinian dialogue metaphor, is referred to as "contextualized neo-dialogism" by the Danish linguist Boel Hedeboe (2002: 41). It is easy to interpret the concept as a democratic and idyllic picture of the seminar room, to which Hedeboe objects. (See also Linell 2009.) Hedeboe criticizes the idea of dialogic learning and points out that the concept of dialogical has diverged from the original dialectical, critical perspective that Bakhtin originally intended. Instead, it has turned into a normative pedagogy aimed at socialization and at blurring social tensions (Hedeboe 2002: 46f.). Hedeboe emphasizes that the conditions in a seminar are asymmetrical, which is of significance for everyone, at both the individual and the group level. I share this view and see argumentation as a more appropriate framework than dialogue to describe what is happening in the seminar room. Learning in an organized form like that at a university should be seen as a negotiation between individuals and the organization. (See also Säljö 2000: 6.)

Usually expressive/creative writing is associated with neither rhetoric nor critical thinking. Yet the expressive writing tradition has roots, far back, in ancient rhetoric, where Sophists excelled in providing writing instruction to young boys aimed at enhancing the students' writing skills, which they would need as orators. Linguistic style, *elocutio*, was believed to have a big influence on how people understand the world and how they act.

In those days, as now, public speakers learnt about language and style as arguments and about the importance of the given situation and the social context. Even then, the art of writing was the pillar of rhetoric, since public speaking requires writing skills (Ong 1990). There are, in fact, some influences from the Quintilianus (2002) writing pedagogy in *Institutio oratoria* to be found in suggestions such as freewriting, advocated by Elbow, as a way to work with rhetorical *inventio* for creating text (Kjeldsen 1997: 95. See also Ström [2017] for extensive research on letter writing as an educational practice in historical times).[3]

In historical times, there were no strict borders between artfully worded poetry and expository prose (Grepstad 1997: 247ff.). Therefore, both artful prose and expository writing were taught. The method can be described as a kind of genre pedagogy, *progymnasmata* (Eriksson 2002), in which students were presented with templates of various text types that they learnt to imitate by following a certain programme with various established writing assignments. This method aimed to teach them to imitate the speech of public role models in order to become skilled orators themselves. The British linguist and researcher Roz Ivanič (1998) describes this method in contemporary terminology as learning to write through an identification process, to imitate in order to acquire a certain *discoursal identity*, and thereby a certain social *ethos*, a social identity.

The fashion to ascribe stylistic originality to individual writers was unknown in ancient times. Originality is a relatively recent phenomenon that did not appear until the romanticism in the 1800s. Many of the assignments in the progymnasmata aimed at teaching pupils to develop maxims in their own texts. These texts would be based on a quotation by one of the great masters—Cicero, for example—and developed in accordance with strict topics and styles that the pupils were taught to follow.

This mode of writing was thus not expressive, in the Romantic sense of free, as original, but nevertheless there was some room for a writer's creativity, and considerable attention was paid to the linguistic and aesthetic form. It is therefore correct to argue that creative writing as an educational method has roots far in the past. This is also true to say about the reflection text as a text type that aims to develop the writer's thoughts on a given subject, which is of particular interest as students' reflection texts constitute the main data in this study.

Michel de Montaigne, who has become known as the founding father of essay writing, developed the written reflection, the free essay, into an artform in its own right in the 1500s. This text type can be defined as an aesthetically designed, often critical, reflection in which the writer, through the act of writing, penetrates deeper into a subject to gain an increasingly complex understanding of it.[4]

In modern times, in university education in the humanities, the personal reflection has even gained the status of hallmark, with a certain literary quality associated to it. In academic contexts, the essay may take the shape of stylistically well-written scientific articles on any topic. In this

book, the reflection text is related to the development of critical thinking through writing. Students write short reflection texts about their work. However, reflection writing in the university context is not without problems[5] (Havnes and McDowell 2008: 3ff.). Asking students to write a critical reflection text based on comprehensive and vague questions about a creative writing assignment opens up the assignment for students' own interpretations and for them to respond very freely. In this way, the university exerts certain rights to assess a person's (personal) development, since teachers assess the reflection texts. Also, a certain intimacy associated with knowledge and knowledge objectives brings ethical issues to a head. (See Chap. 3.) But in the humanities, where language and writing are at the core of knowledge production, it seems that personal development, such as the ability to critically review one's own viewpoints and emotionally driven motives, form a basic part of what learning is about. The Russian child psychologist and educationalist Lev Vygotsky (1973)[6] highlights the central importance of language to human development and learning. Similar ideas can be found in Russian physiologist Aleksei Leontiev (1978) in his definition of the concepts *object* and *motive*. To him, emotionally driven needs are key driving motives in all our actions. (See Chaps. 2 and 4.)

Clearly, the free reflective essay as text type is accompanied by certain ethical issues that need further discussion, and not only in regard to courses in creative writing but, more generally, to courses that require personal, emotional engagement. (See Ghaye 2007: 151ff. on ethical perspectives on reflection writing.) Moral and ethical questions in connection to assessing the quality of students' personal reflections arise but remain unanswered. However, the aim here is to research a writing method in order to highlight how students work with creative writing for critical thinking, and not to research students' emotions or personal opinions.

1.2   Some Points of Departure

The social view on writing goes back to constructivist[7] assumptions claiming that it is through actions in the world that we exist in the world (Bruner 1996; Hornscheidt and Landqvist 2014: 23ff.; Ivanič 1998: 75ff.). For example, through what we write and say, we construct, as

writers, certain discoursal identities in interaction with others. Texts are thus socially coded and sometimes linked to professional identities: You may become a professional fiction writer by writing fiction. Thus, there is reason to talk about different kinds of social positions in connection with writing. However, position is a complex phenomenon. In this book, the term is linked to certain positioning processes that students go through while forging discoursal identities. (See Sect. 4.3 in Chap. 4 and Chaps. 6 and 8.)

The focus of the textual analysis is context, expressed in a text. Activity theory, a contextual theory based in organizational theory, has been adapted and applied for text-analytical purposes. Of course, the lines between overarching and local levels of the broad notion of context fluctuate. Cultural value grounds and orders of discursive power structures are ubiquitous and materialize in the observable reality, such as in texts and in what people say. I have studied the texts written by university students and have spent time with them and interacted with them in the course settings, at specific geographic locations, in order to find out how students learn through writing, based on the ethnographic assumption that learning is accessible for research through in situ observations of linguistic, culturally formed, actions. However, it is the traces of "reality" expressed in texts that I have analysed, not the act of writing as such. Specifically, it is textual expressions of learning that are the analytical focus of this volume.

One aim of the assignment used in the case studies is thus to investigate learning through writing. In activity theory (see Chap. 4), learning is defined as expansion, by which is intended "[…] change resulting from expanding involvement with others over time, developmentally, in a system of social activity (activity system), mediated by tools, including texts, and practices" (Russell 2009: 21). The definition of learning here is focused on "change." Learning involves a change of perception or, expressed differently, it involves perspective change. To learn is to be involved "with others over time" and to use mediating tools, "including texts and practices," in order to exchange meaning and thereby to expand through interacting with others to see things in new ways. According to this definition, then, learning happens by meaning making through perspective change that occurs in social interaction with others. However, if

it is to be accessible for research, there must be expressions, material signs, that learning, in terms of perspective change, has happened. In some way, the person who has learnt something must *know* that a change of perspective has occurred and must be able to communicate the change. This new standpoint can be referred to as a metaperspective, because a perspective is added when you reflect about the fact that you see what you see.

Since I research critical thinking specifically associated to writing, I have connected critical thinking to linguistic utterances and to text types. The students write narrative texts about a moral dilemma that is possible to relate to in different ways. The reflections elicited by the dilemma, and the writing process, are put down in writing in a reflection text. I have thus added the knowledge object (Carlgren 2005) of critical thinking to the aim of writing the narrative text as a key learning objective of the assignment in the case studies.

By "critical thinking," I mean expressions of metalinguistic awareness concerning prototypicalizing functions of language in narrative texts, which I refer to as critical metareflection. By this I mean that there is an awareness of other possible viewpoints from the ones that the writer holds, or first expressed, and that there are utterances in the texts about these other ways to relate and that other positions and perspectives also are possible. Such expressions of critical thinking can be found in reflection texts, when writers explicitly relate to other viewpoints. These expressions of critical thinking can be examined and described in a text analysis. I refer to this kind of critical thinking as critical *metareflection*.

Perspective changes referred to in text analyses should be viewed as textual resources that students may use as tools, which I call recontextualizations (see Sect. 3.5.2 in Chap. 3) or *tools* (Sect. 5.1.2 in Chap. 5). In the assignment that the students engage in, it is through writing activities in different steps that perspective changes take place. In the texts, these steps are referred to in different ways. These references recontextualize the activities from the material contexts, such as discussions or reading activities (or cognitive activities), into the new context of a reflection text, where they are used in new ways. In addition, the students also write about changes of perspective, not specifically linked to activities around text production, but in Nussbaum's

sense of walking in someone else's shoes with the help of the narrative imagination. (See Sect. 2.2 in Chap. 2.) Such shifts serve as resources for writers to use in different ways in their texts.

So, what is meant by text and by writing? It is inevitable that the two concepts are intertwined. I have defined texts written by the students as text types: narrative text and reflective text.[8] By "narrative text," I mean texts based in the narrative imagination of the writer and following structures inscribed in narrative text types. By "reflective text," I mean argumentative, expository, and exploratory texts structured in essay-like forms (after Grepstad 1997).

I have tried to circumvent the complex and problematic concept of genre, where a defining criterion is that users themselves should be able to agree on the content, form, and function of the text that they write and be able to designate the text in terms of a genre (Ledin 2001). An assumption on my part is that many students do not know what is intended by a critical reflection text, nor would they recognize such a text if they saw one. In addition, I am not clear about a definition myself, so genre as a concept to name the texts produced here seems problematic. "Text type" is therefore the term that denotes the texts included in the assignment.

The students[9] have been exposed to some of my ideas about critical reflection texts through questions in the writing assignment. (See Sect. 3.5.3 in Chap. 3.) The questions invite the writers to move between specific and general perspectives on the act of writing as well as on the dilemma and the narrative texts that they write and read. But as far as possible, I have left it to the writers to decide what I mean by "critical reflection," because I wanted to capture their perspective.

Text types presented are those used in the tradition of expressive, creative writing, especially through influences from Peter Elbow. His thoughts about freewriting have a strong focus on the effects of writing on the writers and are less oriented towards the results, which is a different approach from earlier educational writing traditions, where the product, the text, was in focus, not the process of writing it. In the creative writing tradition, editing is viewed as a stage quite separate from the act of writing, that writers engage in post-writing, in the editing process.

Basically, writing is viewed as a method for meaning making, a definition that is shared by Norwegian text researcher Kjell Lars Berge (2002: 159ff.). He defines writing as the act whereby utterances leave traces that are bearers of meaning. Writing thus requires interaction and social context. Meaning-making objects are created that can be used by the writers themselves as food for thought as well as by other readers in some specific context. I also use the complex concept of discourse and follow Ivanič (1998: 16f.). She understands discourse as "producing and receiving culturally-recognized, ideologically shaped representations of reality." In this book, discourse is especially highlighted in connection to writing and to forming identity. (See also Sect. 2.4 in Chap. 2 for writing discourses.)

1.3   Research Problem, the Main Hypothesis, and Aims

The research problem around which the discussion in this book revolves is about how you can learn critical thinking by working with creative writing. I view learning as linked to identification processes and to developing one's discoursal identity through the expansion that takes place when engaging with others in writing activities within a writing context. Writing, then, should be seen as an interaction between the writer and the social context in which the writing activities are situated. A main hypothesis is that creative writing can promote critical thinking, and a case study and a follow-up study aim to test the hypothesis.

The main hypothesis is theorized in Chap. 2, where critical thinking is related to narrative texts. An important step in the formulation of the hypothesis is to view creative writing within an expressive, sociocritical writing discourse framework. This framework permits the use of creative writing as a method for critical metareflection. By the phrase "critical metareflection," I mean the ability to reflect, in writing, about oneself and others by detecting and responding to prototypical language use in narrative texts produced by oneself as writer and by other writers. There is a link between this view and what activity theory defines as learning through expansion. (See Chap. 4.)

The more specific aim is twofold. A first aim is empirical: to test the relationships between critical thinking and creative writing and to point to different kinds of reflections and discoursal identities that result from the writing assignment that I developed. It includes oral as well as written elements and is based on the narrative and the reflective text type.

A second aim is theoretical. I seek an understanding of how texts can serve as sites of negotiation for learning and for the development of discoursal identity. To that end, I have constructed a theoretical model that specifies and operationalizes categories from activity theory for text-analytical purposes. In that way, I can capture the impact of context on learning and show how learning, expressed in a critical reflection text, can be described in a model.

1.4 Ethical Aspects

All students have given their written consent to participate in these case studies. In the creative writing case study, I had completed my part of the course when I asked for students' consent to participate in research. In the follow-up study, I met the students for one seminar, as a guest lecturer, and they sent me their consent after the course was completed. No other lecturers were involved in the research in any way that could affect the students' results or how the texts were assessed. I also emphasized to students that participation was voluntary. The contributions in this book are completely anonymous. The critical reflection texts, which constitute the main data, have been read by the writer and by me and nobody else. All names or facts that could reveal someone's identity have been changed for reasons of anonymity. Everybody is attributed a pseudonym.

1.5 Outline of the Book

Chapter 2 discusses and theorizes on expressive writing and narrative imagination from a critical, sociocultural perspective. Chapter 3 describes the general approach of the research and presents exploratory practice as the ethnographic basis for the empirical work. The in-depth case study and

the assignment with its theoretical supports are presented in this chapter, illustrated by an example from the data. Materials used for triangulation are also reported. Chapter 3 concludes with a section on ethical considerations. Chapter 4 presents activity theory as the theoretical approach to understanding negotiations between the context and the learning outcomes. The chapter also outlines the importance of identity and identification for learning through writing. Chapter 5 introduces the text-analytic approaches that have been applied, beginning with a text-analytical model informed by activity theory. An account of the results of the text-analytical approaches, and how these results have been construed through the text-analytical concepts in the model, follows. In Chaps. 6 and 7, the results from the case study in the creative writing course are presented in terms of writers' positions and learning outcomes. In Chap. 8, the follow-up study is introduced and its results are presented, and, in Chap. 9, an overarching discussion about both studies is presented as well as a discussion about the scopes of the text-analytical model. Some outlooks on the educational possibilities that may come with a sociocritical view on creative writing for critical thinking are discussed in Chap. 10.

Notes

1. The book originated in a research project about teaching and learning for critical thinking for a pluralistic university, funded by the Swedish Research Council. (See Research Council 2013 and Edberg 2015.)
2. The term "dialogicality" has come to be used in a general sense in writing research to describe characteristics of texts. In her dissertation (2004: 36ff.), *Student Writing in Two Knowledge-Building Environments*, linguist Mona Blåsjö studies this complex concept and divides it into five different aspects, three of which she operationalizes to apply analytically.
3. However, Quintilianus (2002) points at several dangers with this approach and advocates for a different one (see section III & IV in the tenth book of *Institutio Oratoria*).
4. The section about Montaigne is from Jan Stolpe's (2012: IX xxvi) preface to Montaigne's essays in Stolpe's Swedish translation.
5. There is an engaging discussion in this source about the ethical aspects of developing students' capacities to reflect, mature, and then to grade them.

6. All the references to Russian or other non-English researchers come from English or Swedish translations. When I have found them in Swedish translations of original books, I have translated the Swedish translations into English. The source from which quotations have been taken can be found in the reading list, along with an indication of whether the translation is mine or someone else's. I have read only English and Scandinavian texts in their original.

7. Cf. the difference between social constructivist and social interactivist research perspectives as discussed by Nystrand (1990).

8. These text types are referred to as "narrative," "narrative text," and "reflection" "critical reflection text," depending on what is most appropriate in the construction of the sentence. By "text type," I mean specific textual features that designate a particular text which may not have the status of genre (cf. a shopping list), However, I do not include essentialist components attached to such text types. (See a comment from Berge and Ledin 2001: 6 about Grepstad's theory about genre; Ledin 2001: 9f.)

9. Depending on the context, I call the students "writers" when I wish to highlight their writing. Sometimes, when there is cause to speak of the students as university students, I call them "students." When I discuss students as participants in an activity system, I call them "subjects," in accordance with the concepts of activity theory.

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2

Creative Writing and Critical Thinking: From a Romantic to a Sociocritical View on Creative Writing

This chapter offers a brief look at the postwar history of writing peda-
gogy in order to show that writing instruction always has links to societal
needs and ideologies, such as the American Bay Area Project of the
1970s, in which the expressive writing tradition originates. In this book,
creative writing is redefined, and placed in a sociocritical framework for
critical purposes, informed by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky's theo-
ries about learning as social. Critical thinking is framed as the writer's
capacity to encompass prototypical representations in language and in
narrative texts. The definition is based on the American philosopher
Martha Nussbaum's theories of critical thinking as including self-aware-
ness through the narrative imagination but expands on it to include a
capacity for metareflection about language and writing. The next sec-
tions present educational traditions of expressive writing, theorize about
critical thinking, and associate it to narrative texts. The chapter con-
cludes with an explanation of how the different aspects of critical think-
ing relate to an expressive, sociocritical writing discourse, which opens
up the possibilities of using creative writing as a method for critical
metareflection.

2.1   Expressive, Creative Writing

Expressive writing, an educational tradition often referred to as creative writing, is based on democratic and liberating writing ideals. The tradition began in the United States in the 1970s with a large-scale writing development project, the Bay Area Writing Project (Gray and Myers 1978). Today this movement is viewed as the beginning of creative writing as an educational writing method and is associated with its key figure, the American writing educationalist Peter Elbow (1973, 1994a, b, 1998).

Expressive writing emerged during a turbulent period of protests in universities during the 1960s and 1970s. The writing movement was a protest against formalized and stiff writing education, underpinned by authoritative ideas about teaching templates and set standards, for students to learn by heart. Good writing results would be achieved if teachers focused on conveying good, respectable writing traditions and correctness to students (Blåsjö 2006; Elbow 1973, 1994, 1998; Hoel Løkensgard 1997: 7, 2010: 47ff.; Ivanič 2004). The expressive writing movement was a way to break free from these prewar writing traditions by emphasizing the writer and the act of writing rather than the end product, a text. The aim of the writing activities within the expressive writing paradigm was to allow students to develop their *flow* and to let everybody express themselves freely in order to acquire new insights through writing, insights that would, in the end, enhance the quality of the texts. The general idea was that the writer's own voice must be allowed to be heard primarily, and that formal requirements be treated only secondary to it. Writing should not be about nervously studying rules for correct language use. Instead, writing ought to be about using one's own language without many rules and restrictions, because that way the writer's language will develop, as will the writer's capacity to *think* through writing and to develop good texts. The writer was seen as an author and a creator of meaning. Writing was viewed as an individual activity, not a social one. Social aspects of the writing process were basically limited to text evaluation through readers' responses (Hoel Løkensgard 1997: 5ff.). In her analysis of writing discourses, Ivanič (2004: 230) describes expressive writing as text focused, oriented towards content and style: "The term

whole language and language experience are often used to refer to these approaches, since matters of form are always encountered in the service of meaning which is located in the learners' experience."

According to Elbow, learning to write is an implicit process that takes place through the act of writing. That way, simultaneously, the capacity to think develops. It is by allowing writers to write freely and fully about topics they find inspiring, such as their personal experience, that their writing will develop, not by explicit teaching about writing. In some accounts, this educational approach is presented as "process writing" within the expressive writing discourse (Ivanič 2004: 229) because the thought development learning objective is based on ideas about the process, or the act of writing per se, as the developmental driving force, when it is accompanied by readers' responses and revisions of the written drafts.

With time, the focus of the expressive writing movement changed, and much attention was paid to style, to the writer's individual expression and voice. Originality became desirable, and, as a consequence, imitation as not desirable. This is ironic, because it contradicts the original, democratic idea about writing as a privilege for all and downplays the writing *process* that initially was placed centre stage in learning to write. The development thus realigns the ideals that grew out of creative writing with older paradigms that emphasized the product, not the act of writing. In addition, ideas of individual originality are contrary to the sociocultural view on writing, with its emphasis on teaching variations of genre and social and written practices, not individual originality of expression (Hoel Løkensgard 1997: 7; Holmberg 2008: 123ff.). This is a contrast to expressive writing education, which addresses two specific genres in particular, the creative, literary genre and the thought-developing personal reflective essay. Both these genres allow room for the writer's subjective fantasy and thought development processes.

Nowadays, an established paradigm refers to creative writing as expressive rather than critical. Many courses in creative writing are given at the upper secondary level. At academic levels, too, such courses generally focus on literary writing, form, and content, and writers are encouraged to find their personal, original voice. Courses in creative writing at the academic

level often are given within disciplines such as literature or language. At Södertörn University in Flemingsberg, Sweden, where this case study was carried out, creative writing is taught by the faculty of language studies.[1]

2.1.1 Creative Writing to Enhance Reflective, Critical Thinking

Elbow's approach to expressive writing is much more academic than its reputation gives reason to assume, and it is not very "romantic." (See, e.g., Dysthe's account [1997: 46].) It is Elbow (1973, 1994a, b) who introduces a systematic method for reflective writing aiming at knowledge and thought development, a method that he refers to as *freewriting* and *writing to learn*. During the 1980s, these terms were developed further within the process-oriented writing tradition. (See Hoel Løkensgard 2010.) According to Elbow, it is through freewriting that writers can find unexpectedly clear thoughts and insights that they themselves might have been unaware of beforehand:

> If you want to get people to be remarkably insightful … try asking them the hard question and then saying "Don't do any careful thinking yet, just write three or four stories or incidents that come to mind in connection with that question and then do some fast exploratory freewriting." It turns out that such unplanned narrative and descriptive exploratory writing (or speaking) will almost invariably lead the person spontaneously to formulate *conceptual* insights that are remarkably shrewd. (Elbow 1994a: 26)

Freewriting is presented as a way of writing to discover, an exploratory writing method that will generate clear thoughts as the writing process proceeds. Elbow claims that writing is the key factor in learning to think, since in his theory language and thought are intertwined. Writing becomes a method that *in itself* generates thoughts and ideas (Elbow 1994a: 28), so explicit teaching is not required (Elbow 1973). The writer in the last quotation is encouraged to write some narratives—"three or four stories or incidents that come to mind … and then to do some fast exploratory freewriting." There are thus two text types designated in the instructions given, the narrative and the reflective types. In addition,

Elbow also refers to "speaking," that is, to conversations about texts as an alternative to writing: "(or speaking)." This remark points at an extended view of the notion of text, which also encompasses activities surrounding the text (Karlsson 2007: 25 about the extended text), although Elbow does not use such terms. However, the texts that result from freewriting are only a step on the way:

> […] since creative and critical thinking are opposite and involve mental states that conflict with each other, it helps most people to learn to work on them separately, moving back and forth between them … But if we hold off criticism and revising for a while we can build a safe place for generative thinking or writing. (Elbow 1994a: 29)

This quotation expresses a view on writing as basically cognitive and individual. Elbow (1994a: 30) accounts for the difference between creative and critical thinking as a difference in mental states or, more specifically, in perspectives; one introverted, intuitively connected to affective impulses, and another, from a distance, critical. Elbow's ideas about *criticism and revising* are not expressed in terms of co-creation or cooperation in the sociocultural sense (Wertsch 1991: 15ff.). Instead, his focus is on the individual and on cognitive aspects of writing. The writing process is described in Socratic terms, as *maieutic* (Bergsten 1993: 11f.), based on ideas that the answers already lie within the writer. All it takes to find them is to allow the writer a fair chance to search, which can be arranged through the construction of "a safe place" where everyone refrains from evaluations of the text: "hold off criticism and revising for a while.". Elbow seems to imply that the writer is a creator and the readers ("we" in the quotation indicates that someone other the writer as reader is involved) are editors who can help to revise and evaluate the text rather than serving as co-creators of it (Elbow 1998: 237ff.). Elbow (1994a: 25f.) refers to the revising stage of the writing process as "second order thinking," in contrast to "first order thinking." It is the stage where the writer discovers her own thoughts, without any outside interference in a first step, followed by a second step, where others may (or not) contribute to the new draft of the text. Even if Elbow does not speak in terms of mediating means, or *tools* (a central concept

in the model; cf. Wertsch 1991: 93ff, 1998: 24), he describes the text as a tool for thought, accessible to the writer, and a tool that allows for internal dialogue with oneself as writer as well as for dialogue with others (Elbow 1994a: 27) through the externalization of thoughts that comes about through the text. However, Elbow does not specify exactly how the writer expands her thinking, or what constitutes or defines what type of thinking he intends, other than two different mental states. But even if Elbow, and the expressive writing tradition, seem to define the act of writing as primarily cognitive and individual rather the social and collective, Elbow strongly emphasizes writing as a way to work with the expansion and development of thinking in a way that is rarely mentioned when expressive writing is discussed in presentations on writing methods and writing research. In this book, it is this tradition of *writing to learn* (Elbow 1994a, b) that I am particularly interested in, as I intend to link theories about critical thinking to creative writing in order to create a theory to develop a writing method.

2.2   Critical Thinking and Narrative Imagination

In many theories about critical thinking, the importance of self-critical awareness (through perspective change) is underlined. It is a salient theme in the writings of the American, neo-Aristotelian philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum (e.g., 1995, 1997, 2001) and her thoughts about critical thinking as a human capacity to empathize with other people and their life conditions through what she refers to as the narrative imagination, through which we can "imagine what it is like to be in the shoes of another […] Such perspectival thinking is fundamental to human emotional and moral life" (Nussbaum 2001: 146). Nussbaum's ideas are the starting point of my own definition of critical thinking, and the narrative assignment in the studies is inspired by her definition of the narrative imagination and its link to critical thinking (Nussbaum 1997: 85–112). Nussbaum's (1997) definition of critical thinking is linked to ideas about responsibilities as citizens in a democracy. In a

multicultural society, it is necessary to be vigilant against ethnocentricity and to overcome social tension based on national boundaries - to learn to see beyond them and beyond gender, ethnicity and other social categorizations. In order to learn to handle cultural differences, self-awareness "the capacity for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions" (Nussbaum 1997: 9) is necessary. In brief, Nussbaum's moral philosophy stipulates that citizens in a modern democracy, with its multitude of people of different races and ethnicities, need a thoroughly thought through ethical positioning in regard to themselves and their values in order to live an educated or enlightened life. That way they can contribute to an enlightened democracy through a well-educated moral judgement (Nussbaum 1995: 39ff.)

Nussbaum sees critical thinking as a capacity that takes practice and education to achieve. Such education should be based on Socratic self-examination (Nussbaum 1995, 1997, 2001) or *fronesis*, a sort of moral awareness in order to fulfil these societal, moral democratic duties. To this end, a cosmopolitan perspective is needed. Critical thinking must also encompass logical thinking as well as what Nussbaum refers to as the narrative imagination, to be able to empathize, by "walking in other people's shoes". In other words, in addition to logical analysis, emotion and the capacity for sound judgement are crucial for critical thinking according to Nussbaum. She thus underlines as do I, the importance of perspective change for critical thinking in her definition.

To this aim, three skills are needed: understanding and mastering logical reasoning, embracing a cosmopolitan perspective, and having access to the narrative imagination (Nussbaum 1997: 85). In particular, the ability to use the narrative imagination for perspective change emerges as a salient feature in Nussbaum's theory, as she argues that a prerequisite for morally sound decision making is the capacity to maintain a self-critical stance to one's own perspectives and to be open-minded when confronted with others'. Education should thus aim at exercising citizens' moral judgement in order to "fulfill basic Socratic functions, showing students the possible narrowness and limitedness of their own perspective and inviting them to engage in critical reflection" (Nussbaum 1997: 70)—in other words, to provide possibilities for students to practise their democratic duties during their education.

In *Cultivating Humanity* (Nussbaum 1997), it is specifically the novel that Nussbaum suggests as suitable for the education of fronesis. By extensive reading of high-quality literature (Nussbaum 1997: 138),[2] it becomes possible to learn to practise empathy with other people and to understand the complexity of their actions.

In Nussbaum's theory of emotions, man is vulnerable, and subject to all of life's uncontrollable aspects and all the emotions these give rise to (Nussbaum 2001).[3] However, emotions do not exist outside of reason. Instead, emotions should be viewed as *intelligent responses* (Nussbaum 2001: 1) to questions addressing values. Reactions help us to develop our thinking. If we imagine ourselves walking in the shoes of somebody else, our perspectivese will changes. We can scrutinize our assumptions about other people and cultures, and, hopefully, there by bridged cultural gaps. Through literature we can learn to understand how differences in race, culture, religion, gender affect habits and ways of thinking and how all peoples share the basic human predicament of being human. In Nussbaum's theory, novels can thus serve as a way for readers to develop their empathy with others and to develop their understanding of others as well as of themselves.

The aim of studying literature is thus to learn to practise moral judgement, to apply a cosmopolitan perspective, and to learn to empathize with others. In that way, readers form a basis for Socratic self-examination, which makes it possible for them to view their own perspectives critically and to reach the same insight as Socrates did: that about our own ignorance (Nussbaum 1997: 147). The aim, of course, is not nihilism of values but, on the contrary, an improved capacity for moral judgement: "The less the lawyers know about a subject […] the more likely they are to vote their prejudices" (Nussbaum 1997: 222). This quotation represents a basic assumption in all of Nussbaum's pleas for a resurrection of the central role of liberal education in a democracy. If we are to avoid 'voting our prejudices,' as citizens in a multicultural democracy, we need education to learn to practise moral judgement by recognizing the intelligence of emotion in the public sphere.

2.3　Critical Thinking: Reasoning from a Specific Case

In rhetorical argumentation theory, no difference is made in regard to rhetorical impact between fictitious and real examples. Instead, it is the oscillation between general rules and the specific example that is crucial (Billig 1996: 163f.; Bizzell and Herzberg 2001: 170ff. about deduction and induction in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*). Nussbaum also emphasizes the importance of the specific example in the literary novel. As a given structure for thought, the specific example has been discussed by rhetorical scholars since antiquity, especially by Aristotle, who refers to the specific example as a particularly powerful means of *persuasio* (Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1356*b*, 1357*a*, in Bizzell and Herzberg 2001: 170ff; see Linell 2009: 243 and Perelman 2004 for some contemporary theories). The fictitious example (which was the drama in Aristotle's time) is a special variant of example, according to Aristotle (1450a). In his *Poetics* (of which only fragments remain), Aristotle specifies the function of the drama to *mimesis*, to imitate reality aiming at *fronesis* and possibly even catharsis through empathy among the audience (Melberg 1994: 17ff.). It is in the Aristotelian sense that Nussbaum defines the power of the literary example. To her, the dichotomy between the specific example and general rules is artificial. We will always bring previous experience to every new situation, so every time we encounter something new in our lives, we will evaluate and understand it in the light of similar examples and events that we recall from the past. Rather than trying to rationalize by doing away with the complexity of examples gathered from real-life experience, *fronesis* is about learning to highlight the uniqueness of the specific case, as a resource for rational thinking, in order to learn to act wisely in specific situations. Emotion and imagination thus have substantial impact, not necessarily on the development of our affects but on the development of our *thinking*, according to Nussbaum. In order for our thinking to be sharp and clear when faced with reality in all its complexity, it is necessary that we expose our thoughts to emotion and to imagination. Without these two aspects, thinking will be blurred. Fronesis is thus about an acquired, moral sense of perception. As sound moral judgement is a

prerequisite for responsible, functional citizenship in a democracy, there should be opportunities for people to acquire fronesis through proper education (Nussbaum 1995, 1997, 2001).

Nussbaum's discussion of the role of literature originates in a certain academic, educational context. If students of moral philosophy are given the opportunity to see the complexity and multitude of facets embedded in the big questions of life, their learning will deepen. In other words, advocating novels of excellent quality on reading lists instead of less complex philosophical examples can be seen as a development of method within the discipline of moral philosophy. Nussbaum's view on the function of the novel thus also has its origins in a certain situated practice, where the novel can fill a specific educational function.

However, there are some linguistic aspects to be emphasized in Nussbaum's theories of moral philosophy. Since she focuses on narrative texts, her definition of critical thinking becomes language oriented and genre specific. With it follows a number of possibilities to research language- and genre-oriented perspectives of critical thinking. Instead of linking studies of narrative text to moral philosophy and Socratic self-reflection (Nussbaum 1997: 15), narratives can also be associated with textual criticism. The narrative example opens up many roads to critical metareflection. It seems that the narrative text type plays an important part in people's meaning making. Narratives in general, not just novels, seem to have a core function for cognitive processes (Billig 1996: 163f about particularization; Bruner 2002: 141ff., 177f. about metacognition in association with narratives; Linell 2009: 243ff.; Wertsch 1998: 73ff about the narrative as a mediating tool). The term "critical thinking" in this study thus refers to metaperspectives on linguistic categorizations in narrative texts, (not restricted to literary novels) which is what I refer to as critical metareflection.

Narrative imagination and empathy are not the instruments only of readers but also of writers who wish to create authenticity in a narrative text. The writer needs to perceive the complexity of human problems in order to give life to them in a text. Therefore, Nussbaum's theories about the narrative imagination can be applied when designing a narrative for a creative writing assignment, one that will require empathy towards other people's perspectives. Instead of thinking about the literary example as an

imaginary reality that readers may use to practise their empathy, the roles suggested here are contrary: A *writer* may use her empathy to create a narrative example, an imaginary reality. Such an assignment requires narrative imagination and empathy to complete. By taking on the role of writer, it is impossible *not to* imagine and to empathize with certain perspectives. That way, the demands on excellent quality literature are no longer salient (Nussbaum 1995, 1997). If empathy becomes a resource in the writing phase, writing a narrative text can be used as a method to practise narrative imagination and empathy, and the narrative text can be used by the writers for text-analytical purposes.

2.4   Expressive Writing in a Sociocritical Writing Discourse

Writing discourses have served as a text-analytical tool to operationalize the text-analytical model (see Chap. 5) and to construct writers' positions (see Chap. 6). In addition, the term "writing discourse" clarifies what is intended by different perspectives on creative writing. First six prototypical writing discourses are introduced. Then follows a presentation of creative writing in an expressive, sociocritical writing discourse.

Each of the six writing discourses that have been defined (Ivanič 2004) reflects a different writing educational paradigm.[4] Writing discourses can be described as "configurations of beliefs and practices in relation to the teaching of writing" (Ivanič 2004: 220ff.). They also represent a chronology of the development of postwar writing instruction, beginning with the late 1950s–early 1960s and onwards, with an interval of a decade between the different writing traditions. I have used them as a starting point to define creative writing and, analytically, to differentiate between utterances about writing found in my data. (See Sect. 5.3.2 in Chap. 5.) As the writing discourses recur in the textual analyses, next I discuss each one briefly.

In a skills' writing discourse, "correctness" is the key term. Teaching focuses on specific writing skills and correct language use. In the expressive writing discourse, which follows, focus shifts from the text to the process of writing and to the writer's creativity and thought development.

Learning is expressed as an implicit process, which happens through extensive writing and reading. Particular attention is given to literary writing and essay writing.

In a process-oriented writing discourse, the writing process itself continues to be the focus of writing development, not the text. The writing process is traditionally described in accordance with the rhetorical canons: *inventio*, inventing content; *dispositio*, arranging the content; and *elocutio*, attending to style and expression, with the addition of peer reviewing, rewriting drafts, and then publishing. Students are encouraged to pay attention to the writing process.

In a genre discourse of writing, focus is on the text as a product intended to serve certain social functions in certain social contexts. Teaching is explicit, and texts are used as study objects and sometimes also as templates for educational purposes.

In a social writing discourse, writing events and social circumstances around writing are given particular attention, as texts are linked to power and cultural contexts. Teaching focuses on creating an authentic writing environment, where writing can be practised in order to function in different professional contexts that students will face in the future.

Finally, in a sociopolitical writing discourse, writing instruction is oriented towards cultural criticism or *critical literacy* and towards larger, overarching perspectives on writing—for example, what writing and literacy do to our social positions and what power structures are supported and purported through different ways of writing. In an academic context, the sociopolitical writing discourse (Ivanič 2004: 238), generally constitutes an academic discipline, or is part of a discipline, aimed at bringing to the fore sociopolitical aspects of power dynamics, for example, that are language based. Social responsibility may be one aim with this type of *critical language awareness*.

By applying Ivanič's overview of writing discourses presented above (Ivanič 2004: 225, 229, 237ff.) recursively, it has been possible to define expressive writing as a variant of social writing that not necessarily (or primarily) needs to aim at literary writing. Instead, creative writing may serve as an educational writing method aimed at teaching cultural criticism for *critical literacy*. To separate this writing discourse from the others, and to associate it with creative writing, I have defined it as an *expressive sociocritical writing discourse*.

In an expressive, sociocritical writing discourse, creative writing can be viewed and used as a method for exploring critical thinking, defined as an ability to reflect, in writing, about oneself, about others, and about language itself, by discovering and relating to language-based prototypical assumptions in narrative texts, produced by the writer and other writers in an academic writing course. This definition is underpinned by a collective view on writing, in contrast to an individual, "romantic" view. A basic assumption about a critical method based on expressive writing is that writing that links to writers' narrative imagination is very powerful. Just as Elbow (1994a: 26) says, it allows the writer to integrate rather than block out, subjectivity and emotion that arise in the cognitive writing process (Flower and Hayes 1980). However, it is important that subjective as well as cognitive aspects of writing be construed as contextualized, sociocultural phenomena (Dysthe 1997: 46; Hayes 1996: 28ff.), since human cognition is permeated by social circumstances: "[C]ontext is not only social but also mental" (Hoel Løkensgard 2010: 74). Contextual circumstances also have substantial impacts on the narrative imagination (Vygotsky 1995; Wertsch 1998). The expressive sociocritical writing discourse shifts the emphasis from the writer's specific originality or endowments to the context where writing takes place, and circumstances for learning in that context come to the fore.

From a sociocultural vantage point, the expressive (and cognitive) aspects of the writing process can be viewed as dialogical or open to negotiation. Subjective perspectives in such a paradigm are considered intersubjective (Linell 2009: 252). Cultural ideas constantly emerge through collective *categorization and reification practices* and are gradually internalized into people's subjective ideas about the world, which in turn will affect collective ideas.

In an expressive sociocritical writing discourse, topics about form and content—for example, to find the individual writer's voice and originality in stylistic expression—may be discussed at group level in order to analyse what it is that individuals and groups value in their narratives, thereby leading to ideological criticism on expressive writing. Thus, for the development of critical thinking, it is important to allow students to be part of a collective production process, to be an individual writer and to produce

their own texts but surrounded by other writers and cooperating with them in a particular learning context. In that way, narrative texts can be studied from critical perspectives and be subject to discussions about ideology, identity, power, and the like (Ivanič 2004: 239). Expressive writing is well suited for subjective expression, for writing about specific and personal matters, and for expressing emotion, all of which may be beneficial for critical metareflection. Social interplay has a strong influence on the educational approach within the sociocultural paradigm. Applied to creative writing, a sociocultural standpoint means that questions about originality are deprioritized, and the influence of cultural factors on writing and on the narrative imagination become interesting to observe. As a consequence, evaluations of literary quality that are salient within the expressive writing discourse become problematic, since such evaluations are ideologically tinted. In an expressive sociocritical writing discourse, it is possible to work differently with such texts and to use the narrative imagination and critical metareflection as a method for students to explore cultural aspects of writing and to learn about common, prototypical ideas externalized in the texts and to discuss them together, as a group. (See Chap. 10; see also Kumashiro 2002, 2015.)

To work with narrative texts for critical thinking means to introduce a new knowledge object (Carlgren 2005). The assignments have another aim outside of those traditionally described, where the basic notion is to help individuals to write freely in order to develop their originality, their natural talents (Dysthe 1997: 45f.; Hoel Løkensgard 1997: 7). In an expressive sociocritical writing discourse, writing becomes collective, and explicit teaching—for example, about the sociopolitical function of language—becomes relevant. In an expressive, sociocritical writing discourse, empathy and emotion become resources for student writers to externalize cultural values in order to analyse such values critically.

2.4.1 Imagination as a Cultural and Social Form of Thinking

The impacts of social context and of group dynamics are underlined in sociocultural theory. Even qualities that are usually associated with people's personality or individual capacity, such as cognition, creativity, or

free imagination, are described as basically socially constructed and collective (Bruner 2004: 9ff.). A sociocultural account of the importance of imagination for humankind would claim that humans' entire social development, and not only our empathy, depends on imagination. According to (Vygotsky 1995; see Edberg 2017) the imagination as a cognitive capacity does not disappear with childhood. On the contrary, it develops as the young person accumulates knowledge and experience. Adults may master abstract thinking as well as other, equally language-based types of thinking (e.g., the ability to think about specific examples). Thinking *happens* in and is made conscious through language (Vygotsky 1999: 404). Language is the link between the concrete action and the symbolic understanding of it: "to recreate it in the imagination in order to express it in words," regardless of level of abstraction (281, 240).[5] An adult masters different degrees of abstract thinking, which in itself opens up may more ways of thinking, compared to what is the case with children. An adult will not switch from a concrete, situated thought process to a purely abstract one. The Soviet psychologists Aleksei Leontiev and Alexandr Luria (1972: 314f.) say, for example, in a comment to Vygotsky's work, that adults master an entire repertoire of *different* levels of abstract thinking and, in addition, because of their life experiences, the possibility to choose among them, depending on the situation at hand. For children and adults equally, the imagination can serve to expand their experience, as a bridge between their own and other people's experiences. Thus, it is not possible to separate concrete thinking from abstract thinking. Through imagination we create new combinations based on previous experience, in order to create something new. In addition, it is through imagination that we understand phenomena in the world that we have no personal experience of, as our imagination allows us to "live" what other people have experienced through their narratives and accounts (Vygotsky 1995: 22). In fact, the imagination is an inherent human capacity, and it permeates all human action, according to Vygotsky. Fantasy and creativity are thus important thought processes that unite emotion, desire (49), and intellect (26): "The creativity that is generated by our expressive imagination pierces through everything in life, in all its forms: private as well as societal, theoretical as well as practical; it is ubiquitous" (50). Thus, *everyone* is capable of imagination, and it is a vital

capacity as it is a prerequisite for creativity and development for change. However, even if everyone is creative, their possibilities to release their true creative potential depend on the social environment. Therefore, the development of imagination and creativity should be subject to educational instruction. Everyone is influenced by, and limited by, social circumstances and the times in which they live. This means, of course, that the narrative imagination, as defined by Nussbaum, as well as contemporary ideas about a subjective perspective are influenced by sociocultural factors in the same way as any other human activity. (See Cole 2004: viif. for a brief introduction to Vygotsky's theories.) This idea supports a sociocultural (or, more accurately, socio*historical* [Cole 1993: 6]) view of expressive writing as equally socially constructed and *constructing* as any other writing tradition. The social context that permeates and surrounds writing assignments will underpin any perspective expressed. It will influence what narratives the writers write and how they will relate to them. When the aim of an academic writing course is to practise critical metareflection, methods based on social interaction may thus be emphasized.

2.4.2   The Importance of Externalization

Production holds a special status within sociocultural theory. As mentioned, Vygotsky (1995, 1999; Edberg 2017) speaks of everyone's creative capacity, but he also underlines the importance of the product (however, not necessarily the literary novel). A course in creative writing, with its productive perspective, can be a suitable environment to try out a sociocultural perspective on expressive writing and on the narrative imagination, since the students will produce products in the form of texts. Vygotsky associates learning with creativity, but he differentiates between reproduction, to imitate in order to remember, and production, to learn by creating new, physical products. Imagination has a central role in human creativity, because it always seeks physical *manifestation* in products, in forms that are visible to the producer as well as others. (If this does not happen, the creative imagination will remain trapped within the person, generating only vague ideas with little or no value. Most often such entrapped imagination comes out as apathy and indecision, says Vygotsky.)

Creativity wants to take physical form and be "operative and active and reshape the objects towards which its actions are directed" (Vygotsky 1995: 49), which will result in innovation. Therefore, "two capacities, the intellectual and the emotional, are equally indispensable for the creative act" (Vygotsky 1995: 26). This idea is strong support for working on assignments in different steps and involving two text types, the narrative text for imagination and emotion and the reflective text for thought development.

Theories about the importance of externalization, or production, have been developed further by the American social psychologist and Vygotsky expert Jerome Bruner (2002). Bruner (40ff.) echoes Vygotsky in what he refers to as "the tenet of externalization," Bruner stipulating that basically all the activities in a culture aim at the production of products of different kinds. It is by being involved in such creative production processes that we all, in one way or another, contribute to the collective knowledge and history of our culture (40). Just like Vygotsky, Bruner (2002)—and Nussbaum, for that matter—points at the decisive impact of the narrative on the formation of our understanding of the world, and how the influence of narratives starts in early childhood through the imapct of telling fairy tales, for example. In Nussbaum's writings, we are primarily students of other writers' narratives, while Bruner more firmly stresses that we should continue the cultural work as co-creators and contributors to the "big culture" through the creation of products. He also points to the fact that "products and products in progress create *collective* and *negotiable* ways *of* thinking in a group" (40, italics in original). Expressive writing offers work forms for "reproduction" and "production" to create something new through "the intellectual and emotional" processes that, according to Vygotsky, are indispensable for the act of creation. In an introductory course in creative writing, students can work with specific narrative examples. In both case studies that I present, I have used Nussbaum's definition of critical thinking to include the narrative imagination and with a focus on the specific example. However, the studies are situated in a course in creative writing and in a teacher's training programme, not moral philosophy. This change of contexts calls for different learning activities. Even though there are "good" novels on the reading list in creative writing,

the learning activities focus on the students' production of narrative texts. A definition of critical thinking that embraces the narrative imagination thus alingns well in such a context. It is also possible to use the students' own texts as a starting point for discussing Bruner's "*collective* and *negotiable* ways *of* thinking in a group." This way, empathy through the narrative imagination can function as a way to work with narrative texts produced by students, so that the students *themselves* may analyse what they have written.

2.4.3   Prototype Theory and the Narrative Example

Projective theories are theories aiming at clarifying what could be, as opposed to practical theories that aim at explicating what is. Einstein's theory of relativity can serve as an example of a projective theory. It is a model, or a fantasy about something that at a later stage materializes, in scientific research in Einstein's case (Cohen 1995). Prototype theory is an example of a projective theory: a theory to clarify social circumstances as constructivist agents that influence free creativity, for example. The bottom line of prototype theory is really accounted for by Vygotsky (1995), when he claims that the impact of social environment and time are much more influential in the development of pupils' capacities than personal endowment or talent.[6] No matter how wide the scope for the combination of possibilities or how great the talent of an individual, a cultural expression can never occur without certain prerequisites. Archimedes, Vygotsky writes, could not have invented an electric dynamo since the cultural prerequisites did not exist at that point in time. In other words, no matter how great someone's individual talent may be, we will always be limited in what we can achieve: "Every inventor, even a genius, is always the child of her age and environment" (36f.). Prototype theory is a specification of this discussion, underpinned as it is by sociocultural assumptions. When associated with narrative texts, prototype theory opens up analytical approaches to the texts that can be useful as a method for students in their research of their own narrative texts.

Prototype theory originates in semantic studies of the American researcher Eleanor Rosch (1973b: 111ff.). The basic idea of prototype theory is that it focuses on typical examples rather than on logical rea-

soning or on principles. The theory stipulates that there are certain examples within a given category that are more representative of the category than others—for example, "some colors […] are 'redder' the others" (Rosch 1973b: 111ff.) or that "an apple is the prototypical fruit" (Ledin 2001: 15). However, the choice of prototype—such as an apple— is not selected at random. Rosch (1973a, b) showed experimentally that American psychology students had ideas about categories that were influenced by the students' cultural background. What to include in the category "real" bird, for example, depends on experience and cultural, prototypical ideas about birds. (In the case of the American psychology students, the prototype for bird was a robin [1973b: 133].) It is thus the most specific case or a specific example that is the focus in prototype theory, and it is aimed at researching how a person will perceive something. According to the theory, a person's perception will be influenced by sociocultural factors (Paltridge 1997: 53). Individuals and groups will consider certain expressions as more natural than others. Their own linguistic choices will be affected by these ideas (cf. Wertsch [1998: 16f.] about prototypicalization, appropriation, learning, and the artistic creativity in *the* copyright age).[7]

The pedagogue and language researcher Gunilla Molloy (2001) speaks about prototypical ideas in terms of metaphors and emphasizes that they are linked to social values. Language-based mental images about reality will reflect, and affect, collective ideas within a culture. In arguments and discussions, they strengthen perceptions about common ground. For example, a person who was brought up in a "culture of robins" will propose this species as the prototypical bird (Molloy 2001: 13), and every time such prototypes are expressed, they will strengthen the common ground shared by people within a certain culture, as people will perceive certain prototypes as the right ones, that which within rhetoric is called *doxa*. (See Jasinski 2001: 183ff. for a definition.) Prototype theory thus accounts for how people categorize their perceptions of the world based on culturally grounded ideas about the most typical and "sensible" representations of it. The effect is that certain choices will be preferred as default prototypes. These choices will not be restricted to the level of language but will encompass much wider, cultural notions and ideals. It is in fact precisely this link between hegemonic discourse (Mills 2011) and prototypi-

cal ideas that reveals the constructivist aspect of social positions and identities. Prototypical ideas are not restricted to objects but include stereotypical assumptions about people. Molloy (2001: 22) explains:

> […] prototype theory will serve normative as well as corrective functions; a woman who prefers to prioritize her intellect will deviate from the prototype "real woman." A man who shows his emotions in public … will also deviate from the prototype "real man." In a culture where men and women are perceived, not only as each other's opposites, but also as superior and subordinate in relation to one another, language metaphors will serve as prototypes and fill normative functions perpetuating power relations.

Prototype theory can be viewed as a "specification of a type of associationism" (Allwood 1989: 5f.) allowing for a certain "semantic vagueness" compared to theories such as word component analysis, for example. Thus, an association among prototype, discursive categorization, and stereotype occurs (ibid.; Paltridge 1997: 55f). Fantasies and ideas never emerge out of the blue. There is always a culturally shaped (and shaping) reality that people use as a starting point (Vygotsky 1995) when they frame their experiences in language, a reality that links those experiences to prototypical and stereotypical assumptions in a wider sense. Creative, narrative texts too can be viewed in the light of Foucault's (1972: 49 in Mills 2011: 15, and pp. 14–25 for a discussion) theories about inclusion and exclusion. They show evidence of what is possible to think and do in a given culture as well as of what social (discursive) positions, identities, and perspectives can be expressed. With such strong cultural links between prototypes and narrative representations of the world, prototype theory can function as a litmus test: "[T]ell me what bird you choose, and I will tell you what culture you represent" (Molloy 2001: 13). Molloy (23) stresses the importance of using prototypicalizations as tools for bringing out critical perspectives in teaching and learning in language and literature. It is on the basis of such ideas that I have developed the writing assignment on which the studies are based. A group of writers will externalize different perspective and different narrative frames through their texts. By use of such narrative examples, the writers of the texts get access to shared, prototypical ideas that can be researched and compared and discussed critically. In that way, the student writers may analyse their own texts, to find out what narratives they

themselves, as cultural beings, produce, rather than to have them focused on the narratives in literary texts, written by professional authors. In addition, using the students' own narratives is a way to circumvent discussions about what would be representative or suitable literary texts to select for this type of critical inquiry (see Nussbaum 1997).

2.5   Concluding Discussion About the Research Background

This chapter has presented a contextualized, practice perspective on critical thinking and creative writing. The emphasis is on the importance of thought development through writing in a social context. In particular, subjectivity, narrative imagination, and emotion are included in the definition of critical thinking, and assignments in creative writing intended for learning critical thinking are discussed. There is quite a bit of support for such an approach, but careful adjustment to the specific environment is required. In a writing context at an academic level, ideological aspects of language and text, a certain type of critical literacy, are in accord with academic learning objects. A method aiming at critical thinking in a course in creative writing (or a teacher trainee programme) could thus include assignments that generate narrative texts intended for critical analysis. This focus on what students may research critically has an impact on the definition of critical thinking. Here "critical thinking" refers to a language-oriented view on critical thinking, defined as an awareness of the ideological and prototypical functions of linguistic prototypes in narrative texts. Evidence of such awareness (in a student text) is referred to as *critical metareflection*.

Elbow's ideas about freewriting as a way of writing to learn forms a starting point for a methodology in this volume. However, unlike Elbow, I have positioned creative writing within an expressive, sociocritical writing discourse, using the British writing researcher Roz Ivanič's overview of predominant postwar writing discourses as a starting point. Positioning creative writing in an expressive, sociocritical writing discourse allows for a sociocultural perspective on creative writing based on the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky's (1995; Bruner 2002, 2004; Engeström 2001; Wertsch 1998) theories about learning as a social, collective activity.

Vygotsky also understands creativity and imagination that way, which is a different approach from that of the individualistic view of creative writing, expressed in the traditional expressive writing paradigm.

Creative writing in this new, sociocritical writing discourse allows for the social perspectives of creativity and writing to be emphasized. Such an approach aims at developing students' abilities of writing to learn (Elbow 1973) to think critically through perspective change and metareflection. Focus is on awareness of the permeable boundaries between individual and cultural dimensions of individuality and identity as well as on how ideology is expressed through language. An important aspect of critical thinking within the paradigm is the ability to analyse texts, such as narratives, as carriers of power and social identities.

A social view of learning through writing forms the basis of the methodology, and there is an emphasis on the social writing context. Learning is defined as "[…] change resulting from expanding involvement with others over time, developmentally, in a system of social activity (activity system), mediated by tools, including texts, and practices […]" (Russell 2009: 21).

Even though all the proposed writing activities are carried out individually, focus is not on individual or personal development of students' abilities to write good fiction. (But, of course, such effects are likely to occur as a result of the writing assignments.) Instead, focus is on developing critical literacy, such as awareness of prototypical assumptions expressed in language and texts, narrative, and other text types.

Notes

1. Here I do not discuss the creative writing tradition within literature. Neither do I discuss the creative writing tradition within gender studies, where a feminist tradition puts into question traditional, academic genre writing and advocates extensive reflexivity in academic texts (cf. Lykke 2010). Nor do I draw on a reflective writing tradition found within the field of practical knowledge, a way of writing that is in part inspired by Schön's (1983) theories about the reflective practitioner.
2. Nussbaum argues that by learning empathy, we can acquire a deep understanding of the *other*, regardless of their gender, culture, religion, or sexual preferences. The literary novel shows in detail how customs and ways to

attend to basic needs vary between cultures but how human needs remain the same. By reading about other people, we can learn about similarities between people and peoples, in spite of differences in living conditions and cultures. There is a common human nature, but cultural patterns can cause people to draw borders and separate us from the other, which may result in exclusion and segregation of certain groups, for example.

3. Unlike the Stoics, Nussbaum does not claim that we should endure and stand all trials. Instead, we should try to understand conflicts and tensions caused by cultural differences and allow them to affect us in order for us to develop (cf. Nussbaum 2001).

4. There are different ways of presenting traditions of teaching and learning writing. (See, e.g., Hyland 2004 for an overview emphasizing the social context.)

5. Also see Bruner's introduction to the English edition (2004) for Vygotsky's theories about the functions of language.

6. Vygotsky's powerful emphasis of historical and social conditions as the basis of human thinking is clearly influenced by Marxism and is juxtaposed against a bourgeois, individualistic ideal celebrating personal talent. Perhaps it also opposes a purely racist, biological view of intelligence and learning. (See Wertsch 1993: 50ff.)

7. The American anthropologist James V. Wertsch (1998) links prototypicalizations to learning, and defines learning as appropriation, to "appropriate" (53). According to Wertsch (53), the term originates from Bakhtin and means "taking something that belongs to others and making it one's own." But appropriation is complex. It is a process of embodiment, in the sense that we internalize new knowledge and learn to master culturally situated, mediating tools, what Wertsch (50) refers to as "mastering"; however, it is not without resistance of different kinds. What Bakhtin has described as resistance or apprehension against appropriation of new linguistic expressions, Wertsch widens to encompass all new mediating means (54). Even if someone manages to demonstrate "mastery," there may still be resistance (56), which is clearly manifested through stereotypical use of tools. It is quite possible to use stereotypicalization as a mediating tool without the process of appropriation (i.e., to master how to use a cultural tool without making it one's own, without appropriating it [174]). However, Wertsch also remarks that embedded in the term "appropriation" is "some kind of conscious reflection […]" and, in addition, "that agents use cultural tools voluntarily or willingly." Inherent in the nature of learning lies a desire to *want* to appropriate culturally shaped mediating means and to make them "our own."

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3

Basic Outlines of the Research

The idea of "critical" implies that viewpoints must change, if we are to see things in a new light. How to elicit and research perspective change for critical thinking thus becomes a central question. This chapter introduces how the notion of perspective change underlies the design of two case studies discussed in the book, to test empirically the link between critical thinking and creative writing. The assignment used in both studies is based on an eliciting moral dilemma that students work with *in steps* and in different versions to maximize perspective change. At the core of the dilemma is the choice between public and private duties, between work and children. Students first write a narrative text, followed by a reflective text. Then, after a group discussion, the narrative is rewritten from a new perspective, again accompanied by a reflective text. The assignment ends with a critical reflection text, and it is this last text specifically that has served as my main data. The assignment is presented in full in this chapter, illustrated by an extended example from the collected data. The main data consists of 65 student texts, where students sum up what they learnt. Data that served for triangulation purposes, to verify the results, is also described. The basic approach to the research is ethnomethodological.

This chapter presents *exploratory practice* (Allwright 2003, 2005, 2010), a research field related to action research but with strong influences from linguistic ethnography. It is a research tradition with demands on in-depth accounts of the research process and procedures: In order to clarify approaches, methods, and background factors for other researchers in this or similar fields, the account serves to make it possible for readers to evaluate and interpret the results and to evaluate it in view of their own research. The approach is described in Sects. 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, where I address reflexivity, exploratory practice, and action research and participant roles. Section 3.4 presents the educational context of the case study, as well as the time period for the implementation of the study. The assignment, the results of which constitute my main data, is described in Sect. 3.5, where data used for purposes of triangulation also is presented. Section 3.6 discusses ethical considerations. (For the follow-up study, see Chap. 8.)

3.1   Reflexivity in Ethnomethodological Research

Theories about reflexivity are defined differently in different research fields and academic disciplines (Cohen 2000: 141; Webster 2008), but the basic assumption is that researchers cannot avoid influencing or avoid being influenced by the social reality that is researched. The term "reflexivity" refers to an ambition to strive for objectivity in regard to the researcher's subjective perspective on a study (Bourdieu 2004). Every researcher has a personal background and experience that form a conceptual screen through which all observations, all data, and all representations of the world is filtered. Reflexivity means that researchers (this author) need to account for circumstances that may have influenced them and thus also the design of the research as well as the results (Ball 1990; Wallén 1996: 111ff.).

I have followed Bourdieu's (2004) definition of reflexivity and view "reflexivity [… as] embedded in, and turned toward, scientific practice" (Maton 2003: 57; cf. Webster 2008: 75). Reflexivity can be said to be

a duty to account for the researcher's starting points and epistemological perspectives. Since my role as a lecturer forms part of the learning environment that is researched, I am expected to maintain a metacritical reflective stance vis-à-vis my own approach (Maton 2003: 54). My own reflexive stance is of this critical, self-reflective type, but without the goal of seeing outside of my own research paradigm in any objective sense, the way Bourdieu seems to have intended. (See Bourdieu 2004: 94ff. for a very extensive "sketch for a self-analysis.") Nor do I intend confessional reflexivity in my interpretation (Webster 2008), which means that as a researcher, I have avoided being explicitly empathetic with the informants, as is otherwise a common practice when researching socially vulnerable groups. (See, e.g., Barton et al. 2007.) For example, in this study, reflexivity does not stretch as far as paying the students to be coresearchers. (See Barton et al. 2007 for an example.) The contributions of the students made it possible for them to discuss the research question among themselves and with me, and, later on to allow me to use their work as research data. Placing the case study in a familiar educational context made it possible to create a platform to research the question of creative writing and critical thinking "from within," the way that the practitioners themselves understand what they do, given their context (Cohen et al. 2000: 25). A starting point to understand more general, theoretical questions, which is a scientific aim in field-oriented research (Karlsson 2008), is to anchor them in practice and let them be examined by people within that environment.

In exploratory practice research such as this, the design of the research, the methods and the results are impacted by the participants' roles and the institutional power relations linked to them; the lecturer-student, relationship in this case. It is my belief that the students ultimately addressed their texts, and often their discussions, to me, as I was the lecturer for the course (or the guest lecturer in the follow-up study). I had every reason to interpret the results of the assignment, as well as what was said and written during the courses, as influenced by power relations, where I am ascribed authority, given my role in the institutionalized educational setting.

3.2   **Action Research and Exploratory Practice**

Some researchers define all applied research as practice oriented, since such research looks into "naturally existing practices" (Karlsson 2008: 105). However, it can be practice oriented to different degrees, which will have different consequences (Karlsson 2008). The case studies are examples of qualitative, practice-oriented research (Cohen et al. 2000; Kemmis 1997; Wallén 1996) in a field called exploratory practice. The aim is descriptive (to understand), not prescriptive (to advocate change), which is a difference compared to action research. (See Weiner 2005: 138ff. about action research.) However, methodologically, exploratory practice resembles action research in many aspects. I use the latter term in the general introduction of the field, which follows.

Action research aims at problem solving and at changing an existing practice, most often in educational settings (Cohen et al. 2000: 227; Kagan et al. 2008). Characteristically, the researcher initiates actions and influences the course of events, but the research is also, in turn, usually influenced by different processes and events during the research period. It is common, as here, that the researcher and the lecturer are the same person. Even if there are different variations of action research (Kemmis 1997: 173ff.), a common denominator is the assumption that it is possible for lecturers to work as researchers in and of their everyday educational practice and to contribute to educational research that way, not least because they often have unique and valuable insider knowledge. This view contrasts with teachers being seen as "using 'results from research'" (Carlgren 2005: 123), which refers to basing their teaching on other researchers' work instead of also producing research in their own teaching practice. A characteristic of action research is thus that the researcher initiates a process, or an action, to research a certain theory in reality—in this case, the theory is creative writing for critical thinking (Karlsson 2008; Wallén 1996: 111ff.)—often to solve a problem.

There are a few problematic aspects of action research. One is that the researcher is part of the social context that is researched and therefore researches her own practice, which can be very difficult, because of blindness to defects in one's work environment or to one's own practices, for example. Another dilemma is that action research very clearly is prescrip-

tive, aiming at change. In the nature of action research lies "taking action" (Allwright 2010: 105) to solve problems (ibid.; see Rönn 2009 for a Swedish example).

In this regard, there is a difference between action research and exploratory practice, as the latter has a descriptive aim, which is precisely my aim. The British education researcher Dick Allwright (2010: 105ff.) points at the importance of *testing* educational hypotheses and believes that educational research should view hypothesis testing as its specific focus area, instead of, as in action research, aiming at changing practices or focusing on teachers' development in accordance with a tradition that goes back to Schön's (1983) theories about the reflective practitioner. Instead, Allwright advocates an educational research approach that he calls *exploratory practice*. This research aims at action to understand, in order to acquire deeper knowledge of something. In these case studies, for example, the goal is to find out new knowledge about learning (critical thinking) through (creative) writing. Whether results from such research will change anything in the educational environment in the future is a different matter, and beyond the scope of this book.

In other words, exploratory practice is educational research oriented towards the ethnomethodological, descriptive tradition of linguistic ethnography (Allwright 2003: 114f, 2005: 3). The choice of exploratory practice as a methodological approach is thus based on epistemological beliefs from ethnomethodology, according to which it is possible for me as a lecturer and researcher to gain knowledge about critical thinking (in this case) by studying how people work with critical thinking in a writing practice. By studying such practices of everyday life, we can gain important insights into how people construct knowledge in their social environments (Garfinkel 2010). In that way we can gain a better understanding of how people who are engaged in practices in their environment actually perceive their practices (ibid.; Burrell and Morgan 2001; Weiner 2005). In the exploratory practice approach, there may be elements of hypothesis-testing experiments aiming at gaining a deeper understanding: "Exploratory practice focuses on taking action for understanding" (Allwright 2010: 105) and to "developing *understanding* of what is happening in the classroom" (Allwright 2010: 106; italics in original)—in other words, to understand the practice by researching it (by collecting data). My work is based on this view.

In the case studies, I have worked in accordance with six criteria that should permeate exploratory practice (Allwright 2010: 109f). In brief, they are:

1. Work for understanding must be put before/used instead of action for change.

   In this study, my overarching aim has been to get a deeper understanding of how students construct their learning during an academic writing course. The results may be useful in future research, for understanding implications of students' approaches to learning on teaching and learning methods.

2. Work done for understanding and/or change must not hinder language teaching and learning and will seek to make a positive contribution to learning.

   I have implemented this criterion through the assignment on which the case studies is built. The assignment has been tried out by students and offers an optional, extra resource for them to expand their learning by adding a new knowledge object (without withdrawing or changing any existing ones), critical metareflection, to their understanding of creative writing. The assignment in the creative writing case study is designed in a way that makes it look similar to other course assignments (but the texts are rewritten a few more times and the premise of the narrative is discussed more in large-group discussions than the other assignments). It is the students themselves who decide how much energy and time they wish to invest in the different steps of the assignment (See Sect. 8.5 for the follow-up study). The design aligns with the criterion that "exploratory practice will 'sit so lightly' that it will not be seen as any sort of extra burden" (Allwright 2010: 110).

3. Whatever is to be the subject of work for understanding or change must be seen to be relevant by those centrally involved.

   In this regard, the research can contribute to a deeper knowledge about narrative texts and a deeper understanding of the links among

context, writing, and learning for those students who complete the assignment and for lecturers who work on the course and wish to take part in the research results.

4. Whatever work is involved must be indefinitely sustainable, not conducive to early burnout.

   The case studies are intended to contribute to future engagement and research in creative writing among colleagues and students by spreading the results, through teachers' workshops, seminars, conferences articles and books. Hopefully, further research in the field will be generated locally and elsewhere among lecturers who are interested in writing research. Possibly, the results also may have practical use in course development in different ways.

5. Whatever is involved must bring people together (teachers with teachers, teachers with learners, learners with learners, teachers with researchers, etc.) in a positive collegial relationship.

   The results of the study will be used for discussions about creative writing in university contexts. Students and lecturers will be able to share results and contribute to future research, which is one aim of exploratory practice. In addition, the development of activity theory for text analysis (see Chaps. 4 and 5), which resulted from the text-analytical work of this research, can also contribute to further discussions about social positioning in text and in learning in contexts other than in creative writing courses. (See further development in Chap. 9.)

6. Whatever is involved must promote the development (seen in terms of developing understanding) of all concerned (teachers and/or learners).

   Mainly for practical reasons, the active participation of other colleagues in the case studies has not been possible. Yet the study has affected colleagues' view on creative writing. Today there exists a discussion about creative writing as a method for critical thinking that was not evident when I started researching, and this can be seen as a contribution to the practice during the research period. My research

has been discussed at a few research seminars, and colleagues have contributed invaluable remarks on the way. In one case, a colleague tried out part of the assignment from the case study in a separate writing group. In addition I have developed a 7.5 credit course module in creative writing for critical thinking that the university now gives as part of the intermediate creative writing course. Through the follow-up study, the method has also been tested outside of a creative writing course environment.

3.3   The Researcher's Roles

An important aspect of reflexivity is to account for the researcher's access to and social function in the researched environment. As mentioned, in exploratory practice (as in action research), the researcher is often an insider and part of the environment and the practice that is to be researched. In cases where action research is done in an educational setting, the researcher is simultaneously a lecturer who has given educational functions within the practice. There is a certain kinship between the lecturer as researcher in her own environment and the ethnographic researcher in fieldwork. In both cases the researcher engages in fieldwork by participating in the practice through data collection. However, the ethnographic researcher is an outsider who researches practices that are unfamiliar: Ehnographic researchers "insert themselves in the daily lives of the members" (Adler and Adler 1987: 5). In ethnographic research, it is necessary to make efforts to gain access to the environment by different methods or permission (Adler and Adler 1987; Ball 1990), whereas within exploratory practice research in educational settings, there is "automatic" entry (Ball 1990: 159f.). Yet another difference is that the lecturer, apart from being familiar with the practice, also constitutes a part of it, through the given social roles. The lecturer will not need to ask for any specific membership role, since there already is one that gives entry but, at the same time, of course, sets very special conditions.

In ethnographic research, a difference is made between *entry* and *access*. A researcher may get "*entry* but perhaps not *access*" (Ball 1990: 159, italics

in original). You may be allowed to enter into a certain environment but not necessarily manage to build relationships with people who belong there. (See, e.g., Barton et al. 2007 for an ethnographic study in a problem-laden social environment.) As a lecturer, I have a duty to show interest in my students and their work and a duty to keep the relationship within a professional and ethical framework. There are also rules for the duration of the relationship and rules regulating my right to entry and access to the environment, as I am a part of it. As a lecturer in the course, I find myself "in the field," and I am, to a certain extent, involved in the (perhaps not daily) life of the group. However, this is not the same thing as claiming to have automatic *access* (Ball 1990: 159f.) to the students' areas of interest or to their trust. A basic assumption on my part has been to construe the relationship between me and the students as one filtered through a social power structure, where the lecturer has authority and power over the students. It is therefore probable that I have had entry but not always access, and this has very likely had an impact on what students have written in their reflection texts, for example.

The action researcher is stuck in the middle of the insider-outsider dilemma. Of course, the environment remains more undisturbed if the researcher downplays the role of researcher and emphasizes her usual social role as lecturer (Ball 1990: 160) rather than that of researcher. Needless to say, a lecturer will always have a substantial impact on the practices of teaching and learning and influence students in one way or another. If such a lecturer simultaneously acts as a researcher and informs the students about this, which I have done to some extent (and very much so in the follow-up study), it must be seen as a disturbance in the environment that may have an impact on the results.

3.4 Context, Main Data, and Selection Procedures

This section briefly presents the course structure and the context of the assignment.

In the creative writing study, which will be discussed here, the assignment is embedded in the introductory part of the basic, undergraduate

course in creative writing. This module (7.5 credits), which stretches over a period of five weeks, is an introduction to creative writing. Theoretically, it is rooted in a rhetorical canon, focusing on *inventio* and *elocutio*, and in a process writing discourse.[1] It aims at exploring content and style through the writing of "dramatized narrative, writing portrayals of characters, and experimenting with style […]." to quote the course syllabus. During the course, students write quite a few short freewriting texts, such as a narrative about a childhood memory (not included in the case study). They also create characters by experimenting with dialogue and settings. They also read about writing techniques and one or two novels and short stories.

All the course assignments have some procedural traits in common; for example, they all include peer responses on the texts, and they all require a new draft after the response, to be handed in with a comment called "reflection." Also, most assignments stretch over two seminars at least (except for the follow-up study; see Chap. 8). Interspersed among the different writing activities are lessons covering one literary novel and a few textbooks addressing different aspects of creative writing. It is during these lessons, which are taught in a large group, that students work with the case study assignment. Thus, the case study formed part of a few of the lessons designed to be integrated as a recurring part of the course during a specific time period. As mentioned earlier, the aim of such a design is to generate data about the work processes and the students' attitudes to them. Also, in accordance with criterion 2 in exploratory practice, the study has been designed not to "hinder language teaching and learning" but to "make a positive contribution to learning." It is also in accordance with criterion 2 that "exploratory practice will 'sit so lightly' that it will not be seen as any sort of extra burden" (Allwright 2010: 110). Students are to recognize the assignment as a "natural" part of the course. This is also a requirement based on the hypothesis that it is possible to gain access to students' perceptions of their practice by letting the case study be part of a number of "naturally occurring" assignments within the practice on the course.

As my research progressed, the assignment changed and developed, very much influenced by the students' reactions to it but also by new theoretical insights that I gained during the course of my research and while reading the students' texts. For the textual analyses in this case study, I decided to use as my main data the first two groups from the very beginning of the research period. (See Sect. 3.5.3 for an example.) In that way, I was able to

access the results of the assignment as they came out, before my own ideas and expectations led to alterations and changes in the assignment and changes in the results as a consequence. (Cf. Chap. 8.)

The assignment included in the case study was carried out in two different groups during 2009–2010 and in the follow-up study during 2016. The data includes 30 critical reflection texts from one group in during one term and 17 texts from the following term; in all, 47 texts in the creative writing study and 18 texts in the follow-up study. The smaller number of texts in the second creative writing group is due to the fact that fewer students took the course that term. I collected the texts (as I collected all other texts in the courses) in two ways: in paper format after lessons and electronically, by e-mail. (See Sect. 3.5.5 for other data that were used for the purpose of triangulation.)

3.5   The Writing Assignment

The assignment in the case study is constructed in stages, allowing for breaks between the stages. The students write texts in different versions, and group discussions and teacher-led lessons take place. The writing process is elicited by a narrative writing assignment, presented in Sect. 3.5.1, and it ends with a concluding, critical reflection text, presented in Sect. 3.5.2. The stages and the overarching structure are presented in Sect. 3.5.3, followed by a specific example with comments in Sect. 3.5.4. Finally, in Sect. 3.5.5, the data used for triangulation purposes is presented and commented on.

3.5.1   A Moral Dilemma

The assignment is inspired by the liberal education tradition that Nussbaum represents. (See Sects. 2.2 and 2.3 in Chap. 2.) The aim is to create an open writing assignment with resources to allow for different solutions. The narrative text type allows for the narrative imagination and empathy and for the writer to "be in the shoes of a person different from oneself" (Nussbaum 1997:11). The assignment takes as a starting point a moral dilemma. Also, the structure of the assignment is based on an instruction from Elbow

([1994](): 24]. The critical reflection text allows for the writers to distance themselves from the specific narrative and to take both a general and a critical perspective on their own writing and that of other writers.

The instructions read:

Step 1 Write a story about this:

A single parent gets a job offer far away from home. The job lasts for two years. During this time the parent and the 11-month-old child cannot meet.

The assignment was constructed to generate resources for creating social categories such as roles, genders, ethnicity based on Nussbaum's ([1997](): 50–84) theories that associate critical thinking, narrative imagination, and cosmopolitanism. The premises of the dilemma give writers room to create a discourse rooted in Western culture, where the public, professional arena and the private, social family life are juxtaposed. These rooms are linked to social possibilities and restrictions, regulated by legislation and by culturally stipulated social rules. The choice of premises is also based on the assumption that all citizens, including the writers of the assignment, have to take a stand in regard to this discourse. (And, of course, the fiction allows them to try out different positions on what they might affiliate with personally.) In addition, it is regulated by law that university education *shall* aim at educating for critical perspectives on power, gender, and ethnicity, and not only on courses in postcolonial studies or gender studies, for example. All courses must problematize hegemonic discourses about the gendered private and public arenas and also the hierarchical power relations linked to them and the impact they exert on economic and social possibilities and restrictions for people in society. To leave a child in order to take work far away from home is a common dilemma for many people in Europe and the world today. In addition, the dilemma can elicit a number of other overarching themes for critical discussion, such as duty in our time, power, and ethnicity, as well as definitions of work and family, inclusion and exclusion.

Efforts to deconstruct all categories in the instructions to the assignment resulted in wordings that were so abstract that they became impos-

sible to decipher and use for students in a beginner's course in creative writing. The categories mentioned in the instruction, "single parent" (instead of member of an extended family, institution, or some other social categorization), "child" (biological or other relations, social and physical age), work (income and social frame), and at home/away (geographically situated) can be problematized. Prototypical and Western ideas about family constellations such as adult/children, at home/away, professional life, are caught in the categories that the students will frame in the narratives. Their choices of narrative frames may be subject to discussion during seminars and in the critical reflection texts.

3.5.2   Critical Metareflection as Perspective Change

The writing method is based on working with perspective change in two ways. First, the writer imagines the world by walking in someone else's shoes while writing. Second, "perspective change" also refers to the recontextualizations in the texts.

Implicitly, metareflection presupposes perspective change. The prefix "meta" implies that you see your own viewpoint from a new point of view. Perspective change defined as trying to "be the other" is a method with origins in ancient rhetoric, where it was used among rhetors to find the strongest arguments and be prepared for possible counterarguments (Aristotle 2001). Perspective change, in this sense, aims at empathizing with other people's opinions and ideas in order to understand their arguments. Nussbaum's theory of emotions is based on this Aristotelian ground. Nussbaum (2001: 146) holds that the narrative imagination can be used as a tool to practise what it would be like to walk in someone else's shoes emotionally by imagining being the other. (See Chap. 2.) The narrative writing assignment is constructed on this type of perspective change as it offers resources for empathetic understanding through the narrative imagination.

Additional tools for working with perspective change are provided through the two different text types and the different steps of the assignment, all linked to recontextualizations. They are of great importance in the assignment.

Although Elbow never uses the term "recontextualization" or discusses his methods in such terms, his suggestions for writing assignments are based on ideas about recontextualization (Elbow 1994: 26; see Sect. 2.1.1 in Chap. 2 for the entire quotation). Linell (2011: 82) points to the fact that recontextualization "means that you […] recycle linguistic resources, definitions of situations, knowledge, ideas, arguments etc. but that such recycling of resources in new contexts always can result in accumulation of new meaning onto the previous meanings, given the new situation." Recontextualization can take place through a change of tool, such as by discussing a narrative text and then writing about the discussion in the critical reflection text. Recontextualization can also occur through a change of text type, from writing the narrative text to writing the critical reflection. All these different recontextualizations result in a recycling of meanings, as they are transferred, intertextually, from the narrative text, through social discussions, to the critical reflection text. In this way, the new text is also tinted ideologically through the recontextualizations (Ajagán-Lester et al. 2003: 230). For example, the ethnographic linguist Zoe Nikolaidou (2009: 81) points at how students in a vocational programme in England see their work, to send e-mails to their customers, in a new light when they include these texts in their work portfolios. A shift in ideology occurs when the text is put in a new context. However, it is not primarily the impact on recontextualizations in texts that is the focus of attention or the ideological shifts in the texts. Instead, the focus is on the impact of perspective change on the writers' ways of thinking about what they write, when something new is discovered and thereby becomes accessible for research by the writers themselves. This is something to highlight in a method that aims at teaching how to practise critical metareflection through creative writing.

The step-by step structure of the assignment in the case study exemplifies how such recontextualization processes have been used as a built-in resource for new meaning making as the students move through the steps in their writing process. Possibilities for perspective change emerge, since perspective change is linked to recontextualization and occurs when revising texts, when changing the text type, and in social interaction (Hoel Løkensgard 2000: 99f.). (In the critical reflection texts, these perspective changes can be noted as changes of references in the texts or as

changes of textual themes. See further Sect. 5.3.3 in Chap. 5.) In addition to the steps mentioned in Elbow's model, the students in this case study go through a final recontextualization step as they write a final critical reflection text about the sum total of working with the assignment. They are given some questions (see Sect. 3.5.3, step 6). The aim is to offer the writer possibilities to reflect about all the different resources provided through the assignment to see how they serve as tools for learning to practise critical metareflection.

3.5.3   Design of the Assignment

The entire assignment was presented to the students in a seminar at the beginning of the course as a recurring activity over five weeks, during which time many other course activities and shorter writing exercises were also taking place. Students were informed that some instructions would be given later on. The outline was presented as:

- Working alone and working in peer groups of various sizes
- Taking part in seminars led by the lecturer
- Writing two different text types: narrative and critical reflection texts

There are no significant deviations in text types compared to other assignments in the creative writing course. However, the recurrence of the same assignment over a long time-period is unique for this assignment, as is the knowledge object, critical thinking. Also, it is only when all the students in the course meet in the lesson format that the assignment is up for discussion. All other writing assignments in the course are dealt with during seminars where the students work in smaller groups with different lecturers (and I teach one such small seminar group myself).

The structure of the assignment is based on an instruction from Elbow (1994: 24 in italics below). The writer is presented with a few premises representing a moral dilemma, *the hard question*[2]—in this case a conflict between responsibilities in the private and in the public sphere. The instruction that follows is to write (individually) a narrative text from the perspective of a character in the narrative. This is followed by yet another

instruction to change perspective and write the story from the perspective of someone else in the story: *three or four stories or incidents that come to mind in connection with that question.* (Time limits restrict the number of stories to two.) On completion of each narrative text, a very brief reflection text is written, *some fast exploratory freewriting.* Interspersed between the written assignments are text discussions in small groups, *speaking,* where the narrative texts are discussed and compared. In addition, during my lecturer-led lessons, the collective and social perspective on writing is emphasized further, through discussions about narrative texts and their social function. On such occasions, time is allowed for students to work with their texts in small response groups.

Between the lessons and the assignment steps, I intentionally planned for time breaks (a couple of days) to allow room for thought and reflection. In addition, there are seminars with other teachers addressing topics such as form and content that "interrupt" the chain presented here.

A detailed presentation of the layout of the assignment in its entirety with all the different steps follows. Step 5 (lessons led by the lecturer) presents the main work themes that were interspersed with the different assignment steps.

Step 1 Reading (The eliciting premises are introduced as the students take part of the first assignment instruction, which reads):

> These are the premises:
>
> A single parent gets a job offer far away from home. The job lasts for two years. During this time the parent and the 11-month-old child cannot meet.

Step 2a Individual writing step (resources for establishing a perspective by empathetic engagement;[3] the instruction reads):

> **A narrative text**
>
> Write a story (one–two pages) about the dilemma, based on the premises.

Step 2b Reflective text (resource for perspective change through change of text type; the instruction reads):

> As an immediate follow-up of text (2a), write a short reflective text about your thoughts in connection to your work.

Step 3 Group discussion (resources for perspective change through group discussion and comparison of different solutions to the dilemma; the instruction reads):

> Participate in a group (four people) discussion of your narrative texts.

Step 4a Individual writing. Rewriting of the narrative text (resource for establishing a new perspective through empathetic engagement; the instruction reads):

> Rewrite the narrative text from 2a in a new version, but this time from some other character's (in the narrative) perspective. Length: 1.5–2 pages.

Step 4b Reflective text (resource for perspective change through change of text type; The instruction reads):

> Write a short reflection text.

Step 5 Lessons led by the lecturer

Lessons addressing genre, creating scenes and characters, form and content, and literary criticism as an analytical method are interwoven in the assignment chain 1–4. During the lessons, the solutions to the dilemma suggested in the students' narrative texts are discussed, first in small peer groups, then in the large group. General questions about content and genre are discussed (resources for perspective change through comparison between specific and general perspective on the dilemma and on linguistic categorizations).

Comment: In the case study, the lessons are referred to as "lessons" or as "seminars" by the writers. In the assignment instruction, I refer to "seminars," but in this text I use the term "lessons." This is because the gatherings were structured as tuition with periods of free seminar discussions where I was the tutor who led the discussions. Other lecturers in creative writing did not participate in the case study, but they have given writing lessons and seminars similar to mine. Their lessons have included other writing assignments from those in the study, and I have also given such lessons. The "surrounding" lessons included theoretical as well as practical parts. They included tutorials about literature, introducing themes that were followed up with practical writing assignments during writing seminars, treating themes such as staging, the relationship between style and content, and literary writing as research and as a way to practise criticism. When the students were engaged in the first case study, they read a section about a particular narrative structure in plays (a model for dramaturgy by Stephen Karpman referred to in Ödeen [1988: 237], which was juxtaposed to the experimental narrative structure in *Mosquitoes and Tigers*, a critical novel by Swedish author Maja Lundgren [2007]; in Swedish, *Myggor och tigrar*, in which she argues that women are locked out from top positions in journalism since men with power never let women gain access to power]). A debate in a newspaper article was also included. The article discusses women's struggle with household duties in the nuclear family and their longing and striving to take on professional careers. Women's family responsibilities have been debated ever since Ibsen's *A Doll's House* from 1879, and in the article two radical positions are presented: one advocating that women leave the duties of family life altogether and the other advocating that women give up professional life and become housewives.[4]

Bringing the article to the seminar and handing it out to the students for them to read and discuss exemplifies the situated character of exploratory practice. As the article offers some interesting general perspectives that could be associated with the moral dilemma that the students were writing about at the time, I brought it to the seminar as extra reading, in case there was time left for discussion during the lesson. However, the students started to discuss the theme of the article (the topic had been discussed on TV), and as I told them that I had it with me, they asked to read and discuss it. The discussion became very animated indeed, and I therefore decided to ask a question specifically about the seminar in the critical reflection text:

"What were your thoughts after today's seminar discussion?" The next term, the article was discussed again, not by student request but on my initiative and as part of what I had planned for that lesson. That discussion was animated too, but not as animated as the first discussion. The design of the assignment and the seminars were basically the same in both groups, but the instructions in the critical reflection text were slightly more specific in the latter. For example, a requirement about length of the text was added. (See step 6.)

Step 6 Individual writing step. Critical metareflection (resources for perspective change through comparisons between specific and general perspectives on the dilemma and on linguistic categorizations; all the previous texts and discussions as available resources.)

The assignment chain ends with a critical reflection text, upon completion of which all the written texts are handed in. The instructions to the critical reflection text varied a little between the two groups of creative writing students who were included in the case study. The instructions to the first group read:

Write a critical reflection.

Write a comment about your narrative texts and thoughts about the single parent.

What were your thoughts about the other students' texts about the dilemma compared to how you solved the dilemma?

What are your narrative texts about at a general level, would you say?

Account for a thought or two after today's discussion. Do discussions impact on your own thoughts, would you say?

Did you learn anything from this assignment?

The directions for the second group were a little more specific than for the first group. The instructions to the first group read (text in italics is identical to the instructions in the first group):

The ancient philosopher Seneca has written that education should teach us to think freely and to take responsibility about our own private thinking but also to critically research norms and traditions in society. Write a text where you reflect about thoughts you have had while working with the assignment, based on your texts about the single parent. Your reflection should contain specific as well as more general perspectives:

Write a critical reflection.

Write a comment about your narrative texts and thoughts about how you solved the dilemma.

What are your narrative texts about at a general level, would you say? Refer to your own work, and that of the seminar group, but also to one of the following: a newspaper article, a scientific report, a literary text, or a painting that you see is associated to your own work and thoughts.

What were your thoughts about the other students' texts about the dilemma?

Would you say that discussions impact your own thoughts about the dilemma? Account for a thought or two after today's discussion. How do the discussions impact on your own thoughts?

Account for a thought or two after today's discussion.

Did you learn anything from this assignment?

Write about two pages (three at the most).

(Writing instructions to the critical reflection text for group 2 in the creative writing study.)

3.5.4   A Specific Example

In the following example taken from the data, all the stages of the assignment are presented. The specific example was chosen because the critical reflection is short and thus suitable to print here, but also because the example illustrates hybrid perspectives that have been streamlined and constructed as writers' positions.[5] (See Chap. 6.)

In most of the critical reflection texts that were handed in in step 6, there are sections where paragraphs from earlier short expository writing have been inserted. However, some students did not hand in any expository writing from steps 2b and 4b, only the critical reflection text. It may be that the short reflection texts served as the writers' journals or that they were not written at all. In my analytical work, I read these texts (steps 2b and 4b). However, I have included them in the examples presented in Chaps. 6 and 7 only if they were particularly illustrative. Sticking to examples from the critical reflection texts in the text-analytical work was a way to create a certain uniformity in the data selection in order to clarify, at the end of a chain of assignments, what the writers decided was important to write about. In the specific example of Antonia below, all the different steps of the assignment will be presented, including the short expository writing exercises (steps 2b and 4b). The example illustrates how one particular writer has worked with the writing assignment throughout all the different steps towards the final critical reflection text that is intended to sum up the thoughts about the entire work chain.

The writer thus writes a narrative text in a first version (step 2, a narrative text), where the premises are situated and the dilemma takes shape in a narrative with characters, time, setting, and plot. In Antonia's case, a distribution of power is created in narrative A and narrative B, where demands of the professional working life supersede demands of the private life. This is expressed in two scenes; the first one shows the methods to exercise power that the employer has access to. The other scene illustrates the consequences of that exercise of power on the individual person who has duties in both public and private spheres.

Assignment Step 2a A narrative text; Write a moral dilemma. (The specific example Antonia is presented, only slightly abbreviated.)

No chance that they would send me away, not now when I have just had Anton. It simply won't work. […]

Boss! Wait! Look, I would like to talk to you about what is happening with my position at work.

Oh yeah? But the decision is already taken. You will be transferred to Kabul.

And if I refuse?

You will be fired.

What? You can't fire me just because I won't go to Kabul?

Of course we can. According to your contract. Right now we need you in Kabul and if you refuse to go, we have the right to fire you.

But this is crazy, for God's sake! Surely you can see how downright impossible it is for me to leave Anton for two years? You are too much!

Calm down now, Susanne. You signed the contract yourself, didn't you, and you actually have a choice to stay at home.

Scents of pepper and chili prickle my nose as I run past the market stalls with all the spices. On the other side of the market I run into one of the small alleyways of the city. The office is almost empty and I do not need to wait long before I get help. Larissa's eyes meet mine, she gives me a smile of recognition, and within a few minutes she returns with my letters. Today there are two. I recognize Mum's squiggly handwriting and the much-loved letter from Anton. He has drawn a heart in the right-hand corner, wonder who taught him to draw hearts. Probably Mikaela. My hands tremble as I open the envelope and I try not to damage the paper.

The thought of sitting with Anton on my lap on a Friday night makes my body hurt with longing. As I put [the letter] in the envelope another paper slips out, I turn it and see a drawing. At the top it says, in crooked handwriting, it says to mum, and Anton is on the beach bathing. On the picture Anton holds on to a red-and-white beach ball, far too big, which he will soon throw to his mum. To his blond mum. The picture of the blond mother hits me hard. It makes me realize that Anton has no idea of what I look like. It makes me realize that my son and I are like strangers. (Antonia narrative A)

In step 2a, the perspectives of the story are established. The main character is a Swedish woman who takes a job in Kabul. Through the letters and the references to the main character's thoughts, the conflicts between the characters caused by absence from home are given literary form.

On completion of the narrative text, the writer writes a short reflective text (writing assignment 2b, reflection A). The reflection texts turn out differently for different writers, since the instructions give them considerable freedom to choose themes and length of text. In Antonia's case, all her reflection texts are more or less of the same length:

Step 2b Reflective text. Write a reflection text. (The specific example is in its full length.)

> I think that it was horrible the way the employers could force the parent to choose between her child and her work. It is a difficult choice, especially for a single parent. I wonder what I would have chosen, and thought, in a situation like that. If there is crisis with money, if you are a single parent, and there are hardly any savings, then you have to get a job! First I only thought about writing a dialogue about how the single parent talked to the employer to make him change his decision. But then I wanted to include what the parent thought about leaving her child for two years. That is why I chose to write about how the parent felt after her decision. I got the picture that the parent would feel shame and regret about her choice. (Antonia reflection A)

In step 2b (reflection A), Antonia jotted down some reactions. The text shows signs of an associative freewriting text with markers of chronology—"first … but then"—indicating that the writer has been busy engaging in different processes.

In the second draft of the narrative text (narrative B), Antonia kept the main character from the first draft but changed the time:

Step 4a Rewriting. Write the narrative text (2a) from a different perspective. (The specific example below is slightly shortened.)

> The spoon scratches the porcelain. Mikaela is gesturing. It's a miracle that her cup still stands upright.

> Susanne? Listen! A light slap on my shoulder, and I realize that she has been still for the last minute. Are you okay?

> Shrugging of shoulders, Well, yes. I guess.

I will leave Anton.

There is a silence. For a second it seems as if she has lost her breath. The only sound I hear is my pulse pressing against my temples. I close my eyes. That is when the blow comes.

Bloody hell, you can't be serious. Is that your choice, eh? To abandon Anton? And will that solve everything, or what?

What does she want me to say? She refuses to look me in the eye, and I don't have the courage to say things that she doesn't want to hear. Tell her that she can be the one that I can't be for Anton. Present. (Antonia's rewritten narrative text [narrative B])

In the second draft (narrative B), the main character (the single parent) meets the character who will take care of the child. The meeting takes place just before the parent departs on her long journey, so yet another scene is added to the previous two that were written in the first draft (narrative A). That way the time aspect is focused, before and after the hard decision. In narrative B, the social conflict is staged, to pass one's parental duties onto somebody else, thereby solving the dilemma between public and private undertakings.

Step 4b Reflective text, to be written on completion of the new version of the narrative text. Write a reflection. (The specific example is quoted in its entirety.)

Most of us started out by assuming that the character lived in Sweden, but then, in the second draft, everybody but me wrote about people in a different country. Somebody in the group mentioned that everybody had thought about the single parent as a woman. I did too! Wonder why, really? Also, I thought that it was more interesting to write about a parent who leaves the child rather than a parent who stays at home and lives happily ever after. That would be boring to write and boring to read. I have no idea how I would have reacted, had it happened to me. A guy in our discussion group who has just become a father felt that he could not write about abandoning the child. It's cool that such a short description [the premises] can start up so many thoughts and ideas. I think that this assignment was great fun. It set my thoughts going, and much freedom, and that generated a lot of inspiration. A delightful conflict, if I am permitted to say so. (Antonia reflection B)

In the short reflection text (reflection B) that follows the second narrative text (narrative B), Antonia has become aware of the perspective she created in the first draft of the narrative without thinking about it (since she does not mention it). The short reflection texts (A and B) that follow each narrative text (A and B) illustrate the step-by-step structure of the assignment, aimed at enhancing the thought process through reflective writing. In reflection A, Antonia accounts for her work with making sense of the premises: to interpret and create a narrative from them, and to develop a writer's stance in the text and a certain perspective. In reflection B, it is the writing context that is thematized, the writer in the seminar room, not the second draft of the narrative text, which would have been a possibility. (The thematic choices in the reflection texts vary a lot in the collected data.) Reflection B presents the writer's own solution and reactions, which are compared to other narratives and reactions of other students in the group: "a guy in our discussion group … felt." Clearly, emotional reactions and thought processes emerge in this encounter, as Antonia compares her own reactions to how her peers have related to the assignment. In the text, these processes are highlighted grammatically by exclamation marks and question marks: "Something that I did too! Wonder why really?" In this particular example, the writing assignment and the course context are thematized.

As mentioned, the critical reflection texts from the final step, step 6, critical metareflection, constitute the main data of the study. Reflection C reproduces such a text without abbreviations. In it, Antonia answers the questions included in the instructions to step 6 by writing a summary of her previous short reflection texts:

Step 6 Critical metareflection. Write a critical reflection about your work with this assignment. (The specific example is quoted in full.)

> Naturally, I thought about the problem from the point of view of someone who reminds me of myself. That is why the single parent is a young woman. To me it was interesting to imagine the woman's thoughts before and after her decision to leave the child. That is why, in the first perspective [narrative text] I have divided the narrative into two separate scenes, one where the parent finds out that she has to make a decision, and the other where the decision is made. It was interesting to empathize with a parent and to

think about what she would think about herself afterwards. I think that I, and most of the others, automatically thought about the single parent as a woman, and I think that it is an indication of what things are like in today's society. It is more common for men to leave their families, that it is men who are pigs [sic!]. Women have to stay, and with most of the others [in the writing group] it was the woman who was the victim. It was interesting to see how those who thought of the parent as a man had solved the dilemma. Honestly, I was offended by the thought that a woman would be capable of leaving husband and child. I immediately thought that the woman must have died or something. This clearly shows my prejudices about society and the modern family. My opinions are probably the same now as before I worked with the assignment. Perhaps my insight about the fact that I actually have ideas that are prejudiced when it comes to family relations have deepened? (Antonia critical reflection C)

In her critical reflection, Antonia remarks on the gender perspective. Also, she addresses the link to the writer's *autobiographical self* (Ivanič 1998: 24f.). Antonia notices prototypicalizations in her own narrative as well as in the narrative texts that the other students have written. In addition, she remarks on social structures outside of the seminar room. These remarks are an example of what I have defined as sign of critical metareflection, where writers manage to change perspectives and see and relate to prototypical representations in narrative texts, both their own and those of others. In this particular example of critical reflection text, Antonia writes that she was "offended by the thought" that parents may abandon their children. An emotional reaction "offended" sparks off the perspective change.

3.5.5   Data for Triangulation

In research inspired by ethnomethodological methods, a considerable amount of data is collected. There are also requirements of reflexivity to account for the researcher's view on the circumstances that have influenced the collection and selection of data, as well as on contextual, social dynamics that have impacted on the research and the results. I will describe the students' critical reflection texts, which constitute the main

data, and then present data used mainly for triangulation purposes (Cresswell 2005; Denzin and Lincoln 2013; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 165). Such triangulation procedures aim to verify recurring patterns found in the main data. (As for the data in the follow-up study, see Chap. 8.)

Students' Texts

The narrative texts from steps 2a and 4a discussed in 3.5.4 above, were used for triangulation purposes and as reference data to follow up statements about the narrative text when students refer to their narratives in the critical reflection texts. Other than that, they mainly served as the students' data resources for analysis. The narrative texts were collected in the same way as the critical reflection texts, handed in to me in paper format and sent to me by e-mail.

Surveys

As the students set out to work on their assignments, they usually have spontaneous opinions about them. Therefore, all assignments are evaluated continuously. In this case, with the assignment about the single parent, there came about a spiral of feedback, as the assignment was talked about during lessons in the small-group discussions. This too mirrors the "natural" work process developed in the course. I usually ask students, as part of a lesson, to write a short reflection in response to questions they have raised during discussions or that I have noticed in their reflection texts. I collect these short, evaluative reflections and discuss them with the students in a continuous dialogue about teaching and learning on the course. In the case study, on some occasions, these questions functioned as surveys or as state-of-the-arts' inquiries. The students were informed before they wrote that they would hand in their texts without signatures and folded so that the text could not be seen by anyone as they were handed in. They would be read by me, not only for the teaching procedures in our group but also for research purposes. Students who did not wish to participate in the research were asked to tell me so or to hand in blank sheets. The surveys were used as background data for triangulation purposes:

An introductory quiery. What does creative writing mean to you? The question was answered in writing during five minutes at the beginning of the course to get an idea about students' views on create writing. (30 responses)

An introductory quiery. What is your view on style in your own writing? The question was answered in writing during five minutes at the beginning of seminar to prepare for an "exercise in style" with a focus on style as a language function and a carrier of ideology. (20 responses)

A survey about text discussions. The questions were answered anonymously in a survey to get information about what values students attach to text discussions and also to find out more about expressive writing discourses. (20 responses)

An evaluation of the work process linked to the moral dilemma of the single parent. The questions were answered anonymously in a multiple-choice survey that was returned to my university letter box. (17 responses)

The surveys enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the students' perspective on creative writing and what such writing means to them, and also enabled me to get a general idea of their view of the course and why they take it. The results of the surveys served to support conclusions that I drew in the analysis of the critical reflection texts.

Audio Recordings from Group Discussions

Some of the collected data consists of 11 audio recordings of group discussions lasting on average about 90 minutes each; seven were recorded by me, and with me present, and four were recorded by the students, and in my absence. In addition, I recorded one interview (about 30 minutes' recording time) with a student where I presented leading questions about perspective change. I have listened to all of the recordings. I have transcribed two of them plus the interview with the single student in full length.

Group discussions about the written texts (or sometimes about texts from the reading list) make up a central part of the teaching and learning practice in the creative writing course, and they are organized on a regular

basis by the students and held outside of my presence. Usually I participate in one of the text discussions with the students. They last from an hour to 90 minutes, depending on the number of participants, as in the case study. In fact, my initial intention was to use the audio recordings as my main data. However, further on in the research process, I decided to focus on the critical reflection texts. The recordings therefore served as a valuable contribution to mapping the context around the writing activities on the course and a way to establish patterns of contextual features in the texts. In addition, they provided insights into recurring themes that permeate the discussions and assisted me in recognizing them in the texts. I have used one example from a group discussion to illustrate this. (See the author's profile in Chap. 6. See also Chap. 8 in the teacher trainee study, where I have used an audio recording more extensively.)

The audio recordings turned out to be very interesting in many ways, but of course artificial (see Chafe 1992) since they were recorded for research purposes. As a teacher, I regularly participate in group discussions with students, but I never record them. Situations that occurred during the discussions in which I participated mirror a dilemma in exploratory practice: the researched environment will inevitably be affected by the researcher, and since the researcher also is the lecturer, that function too will be affected.

The recordings, with the exceptions just mentioned, and the surveys served as background data for triangulation, to verify patterns that I found in the critical reflection texts. They also played a central part in how I selected the text-analytical approaches to the texts. For example, my initial hypothesis about the impact of identity took form while I listened to the recorded small-group discussions. The Swedish linguist Anna Malmbjer (2007) has shown that work in small groups is strongly influenced by social positions that group participants express in groups and by the formation of relationships within these groups. I found similar patterns in the audio recordings from the group discussions in my data. In discussions where I was absent, someone in the group tended to take a leading position initially, an initiative that impacted on the social dynamics in the following group discussion. In addition, I found that participants seem to look for consensus during the discussion (Malmberg 2008: 227ff.). In groups where I participated (cf. focus group discussions and

semistructured interviews in Kvale and Brinkmann 2009), the patterns are very similar, but to a lesser degree, very likely as a result of my influence on the group dynamics. The recordings thus served as important data to find analytical approaches and as a source of information to verify patterns in the critical reflection texts.

Research Diary

In qualitative research such as exploratory practice, researchers are encouraged to keep a diary as part of their reflexivity. This is to allow for researchers' personal reflections about the research and to give room for theoretical and methodological speculations and decisions (Cohen et al. 2000: 313). This description correlates with how I used a research diary during the research period. I kept it up continuously and wrote notes from observations done in my teaching practice and its context, such as events or patterns observed in group discussions or in conversations with colleagues, for example. Above all, the diary has been a tool for reflections about events, feelings, or thoughts as well as about different theories and research reports that I have come across. It has served as an important storage place for tentative ideas and enabled me to keep a track record of my research.

3.6   Ethical Considerations

There are ethical aspects to consider in research such as exploratory practice, aspects specifically related to student participation in the research and to their text contributions. The stance I have taken is based on informed consent. I emphasized that the assignment about the single parent was part of the course, and mandatory, because the text types are basic ones in creative writing courses, and it is common practice to write narratives staging a moral dilemma of some kind in such courses. I informed students about the aim of the research and explained that participation in the research part of the course was voluntary. If they chose to participate, I would make sure to anonymize all their contributions. I told them that it was not until after the course had ended that they would inform me about their decision and that they were entitled to change their minds at any

time during the duration of the research. I exemplified how I worked with anonymous hand-ins by referring to the procedure we had with the questionnaires, where all students returned their texts without signatures (and without text if they did not wish to participate), and folded. All these instructions about research procedures deviate from what I usually say to students. Yet it is not my impression that the texts the students handed in are different from other texts that creative writing students hand in.

Another ethical question concerns the obvious risk of orienting questions and assignments in a direction that you as a researcher desire. My work with changing the assignment in different ways to increase instantiations of critical metareflection in the critical reflection texts from the students can be viewed in this light, and not only as a sign of responsivity towards the students on my part (Barton et al. 2007: 40ff.). The changes must also be perceived as an intention, subconscious perhaps, to avoid a result that would show that creative writing would *not* function as a method to learn critical metareflection.

The researcher in me observes that I, as the lecturer, have tried to remedy "faults" and that I was interested in taking measures to facilitate student learning by adapting assignments so that they were more in line with the requests of many students and with my own discoveries during the research process. From a researcher's perspective, a trap opens where dreams about the good results come true, because the researcher has started to adapt the assignment to get instantiations of a desired result instead of observing what the results actually were. This is the reason why, as I mentioned earlier, I selected the data from the first two initial courses where the assignment was tried out and where my interpretations and alterations had not yet had time to change the results (However, I made some minor changes in the instructions to the critical reflection texts between the two groups, as I mentioned in the presentation of the assignment.)

I did not talk specifically about my research during the course. Questions about it came up on the odd occasion, as in one group when I had to change dates for a seminar because of a conference and told the students why. On another occasion, during the audio recording of a small-group discussion, a student asked about her contribution to my research. She thought that she had talked about rather ordinary things

and wondered if such everyday conversation really contributed to research. Apart from that, a couple of students said that they think research is interesting. One student asked not to participate in the research, and another expressed hesitation about participating. (Neither is included in the data.) I interpreted the fact that students' mention the research, albeit on very rare occasions, as an indication of a minor change in our relationship in comparison to what the relationship would have been like if I had not been engaged in exploratory practice. It is a matter of fact that in the parts of the course where we were working with the assignment in the case study, the students were a focus of my attention as a researcher in a way that they were not during the other parts of the course or with other lecturers.

In other words, with the odd exception, students did not show that they were interested in the case study or make any comments about it. They commented on all the assignments they worked with in a way that is similar to how students usually evaluate their work. It may be that my "natural" identity (Gee 2001: 100ff.), as a middle-age, white Swedish woman, and my institutional identity, as an academic lecturer, contributed to the fact that interest in my research activities seldom was expressed. Had my natural or institutional identities deviated from some norm— for example, social, ethnic, religious, or linked to physical appearance— or had the students deviated from similar norms (which they did not), there is reason to suspect that my research would have impacted considerably on students' reactions. David Barton et al. (2007), for example, writes about research fatigue among socially deprived British youth, who have been a research target for many researchers. I have not noted any such reactions among the students in the academic environment of this research. However, this does not mean that the impact of my functions as a lecturer and researcher was minor (Neil and Walters 2006), only that the circumstances surrounding the assignment, and the assignment in itself, were influenced by circumstances linked to power structures that are perceived as typical of a university (e.g., that it is the administrative duty of a lecturers to assess students' work). It is not possible to say to what degree the results depend on such circumstances, only that they probably do depend on them. In addition, everything accounted for here is construed through my conceptual screens, of course.

3.7   Summary of the Approaches to the Research

Exploratory practice is the major orientation of the research by which I have collected the data. It is also the method by which I have approached the analysis of the data, researching in order to understand, not necessarily to change, which signifies exploratory practice. Since it is my own practice that I have researched, reflexivity has been a matter of concern, and my stance in this regard is self-reflective, without claiming that I have any aspirations of objectivity. (See Bourdieu 2004: 94ff. for a discussion.) I believe the results of the writing assignment were impacted by the power relations that come with the participants' roles in an institutionalized educational setting.

The assignment on which the case study and the follow-up study is based consists of different steps. I developed its structure within the framework of my own teaching practice in a course in creative writing (and adapted it in the follow-up study in Chap. 8). The starting point is a moral dilemma that the students work with in two narrative texts and in two short reflective texts: The first narrative text is followed by a reflective text and then by a group discussion, after which the narrative is rewritten in a new perspective. The procedure is repeated: The narrative is followed by a reflection text. Finally, the assignment is completed with a critical reflection text, which constitutes my main data, consisting of 47 critical reflection texts from the same number of students and followed up with 18 student texts from a different course. The data that has served triangulation purposes consists of the students' narrative texts, questionnaires, audio recordings from group discussions, and a research diary.

Notes

1. According to the syllabus for the module "Ideas and Expression" ("idé och uttryck 9 hp") in creative writing at Södertörn University.
2. Here and in what follows text in italics is a quotation from parts of Elbow's instruction. (See Sect. 2.1.1 in Chap. 2 for the entire quotation.)

3. The different steps are viewed as resources for perspective change. The texts in parentheses in the instruction texts aim to clarify more overarching aims or possibilities for such changes of perspective central in the construction of the assignment. These comments about perspective change are not included in the instruction texts to the students.
4. The 2007 novel by the Swedish writer and feminist Maria Sveland with the provocative title *Bitter Cunt* (*Bitterfittan*) thematizes the entrapping women's roles, and Swedish American artist Anna Anka discusses women's emancipation and praises the ideal housewife.
5. Hybridity is not always a salient feature in the reflection texts in the data. Some texts show more dominant features from a specific profile.

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4

Discoursal Identity and *Subject*

This Chapter presents theories that provide support for a text-analytical model based on activity theory that is later applied methodically on the data (Chaps. 6, 7 and 8). In Sects. 4.1 and 4.2, activity theory is introduced along with its contributions towards explaining learning and change within big organizations. In Sect. 4.3, activity theory is linked to writing and identity. The theme is expanded in Sect. 4.4, where the analysis of discoursal identity in text is illustrated in an extended example. This example forms a basis for the presentation of writers' positions in Chap. 6. Chapter 4 thus aims at providing a theoretical ground for the text-analytical model introduced in Chap. 5.

Drawing on the British writing researcher Roz Ivanič (1998, 2004, 2006), I view learning as being closely linked to identity and identification processes. In a writing context, identity is defined as discoursal identity, which originates and develops in the interaction between the writer and the writing environment. The activities of writing and learning by writing are thus viewed as deeply embedded in the social context in which they are situated. Writing processes can be linked to activity theory (Ivanič 2006; Russell 2009). People learn by participating in activity systems. We interact within these systems, and our discoursal identities shape, and are

shaped by, actions within the systems. What we learn through writing thus depends on identification processes within the activity systems and on the new possibilities for selfhood as writers that emerge and what these identities open up for us in terms of new ways of thinking and interacting. Such changes can be seen as a result of expansion through the identification processes involved in learning.

4.1　From Social Psychology to Organizational Theory

Activity theory has its origins in organizational psychology. It is often used for the analysis and interpretation of human action, mainly within institutional organizations. Its organizational perspective is considered particularly relevant for analysing how people within organizations are shaped by, and shape, the actions within those organizations. The theory can also contribute to the explanation of change and of learning. Activity theory highlights the fact that human activity takes place within social systems and that individuals always interact with others within these systems with some motivational and work-oriented objects to achieve some outcome. The model used in activity theory answers questions such as who does what, with whom, using what tools, driven by what object, and with what outcome, given their actions (Engeström 1987).

The major researcher behind the theory is the Finnish activity theorist Yrjö Engeström (1987, 1996, 2001, 2009, Engeström et al. 1999): Engeström has developed the social psychological theories on the zone of proximal development of the Russian social psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1978, 1999) and the activity theory of the Russian psychologist, linguist, and activity theorist Alexei Leontief (1978) into an organizational theory (Cole and Engeström 1993; Russell 2009: 19; Wertsch 1998). Engeström's activity theory expands the triangle of mediation (see Fig. 4.1) by using as a point of departure Leontief's theory of activity systems and ideas about the importance of the social and collective components of all human (work) processes. Leontiev's contribution to Vygotsky's model was to transform the latter's focus on the individual learner by placing the learner in the social context of a complex, collective activity system.

This is the starting point from which Engeström developed the concepts of the model of activity theory presented here (Engeström 2009: 306f.; Russell 2009: 20). His major contribution, and the difference between the models of Vygotsky and Leontief, is that Engeström adds the concept of *community* in a graphic design, thereby completing the idea of a structure to visualize organizational theory, highlighting changes in organizations and production processes (Engeström 2001: 134). Leontief, who developed the idea of activity systems, can be said to have retained Vygotsky's focus on the individual as learner, with less emphasis on the organization in comparison to Engeström (Kaptelinin 2005: 11). In this study, I use Engeström's model as a heuristic framework for text-analytical purposes. It is Vygotsky's and Leontief's perspectives on individuals as learners in groups that will be focus of interest, not organizations as learning organisms or their structures.

Of significance in Engeström's activity theory is a dialectical, Marxist view (which was also the perspective of Vygotsky and Leontief). The many voices of the collective are the focus of attention, their conflicts and their instability. Activity theory thus provides a framework for a collective rather than an individually oriented perspective on learning as a social activity, as it sees all learning as taking place within collective activity systems.

Vygotsky's triangle of mediation (Fig. 4.1) began as a theoretical description of how people think and develop through the use of (symbolic) tools, which makes people different from animals. Vygotsky's starting points are the concepts *stimuli*, represented by S in the triangle, and *response*, R. Vygotsky adds a factor X, which he describes as an "intermediate link … a second order stimulus (sign)" (Vygotsky 1978: 40), by which he means a culturally created tool. Hereby, Vygotsky creates a
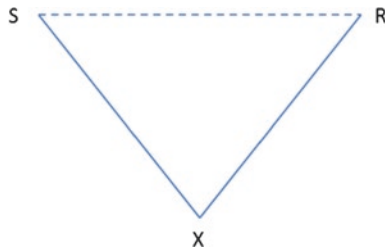
Fig. 4.1 Vygotsky's triangle of mediation (Source: Vygotsky 1978: 40)

representation of what he defines as "mediated action" (54). Humans are different from animals because they mediate their responses to stimuli by means of cultural tools, unlike the unmediated direct response found among animals. Because of mediation, human behaviour is strongly influenced by the social context in which the cultural tools are embedded. It is through mediated action that human beings create knowledge, and since mediated action is always situated in a social context, culture and cultural identity are also results from mediated action. It is worth noticing that Vygotsky developed his sociocultural theory in opposition to Piaget, and he refuted Piaget's developmental stage theory (Piaget 2008). Instead of describing children's development as a series of biologically preconditioned stages, Vygotsky views the development of the individual child as dependent on and driven by the social environment and cultural tools available within that environment. In particular, it is language that is the most important mediating tool for the child's cognitive and social development. Through language use, children gradually acquire abstract thinking, and through language, they are gradually socialized into the surrounding culture (Vygotsky 1999: 396). The fact that language use changes over time reflects social changes over time, since "the word represents things in the conscious mind" (400). There exists an inextricable relationship between the collective, socializing language and the development of the social capacity and of the cognitive development of an individual, according to Vygotsky. Our thoughts are created *in* and through the social language: "Thoughts are not expressed in words, but completed through the use of words" (406) and in the social activities with others within the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978: 84ff; 1999: 329ff). However, it is not a one-way process described here, not simply a question of how different individuals become culturally "civilized." Vygotsky (1995) always speaks in dialectic terms. It is part of human nature to use socially shaped tools in order to produce cultural products and thus also, over time, to reshape these cultural products, thereby contributing to innovations and new ideas (49) in a constant and continuous developmental process. Vygotsky thus defines human nature in terms of cultural activity. It is through mediation by the use of cultural tools and by the creation of new tools and new artefacts that we become human. Activity theory extends this sociocultural theory to encompass and emphasize contradictions and change over time within

complex and expanding social systems like organizations (Engeström 1987; Sanninio et al. 2009b: 13ff). In activity theory, there is an emphasis on social mediation, and it is primarily different aspects of the mediation that are described and specified within a model.

In activity theory, the *object* is considered to be the driving forces of all activity: "Activity theory is a theory of object-driven activity" (Engeström 2009: 304). *Subjects* in activity systems are engaged in different activities, and they are driven by an *object* of some kind, using *tools* aiming at achieving some overarching *outcome*. However, as stated earlier, there is a difference between Engeström and Leontief regarding their emphasis on individuals within the activity system. Leontief keeps (but extends) Vygotsky's focus on individual learners and thus views *object* from the perspective of persons; Engeström's focus is much broader, oriented towards the *systems* as learning entities.

According to Leontief (1978: 17ff.), "the object of an activity is its true motive." He separates *object* as a visual object, towards which the action is directed, from *motive*, a driving force, originating from within a person, a stimuli-driven *motive*, which drives a person to act in order to obtain some certain *outcome*. Behind the actions is a driving force, an intention or an emotion. The *motive* may be material or idealistic. It can exist in the real world or as fantasies or as concepts in somebody's thoughts (Leontief 1978). Leontief points specifically at the problems of depicting human activity in a theoretical representation. Such activities are not enclosed in specific entities or spaces but best described as complex processes, visual to the eye only in parts.
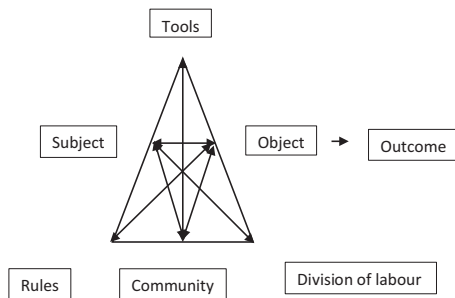
Fig. 4.2 Activity theory. Engeström's triangle of mediation (Source: Engeström 1996, vol. 3, p. 78.)

For example, assume that the *object* is (to catch) a fish and the *motive* is to appease hunger. The *motive* may lead to actions that are not necessarily directed towards the fish but still can be related to the *motive* of appeasing the *subject's* hunger as a final *outcome* (Leontief 1978: 17ff). There is some support for this interpretation in Engeström too. He describes *object* as "the central issue of activity theory" (Engeström et al. 1999: 31) and stresses that it is *object* that ties up the actions of the individual with the activities of the collective activity system: "the object…is what connects my individual actions to the collective activity." In this way, individual activities are accepted as contributing to and influencing the *outcome* of the entire activity system. In the project at hand, I have not discussed what effects the assignments may have on the activity system (the writing courses). The main focus in this study is the students' perspectives, sometimes in conflict with the activity system, and the results of the assignment in terms of learning *outcomes*.

The *subject* is part of a *community*. The way by which the *subject* makes use of the mediating *tools* available thus is affected by contextual factors, since the use of *tools* is always situated in some sort of social and collective context. However, *subjects* are also individuals with certain backgrounds— for example, an "autobiographical" writing "self" (Ivanič 1998: 24f), which has been shaped by people's previous experience (Ivanič 2006).

In the activity system, the way it has been interpreted here, *rules* mediate between *subject* and *community*, where *subject* expresses the individual aspect of the system and *community*, the collective aspect of it. Both aspects influence one another, since everything within the system affects everything else. The relationship between *subject* and *community* is also mediated by *division of labour*, a concept that regulates who does what with whom within the activity system, given its *object* and *motive*.

4.2   Learning

A collective action within an activity system will lead to changes and results of different kinds. In a context involving writing and "text," such changes can be linked to *learning* according to writing researcher David R. Russell (2009: 21): "[…] learning is viewed as change resulting from

expanding involvement with others over time, developmentally, in a system of social activity (activity system), mediated by *tools*, including texts, and practices." Russel describes learning as change, dependent on our ability as learners to participate in "expanding involvement" in activity systems. It is "over time" that the learning process "developmentally" takes place, as it becomes interwoven in the system, in complex learning patterns involving the use of mediating means. The learning processes will affect the system in its entirety as well as the different parts of it. For example, *subjects* will not be the same at the end of an activity as they were at the beginning. Russel emphasizes the particular impact of texts and text-related activities in the process of learning: "tools, including texts, and practices." This is particularly true for a writing course, where students mediate their learning by means of writing, and all the social practices link to the writing processes, such as producing texts and talking about the production of those texts as well as the texts themselves. Activity theory thus describes social learning and social change by and through actions within complex social activity systems, such as organizations.

Context not only surrounds writing activities but permeates them. Context should be viewed as relational, inseparable from the text: "Context [is]…relational…'the text'—what is going on—cannot be separated from 'the con'—what accompanies it" (Ivanič 2006: 8). This theoretical assumption supports the model for text analysis to be introduced in Sect. 5.1 in Chap. 5, as it suggests that context in text should be viewed from the perspective laid down in activity theory.

People are engaged with one another in a number of different contexts, and they also learn within these hybrids of systems and complex networks of relationships at the individual and collective level (Daniels 2010). It is through all these different engagements, over time, that individuals and activity systems change. This change can be described as "learning by expansion" (Russell 2009: 21). The development continues when people bring with them knowledge constructed in other systems into new activity system, which is the "transfer" (ibid.) process that will lead to change. Such changes do not take place without conflicts and contradictions, since individuals interpret activity systems differently. Russell (21f.) shows that a university course may in fact

consist of many different activity systems and that lecturers and students may have quite contrary *objects*, which of course can result in conflicts and resistance when it comes to course content and working with the assignments, for example. The differences in learning *outcome* between students in my data can be informed by such observations. (See Sect. 5.1.5 in Chap. 5.)

Some have described activity theory as a lens to zoom out to research complex systems or to zoom in, to observe individual subjects (Russell 2009: 20). A salient feature of the theory is that it is up to the analyst to decide the scope of the analysis. The triangle is empty, so to speak:

> The analyst constructs the activity system as if looking at it from above. At the same time, the analyst must select a subject, a member (or better yet, multiple different members) of the local activity, through whose eyes and interpretations the activity is constructed. (Engeström et al. 1999: 10)

By letting the lens zoom in on the activities of the creative writing course the way it has been conceptualized in the students' critical reflection texts, it becomes possible to analyse how the students, as writers of these texts, relate to the course and to all the different steps of the assignment as it unfolded during the course. Within the framework of the case studies in the project, the "multiple different members" of the activity system are represented by the students and the "local activity" is represented by the course they take (which I call [local] activity system). In the text-analytical model (Sect. 5.1 in Chap. 5), the students become writing *subject* and the collective of the course in creative writing *community*. Texts that students write can thus be seen as (writing) actions within the framework of the local activity system of a writing course. Since all *subjects* write texts, there will to be a diversity of perspectives and "interpretations" of the course that can be analysed through the model. This basic assumption, in turn, is supported by the hypothesis in critical discourse theory (Fairclough 1992) that texts are permeated by context. As a consequence of the fact that the production of the critical reflection text is situated and steeped in a certain environment, the texts can be construed as pictures, "snapshots" (Russell 2009), of the system of a writing course, the way the writer understands it, and at the same time a picture of the writer's learning trajectory within the *community* of that activity system.

4.3   Positions and Discoursal Identity

A point of departure in the following account is that learning is viewed as a process, situated in place and in time. To describe this process as it has been expressed in my data, a link is needed between the writing course and the writers' perceptions about their discoursal identities as writers. The text-analytical model introduced in Sect. 5.1 in Chap. 5 allows for such a link by its concept *subject*. In the model, *subject* is associated to expressions of social position[1] *in text*. In Chap. 5, *position* is discussed in terms of discoursal identity linked to activity theory, through the concept *subject*, to form a basis for the contruction of writers' positions within the framework of activity theory. Chap. 6.

The term "position" is used to describe how people not only create but also express their view of themselves in social contexts, so positions are always claimed in relation to others. In a writing context focusing on language, these positioning processes are frequently referred to as dialogical, a concept that can be traced back to the Russian linguist Michail Bachtin's theories about dialogism. According to these theories, it is through language and utterances in dialogue with the surrounding society that we construct our notions of self (Bachtin 1986: 65). In the case study, I interpreted the term "position" as a negotiation, where writers use whatever resources that are available to them in order to claim a certain discoursal identity by using the resources in their texts. Thus, social identity is constructed in a number of ways, one being by means of writing, thereby creating a discoursal identity through text. Individuals consciously strive towards or away from different social positions in their writing. They renegotiate their discoursal identity through the texts they write (Burgess and Ivanič 2010: 232; Ivanič 1998). Within conversation analysis (Linell 2011: 180f.), a similar definition of identity linked to position is used. I have found it useful to relate the meaning of *subject* in the text-analytical model to ideas about social position and discoursal identity within the larger framework of an organization. The Swedish linguist Per Linell (Linell 2011) underlines that there is a similarity between identity and social role. Both notions are readily transferable across a number of social contexts in a wider sense than the immediate, very local actions between people engaged in the "here and now" of conversations, for example,

where of course identity work may go on. However, at the macro level, such conversations form part of actions in activity systems, such as a course in creative writing at a university, and they are influenced by, and influence, these systems, according to activity theory (Engeström 1987). Within the writing environment that I researched, the external social reality outside the course has a strong influence, which is manifested in a number of rather stable social roles and positions that students express that they are motivated to achieve, such as the role of professional author or journalist. Within the academic setting of the course, there are other identities and roles, such as those of student and lecturer, established through administrative rules and social practices. Also, at a local, micro level, there are the discoursal identities expressed through the texts that the students write. However, these identities cannot be viewed as stable but rather as temporary constructs influenced by the writers' previous experiences of writing and of writers that have formed and form their autobiographical selves. Positions,[2] or patterns of position (Linell 2011: 179) that I have found in the data, thus have to be interpreted as fluctuating and shifting social ones, similar to different perspectives or stances that people may embrace or try out in social interaction.

It is within the British research field called New Literacy Studies that Ivanič has contributed to new insights and findings about the connection between *writing* and identity. She has specialized in writing research within vocational educational settings, such as training for the catering and restaurant professions. The major data on which the writing research in this project is based, however, was collected from a basic, one-term course in creative writing at a Swedish university, and there are no vocational learning objectives in its description. (See also Chap. 8 for the follow-up study and Chap. 9 for an extended discussion about the impact of context and discoursal identity on learning outcomes.) Still, I have found theories about identity, and discoursal identity in particular, to be of significant importance analytically in the interpretations of the data. (It also informs how I have linked *subject* to the writer of a text in the text-analytical model in Chap. 5.)

A person's discoursal identity does not only play an important part in learning processes during periods of education. Someone's perception of *discoursal self*, to a high degree, also forms that person's entire sense of

identity (Ivanič 1998: 23ff.). Discoursal self is one of four different ways by which discoursal identity is expressed:

> A writer's "discoursal self" is the impression—often multiple, sometimes contradictory—which they consciously or unconsciously conveys [sic] of themself [sic] in a particular written text. I have called this aspect of identity "discoursal" because it is constructed through the discourse characteristics of a text, which relate to values, beliefs and power relations in the social context in which they were written. (25)

In other words, discoursal self is the way that identity is expressed in a text. In addition, there are three more aspects of discoursal self. One is *self as author*, which is how strongly the writer claims a certain authority, or persona, by which readers may attribute a certain ethos to her (89ff.). The writer's persona in the text will be tainted by previous experience, by the writer's *autobiographical self*, and this in turn will influence to what extent the writer claims authority in the text. Finally, there is an aspect to discoursal identity that relates it to the world outside of the text and to what *possibilities for selfhood* are available to the writer in the social environment (24). What are the possibilities for the writer to attribute to herself some social position that comes with writing, such as author, or academic researcher, or journalist, for example? Such possibilities for selfhood are of course always linked to different social contexts, but also to performance criteria of various kinds. It is all these different aspects in combination that Ivanič defines as discoursal identity, and that is the definition used here.

Used as a heuristic tool, activity theory can offer a framework to cast light on identification and learning processes (Ivanič 2006: 8).[3] By underlining the importance of the social environment, by social practices and semiotic resources available within systems of social activity, complex, contextual patterns that influence learning can be theorized. Ivanič puts actions, "doing," and learning within the context of an activity system (Fig. 4.3). In Fig. 4.3 (cf. Fairclough 1992), the activity system is surrounded by two frames. One frame is next to the system and represents practices, genres, and discourses that permeate the system. The other frame represents power relations, values, and beliefs found outside

of the system but also within it since these relations influence the practices of the first frame. The figure thus illustrates the influence of social context on learning activities as well as the influence on such activities from historically established power relations and cultural values with which they are imbued. Also implied in Fig. 4.3 is the idea that individual actions as well as entire activity systems have an impact on the surrounding context, which will lead to contradictions and eventually to change over time. (See Engeström 2001 on historicity.) Perceptions of identity are influenced by such complex circumstances. Also, in the case of learning through writing, the figure shows the central role of *doing* in order to learn. In the figure, doing and learning are inseparable actions, placed in the centre of the framework of the activity system and linked to practices, genre, and discourses. (See Russell 2009: 24 about genre.)

As illustrated in Fig. 4.3, entire activity systems, such as a university course, are permeated by power relations, values, practices, discourses, and the like. Individual students are involved in identification processes while learning within these systems. Their perceptions about social and discoursal identity are embedded within their actions in the discoursal
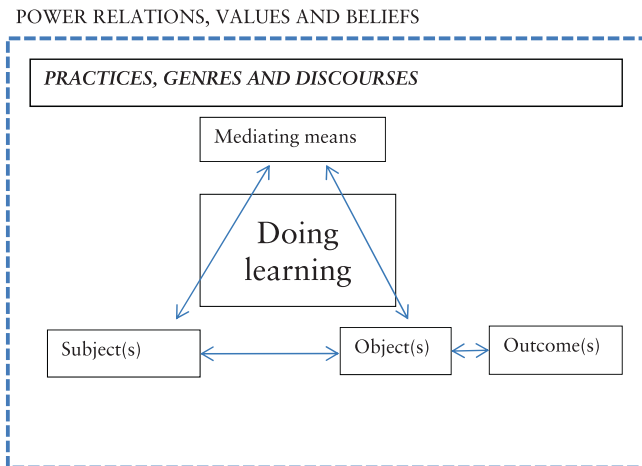
Fig. 4.3 The elements of a social activity located in a sociocultural-historical context (Source: Ivanič 2006: 10)

practices within the systems. These actions will gradually become internalized and form part of the *subject's* ideas about identity, which thus is shaped through the learning process of (discursive) activities. The practices, genres, and discourses become mediating tools between the *subjects* and the activity system. Viewed this way, activity theory intertwines people's social, discoursal practices within activity systems as well as with their sense of identity. *Learning* is inseparable from discoursal *doing* and *becoming* (a discoursal self). Thus, completely new links can be established among activity theory, discoursal identity, identification, and learning. Activity theory as a truly social constructivist theory of action may serve as a *tool* to analyse writing activities, since it can explain internalized ideas of identity as emerging from discursive actions within activity systems (Ivanič 2006: 11). When activity theory is linked to theories about writing, a much more complex description of the writer and of writing in context is possible, as the context can be specified and looked into by means of the theory.

Ivanič (2006: 21) suggests *identification* as the key word for learning, since all learning is based on identification processes "in language learning and in transformation of practices across contexts" (7). It is someone's wish or desire to identify with a category of people who engage themselves in certain social activities that will decide what the learning *outcome* for that someone will be. It is when the learning *subjects* make the activities their "own" by "taking ownership of the activity" (21) and become "actors with agency" (11) that learning will occur. (Cf. to create space to act in Linell 2011: 90.[4]) All of this takes place within context-specific social practices that can be theorized as actions in activity systems, where people keep changing the systems, and, simultaneously, they themselves will change. Identity work is thus a complex activity, and it can be summed up as (1) relational, (2) discoursally constructed by (a) *address*, which is how others talk *to* us; (b) *attribution*, which is how others talk *about* us; and (c) *affiliation*, which is how we, as subjects, choose to talk like others. Finally, identity can be defined as (3) a process rather than a property, that (4) is networked and (5) constantly reconstructed. (Ivanič 2006: 11ff.).

To a high degree, in a course in creative writing, identity depends on different texts that the writers produce and then discuss in groups,

discussions that, of course, will give rise to new expressions of discoursal identities. One aspect of forming identity is linked to what the subject wants and communicates to others. Another aspect is which of these signals others actually take up and accept (Ivanič 2006: 12),and in particular the way the signals present themselves expressed in the pages of a text—in other words, how a writer's authorial self comes out in a written product. The discoursal identities of the course participants can be interpreted, in part, as a relationship between *possibilities for selfhood* available in society outside of the course and accessibility of these possibilities through certain types of writing. Since identity is viewed as constructed in dialogue with other people in a number of different social contexts, writers are likely to bring a number of different identities from contexts outside of the course in creative writing, for example, and these identities will affect how they experience the various activities in the course. The participants also use their previous writing experience, their autobiographical selves, to express who they are as writers, and other participants interpret and influence these expressions. In order to analyse discoursal identity and how such identities influence learning through writing, which is the focus here, this relational definition of identity is a basic theoretical underpinning of the study (Ivanič 2006: 13).

The text is the site where the writer's affiliation is created and expressed. It is through the text that the writer chooses to talk like others by favouring certain discourses and rejecting others. The writer's autobiographical self will have an impact on what discoursal choices the writer is likely to make (Ivanič 1998: 31; 2006). In addition, personal choices will be under the influence of prototypical social writing identities available in the surrounding sociocultural context (Ivanič 1998: 79ff.). As we write, we imitate and reproduce, or challenge, existing discoursal practices and ideologies that these practices represent. Writing becomes an act of identity (ibid.), the way we create and express our sense of self. It is discoursal choices that reveal what identities we wish to expose, by means of affiliation to certain ways of writing, "how we talk like others" (Ivanič 2006: 13). In other words, through our writing, we reveal our relationships to possible, prototypical choices available within certain literary practices

(Barton 1994; Ivanič 1998: 68). A writer's affiliation, then, can be analysed by studying the discoursal choices a writer has made in a text.

Texts also reveal our previous experience of engaging in different discoursal practices. Our familiarity with different discoursal choices will clearly show in our writing, and literary writing is no exception in this regard, of course. In a learning situation, this aspect of writing becomes particularly interesting, as the writer finds herself in a state of learning, and may be eager to learn, since:

> [...] someone cannot engage in a Discourse[5] in a less than fully fluent manner. You are either in it or you're not. Discourses are connected with displays of an identity failing to display an identity fully is tantamount to announcing you do not have that identity—at best you are a pretender or a beginner. (Gee 1990: 155)

Ivanič finds that there is an "urge" (motive in activity theory) to imitate in order to establish affiliation by *attribution*: how others talk about us as writers depends on the impressions readers get from reading the text. Imitation "to display" seems to be an ongoing process in learning to write. Display is "doing" (Fig. 4.3), actions in which writers are actively engaged, and the actions are clearly linked to processes of identification, manifesting themselves in the text or in the textualization process. However, creating a discoursal identity also depends on how others talk *to* you, by "address." For example, if the lecturer starts to discuss course literature and examinations ahead, the identity of the writer will be that of a student who is about to be evaluated and assessed. When, for example, a student gets feedback on a text during a course, the same identification processes are activated, and the readers' address becomes very important to the writers. Address is the one factor that has an influence on all the course activities and that very strongly influences the processes of identification (Ivanič 1998).

In all, this discussion sums up the foundations of the discoursal construction of identity that Ivanič refers to and that I have used as a starting point for creating the link between *subject* in the text-analytical model and the writer's discoursal identity.

4.4 The Construction of Discoursal Identity Through Writing

In order to account for signs of *learning* in a critical reflection text, I have looked for a theory that allows for representations of the learner and of the system within which learning takes place. These requirements are met within the framework of activity theory, when its concepts are reframed as a model for text analysis. (See Fig. 5.1 in Chap. 5.) Activity theory provides concepts for individual as well as organizational aspects of learning, but it is intended to describe learning at the organization level rather than to account for the learning processes of individual learners. However, the way I have used the theory here is to forge a heuristic *tool* based on activity theory as a way to map learning trajectories expressed in texts. The focus is on writers as learners, not on the organization (and of course not on the specific individuals who provided the data for analysis).

Since issues of identity are at the core of learning processes involving writing, it has been necessary to create a theoretical link between the discoursal identity of writers, as individuals in the process of learning, and the concept *subject* in the text-analytical model. By creating such a link, the model can be used as a tool for text analysis. (See Chaps. 6, 7, and 8.) Within activity theory, the term "subject," not "identity," is used. The notion of *subject* is complex, and for it to serve text-analytical purposes, it is linked to expressions in a text of the writer's perspective of engaging in writing. Ivanič (2006: 11f.) emphasizes the difference between *subject* and subject *to*. *Subject* represents an individual with agency, someone who has the capacity to act with intention, *motive*. Subject *to*, in contrast, signals a lack of agency, being subject to the agency and motives of other people and of organizations. Identity may in fact be interpreted as the result of a negotiation between *subject* and subject *to*. There will be certain social positions available for the writer, and the writer will have various ideas and knowledge about these positions depending on previous experiences—what Ivanič calls the writer's autobiographical self. As writers progress in their learning process, they may challenge these social positions. That way new *motives* for new actions will emerge, and repositions of writing identities will result. However, within an activity system, there will always be circumstances and other *subjects* with different *motives*

and *objects* to which the writer must relate. Viewed this way, and linked to the two aspects of agency, *subject* and subject *to*, learning is a constant process of negotiations about identities, intimately linked to social position and in constant flux (Ivanič 2006). In this project, there is an emphasis on *discoursal* aspects of identity, tightly linked to writing and to how I have interpreted the results found in the data. For example, many students write that they *want* different things, that they have intentions with their narrative text that can be associated with identification processes. Expressions of intention are often linked to thoughts about stylistic choices in the narratives:

1 Intention as a sign of the writer's discoursal self

First of all, I wanted to sculpt the portrait of a single mother […], so, although the perspective was somebody else's, I still wanted the main character to be in focus. (Siri)

The writer's intention in example (1) is strong, emphasized by an argument: "First of all, I wanted to … so, although … I still wanted to." Writing is linked to artistic, creative work: "to sculpt." Siri also mentions the importance of choosing the perspective of the narrative: "the main character to be in focus." The writer's intention in (1) is expressed in a creative writing discourse, thus connecting the act of writing to ideas about a discoursal writing identity as a literary author of novels or short stories who makes artistic choices about style. Such themes in the critical reflection texts may focus quite explicitly on thoughts about writing as a profession and a possible future personal career:

2 Expressions of identification

Perhaps I'm a bit scared. What if I discover that it's impossible for an author to work and to think like that? (Ida)

Some students in the data use the word "author" and relate their thoughts to a professional authorship, like Ida in example (2). She reflects on the implications writing narrative texts will have on her writing identity. She is afraid, "a bit scared," that she has just discovered a mismatch between what

she previously thought about authors and what she now starts to understand differently. It seems to dawn on Ida that things she did and decisions she made in her writing previously may not align with actions taken by professional writers. Her ideas of what professional authors do may in fact have been misconceptions: "What if…it's impossible…to work and to think like that?" It seems that ideas that Ida brought to the course through her autobiographical self are now put under scrutiny, as she discovers that she probably has to change how she works and thinks if she is to change her discoursal identity in the future. Thus, a new understanding of what it means to be a writer or an author is illustrated in example (2). The shift in perspective is profound at an individual level, since it brings with it possibilities for completely new ways for students to reorient their understanding of what it means to write. Much of my data highlights issues related to this type of identity work. Ideas about what it means to write are closely connected to what it means to enact a certain discoursal identity and to what right the writer has to claim such an identity.

As I mentioned earlier, identity is a complex phenomenon, which can come about only in the social interplay with other people (Goffman 1959 in Ivanič 2006: 12f.). Ivanič (13) particularly emphasizes that identity is best understood as progress or as an activity rather than as a fixed state of mind. She suggests the idea of identity as an ongoing process over time. Viewed that way, the question arises as to when a person's identity actually is constructed. This moment of recognition of somebody's identity, *the moment of uptake* (ibid.), is the point at which it is decided whether the social environment will accept a claim of identity or not. In a writer's world, it is the point where the reader decides whether the writer, through the text, is: […] either in it or […] not" (Gee 1990: 155), as the British linguist James Paul Gee bluntly puts it, pointing at the fact that the decision about acceptance or rejection depends on whether the writer actually succeeds in demonstrating sufficient skill in the writing through the text or not.

From the writer's point of view, the reader is basically a construct built on the writer's ideas about a perceived model reader (See Sect. "Discourse of Uptake" in Chap. 5) and the writer's desire to be read in order to be talked about by others in a certain way (Ivanič 2006: 13). The writer thus casts a certain "sideward glance" (Bachtin 1991: 220ff.) at an imagined,

model reader of the text. That way, the learning that takes place while writing becomes relational and is enacted through linguistic choices during the actual process of writing. Learning through writing depends on an act of identification with a certain writer being read and accepted by a certain reader. Identity thus is better understood as a verb and an ongoing process than as a noun. The aspect of action associated with verbs releases the concept from notions of permanence, whereas identity as a noun makes for an undesired static understanding of learning through identification. The subject as learner is interested in certain social (writing) identities and imitates them and tries them out in a process of identification linked to writing within certain discoursal, textual frames. *Affiliation* and identity become performative concepts, viewed this way.

4.4.1   Creating Identity Through Writing—An Example

In what follows, I discuss one particular critical reflection text by one writer to illustrate the link between discoursal identity and *subject,* thereby specifying what is intended by *subject* in the text-analytical model. I draw on Ivanič (2006) in what follows, in order to show how the data in this study has been interpreted in terms of prototypical discoursal identities and as learning profiles, *subjects*, within an activity system. (See Chaps. 6 and 8.) The discussion of the example is based on a comparison to an analysis of a student's learning trajectory presented in *Language Learning and Identification* (ibid.), where Ivanič discusses identity, identification, and learning a profession. I found her approach interesting because it illustrates an overarching perspective on learning. Therefore, I have replaced Ivanič's example (an interview with a student at a trainee restaurant) with a reflection text written by a student in the course in creative writing as a way to illustrate how learning manifests itself in *texts*. The example represents patterns of identification processes at a textual level that I have found throughout my data consisting of reflection texts. My hypothesis is that the *text* is an arena where the negotiation between *subject* and subject *to* becomes manifest, revealing what learning takes place when a writer writes a text within the *community* of a course in writing, as the case is here. The example that follows illustrates the tight link that I have

found in my data among learning, identification, and (personal) *motive*. Writing gives rise to identification processes that can be analysed as patterns traceable in text. Eric, a 20-year-old student from the course in creative writing, is an example. How Eric expresses his discoursal identification process is illustrated in example 3a–d.

3 a–d Identification through writing

> (3a) During the weeks that we have been working with these assignments, it feels as if we now have a better understanding of how to solve problems. You can look at a problem in different ways, and by choosing different solutions to the problem, you can reach different goals as an author. (Eric)

In (3a), Eric says that his objective (*object* in activity theory) during the period at hand has been to work "with these assignments," by which he refers to writing a narrative text about a moral dilemma, "a problem." Eric probably refers to a number of different narrative examples that he has come across while reading and discussing texts with the other students when he concludes that "You can look at a problem in different ways, and by choosing different solutions to the problem…". This work has resulted in various solutions to the dilemma and different possible perspectives on how to view the moral "problem." Eric links these different perspectives to his working *object*, which is to write narrative texts. The fact that his work has generated "a better understanding" is connected to a writer's need "to solve problems" of a textual nature. For Eric, then, focus is on his development as a writer, not on the social implications of the dilemma he and the other students have written about. However, Eric also has personal *motives* for writing. The final part of the example in (3a) is oriented towards the writer's personal *motive*, that is to say towards the driving force that Leontief says is a basic prerequisite for people to act and show evidence of subjective agency or motivation (Kaptelinin 2005: 10f.). For Eric, his *motive* is associated to questions of authorship. To him, "different solutions" (to the dilemma) become *tools* to "reach different goals as an author." This statement can be interpreted as a sign of transition of identity. Eric wants to work with his text in order to change position from that of an amateur to an accomplished author.

Regardless, the issue of identity—in this case the ability to claim the right to attribute to oneself a desired discoursal identity—is a driving force, a *motive*, for Eric to work with the assignment. As his text unfolds, he seems to realize that there are more aspects to consider when writing a narrative than the main character:

> (3b) I have started to think about that you need to turn a situation upside down, twist it inside out. How solutions will affect those characters that you don't think so much about while you're buzzy writing about the main character. (Eric)

Eric describes what happens to his thoughts during the writing process in (3b). He reflects about all the perspective changes he has made while writing the assignment, that it forced him to "turn a situation…inside out." This work seems to have given him food for new thoughts about the narrative he has written. He starts to see "those characters that you don't think…about while…writing about the main character." This seems to come as a new insight to Eric, as a discovery he makes while writing and changing perspectives in the process. Also, the new insights seem to extend beyond the text, in the reception discourse about the real readers. In the next sentences Eric writes:

> (3c) I have also started to think about to whom you write. In these texts, I first wrote to myself basically. I then realized that if you do, there's a risk that the text will become a bit boring in a way. Uneventful, at least to me. I just added and added new stuff to the plot, but I didn't write anything about feelings, since *I* knew what the characters felt, but of course nobody else can know. (Eric)

Through the changes of perspective generated by the assignment, the dialogical nature of text seems to become clear to Eric as in (3c) he begins "to think about to whom you write." In this quotation, he concludes that just as there are other perspectives than that of the main character in a narrative, a text can be viewed from other perspectives than that of the writer. The quotation thus illustrates how Eric changes perspective and sees his text in the light of a model reader. In that way, he manages to see that

his writing was monologic, "I…wrote to myself basically," and that the result of such writing is undesirable, "the text will become a bit boring in a way." A reason for this is that he has only paid attention to his own needs when he "just added and added new stuff to the plot." To him, information about emotions was unnecessary, as he already "knew what the characters felt." Through the assignment, though, he can conclude that "of course nobody else can know," which comes as a new insight to him. The similarity between Eric's statement about his initial focus on the main character in his story and his focus on the main "character" of the writing situation, himself, is striking. To become aware of possible perspectives other than those of the main character in the narrative seems to change Eric's understanding of narrative text. But more importantly, in the development of thinking through writing, to imagine readers other than oneself seems to change the perception of writing as monologic to writing as social. Being an "author" of texts that others will read is different from being the writer of diary-like narratives intended for one's own private reading only. In quotations (3a), (3b), and (3c), an emotional process through writing is exemplified, and it results in critical metareflection. Signs of emotion in the writing process are mirrored in verbs such as "feels" (in 3a), and cognitive aspects of writing are expressed in verbs such as "think" (3b) and "realized" (3c). Eric sees that there are more characters than the main character to think about when writing a narrative, and there are more readers of the text than himself. These factors have a decisive impact on what will be accepted as a good text, not "boring," like the one Eric initially wrote. Eric thus understands that for a narrative text to be of value for other people than himself, it needs to be constructed in dialogue together with a reader outside of the text, something that he has only now "started to think about."

It may be that Eric's *motive* drove his change of perspective. He wanted to be viewed by others as an author. Perhaps the readers of his narrative did not react to his text the way he had intended and he therefore was forced to realize that his *projected self* (Ivanič 2006: 19) as a writer was rejected. The reason for this rejection can be found in the text, which, according to Eric, lacks in quality, since it is "boring" and "uneventful." But regardless of *motive*, Eric de facto changes perspective through the

assignment and seems to get a new and deeper insight into his writing. It becomes more complex, and illustrates the change that comes with "expanding involvement with others over time, developmentally, in a system of social activity (activity system), mediated by tools, including texts, and practices" (Russell 2009: 21). Examples 3a–d thus show the process called *learning through expansion* (Engeström 2001: 13f.; Sanninio et al. 2009a: xii) in a text. Eric has chosen certain solutions that he liked at first or, to put it differently, that he was familiar with and that he wanted to imitate and display. However, he notices that that his choices apparently did not go down well with his readers at the moment of uptake (Ivanič 2006: 13) when they decide on whether he can ascribe to himself the identity of a good writer. Eric discovers that his identity as a writer is relational, decided in a negotiation process with readers. Through the changes of perspective and the writing process, he can now draw conclusions about his writing that he has never previously thought about:

> (3d) This assignment was thought provoking from beginning to end. It kept changing, and it gave me lanterns allowing me to see new things in my own writing, over and over again. Things that I haven't thought about before. Which is very good if you want to develop. Which is what I always want. (Eric)

Eric's wish in this last quotation (3d) to develop can be viewed in terms of learning as an identification process. Initially he hosted a romantic idea about writing as an act of a creative genius, a loner with an innate talent who simply jots down fantastic texts (as Eric seems to have done in his first version of the narrative assignment). This view has changed to become more complex and dialogical by the end of the assignment. Thus, a change of perspective has taken place and a critical, self-reflective stance has emerged. By involving himself with the other students in the creative writing course, Eric acquires insights about perspectives in a general sense, which allow him "to see new things in my own writing, over and over again. Things that I haven't thought about before." One such thing seems to be the important insight about how discoursal identity is created. The idea that the discoursal identity of author is the result of a social process

involving the reader, who in fact holds power over what the writer may call himself, is new to Eric. It is at the moment of uptake that Eric's discoursal identity will be established. In order for him to call himself a writer, or author, or for other people to address him as such, he needs to speak as one, through his texts. His striving for a certain identity thus automatically opens up questions about talent or skill. He seems prepared to make an effort to improve his writing in order to be talked about by others as a good writer. If doing this requires being able to see his texts from the reader's point of view, Eric will be interested in learning how to do that. Doing so in turn will probably change his view on what (work) *objects* to prioritize—for example, to sketch more complex portraits of all the different characters in his narratives, not only the main one. Very likely, his *motive* for writing will change too, at least in regard to what it means to write like the writer or author that he wants to be or become. These insights will influence his desire to act in ways that are new to him, according to what he says in example 3d that change is necessary "if you want to develop. Which…I always want." In this way, the critical reflection text and the perspective changes that take place within it mirror the process of change that individuals go through when they get involved with the process of developing their discoursal identity within the activity system of a course in creative writing. The text lays bare a negotiation process between the writer, *subject,* and the social environment, *community,* visible in the narrative and in the critical reflection texts. The writer asks if he is a good enough writer to ascribe to himself the discoursal identity of author. And the answer can be found only in the social context around the text, through the responses to the text presented from members in the writing group (and the lecturer).

In her article Ivanič (2006) also shows how identity is networked in a way that is directly transferrable onto the example of Eric in the course in creative writing. (See Ivanič 2006: 23f for an exact comparison of her example and this one.) The identity that Eric has created within the creative writing course is just one of a great number of identities available to him through all the different activity systems that he is part of. Perhaps Eric, like Ivanič's student, takes courses in cooking or knitting. Perhaps he is a parent, or a piano player. His identities are networked in two ways.

First, what he "is" in the course in creative writing is only a part of what he "is," since his entire identity was constructed and continues to be constructed from discoursal selves (Ivanič 1998: 23ff) in relation to other complex networks. Second, he brings with him his autobiographical self, everything he is through his previous experience from actions in other activity systems. As he enters the activity system of the creative writing course and starts interacting in it, he will also have some impact on it. All the students who are involved in an activity—for example, a course in creative writing—are in this way both *subject*, in terms of agents with a capacity to act and influence the context in which they interact, and subject *to*, exposed to the influence of other *subjects* who form part of the activity systems. We cannot know if Eric's development will expand to his identities outside of the course context, outside of the activity system of the creative writing course. All such expansion depends on what other contexts Eric is active within and what other identities he has there.

There is also a time perspective. (See Engeström 2001: 136 about the function of time and history in activity systems; Burgess and Ivanič 2010). Everyone and everything that form part of an activity system have a history, as indeed has the activity system itself. People bring their experiences and their expectations that have been formed in the past. They bring them into existing systems where there are *rules* that regulate actions and *division of labour*, which also affect power relations. All these factors affect the activity system but are at the same time affected by it, so that, over time, changes in people's actions as well as in people themselves, *and* within the activity systems, will occur. Perspectives will change, and with these changes opportunities for personal growth will occur (Ivanič 2006: 24). The results of the analysis of the data in this book point in this direction.

In her research into the relationship between writing and identity, Ivanič (1998: 24f.) describes how students need to challenge what they perceive as their autobiographical selves as they face new challenges when they take their first steps in their academic writing careers. They try out and create new discoursal identities through their academic writing. It is in the very process of writing that these identities are confirmed and renegotiated, and as these writers meet the reactions of readers, negotiations continue. As we could see in the example with Eric, not only does

the reader evaluate the text, but she also confirms (or rejects) the discoursal identity that the writer wishes to attribute to himself (33). Ivanič shows that discoursal identity is linked to learning in a particular context. This context in turn can be described as the activity system within which learning is mediated through identification processes linked to writing. Within the framework of such a system, the writer can be viewed as *subject*, since she participates as a subject in the activity system through acts of writing (and other actions) within the system, and as a writer with a certain discoursal identity. Through this theoretical lens, it becomes clear that the idea of discoursal identity is intimately connected to the activity systems that generate reasons for writing in the first place (Ivanič 2006: 25ff.) In the critical reflection texts in my data, a picture of texts as sites of struggle (Ivanič 1998: 331f.) emerges, where writers such as Eric try out what identities they wish to affiliate with and what identities they are uninterested in:

> Writers creatively recombine the discoursal resources at their disposal in order to construct the unique discoursal self which they present in their writing. These creative re-combinations contribute towards discoursal change and hence new possibilities for self-hood in the future. (Ivanič 1998: 329)

The examples discussed in this Chapter have shown that it is necessary to consider the idea of discoursal identity and negotiations of identity to understand what learning takes place in the course of working with the writing assignment. Learning is linked to negotiations between the writer and the surrounding context, not only for a writer like Eric, but for all the writers studied. The text thus becomes a tool that makes it possible to store acts of writing. Simultaneously, texts become maps or protocols that mirror how the writer perceives negotiations with the context of the surrounding activity system. The examples in this chapter show that since the negotiations are visible in texts, they become accessible for text analysis. Text, then, becomes a discoursal map that can show learning through expansion as well as contradictions and tensions within the activity system.

4.5   Summary

This Chapter provides a theoretical ground for a text-analytical model introduced in Chap. 5. It was necessary to bring in the idea of discoursal identity and negotiations of identity to understand what learning takes place in the course of working with creative writing for critical thinking. In order to trace learning in texts, an analytical model inspired by activity theory has been constructed. It is a context theory originating in organizational psychology, used for the analysis and interpretation of human action. An extended example illustrated the way discoursal identity can play out in a text. This example, in turn, forms a basis for the presentation of writers' positions in Chap. 6.

Notes

1. *Discoursal identity* originates from Gee (1990) and Goffman (1959 in Ivanič 1998: 22f.). The concept emphasizes the agency of individual people. Individuals are not determined by fate or by repressive social structures to give in to submissiveness. Instead they can "[…] react to the alternatives available to them, what Billig calls 'argumentation' […]. It is essential to theorize the role of 'the individual' because of the existence of alternatives […]." It is thus the dynamic relationship between an individual person and the collective, such as an organization at group level, that is in focus in the quotation. This is precisely what I intend to describe in the textual analyses in the project. Therefore, it is useful to restrict the term "position" to writing processes and writing contexts (Ivanič 1998), which is how the term has been used here.
2. In a study of educational writing, the Norwegian writing researcher Jon Smidt (2002) uses the term "position" as a way to study negotiations about writing between pupils and the teacher. Smidt also defines "position" in a somewhat more restricted sense, as positions *within* someone's discoursal self, that is to say, the signs of discoursal self that can be found in a text and that Smidt (424) calls *discoursal role*.
3. In Sects. 4.3 and 4.4, I draw from Ivanič's enlightening article from 2006.
4. Linell's definition of the term "agency" reads: "No activity type [a term from Linell's conversation analysis] entirely encompasses its own meaning;

circumstances not immediately tied to the [conversational] activity at hand affect meaning. In particular, the specific interlocutors engaged in the conversation, and their agency, contribute to meaning making. Agency is defined as the capability to act independently, and on one's own initiative, be it as an individual or at group level. It is a capability to choose what actions to take, and to assume responsibility for the choices. Even the most trivial and routine-like activities of everyday practices are actively reiterated, at given instances, always with some little variation that calls for agency" (Linell 2011: 90, my translation).

5. Gee (2008: 3.f, 155ff.), Gee writes Discourse with a capital D to represent discourses that permeate visions and imagination at macrocultural levels.

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5

Text as a Site of Negotiation: A Model for Text Analysis

How can texts serve as sites of negotiation about learning and identity work? This chapter presents an attempt to trace and describe how learning is negotiated between the learning environment and the learner. The way this process is constructed in a reflection text is explained in a model for text analysis, adjusting the concepts from activity theory into a text-analytical framework. The chapter also presents the text-analytical approaches that have been applied to operationalize the concepts in the model.

I have developed a model for text analyses that makes it possible to research and describe learning in terms of social meaning making through textualization processes, situated in a specific context. The model mirrors concepts and ideas from activity theory (see Chap. 4) as well as theoretical assumptions found in discourse analysis. One such basic assumption is that a text always has a social purpose and address, in the sense that it is directed towards a reader for a reason. The social context is thus always manifest in the text. For example, by placing a text in the framework of the text-analytical model, the concepts from activity theory can serve to describe and explain learning *outcomes* found in texts written in an educational context. Here I use the model to map differences in the data and to facilitate an understanding of my results as an effect of social meaning making through textualization.

The model visualizes text as a site of negotiation. The textual anchoring of the various concepts in the model has been developed by application of different text analyses of the critical reflection texts written by students in the case study. The model reflects the writer's perspective when confronted with that of the university. It describes the impact of identification processes while writing to learn. (See Chap. 4.) The model constructs a zone where the subjective agency of the writer is confronted with demands and expectations of the collective *community* of the course (and also of the university). In the case study, to a high degree, *community* is situated in the course context, and ideas about what *community* means to the writers, will be expressed in their critical reflection texts.

This chapter introduces the model and its concepts in Sect. 5.1, discusses the ideological view on text, on which the model is based, in Sect. 5.2, and presents an analysis of the text underpinning the model in Sect. 5.3.

5.1 The Textanalytical Model

The model for textual analysis that I have developed is based on a theory of organization, activity theory, originating in the sociocultural tradition (socio*historical*, to be in exact alignment with the tradition from Vygotsky). Activity theory describes activities within a certain situated practice (Engeström 1987, 1996, 2009), as explained in Chap. 4. In the context of this case study, activity theory serves as a point of departure for mapping the link between the organizational context in which the assignments and the writing are situated and the context found in the critical reflection texts produced by the students. That way, whatever learning that takes place within the textualization processes becomes accessible for analysis, as learning through writing can be studied through the lens offered by the concepts. However, in this study, focus is on context *expressed in text*. In the critical reflection texts, the students are free to reflect about all the different aspects of the writing assignment. Thus, it becomes possible to see what the students as writers conceptualize as worthwhile *doing* in the act of writing the texts and how students, at the textual level, work with critical metareflection

in the textualization process. The text-analytical model serves as a way to use concepts from activity theory as a resource for analysing the context within the text. Context is defined as a relational phenomenon, impossible to separate from the text, and it is the link to learning that is highlighted (Ivanič 2006: 8) through the interpretation of activity theory as text oriented. I wish to emphasize (as does Ivanič) that I have used activity theory as a heuristic. I have no intention of developing the concepts of the theory but aim to make them accessible as a framework for discussion of other theories linked to learning (such as writing theories).

As mentioned previously, although concepts that refer to the collective level of the activity system are included in the text-analytical model, the emphasis is on writers, not on broad perspectives, such as changes of entire activity systems. For example, *subject* in the model should be viewed in terms of writers' discoursal identity in connection to their learning through writing within an academic organization as stated in Chap 4 (Gee 2001; Ivanič 1998).

The text-analytical model in Fig. 5.1 shows how the concepts from activity theory are interrelated with one another and linked to the functions that they fill in texts. The relationships between the concepts were explained in Chap. 4. They remain the same when applied to intertextual relationships, for explicating contextual circumstances as accounted for in activity theory, and through basic assumptions from discourse theory, as referred to earlier. However, in order to operationalize the concepts for analytical purposes, they need to be paired up with text-analytical notions, which are presented next.

Subject refers to expressions in the text that construct the writer's discoursal identity. *Tools* refers to recontextualizations manifest in the text. *Object* is represented by areas of interest or attention towards which the writer focuses her work, and *motives* are sections in the text that may be understood as expressions of a possible driving force steering towards the (work) *object* (based on Leontief 1978). *Community* refers to different contextual levels of the text, whereas *rules* and *division of labour* refer to textual expressions of the relationship between *subject* and *community*. *Outcome* refers to the interpretation of what learning outcome is expressed in the text and what possible conflicts the text expresses regarding the

Tools Recontextualizations in the text.

Outcome Textual expressions of critical meta-reflection.

Object/Motive Textual expressions of the *subject's object* and *motive*.

Division of labour Textual expressions of who does what, given the *objects* and *motives* constructed in the text.

Subject Textual expressions of the writer's discoursal identity.

Community

Social orientation of the text
Subjective/individual,
Local group frame,
Local course frame,
Collective academic frame,
Collective societal frame.

Themes
Discoursal identity,
The response group,
The seminar group,
The University,
The dilemma, Activity systems outside of the academy.

Rules Textual expressions of communicative conditions, frameworks for rituals, and traditions.

Fig. 5.1 Model for the analysis of context in reflective texts

relationship between the *subject* and the surrounding course context within which the writing took place.

The model thus offers an interpretation of context-in-text, but it is not in itself a text-analytical *method*. For methodological purposes, it has been necessary to operationalize the concepts of the model. Section 5.3 presents an account of the operationalization, covering the main analytical approaches selected here as well as the major results generated by the different analytical approaches. Also, how the different results have been linked to different concepts of the model is discussed. These links are prerequisites for the development of writers' profiles presented in Chaps. 6 and 8.

In what follows I explain the concepts of the model and relate each concept to the analysis of the critical reflection texts. The results of these analyses are discussed further in Sect. 5.3.

5.1.1 *Subject*

As defined above, *subject* refers to representations of the writer's discoursal identity (Ivanič 1998: 24ff) as it manifests itself in the critical reflection text. Through the action of writing, the textualization, certain dispositions emerge that will cast light on how the *subject* expresses what it means to her to participate in the writing course. It is the writer's basic position that is highlighted, how she perceives the encounter with other people in the course, working with the assignment and participating in other social activities. Regardless of perception of oneself as writer expressed in the text, I have interpreted such expressions as a function of *subject* as writer in the text-analytical model. In addition, I have described recurring patterns relating to *subject* in the texts as prototypical, not belonging to specific writers. In other words, *subject* is a compound of individual writers who share some traits in how they relate to writing. Grouping together different critical reflection texts according to traits they share in regard to how the writers position themselves (as writers) is a way to construct identities, which may cast light on how writers relate to creative writing for critical thinking and to participating in the course. In terms of text analysis then, *subject* is a prototypical writer, constructed through a merger of traits in different texts and through

different text analyses. In particular, writers' intentionality has been analysed by studying expressions of social framing in the text, thematic content and writing discourses, including discourses of reception and discourses of evaluation. All these analyses cast light on what the *subject* in the model finds relevant to write about, out of all the possible choices on offer. The decisions made about content and stances in the writing of a text provide important information about the writer's discoursal identity and serve to reveal a position as *subject* assuming a specific attitude to the course.

5.1.2 *Tools*

In the text-analytical model, *tool* refers to whatever references writers make to mediating means in their writing. These references can be analysed. By tracking what references *tools* the *subject* mentions in the text, the main perspectives of the themes chosen can be clarified. Writers select different references as mediating means *tools* from all those available. They put these *tools* to use in specific ways. However, at the same time, writers reject other *tools*. In the critical reflection texts, this process becomes visible through analysis of references in the text.

The use of *tools* varies considerably in the texts. The questions in the writing assignment can serve as a *tool* for some writers. Other writers may refer to the narrative texts, to seminars or group discussions. The Swedish linguist Mona Blåsjö (2004: 30ff.) defines mediating *tools* as "resources people use […] in social practices" (my translation). They may be material or linguistic. They may have cognitive as well as social functions. In an educational setting, tools may also be material things, such as a computer, or symbolic, such as language signs, at the micro level. But *tools* may also refer to social practices at the macro level. Blåsjö has particularly studied links between all these different levels of the concept of *tools* and how they are put into use. However, in this book, I analyse *tools* at micro level since I look into language use in texts, what Vygotsky refers to as the symbolic meaning of *tools* (Vygotsky 1978: 52ff.) and what I define as *tools* manifest in the students' texts. In

addition, according to discourse theory, textual references are of relevance when interpreting contextual circumstances outside of the text. The results of the *tool* analysis may provide information about the context around the text and be linked to the writers' learning processes in a more general sense.

A remark regarding the overarching aim of the project may be relevant here. The aim is to research creative writing as a method for critical thinking, with a particular focus on metaperspectives. A salient feature of the assignment is to facilitate perspective change, for students to see an object of research (the moral dilemma, and writing about it) in a new light. As the different stages of the assignment unfold, each stage can serve as a symbolical *tool* available for the *subjects* to use in their work ahead and as a *tool* for perspective change as they write their critical reflection texts. The central focus on perspective and perspective change for critical reflection is one of the reasons why a change of *tool* in the text has been marked as a change of perspective. (See also recontextualization in Sects. 3.5.2 in Chap. 3 and 5.3.4 in Chap. 5.)

I have focused on the (inevitable) changes of perspective that come with recontextualizations. Every time the *subject* changes from one *tool* to another, there will automatically follow a new point of view. This is my main definition of perspective change in texts, and a central focus of my text analysis of the critical reflection texts. In the analysis of *tools*, I focus on what perspectives and changes of perspective these *tools* bring about and what the operations may say about how the *subjects* interact with the assignment.

5.1.3   *Object* and *Motive*

Within the framework of the text-analytical model, the concept *object* refers to work-oriented themes and expressions in the texts. *Motive* is an interpretation of how such themes may relate to the writer's intentions for choosing them out of all choices available. Such choices indicate a certain stance that the writer takes, which is of analytical value as the analysis aims to separate different writers' perspectives. Keeping the

concepts *object* and *motive* separate (Kaptelinin 2005: 10f.; see Sect. 4.1 in Chap. 4) facilitates a double gaze at the process of textualization: one directed towards the writers' (work) *object*, the other directed towards possible driving *motives*. *Motive* thus becomes equivalent to writer's intention. Even if it could be argued that everything in a text is there because of the writer's *object* and *motive*, I claim that certain features more closely link to these two concepts than others.

Thematic choices expressed in the texts point out what the *subject* defines as work focus—*object* in the textual model. The analysis of discourses of uptake, or absence of such discourses, highlights how the text gives voice to the writer's preferences regarding how she wishes to be perceived by readers, by attribution and address (Ivanič 2006: 11; also see Tønnesson 2002: 19, 21, 92 about perceived reader). Such information not only clarifies aspects of *object* in the text. It also points at possible *motives*, as the relationship to the reader is written into the text as subject positions.

In addition, the analysis of social orientation in terms of social frames that the writer refers to through the thematic content of the text can offer information about stance or point of view in regard to (work) *object* as the writer has expressed it in the text. This information in turn may cast light on the *motive,* which is why the analysis of social orientation has been used.

The form of the text is also part of the analysis. It turns out that there is considerable variation among the students' critical reflection texts. Some handed in long texts and others very short ones, in particular in situations where no word count was required. There are also different but specific variations in text types in the data, depending on what the writers have written about. I have therefore considered the length of the text one (of many) expressions of *object*/*motive*. To analyse the concept of *motive* specifically, I have noted evaluating writing discourses, as well as other discourses of evaluation, including verbs and other expressions of thought, opinion, emotion, and intention, or desire, since these expressions will mirror the *subject's* subjective perspective on what is worthwhile to notice. The analysis will contribute to the interpretation of *object*/*motive* even further. Engeström (2009: 308) also attributes emotional experience to the concept of *motive*.

5.1.4   *Community, Rules, Division of Labour*

In the text-analytical model (Fig. 5.1), *community* refers to expressions in the text that can be linked to the relationship between *subject* and the collective level of the social context in which the textualization has taken place. For text-analytical purposes, textual expressions of *community* have been interpreted as social frames. In the critical reflection texts, these frames emerge as different contextual levels. They may be expressed at a subjective level, where the content is focused around themes such as personal development as writer or thoughts about the writer's personal discoursal identity. The social frames of the text can also be expressed at a collective level. That is when the themes relate to overarching societal or political issues, for example. Between these contextual levels, there is a social frame with more overarching references to the university or to the entire category of students in creative writing, or, more locally, to the creative writing class, or even, very locally, to the small writing groups to which the individual writers belong, or in fact even to the self alone.

In the model, the communicative exchange between *subject* and *community* is represented by the concept of *rules*, which regulate conditions between the individual and the collective levels of the activity system, in particular related to views on "collective traditions, rituals and rules" (Engeström 1987: 28 about "exchange of communication"). In the texts, these exchanges are expressed as rules regulating subjects' personal rights and duties they have towards others within the *community*. Rules are also referred to when textual themes address views on knowledge, or on the content of the course, or on teaching methods, or on what *rules* the lecturer should comply with. Sometimes *rules* are explicitly expressed in the texts; sometimes they have been deduced from implicit statements.

The concept of *division of labour* in the model refers to textual expressions about agreements between *subject* and *community* regarding who should do what. The textualization takes place within the writing course, and *subjects* must negotiate *rules* and *division of labour* within the course frames. What *subjects* do during the textualization process, what they consider important to bring up in their texts in terms of *rules* and *division of labour*, and what they never mention can tell about their view on affiliation with *communities* they are interested in belonging to, whom they

wish to "sound" like and act like. In this light, the critical reflection text is a response to something that used to be (autobiographical self) before the course as well as a response to the questions of the assignment, and the tuition in the present. But the text is also written in anticipation of a response waiting for the writer in the future. The text is thus entangled in time, and in context, and in the social interplay with people and resources available. These processes can be analysed through textual expressions of the concepts *rules* and *division of labour*, which reveal some of the terms of negotiation between writer as *subject* interacting with different levels of *community* (cf. Linell 2009: 31 about dialogical and social meaning making). Expressions in the texts that refer to these circumstances are linked to the concepts *rules* and *division of labour* in the model.

To conclude, I use the terms '*community*', '*rules*', and '*division of labour*' to map those social circumstances that *subjects* mention in their texts. These concepts may cast light on how writers view working with the assignment from a social point of view. (The different relationships between *community* and *subject* and *object/motive* are presented in detail in Chap. 6.)

5.1.5 *Outcome*

The concept of *outcome* in the text-analytical model refers to statements in the texts where *subjects* express their textual actions within the activity system and how these actions relate to the *object/motive* of the activity system. In other words, *outcome* is the point of negotiation between (assignment) goals at the university (course) level and the same goals viewed from the writer's perspective. It is the point of analysis where alignments and contradictions between the university and the students in regard to assignment *outcomes* are clarified.

Learning objectives, such as critical thinking, are not always made explicit in course documents at universities. However, legislation exists in Sweden that stipulates that *all* university education should aim at developing students' critical thinking. The assignment in this case study is a situated interpretation of the legislation, as it aims at enhancing students' critical thinking. Therefore, in my interpretation of learning

outcomes, I have construed the concept *outcome* as an expression of critical metareflection in the texts. Thus, when analysing *outcome*, I focus on what the textualization has rendered in terms of critical thinking. The concept *outcome* thus becomes a lens to look into the text as a site of negotiation between the *subject* and the university about what learning *outcomes* the assignment should give rise to. It is the *subject's* point of view that is voiced in the text, so conflicts and contradictions will emerge when the perspective of the *subject* meets that of the system, as expressed through the level of *community*, at course level, as part of a large university organization and a representative of official, societal objectives and intentions.

Activity theory is based on the assumption that inherent in all human activities are contradictions and conflicts. However, since I have used the theory as a heuristic framework for text analysis (see Ivanič 2006), I have not analysed these contradictions systematically at different levels of activity theory. *Outcome* in the text-analytical model refers to interpretations of learning *outcomes*, as these are expressed by the writing *subject*, and possible conflicts and contradictions that these positions may result from a university point of view.

Engeström (1987) provides an example of this particular type of conflict: A child goes to school to play, while parents and teachers try to make the child go to school to study and learn. Engeström calls the adults' *motive* a "culturally more advanced motive" in comparison to the child's "dominant motive" (33). In my analysis, I have looked for textual expressions of critical thinking, defined as critical metareflection. Contradictions can be said to occur when the *subject* in the system, through the text, expresses *objects* and *motives* that are different from those expressed by the university (e.g., to practise critical thinking when the personal *object* is a different one). I do not use the terms "dominant/culturally advanced," however, even if the *outcome* definitely relates to overarching research perspectives, such as whether it is possible to use creative writing assignments as resources for learning critical thinking, which, of course, may in some respects be analogous to Engeström's example. For example, if a writer categorizes some part of the assignment as an instrument for inspiration, I have evaluated

what such an interpretation of the assignment will result in in terms of critical metareflection, as the aim of the assignment is to explore if it can be used for critical thinking, defined as critical self-reflection. *Outcome*, then, reveals something about what happens while students practise critical thinking through creative writing.

5.2   Basic Assumptions About Text as Intentional

As stated earlier, the text-analytical model is based on concepts from activity theory. For text-analytical purposes, I have linked the concepts to the assumption that texts always have social address, which is a basic idea of critical discourse analysis. The assumption also predicts that the social conditions of the text, its *intentionality* (Ledin 2013), will be inscribed in it. However, intentionality and address are *object*-driven, in the sense that they come about within societal activity systems. The model thus offers a description of intentionality as the intentions play out in a specific context. The analysis can clarify in detail the intentionality written into the critical reflection texts.

Intentionality originates in the phenomenology of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (2004), which is based on fundamentally psychological ideas about the human constitution. To Husserl, human conscious perception is always directed, either towards something or someone. Transferred to how we understand texts, intentionality has to do with textual awareness. In a literate society, there exists among text producers and consumers an implicit awareness of the fact that texts are encoded messages with sufficient social significance for them to become texts. The formats and the genres of texts are conventionalized and serve as signals for different social functions. This way, texts can be described as conventionalized social action. Texts can, in fact, run rhetorical errands for people (Ledin 2013; Miller 1984) by intervening "in a certain time space called *kairos* in rhetoric" (Ledin 2013: 8 [my translation]).

In a literate society, every reader and writer knows what texts do. Therefore, intentionality can be said to be a culturally preinstalled consciousness. Texts will "automatically" be perceived as messages addressing somebody, and intended for meaning making. This meaning making takes place among individuals, locally, as well as at a societal level, where people interact in different social contexts: "intentionality makes cooperation (co-action) possible, as it predicts that language users will make sense of texts in a goal-oriented way, whether they are readers or writers" (Ledin 2013: 16 [my translation]). The intentionality of a text thus relies on such collective assumptions that writers are familiar with and bring to use in textualization processes. The theory of intentionality encompasses Bakhtin's theory of addressivity.[1] In brief, by addressivity, Bakhtin stipulates that every utterance has a direction. Writers always address their texts to an imagined addressee (Bachtin 1986: 94f.). Addressivity thus presupposes intentionality. There exists an understanding of texts as social, and with address. In addition, then, I define the notion of "social" that underlies assumptions about addressivity and intentionality within the theoretical framework of activity theory and specifically linked to text production through writing. The way I have used intentionality here, it concerns the writer and her interpretation of the context within which the text was written. It has to do with what the writer expresses that the text will *do* and for whom it will do it. The individual perspective of the act of writing to learn cannot be excluded from a writing theory. Writing is an individual act that engages the psychology of individuals, in accordance with what has been said earlier. Texts are written by individual students, and it is their writing that is in the focus in this project. However, the students' "intentional" writing acts are governed by the fact that these acts are situated in an object-driven activity system of a university. It is the tension between the *object/motive* of individuals and the forces of an *object*-driven activity system that the model can capture. To operationalize the concepts and link them to the model, Sect. 5.3 presents the approaches used to analyse the social orientation of the text.

5.3   Text-Analytical Approaches

In this section I introduce the text-analytical approaches used for operationalizing purposes of the analytical model concepts. Among the many approaches I tested, I finally settled on those that best served my overarching aim, which was to find patterns in the critical reflection texts that can be linked to learning through writing (as social action in a certain context, and visible in text). Two major analytical approaches proved to be of specific value: first, thematic analysis and analysis of social frames, and second, analysis of writing discourses. To these approaches I have added analyses of recontextualizations in the text, and I analysed verbs expressing thought and emotion. It is by tying the initial text-analytical approaches to the concepts of the model that I developed the conclusions presented in Chaps. 6 and 8.

The reader is asked to keep in mind that there are no strict boundaries linking certain approaches to certain concepts. On the contrary, the analytical approaches overlap, so that, for example, the thematic content analyses have been used to shed light on different concepts in the model. This particular analytical approach, themes and social frames, has enabled me to research different contextual levels of the text. The approach creates an opening for analysing the mediation between *subject* and *community* in relation to *rules* and *division of labour*. That way, overarching textual functions inscribed by the *subject* emerge, and the negotiation between *subject* and *community* about *object* and who should do what and why—that is to say, *rules* and *division of labour*—thus reveal themselves.

By analysis of recontextualizations in the text, other circumstances also have been clarified, such as, for example, what the writer thinks about while writing and working on the assignment. All these different analytical approaches have been linked to the different concepts of the model. That way they have contributed to map how the writer as *subject* in the activity system of the course in creative writing has experienced what it means to do an assignment and what learning *outcomes* the assignment has rendered.

5.3.1   Themes and Social Frames

Thematic content analysis serves to describe the way groups work with thematic content to "identify meanings that are valid across many participants" (Joffe and Yardley 2004: 66), as recurring patterns in texts. Thematic content analysis highlights what the writers find interesting to discuss in the critical reflection assignment. Thus, parts of the answer to what goes on while students work with the different steps of the assignment can be found by analysing the key themes in the texts, especially when the themes are associated to social frames. The texts show significant differences in how the writers have interpreted the assignment questions and what they have found relevant to write about. As expected, this finding is particularly obvious among the writers who received less specific instructions. (I did a word-count to verify the differences in text length since I found significant differences in the data. See Chap. 6 writing profiles for a discussion of these results.)

The thematic content analysis follows a method described by Joffe and Yardley (2004: 56ff.). The analysis is qualitative. By reading the texts repeatedly, I observed thematic content patterns in them. These patterns then served as guides to delve into the texts further to verify (or reject) the observations. The method is best described as inductive, as I have not used default categories, for example, apart from the questions in the assignment (57). Further, I marked the social orientation of the textual themes according to how they are expressed in the texts through references in the texts. The writer can refer to other people, groups, and communities. Themes and references may point inwards—towards the course, for example—or outwards, by external references outside of the social frame of the course and so on. I also noted implicit references in the content themes (57). For example, the writer may address the world of the dilemma or the social frame of the course. I labelled all the different themes according to their main social orientation, such as the world of the moral dilemma, the (subjective) social frame of discoursal identity, the social frame of the course, and others. To code the themes, I used coloured pens and worked manually, without a computer.

The notion of frame (introduced by Goffman [1974]) is complicated and has a number of interpretations. Here I follow a definition originating in the Swedish conversation analyst Per Linell (2011). Linell links frames to different contextual levels in conversations. However, I have found his approach can be applied to the analysis of contextual levels in *text*s. In the data, a particular writing discourse may evoke stylistic choices the writer prefers, for example, related to the social frame of discoursal identity. The social, contextual frame of the text can thus be very local and refer to the writer's personal subjective sphere, or it can be externally oriented, towards contexts outside of the course. (See Ivanič 2006; Linell 2011) A picture of the social scene written into the text emerges when I associated the thematic content to social frames. This picture serves as analytical support in the interpretation of the text regarding the relationship between the concept *subject* and those of *community*, *rules,* and *division of labour*. The thematic content and frame analyses have enabled me to research into whom the writer refers to socially and how the writer categorizes the social interplay.

The results of my text analyses of themes linked to social frames show that there are five social frames in the critical reflection texts. They encompass (1) the *subject*: the act of writing and questions about writing relating to the discoursal and social identity of the writer as well as emotional processes evoked by the moral issues of the assignment and the work process involved in working with the assignment; (2) the very local writing group of about four students; and (3) the local course and course-related activities, such as social relationships among the students as well as *rules* related to the course activities and the social relationships in the course; and (4) an overarching collective frame outside of the course¸ in the immediate academic context of the creative writing course and, further; (5) of the society outside of the university.

As previously mentioned, differences in the social orientation of the critical reflection texts were the basis for my decision to define the concept of *community* in the text-analytical model as different contextual levels visible in a text. Differences in social orientation have also contributed to my decision to present the results of the assignment in the form of prototypical writing positions. (See Chaps. 6 and 8.) After studying the content themes and accompanying social frames that writers preferred or rejected in the critical reflection texts, I was able to map the concept *subject* through the writer's own ideas about discoursal identity,

as well as the concepts *object* and *motive* as they are expressed in the texts. The different contextual levels can also provide information about the writer's relationship to the concept of *community*.

5.3.2   Writing Discourses

In Sect. 2.4 in Chap. 2 I concluded that writing discourses (Ivanič 2004) served as a tool for text analysis, in particular in connection to the text-analytical model in Sect. 5.1 and for the construction of writers' positions in Chaps. 6 and 8. In what follows, the writing discourses found in the critical reflection texts will be presented. Most frequently represented in the data is the expressive writing discourse. However, I also found other discourses that I have categorized as writing discourses because they relate to writing: discourses of evaluation and discourses of reception. The intentionality of the texts is expressed through these writing discourses. Such discourses can cast light on the writer's view on her role as *subject* within the activity system. Opinions about writing and about what particular significance is attributed to *tools* can be found in the analysis of writing discourses of evaluation. Information about *object* and *motive* can also be found this way.

Writing discourses initially found in surveys and recorded focus group interviews also were found in the critical reflection texts. I thus viewed them as ubiquitous in my data, and decided to let the writing discourses serve as tools for grouping and sorting the texts. Within writing research, six different discourses about writing and learning to write have been described. (See Sect. 2.4 in Chap. 2.) The discourses mirror certain epistemological beliefs that permeate different types of writing instruction. I used the typology of writing discourses as an analytical tool to investigate what epistemological beliefs underlie the artefacts of my data, based on the assumption that by identifying such writing discourses, the researcher will find values and beliefs about writing and learning to write mirrored in the critical reflection texts (Ivanič 2004: 222). Therefore, I first made notes of writing discourses whenever they appeared in the texts and then analysed them to find out what types of writing discourse they were.

The analysis shows that primarily the expressive writing discourse (Ivanič 2004: 229f.) is represented in the data. (See Chap. 2.) I found

three main variations of the expressive writing discourse: one focusing on content and form, another instantiating emotional- and process-oriented aspects of writing (e.g., a discourse oriented towards the act of freewriting), and an explorative writing discourse focusing on writing as a method to discover. The next quotation (4) is an example of a content- and form-writing discourse:

4   Expressive writing discourse; writing defined as working with content and form

> […] I would poke around a bit in some of my texts after the comments that I got. (Yrsa)

To Yrsa in (4), it seems that writing is closely linked to editing, to "poke around a bit in…my texts," as she puts it, by which she means work with the content-form nexus, which is a major content theme within a certain type of expressive writing discourse. In the expressive, process-oriented variation of this writing discourse, writing is expressed as a subconscious process. The discourse may display expressions of writing explicitly, as in example (5):

5   Expressive writing discourse; writing as process

> The first draft of the single parent, almost wrote itself […] (Tea)

In (5), a writing discourse focusing the writing *process* is at the fore. Tea writes that the text "almost wrote itself," intuitively, independent of the conscious act of the writer. This view on writing marks an expressive writing discourse where the writer freely expresses all sorts of emotions and thoughts through the process of writing, or freewriting, in Elbow's (1973) terminology.

A third variant of the expressive writing discourse can express writing as exploratory, a way to discover, as in example (6):

6   Exploratory writing discourse; writing to discover

> I have had to realize that there are people who abandon, sometimes without much of second thoughts about it. But of course, I already knew, considering what I wrote in the previous paragraph [where the writer accounts for childhood memories of when she was abandoned]. I only got a confirmation, once more, I guess. (Simone)

In (6), a view on writing as *exploratory* (Elbow 1994: 26) is illustrated. It is an example where a deep, emotional experience is in focus of the critical reflection. In a first step, Simone states that she has to change her ideas about why people sometimes leave their children. These things may happen "sometimes without much second thoughts about it." The statement seems to express a new insight, one that Simone ha resisted but has "had to realize" after having worked with the dilemma in the narrative text. The verb "realize" points towards a cognitive process as part of the writing process. In the next sentence, Simone seems to remind herself that this is no new insight—"I already knew." The statement follows "the previous paragraph," in which she has told the narrative about her personal experience of abandonment. Through writing, Simone *puts into words* two conflicting perspectives: that of the child she once was, and her own painful experience, and that of the adult. Working in her response group, Simone read a number of different narratives giving reasons for abandoning a child. She seems to draw the inductive conclusion that such things can happen for no major dramatic reason but as a fact of life for many people. For an adult, the abandonment of a child may seem almost trivial, something that can happen under unfortunate circumstances. The statement "I…got a confirmation, once more" can be interpreted as a sign of learning through appropriation. According to the theory of appropriation, learning comes about through repetition of knowledge acquired from previous experience, in a recontextualization process in new social contexts (Säljö 2000: 152ff. about learning by imitation and meaning making in social interplay; Wertsch 1998: 141ff. about appropriation). Thus, in (6), an exploratory writing discourse is illustrated. The writer explores a question through writing, one based in her own experience in this particular case. Thus, she can change perspective and gain new knowledge, albeit painful, probably as a way to understand a childhood experience in a new way.

The exploratory writing discourse can be recognized by linguistic markers that express a link between emotion and cognition. Writing is used for analysing themes and topics through the act of writing, as the writer reaches insights that are constructed as new to her (Elbow 1994: 26).

I analysed exploratory writing discourses, as in (6), to categorize what view on writing has been expressed in the text. The results form part of the construction of the writing positions. (See Chap. 6.)

Evaluating Writing Discourse

The expressive writing discourse described by Ivanič (2004) is comprised by a cluster of discourses. Expressions of opinion of different kinds are frequent in my data, and quite often they come in combinations with expressions of writing. I have named this discourse (expressive) evaluating writing discourse and defined it as closely related to the paradigmatic writing discourses, as it expresses "configurations of beliefs" (220) linked to writing, frequently to teaching and learning situations involving writing, as in example (7).

7   **Evaluating writing discourse, explicit I**

The best thing is that we learn about […] stuff that we didn't think about ourselves when we wrote the texts. (Elsa)

In (7), Elsa evaluates—saying "The best thing is"—what she has learnt from working with the narrative text. The response group conversation about "stuff that we didn't think about ourselves" serves as a tool to help her to improve her texts, so the evaluations is linked to writing. In such cases I have I categorized the discourse as an evaluating writing discourse. However, evaluations sometimes can be thematized as a *tool* for cognitive processes rather than as writing discourses of evaluation, for example, when expressions of evaluation are used as tools for comparison or to reach conclusions about other themes than writing.

8   **Evaluating discourse, explicit II**

[…] sometimes women are no better than men […]. (Beatrice)

Example (8) illustrates an evaluating discourse when Beatrice uses an evaluating utterance, "no better than," to compare men and women, in order to draw a general conclusion about gender, not related to writing.

I categorized utterances that express an evaluative view of some kind as evaluating discourses—for example, text that uses adjectives and adverbs such as "good," "bad," "no better." I also categorized as evaluating discourses propositions in the texts that contain evaluations, explicitly or implicitly, as in example (9):

9   **Evaluating discourse, implicit**

[…] I can [...] get tired of classroom discussions […]. (Lydia)

In (9), Lydia evaluates the teaching situation. Saying that the "classroom discussions" that she has grown "tired of" implicitly expresses an opinion not directly linked to writing. "Tired of" here can be interpreted as an affective expression of irritation with a number of social actions linked to the "discussions." Evaluating writing discourses and evaluating discourses, or the absence of them, can provide information about the writer's *object* and *motive* driving forces, depending on what is evaluated. Through such text, approaches to working with the assignment and social orientation related to *community* can be interpreted.

The analytical results enabled me to map how the *subject* expressed in the text engages in the assignment and to specify the learning *outcomes* of that engagement. The textual analyses show that the evaluating discourses can be separated into three major themes: one about the writing results associated to the *tools* provided, a second associated to affect and emotional experiences, and a third associated to learning. These analytical results provided a basis for the construction of the writers' positions. (See Chaps. 6 and 8.)

Discourse of Uptake

The notion of "sideward glance" is used within socially oriented linguistic and writing research. The expression was originally used by Bachtin in his analyses of Dostoyevsky's novels (Bachtin 1991: 220ff.). Within social writing research, "sideward glance" describes the fact that a text is always written with "addressivity." The writer always writes with some degree of intention, and on the assumption that the text will be read by someone.[2]

The writer has ideas about how she will be read by others, as a writer, so there is reason to talk about a *projected self* (Ivanič 2006: 29) engaged in the act of writing and exerting influence on it. Addressivity thus is one way in which intentionality is expressed in texts and a way that the writer addresses the text to a perceived reader, a model reader (Eco 1994), while in the process of writing.

There is a lot of research on reception of texts and of the model reader. In what follows, I briefly sum up the theoretical sources that I have used in my approaches to the analysis of a model reader, expressed in the critical reflection texts. The Norwegian text researcher Johan L. Tønnesson (2002, 2003) developed the model reader concept of the Italian semiotician and philologist Umberto Eco (Eco 1994: 8–10). Eco separates the empirical reader, whom he sees as "you, me, anyone, when we read the text" (8, 10), and the model reader, who is inscribed in the text as a prototypical model reader. "The conceptions in the minds of empirical readers do not follow any laws, whereas the model reader complies to rules related to genre, and other *rules of the game*" (10). Tønnesson, who has written extensively about the model reader (e.g., 2003; Björkvall 2003: 23ff.), describes the model reader as the idea of a reader in the writer's imagination: "[the writer] forged herself a model reader while she was writing" ["dannet seg en modelleser når hun skrev"[3]] (Tønnesson 2002: 92), which is the very restricted meaning that I have applied.

For the writers in the creative writing case study, there are probably many possible model readers and empirical readers of the narrative texts. However, only the lecturer is the reader of the critical reflection text, which is handed in to the lecturer (= to me) and not read by the other students. The narrative texts are read by the students and by me. Sometimes students comment on these conditions, but only rarely do students make them explicit in discourses of uptake by turning to the lecturer directly, as in example (10):

10   **Discourse of uptake**

[…] so I think about what you said in the seminar. (Rut)

Explicit references to a reader as "you" in (10), where Rut addresses me directly, "what you said at the seminar," and thereby establishes a direct relationship with the empirical reader who is me, her lecturer, exemplify a type of sideward glance that I found in the data. However, implicit indications of address are more frequent. Discourses of uptake thus signal, not only a writer's intention with the text but also the writer's social rapport to the reader, as in (10). In the analysis, I use the model reader, the empirical reader, and, when references are unclear, "the perceived reader."

I thus analysed the way that a sideward glance is created in the text, and I call such instantiations as a discourse of uptake, as in (10). It refers to the person whom the writer indicates to be a perceived reader of the text (Tønnesson 2002: 92). In addition, I have done a qualitative, close reading (Van Dijk 1985) of the critical reflection texts, in view of the model reader, based on the research questions "Who do the readers become, and what are they supposed to do?" and "Who do I, your lecturer, become in this text?" and "What do you want me to do?," by going through the basic assumptions about the relationship between writer and reader as it has been implied in the text. In the analysis, I researched and marked explicit utterances or implicit assumptions where something is expressed about a perceived reader (i.e., about the writer's model reader and the empirical reader). These statements provide important information about the relationship between the *subject* and the *community*, concerning who should do what, that is to say, about the *division of labour,* which is needed to interpret the text-analytical results when they are construed through the text-analytical model in Sect. 5.1.

The analyses show that two main conceptions of the reader are raised in discourses of uptake. There is a model reader whom the writer imagines while writing, as a model reader of the narrative text. There are also references to the empirical reader in reality. These readers can be fellow students, family members, or friends, and they are all linked to the narrative text. Finally, there is the lecturer as a reader, represented as a hybrid between a model reader and an empirical reader.

Perhaps the writers were influenced by the knowledge that I actually read their texts, both narratives and critical reflections. Thus I served as a

model reader *and* an empirical reader of both text types and functioned as a (single) empirical reader of all their text production. These text-analytical results contributed to the design of a possible *motive* in the writers' position and enabled me to interpret the relationship between the *subject* and *community*. (See Chaps. 6 and 8.)

5.3.3   Recontextualizations as a *Tool* for Perspective Change

Tool is a central concept in sociocultural theory as well as in activity theory. In the text-analytical model, *tool* is conceptualized as recontextualizations in the text. The final critical reflection text in the writing assignment can be seen as an overarching *tool* with several functions. Ultimately, the writer's linguistic process serves as the primary *tool*, of course, the one that leaves analysable tracks in the texts. It is the writer who creates all the discourses and expressions that in turn will serve as *tools*, but in the text analysis, the critical reflection text constitutes the *tool* that frames the writing process and through which it is possible to examine what other *tools* the writer has used, and for what discoursal aims. An example is when one of the students, Markus, notes that "the task was unrealistic" [(Markus)]. The *tool* Markus uses are the premises of the dilemma, since he refers to the dilemma as the "task" in his text. He says that no "parent would even consider the option" [to leave a small child for so long—author's note]. In other words, Markus has used the premises of the dilemma as a *tool* to construct an evaluating discourse about the assignment; it was "unrealistic." In this way, he has established a position. The next *tool* that Markus uses is "the news," where, according to him, there have been reports about people who go to Mars and are gone for two years. A recontextualization occurs when the news is lifted into Markus's reflection. He uses the news as a *tool* to reevaluate the premises of the dilemma. Through the recontextualization process, the premises appear less unlikely. A change of perspective has taken place.

I took notes on the types of *tools* writers invoke when there is a change of *tool* through the text recontextualizations. I then proceeded to analyse the function of that particular *tool* in the text, which is what the writer achieves by applying it. I have not, however, differentiated between dif-

ferent types of recontextualizations, whether they can be viewed as inter- or intratextual. In particular, I highlighted recontextualizations where the perspective changes lead to statements of a metacritical nature, as in example (11).

11   **Critical metareflection**

Why did I? It was not necessary at all for me to write in such a stereotypical way. (Liv)

The statement in (11) implies that the writer has taken a new perspective on a previous approach in the narrative text and changed her mind: "Why did I? It was not necessary…" I characterized the statement as critical metareflection in the text analysis. Critical metareflection thus relates to sections in the critical reflection text where there is an awareness of other possible positions than the one expressed and where the writer comments on it in some way. In (11), Liv shows that she has discovered that her narrative text expresses a prototypical idea, "such a stereotypical way."

The text-analytical results set a foundation to discuss what writers actually do while writing a text and how this can be linked to perspective change and critical metareflection. I noted the recontextualizations that occur in the texts and how the writer handles them as cognitive *tools*—for example, to compare and to draw inductive conclusions. I also noted when such statements could be defined as critical metareflection. (See Chaps. 6 and 7.) This text-analytical work has helped to chart the concept *outcome* in the text-analytical model.

Preliminary results showed that, for text-analytical purposes, concepts such as *tool* become vague due to their wide semantic range. The writers refer to a number of different phenomena that generate recontextualizations. The problem with the wide range of the concept of *tool* has been raised by other researchers who have divided *tool* into cognitive *tools*, originating in language, and practical *tools*, referring to concrete objects (Blåsjö 2004; Säljö 2000: 21f.). In addition, *tool* as an analytical concept is vague because it is difficult to define its borders. It can be perceived at different levels that overlap (language/word). The way I have applied the concept is to note statements that serve to change the perspective in the text. I did not specifically note what category of *tool* is referred to in the texts.

The text analyses show a number of *tools* that writers refer to, for example those provided by the course such as the moral dilemma and the instructions that come with the assignment. Other *tools* are the narrative texts—those they wrote themselves and those written by other students. There are references to the writer's short reflection texts (see Sect. 3.5.3 in Chap. 3) and to titles from the course reading list. The social activities during seminars and discussions also function as *tools* for changing perspectives in the reflections texts. The texts show that concrete objects and social encounters transform to cognitive *tools* during the writing process, as does the narrative imagination. In addition, the autobiographical self, such as previous experience and knowledge serve as *tools* for recontextualizations in the critical reflection texts.

But even affective *tools,* such as feelings, willpower, and opinions, serve to establish certain perspectives and positions. There is a high degree of affective stances, expressed, for example, through verbs such as "think," "feel," "want," or "like." These verbs establish points of view or mindsets rather, for example, as when a writer switches between verbs expressing emotion and verbs expressing cognitive work. A clear example of this is found in extract (96), in which the writer's emotions and cognitive processes seem more or less intertwined.

In addition to verbs that mark a change of *tool*, the writers refer to other immaterial tools, such as prototypical language that they link to emotions. Often the *tools* are intertwined and used in order to draw conclusions, to evaluate or to compare perspectives, as in example (12a–c), where Liv explores her own narratives and finds prototypical ideas in them:

12   **Application of cognitive and affective tools**

(12a) The fact that she travels abroad. (Liv)

(12b) That she is young. (Liv)

In (12a and 12b), Liv draws a conclusion about prototypicalizations in her own narrative through inductive reasoning. As she revises the text, she discovers several examples of prototypical ideas. For example, she has framed the narrative as exotic, by setting it "abroad." That way, she

appears to suggest that she disregards the possibility that such a dilemma could happen where she lives. She also indicates that she did not even think about the fact that the main character is a young woman (she is herself young and female) when she wrote the story. The discovery of the prototypical choices are followed in (12c) by comments with emotional content:

(12c) I get, well, angry almost, when I make the discovery. (Liv)

Examples (12a–c) illustrate that cognition and emotion seem intertwined during work processes involving perspective change. Here the change comes about through the alternation between empathic engagement in the narrative text followed by an analytical distance to the narratives as the writer completes different steps of the assignment. In hindsight, Liv (12c) detects prototypicalizations in her own text. Besides pointing to the significance of emotional reactions—she gets "angry"—the example also exemplifies the importance of time for perspective change to take place. Time is a prerequisite for a change of perspective to occur, and writers frequently refer to time in the texts. Liv, for example, gets "angry" "when" she "makes the discovery." The verb "get" signals a reaction that takes place in time, in retrospect, when she returns to her narrative through the recontextualization of it in a critical reflection. It seems to take a while for Liv to create the distance needed to look critically at her own text.

Perspective changes like these can result in the creation of argument structures where narratives and different observations serve to support argumentation based on inductive reasoning, on reasoning from sign (examples), analogy, or cause-and-effect chains. The result of the text analysis shows that the tools are used differently, depending on how the writer perceives the context and the purpose of the activities in the course.

5.4   Summary

This chapter presents a text-analytical model to describe learning and development of discoursal identity through reflective writing. The model is based on concepts from activity theory and on basic assumptions from

discourse analysis that the text always has social address and that social context is reflected in the text. The activity theoretical concepts to describe the reflection texts in the case study have been operationalized primarily through text-analytical approaches with a focus on textual themes linked to social frameworks and themes expressing writing discourses. These analyses have been supported by the analysis of recontextualizations in the texts in different ways.

Subject refers to textual expressions of the writer's discoursal identity, and *tools* relate to recontextualizations in the texts. *Object* is construed through expressions that inform us about the orientation of the work object. *Motive* is constructed as a possible driving force, expressed explicitly through modal verbs and textual themes, or implicitly through premises in the texts. *Community* refers to contextual levels in the texts, and *division of labour* refers to the relationship between *subject* and *community*. *Rules* are construed as contextual circumstances expressed as "traditions" of common practice and references to communication rules. *Outcome* is an interpretation of the results of the assignment, in terms of learning, but also in terms of contradictions and conflicts between *subject* and the surrounding context in which the acts of writing took place. The model clarifies the importance of identity and identification in learning. It shows the text as a site of negotiation between a writer's perspective and the perspective of an academic institution. The model has served to construct the writers' positions. (See Chap. 6.)

Notes

1. No utterance comes without a history. Utterances adhere to one another and to earlier utterances and to utterances in the future. Bachtin (1986) used Dostoevsky's literary texts as a starting point for his theories about utterances in context.
2. Cf. Perelman (2004) about the universal auditorium—that is, a model "listener" to rhetorical argumentation.
3. Translated from Norwegian: created for herself a model reader as she wrote.

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6

Writers' Positions

How do students learn from creative writing for critical thinking? This chapter shows that writers try out discoursal identities they wish to ascribe to themselves and leave out those that they are uninterested in. What and who the writer becomes through discoursal choices create a dominant perspective through which the writer views the assignment, and this has a decisive impact on what the writer learns. Based on these observations, I have structured the results as three prototypical writers' positions with a variation, a profile based on differences in *motive,* in each. The names assigned to the positions—the genre-, the process- and the research-oriented positions—mirror the driving *motives* and *objects* that are the main focus in each learning trajectory.

In interpreting the data from the case study with the creative writers, one of my major decisions was to construe the results of the text analysis presented in Chap. 5 in terms of different writers' positions. The positions constitute a representation of tendencies in the critical reflection texts, constructions intended for theoretical purposes, which should be kept quite separate from any ideas about characteristics of individual writers. The positions are to be understood as perspectives that writers can hold in social interactions, such as learning activities, ones that are constantly dynamic and shifting.[1] Here they provide a representation of

learning patterns found in data from a course in creative writing and serve as a *tool* to highlight links among discoursal identity, identification, and learning. (See Chap. 8 for the follow-up study.) The positions give no information about the exact frequency of textual phenomena or about persons who have contributed with their texts. It may also be worth taking into account that the tendencies described are those that I judged to be important for the discussion of activity theory as a text-analytical model, in order to describe learning.

I distinguished three major writers' positions in the data from the case study, and they show how writers have related to the assignment. For each of these positions, there are specific variations. On the basis of these results, I have constructed prototypical writers' profiles: a genre-oriented position divided into an author's and an apprentice's profile; a process-oriented position with an empathetic and an expressive profile; and a research-oriented position divided into a communicative and a strategic profile.

In this chapter, I discuss the positions and the profiles in turn. I will describe each position in a sequence of three steps, based on the concepts in the text-analytical model. (See Sect. 5.1 in Chap. 5.) Firstly, I introduce the position at a *subjective* level, from the perspective of *subject,* and with the same *object* for both profiles. Secondly, I introduce the two separate profiles, one after the other, to describe the differences in *motive* between the profiles within the position and how the differences affect the *subject's* use of *tools* in each profile. Finally, I discuss *community, rules,* and *division of labour*. These concepts illustrate the point where a subjective perspective meets that of a collective perspective, and I discuss the different perspectives in regard to how they are presented in the writers' critical reflection texts. At the text level, the perspectives are interwoven and not always explicitly expressed. In the presentation that follows, I have highlighted them and made them explicit.

Finally, in the concluding section, I discuss the stances taken in the different positions in terms of *outcome* in order to clarify the impact that the positions may have on learning through writing. Thus, *outcome* is the concept used for describing the differences in perspective between the university and the writer.

6.1 Genre-Oriented *Subject* Perspective (*Subject,* Object/*Motive*, Tools)

Knowledge about *genre* is the major orientation of *object* in the genre-oriented positioning. The social frame in the critical reflection text is *subjective*. The concern is with the writer's discoursal identity, which is expressed as fixed in the author's profile and in flux in the apprentice's profile. The critical reflection text focuses questions related to writing as a literary author. There is particular emphasis on finding an individual voice, on presenting oneself as original in one's writing, which echoes a characteristic of the expressive writing discourse (Ivanič 2004: 230). The focus on identity as a writer is expressed in themes such as possessing or wishing to possess knowledge about how to write literary texts and about the literary quality of the subject's assignment texts. The writing discourses mainly express genre-related themes, such as content and form and realism. Writing discourses in the genre-oriented position can be constructed as a skills' writing discourse (Ivanič 2004: 225), such as handy hints about how to develop the characters of the narratives. Such discourses indicate that there is a precept or a template for correct and skillful writing.

Writing is expressed as linked to concerns about one's literary authorial self. The *object* is the style of the narrative text, frequently associated with expressions of desire or intention, wanting to create reactions among the readers.

13. Discourse of uptake

> [...] I [...] want to provoke, to get some reaction to my texts, to break down things that are taken for granted. [...] (Viktoria)

In example (13), Viktoria voices her intention to create emotional effects: "I [...] want to provoke, to get some reaction." The example illustrates a discourse of uptake specific of the genre-oriented positioning, where focus is on ideas about what an implied model reader of the narrative text may think of feel. The *object* of the act of writing is to compose a new

experience for the model reader, so that the reader can "break down things that are taken for granted." Viktoria wants to show the reader a completely new, original way of understanding "things." In other words, it is the reader who is *subject* to change here, not the writer. In the genre-oriented position, the *object* is not to explore prototypical ideas that the *subject* may hold but instead to develop content and form to create originality of expression, as described within the prototypical expressive writing discourse (Ivanič 2004: 225), in order to "stir" the reader.

In the genre-oriented position, it is primarily the results of the act of writing that emerge as content themes, and the themes are used as *tools* for evaluation.

14. Evaluating writing discourse

> […] The dramaturgical triangle, victim, protagonist, antagonist may come in handy. […] (Maria)

In example (14), Maria discusses a theory from the reading list, and deems that it "may come in handy,". She finds that knowledge about dramaturgical effects may help the writer to improve the narrative. The evaluating writing discourse thus constructs writing as working with form and content to create certain responses among readers. Implicit in this view is a negotiation about the right to attribute to oneself an author's identity.

6.1.1   Motive and Application of Tools in the Author's Profile

In the author's profile, the writer's identity is expressed as fixed (or "mature"). The *subject*'s gaze focuses social frames outside of the *community* of the course. Expressions of self in the reflection text refer to a professional author's identity, such as novelist or specialist of literary writing more generally. An example from a recorded group discussion may serve to illustrate this, at the same time as it illustrates that themes and discourses found in the texts are ubiquitous in the data.

15. Performing expertise

> […] Well I was more textual in my thoughts you know how do you want to work with these smaller narrative elements textual elements eh do you want to streamline these cliff-hangers and these implicitly narrative allegories I mean do some more work on such things eh I mean that the text in itself becomes an experience and the same thing with the plot […] (Siri, recorded group discussion)

It is particularly the expert discourse in example (15) that signifies the author's profile. When the social framing is at local group level, as in (15), expertise can manifest itself through social positioning, as here, where the *subject* assumes the role of teacher or group leader. Siri in (15) constructs expertise by putting questions to a student in the response group. She displays expert knowledge by using an initiated vocabulary, such as "narrative elements" and "allegories," and through the advice she offers, "streamline … cliff-hangers …" and "do some more work," so that "the text in itself becomes an experience." Through such linguistic resources, Siri creates a "professional author's discourse" through which she can display that she has sufficient knowledge to guide others. This claim, in turn, can be construed as driven by a *motive*, defined as exercising skill, in order to attribute to oneself a discoursal identity of professional author. In the author's profile, the identity is displayed by performative acts such as in (15) in the social context of the course. At the textual level, significant traits are expressions of self-confidence and expertise, to give evidence that the *subject* masters literary composition in a skillful and challenging way. For example, signs of self-confidence and expertise can manifest themselves when the *subject* writes about what she wants to achieve:

16. Take up challenges

> […] I wanted to attack what is almost impossible: to depict the thoughts of an infant. […] (Martin)

Expressions of intention, such as in example (16), simultaneously tell about perceptions of personal courage and talent. In an evaluating writ-

ing discourse with verbs such as "wanted to" and "attack," Martin voices autonomy and creative intention. He evaluates the magnitude of the challenge as "almost impossible" but still estimates that he can go through with it. By his choice of words, Martin has defined the narrative assignment as very advanced indeed. However, it is he who has chosen the theme "to depict the thoughts of an infant." Example (16) illustrates the *subject's* personal agency, as he himself sets the levels of the assignment. His intention is to put himself to the test, to see what he is capable of as an author. Although he deems the challenge as more or less impossible, he is going to accept it, which of course is courageous.

To "get across" and to be read as one had intended, at the moment of uptake is a central content theme in the author's profile. The model reader and the empirical reader are foci of attention and form the hub of the discourse of uptake. The final result is important.

17. To get across

[…] More or less, the readers in my group understood what I had intended in the final version. I see this as a confirmation of the fact that I didn't go too far, but got the text just right. […] (Henning)

In example (17), Henning observes readers' responses to his texts to check that his intentions got across, and he is pleased to confirm that "the readers in my group understood what I had intended." The sought-for responses appear after revisions, since the readers' reactions occur in "the final version" of the text. It seems, then, that Henning is prepared to revise his text if necessary in order to get the desired responses from his readers. Mostly only small changes are needed, such as exchanging a word for another to get a more coherent style or changing some detail that will increase the readers' engagement. Henning has a firm sense of what constitutes a good story and is very sensitive to small things that may impede the reading experience:

18. Revising details

[…] [from] the response that I got [I] noticed problematic details, things that I need to clarify. For example [...] why the door was unlocked. […] (Henning)

Example (18) shows that Henning is clear about the plot and basically only needs his readers' assistance to sort out "problematic details" that may be confusing, such as "why the door was unlocked." The *subject* in the author's profile will gladly accept suggestions from the empirical readers in the group, and he views their comments as helpful to "clarify." Other than that, the writer expresses that it is uninteresting to make changes or revisions. The moment that content and style have reached what the writer percieves as the desired level of professionalism and originality, the writing process is over. This stance is revealed in evaluating writing discourses referring to the writer's own text:

19. Self-evaluation

[…] I am actually rather pleased with my texts. […] (Kim)

In large part, the content of the critical reflection text can consist of themes related to the discoursal identity, such as evaluating writing discourses about the results of the act of writing. Self-evaluations as in example (19), where Kim is "rather pleased with her text," are frequent in the author's profile. The *subject* continuously evaluates her level of professionalism, by estimating how her texts meet high requirements. Kim is "rather pleased," suggesting that there is room for further improvements. High requirements indicate that the *motive* for the *subject* in the author's profile is performative, to stage a discoursal identity as professional author through the quality of the narrative texts. For that reason, whom the *subject* chooses as object of comparison becomes important.

20. References to professional authors

[…] As I said, the subject was depressing, so it was interesting to take up the challenge and try to add a glimpse of light to the story. I personally think that I managed to make the black shades almost disappear. It's been good fun to see that it was possible to change the conditions in this way. I come to think about Kjell Johansson's book *The House by the River* [*Huset vid Flon*]. He manages to convey some kind of hope and reconciliation although the basic theme is pretty gloomy. […] (Victor)

In the author's profile, the *subject* is courageous and will not stop at difficult tasks, but is willing to "take up the challenge," as when Victor in example (20) undertakes the *object* to "add a glimpse of light" to the dilemma in the assignment, which by most standards seems rather difficult. Furthermore, Victor shows that his standards are high. He compares his text to a novel by a well-known and renowned Swedish author, Kjell Johansson, and not to peers within the course context, as the case is in the apprentice's profile and in the process-oriented position. Through the choice of object of comparison, the orientation of the discoursal identity instead points towards a social frame outside of the course. Victor shows that he has the capacity to talk at a professional level about narrative texts by displaying awareness of literary analysis of novels as he brings up the themes "hope and reconciliation" in the novel *The House by the River*. This display of knowledge contributes to position him as a literary expert.

The example also shows that performative *motives* influence how the *tools* available are applied by the *subject* in the author's profile. Victor uses the literary example that he has selected, "Kjell Johansson's book," as a cognitive tool to compare his own stylistic skills to those of a professional author. Thus, he turns down other content themes, such as reflecting about societal implications of the moral dilemma, for example, and focuses on readers' reactions to his own text. In the author's profile, the model reader and the empirical reader are the main *tools*. For instance, the response group serves as a test panel of empirical readers.

21. The response group as test panel

> […] it was [...] rewarding [...] to hear how people in my response group perceived the *motives* and reactions of the different characters. To me, they served as a focus group, where I could test if I had succeeded in my ambition to [...] leave enough room for the readers to construe the story. […] (Henning)

In example (21), the response group serves to try out different readers' reactions, like "a focus group." Henning needs the group to find out if his

text would "leave enough room for the readers." He tries out stylistic effects intended for a target group, as if he were to launch a product on the book market. It is an approach that illustrates how the *tools* are applied in the author's profile. Few *tools* are used, mostly style and sideward glance at the model reader and at empirical readers in the course, and with the specific intention to create effects.

Even though there are many expressions of intention to create originality in the narrative text, the *subject* in the author's profile is oriented towards constructing specific traits, such as realism and a thrilling plot, typical of a certain narrative genre. Thus, stylistic choices tend to streamline the narrative imagination.

22. The narrative imagination subordinate to generic rules

> […] This shows how important it is to make sure that the setting is in alignment with the plot. Otherwise, the story will not be realistic. (Torun)

Torun in example (22) shows that the application of available *tools* is not free but subordinate to generic rules, such as creating realism. Torun stresses the importance of knowledge about generic rules in order to write well, "to make sure that the setting is in alignment with the plot." This type of generic demands implies that the *tool*, narrative imagination, must be used with caution, restrictively. Earlier in her critical reflection text, Torun accounts for a discussion in her group about abandoning one's child. According to her, this does not happen in rich countries today, and, therefore, the plot should be set in a historical context to create realism, which is very important to Torun. Example (22) also shows that the narrative imagination is influenced by prototypical conceptualizations of the world. Of course the dilemma could be framed in a realistic contemporary context, but Torun does not seem to see things that way, and the group discussion does not help her in this regard. In brief, the narrative imagination is restricted not only by culturally framed prototypes but also by the writer's ideas about writing in compliance with generic rules such as realism.

Thus, the writer's autobiographical self emerges as utterly important in terms of *tool*. Personal knowledge about exact circumstance warrants

what content and style will work for the empirical reader. Autobiographical self is definitely used in decision making, for example, in what to write about as in example (23).

23. Autobiographical self as a tool in the author's profile

> […] Lack of knowledge about the country made me skip this idea. […] (Anna)

In in the author's profile, ideas such as setting the plot in a foreign country are rejected for "lack of knowledge," as Anna puts it in (23). The demands for realism in the texts are so high that ideas that cannot be supported by personal expertise are rejected. The *subject* thus uses the autobiographical self as a *tool* to estimate what the model reader may accept as a reasonable narrative. In this way, autobiographical self becomes a complex *tool* for censorship, one that will see to it that the writer will write realistically about themes she knows about to make sure the texts will not lack in realism, as exemplified in (23).

Social processes in the course, such as group discussions or discussions during seminars, have limited use in terms of *tools* for learning. Example (24) illustrates how the *tool* discussion seems to serve more general social purposes.

24. Discussion as social interplay

> […] I think that today's discussion was very interesting. Then again, I always think it's good fun to discuss things. […] (Marc)

In spite of the fact that one of the questions in the instructions to the critical reflection text specifically mentions "today's seminar discussion," Marc's answer in (24) indicates that he does not attach any significant importance to it; it was "very interesting." An evaluating discourse expresses that he always thinks that it is "good fun to discuss." Probably these answers are of a strategic nature (Berge 1988: 54ff.). The questions put in the instructions to the critical reflection text must be answered in order for the *subject* to pass the course. Other than that, Marc's text does

not reveal any indications of *object* or *motive* that he wishes to share. Example (24) shows that the *tool* "discussion" is not very useful for the *subject* in the author's profile, unless it is linked to the reception of the writer's narrative text or, generally, to themes such as form and content of narrative texts. As has been shown in the examples, discussions can also serve as *tools* for performative *motives* to stage a specific discoursal identity. However, the *tool* discussion is not used for critical thinking.

6.1.2   Motive and Application of Tools in the Apprentice's Profile

In the apprentice's profile, the discoursal identity is expressed as in flux, unestablished, and subject to change. A salient theme in the critical reflections is to strive towards an author's identity, to transform from amateur to professional. In the apprentice's profile, the *subject* orients towards social frames outside of the *community* of the course, as does the *subject* in the author's profile. The difference is that in the apprentice's profile, it is through working with the assignments and through participation in course activities that the identity of apprentice can change. This way, the skills needed for professional writing will be acquired, and the requirements to attribute oneself the identity of author will be fulfilled. Trying out new ways to work with style and content is a salient theme in the reflection texts, for example, in accounts of new insights about how style can have an impact on readers.

25. Accomplishment in focus

> […] things that are in excess or don't fit into one story, can be placed center stage in the other. This also creates opportunities to play with readers' ideas. […] You can create a sort of 'wow factor" and really surprise the reader. […] (Elin)

The focus is on practice for perfection in the apprentice's profile. Discourses of uptake express ideas about model readers' reactions to the narrative text, and these discourses are salient in the apprentice's profile,

which is illustrated in example (25). Elin sums up learning from working with perspective change in texts: "things that…don't fit into one story, can be placed…in the other." This has given her insights about style as an author's *tool* by which it becomes possible to "create a sort of 'wow factor' and really surprise the reader." In other words, Elin's craftsmanship as a writer can be used for the important *object* of steering readers' reactions. Elin practises her writing skills, knowing that her discoursal identity is constructed in social interplay and that her right to attribute to herself the identity of an author depends on readers' reactions to her texts. Of course, the exact time for the moment of uptake is difficult to establish (Ivanič 2006: 13), but the *subject* in the apprentice's profile is still driven by the impact of this encounter. The writing discourse is focused on results, as in the author's profile, but in the apprentice's profile, professionalism is an *outcome* to reach through practice.

In the apprentice's profile, the *subject* identifies socially with the student peer group and more peripherally with a professional role outside of the course. The driving force to create a change of discoursal identity is expressed in the *motive*, which can be described as self-improvement. The *subject* is engaged in a process of creating and trying out a desired identity, not in consolidating or exercising one already in existence. In the text, this process is displayed through themes evoking the model reader and through evaluating writing discourses and expressing an interest in comparing one's texts to models, or templates.

26. Writing to become

> […] I wanted to write a text which would be *interesting* to read […] I chose the theme unhappy love. […] Unhappy love is a pretty common subject, I suppose, but I felt that I managed to create a certain twist to it, in my second version of the text that I wrote. At least compared to books that I have read about love, I think that I managed to write with an original touch, well, fairly much so, anyway. […] (Erik)

Themes highlighting how to *achieve* professional skill are salient in the apprentice's profile, unlike the author's profile, where skill is perceived as already in existence and performed, not practised. Erik in example

(26) wants to master the art of literary writing, which in his view puts high demands on uniqueness, to create "an original touch," and to be good at it. The example illustrates that the writer's autobiographical self plays a big part in this process, since we can only imitate what we know about (Ivanič 1998: 213). Eric refers to "books that I have read about love." Thus, Erik's role models are writers of books that he has held in his hands and has experienced as a reader. It is his reading experience that serves as a guide for him in his efforts to create his own writer's voice and to change his discoursal identity from that of an amateur to a professional author. However, the idea of what constitutes a professional writer is vague compared to how the same themes are expressed in the author's profile. Here it is "books," not specific authors, and the writing discourse also has more markers of uncertainty, such as "well, fairly much so, anyway." Above all, texts and thoughts presented by the other students in the course serve as possible role models in the apprentice's profile.

27. Group members as role models

> […] It is when we discuss the texts in our group that you realize, I think, the number of options available. There are so many ways to depict things. You can get ideas [from the group] that you can use in in your texts later, but most of all, [the discussions] make you see things in a broader perspective. […] (Christel)

Christel reports in example (27) that the group discussions broaden her perspective and provide food for inspiring new ideas to use as *tools* in her writing: "ideas that you can use in in your texts later." In the author's profile, the *subject* refers to professional authors as models, not to peers, as Christel does in (27). Neither do references in the author's profile refer to group discussions as fascinating or as *tools* to broaden one's perspective in the way they are described by Christel. In the apprentice's profile, role models can be found just as well within the course context as outside of it. The group can thus serve as a multifunctional *tool* in the apprentice's profile, whereas in the author's profile, it mainly serves as a *tool* for trying out readers' responses.

In the apprentice's profile, the *subject* has high regard for the other students, for their texts and responses. As this attitude permeates the relationship with the group, and as the focus is set on learning, the perception of what it means to write is expressed as a learning process, locally situated within the context of the course.

28. An emphasis on self-improvement

[…] I think that discussions and text response are extremely important for you to learn. [...] Otherwise, the ideas you got, and that you think came out so brilliantly when you wrote them, well, it turns out that they were uninteresting, or that people didn't understand them. […] (Madeleine)

In example (28), Madeleine emphasizes the social *tools*—"discussions and text response"—because to her, they "are extremely important for you to learn." She attributes sufficient authority to the group to let members guide her in her development as a writer.

Readers' responses help to broaden Madeleine's understanding of the dialogical nature of texts, that readers may find brilliant texts "uninteresting" or miss the point even. Example (28) illustrates an eagerness to learn from the group. The difference from the author's profile lies in scope; here the *subject* is prepared to change much more than details in a narrative text—in fact, entire "ideas" are reviewed critically. In the apprentice's profile, the *subject* is prepared to renegotiate a discoursal identity, not just "problematic details" of specific narrative texts. An example of this change in attitude is what comes out as a profound interest in exploring and commenting on the various *tools* available in the course.

29. Exploring the tools

[…] To write […] from two perspectives [...] is an efficient way to chisel out more (for example more about the characters). […] (Elin)

In example (29), Elin is eager to explore the *tool* perspective change to learn how to improve "the characters." This, and similar comments about literary

composition, such as creating originality, is salient in the apprentice's profile. Style and content are themes represented in the prototypical expressive writing discourse (Ivanič 2004), and in particular, there is an eagerness to find originality in stylistic choices and to avoid clichés at all costs.

30. Expressing originality

> […] I succeeded in escaping the traps of clichés, and created something in my own style, original. […] (Viktoria)

In example (30), Viktoria looks for ways to create a personal voice in the text, "something in my own style," and seems pleased when she "succeeded," since she mentions this in her text. Viktoria exemplifies the *object*-driven *motive* in the apprentice's profile, which is self-improvement. As in the author's profile, it is the narrative text that is considered to be the most important *object* of the entire assignment. But for Viktoria, writing the narrative serves as a *tool* to practise rather than to display originality and skill in literary composition. The assignment, the tuition, the discussions are all viewed as *tools* to help the *subject* "escaping the traps of clichés," to learn something new, even if there is uncertainty about what this might be.

However, as in the author's profile, the critical reflection text is not a prioritized *tool* in the apprentice's profile. Most often, it is a short text, especially so in the data when no length requirements were specified. In terms of text type, the critical reflection comes out as a short report, containing accounts of the writer's intention, readers' reactions, and evaluations of the final result and/or as a review of the narrative text.

As the *subject* does in the author's profile, the *subject* in the apprentice's profile considers the assignment to be a challenge. The difference is that in the apprentice's profile, there is a clear focus on what learning the challenge has generated.

31. The link between challenge and self-improvement in the apprentice's profile

> […] It was also very taxing and healthy to be forced to work with the assignment from different perspectives. Being forced to look at a problem

from different points of view. This is actually what I feel that I have learnt from the assignment, to twist and turn an assignment. Not to take the first, simplest and straightest road. To think one more time, and to choose an angle that perhaps isn't the first one that comes to mind, but one which in the end will lead to a better result. […] (Erik)

The assignment is described as a performance-enhancing *tool* in example (31), and a challenge. Erik stands up to the challenge when pushed: "to be forced to work…Being forced to look… from different points of view." Probably this is not his habitual way of working with narratives, as he stresses the effort he has put into his work: "it was … very taxing and healthy," a bit like a workout session in a gym. Through a method that is new to him, he has learnt something new. By going through all the different stages of the assignment, Eric has been forced to put more effort into his writing that usual: "Not to take the first, simplest and straightest road." He assesses the application of the tools as a new way to find a true, original way of writing, which "in the end will lead to a better result" as a consequence of his having had "to think one more time."

The *subject* in the apprentice's profile thus uses the critical reflection text communicatively, for self-improvement, which is the driving *motive* expressed through a particular focus on the *tools* as potentials for learning. It seems that recontextualizations of the dilemma, through the different texts and discussions, have served as a powerful *tool* to learn about content and form in narrative texts, as we have seen from Erik's comments, but not as a *tool* for exploring the moral dilemma or for reflecting about prototypical ideas or values linked to ideology and language. Such content themes and discussions in the critical reflections can be described as unimportant for the *subject* in the apprentice's profile.

6.1.3   *Community, Rules,* and *Division of Labour*

In what follows, the relationship between *subject* in the genre-oriented position and *community* is discussed. It is the encounter between *subject* and collective levels of the activity system that is described, and the

perspective is that of the *subject*. The collective aspects of the encounter are expressed through the concepts *community*, *rules*, and *division of labour*.

Community

In the genre-oriented position, the course community mediates between the *subject's object*, which is to express or gain knowledge of genre, and the *community* outside of the course, where such knowledge is in demand. The main *motive* for taking the course is expressed as performing or acquiring knowledge of genre intended for an activity system outside of the academic *community*, on a commercial market. In the genre-oriented position, writing discourses mainly evoke discoursal identity as author. In the author's profile, the identity is constructed to function professionally outside of the course *community*, and within it to gain confirmation of expertise. In the apprentice's profile, the identity is subject to self-improvement and change within the *community*. Evaluating writing discourses negotiate the legitimacy of attributing to oneself the discoursal identity of author. This right is achieved when skill is performed through stylistic choices in the narrative text type. Example (32) illustrates how a sideward glance at the model reader outside of the course *community* serves to assess what is worthwhile learning.

32. **Model reader within and outside of the course community**

> […] I learnt to write about controversial subjects that move and shock readers. Something which I believe is important if you want to stick out as a writer/author. […] (Martin)

In (32) Martin associates what he has learnt about "controversial subjects," to topics that relate to self-improvement as a writer, such as influencing the reader, and to a professional role as "a writer/author" in the society outside of the course. Pairing two roles, writer/author, gives room for different text types and professions, all outside of the course. One may construe the statement in (32) as a sign of learning through expansion

within the *community* of the course. Martin has drawn a conclusion about "controversial subjects that move and shock," probably because he has gone through the steps of the assignment wholeheartedly. His work *object* has been to merge in the social processes of writing, reading, listening, and discussing all the different possibilities elicited by the dilemma. Thus, he has experienced his own reactions and "lived," symbolically, those of the other *subjects*. Perhaps he found some of the solutions to the dilemma suggested by his peers rather shocking. On reflection, from the experience of this process, he draws an inductive conclusion about originality, which he links to discoursal identity as author and to how to use content and style to "stick out." In other words, work within the *community* is associated with a writer's identity outside of it. In (32), however, Martin expresses a certain ambivalence, in that he is *subject* in the apprentice's profile and part of the *community* of the course in creative writing, since he uses expressions such as "learnt to" and verbs like "believe [not know] is important." At the same time, he also, thematically, gives voice to a direction away from the course, towards an imagined future, where he can "stick out," probably on the commercial book market outside of the course. In the author's profile, the discoursal identity is expressed as matured and already belonging to the *community* outside of the course.

Rules Based on Epistemological Beliefs

In the model, *rules* refer to the relationship between *subject* and *community*. The concept regulates subjective and collective levels of the system, that which Engeström (1987: 28) describes as concerns about what collective traditions, rituals, and rules should regulate the exchange of communication. In the texts, these circumstances are expressed as *rules* that regulate effects of epistemological beliefs. In the genre-oriented position, the course in creative writing is basically defined as a vocational course for future commercial writers, aiming at forming professional authors (author's profile) or to educate (apprentice's profile) future authors in a certain type of creative composition of narrative texts. The course becomes a mediating tool to establish (in the author's profile) or to develop (in the apprentice's profile) a relatively well-defined discoursal identity as author. In the genre-oriented

position, epistemological beliefs underlie the view that the *rules* should warrant a course where this type of learning is the major *object.*

33. Epistemology expressed as rules

> […] After all, it is *how* [italics added] you write that should be the main focus on a writing course or something. […] (Kim)

In example (33), Kim expresses a similar view of "a writing course" to the one described in writing research (Hoel Løkensgard 2010; Ivanič 2004) where the "how" you write, style, is in focus. Many critical reflection texts in the data hold this view. Content themes such as style and skill are at the forefront, similarly to what Kim refers to—"*how* you write"—in (33). To the *subject* in the genre-oriented position, knowledge about writing is the same as writing good stories. According to the *rules* that underlie this idea, good writing has to do with generic "how"—that is, knowledge of genre and how to apply it.

Rules for Teaching and Learning in Terms of Content and Methods

In the genre-oriented position, the *rules* expressed in the writing discourses of the texts stipulate that the assignments should serve to teach students how to write with realism, with originality of style, and with a thrilling plot, preferably with a certain twist to it. This type of writing discourse expresses a template view of writing education, similar to the one found in a prototypical skills-writing discourse from the 1950s and early 1960s (Ivanič 2004: 233). It emphasizes the ideas that there is a correct, "good" way to write a story, for example, and that this should be explicitly taught to students. Viewed as a pattern in my data, it represents ideas among the student writers that the best way to learn and to develop is by explicit teaching. This view is exemplified in (33) and comes out in the data as implicit assumptions in the reflection texts. By taking the course, the desired writing skills should follow. Therefore, in the genre-oriented position, it is considered a breach of rules if the "main focus on a writing course" should be on anything but a specific type of genre knowledge and on "handy hints."

The most salient features of the evaluating discourses bring out ideas about the function of *tools* and how they can be used in the construction of an author's identity. The *tools* available should mediate between the *subject* and the commercial book market in order for the *subject* to practise the *tools* within the *community*, so that writing skills can be performed outside of it. When topics other than style and content appear during a discussion—for example, about the dilemma—it is considered a breach of rules, and quite irrelevant or uninteresting.

34. Effects of epistemological beliefs on teaching and learning

> […] Sometimes the discussion tends to let go of the text and instead it is about social injustices in society. But when we returned to the texts I became eager to work [...]. (Freja)

In Freja's account in example (34), she reflects on problems with engaging in questions outside of working with content and literary composition. She has waited for the group to finish discussing questions about "social injustices in society." Not until the group "returned to the texts" does Freja's enthusiasm come to life again. Example (34) illustrates that the *subject* in the genre-oriented position invokes rules about teaching and learning that say that anything outside of literary composition is the same as "let[ting] go of the text" and therefore is deemed irrelevant, or as a deviation from the *rules* of what the course should be about. To follow the *rules* correctly would be to teach and discuss genre knowledge and skills of practical use for writers.

Division of Labour Among the Subject, the Lecturer, and the Group

In what follows, I first present ideas about the *division of labour* expressed in the author's profile, followed by those in the apprentice's profile.

The *motive* in the genre-oriented position is to perform skill in the author's profile and self-improvement in the apprentice's profile. These stances are expressed in explicit or implicit opinions about the

division of labour in the course, who is allowed or assigned to do what—for example, authorizations that allow the *subject* the right to perform or to try out discoursal identity in the course. Since writing skill is crucial to how identity is read (Gee 1990: 155; Ivanič 2006: 13), the question of who is to assess the amount of skill displayed in a text is accentuated. In the genre-oriented position, the *division of labour* emphasizes issues related to referee and peer reviewing. In the author's profile, the right to assess the discoursal identity is placed outside of the response group, while in the apprentice's profile, it is placed within the group.

A sign of this difference is a salient theme in the texts describing readers' responses. Discussions about who should give feedback on the narrative texts are very specific. For example, the response from group members has restricted value in the author's profile, whereas it is an important *tool* in the apprentice's profile, where it serves as a guide for developing original ideas and contributing to changing the writer's identity. This is not the case in the author's profile.

The lecturer is very important to the *subject* in the author's profile. She mediates between the *subject* and the activity system outside of the *community* of the course by serving as a mediator of genre knowledge. She should teach about literary composition, give practical advice, and assess the *subject's* own texts. The latter is of particular importance in the author's profile.

35. Teacher's feedback

> [...] the lack of reader's response from the teacher […] not until after the third version [...] did we get comments. […] (Kim)

All students probably value comments from the lecturer, but in the author's profile, it is expressed verbally as a theme in the critical reflection. In example (35), Kim expresses dissatisfaction with the "lack of reader's response from the teacher." Implicit values that hold that the lecturer's remarks are crucial to the *subject* as author underlie such statements,; comments from the peer group are not. The way that the *division of labour* is expressed stipulates that the lecturer shall give

and the *subject* receive the lecturer's initiated response. The fact that the *subject* continuously gets comments from the response group seems to be of little importance. In the author's profile, the group functions merely as a test panel, not as a tool to develop a writer's skills. This may have to do with the fact that the *subject* views herself as more advanced, as an author well on the way to professionalism, as expressed in example (36).

36. Example of an advanced writer's identity

> […] Perhaps I have already written sufficiently before [the course]. […] (Kim)

In (36), Kim hints—the adverb "perhaps" can be interpreted as a hint rather than as a strong assertion—that she has quite a lot of writing experience already. Therefore, to develop as a writer, she needs qualified readers. It seems the peer group lacks the competence required, simply because members have not written as much or come as far as Kim, according to her explanation in (36). Kim thus positions herself as expert in relation to other *subjects*, and this will affect her view of *the division of labour*. The right to erase "perhaps" in (36) and decide whether Kim actually *has* written sufficiently to attribute to herself the role of expert outside of the *community* of the course is given to the lecturer. By force of (attributed) competence, the lecturer is given authority as a peer reviewer of a certain type of narrative texts. More important, the lecturer also is ascribed authority to offer different attributions of discoursal identitiy to the *subject* depending on the how the lecturer evaluates the quality of the text at hand. The lecturer thereby mediates between the *subject* and a *community* outside of the course. It is thus not simply opinions about the quality of texts that are negotiated between the *subject* and the lecturer. The quality of the author of the text is assessed, in particular the *subject* as an author of books intended for a commercial market. Implicitly, this places the lecturer in a different *community* from academia. The *division of labour* becomes such that the lecturer must act as an expert of a particular genre of narratives, and with the capacity to determine what the market outside of the university may want and appreciate. The lecturer and the *subject*

form a special alliance, in which no other *subjects* are included, since they still lack sufficient competence to be part of the *community* consisting of the *subject and* the lecturer. In terms of *division of labour*, this means that it is not for the other *subjects* to decide about the writer's attribution of identity. Other than serving as a focus group, they have little or no relevance to the *subject* in the author's positioning. It is the lecturer alone who is responsible for summative assessment during the work process and for the final formative assessment (Biggs and Tang 2011).

The lecturer mediates in that which concerns the change of *community* from an academic to a commercial one. It is a *division of labour* through which the *subject* gains the right to attribute to herself the discoursal identity of "legitimate" author. In the apprentice's profile, this authority is also assigned to the peer group, whose members have a similar authority as the lecturer in this regard. In both profiles, however, knowledge about anything outside of content and style, such as exploring prototypical language use in a sociocritical writing discourse to discuss ideology, or social issues, are outside of what the course should be about. Therefore, the function of the lecturer and of the critical reflection text are reduced to strategic *tools* rather than *tools* for learning. Short texts with brief comments to the questions asked are handed in, probably only because submitting the completed assignment is a prerequisite to get course credits.

Group work is primarily part of a mediating process between a model reader outside of the community of the course and the *subject* in the course. The *division of labour* is such that the *subject* writes *for* her response group, not as a part of or together with it. Also, there is a difference in how the profiles express attitudes to delivering feedback to others. In the author's profile, this is expressed as rather tough rules for how to give a reader's response.

37. Rules for reader's response

> […] The most important thing is to create a liberal attitude, and an atmosphere where everybody understands the difference between the text and the person. No polite praising. […] (Michael)

In example (37), Michael expresses rules for text-oriented feedback. His view here is that the group shall disregard what they may need to keep

face, or self-esteem. There should be "[n]o polite praising" in their attitude to working with feedback. In other words, Michael expects the *subjects* to be capable of keeping a professional distance from their texts. How you address (Ivanič 2006: 14) the writers is unimportant, according to Michael. What counts is the quality of the text, not the writers' emotions. The *subject* who gives a response must not be intimidated by "politeness" (i.e., by consideration for the *subject* who receives the criticism). Instead, the *division of labour* is such that it is everyone's responsibility to "create a liberal attitude" and be prepared to withstand sharp criticism. It is a *division of labour* similar to the relationship between an author and a publisher, where the publisher sets the standards for "good" and commands manuscripts for certain markets from the author. In such a setting, the author is expected to handle "the difference between text and the person" and not to be concerned with emotions that criticism may stir.

In the apprentice's profile, the attitude is less competitive, or "professional," and the *subject* is inclined to support other group members, even to admire their work.

38. Admiring peers

> [...] I was super impressed by the other solutions. [...] (Linda)

In example (38), Linda expresses genuine appreciation, as she "was super impressed" by the texts written by the other students. This attitude signals trust in her peer group's capacity for producing good writing. With such faith in them, it becomes possible to confide one's own texts to them and rely on them as competent readers and response givers. The *division of labour* between *subject* in the author's profile and in the apprentice's profile sometimes is like that of to a master–apprentice' relationship, described by Lave and Wenger (1991; Wenger 1998) as *legitimate and peripheral participation*: The apprentice learns from the master, the author, by taking part at a distance, imitating to become a master later on. In my data, in the apprentice's profile, the master is often described as a peer in the response group and depicted in the

reflection text as an authority with expert status. Thus, address, how others talk to us, and attribution, how they talk about us, have considerable impact on the social patterns in the groups, on *rules* that will influence the *division of labour*. Certain tasks, such as giving feedback, as in (37), seem to depend on ideas about discoursal identity that *subjects* attribute to one another. As we have seen, the question of discoursal identity is negotiated with the lecturer in the author's profile, and outside of the group whereas in the apprentice's profile, the *subject* is inclined to attribute such authority to the peer group that their own voice or autonomy may be threatened.

39. The subject's autonomy

> […] there is a risk that [...] you start to listen more to the group than to yourself. […] (Madeleine)

Madeleine in example (39) expresses a conflict in the *division of labour* between her and the response group, as if "there is risk" that her own voice will be silenced when she begins "to listen more to the group than to" herself. It seems from this example that Madeleine would like a more dialogical *division of labour*, where she can decide for herself about her own text. This *object* must be said to be more in line with *rules* for a *community* such as a course in creative writing, but perhaps not a commercial publisher. Differences in view of the *division of labour* between the profiles in genre-oriented position basically mirror differences in *motive* between them. This is also shown in example (40), where the group is given a mandate to serve as partner in a dialogue similar to what Madeleine implicitly requests in (39) to decide for herself, in dialogue with others. Torun, too, wants the group not to decide but to advise about choices in matters of content and style, as shown in example (40).

40. The function of the group

> […] In the group we talked about the importance of time and setting for the plot to be realistic and plausible. […] (Torun)

Torun reports in (40) about a group discussion regarding content and style. The fact that this theme appears in the reflection text implies that it is worth mentioning because it is important. The *subject* seems to advocate a *division of labour* where the group discusses "the importance of time and setting for the plot to be realistic and plausible." Such a *division of labour* can come only if competence to add knowledge to discussions about overarching narrative principles is attributed to the peer group. The image of *the division of labour* is similar to the one envisioned by Vygotsky (1978: 84ff.) in his theory about the zone of proximal development, where a pupil learns from another, only slightly more advanced pupil (see Hoel Løkensgard 2000: 95f. about peers as pedagogical support), rather than the professional expert–apprentice relationship expressed in the author's profile in (15).

Themes in the texts referring to relationships between the *subjects* in a local *community*, such as the response group, can be interpreted as signs of learning, linked to negotiations about identity—for example, expert–peer identities, as described. Identity, however, is never mentioned by Lave and Wenger (1991) or by Vygotsky (1978) in his extremely influential theory. Vygotsky discusses under what conditions children can imitate someone more advanced than themselves at a particular point in time. It is imitation, not identification, that is the basis for learning, according to Vygotsky (1978: 86ff.; 1999: 329ff.). However, my research indicates that identification precedes imitation. The issue of who you want to imitate and identify with is paramount to what you wish to imitate and learn. The positions in my data illustrate this phenomenon. When in the genre-oriented position the *subject* in the author's profile, for example, identifies with a professional author, and the peer group is defined as a test panel, very likely no identification with peers takes place, and, as a consequence, no imitation occurs. Neither does imitation seem to occur in the apprentice's profile if, for example, the peer group has been attributed such high status that the autonomy of the *subject* is threatened. This can be see in example (39) when Madeleine reports uncertainty about who she should listen to and, implicitly, what *rules* should have priority: her own right to autonomy or *rules* about quality in texts advocated by some members of her group.

Outcome in the Genre-Oriented Position

In the genre-oriented position, the *object* is conceptualized as writing narrative texts and trying them out on readers. The *subject* distributes the narrative text to the response group and to the lecturer and gathers response from the readers. The *subject* makes certain changes of content and style after the responses, then hands in the narrative text and the critical reflection text. The *subject* (possibly) reads literature from the reading list that is considered handy and useful. (See Sects. 6.1.1 and 6.1.2.) The *subject* also mediates between the course content and the lecturer by evaluating how well the assignment has served her, and she suggests improvements.

In the genre-oriented position, the (activity system of a) university function is expressed as an agent who arranges a course in creative writing; it is a vocational, authors' training course offering teaching and learning aimed at increasing the *subject's* skill in writing a certain narrative genre intended for the commercial book market. The strategic function of the university, as a provider of course credits, is also expressed, although implicitly. Generally, the texts are short, which may be a sign of attributing a strategic function to them, as a mediating *tool* between the *subject* and the university. The *rules* stipulate that they must be handed in for the students to receive their credits. (However, students are free to write as much as they like in the texts in this project.) In the genre-oriented position, the communicative function of the critical reflection texts mainly serves as a brief report to evaluate the assignment. The text is written like a short summary answering the questions in the critical reflection instructions. The *subject* thereby invokes an implicit *rule* that allows her the right to interpret the vague questions as a *tool* to evaluate how well she has succeeded (author's profile) with the narrative text and to evaluate new handy hints (apprentice's profile). The conceptualization of the assignment is thus linked to ideas about identity, to performance or acquisition of an author's identity. Since the course in creative writing is defined as a vocational course for authors (in different stages of professionalism), the *object* as well as *motive* of the course organizers should mirror this stance, and thus allow such ideas to permeate the teaching and learning activities on the course.

The university and the students have different *objects* and *motive*s. The academic course in creative writing is ruled by documents, where learning objectives are meticulously stipulated, and with an academic epistemology underlying the course content. From these documents, it is clear that there are no *rules* that say that the course in creative writing is an author's vocational training course, where the lecturer serves as mediator of a (market-oriented) knowledge of genre and where students practise writing in a certain type of narrative text type to enhance their writing skills. The *motive* to confirm or change one's discoursal identity does not align with course objectives. Such objectives have a broader focus, and encompass analytical and basically academic and scientific perspectives on writing and on language. Course content such as, for example, literary composition becomes the central *object* for the *subject* in the genre-oriented position, driven either by a *motive* to confirm or to change the discoursal identity. The lecture, in contrast, defines the assignments in literary composition as a mediating *tool* to enhance critical awareness of prototypical ideas and frames in narrative texts. Thus, there is a contradiction in expectations regarding learning *outcome* of the assignment, caused by conflicting view of knowledge *object*, of *division of labour*, and of the application of *tools.* Even at the collective level of what *community* the *subject* is part of there is conflict, as the *subject* wishes to identify with discoursal identities outside of the university, not with identities within it. There is a risk that such contradictions block learning, if the learning *objectives* are viewed as outside of the discoursal identity. *Objectives* such as critical metareflection, for example, may seem irrelevant, and the only learning *outcomes* will be practical advice, and the only books read will be practical handbooks, unless the university enforces strategic measures such as written exams on all titles on the reading lists. In the genre-oriented position, the critical reflection text tends to function as an evaluating tool and for strategic purposes, to submit the texts in order to get the course credits. That way the text type is never used by the student as a tool to develop perspective transformation and critical metareflection.

6.2   Process-Oriented *Subject's* Perspective (*Subject, Object/Motive, Tools*)

This section introduces the process-oriented position. It is divided into the subcategories empathetic and expressive profiles, as I have separated *object* from *motive*. The presentation begins with *object*, which is shared in the position, whereas *motive* separates the profiles. Discussions of *motive* and use of *tools* in the empathetic and the expressive profiles are presented separately. Finally, the presentations end with a discussion of *community*, *rules* and *division of labour* for both the profiles.

The process of writing is the major orientation of *object* in the process-oriented positioning. The social frame in the critical reflection text is subjective, as in the genre-oriented position, but with a different emphasis. Emotion is a keyword in the content themes of the critical reflection texts. The major concern is with the writer's emotional processes in the act of writing, through which the discoursal identity is formed. The writers seem engaged in the process of trying out different discoursal identities in order to create a unique discoursal self "which they present in their writing", which is a characteristic of Ivanič's (1998: 329) process view of writing discourse. As we have seen in Sect. 6.1, in the genre-oriented position, discoursal identity can be found outside of the *subject*, as a particular and sought-after identity and as an *object* to reach by acquiring certain skills through practice. In the process-oriented position, however, the writer's identity is expressed as genuine, inherent, a not-yet-discovered discoursal identity that can be unearthed through the writing process.

In the process-oriented position, it is mainly the process writing discourse that is constructed in the texts (Ivanič 2004). The act of writing is conceptualized as intuitive, and it is the *subject's* inner processes that will lead to externalization of emotions and opinions through and in writing. It is by *experiencing* feelings that the act of writing can take place. Also, emotions are the way through which the *subject* can discover her true discoursal identity, which previously has been concealed or not yet clearly expressed, as it is the emotions that give rise to texts and inform the *subject* about her true discoursal identity.

One major difference between the genre- and the process-oriented positions lies in ideas about how to become an author. In the genre-oriented position, the way to accomplishment is by (learning to) master the know-how of the narrative genre. In the process-oriented position, the road to accomplishment is essentialist. Identity lies within the subject and accomplishment can be attained by going through affective experiences during the writing process.

Thematically, the critical reflection text consists of reports covering circumstances connected to the writing process. Different emotional phases and experiences while writing the moral dilemma, for example, are reported. It is the act of writing that receives comments rather than the content and form of the narrative. The *subject* in the genre-oriented position is set on a professional role outside of the *community* of the course. In the process-oriented position, the *subject* more clearly orients inwards and places her own processes within the course *community* so that the social frame of the text is constructed as local.

The *object* in the process-oriented position is expressed as the writing process and as social processes in the course. The focus is on merging emotionally into all the course activities rather than working to create reader's effects in the narrative text, as in the genre-oriented positioning. Also, the discourse of uptake is situated locally in the process-oriented position.

41. Locally situated discourses of uptake in the process-oriented positioning

> […] It is fascinating to see that our texts have become so utterly different. Stimulates creativity, it does. […] (Yrsa)

It is the effects of the narrative texts on the *subject* herself that is commented in example (41) as Yrsa uses an evaluating expression, "stimulates creativity," to tell what she learnt from the discussion in her peer group. In other words, it seems that the texts Yrsa reads function as *tools* to spark her feelings. The fact that the texts "become so utterly different" gives rise to emotions; it is "fascinating" and the discovery of differences "[s]timulates" the *subject*. In the process-oriented position, these types of emotional reactions to texts and activities are

salient features and constitute, in fact, the major *object* towards which the *subject* orients the work processes. As we saw in Sect. 6.1, the *subject* in the genre-oriented position focuses on the narrative text as a result, an *outcome* of the skilled writers' conscious work with content and style, and with a view of text as a product intended for a reader outside of the course context. In the process-oriented position, the *subject's* main *object* is emotional: It can relate to the writing process, or the social processes in the group, or to emotional processes evoked by texts. Yrsa in (41) is fascinated by "our texts." She has more of a collective perspective on writing texts than the *subject* in the author's profile. In the process-oriented position, a content theme in the critical reflections expresses genuine interest in what the other students have written. The *subject* is fascinated by the creativity of her peers, "how utterly different" the texts come out, and not primarily how professional or "talented" the *subjects* are. Above all, the text seems to function as *tools* for the s*ubject's* own creative writing process. However, there are differences in *motive* between the *subjects* in the positions. In the empathetic profile, the emphasis is on empathy; in the expressive profile, it is on reaction, which is discussed in the next two profiles, the empathetic and the expressive participants' profiles.

6.2.1   *Motive* and Application of *Tools* in the Empathetic Profile

In the empathetic profile, the *motive* that drives the act of writing is constructed as emotional, or empathetic. It can be defined as a *subject*-essentialist position of the writer's self, and the orientation is directed inwards, towards experiencing emotions and feelings as a writer. The discoursal identity lies dormant within the *subject*, as an unconscious identity, which will emerge through the writing process, which in turn depends on emotional processes involving empathy. The writer's identity in this profile is a fluctuating emotional state rather than a stable *subject* position. Evaluating writing discourses express emotional experiences during the writing process and affects evoked by the dilemma.

42. Evaluating writing discourse topicalizing emotion

> […] to write about the single parent was rather unpleasant, actually. […]
> (Isabel)

In example (42), Isabel associates the writing process, "to write about the single parent," to her emotions. During the act of writing she has used her narrative imagination to merge into the dilemma and to get in contact with her emotions, which seems to have been "rather unpleasant." But the empathetic stance is not restricted to the writing process or the dilemma. Social circumstances of the course play an important role in the profile. This can be observed in evaluating discourses relating to the local context and social procedures involving writing, as in example (43).

43. The social writing process in focus

> […] To be given the same assignment, and to solve it on your own, and then
> to meet and present the different solutions, is always exciting. […] (Ida)

In (43), Ida highlights the social writing process in her reflection text. She attaches special value to the social aspects of the assignment, to start on her own and then continue to work with her peers in the group. It seems that not only the comparative stage of the assignment where the solutions are presented is "exciting." The social encounters "to meet" seem important too, because they inspire emotions.

Time also is a salient theme in the empathetic profile. Focus is on the social aspects of the work process, the initial stage, to be "on your own" and "then to meet." (See time discussed as a central *tool* for learning in Burgess & Ivanič 2010.) Different emotions in connection with the work process are registered, as in example (44), where the act of writing and circumstances in the immediate writing context are reported in the critical reflection text.

44. The impact of context

> […] Often I include things that have happened in reality in my texts, for
> example, I may write about what is going on precisely while I am writ-

> ing. Something that I do, or think, or an observation. To me, it is often
> a good way to get started, and get the flow going. […] (Irene)

In (44) time itself, "what is going on," is a theme in focus, expressed as observations of "what is going on" while she writes, as when Irene reports what affects her writing process. Her attention is on the immediate, exterior writing context involving the *subject*, "something that I do," or oriented towards interior processes, to "think or an observation." These processes are described as influenced by the here and now of a particular moment in time, which places the writing discourse in a prototypical romantic paradigm (Ivanič 2004: 225). It is the spur of the moment that inspires the writer and opens up the creative intuitive emotional flow, and is described as a prerequisite to "get the flow going." The entire assignment is construed in that romantic writing discourse by the *subject* and linked to emotional process.

45. The importance of affect for the act of writing

> […] The moment I read about the assignment, a number of different
> emotions came up. I found this very inspiring, and the assignment felt
> down to earth and real. […] (Marja)

Example (45) illustrated how emotions serve to inspire the *subject* in the empathetic profile. To get into contact with affects and emotions is constructed as the hub of the work process, as Marja puts it in (45): "I found this very inspiring." The structure of the assignment in different stages seems to be appreciated; it "felt down to earth and real." Comments such as these can be interpreted as a need to connect to the concrete, "down-to-earth" reality in order to *feel* it to be able to write about it, since it is emotional processes within the *subject* which are vital for inspiration and flow to occur. It is only *in* some sort of experienced emotion that the *subject* in the empathetic profile is capable of writing.

Another specific trait in the profile is the need for creative freedom, which is expressed in evaluating discourses such as in Siri's statements in example (46). To her, it can be frustrating to have to comply with instructions.

46. The importance of individual freedom to the act of writing

> […] I love using my imagination but, the more facts you are given, the
> less room is allowed for that free imagination. […] (Siri)

In the empathetic profile, writing is described as in (46), in verbs expressing affect, "love," and nouns refer to creativity, "my imagination." Strong feelings and full creative freedom are at the centre of the writing process. Inspiration is an absolute necessity if any writing is to take place at all. The *subject* is driven by a desire to engulf in writing to such an extent that it can be difficult to engage in assignments that the *subject* has not chosen herself. In (46) Siri concludes that "the more facts" she has to consider in the assignment, "the less room is allowed for… free imagination," which she finds detrimental to her individual, creative writing process. The way writing is constructed in (46) represents a prototypical view of creative writing. *Learning* is seen as resulting from writing about topics that are of personal relevance to the students (Ivanič 2004: 229). It represents a teaching tradition that has received considerable criticism from writing researchers in the sociocultural school.

Example (46) also illustrates an approach to the use of *tools* specific to the empathetic profile. It is driven by an emotional *motive*, by a desire to engulf in the writing process, thereby getting into contact with an inner, creative flow (Csíkszentmihályi 1992) rather than to create emotional effects on readers. The writing process itself becomes the central tool in the empathetic profile. It can be compared to an engine, dependent on inspiration for fuel to keep up inspirational flow needed to work through emotional resistance. Without flow the work process is in jeopardy.

The narrative imagination can be assigned such importance that it is given a life of its own. The writer may even have to submit to the *motives* and intentions of the fictitious characters.

47. The narrative imagination as *tool*

> […] I decided at an early stage from what perspective, the reader should see
> things, … namely that of the man. […] But as I started to write, the story

developed in a completely different way. I started to tell about Stephen and his little baby. Instead of turning him into a hard and cold character, he became humble and loving. Instead of judging Jessica, he could relate to her in a way which was unexpected to me, to begin with. […] (Elin)

In example (47), the act of writing is described as an intuitive process. Elin starts to write a narrative that soon gains a life of its own. Her intention as a writer has been superseded by the intentions of the characters in the narrative, who have desires of their own. Thus, the narrative "unfolds in a way which was unexpected" to her. Elin seems to follow her text by listening to 'what it wants" by allowing its characters to take over in surprising ways. The tools are thus used with an emphasis on empathy in (47), on flow and creativity and on getting into contact with an undiscovered inner world.

Emerging into the act of writing in this way can be so absorbing that the *subject* becomes incapacitated and unable to read her own text at all, and thus dependent on the response group to grasp it.

48. The response group as a *tool* for externalization

[…] What on earth have I written? […] I didn't have a clue. But I think that my response group understood. […] (Tea)

The reception discourse in example (48) indicates that it is Tea herself who is the ultimate reader of the text, as she is its writer but "didn't have a clue" about what she has written. In her first question, the sideward glance is directed inwards, through the question that Tea puts to herself: "What on earth have I written?" The choice of tense, "what … have I written," indicates that in the act of writing the critical reflection text, she actually *orchestrates* her emotions in a new writing process, where emotions are used as a way to distance herself from an experience of an earlier writing experience. (See Sect. 7.3.1 in Chap. 7.) Through the change of text type, Tea creates a sort of historical present, which helps her to distance herself from her narrative work, and to rediscover it by writing about it in a different text type.

Tea also uses the empirical readers in her response group, but not as a test panel to find out what effects the text will have on them, as in the

genre-oriented positioning. Rather, she uses them to create the distance needed for herself to become a reader. This difference in stance is exemplified in (48), where Tea "didn't have a clue" but her "response group understood." The group has served as a *tool* for Tea to change her internal perspective as writer, to the external perspective of reader. The example shows that writers in the position become vulnerable, as they depend on the social environment to break away from a trance-like writing process. The response group gets a significant role as a *tool* for externalization.

In addition, both in (47) and (48), the passing of time is expressed as a crucial *tool* in the process. In (47), it is the time before, during and after the act of writing which is thematized. In (48), it is the time between the act of writing a narrative text and the response that follows that finally result in externalization of the narrative, according to Tea.

As in the apprentice's profile, the group is important as an inspirational *tool* in the empathetic profile. The group is reported to be competent as writers, and their narrative texts are described as interesting to read.

49. Empathy as a *tool* for inspiration

> […] I felt [...] an urge to imagine myself in the shoes of the character that this guy had written about. […] (Freja)

The "urge" to change perspective in example (49) points at an empathy-driven *motive* and an inclination to try out new ideas. In Freja's case, the "urge" is oriented towards someone else's text, in fact to "walk in the shoes of the character," to *live* such a perspective in someone else's story. The empathetic *motive* drives the *subject* to new experiences that way. It is also likely that "this guy's text" serves as an inspirational *tool* to start writing new texts. In the empathetic profile, the critical reflection texts show signs of fascination about the multitude of different worlds that appear in the narratives, turning them into *tools* for new emotional experiences and inspiration.

50. Reading as a *tool* for inspiration

> […] Everybody had solved [the dilemma] in different ways and it was inspiring to read all the different solutions. […] (Theo)

The narrative texts written by other students are recurrent themes in the critical reflection texts, as in example (50), where Theo notices that the *subjects* have solved the dilemma "in different ways." Just as in (49), this example indicates that the *subject* finds reading "all the different solutions" inspiring, probably because they have generated a creative spark, which is much appreciated and motivating in the empathetic profile.

A problematic *tool*, however, is the group and group processes. The dependence on other *subjects* in the search of one's discoursal self can lead to feelings of vulnerability.

51. The *subject* as vulnerable

> […] Before I read my text aloud to the others, it felt as if the paper was burning between the covers. […] (Tea)

Example (51) illustrates working with establishing a subject's position. It is a dramatic moment of uptake for Tea, when she is about to meet herself through her readers, to the extent that "the paper was burning between the covers." She assigns the group considerable competence, not only as readers but also as friends, or midwives, even. In this way, the group is constructed as a *tool* for delivery of oneself as a writer.

It is common for students to restrict the interaction with peers to those they happen to sit beside and not to extend social circles any further. This is particularly the case in the empathetic profile. If the *subject* uses discussions in large groups as a *tool* at all, approaching the large group is expressed as a process in two or more steps, where different *tools* are involved.

52. The group discussion as a *tool*

> […] Ernst in my class came up with an original and exciting approach that I think is a little taboo. […] It made me stop and think for a bit […] And a different matter was the perspective … telling the story from the woman's point of view [a mother as the single parent of the dilemma] which is what most people probably did. […] (Steve)

In example (52), the "class," as Steve puts it, really refers to the narrative *texts* and to the discussions about them. The narratives seem associated with the writers in the social room of the course and with the way in which Steve remembers their stories. First he uses one individual student, "Ernst." Then he makes some general observations involving everyone, "most people." Steve thus begins his thought process with someone that he knows by name before he draws conclusions about the other course participants. The large group is frequently referred to as too large, or frightening, or, as in (52), rather approximately, "most people," and their comments are referred to vaguely, "probably." The example illustrates a type of abductive reasoning: The *subject* makes an approximate estimation of how other *subjects* have solved the dilemma through means of a single or so observation of someone they sat next to. This helps the *subject* to "stop and think for a bit" about what is possible to write about, to reflect about prototypical ideas in narrative, for example, to tell "the story from the woman's point of view."

The application of *tools* in the empathetic profile is influenced by processes in the social room and driven by the *motive* to generate inspiration, as this gives rise to a creative writing flow. If such a flow is inhibited, the writing process comes to a halt. In a social view of creative writing, one may think that all students are equally affected by writers around them. However, I would argue that (49) is a representative example of a particularly socially receptive kind of writing student, which is what the empathetic profile illustrates.

6.2.2   Motive and Application of *Tools* in the Expressive Profile

In the expressive profile, the *motive* for the act of writing is constructed as emotional but externally oriented towards articulating opinions and emotions, whereas in the empathetic profile, the orientation is directed inwards. Just as in the empathetic profile, in the expressive profile, the discoursal identity lies dormant within the *subject*, as a subconscious identity, and it emerges through the writing process, which in turn depends on expressions of emotional processes. Evaluating discourses in

the expressive profile can be extensive when textual themes give rise to strong opinions.

53. Reactions and opinions

> […] In my view, the norm that stipulates two sexes is irritating, absurd, and destructive. […] (Leo)

Example (53) illustrates how the *motive* is driven by a need to *express* oneself. Expressions of opinion are significant for the critical reflection texts in the expressive profile, as in (53), where Leo seems very engaged in the discussion of gender norms. The engagement is constructed through the choice of theme, of course, and also through the strong values in the evaluating discourse, with words such as "irritating, absurd, and destructive." The theme is a response to one of the questions in the assignment: "Account for a couple of thoughts from today's seminar discussion," and the evaluating discourse seems to be a reaction to what has been said about gender norms during the discussion. The emphasis in the expressive profile is much more extroverted than in the empathetic profile. It seems as if emotions give rise to a need to express them rather than to "live" them, as in the empathetic profile. The critical reflection texts are filled with different verbs for opinion, such as "in my view" in (53). Expressions for different kinds of emotional reactions linked to the writing process and to the social processes in the group (54) are addressed as central themes for discussion in the critical reflection text.

54. Freewriting to express oneself

> […] here it was okay to just let go and babble away. […] (Torun)

As in the empathetic profile, example (54) illustrates a well-established prototypical view on creative writing as freewriting, aiming at externalizing the writer's thoughts and ideas (Elbow 1994). This way of writing is constructed in a process-oriented writing discourse (Ivanič 2004: 225). The emphasis is not primarily on the stylistic quality of the text

produced but on the process of expressing oneself and of externalizing one's thoughts on paper through *freewriting* (Elbow 1973, 1994). There are no demands on the writer to produce good writing. Instead, the writer is free to "just let go and babble away," as Torun aptly describes the process. It is a writing process that has been defined (Elbow 1994: 26) as the first step in the exploratory work of writing to discover, *exploratory writing*, aimed at expressing thoughts and feelings. This step precedes a second stage of the writing process, where the text is revised and the thought process is given room to develop. In (54) and in other similar examples in my data, needs to "just let go" and simply to "babble away" are salient themes. Another significant feature in the expressive profile is the meandering, associative form of the critical reflection texts. Often the reflections are long (Torun handed in the longest text of all in the study), probably as a result of an emotionally driven *motive*. In the data where no length was specified, the reflection texts are longer in the expressive profile than in all the other positions, and sometimes they are very long indeed (exceeding 6,000 words, compared to a critical reflection text from a *subject* in the author's profile consisting of 170 words).

The length of the texts mirrors a central, communicative function of the reflection text, which is to use it for freewriting rather than to let it serve strategic purposes—to complete the assignment to get the credits, for example. This expressive, external *motive* leaves traces in the application of the *tools*. The assignment is perceived as a topic for debate rather than as an eliciting moral dilemma for experiencing empathy.

55. The moral dilemma as a topic for debate

> […] I did not see this assignment as a dilemma, and I did not get the impression that any of my course mates did either, at least nobody in my group did. Instead we saw the dilemma as a starting point, as a stepping-stone or something. […] (Leo)

Example (55) illustrates that the narrative writing assignment is looked upon as a *tool* for taking up a certain viewpoint in a topic for debate or to prepare for an antagonistic polemic stance, as when Leo states that

there were no reasons to "see this assignment as a dilemma." This is quite a remarkable statement in view of the unusually animated discussion that was going on at this particular seminar when the dilemma was discussed. However, Leo does not seem particularly interested in emotional or empathetic aspects of the dilemma, nor does he seem to notice the emotional turbulence in the large group that I myself witnessed at the time. On the contrary, Leo uses the small group to confirm his opinion that there is no dilemma: "I did not get the impression that any of my course mates did either." I would argue that Leo denies or ignores that the assignment is regarded as a dilemma by the majority of students. One way to construe such a denial, somewhat paradoxically it may seem, is to view the viewpoint as generated by an emotionally driven *motive* to discuss and to voice one's personal point of view. The *subject* in (55) seems to refer to a starting point or an opinion that is already in place, ready to be voiced. The topic seems to be selected from previous experience, as it is associated to the autobiographical self: In the expressive profile, such an emotional *motive* influences how the *tools* are used.

56. The autobiographical perspective

> […] I just let go of my feelings, and took it from there […] It is okay to leave your child if you do it to serve mankind. […] (Leo)

In example (56), the narrative text becomes a *tool* to *express* an opinion based on emotion. The close link between the narrative text and the *subject's* opinions is externalized in an evaluating discourse: "It is okay to leave your child." This discourse follows immediately after the utterance that the *subject* "just let go of my feelings." It is an expressive way to use the narrative text, which is different from that of the *subject* in the empathetic profile, who uses the narrative as a *tool* for empathy and to imagine what it would be like to walk in someone else's shoes. In the critical reflection text, the *subject* in the expressive profile develops viewpoints about engaging questions—for example, as in example (57) about advantages with putting your children in nursery school.

57. The critical reflection as a *tool* to express opinions

> […] To [...] leave your child at a nursery school [...] need not at all be a bad idea [...] but [...] a positive choice for children and for adults [...] my daughter is ever so happy at the nursery. […] (Erika)

Example (57) illustrates the tendency in the expressive profile to react, as well as the tendency to link the topics discussed to personal experience and to voice one's opinions in the matter. Erika frames the moral dilemma very closely to her autobiographical self, as a mother who leaves her young child in a nursery school. Primarily it is through personal experience (57) that the *subject* finds support for general statements (e.g., that Erika's daughter "is ever so happy at the nursery".) At some level, Erika thus implies that child care in nurseries can be associated with unhappy and abandoned children. It seems that Erika uses the critical reflection text as a *tool* to voice her personal viewpoint in the matter.

A recurring theme in the critical reflection texts in the expressive profile is the group members and social processes in the group. The group is framed as supportive, on one hand, as in (55), where Leo uses the group as a *tool* to support the interpretation of the dilemma as unproblematic, just like "course mates" did. The *subjects* that Leo actually talked to "nobody in my group" are given a metonymic function as representatives for everyone in a general sense, so that "nobody in my group" becomes an abductive argument to support generalizations—for example, as to how the assignment should be interpreted, as in (55) or to support a certain position, as in (58).

58. The group as a *tool* to create arguments in support of a viewpoint

> […] It does not feel as if any of us who has taken the course this term sees it as particularly problematic to leave a child nowadays. […] (Leo)

The group seems to serve as a cognitive tool. Leo uses emotions—"It does not feel as if any of us"—to estimate the amount of support there is for a certain viewpoint and concludes that everyone views the dilemma in the

same way as Leo. This conclusion is then used in order to state an argument.

However, the group is also depicted as agonistic, as for example when the subject and the group are said to hold different views. In such cases the group functions as a tool for emotional reactions, and seems to help the subject to emphasize a personal viewpoint, by ascribing the group a different one:

59. The group as *tool* for affective expression

> […] YES, at last, somebody in that big group of people said what I wasn't allowed to say during the discussion (Well, good God, I wasn't formally FORBIDDEN of course, but, honestly, would people really have coped if I had?) […] (Leo)

Example (59) exemplifies the group dynamics between the *subject* and the other course participants, and the attitude is ambivalent. In (58), we saw that other *subjects* can serve as *tools* to gain support for a particular point of view. Here, in (59), the function of the group is polemic. The group is described as unreliable, or weak. Leo does not know if opinions will gain acceptance or not—"would people really have coped," as he expresses the situation in (59). In this particular example, Leo refers to another discussion outside of the seminar [elsewhere in the reflection text], where there has been an animated debate questioning the dualism of gender. This experience is used as a supportive argument (authority). Somebody, [a well-known Finnish Swedish professor in gender studies, Tiina Rosenberg] "at last" voiced an untraditional view on gender, one with which Leo sympathizes. Leo uses this experience to create distance to the peer group and create a certain bond to me as an (intellectual?) equal. The group probably would not "have coped" with Leo's claims about gender. It seems that Leo assumes that I *will* cope though, since I am the reader of the critical reflection text, and Leo of course knows this. Ambivalence in regard to the group, as described in this example, is a salient feature of the texts in the profile. The lecturer replaces the function of the group as partner in the discussion. The group and group processes are so important in the expressive profile, in fact, that they recur as

themes throughout the reflection texts. For example, when the *subject* addresses the writing process, the reactions of the group are associated with expected readers' reactions. However, it is not the text that appears to be the focus of the reader's attention, in the mind of the *subject*, but the *subject's* ideas about what the model reader may think about the writer as a person.

60. Local reception discourse

> […] In that way, it becomes easier to write freely, [if] you mask yourself [the main character in the narrative is "masked" as a man, not a woman, as the *subject*], the readers focus on the text. They won't be thinking oh, is Daphne really such an unpleasant person because the story, surely must be taken from personal experience, at least to some extent. […] (Daphne)

In example (60), Daphne casts a sideward glance at the empirical readers in her response group, as she expresses that she has to mask herself by changing the sex of the main character. That way she avoids the disapproval of the group and gains access to a mental space to "write freely." Daphne seems convinced that her readers believe that what she writes is based on "personal experience, at least to some extent." The *subject* seems to be in very close contact with the model reader during the act of writing. It is as if the model reader were able to look right through the narrative and deem the *subject* as "unpleasant" in the same way as the invented character of the narrative. Therefore, Daphne must censor her writing, so that her peer group "won't be thinking" badly of her, which is very important to her. Here the empirical readers of the group get confounded with Daphne's ideas about the model readers. But her concern is about what the readers will think of the *subject's* autobiographical self, about who she is as a person, behind the text, and not about the quality of the text she has written. A negotiation about boundaries concerning what can be written and what must be kept hidden from others seems to be occurring, when the themes of the narrative text engage the writer in the expressive profile. However, it is not only what other *subjects* think about the *subject*. That is expressed in the reflection texts. The writer's own opinions are a particularly important textual theme.

61. Remarks about the opinions of others

[…] It is easy to feel and to think about things when you do not [as does the *subject*] have your own personal experience of a certain issue. [...] It is easy. […] (Beatrice).

In example (61), Beatrice indirectly says that it is the group members who voice opinions about "issues" that they "do not … have … personal experience of," thereby indicating that she herself has opinions about them, since it emerges as a theme in her text. The social dynamics of the course context serves as a *tool* to put into words one's own opinions, thereby confirming a subject positioning. In (61), this is illustrated when Beatrice points to the fact that without "personal experience," it is easy to "to feel and to think" in what she views as an unreflected way. Between the lines emerges her own opinion, which is that, in fact, it is very difficult to judge others. This she knows from personal experience of complex issues.

62. The importance of personal experience

[…] I agree that mosquito bites are worse than tiger attacks. I can relate to the mosquito bites, because I have experienced bites as well as attacks. […] (Beatrice)

In example (62), Beatrice uses a novel from the reading list as a supportive argument to confirm the *subject's* viewpoint. It seems there has been tension between Beatrice and other group participants. The text mirrors an argument between these model *subjects* and their perceived points of view. Here the writing process becomes a central *tool.* As in the empathetic profile, it resembles a metaphorical engine, driven by the writer's reactions to the eliciting dilemma of the narrative writing assignment and the social processes, for example, at seminars. Group processes become cognitive and emotional *tools* in the act of writing, to put into words a clear, voiced, personal viewpoint. This is done in retrospect, after the seminars and other social gatherings. It is thus possible to construe the critical reflection text as a *tool* that, at least in parts, replaces group

discussions. The *subject* expresses insecurity in regard to reactions from the local community of the group. Therefore, the *tool* discussion during the seminar is rejected. Instead the critical reflection text, which will be read only by the lecturer, is used. Preferences like these indicate that an authority figure is needed for the *subject* to feel safe and also, that writing rather than oral expression seems a safer option.

63. The critical reflection text as a substitute for oral expression

> […] I much prefer to babble and blab in writing than in real-life conversations. I think it's scary, and difficult to get a say in the conversation with so many people at the seminars. […] (Torun)

In many reflection texts, the writers report that it has been a struggle to relate to the opinions of peers and to make room to express their own points of view. Often the group dynamics give rise to emotions—"It's scary, and difficult" as Torun puts it in (63)—particularly in big groups. She "much prefers" to express herself "in writing than in … conversations." The critical reflection text in the expressive profile thus gains communicative function as a *tool* for freewriting, allowing personal thoughts and feelings to be explored without "scary" interference by others. Different perspectives on the assignment can be clarified by the *subject* herself while writing. The associative, meandering style suggests that opinions and thoughts are written down as they occur during writing. A characteristic of the text is redundancy. Another salient feature is a specific structure. After a few initial paragraphs, the text takes the format of a long letter to the editor, as in (57) about a specific topic of debate, such as the beneficial effects of bringing up children in nursery schools or some other topic associated in some (sometimes remote) way to the eliciting dilemma that the *subject* is interested in. Long reflection texts are thus signs of the communicative rather than strategic function of the text, and with a sideward glance at the lecturer as a reader and supportive mentor. It may even be that the lecturer becomes the only receiver of the *subject's* opinion when the group is perceived as problematic.

Another significant feature in the expressive profile is to express a need for change and variety.

64. Expressing interest in change and variety

> […] the assignment has been rather protracted and strenuous at times.
> […] (Leo)

In an evaluating discourse in example (64), Leo concludes that working with the same assignment to explore a moral dilemma for a long period of time has been hard—"protracted and strenuous," a burden. The example illustrates a stance taken where the *subject* seems to use the *tools* in a process-oriented way. The tools serve the function of stepping-stone to express opposing views or viewpoints different from others in the group, and this in turn seems to spark the writing flow. A problem, then, is that once the *subject* has finished reacting, the writing process will stop, and the *subject* will consider the assignment complete and be ready to move on to the next task.

To sum up, in the expressive profile, the critical reflection text functions as a *tool* for freewriting, to express reactions and put into words opinions that arise as a result of social processes. The *subject* emerges in the act of writing. That way, contact with an inner discoursal self is formed, as part and parcel of reactive writing processes. The text becomes long and associative, a receptor of emotional reactions. It is ascribed a communicative function rather than a strategic one. The act of writing is constructed as a *tool* to clarify a different viewpoint to the *subject* personally rather than to others.

6.2.3   *Community*, *Rules*, and *Division of Labour*

In what follows, the relationship between the *subject* in the process-oriented position and the *community* is accounted for. It is the encounter between the *subject* and the collective levels of the activity system which is described, and the perspective is that of the *subject*. The collective

aspects of the encounter are expressed through the concepts *community*, *rules,* and *division of labour*.

Community

In the process-oriented position, the course *community* mediates between the subconscious discoursal identity of the *subject* and the discovery of a conscious and unique discoursal identity. The analyses of evaluating discourses as well as discourses of reception and textual themes point at an implicit *rule* which stipulates that a genuine discoursal identity will be unearthed as the *subject* emerges in all the different processes offered during the course. The driving force is oriented towards gaining acceptance to enter the local *community* of the course, not to exchange it for some external *community* as expressed in the genre-oriented position. The position taken by the *subject* is clearly ambivalent, as it oscillates between demands for individual freedom versus an orientation towards forming part of the collective, local *community*. Salient topics in the critical reflection texts are the social climate in the group and relationships to other *subjects*. Also, special focus is given to *rules*, in particular rules concerning procedural matters, such as the *division of labour*. The text focus on who is supposed to do what, and how much or how little time and space should be distributed to different *subjects.*

65. Procedural questions

> […] I like group discussions very much indeed, provided that they take place in a large group. If you are in a small group, there will be pressure on everyone to say something, and it is never a good idea to force people. For example, in a small group, starting up the discussion can be a bit slow, and there will be silence, and a tense atmosphere. […] (Embla)

Example (65) illustrates a conflict between regulations at individual and at group level. It is expressed in an evaluating discourse regarding the *division of labour* that follows from the *rules*. Embla claims that group "pressure" in small groups "is never a good idea." This statement is used

as an argument to claim *rules* in support of individual freedom. The *division of labour* should be such that Embla is freed from the duty to take part in the group discussion. At the same time, she must take into account her duty to contribute to the collective of the group, to avoid "silence, and a tense atmosphere." It seems that Embla is preoccupied with an internal discussion about what can be considered a reasonable *division of labour* in a group discussion. She weighs these social demands against what she can accept as reasonable infringements on her personal freedom. In this specific example (65), it is interesting that Embla seems to experience more pressure in a large group than in a small one, as the opposite is a more common position in my data. Clearly, the *rule* that stipulates a duty to contribute is stronger in a small group, and Embla wants to renegotiate the *division of labour* by arguing about group size.

66. Group size

> […] In a big group, on the other hand, there will always be *somebody* who doesn't have a problem with striking up a discussion […] and then other people will follow. That way, with a bit of luck, you'll end up with everybody in the group […] engaged in a lively discussion, where you'll hear new thoughts all the time, and there will be new perspectives, and this gives you sooo much […] I really *love* discussions […] in big groups […] I [can] give room for my a thoughts in peace and quiet without any strong pressure […]. (Embla)

In example (66), Embla describes a *division of labour* that makes it possible to exercise the personal right to be exempted from the collective *division of labour*. Embla wants to participate, because the group discussion "gives you sooo much," but it is participation on her own terms. The emotionally driven *motive* is constructed in an individualistic stance, which permeates the relationship to the *community* locally in the group processes as well as in the overarching view on how teaching and learning should be best designed. There is an ambivalence in the social encounters with the community of the course, but there are no references to course external *communities* in the reflection texts in the process-oriented position.

Rules Based on Epistemological Beliefs

Epistemological beliefs in the process-oriented position are basically essentialist, Socratic.[2] They originate in the idea of inherent knowledge and competence, which can be "delivered" through free and inspiring work. In the process-oriented position, the course in creative writing is perceived as a course in personal development, where a previously unknown discoursal identity can be unearthed. This does not mean, however, that questions of style and language are not topics frequently referred to in the process-oriented position, but evaluating writing discourses construct themes such as style, or good writing, as a matter of personal emotion. Writing results depend on inspiration, as the implicit *rule* stipulates that good writing skills come as results and consequences of emotions. It is emotions that make it possible for the *subject* to gain access to an inner writing flow and a true discoursal self. For these reasons, the *subject* has a right to expect that teaching and learning should facilitate and encourage emotional processes within the writers.

It is not until at the moment of uptake, when the text is read by the empirical readers, that it will be established whether the *subject* will pass the test as author (Ivanič 2006: 13). In the process-oriented position, however, it is not only the text that is reviewed by the readers at this moment. The *subject's* personal characteristics are also up for scrutiny through the text, not merely the subject's knowledge regarding genre. In the process-oriented position, evaluating discourses centre around the reader just as in the genre-oriented position, with the difference that it is the *subject's* emotional processes and comments about being evaluated as a *subject* that are expressed.

One *outcome* of the course is personal development through emotional experiences in connection to writing. Implicit *rules* seem to stipulate that the *subject* has the right to emotional experiences, to devote herself, and to express herself, to a substantial amount of individual agency. The *rules* are based on the epistemic belief that the writer should be given unlimited access to her individual creative writing process, because uninhibited process writing will *result* not only in personal development (Ivanič 2004: 225) but also in cognitive development. This is an epistemic belief that is

very close to what can be found in Elbow: "[…] unplanned narrative and descriptive exploratory writing (or speaking) will almost invariably lead the person spontaneously to formulate *conceptual* insights that are remarkably shrewd (Elbow 1994: 26)." Elbow emphasizes the importance of spontaneous, "unplanned narrative and descriptive exploratory writing," regardless of text type. His epistemic stance is mirrored more or less identically in the data in the process-oriented position, where spontaneous writing is of crucial importance to the *subjects*. However, it is creativity, emotions, and opinions that are salient themes, not "conceptual insights." When such insights occur in the texts, they function as confirmations of emotions or opinions that the *subject* already holds, and they do not necessarily generate new perspectives and new knowledge. Yet confirmations of one's own viewpoints may emerge as new insights, "remarkably shrewd" from the *subject's* own perspective, and valuable for that reason.

To sum up, the *subject* in the process-oriented position constructs a process-oriented view in regard to the guiding *rules* of the course. The results in terms of teaching and learning is that the *subject's* writing process is at centre stage, to be provided and cared for. Through an uninhibited writing process, original writing will emerge from the *subject's* unconscious self. The act of writing becomes a method to deliver a discoursal identity hidden within, by ways of the maieutic of inspiring educational instruction. The course's outcome in terms of learning thus need not be to explore the subject of creative writing through the assignment but to explore the *subject* herself.

Rules for Teaching and Learning in Terms of Content and Methods

Teaching and learning should be aimed at creating a state of creative flow within the *subject.* That way, through the act of writing, it becomes possible for the *subject* to project and get into contact with a personal, inherent, and original talent. The processes must be encouraged through teaching and learning methods that generate excitement and pleasure. In the critical reflection texts, these requirements are expressed through recurrent themes and discourses of evaluation related to *rules* and work procedures in the

course, with a particular emphasis on social processes. Evaluating discourses foreground the right to creative freedom and the right to satisfy the *subject's* need for excitement through the writing activities. There is thus more emphasis on effects on the *subject* as a person than on possibilities to increase the knowledge about genre, for example, or other insights related to learning, through the course. The literature referred to from the reading list is mainly the fiction texts, whereas other texts, theoretical ones, seem not to be preferred as they do not occur as references in the texts. This result indicates that there is a basic *rule* which authorizes the *subject* the right to use the *tools* to indulge in emotions and opinions.

Instruction that blocks the creative flow of the *subject* is viewed as detrimental to the of delivery process, the maieutic, of the dormant discoursal identity and thus is described as ineffective.

67. Counterproductive teaching and learning

> […] I now feel that I can't come up with any more reflections about this assignment, actually. Still, it has been rewarding, at least as a provocation and as a topic for discussion. But to extract more narrative texts from the situation presented in the assignment will not be possible for me. The gate is closed. The cow has gone home and refuses to give milk. (Michael)

The sensitivity to emotional processes in educational situations is illustrated in example (67). All students may naturally experience fatigue, or boredom, but the example shows that in the process-oriented position, such emotions are emphasized. In (67) Michael writes that "it [working with the assignment] has been rewarding," at least the provocative aspects and the discussions. But as the creative work flow fades out, the entire writing process stops: "The cow has gone home" when Michael is instructed to "come up with … more reflections," more than his inspirational flow allows. Neither is it possible for him to write any more narratives about the dilemma.

Michael captivatingly expresses that it is not he who is in charge of his creative flow. Instead, within him is a metaphorical cow, who lives her own life and who "refuses to give milk" if not stimulated in the correct way. Michael cannot help it; without the right conditions, all writing will

stop, creative as well as critical, because "the gate is closed." Working towards new insights thus becomes impossible.

Creative writing and critical thinking are expressed as completely dependent on emotional processes, through themes such as contextual conditions to maximize creativity and flow. According to the (implicit) *rules* that can be deduced in the process-oriented position, teaching and learning that are not varied enough or that, for whatever reasons, evoke boredom or feelings of unease, such as, for example, assignments based on repetition, are perceived to be counterproductive, since they block the entire work process. From this idea follows that *all* the activities and *tools* on the course must be carefully adapted to give inspiration and writing flow at the individual level at a particular point in time.

Division of Labour Among the *Subject*, the Lecturer, and the Group

The way the *division of labour* is constructed in the process-oriented position highlights an affective *motive* to position a subject-"essentialist" writer's self through emotion and reaction. The *division of labour* should serve to support new discoveries regarding the discoursal identity of the *subject.* Unlike in the genre-oriented position, where the focus is on reader's rights to which writers have to submit, in the process-oriented position, there is particular focus on the *subject* as writer and on the individual rights of the *subject* in terms of freedom of expression. Here the *division of labour* is such that the *subject* is described as in possession of the text, and the readers' rights are reduced to a passive consumer of whatever text is presented to them.

The lecturer is given the role of inspirational liberator on one hand and stabilizing watchman on the other. A very important function for the lecturer is to monitor all the different group processes and get to rein them in when they become problematic. It is the lecturer who is to be the mediating *tool* between the social space of the course and the private sphere of the *subject's* inner world. The lecturer should encourage the *subject's* creative processes by offering inspiring teaching and learning settings and inspirational writing assignments under stimulating and secure

conditions. Thus, the lecturer is given a supportive function so that there will be room for the *subject* to do her most important labour, which is to express emotions (empathetic profile) and opinions (expressive profile). For this to happen, the lecturer must keep group dynamics under control, since the *subject* may need protection from other *subjects* and from their reactions and opinions.

68. The right to protection

[…] when other people's opinions become judgmental. […] (Beatrice)

A recurring theme, exemplified in example (68), highlights feelings of insecurity and fear of "other people's opinions," in particular in the expressive profile. To Beatrice they may "become judgmental." She implicitly states that she risks exclusion from the *community,* on which she is dependent, if she voices her opinions, which she desperately needs to do, given her expressive *motive*. Such textual themes signal personal concern with different reactive processes, both those of other *subjects* and of one's own reactions. It may even be difficult for the *subject* to determine who it is exactly who thinks or feels what. In other words, in the process-oriented position, *the division of labour* is such that the lecturer has an obligation to provide a safe and holding environment to facilitate for the *subject* to try out what is at stake, in terms of affect, when entering into the local course community. What can be described as a therapeutic function is attributed to the lecturer. Thus, the lecturer is expected to have professional therapeutic knowledge and capacity to create a holding environment for the *subject*, to avoid the risk of exposure to group dynamics that may seem potentially dangerous. The lecturer becomes one of the most important mediating *tools* between the group and the *subject* throughout the different processes that the *subject* goes through in her encounter with herself. It is this encounter that is the major labour for the *subject* according to *the division of labour* expressed in the position.

The group and its processes are salient themes in the texts. The perspective is local, often limited to the response group (usually consisting of four students including the *subject*), or very local indeed, represented by

a student who happens to sit next to the *subject*. In the texts, such local perspectives can be constructed as a sideward glance at the group or at a particular individual or at the *subject* herself. For example, the response group is expected to take responsibility not only for the text but also for the *subject* through the text. It is basically the *subject*, not the text, who is evaluated by the response group. Situations where the *subject's* text is read by peers thus become moments of uptake, when major parts of the *subject* as person is evaluated.

These strong links between the writer as a person and the text are sometimes verbalized in terms of fear or unease. The *subject* is afraid of exposure to others in the group and seems reluctant to enter into the course *community* and become a *subject* with agency, not simply an object observed by others. Vulnerability is a recurring theme in the critical reflections, expressed in subthemes such as references to the group's social climate and different social processes. It is the labour of other *subjects* to be good comrades and listeners. I have found a few examples where the *subject* wants the lecturer to make sure that the *division of labour* follows rules in accordance with the expressive *motive* in the expressive profile.

69. Conflicting motives

> […] We need more […] guidance if we are to stick to the texts and avoid sliding into unpleasant […] discussions. This is a plea to the lecturer. […] (Maria)

As mentioned earlier, in example (69), Maria states that the lecturer should act to protect her from "unpleasant […] discussions," that is, from other students in the group. The example also illustrates a conflict between different *motives* in a group, as when a *subject* in the genre-oriented position meets a *subject* in the process-oriented position. Tension resulting from contradicting *motives* is expressed in (69) as an unpleasant experience of losing control of the work climate, as it slides, and becomes "unpleasant," to such an extent that the lecturer should do something about it.

For example, a *subject* in the genre-oriented position may find the writer's personal feelings as beside the point or even unpleasant to talk about. In the process-oriented position, on the contrary, the *subject* is keen on talking about emotions and opinions generated by the moral dilemma. Topics such as style, or literary form, "to stick to the texts" as Maria implicitly signals her *motive* in (69), are not necessarily focus of interest for the *subject* in the process-oriented position. My data shows that expressions of feelings and opinions can get very private and emotional. Through her text, Maria formulates "a plea to the lecturer" not to have to take part in such discussions. The *subject* in the process-oriented position, in contrast, may experience the same discussion as filled with creative action and inspiring. Examples (68) and (69) illustrate that different positions can result in conflicts about what *rules* and *division of labour* should be accepted by the group.

Outcome in the Process-Oriented Position

In the process-oriented position, the main work *object* is constructed as unearthing the writer's genuine discoursal identity by engaging wholeheartedly in different processes. The writing process is described as a series of emotions, experienced and *lived* through the narrative text type and emotionally reacted upon in the critical reflection text, where emotions and thoughts are let free. The group activities during the course, discussions, and items from the list of textbooks that the *subject* refers to are all used as *tools* for affective and reactive processes. The *subject* finds herself centre stage in all these different processes and shares experiences and opinions through the text.

70. The balance between monologue and dialogue

[…] What I want to say is not necessarily what other people find most interesting, but that is also why you write: To reach out with your thoughts[...]. In a general sense and, taken to its extreme, this question [the dilemma] is about life and death. In my view, there are four [in the

original] really important basic ingredients in life: love, fear and death …
I suppose that this is what I want to stage in the text, and mostly fear,
because I believe that fear is what puts things into play for us, good or
bad. At least for me. (Adriana)

In example (70), Adriana illustrates and concludes an interesting para-
doxical perspective that permeates the writing in the process-oriented
position: What one writes, she says, "is not necessarily what other people
find most interesting." At the same time, though, Adriana concludes that
her personal *motive* for writing is to express her thoughts, "to reach out."
Perhaps Adriana writes in order to reach out to herself in the first place,
through her work. In many texts in the process-oriented position, the
encounter with the *community* is constructed as a conflict-zone. A balanc-
ing act between monologue and dialogue seems to be at hand, as the
subject expresses ambivalence in regard to becoming part of the *commu-
nity*, its *rules* and *division of labour*.

The university course in creative writing is described as a site for self-
fulfilment through writing. Everything available in the course, teaching
and learning, the social context and the assignments, should all contrib-
ute to support the *subject's* creative processes in order to maximize the
emotional work *object*, according to an implicit *rule* which stipulates that
it is through affect that a true discoursal identity will be revealed. The
course or, rather, the very local *community* consisting of a small group
within the seminar group becomes a mediating *tool* between the interior
and exterior world of the *subject*. A student identity emerges, one that is
dependent on subjective emotions and reactions for inspiration and on
the holding environment from supportive peers and the lecturer. The
identity of an analytically oriented academic student, however, is down-
played. Academic learning *objects* are rarely expressed, other than implic-
itly (the texts are handed in to be graded in accordance with examination
rules). The strategic purposes of the assignment are not a salient theme in
the texts.

The *object* and *motive* in the process-oriented position is to unearth a
genuine discoursal identity through the course in creative writing.
However, such *objects* and *motives* do not align with those found in docu-

ments such as course curricula, which instead emphasize academic *objects* and *motives* to provide a course context and *tools* aiming at critical thinking and, basically, at scientific perspectives on writing. Therefore, a contradiction in the interpretation of *object* and *motive* between students and the *university* is expressed in the position. There are no *rules* to stipulate therapeutic course *motives* for university courses in creative writing. Nor are there *tools* to handle extensive emotional turbulence among students or lecturers, and there is no one to take responsibility for possible aftermaths. By presenting the dilemma in the writing assignment, it is true that the course content elicits questions of a certain moral and emotional character, but the content is primarily aiming at theoretical *outcomes* rather than emotional ones. Learning to think critically through the narrative imagination as a *tool* for empathy (Nussbaum 1997) is in focus from a university perspective, not therapeutic or emotional aims. There is thus a profound contradiction in regard to epistemological beliefs between the student and the university, a contradiction that has repercussions in regard to the *rules* and the *division of labour* within the *community*. In fact, it is not clear what *community* the *subject* participates in, which leads to contradiction at all levels of the activity system (e.g., concerning the application of available *tools*). All these different contradictions can generate feelings of insecurity about the relationship between the *subject* and the other students. In the critical reflection texts, a salient theme is trust or lack of trust in other students in the group. There is anxiety about what other people may think of the *subject*. The same anxiety can also be associated to the lecturer. The peer group as a *community* can assume the characteristics of a psychological therapy group, rather than a work-oriented group of peers who have come together in order to improve their literary writing skills, which is how the *subject* in the apprentice's profile describes the group. In all, it is possible to construe that the *subject* in the process-oriented position ascribes herself the identity of student in a writing course but also, in part, as a client in a therapy group or *subject* in a club for free discussion.

The data points to the risk that the emotional/empathetic *motive* blocks learning *outcomes*, such as critical metareflection. The *rule* which stipulates that a genuine discoursal identity lies hidden within

the individual seems to generate an emotional approach to the assignment and the *tools,* as it is through emotions that *subjects* can unearth their discoursal identity. In the critical reflection texts in the position, there exist an abundance of emotional themes and expressions, suggesting a great need for emotional experiences in the act of writing. It is important for the *subject* that the different stages of the assignment offer varied activities and that they can be completed quickly, to give rise to strong emotions or opinions. The critical reflection text, not just the narrative text, serves as a *tool* in this emotional process. The reflections tend to be long, associative texts, where the writer uses the act of writing to confirm rather than to change emotions and opinions. Stances taken are strengthened, and the texts often lack metacritical perspectives. It seems that emotions, opinions, and the social encounters during the course tend to be the only *tools* that the *subject* uses. Such choices are problematic not only because they do not lead to critical metareflection. The *tools* may also become almost impossible to use if the response group rejects the role of therapy or discussion group, or if the assignment is not sufficiently stimulating. There is a risk that the learning *outcome* will be very limited in the process-oriented position. It is mainly affective *tools* that come to use, and instead of new insights, and meta-perspectives, the *subject* tends to end up with self-confirmation.

A contradiction is revealed in the process-oriented position between the university and the *subject* concerning *object* and *motive.* The *subject* claims that the *rules* permit a strictly subjective and individual process in search of the person's discoursal identity. The university, in contrast, insists on the assignment as a *tool* for practising academic, critical thinking in accordance with curricula, to regulate what work should be carried out within academic courses. One may also question if any knowledge acquired during the course is transferable within the academic activity system. Learning at the university may of course generate personal development, but in connection to subject matter and questions of an academic, general nature. Therefore, it becomes difficult to evaluate if any new insights at a personal, emotional level

from the course in creative writing will be of use in other activity systems, and it is difficult to say if the student has practised academic writing at all.

6.3   Exploratory *Subject's* Perspective (*Subject, Object/Motive, Tools*)

This section introduces the third, exploratory position. It has been divided into the subcategories communicative and strategic profile as I have separated *object* from *motive*, as in the previous positions. The presentation begins with *object* that is shared in the position whereas *motive* separates the profiles. First the communicative profile is presented, followed by the strategic profile. Presentations of *motive* and use of *tools* in the communicative and strategic profiles follow separately. Finally, the presentations end with a continuous discussion of *community*, *rules*, and *division of labour* for both profiles in the position.

  The discovery of the subject matter is the major orientation of *object* in the exploratory position, and the approach is analytical. The social frame is multifaceted. The critical reflection texts can be characterized as showing signs of subjectivity, as described in the genre-oriented and the process-oriented positions. However, one major feature is that the texts also embrace more themes than discoursal identity and emotional reactions in response to the dilemma. Instead, themes orient towards social and theoretical issues in the social world related to the moral dilemma. The texts are filled with a multitude of references to all the social frames of the textual model. It is a student's discoursal identity that emerges in the text, and a very clear analytical approach is expressed. It is an approach in parts described by Elbow (1994) as exploratory, one in which writing aims at discovering new knowledge. The writing discourse that I found in the exploratory position can be defined as a creative sociocritical writing discourse, and it is characterized by merging subjective and emotional content themes with analytical, theoretical themes. (See also Sect. 2.4 in Chap. 2.)

A feature of the critical reflection in the exploratory position is that it contains analyses of other subjects' work and that those texts are discussed in terms of specific examples, but also in more general terms.

71. Writing as analytical work (1)

> […] For example, one person had written a short paragraph, which made her text seem like a sort of poem … which is in line with what Chandler writes about, that it is difficult to separate form from content […]"established conventions […] contribute to the meanings […] with texts." So what happens if somebody pokes around in the subgenres of prose, as in this case? Will that cause confusion amongst readers? […] (Elsa)

Examples (71) and (72 below) illustrated how the *subject* uses a text written by a group member analytically, in (71) to reflect about genre. Someone has "written a short paragraph … like a … poem." Elsa associates the observation she has made to a text in the reading list by "Chandler." Thus, the example illustrates how a student in the communicative profile uses the critical reflection text to analyse observations she has made during reading and in discussions with others in the social interaction and then relates what she has retrieved to theories from textbooks.

The examples also illustrate how thinking in the exploratory position is expressed as a pendulum motion, moving from the specific example to the levels of principle and theory, as described by the British researcher Michael Billig (1996). In her critical reflection, Elsa returns to a specific situation that seems to have occurred in the seminar room, where, quite unexpectedly, someone has received harsh criticism:

72. Writing as analytical work (2)

> […] Perhaps […] it all boils down to expectations, if you expect to drink a glass of water, but too late, realize that it is milk that you have in your mouth, the reaction will be that you spit it out. This reaction will come even if you usually like milk. Perhaps that is why a group member was met with such resistance […] the expectations were not met. […] (Elsa)

"It all" in example (72) probably refers to reactions that a writer Elsa talks about in (71) has faced, reactions Elsa tries to find reasons for. In (72) she continues the analysis by trying a hypothesis about how "established conventions […] contribute to the meanings […] with texts." She applies the principle of conventions to analyse a specific social incident, "a group member was met with … resistance." Interaction in the social context is associated with other similar observations of negative reactions—for example, that "you spit" when confronted with the unexpected—reader's expectations in this case. By reasoning from analogy, Elsa synthesizes her observations and comes out with thoughts about genre theory: Not only do text conventions create meaning, they also create reader's expectations. Elsa then applies these insights to specific observations from the course.

The analytical reasoning illustrated in (71) and (72) characterizes parts of, or entire, critical reflection texts in the data that have contributed to the construction of the exploratory position. I refer to this exploratory writing discourse as subject matter oriented. Two perspectives of creative writing come out in this prototypical writing discourse described in research literature. (See Sect. 2.1 in Chap. 2.) The discourse is not primarily constructing interest in literary style, but it is *exploratory*, aiming at writing to discover subject matter (other than style). In this writing discourse, the text expresses themes that reflect thought processes. Elbow calls it "second-order thinking" (cf. Billig 1996 about thinking and argumentation). The reflection texts are rich in metacritical comments about the dilemma and many references in discussion with one another. This gives the critical reflection text an argumentative, multivoiced, social characteristic (Ivanič 2004: 222f.), where different perspectives are juxtaposed and explored. The act of writing tends to end in a research question or in a hypothesis relating to the dilemma or to reflections about prototypical language use.

The dialogical characteristic of the text is expressed through style and grammar, such as frequent questions.

73. Writing to find questions

> […] It also becomes obvious that the subject of leaving a child is no-no. For how long is it okay to be fed up with your child? Is it even permitted not to love one's child? […] (Elsa)

Evaluating discourses, such as the "subject … is no-no" in example (73) appears in analytical sections of the texts. To Elsa it "becomes obvious" that in no texts or group discussions has she found any simple answers to the dilemma. This conclusion gives rise to researchable questions, for example, about attitudes to parenthood and to the relationship between parent and child. The critical reflection text, stylistically, is characterized by the movement of a pendulum (as described by Billig 1996). The writer moves between specific examples, as Elsa does in her observations of all the different examples, and general levels, as in the concluding questions in (73).

The *object* in the position is to explore the subject matter through the assignment. However, there is a difference in *motive* between the subjects in exploratory positions: In the communicative profile, the emphasis is on the communicative function of the text, to use writing as a way to explore and to understand, whereas in the strategic profile, it is strategic functions that come to the fore—to get good grades, for example. The differences between the communicative and strategic profiles are underlain by ideas about epistemology, academic study as liberal or as goal oriented, which is described next.

6.3.1 *Motive* and Application of *Tools* in the Communicative Profile

The *motive* that drives the act of writing in the communicative profile is constructed as communicative. The concept comes from the Norwegian text linguist Kjell Lars Berge (1988: 54ff.) who describes the act of writing as communicative, when the writer's *motive* for writing is meaning making, to understand through dialogue and analysis. Here the concept serves to describe the discoursal identity expressed in the critical reflection texts where students see themselves as students in a university course in creative writing. The communicative *motive* opens up for a dialogical approach. The *subject* positions herself as observing *subject*, not as an object for other people to observe. An exploratory stance is expressed in the texts as the different stages of the assignment unfold. The social interaction on the course is constructed as unproblematic, as a dialogue between discussion

partners, aiming at perspective exchanges, rather than as a focus group meeting or a session with therapists.

The *subject* is particularly interested in observing patterns by means of comparison. As will be illustrated in examples (74 to 79), this focus on patterns keep recurring in the critical reflection texts as a salient feature regardless of textual theme: whether discoursal identity, the writing process, or the relationship to the group. One particular feature is that an abundance of *tools* is put to use. The textual manifestations of this include a high frequency of recontextualizations, which result in changes of perspective and openings for analytical thinking. The exploratory approach is also marked by signs of persistence, for example, as in example (74), where the *subject* does not seem to tire from working with the long assignment but, on the contrary, wishes for more.

74. Interested in changing perspective

> […] I wanted to change [perspective] and change and change again. […] (Liv)

In (74), Liv explains that she is interested in analytical work, as she problematizes a moral issue by working with it in many steps, and wants to "change … and change and change again." Through the rhetorical figure Liv expresses a desire to explore. Liv wants to change perspectives to learn new things and finds exploring a subject by means of variation and repetition interesting. By repeating the theme but changing the perspective, the *subject* can use triangulation to study patterns in texts: her own texts as well as those written by the other students. That way the narratives can be observed and discussed as empirical data, not only as examples of texts written for literary purposes, where discussions tend to be about readers' responses or style as expressed in the genre-oriented position.

The discoursal identity is constructed as one of many themes for analysis in the communicative profile. For example, it may appear in discussions about the link between autobiographical self and style, as in example (75).

75. Style as an analytical tool

> […] It was also clear that you refer to yourself in the texts. Not that my parents were absent when I grew up. But for example, I wrote […] a scene where the parent (the mother) sits with her son […] in a couch […] As the most natural thing, they sit in the couch that I recall from our home where I grew up as a child. […] (Victor)

Victor in (75) uses his narrative text analytically when he revises it and explores what he has written. He discovers that personal experience subconsciously influences stylistic choices, "you refer to yourself in the texts." Victor has noticed that the parents in his fiction "sit in the couch that I recall from … where I grew up." This example shows that it becomes obvious to Victor that he has based certain textual choices on personal experience, without thinking about it when he wrote the text. His observation is an example of critical metareflection, because the *subject* discovers that categorizations in language follow cultural patterns and that his texts also are under the influence of such forces.

   Observations of a specific example, as in the last example, can develop into critical reflections about language in a more general sense. The influence of a childhood memory in a text (75) is problematized and unfolds into what seems to be a new theoretical insight to Victor in example (76) as he moves on to discuss the influence of cultural perspectives in texts.

76. Style as an unconscious cultural code

> […] To write from different perspectives resulted in an interesting discovery. It goes without saying, and it is self-evident that your own choices influence the texts you write. But I would argue that the assignment clarified this in a very special way. It has become quite obvious that we choose a number of perspectives, but we are not aware of them. […] (Victor)

Example (76) illustrates how the specific discovery in (75) is expanded to a broader discussion. Victor concludes in (76) that "to write from different perspectives resulted in an interesting discovery" regarding perspectives in general. Through his writing he comes to recognize, based on

personal writing experience, that, in general, we are unaware of perspectives, because they are unconscious. This seems to be something that Victor has not thought of before. It seems to serve as a *tool* to draw new conclusions outside of the frames of the text about conditions in the social world. Victor experiences that by working with the assignment, "it has become quite obvious" that people "choose a number of perspectives, but … are not aware of them." The social world is permeated by proto-typical ideas, but people fail to notice them. To Victor, this has become clear "in a very special way," and he expresses that he has learnt something new, or in a deeper sense, a fact that he finds interesting.

The examples mirror an exploratory stance, one where the *subject* changes social frames from one limited to social identity to a collective social frame, encompassing cultural conditions in a general sense, and it is done through the use of perspective change as an analytical *tool.*

In the communicative profile, the way to relate to the *writing process* is analytical too. The *subject* shows particular interest in finding patterns in order to understand. This is exemplified in an evaluating writing discourse in example (77), where the writing of the narrative text is thematized as an analytical process.

77 Writing as an analytical process

> […] This text was important for the development of my writing. It is the first dialogue where I deliberately think about using subtext and literary composition. […] (Liv)

In (77) Liv concludes that the text has meant a lot to her, "for the development of my writing." Here she refers to working with literary composition, which she has come across earlier on, on the course. Through the assignment, Liv now seems to appropriate what she has learnt previously during the course—for example, to "consciously think about using subtext and literary composition." It is thus *how* she has worked, "deliberately" instead of intuitively, and specifically *what* in the assignment that she has focused on, "subtext and literary composition," that she writes about. In the critical reflection, she thus sums up what she found interesting. The themes in the

text are oriented towards trying out different writing *tools* in order to get a better understanding of what she has learnt.

The *subject* oscillates between working with a specific example and with general patterns observed in many examples. There is a marked interest in observing and comparing similarities and differences in the texts and also in comparing what group members say about the texts. In example (78), Liv changes the social frame by changing the theme. Instead of casting a sideward glance at the others to get an idea about her own discoursal identity, as would the *subject* in the process-oriented position, Liv assumes a metacritical perspective on herself as part of the group and, notices, by means of comparison, how they all work and react to the dilemma:

78   Comparing responses

> […] In the group, many of us had "read" assignment instructions that in fact were not there at all, and we were surprised about all the different solutions [to the moral dilemma]. […] (Liv)

Example (78) illustrates the importance of perspective change as a result of recontextualization. However, Liv shifts the social frame of the text when she moves from addressing her own writing (78) to reflect about the act of writing collectively, in the group in (79). It seems that working with others in the group, for *subjects* in the communicative profile, causes an expansion, or learning, as the *subject* manages to move from the subjective frame to the social context of the group as a result of the perspective change caused by the multitude of solutions and strategies observed. Liv confirms that "many of us had 'read' assignment instructions that in fact were not there at all" and that the group members "were surprised" about the different solutions. The group becomes a *tool* for comparative observations and useful for inductive reasoning. Liv's conclusion in (78) is that a number of different solutions that she and other writers rejected can be interpreted as signs of collective, unconscious prototypical ideas that have influenced how the group members have understood the assignment instructions.

My analyses show that change of frame in the texts can be viewed as a sign of learning through expansion, as the *subject* moves from a subjective perspective towards critical thinking. But there are also examples of how shifts of frame are used as an exploratory *tool.* Example (79) shows change of frame used within a narrative text to explore overarching themes in a text.

79 The narrative text as a tool to change frames

> In three texts I have explored Baoki … and the social conditions that she has had to accept… I have explored the idea that you always have choices. At least a choice as to how you can handle the circumstances that are forced upon you. […] (Liv)

In (79), when Liv has read her own texts about "Baoki," she oscillates in her analysis between Baoki as an individual and Baoki in a societal frame: "Baoki … and the social conditions that she has had to accept." This observation is then linked to general, philosophical ideas about individual freedom, "that you always have choices," albeit restricted ones. Through these operations, the dilemma is moved from the specific narrative to social, collective ideas about social conditions and social justice. Such questions could be reframed as research questions for further investigation. Thus, it is *learning* through the act of writing that comes to the fore as the social frames within the critical reflection expand.

In conclusion, the application of the *tools* available through the assignment is seen as unproblematic in the communicative profile, as there are no references to conflicts in the critical reflection texts. The act of writing is expressed as a tool to explore different perspectives on the social consequences of the dilemma. In the recontextualizations of the texts in the writing assignment, the *subject* crosses different social frames and moves between them: the frame of the subjective and specifically autobiographical, the local social frame of the group where different texts are read and discussed, towards a wider, societal frame, where discussions and interpretations are contextualized as societal and cultural conditions that may influence what perspectives become salient in different social settings. The narrative texts of the group are used as *tools* for inductive reasoning,

and as examples to compare and to draw conclusions from about proto-typical patterns in language specifically as well as at a general level, but also to formulate different research questions. The critical reflection texts can be characterized stylistically as free essays, as *tools* for testing different hypotheses by *pro et contra*—argumentation. This is a salient feature of the critical reflection text, and signals a significantly different way of using it, compared to the brief reports found in the genre-oriented position or from the long, meandering, emotional texts in the process-oriented position.

6.3.2   *Motive* and Application of *Tools* in the Strategic Profile

Here I introduce the strategic profile by a short account of its construction; then I follow the same arrangement as the other profiles.

All students in higher education have to submit to *rules*, such as the grading system, which prompts students to hand in assignments in order to get course credits. Such conditions are implicit prerequisites built into the activity system of the university course. In order to illustrate what influence such organizational circumstances may have on student writing on a course such as creative writing, I have created a strategic profile based on a single example, basically. The term "strategic" comes from Berge (1988: 54ff.) and refers to communicative actions aiming at strategic *objects*, such as to produce good writing to get good grades. These strategic themes are almost absent in my data, apart from a few texts, and one in particular, where strategic questions are salient and explicitly raised. The strategic profile thus illustrates basic *rules* that all the students who enrol in academic courses have to comply with; therefore, they need to be discussed here. First is an example of the strategic *motive* from the genre-oriented positioning.

80   Strategic motive

[…] as the frames of the story were given beforehand […] I saw [little] point in talking about it [the dilemma]. Rather, [I] wanted to work with

style, and language, to concentrate on the text, well, on finding an original voice perhaps? As it turned out, this proved to be a silly decision and stupid thinking. […] (Kim)

Example (80) illustrates that, in reality, the *subject* is not free to decide about the (comparatively free) assignments or the content of teaching and learning in the course. Instead, the relationship between the student and the university is one, where the student has to comply with the rules and regulations of the university. The overarching theme in the critical reflection is strategic, and thus the *motive* can be constructed as strategic: to handle the course requirements in order to pass the course. This situation is illustrated in (80), where Kim redirects her work *object* from what she wants to do, which is to work with literary composition, "style, and language," to what she does not want to do, which is to think critically about a dilemma—"I saw [little] point in talking about it"—something that has been more or less imposed on her to think about. In (80), a position is taken, where the *subject* really wants to work with the assignment in a correct way. The exact wording in the instructions then becomes very important. Kim's comment, "a silly decision and stupid thinking," can of course be seen as ironic and as implicit criticism of the fact that she has been expected to talk and write about a given subject without any clear instructions. Because of this vagueness, she has felt at liberty to act independently and follow her *motive* in her decision making. Now, in retrospect, she learns that it was "stupid thinking" to use her agency and focus on a work *object* in which she is interested, instead of acting like an obedient student. The example also shows that strategic *motives* force the *subject* to submit to university requirements; she is not very free to use personal agency and decision making based on individual *motive*. It is precisely this contradiction which is illustrated in the expressive, strategic profile and which touches on a fundamental power structure that all the students in my data have had to consider in their actions within the activity system of the course in creative writing.

Achievement can be said to be the driving *motive* in the exploratory, strategic profile. The discoursal identity that comes into play in the critical reflection text is a student in an academic course in creative writing, just as in the communicative profile. However, the *subject* position as

observing and independent *subject* is weaker. Much energy seems to be spent on interpreting and complying with procedural *rules*, such as *how* the *subject* as student is expected to study in order to complete the assignment in the correct manner to achieve a good grade. In the writing discourse of the texts, procedural questions about how the work should be done come to the fore. This implies that the assignment is viewed as goal-oriented and not free, in the liberal education sense (Biggs and Tang 2011). The *subject* shares the same analytical approach to the assignment as the *subject* in the communicative profile, and there is a shared strong discoursal identity as student. In the strategic profile, however, there is an idea that the assignment has a given, correct solution, which the student needs to find and write down in the critical reflection text. The *motive* is thus linked to strategic functions of the text. The act of writing can be viewed as driven by an ambition to achieve in order to reach certain pre-set learning outcomes. This *motive* generates a different text from the one in the communicative profile, in spite of the fact that the *subjects* in both profiles share the analytical, exploratory *object*. In the strategic profile, questions about doing well are brought to the fore:

81 Motive achievement

> […] I was an ambitious pupil who always fought until I got good grades in all the subjects. [Unprompted comment about experiences from school.] […] (Ella)

Achievement as a driving *motive* in the strategic profile is illustrated in example (81). There is no call or obligation in the instructions to write about previous school experiences or one's personal learning profiles, so it is on her own initiative that Ella brings up the topic of ambition in the reflection text. This, plus verbal expressions of strong ambition, that she "was an ambitious pupil" in school, makes the driving *motive*, achievement or ambition, plausible. A *subject* with achievement as *motive* in an activity system such as a course in creative writing is likely go through education with a strategic view on all its components. One in particular, assessment, will be foregrounded in a way that is not the case in the communicative profile, for example (where such themes or discourses are not

addressed at all). This *motive* will have a profound impact on the relationship to the lecturer, for example, who becomes an examiner, not a discussion partner. It also puts extra emphasis on the unequal distribution of power between student and lecturer, since the *subject* clearly takes a subordinate position as a student waiting for instructions from someone authorized to give them. The *subject* thus sees herself as the object of the lecturer's gaze, which makes it difficult to keep up an independent stance throughout the various stages of the assignment. Thus, the *subject* remains uncertain about what kind of autonomy and agency is required. To work with the assignment strategically, in order to get good grades (which all students do to different extents), will lay bare a basic conflict in regard to what is meant by critical thinking and who has authority to define the term. In the strategic profile, where achievement is the *motive* and the overarching driving force, the question is put on its head. Not only is the *subject* asked to work independently and critically, she is also asked to do it in the right way, and without instructions as to what is meant. In the text, this is expressed through themes that focus on assessment. Thus, the strategic function of the critical reflection text as a document for the examiner is central. Its function as a way to practise critical thinking by working with perspective change through different assignment stages is perceived as a long struggle with vague instructions and demanding procedural work. Seen that way, it is easy to understand the heading of the text in example (82).

82 The assignment as a school task

The cumulative, never-ending school homework [...] (Ella)

Using the phrase "school homework" in the title of an academic writing assignment, as Ella does in (82), signals that the assignment is defined by the student as a (compulsory) and very long "never-ending" school task. Associations go to earlier school years, when teachers forced pupils to go home and continue their work endlessly. The way it is phrased in (82), the *subject* is positioned as a pupil, with a duty to obey, and complete a school task—quite different from an adult, independent aca-

demic student who is expected to research questions under the guidance of lectures and in discussion with other students to find new knowledge. (However, in this specific example, one must assume that the phrase is chosen with a fair amount of irony and intended to be critical.) The work *object* is thus expressed as to complete all parts of the assignment in a correct manner, according to the instructions, in the best possible way, to write a good text and get good grades. The discoursal identity that is conveyed is a high achiever, interested in the subject matter and in performing well.

The strategic *motive* has an impact on how the *tools* are applied, especially social *tools*, and the relationships to other *subjects*. Textual themes point at problems in group work, for example, when it comes to interpreting instructions. In example (83), group dynamics are exemplified. I led a discussion during a seminar and asked about the students' thoughts about how they had framed the dilemma and how narrative frames mirror cultural contexts. Ella in (83) concluded that:

83 Questions of procedure as tool

> […] Most of the time the group discussions focused on form and style
> […] what our stories tell about ourselves, our society and our culture
> […] not until the very end of the discussion did we start talking about such subjects. […] (Ella)

One possible interpretation of the statement in (83) is that Ella expresses irritation or concern about the fact that the group she was in did not follow or did not get instructions. (Possibly this also is an implicit criticism of the lecturer, me, who was vague.) Ella seems to have tried to follow my initial instructions during the seminar and discuss the prototypical function of genres such as the narrative, but she notices that "not until the very end of the discussion did we start talking about such subjects." It seems that the group Ella was in did not follow my instructions. If a group is driven by a certain *object*, which seems to be the case in (83), where "the group discussions focused on form and style" conflicts will arise because achievement as a driving *motive* in the strategic profile

is linked to strategic concerns, to comply with *rules*. Even if Ella does not mind talking about style, deviations from the instructions will cause frustration, as they may jeopardize her chances of getting good grades.

The strategic *motive* is mirrored in the stylistic quality of the critical reflection. It has the characteristics of an evaluating review, with themes such as evaluations of the construction of the assignment, of the contribution of the peers in the group, and of the actions of the lecturer. There is a risk that critical thinking ends up in critical reviews of conditions concerning the immediate course context, instead of critical thinking based on analytical thinking about a given subject as in the communicative profile. The vulnerability of the *subject* is similar to that in the process-oriented position, but here the anxiety is centred on what the lecturer will think about the results expressed in the critical reflection text, not on what the peer group will think about the *subject* or the narrative text. This concern about the reader's (lecturer's) anticipated authoritative demands on the *subject* turns the sideward glance inwards, towards the *subject's* ability to accomplish good results, not outwards, at the questions presented in the assignment. The repercussions can be observed in the criticism of the *tools* offered in the course, as this is expressed in evaluating discourses, criticizing the liberal construction of the assignment, the instruction, the lecturer, and the other *subjects*, as has been illustrated in the examples. The *subject* manages to complete the assignment in spite of, not because of, the *tools*. In fact, it is personal ambition and determination that become the most important, perhaps the only functioning *tool* available for the *subject* in the strategic profile.

6.3.3   *Community, Rules*, and *Division of Labour*

Next I present the relationship between the *subject* in the exploratory position and the *community*. I describe the encounter between *subject* and collective levels of the activity system, and the perspective is that of the *subject*. I express the collective aspects of the encounter through the concepts *community*, *rules*, and *division of labour*.

Community

In the exploratory position, the course *community* mediates between creative writing as an academic subject, presented in the assignment, and the *subject's* work *object* to explore the subject by working with the assignment. Focus of the assignment is creative writing for critical thinking. The *community* mediates between critical literacy (Luke & Freebody 1997), the way it is taught on the creative writing course, and academic literacy in other academic subjects with similar critical learning objectives.

In the exploratory position, the driving *motive* to work with the assignment is expressed as a wish to acquire new knowledge about the subject. Knowledge in the exploratory position is described as including all the other themes referred to in the other writing positions, such as language, style, personal development, and knowledge about the moral dilemma. However, there is a difference in approach to these topics. When they come out as themes in the reflection texts, they are linked to theoretical perspectives and to analysis. The topics—for example, why so many narratives written by the group contained similar prototypical assumptions about gender and ethnicity—are discussed in terms of cultural issues, to the function of language, to stereotypes and ideology. The topics become researchable at a general level presented as hypotheses or researchable questions of different kinds. Also, creative writing is associated with a collective of learners, a *community,* constructed in the text as "we," "us."

The academic stance is evident at all levels of the text. For example, it can be observed in the *subject's* attitude to the expressions such as "reflection" and "critical reflection" found in the assignment instructions. In the exploratory position, such words have been interpreted as signals to work analytically. The exploratory stance is also visible in an essay-like structure, which mirrors the analytical approach to the topic. The text alternates between specific observations and theoretical perspectives on things observed, which seems like a highly adequate understanding of a writing assignment in an academic *community*. Other communities or discoursal identities linked to communities outside of the university are rarely mentioned in the texts. The assignment is primarily defined as part of a

university education, a *community* in which *objects* such as developing students' ability to think critically never are put into question. Even though there is a difference in degree concerning autonomy in relation to the *community* between the profiles, there are no signs of hybridity when it comes to the expression of discoursal identity. In the exploratory profile, a student identity is constructed. This identity makes room for the *subject* to critically explore the topic presented in the assignment. In the texts, this can be seen through a high frequency of metacritical comments. In the strategic profile, the sideward glance becomes self-monitoring, since the *subject* puts emphasis on how the assignment will be graded. In the communicative profile, personal agency and a right to think freely come to the fore. In all, the different text-analytical results show academic characteristics in the texts produced, which place them in a *community* perceived of as academic by their writers.

Rules Based on Epistemological Beliefs

Rules that are explicitly or implicitly stated in the critical reflection texts imply epistemological beliefs very close to those found in the course syllabus—for example, that teaching and learning and textbooks on the reading list shall convey theories about creative writing and that these theories shall be applied in practical writing assignments. This perspective is constructed in a subject matter–oriented, exploratory writing discourse. It is different from expressive writing discourses in the other positions, where emphasis lies on themes about learning the genre and on the *subject* and discoursal identity in different ways. The *object* that permeates the application of *tools* in the exploratory position thus comes out as academic, and the *subject* refers to *rules* stipulating an analytical, exploratory approach to the work process.

The profiles in the exploratory position, however, show two different approaches to the assignment based on two different ideas about academic education. In the communicative profile, the epistemological beliefs have roots in ideals from Humboldt: "universities should treat learning as not yet wholly solved problems and hence always in research mode" (Humboldt 1810 in Elton 2005: 111). It is a paradigm that

describes university education as liberal, to a high degree, where the students' own questions and search for knowledge take centre stage. The communicative profile echoes this view on knowledge: The communicative function of the assignment as a tool for developing thoughts and expanded knowledge is emphasized.

There are signs of a communicative *motive* in the strategic profile too, but the emphasis on the strategic function of the assignment is highlighted, and it is academic merits that come across as a salient theme. In such paradigms, academic studies are described as goal-oriented, with measurable learning outcomes that have been decided on by the university long before the students begin their course. The epistemic view can be said to be that academic studies should be object-oriented, with exactly defined learning objectives, the way such objectives have been defined in the Bologna documents, for example, concerning mobility, employability, and competitive perspectives.

In the strategic profile, such an object-oriented view on knowledge as measurable and defined by others is emphasized. The view is constructed in the texts as a concern with problems that occur when the learning *objects* in the assignment are perceived as vague and able to interpret in different ways.

Rules for Teaching and Learning in Terms of Content and Methods

The analytical features that characterize the critical reflection texts imply rules that authorize the *subject* in the communicative profile the right, or in the strategic profile the duty, to explore the subject matter in the assignment. The exploratory stance is expressed through the variety of *tools* used by the writers, who explore the assignment questions from many more perspectives than in the other positions. Implicitly, then, the writers apply rules that give them the right to expect that teaching and learning shall result in expanding (theoretical) knowledge about the subject matter presented in the creative writing course as well as the right to try out such knowledge in practical writing assignments.

In the communicative profile, the *subject* airs enthusiasm about working with the assignment. Evaluating discourses are very positive

about working with perspective change through recontextualizations (as in example [74]: "I wanted to change [perspective] and change and change again"). Also, the liberal work method suggested through the open questions and the discussions in the seminars seems to be accepted by the *subject* in the communicative profile, as the method never occurs as themes in the texts or in evaluating discourses. This suggests that the *subject* claims the right to form an exploratory, researcher's position in regard to her own writing, quite in alignment with the *rules* of the course.

In the communicative profile, the *subject* as writer is expressed as an autonomous, independent thinker in possession of subjective agency. It seems that, without anxiety, the *subject* casts sideward glances at the lecturer as mentor and, equally, as a thinker—for example, in questions related to the dilemma, as in example (84).

84 A dialogical relationship to the reader

> […] Having written this assignment, I have started to think an awful lot about whether or not it is possible to uphold an equal relationship as a parent if you are a woman […] so, as I mentioned […] the assignment gave rise to many reflections about society in a general sense: issues such as gender, power, and generally, what is expected of us as people. […] Is a father a bad father if he does not ever use his right to paternity leave? […] What is really meant by a bad parent? […] (Annika)

The dialogical relationship to the reader is expressed in (84) in the way the subject is presented. Annika frames the problem as a dilemma up for discussion "whether or not," and she suggest two topics: "Is a father a bad father if [...]? What is really meant by"…? That way, she not only poses questions to herself, she also invites the reader (her lecturer) to think further. In this way, through the text, the *subject* implicitly claims her right to independence, to give her thoughts space to develop into a conversation with a model reader, and to formulate hypotheses for further research based on the vague questions in the assignment.

85 Writing for critical exploration

> […] While working with this assignment I thus thought something like: "*I cannot write about parenthood, since I don't know anything about it, and that will show in my text* [Italics and quotation marks in the original]. I do not think that it is a very constructive idea to think like this, but on the contrary, something I need to get away from. Writing is a way to critically research into things, which according to Seneca is the basic aim of education. (Ida)

In examples (84) and (85), the writers express a hermeneutic, exploratory epistemological view very similar to that in the course syllabus. For example, it seems that Ida in (85) has been comfortable with vague assignment questions and teaching and learning activities allowing for a certain amount of subjective agency. Ida makes choices, not only in regard to what type of texts to write but also in regard to what she wants to explore in her writing and who she wants to be. She concludes that she needs to reconsider her ideas about writing a perfect text in order to prove through her writing that she is a good writer, avoiding topics that would reveal lack of knowledge since that "*will show in my text*" and, thereby, automatically disclose lack of qualities as a writer, which is a preoccupation in the genre-oriented positioning. Instead, she seems to renegotiate the act of writing, defining it as "a way to critically research into things," which is a change in view on what writing is or can be. Ida's reflection exemplifies a shift of writing discourse, from an individually oriented, "romantic" writer as accomplished or genial, to an expressive, sociocritical creative writing discourse, where writing to discover is in focus, and not primarily the stylistic quality of the end product. It seems that the shift results in fewer contradictions between the *subject's* epistemological ideal and that of the university, and is more in alignment with ideas about critical thinking found in the course syllabus.

In the strategic profile, however, textual themes associated with teaching and learning emphasize content and style. Also, the *rules* expressed are similar to those described in object-oriented teaching and learning paradigms, for example, within *constructive alignment* (Biggs and Tang 2011). Such pedagogies emphasize that teaching and learning should be designed so that students know exactly what they are supposed to do and

how, what learning outcomes the activities and assignments will result in, and also how their work will be assessed by the lecturer. Traces of such a paradigm are illustrated in example (86).

86 Focus on assignment goals

> […] I believe that it would have been better if the assignment had been introduced to us from the beginning, in the whole thing, very clearly. […] (Kim)

In evaluating discourses as in (86), the *subject* asks for specific and preset requirements "the whole thing, very clearly." This is an implicit critique of the step-by-step construction of the assignment and the vague nature of the questions. In this field study, the structure was announced beforehand to the students, but some details were introduced during the work process, to facilitate generating new perspectives in the writing process. In (86), this structure is implicitly described as a breach of the students' rights to exact *rules*, which "would have been better." The example echoes a view on *rules* found in teaching and learning paradigms, where all the anticipated learning *outcomes* are broken down to the micro level and where all the steps of the learning process are made clear to the students in advance. Included in this type of teaching and learning paradigm are *rules* that stipulate teaching of measurable knowledge, so that learning *outcomes* can be assessed in accordance with exact assessment criteria. The paradigm leans on an epistemology where knowledge is constructed by the student by means of teaching and learning with predesigned learning *outcomes*, effects, and consequences: "[S]tudents should be 'entrapped' in [a] web of consistency" (Biggs and Tang 2011: 99). Design and consistency are considered warrants for measurable learning. In the strategic profile, the teaching and learning requested build on this type of epistemological belief. Some of this ideal is reflected in (86) and also in textual themes where the writer asks to have texts assessed by the lecturer. (See example [87].)

Utterances about teaching and learning and procedural issues related to such topics in the different profiles thus mirror a basic difference in epistemological ideals that generate different ways to relate to the

assignment. Open questions and a high degree of personal agency are viewed as stimulating in the communicative profile but as unclear and problematic in the strategic profile. The mediation of knowledge is facilitated by the structure in the communicative profile but not in the strategic profile, where neither teaching and learning nor the outline of the assignment is characterized by an object-oriented epistemology.

Division of Labour Among the *Subject*, the Lecturer, and the Group

In the exploratory position, the critical reflection texts mainly express two different positions in regard to the *division of labour* between the *subject* and the lecturer and between the *subject* and the group. In the communicative profile, the lecturer and the group function as conversation partners, whereas in the strategic profile there are differences between the function of the other students and the function of the lecturer.

In the communicative profile, the function of the lecturer is constructed as that of mentor, and mediator of academic knowledge, with particular emphasis on mentorship, and co-reading, whereas in the strategic profile, focus is on the lecturer as an examiner assessing what is put down in the text. The labour of the *subject* in the communicative profile, is to use the assignment as a *tool* for exploration and practice. The lecturer's *labour* is to be an accomplished lecturer in creative writing at a university course, not an expert at a professional author's vocational training course as in the genre-oriented position, or a coach at a course in personal development as expressed in the process-oriented positioning. Implicitly lies a view on the *division of labour* where the lecturer mediates between a research based university perspective on creative writing, and the *subject* who practises to gain access to this *community*.

The stance taken in the aspect of *division of labour* does not cause contradictions, since the work takes place at a university, where, de facto, the given social roles are those of lecturer–student, as constructed in the texts for example in the sideward glance at the lecturer as empirical reader. In the communicative profile, the *subject* constructs the lecturer as a benevolent reader and mentor. The relationship allows for the writer to be

independent and free, if at all the relationship is commented on in the texts. On the other hand, the sideward glance at the lecturer in the strategic profile is commented on, and less autonomous. The lecturer's work of assessing is a salient theme in the text, as is the work of the *subject* to achieve. The duty to achieve makes it possible to claim the right to be assessed by the lecturer.

87 Focus on assessment

> […] it was somewhat disappointing that my text was never assessed. […] (Kim)

In example (87), Kim thus points at a breach of *rules*. The lecturer has not delivered in accordance with the implied *division of labour* where the lecturer assesses and the *subject* is assessed. It is therefore not at all surprising that Kim finds it "somewhat disappointing "that her "text was never assessed." In the strategic profile, the text becomes a *tool* for examination of learning outcomes about content and form for example, whereas in the communicative profile, the text is perceived as a *tool* to write in order to think. Implicitly, then, in the strategic profile, *rules* and *division of labour* should be such that it supports the *subject's* attempts to use the *tools* available in the course to fulfil the *motive* to achieve, for example, by very clear and predesigned, measurable learning *outcomes* in all the stages of the teaching and learning processes. In the strategic profile, a commander–deliverer relationship is established between lecturer and student through evaluating discourses expressing opinions about the assignment, and in content themes about what is to be done and how.

In the communicative profile, no such requirements are constructed in the texts. Lack of such themes may be construed as a sign of independence. They never emerge because they do not form part of a *motive* for the *subject* while working with the assignment. There seems to be an implicit *division of labour*, where the *subject* works independently, and the lecturer functions as a supervisor/discussion partner from time to time.

Unlike the *subject* in the genre-oriented author's profile, in the exploratory position, the *subject* writes with the group, not *for* the group. In the

texts, this is expressed through choice of pronouns, such as "the group … we." The work that is produced on the course, is intended for the course, and not for a market outside of it. The act of writing is looked upon as a social activity, where the response group serves as a partner for dialogue and their texts as analytical tools. Even if such processes are described as more problematic for the *subject* in the strategic profile, because of how *rules* and *division of labour* are interpreted, *subjects* still refer to their peers as belonging to the same *community* and complying to the same *rules* and *division of labour*. It is basically a focus on the collective interpretation of *division of labour* that emerges in the exploratory position, one where everybody is responsible for the other group members, and where everybody works with analysing the texts produced in the group, reading the texts thoroughly, and giving response to the peers. Creative writing in this group climate, becomes a type of exploratory, academic writing, where a group of students together try out what it means to write like this, and what learning may come out of it.

Outcome in the Exploratory Positioning

In the exploratory position, the major *object* is expressed as exploring creative writing through the assignment. The writing process is defined as an exploratory method. The narrative and reflective text types are used as *tools* to explore specific, subjective levels of writing and, through observations at these levels, to generalize and formulate hypotheses. Both text types are accepted as *tools*. Such acceptance can be interpreted as compliance with implicit *rules* about writing at the *university level*, where students write analytical texts as part of their university education, regardless of the academic discipline, and where the *subject* is prepared to accept the discoursal identity of student among a group of students. Group activities during the course, teaching and learning, discussions, other students' texts as well as textbooks from the reading list that the *subject* refers to all serve as *tools* in the exploratory process.

In the exploratory position, a contradiction in regard to epistemological beliefs within the university is reflected. Two traditions are juxtaposed, the object-oriented view on knowledge as opposed to the liberal,

"Humboldian" view. The contradiction between the rule- and goal-oriented learning paradigm and liberal education ideals comes to the fore, visible as a dichotomy between the paradigms in the critical reflection texts. There is a risk that assignments that reflect a liberal education view generate problems for *subjects* who are driven by goal-oriented *objects* and who have achievement as *motive*. However, strict goal orientation cuts down on possibilities for subjective agency and independent, critical thinking, which are driving *motives* in the communicative profile.

In the exploratory position, the main *outcome* of the assignment is that the *subject* strengthens many *different* discoursal identities. Not only do *subjects* express improvement in narrative writing and personal development as writers. There are also, in the texts, signs of learning in regard to critical thinking. The critical reflection texts display an abundance of references and themes that relate to all the different levels of social framing: that of the discoursal identity, the frame of the local course context, but also, elicited by the moral dilemma, to the broad social frame of society outside of the university context. The texts address how these frames are linked to the *subject's* own acts of writing on the course.

By working with the assignment, it thus seems as if the *subjects* have internalized the knowledge *object* of critical metareflection as part of their learning. In so doing, they have practised a certain kind of academic writing and achieved a certain degree of critical literacy. It is thus possible to claim that the course mediates the transition between the discoursal identity of a (writing) student in a course in creative writing and a (writing) student in a different university *community*, as the course offers an insight into academic concepts such as "critical" and "metareflection." These results indicate that it is possible to hypothesize that the assignment facilitates transferability, through its shared *object* (see boundary object in Sect. 8.2), which can be transferred to other activity systems; between creative writing and other communities in university context (and elsewhere), where critical reflection is an *object*. In that case, it is possible to claim that the *subject* in the exploratory position can be regarded as a *legitimate peripheral participant* (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998) in an activity system outside of the course frames of creative writing but within the activity system of the university. In the exploratory position, learning is clearly linked to *objects* found within the university context.

The *subject* interprets the assignment and works with it in the way it was intended. Through such an understanding, the assignment becomes a mediating *tool* between the *subject* and the culture and literacy practices found within the activity system of the academy in a broad sense.

6.4 Summary of the Writers' Positions

The critical reflection text serves different *objects* and *motives*. In the genre-oriented position, the critical reflection text is deprioritized as text type; in the process-oriented position, it is mainly used as a *tool* for associative freewriting; and in the exploratory position, it is used analytically, for (academic) argumentation and exploration. To conclude, the different functions of the critical reflection text result from different prototypical *subject* positions taken by *subjects* in the activity system, a course in creative writing.

6.4.1 Genre-Oriented Positioning

In the author's profile within the genre-oriented position, the *motive* is performative, to confirm an established discoursal identity as a literary author. The work *object* is to write a narrative text that meets the requirements of the genre at a professional level. Prioritized *tools* are acquired writing skill and readers' responses. The discoursal identity as student is downplayed. The *subject* stands outside of the *community* of the course and writes *for* it, not *with* it. The *division of labour* and *rules* are expressed so that the peer group functions as a focus group, and the lecturer is given the role of an editor. The course is defined as a vocational course for authors. The *outcome* is a short, evaluating critical reflection text, serving a strategic function.

In the apprentice's profile, the *motive* is self-improvement, in order to acquire an author's discoursal identity. It is to learn by affiliation, to talk like those we admire, in order to gain the right to attribute to oneself a certain desired, discoursal identity. The *object* is thus to produce a narrative text that can change the discoursal identity by showing evidence of

advanced literary writing skills in accordance with genre requirements. Central *tools* are those that contribute to such an accomplishment and the reader's response as well as practical advice in particular. The discoursal identity as student is accepted in parts, but as an apprentice in a future profession, not as a student in a university course. The *subject* includes herself in the *community* of the course and writes together with other students. The *division of labour* and *rules* are expressed in a way that the course is defined as a vocational course to become an accomplished author. Other students who are perceived as talented by the *subject* become role models, and the lecturer becomes an expert of a certain literary genre. The major learning *outcome* is that the *subject* uses the critical reflection communicatively, as an evaluating report, to account for the efficiency of the *tools* for improving content and style in narrative writing.

6.4.2   Process-Oriented Positioning

In the empathetic profile, the *motive* is expressed as subject formation through emotion and empathy. The work *object* is to emerge in the writing process and the social processes in order to discover a dormant discoursal identity. Preferred *tools* are inspiration through the narrative imagination, the act of writing itself, the reading experience, and a supportive course environment. The discoursal identity of student in an academic course is vague and dependent on emotional affect. The *subject* is in a position of dependency in regard to the *community* of the course, as the people there are needed for the *subject* to unearth a discoursal identity by writing with others. The *division of labour* and the *rules* referred to construct the course *community* as a place for personal development. Other *subjects* become creative inspirers, who contribute with their emotional support and narrative imagination. The lecturer is ascribed responsibility to create a good group climate and also to function as a coach. The *outcome* is that the critical reflection text gets communicative function for the *subject*, to understand what she has written and thereby who she "is" as a writer. The texts tend to get the characteristics of a lengthy private journal, filled with accounts of emotional processes, experienced while working with the assignment.

In the expressive profile, the *motive* is constructed as subject formation through reaction and opinion formation. The work *object* is to react emotionally and to voice opinions. By doing so, an inherent discoursal identity is unearthed. Preferred *tools* are personal experience and often agonistic encounters with others in social and creative processes. The narrative text type is a *tool* for reaction, and the critical reflection text is a *tool* for living as well as for putting into words affects, in that way formulating a *subject* positioning. The discoursal identity as a student taking an academic course becomes ambivalent, as does the relationship to the *community* of the course. The *division of labour* and *rules* expressed are such that the course *community* takes the function of a therapy group, where the *subject,* through her reactions, can work towards establishing subject position, and where other *subjects* assume the work *object* of supporting the *subject's* different processes.

The lecturer is ascribed responsibility to create a safe and holding environment and also to be tolerant and provide support, even to function as a therapist.

The *outcome* is that the critical reflection text gets communicative function for the *subject* to establish opinions and thereby position herself as a writer. The text tends to consist of lengthy argumentative passages and has the characteristics of a polemic (political) pamphlet.

6.4.3   Exploratory Positioning

In the communicative profile, the *motive* is constructed as communicative, to learn about creative writing. The work *object* is to explore the subject matter of creative writing as outlined in the assignment. No particular preferences of *tools* are expressed, but instead all the *tools* are applied and tried out—those presented through the assignment as well as those that emerge through the work process within the social frame of the course. The discoursal identity of student in an academic course is preferred to other possible discoursal identities. The *subject* forms part of a course *community* with other students, and the text does not orient outside of it. The *division of labour* and the *rules* expressed are such that the *subject* finds herself taking an academic, creative writing course, where the lecturer teaches the subject

matter as described in course documents and where the *subject* writes assignments together with other students. The *outcome* is that the critical reflection text serves a communicative function as an academic, critical reflection text in the form of a free essay, with accounts and personal reflections about learning that the assignment resulted in.

In the strategic profile, the *motive* is constructed as strategic, to learn about creative writing and to show evidence of high achievement in all the text types. The work *object* is to explore the subject matter of creative writing as outlined in the assignment and to get academic credits. No particular preferences of *tools* are expressed, but instead all the *tools* are used with a certain amount of ambivalence, since the most important *tool*, "clear statements about expected results," is lacking. *Tools* presented through the assignment as well as those emerging through the work process within the social frame of the course are not used to their full extent, according to the *subject*.

However, they do come into play communicatively as well as strategically, to prove to the examiner that the *subject* has completed the assignments well. The discoursal identity of student on an academic course is preferred to other possible discoursal identities. However, the *division of labour* and the *rules* expressed are such that a contradiction exists regarding who does what, and what *rules* to follow occurs, when the exact work *objects* are vaguely presented. The *subject* forms part of a course *community* with other students, and the text does not orient outside of it, but the orientation towards specific strategic *objects* is stronger than in the communicative profile. There is more emphasis on the *labour* of the lecturer's duty to give clear instructions than in the communicative profile.

The *outcome* is that the critical reflection text gets communicative function as a *tool* for critical thinking in the form of a free essay, with an emphasis on evaluating discourses and also with a sideward glance at the lecturer as examiner of the text as an examination document.

Notes

1. Ivanič (2006) speaks in a similar way about social positions, as discussed in Sect. 4.3 in Chap. 4, and Linell (2011:179) finds similar "positioning patterns" in his data based on conversation analysis.

2. According to the Socratic idea of how we become wise, man was born in possession of all knowledge. However, it had to be drawn out of him by a midwife (a philosopher like Socrates and his dialectical method) in a process that has been compared to childbirth, *maieutics* (Bergsten 1993).

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7

Critical Metareflection

In this chapter, I discuss the results of the text-analytical model to interpret my data, in terms of metacritical reflection. First I give a brief recapitulation of the link between Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development and activity theory. Then I present an account of text as a site of negotiation, and why such a complex concept is applicable for analytical purposes here. The writers' positions from Chap. 6 serve as a basis to illustrate different standpoints in the negotiation based on what I have found in the data. (See Chaps. 8 and 9 for the follow-up study.)

7.1 Text as a Site of Negotiation

This section opens with a short recapitulation of how I have used activity theory as a heuristic *tool* to develop a model for text analysis based on activity theory. This is a very restricted application of a vast and encompassing theoretical framework. Engeström (1987) sets out to describe social development, by which he intends how complex socially organized, *activity system*s, such as big organizations, for example, learn over time through *expansion*. The expansion results from actions by individuals and

groups within the systems that gradually cause the systems to change. As I pointed out earlier, the theory can be used as a zoom lens. It has also served to research small or very small activity systems. (See Sect. 4.2 in Chap. 4.) Expansion in such downsized systems has focused on learning patterns of a few or individual participants within the systems (e.g., Ivanič 2006). I utilize this somewhat restricted, or individually oriented, perspective of the theory, which goes back to Vygotsky's (1999: 328–339) and later Leontiev's initial (see Kaptelinin 2005) contributions, in order to avoid aspects of a theory of learning that downplay factors such as individual agency , since I use the theory heuristically in a setting where individual perspectives of learning are important, as is the case in teaching and learning for critical thinking through creative writing. The term *expansion* thus refers to learning that takes place when the learner appropriates new ways of seeing the (learning) matter through a change of perspectives, and thereby expands her understanding of the matter at hand, that is to say learns something new.

In this study, I interpret the *outcomes* of the writing assignment as signs of learning, expressed in a text. By applying the text-analytical model, the text can be regarded as a site of negotiation between the *subject*, represented by student writers, encountering the collective level of the activity system, *community*, represented by everyone engaged in the activity system of the course, such as other students, the lecturer, and the surrounding social context. Chapters 4 and 5 presented accounts of how the concept of *subject* in activity theory has been theorized and represented as discoursal identity among writers in the text-analytical model. In order to clarify how ideas and ideals about such discoursal identities among writers influence the learning *outcomes* of the writing assignment, in Chap. 6, I constructed six prototypical writing identities by mapping writing discourses and textual themes in the critical reflection text (to name a few of the text- analytical approaches that were used in the case study).

Thus I analysed positions in text, not individual writers, and the positions and the varying profiles within them, are constructed solely for theoretical, text-analytical purposes. Through the different positions, it becomes possible to observe how learning through writing is linked to identity and identification processes. This is a perspective on learning that is addressed neither in Vygotsky's sociopsychological theories about

child development or in Engeström's discussions about organizational theories but is found in Ivanič (1998, 2006). By adding identification to learning through writing, it becomes possible to explain how different stances among adult writers affect what they learn within the activity system of a university course. As has been shown, activity theory is basically a development of Vygotsky's triangle of mediation (see Fig. 4.1) and a response to his theory about the zone of proximal development (see Engeström 1987: Chap. 3) through the addition of the concepts *community* and *rules* and *division of labour* that follow as a consequence of the collective level of the theory (initiated by Leontief). Vygotsky's theory about the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978: 4ff., 1999: 329; Säljö 2000: 119ff.) was intended to describe learning as a social process, where humans (children in Vygotsky's case) depend on the social environment (other children and an adult teacher) in order to reach the maximum of their developmental potential. Vygotsky's theory lacks the organizational dimensions and ultimately the societal implications of social development that Engeström's (based on Leontief) extended triangle of mediation adds. These important additions open up for social dimensions of learning and enable us to describe contradictions and conflicts in learning processes situated within activity systems.

I compare the text to a site of negotiation, following Ivanič's (1998: 331f.) *text as a site of struggle*, because it is in the text that the encounter between the *subject* and *community* can be laid bare for analysis. This may of course be a struggle, but the social function of the text, as I see it, is to negotiate through argumentation. The zone of proximal development takes the shape of a textual space where writers, through the act of writing, negotiate what identities they are interested in, what *tools* they use, what voices, by affiliation, they invite, and how they interact in discussion with the voices or not.

This chapter offers an in-depth presentation of the different approaches to critical metareflection taken by the students in my research and what the approaches generate in terms of critical thinking learning *outcomes*. Some of the examples are extensive, because they illustrate a specific stance or position that may have developed in several steps. As has been shown in Chap. 6, the critical reflection text is used differently by different writers. Critical reflection is not prioritized as a text type in the genre-

oriented position; in the process-oriented position, its main function is as a tool for associative freewriting; and in the exploratory position, the text is used for analytical, argumentative writing. In parts, this chapter overlaps with Chap. 6, but it offers an overview of specifically critical thinking *outcomes* in the different writers' positions.

7.2   Critical Metareflection in the Genre-Oriented Position

In the genre-oriented position, the zone of negotiation is a space where the *subject* meets and evaluates her relationships with the model reader and the empirical reader. The dilemma is conceptualized as an exercise in literary style, and the challenge is to create a narrative text where certain generic requirements are met, so that the text is an original work of art. Although the *subject* does not prioritize the critical reflection text, there are still instantiations of metacritical perspectives. In particular, they are associated with thoughts about how prototypical ideas and expressions affect the impressions readers may get of an author's skill (i.e., they are associated with the writer's discoursal identity).

7.2.1   Critical Metareflection in the Author's Profile

The *subject* who strongly identifies with a professional writer's discoursal identity outside of the course *community* is illustrated in the author's profile. The profile shows how the *subject* manages the encounter with university requirements on critical reflection texts, which is a text type of low priority, associated with a rejected student identity. The conflict thus mainly concerns contradictions between discoursal identities, those that the *subject* wishes to affiliate with, and those that the university forces upon the *subject*. In the data, signs indicate that this type of conflict brings out strategic *motives* for writing the critical reflection texts, and relatively little work is put into that part of the assignment. In the author's profile, the *subject* tends to interpret the word "critical" as "review" or "evaluation" and not in any academic, analytical sense.

The zone of negotiation consists basically of the *subject*'s own model readers and the lecturer as empirical reader. Changes in perspective that generate critical thinking are mostly linked to discourses of uptake and occur when the *subject* compares anticipated readers' response based on assumptions about the model reader to responses from empirical readers on the course. Metacritical perspectives are expressed mostly as minor stylistic discoveries and changes made in the narrative text due to comments from empirical readers. For example, ideas about effects of stylistic choices may change, if the empirical readers did not respond in the way that the *subject* had planned it. Metacritical perspectives are also linked to evaluations of the narrative text in its entirety.

88 **Establishing perspective; self-evaluation**

> […] Actually, I am quite surprised myself that I managed to create a story that I think is pretty interesting. (Markus)

As a first step, illustrated in example (88), Markus establishes his idea about the text. In this case, the *subject* finds that he was better than he first thought, which is a change of perspective. Markus is aware of reactions from empirical readers, and their reactions are an important *tool* for him.

89 **Perspective-change generated by perceived readers**

> […] Basically, it felt more like a strike out of the blue, of destiny or fate, when you do not know what the project is all about. But perhaps you will be disturbed by not getting any clues. (Markus)

It is probable that "you" in the first sentence in example (89) refers to the model reader. This example illustrates how a writer in the author's profile challenges his perceptions about the model reader, by causing him to think about the empirical reader: "You" in the second sentence probably refers to empirical readers Markus is about to meet on the course. They may be "disturbed" and feel differently about the text from what Markus intended. By empathizing with the empirical readers, Markus undergoes

a change of perspective. In the second sentence in (89), Markus distances himself from his initial emotions "it felt… like" and questions them. On second thought, Markus realizes that his stylistic choices may have very different effects on his readers from what he intended. A typical *subject* in the author's profile is that metacritical insights occur in parts of the text that express a sideward glance at readers and a discussion of how the text could be improved to enhance effects on readers' response. I define this as an *instrumental* and utility-oriented metacritical perspective. The insights are linked to a certain *tool* and set on improving the narrative text by better understanding how readers understand the texts. Metacritical perspectives occur through the change of *tool* from the model reader to the empirical reader. That way learning through expansion occurs. The *subject* repositions the readers and sees them in a new light. He moves from using a subjective, imagined, model reader to using empirical readers within the framework of the course. Thereby he expands his previous understanding of readers and learns to differentiate beween them.

The subjective perspective does not change. The *subject* compares her personal point of view about her text to what the empirical readers thought about it, but the comparison does not extend to someone else's narrative text, for example. The lecturer and the peer group function as a focus group and can verify or change the *subject*'s ideas about the model reader for future use. In the author's profile, a particular problem is that the lecturer is the only person invited as a trustworthy expert into the zone of negotiation. If it takes time to get a response from the lecturer, dialogical learning processes will be restricted, as the *subject* does not attribute much value to remarks from the peer group.

7.2.2   Critical Metareflection in the Apprentice's Profile

The apprentice's profile illustrates critical thinking when the *subject* displays a discoursal identity in transition from amateur, aiming at accomplishment and expertise. The *subject* orients towards an identity outside of the course *community,* but the transition is expressed as taking place within the course *community*, not outside of it. The contradiction between

the identity of the student and that of the apprentice as author is less pronounced than in the author's profile, where an accomplished author's identity is already formed. Here there is room for more voices in the zone and thus also more possibilities for changes of perspective. Although the *subject* in the apprentice's profile rejects many *tools*—theoretical books, for example—many *tools* are picked up and used. Other *subjects* serve as *tools* for learning. Also, texts written by peers are used as templates to learn about writing. Thus, the *subject* in the apprentice's profile has access to many more perspectives since the *tools* on offer are not rejected, as in the author's profile. When the contradiction between *communities* is less pronounced, there are fewer signs of strategic *motives* for writing the critical reflection texts and more signs of communicative function.

Meeting and discussing texts with empirical readers can have rather profound consequences in the apprentice's profile and affect the *subject's* discoursal identity in a deeper sense, putting values and ideas about one's previous writing identity into question.

90 Metacritical perspectives on oneself as a writer

> […] I believe that it [working with the assignment] brought out thoughts. The black humor that I seem to find in my texts is not clear to others. Perhaps I am on the wrong track completely. Anyway, it taught me about a vagueness, or a blindness to my own flaws, a confusion within myself, which I find hard to accept. I also learnt to think in many different ways, not just one, when it came to the problem. This I did by talking to the others and listening to what they said about the dilemma. Also I took one more step toward simplicity of style, in a good way. I can be clear, and that is quite all right. It [the narrative text] doesn't get bad even if it isn't twisted, or crazy. (Olivia)

Example (90) illustrates a subjective, *subject-oriented* type of metacritical thinking. The discoursal identity is constructed as changing, expanding. Based on responses from the empirical readers, Olivia critically analyses her own stylistic choices, at the moment of uptake, when her identity is read by others. The empirical readers did not understand her text; apparently, it was "not clear to others." She starts to question her-

self as a writer and the stylistic choices she has made. In doing so, she sees not only her text but herself as a writer in a new light, thus expressing a metacritical perspective on her discoursal identity. The dilemma becomes a *tool* "to think in many different ways." By sharing the thoughts of others in a social context, where a multitude of ideas about the dilemma and different solutions are discussed, Olivia *experiences* that it is possible to interpret a moral dilemma in many different ways. Her own text, too, is read differently by different readers. Example (90) thus illustrates that the *subject* starts to question her texts not only but also the "black humor"—that is, her preferences of style, and genre, and, finally, herself as a writer. All the different experiences through the social encounters with other students in the course become *tools* for critical thinking that results in metacritical perspectives for a writer who apparently felt that she had a stable identity and confidence as a writer. Now the *subject* acquires a new way of understanding her own writing and her discoursal identity.

Expressions of emotional reactions are frequent in the data, but the reactions are associated with different textual themes. Example (90) is an example of how subjective, *subject-oriented* metacritical thinking gives rise to confusion and comes with emotional reactions.[1] To Olivia in (90), the assignment has made her try out a completely new position, which causes her to question her previous standpoints as a writer, as she sees everything she has written earlier in a new light. This is a sign of learning through expansion, and it occurs when the *subject* changes the social frame from subject level to group level and starts to renegotiate a *subjective* idea about discoursal identity through social writing with other students on the course.

Although metacritical perspectives are often linked to discoursal identity, as in (90), new insights may also occur in relation to societal issues outside of the course. In example (91a–f), we follow such a metacritical process through text in the apprentice's profile, where the *subject* expresses an ambition to write with realism as a stylistic choice. Initially, in (91a), the *subject* intends to write a new version of the narrative text, with the work *object* to increase the distance between the fictional characters.

91 **(a–f) Metacritical perspectives and discoursal identity**

(91a) […] In the following text, I wanted to show what a quarrel between two characters may look like, seen from the outside. (Madeleine)

The different steps of the assignment have resulted in a question of style. In writing a second draft of the dilemma, Madeleine in (91a) formulates a research question that addresses how to write about "a quarrel…seen from the outside." Simultaneously, as the work progresses, she makes other discoveries. Madeleine comments on what she considers to be stereotypical categorizations that she has chosen without thinking about it:

(91b) […] In my view, the biggest dilemma with the texts about the single parent is the fact that you very easily paint stereotypical portraits […]. (Madeleine)

It is likely that the different steps in the assignment generate a number of observations that result in inductive reasoning. For example, gender issues were discussed on a number of occasions during the seminars. I particularly recall the animated discussion, discussed earlier, about parental duties during a seminar where the students read and discussed a newspaper article about gender and parenthood. It may be that such occasions, and reading about how other students have interpreted the dilemma in their narratives, resulted in insights about categorizations in narrative texts. It is interesting to note that Madeleine in (91b) uses "you" in "you…easily paint stereotypical portraits," probably referring to writers in general who use stereotypes in their narratives. In the sentence that follows in her text, in example (91c), she confirms that she has found a gender stereotype in her own text that she was unaware of when she wrote it:

(91c) […] As in the previous version of the Single Parent, where Anne immediately feels pity for the man, and starts to fuss with him, in that stormy relationship […] That way she sends a signal that he does not have to take responsibility for his own actions […]. (Madeleine)

Example (91c) illustrates how Madeleine realizes that she did not think about the gender perspective of her narrative when she wrote the text. It is not until she encounters the issue of gender, through the teaching and learning in the course, that gender becomes an issue to reflect on. The *outcome* is that Madeleine discovers stereotypical patterns related to gender in narrative texts, and she finds them in texts written by peers and by herself. Metacritical perspectives seem to occur in the shift between formulating a dilemma and then comparing the solution to the interpretations done by other writers. In that way, other possible perspectives emerge, and prototypical categorizations in the own narrative become clear.

Had Madeleine not completed the different stages of the assignment, very likely she would not have found any links between gender and stereotypical language in her own or in any other texts, as she points out in example (91d):

> (91d) […] Gender issues are […] difficult to write about, because you easily fall into the very pit you try to show others. […] (Madeleine)

Examples (91c and 91d) illustrate a salient pattern in the data: When the *subject* notices a stereotype in the narrative text, critical thinking extends to the context. Madeleine observes that "gender issues are difficult to write about" generally, because prototypical thinking permeates notions about men and women to such an extent that we become blind to them— "we fall into the…pit" even in situations where we really try to have our eyes open. It seems that these are new insights and that it would be possible for the writer to formulate further questions that could be researched in new texts, narrative or scientifically oriented text types. (See, e.g., Sannino 2009a for a brief summary of learning through expansion.) The way in which Madeleine learns is through expansion into the social context, by discussion and comparison of her own texts to those of her peers. In her critical reflection text, she writes that she did not notice the stereotypes at first, but only after some time, which is a sign of the element of time for thought processes to develop, an indication that the process of development "lags behind the learning process." (See Engeström 1987: 10, Chap. 3.)

The examples I have discussed here show that critical thinking is closely linked to the specific context of the learning environment and to perceptions of self. In the genre-oriented position, critical thinking is associated with ideas about authorship and with a specific interest in genre-specific requirements.

> (91e) […] can a mother leave her child as lightheartedly as a father, without it seeming unrealistic? (Madeleine)

The *subject* as author is centre stage in example (91e), and it illustrates that any insight generated by changes of perspective through the assignment—for example, about gender—will end up in thoughts about style and/or genre. In the genre-oriented position, it is the moment of uptake, through readers' reactions, that will decide what the learning *outcome* will be at the end of the assignment. To the *subject,* the overarching question in the end is whether her text can be altered (made less stereotypical) "without it seeming unrealistic," and, I would argue, it is decisive of what learning will come out of the assignment. The narrative text becomes a site of negotiation, because it is the site where it is decided if the *subject* has the right to ascribe to herself the discoursal identity of author. One may assume that Madeleine in (91e) reflects about whether an author can avoid stereotypical assumptions about the world without getting into trouble with their empirical readers. At the end of her critical reflection in example (91f), Madeleine offers a concluding piece of advice.

> (91f) […] a good writing aid, if you feel that your story won't develop, or is uninteresting, —write it from somebody else's perspective! (Madeleine)

Example (91f) illustrates a genre discourse (Ivanič 2004). It is a salient writing discourse in the apprentice's profile. However, the fact that *subjects* reflect about difficulties in seeing prototypical ideas in their own texts is an example of metacritical perspectives and a sign of learning in the genre-oriented position. *Subjects* renegotiate their discoursal identity in a dialogue with others in the social context, as they discover prototypical expressions in their texts, and, in the genre-oriented position, it generates a subjective, *subject-oriented* type of metacritical thinking.

7.3   Critical Metareflection in the Process-Oriented Positioning

In the process-oriented position, the zone of negotiation is expressed as a space for emotional experience. The *subject* faces her own subconscious and spontaneous feelings in the externalized texts. Writing in itself, through the textualization process, seems to generate emotions and thoughts that may serve as *tools* for perspective change and critical thinking. Not only is the discoursal identity exposed through the writing assignment, visible to the *subject* herself. In addition, the s*ubject'*s attitude regarding the dilemma is revealed. In the process-oriented position, metacritical perspectives are characterized by a change and appropriation associated to the transition from a subconscious, intuitive stance in the writing process to a conscious and planned use of affect. Emotions become a *tool* for understanding. However, an emotionally driven *motive* is not necessarily dialogical. There exists a conflict between keeping up a dialogue with yourself and keeping it up with other voices in the zone. The data shows that, primarily, the *subject* is engaged in personal, emotional experiences during the act of writing. But the data also shows that affect and empathy can be directed towards the world outside of the writer, and that way help the writer to think critically.

7.3.1   Critical Metareflection in the Empathetic Profile

The empathetic profile shows critical metareflection when the *subject* expresses an emotionally driven, internal *motive*. It is a *motive* that can be implemented particularly well in the narrative text type but also in the reflective text types due to relatively vague instructions and the subjective agency that follows as a consequence. The *subject* empathizes with the characters in the narrative text. Then, through the freewriting process, emotions and thoughts may flow freely in the critical reflection text.

The critical reflection in the *empathetic* profile mainly serves the function of a report of emotional experiences and whatever effects they may have had on the *subject* during the writing process. It can also take the shape of an associative chain of thoughts, frequently with long sections,

sometimes almost an entire critical reflection, without any signs of sideward glance at a model or an empirical reader. For example, the question from the assignment: "what would you say that your text exemplifies in a more general perspective," may generate a recontextualization of the narrative by repeating it in more general terms.

For example, two-thirds of Steve's critical reflection text in (92) is taken up by a summary of the content of his narrative text. The theme is about double standards, and it is the main character, Elin, a tourist who often travels to Thailand, who exemplifies the moral flaw:

92 The narrative text retold in the critical reflection text

[…] like all good citizens, in our country [she has] opinions that are politically correct […]. But in reality, she is like all the rest of us: prejudiced and judgmental, in unexpected situations. […] (Steve)

It is possible to interpret Steve's long account of the content of the narrative text exemplified in (92) as a beginners' fault. He ought to have understood that he cannot basically repeat the same narrative in the critical reflection. However, the long account of the narrative may be interpreted differently, as an example of a process of accommodation, where the *subject* uses the same *tool* to try out something completely new. Rewriting his own narrative text in another text type, as in (92), generates a shift in perspective: from the specific example of one tourist, to the general perspective of "all good citizens, in our country." To Steve, this may very well be a new way of thinking. By creating distance from the narrative in the critical reflection text, Steve clarifies *to himself* what he has staged in the narrative (cf. Billig's [1996] theory of argumentation according to which thinking is polarized between specific and general aspects of phenomena). In order to get a better understanding of what he first wrote, Steve rewrites the narrative, thereby investigating it and giving himself space to comment on it. For example, he uses Elin, the tourist in the story, as a symbol for everyone and as a *tool* to think in terms of a synecdoche (*pars pro toto*), "she is like all the rest of us," and he includes himself, "us," in the analogy. I have defined examples similar to (92) as learning by appropriation of analytical perspectives on text

through recontextualizations. In the *empathetic* profile, the process originates in emotional reactions. It may even show similarities to what Elbow (1994) refers to as second order thinking, and which he says occurs when the writer revises the text. Further, there are striking resemblances in (92) to Vygotsky's theories about externalized speech, which, according to Vygotsky, signifies the way children think. In adults, this thought process is internalized (Vygotsky 1999). Steve's text in (92) very clearly shows signs of an ongoing (linguistic) thought process on its way towards taking an analytical turn. The textualization in itself can be regarded as an adult way to move from externalized to internalized thought, as when Steve approaches the general perspectives of his narrative by *writing* (thinking) himself through it. I call this approach *a process-oriented, instrumental critical metareflection*, as it is through a specific instrument, or *tool* (the reflection text), that the process can change from empathy to analysis.

The narrative imagination and empathic reading of one's own texts and those of others may also give rise to metacritical perspectives similar to those described by Nussbaum (1997, 2001). The *subject* may become aware of subjective perspectives through emotional reactions in the encounter with other writers. Processing such encounters by using writing as a *tool* for thought (as in 92) may help the *subject* clarify to herself what her position is. A combination of *tools*, such as the narrative imagination, in contact with the different solutions and the social interaction during the course, seems to generate metaperspectives on the *subject's* own prototypical choices. Here is an example:

93 Perspective change going from lived experience to fiction

> […] the fact that I chose to write from a mother's point of view is because I am a mother myself, and I related to my own emotions, if I were forced to leave my child. […] (Erika)

The changes of perspective in example (93) may seem trivial. Erika transforms her own experience into fiction. However, perspective changes are very likely not to be the least bit trivial to *subjects* themselves. They would

not have occurred had it not been for the surrounding texts, which caused Erika to *see*, or analyse, her preferred choices. This is a sign of appropriation, an incipient critical insight about oneself as a writer and about what subconscious attitudes influence one's arguments. In the process-oriented position, themes in the metareflections link to these types of personal experiences or emotions and are tightly intertwined in the texts. The writing process is constructed as emotionally taxing when the dilemma is associated to personal experience. The subject emerges in empathy, and does not separtate personal experience or emotions from experiences that the ficticious characters in the narratives go through:

94 The limits of empathy

> […] I suppose that the dilemma was a real blow to me, as I am a mother of a little girl about the same age as the child in the text and, also, quite a vulnerable person. I can feel that this is a disadvantage to me, as I get fewer options to choose from. For example, I refuse to accept that there are people who abandon their children out of their own free will. Of course, I know that these things happen, only, to write about them is like opening up and letting in emotions that I do not want to feel. I suppose that it is something I shall have to work at. […] (Erika)

Example (94) illustrates the tendency to use the autobiographical self as a natural point of departure for the narrative imagination and how such a stance also can become problematic. The assignment instructions do not say that the writing *subject* should be identical to the main character of the dilemma or that the narrative about the single parent must be narrated from the parent's point of view. Therefore, (94) illustrates that emotions hold the *subject* in a firm grip. Erika identifies with the main character in the narrative because she herself is a parent: "I am a mother." It seems natural for the *subject* in the *empathetic* profile to place herself as the parent in the dilemma, the character with whom she identifies the most. In addition, Erika also claims that it is necessary to stick to this position and not even try to fantazise about standpoints other than her own: "I refuse to accept that there are people who abandon their children" and what that might generate in terms of exploratory work. As she

says, the position restricts her possibilities—"I get fewer options"—to use her narrative imagination as a *tool* for discovery. Now, Erika in (94) was challenged during a seminar, just as the other students were. A number of different possible narrative scenarios were discussed, so, in spite of her resentment, she had to confront all sorts of opinions about the solutions to the dilemma. For emotional reasons, this was hard.

95 Writing to externalize one's standpoint

> […] My conclusion is that I would never be able to abandon my child […] and, therefore, neither could the main character of my text. […] (Iris)

In the *empathetic* profile, empathy may prove to be a problematic *tool* for perspective change, as it will result in emotions that the *subject* wishes to keep at bay, as illustrated in example (95), where Iris concludes that under no circumstances would she "be able to abandon" her baby. Therefore, seemingly she would be unable to write about such circumstances in the form of fiction either: "neither could the main character of my text." In such cases, emotion serves as a *tool* to reach and establish a standpoint, not to try out a new one, as shown in (95), where neither fictitious nor real examples seem to serve as *tools* for trying out different viewpoints in regard to a difficult social issue.

Parallel to these examples are examples showing an opposite tendency, where *subjects* emerge in a learning process through empathy. For example, Erika in (94) seems to indicate that she would have to undergo emotional ordeals in order to change her ways as a writer and that she may be prepared to do this: "I suppose that it is something I shall have to work at," as she puts it. She exemplifies the *subject* in the empathetic profile, in particular, expressing a wish to emerge in the fictitious worlds. Nussbaum's theory about empathy and narrative imagination as a way to critical thinking gets support in the empathetic profile. I would argue that the possibilities for perspective changes for critical thinking are enhanced when a group of students all are engaged in writing about a specific theme that will generate very different narrative texts. These narratives will be

compared, and thus used as *tools* for recontextualizing of the issues at hand while the writing process is ongoing and affective. In that way, questions relating to the dilemma may spark emotional as well as cognitive engagement through the work process. Such processes leave traces in the language in the texts, for example, regarding the use of certain verbs (which appear in bold in the next example).

96 From feeling to thinking

[…] Somebody in my response group had […] placed the situation in a different culture and then, suddenly, it **felt** more credible. […] I had **felt** a bit stuck, **felt** that there were not so many solutions, but as I **took part** of the other stories, I **realized** that there are actually many […] aspects to this […], situations where parents left the child […] were [not] so distant and incredible. I could **relate** to them because the author had highlighted different aspects that I had not **thought** about. […] (Iris)

Example (96) exemplifies a process where a verb for empathy and emotion, "felt," precedes metacritical perspectives expressed by cognitive verbs, "realized" and "thought." There seems to be a shift from emotional to cognitive *tools*, from emotion to thinking. Of particular interest here, though, is that the two processes seem to merge in the last sentence, indicated by the verb "relate" as a bridge between "realized" and "thought." The close ties to the local context are salient too. The social frame referred to is very local indeed—"somebody in my response group," as Iris writes.

Even if part of Iris's work *object* is to compare the quality of her own text with that of other writers in her peer group, or to create realism, it still seems as if her curiosity about other writers' texts and her empathetic reading of those texts give rise to metacritical perspectives on presumptions in her own texts. This is an example of critical metareflection very similar to the one described by Nussbaum. The narrative imagination is used as a *tool* for critical thinking (critical self-reflection in Nussbaum's [1997] terminology). It is reflective thinking, anchored, not lacking, in emotion. Here I call this particular type of critical thinking *critical empathy*.

It seems that social interaction, in combination with emotional processes generated by reading and writing, under certain circumstances, enhances the capacity to renegotiate and expand the *subject's* own prototypical ideas, by creating new understandings.

7.3.2   Critical Metareflection in the Expressive Profile

The expressive profile shows the critical metareflection when the *subject* expresses an emotionally driven, extroverted *motive*. As in the empathetic profile, it is a *motive* that can be implemented in both text types, but particularly well in the reflective text type due to relatively vague instructions and the subjective agency that follows as a consequence. Through the freewriting process, reactions and opinions can be freely expressed in the critical reflection text. There is a tendency to refrain from dialogue in the expressive profile. Instead, the zone of negotiation is defined as a lectern; other *subjects* are referred to as audience. Under such conditions, no changes of perspective occur between different voices. Instead, the zone is filled with the writer's own voice, the writer's own reactions and opinions. Salient textual features in the profile are few references to other *subjects* or other texts or other external references, such as textbooks. Such features indicate that the text should be viewed as a *tool* for freewriting, mainly intended to provide room for the *subject's* expressive *motive*. Yet another sign of the affective-driven *motive* are expressions of boredom. The *subject* loses interest and wants to move on as soon as the reactive process is over. Thus, the zone of negotiation tends to be void of voices other than that of the *subject*.

However, there are also examples of when the *subject* includes other voices in the text and opens up to discussion and exchange of thoughts and opinions. It happens when the *subject* uses the narrative imagination, as in the empathetic profile, to imagine what the different solutions of the dilemma would lead to. In such cases, metacritical perspectives come about, even if the *subject's* personal opinions are very strong. Here is an example:

97 Metacritical perspectives on personal opinions

> […] It was interesting to take part of the solutions from those who
> thought about the parent as a man. Quite honestly, I was really offended
> by the thought of a woman as parent. How could a woman leave her man
> and her child? In my mind, thoughts immediately popped up, that the
> woman must have died or something. Clearly, this shows my prejudiced
> view on society, and the modern family. […] (Antonia)

A dialogical perspective is illustrated in example (97), where Antonia has
had an interesting exchange of opinions—"It was interesting to take part
of the solutions"—and formed a new opinion, this time about her own
ideas of acceptable social behaviour. A dialogue with other students in the
group gives room for comparison where she first is shocked by their solu-
tions—"I was really offended"—and compares them to her own solu-
tion—"the woman must have died"—ending up in what seems to be a
sign of appropriation, resulting in a new standpoint—"Clearly, this shows
my prejudice"—which is a metacritical perspective on her previous
viewpoint.

For critical metareflection to occur in the expressive profile, the subject
must persevere through the process and *want* to remain and even immerse
the self in the different steps of the assignment. It is necessary to over-
come resistance. One way that this happens is by change of attitude to
the *writing process*, by persevering, although working with the assignment
may feel "incredibly tedious," as Leo puts it in example (98).

98 Metacritical view on the writing method

> […] the previous versions [have] given me a solid ground, and now I can
> move on with the story and get further with it. I was about to say that I
> was "forced to" elaborate clear characters with clear motives, and desires,
> and backgrounds. This made it much easier to create the scenes where the
> characters meet. I knew exactly how the different characters would react
> in different situations. Had it not been for such thorough research before
> writing, I would not have known. I have played around with the idea that

this may come in handy in the future, somehow. […] even if it may feel incredibly tedious to do certain things, it is work that will lead to more exciting things later on. (Leo)

Example (98) describes a process approach to writing. It is not only the *subject*'s own opinions that are processed through the act of writing, but a number of different approaches to the dilemma. Even the characters in the narrative are used in order to stage different reactions: "I knew exactly how the different characters would *react* [italics added] in different situations." The metacritical step in (98) is taken when the *subject* manages to hold back reactions, although the work process is "incredibly tedious" and possibly makes the writer want to give up during the different stages of the assignment. The *subject* is even inclined to describe this meticulous work as forced upon them, as Leo puts it: "I was 'forced to' elaborate." But the effort pays off. Resistance is transformed into a creative, new method for future work, where it "may come in handy." Through perseverance and by holding back affects, the *subject* can thus make use of reactions analytically and in an exploratory manner, as in the exploratory, communicative profile, which is illustrated in example (99):

99 **From opinion to analysis**

[…] What I noticed in discussions with others is that [it] takes a legitimate reason […]. The parent cannot go away to take any job. —most of us had chosen a profession where you need to be highly qualified […] something that really would make a difference to humanity […]. During the discussions, we agreed that […] all things considered, a child is a responsibility, not some kind of legal right […]. But to abandon your child […] because of poverty, and because you have no other options, well, that is completely accepted. Once, during a coffee break where I used to work, I heard stories about ordinary families in our country, where parents leave their children in nurseries even during their holidays, to take courses in painting. Judging by the reactions from those workmates, that was not at all okay. […] (Leo)

This new analytical stance replaces a previous reactive stance, exemplified in (99). The zone serves as a tool to research and compare argu-

ments from two different social contexts. In that way, Leo seems to notice nuances and opens up to opinions and voices other than his own. In the expressive profile, for metacritical thinking to occur, subjective agency and perseverance are crucial. It is *wanting* to continue working long after personal reactions have faded and *wanting* to listen to others that impact on the learning *outcome* in terms of critical thinking. In (99), the *subject* explores different perspectives in a process-like manner. The *subject* engages in a reactive process and seems to start to listen to what others have to say, which is a prerequisite for exploratory analysis.

Anna in example (100a–f) is yet another example of a *subject* who holds strong opinions and who has taken notes of gender issues linked to categorizations through language. But Anna moves on to speculate on possible narratives other than the ones she wrote about.

100 **(a–f) Investigating dialogue between fictitious worlds**

> (100a) […] To begin with, I was completely determined. My story was going to be about a woman in Africa who is forced to abandon her child in order to survive. But it was lack of knowledge about the country that made me give up the idea. Instead, the plot is set in Sweden, or some other welfare state. […] (Anna)

From what Anna says in example (100a), we can conclude that realism depends on a writer's knowledge about the subject matter. This is an insight expressed by many writers in my data, and they seem to gain this insight either while they think about the setting of the dilemma or during the act of writing it. It is an insight that can make them reject ideas. I have no example where a writer expresses a determination to write about a character from some foreign continent, for example, as in (100a), and who sets about to research and find information about the subject matter (as a research project) to try the idea. The only reports I have in my data are from writers who did not pick up the challenge when they realized that the territory was unknown to them. This may be a sign of lack of interest in life problems situated far away from the *subject's* own sphere of interest, as it is specifically cultural circumstances that writers claim to be

unable to create, not other unfamiliar situations created by the narrative imagination, as in example (100b).

> (100b) […] My first text is about a woman who has been left by her partner long before she told him she was pregnant. Since she is single she hires a nanny, who takes care of the child while she works. The woman is very successful and is offered a job that would make a substantial difference to her career, but at the expense of spending time with her child. In fact she would be forced to leave it. From the beginning I had in mind that she would take the opportunity of career advancement, and leave the child, but at the very last minute, I had second thoughts, and changed my mind. She abandons her career, not her child. As such a decision is very far from what I would have done, I thought it would be easier (and more fun) to write about a parent who is evil through and through, and only thought about herself, but it turned out to be more difficult than I had thought. […] (Anna)

Implicitly example (100b) expresses the idea that the act of writing should be easy and generate pleasant emotions. Such expectations affect choices in regard to the setting and the plot. In this example, the main character "abandons her career, not her child," because Anna, as a writer, feels that it "it would be easier (and more fun)" to fantasize about something "very far from what I would have done." Because Anna wants to explore what the choice between career/child would mean to someone similar to herself (or to herself), she needs a plausible scenario, one that could happen to her, and thus she forgoes setting the plot in a foreign culture. Anna describes her main character as "evil through and through" and estimates that it will be easy to create such a character. However, during the writing process, problems occur, as "it turned out to be more difficult than I had thought" to create an evil person. It is reasonable to interpret what goes on in (100b) as learning through expansion. A new, metacritical stance is taking shape. A research question is under construction; what is meant by an "evil" person? The question arises as Anna changes the narrative perspective in the new version of the narrative text in example (100c) as new complications appear.

> (100c) […] In my second text I tell the story from the child's perspective and her thoughts about her mother […]. It is clear that the nanny thinks

that the man did the right thing to leave the woman. The nanny thinks
that the mother is a "bitch" […] who only thinks about herself and her
career. It was only natural that the nanny disliked the woman and that she
should sympathize with the man. I believe that the relationship between
nannies and their employers is like that.… It is a rule, more or less. […]
(Anna)

Anna notices a prototypical expression in her text, and she explains that
it is caused by social and societal conditions: "It is a rule, more or less." In
the expressive profile, there is a risk that the *subject* ends up taking sides
in a particular argumentation, as in the example, and, through that pro-
cess, also considers the standpoint to be a proven fact. In (100c), the
subject changes from "I believe that" to formulating a general assertive
statement: "It is a rule." The rule that the *subject* claims to have observed
could instead have been framed as a research question for further exami-
nation, as is the case in the exploratory position. In the expressive profile,
however, research does not seem to be included in what the assignment is
about. But even if the emphasis in the texts is on staging or extracting
opinions from narratives, the example still shows that the *subject* defines
a theme in her narrative as prototypical and starts to reflect on it critically.
It seems as if an analytical phase of the reflective process begins when
Anna starts to use her narrative imagination to think about *different*
choices that the fictitious characters might face. In her critical reflection
text, she moves on to speculate about other plausible solutions to the
dilemma.

> (100d) […] An alternative solution to the problem would be that the
> woman contacts the man and tells him that he is the father of the child
> […]. The other story, I could have told from the man's perspective. […]
> In retrospect, I cannot understand why the women acted like she did.
> How she let him get away from his responsibility so easily. […] (Anna)

Example (100d) shows the importance of the recontextualizations that
the texts undergo in the writing process and the changes of perspective
that follow. Anna uses the critical reflection text as a *tool* for freewriting.
The text emerges in the textualization process and mirrors her thoughts

as they are put on paper, while writing. She returns to and develops meta-critical perspectives on themes written earlier in the text. One thing she returns to is her thoughts about setting the plot in a different culture (100a), which she wrote that she initially had rejected.

> (100e) […] Yet another alternative would be to set the plot in a develop-ing country. If you move the story to a poor country, far away from here, where the parent is forced to leave her child in order to survive, the situ-ation is not unrealistic at all. […] (Anna)

Example (100e) shows how a metacritical perspective emerges during the writing process and how empathy is used in order to switch between different narrative worlds. New viewpoints are juxtaposed with one another, and they create new *insights*. In (100e), Anna returns to the idea in (100a), to set the plot in Africa. Instead of rejecting the idea, because she knows too little about the culture, she discovers that, regardless of cultural back-grounds, people in difficult situations are not so hard to understand. Implicitly she asks what *she* would do "in order to survive." Thus, she reframes the dilemma to survival from poverty, and not a dilemma about good or evil. The entire process (100a–e) is very similar to the one Nussbaum (1997, 2001) defines as critical thinking, where the narrative imagination constitutes an essential part of what it takes to anchor logical, analytical thinking in emotion. Anna in example (100f) ends her reflec-tion with a few comments about this.

> (100f) […] Most of all I learnt not to be so categorical when I argue. I often have a solution to a problem, but after the discussion I realize that there are a number of different solutions. […] (Anna)

Time is one of many *tools* that contribute to create possibilities for per-spective change for Anna. The changes come "*after* the discussion"; *after* listening to the multitude of voices in the discussion, Anna perseveres and withholds her own reactions. She has learnt something new, by expanding her capacity to take in what others have to say, or, to put it in her own words: "I learnt not to be so categorical when I argue." I call this type of critical thinking *critical evaluation*. What the profiles have in

common in the process-oriented position is that writing is driven by an emotional process. For learning to take place in the expressive profile, the *subject* needs to control and practise to hold back affective reactions (e.g., boredom), which can follow when the reaction has faded. For learning to happen in the empathetic profile, the *subject* expresses a need to nerve oneself, in order to have emotions and not be overwhelmed by them. In both profiles, however, many examples of critical metareflection indicate that when emotional reactions are kept under control, they can serve as dynamic starting points for exploratory dialogue between different stand-points and feelings, allowing for possibilities of metacritical thinking.

7.4   Critical Metareflection in the Exploratory Positioning

A salient feature in the exploratory position, and one that separates it from the other positions, is that the *subject* expresses a metacritical stance, regardless of what social frame is explored. In the exploratory position, in the communicative profile, the zone is expressed as a well-equipped experimental laboratory, where research questions are explored by students with a high degree of subjective agency. In the strategic profile, it is expressed in a way similar to in a traditional teacher-led, monologist classroom, where assignments are handed out, solved, and graded in accordance with instructions and rules decided in advance by the teacher.

7.4.1   Critical Metareflection in the Communicative Profile

The exploratory, communicative profile is a way to illustrate critical metareflection when the *subject* is driven by an exploratory *motive* to analyse research questions evoked by the dilemma and to work with them independently. The relatively vague assignment instructions and the right to subjective agency that follows do not cause conflicts that must be handled strategically. It seems reasonable to assume that the *motive* is communicative (exploratory) as the data shows that the *subject* engages in the

assignment and in social discussions to develop critical, researchable questions. In the communicative profile, the basic attitude to writing is exploratory and analytical (Elbow 1994: 26). The attitude constructed in the texts is characterized by curiosity and trust. Many voices are invited into the zone of negotiation, and it is a collective, a "we". Regardless of what assignment question is addressed, the texts signal an analytical approach, with a multitude of recontextualizations and comparisons from many different perspectives. There is a high frequency of metacritical perspectives, as was shown previously in (Section 6.3.) Example (101a–b) illustrates what the stance looks like in a text.

101 (a–b) Analysis of style for critical reflection

(101a) […] I avoided to write explicitly about what the character was thinking. Instead I tried to show it, through dialogue, actions, body language, and dramaturgical turning points. The differences between the paragraphs I wrote based on personal experience and those that I invented are clear. […] (Liv)

Compared to the subject in the genre-oriented position, there is a difference in approach to the assignment. The *subject* in the exploratory position expresses interest in the act of writing as a method: to explore what happens to a narrative text when you try out different *tools.* In contrast, in the genre-oriented position, the focus is on what possible effects stylistic choices may have on model readers. Here the narrative becomes a tool to try out and observe generally what happens, as in example (101a), where the *subject* tries out some of the *tools* that she has encountered during teaching and learning (e.g., a specific seminar-focused literary dialogue as a way to create characters and a text about dramaturgical turning points in narratives were on the reading list). It seems that Liv discovers a link between quality of style and lived experience, as she compares sections in her text. She notices that "[t]he differences between the paragraphs ... based on ... experience… and those that I invented are clear." Thus, statements about differences in style are grounded in analysis of style and are supported by factual observations. In this example, the *subject* has made an attempt to try out a fictitious world that she knows

nothing about (cf. 100a, where this idea is rejected), and she concludes that it is possible to see differences in quality of style. But links between the narrative text and observations about the autobiographical self are established in various ways.

> (101b) […] She has left her child. But me, I took mine with me to go there, and brought it back home again. She comes from the countryside in China, where circumstances force her to accept a job offer far away from home. I come from the capital of a rich country, and I have the possibility to travel as I please around the world for several months. The call to change perspective revealed new aspects of the story. […] (Liv)

When Nussbaum (1997, 2001) claims that the narrative imagination is a part of critical thinking, it is precisely the operation illustrated in example (101b) that she refers to. By use of empathy in the creation of the narrative text, the *subject* can imagine other possible living conditions. Then, in the critical reflection, it becomes possible to draw metacritical conclusions about different conditions in text and in reality. Through the dilemma, Liv observes in (101b) differences between the fictitious character that she creates and her own, Western perspectives and conditions, at the same time as she observes that the changes of perspective that take place while working on the assignment also cast light on "new aspects" that are possible to analyse further.

According to Nussbaum (1997, 2001), the narrative imagination makes abductive, logical thought operations possible. The operations permit the use of empathy in a number of different narrative frames (literary examples of outstanding quality in Nussbaum's case) without having to use deduction. This way, an emotional link is created to logical insights. Nussbaum claims that the potential of the literary example is considerable, in terms of influencing people's moral judgement, but whether such an influence has taken place here is impossible to tell, as this study analyses texts, not the development of moral judgement among individuals. Yet the examples discussed here illustrate that empathy through the use of narrative imagination is a *tool* for critical metareflection in the sense that Nussbaum intends it, even though one must assume

that the narrative texts produced here are no way near the very high literary quality Nussbaum advocates.

The exploratory, analytical approach to the assignment is expressed throughout the text, as illustrated in (101a) and (101b), for example, where all the *tools*, including the narrative imagination, contribute to create metacritical perspectives. It is a critical stance that permeates the writing process, not only in the analysis of the differences in quality of literary style, as in (101a), which refers to the subjective level of the discoursal self (and skill, basically). The analytical stance also extends to language, in a general sense, as a *tool* for play and as a *tool* for analysis, without very clear boundaries between the approaches. For example, by playing with words, language is used both as a *tool* to create stylistic effect and as a *tool* to critically deconstruct concepts analytically.

> (101c) […] standing there single, standing there double, standing there down and under, hardly standing. It is not easy to stand firm and claim shared responsibility. […] (Liv)

As can be seen in example (101c), style is not primarily a matter of affiliation in order to create discoursal identity but a method to critically explore and unearth meanings in linguistic expressions; here the question is what it means to stand alone as a single parent.[2] The critical reflection text contains a high frequency of metacritical expressions because of the *subject's* exploratory, dialogical approach, regardless of the social frame under investigation (the discoursal identity, group processes, or the dilemma).

A salient, differentiating feature in the critical metareflection in the exploratory position is that emotion is linked to critical reflection and analysis. This is different from the empathetic profile, for example, where the *subject's* main work *object* is to experience and live affects and emotions, not to analyse them. Contrary to this, in the exploratory position, the *subject* moves from emotional experiences, to analysis of the feelings, by observations of what caused them, to conclusions about different phenomena at a general level. This is a kind of inductive approach.

Social *tools*, such as group discussions, and narrative tools, such as other texts, are used metacritically in a similar way.

102 **Discussions and reading as analytical tools**

> […] In the group, many of us added instructions in the instructions
> which in fact were not written in them, and we were surprised about
> each other's different solutions […]. To abandon a child, is a topic
> charged with emotions. It is so charged in fact that most people in the
> group though that it could not possibly happen in a family near me, but
> among criminals, poor people or where there is a war. But 400,000[3]
> children live without one parent in Sweden. […] (Liv)

In the previous positions, we have seen that the group can serve the func-
tion of test panel to evaluate readers' responses. The group can also serve
as a *tool* for the *subject* to indulge in emotions or to launch off into differ-
ent opinions. In the communicative profile, however, the group is mainly
used as a *tool* for comparison of perspectives and themes that emerge
during the discussions and while reading the different narrative texts. In
that way possibilities occur to analyse and draw conclusions about differ-
ent societal phenomena, as illustrated in example (102). Liv concludes
that "many of us" had situated the difficult dilemma "charged with emo-
tions" in other cultures and places far away from themselves, although
local cultural and social choices would be very realistic, according to the
statistics that Liv refers to. In the exploratory, communicative position,
the *subject* uses the tools to move between different social frames, that of
discoursal identity, the course frame, and expanding further to society
outside of the course and then back again. This pendulum movement
gives rise to distance and allows for metacritical perspectives in all the
frames. The differences in the approach to critical thinking between the
positions are in fact illustrated in (102). The *tools* are used metacritically
for stylistic improvement, as in the genre-oriented position. As in the
process-oriented position, metareflection may also be expressed as empa-
thetic recognition (it could have been me). However, in addition, there is
a salient, general perspective to be found in the exploratory position in all
the social frames of critically exploring prototypical choices. At a specific
level, the *subject* refers to her own texts as well as those of others. At a
general level, the *subject* links observations about prototypicalizations to
cultural issues and to language (e.g., to the fact that prototypes in lan-

guage create stereotypes and contribute to stereotypical thinking) (cf. Molloy 2001). The *subject* thus displays awareness of the fact that she as an individual, the group as a collective, and the surrounding society are all permeated by a Discourse (see Gee 2008: 3f., 155ff. about Discourse with a capital D) about the *other*.

The examples discussed above illustrate a type of critical metareflection which oscillates between many different social frames in the text-analytical model: the individually oriented, the local frame within the response group encompassing all the different groups of students on the course and also encompassing social frames outside of the course, such as university society in general, in regard to the dilemma. In the exploratory communicative profile, critical metareflection can be described as *independent, analytical argumentation*. The *subject* formulates research questions using the ones provided in the assignment as a starting point, develops them, and researches them in the different frames. In this way, the critical metareflection borrows characteristics significant of academic discourse, where writers are expected to reflect critically and analytically in assignments given to them within a *community* of a university course, such as creative writing.

7.4.2   Critical Metareflection in the Exploratory Strategic Profile

The exploratory strategic profile presents a critical metareflection where writers are strongly *motivated* to achieve well in a goal-oriented paradigm, where learning goals and *outcomes* (and the methods to reach them) are clearly specified beforehand, through teaching and learning and in the assignment. When the assignment is based on a liberal education view of learning, allowing for a relatively high degree of subjective agency, indicated, for example, by vague questions in the assignment instructions, a contradiction arises between the *subject*'s demands on being led and instructed and implicit *rules* about subjective agency from the *community*. As Engeström (1987: 8, Chap. 3) describes: "If the subject matter is given, the subject asks: […]. Why should I try to solve it? […] Who designed it, for what purpose and for whose benefit?" Had these goal-

oriented questions been answered in the instructions, the contradiction would have been solved. In the strategic profile, it is clear that the contradiction gives rise to conflicts regarding *rules* as well as *division of labour* about who decides what in regard to the assignment. When the assignment does not clearly specify what exact learning goals are anticipated, the conflict may generate considerable uncertainty and anxiety about doing the assignment in the wrong way, as indicated in the critical reflection through expressions of anxiety or anger about lack of clear instructions. It is reasonable to assume that the *subject* in the strategic profile has to struggle to overcome the conflict between *rules* based on a goal-oriented view on academic education, and *rules* based on a liberal view, given the personal *motive* to achieve well without knowing exactly what is expected of the students. Such uncertainty about requirements calls for self-discipline, different from the one in the expressive profile, where the *subject* overcomes impulses to fritter time away. In the exploratory strategic profile, self-discipline is associated to feelings of insecurity caused by vague *rules* within the activity system. The *subject* expresses that she is strongly motivated to work but does not know how. Frustration follows and, probably, a desire to protest, since it is impossible, for strategic reasons, to ignore the assignment or to not perform well.

It is an analytical stance that emerges in the strategic profile too, but the zone of negotiation contains fewer voices, than in the communicative profile. The *subject* seems less inclined to try out ideas and to take risks than in the communicative profile. However, in examples (103 a–g), a work process of an expanding kind is presented.

103 (**a–g) Critical metareflection in the strategic profile**

> (103a) […] I felt that it was interesting to read the texts that the others had written, but I felt that, in our group, we mainly talked about style […]. (Ella)

In other words, the *subject* seems to end up much on her own when it comes to choices of what themes to discuss, as the rest of the group members are engaged in talking "about style" (quite contrary to what the lecturer asked them to do). Example (103a) shows that Ella was prepared to

discuss the themes of the texts. She has found it "interesting to read the texts that the others have written," implying that she wants to talk about them and also, implicitly, indicating that she makes an attempt to comply with my instructions at the seminar, which were to discuss the themes. However, she has not succeeded in getting any deeper conversation about the topics going in her group. The other *subjects* obviously had other *objects* and *motives* and wanted to talk about "style." In spite of this, Ella manages to do some comparative analyses of the different narratives produced by the group. From this work, she has developed insights about the importance of allowing for many different perspectives, because they are needed to create food for thought.

> (103b) […] Anyway, it is not until we meet other people that it becomes clear that we may hold very different views on how we perceive a given subject, —and that way also start to think about why that is. […] (Ella)

Example (103b) illustrates how a subject in the strategic profile works analytically, in spite of feelings of resistance and insecurity. Ella is critical of the *rules* (and perhaps also of the lecturer who has implemented them, and other *subjects* who comply). Yet she overcomes such obstacles and concludes that "anyway" she has learnt something new through the assignment. Her strategy to go through with the work *object* and complete the assignment creates a platform where she can begin to express a critical research question: "start to think about why that is." With the little guidance she can glean from the instructions in the assignment, she takes on the work and goes through with a critical discussion using writing as a *tool*, and with a personal and independent stance at that. She embarks on the theme of being critical of different kinds of authorities (103c).

> (103c) […] history has taught us that it is important that *all* individuals have courage, and are capable of raising their eyebrows in view of courses of events and trends in our society. Citizens capable of critical thinking are a prerequisite for us, if we are to avoid the repetition of mistakes from the past. […] (Ella)

This, she juxtaposes to her own personal fear in example (103d).

> (103d) […] To claim the right to take up room, even with a frown on your face, and to confront authority, is something I have had to practice throughout my adult life, and without guidance, —a heavy lesson if you are out of practice. […] (Ella)

Ella in example (103d) expresses a struggle for independence, but it comes at a price, as it is "something I have had to practise throughout my adult life." Freeing oneself from authority takes not only courage but also practice. These insights seem to be the result of deeply felt personal experience, "a heavy lesson." It is hard to know for certain, of course, but it seems that Ella is exploring in her critical reflection text what authority has meant to her. Interpreted that way, Ella represents someone who is learning through expansion, as she begins to see a connection between achievement and submission.

> (103e) […] I am myself part of that little group of upper secondary pupils who were always called "super-performers and A-graders" and who were never a nuisance to the teachers. […] (Ella)

It seems in example (103e) as if Ella associates her good grades—"A-graders"—with expectations of submission, to not being "a nuisance to the teachers." Also, this attitude of hers has been part of her learning identity from childhood. The critique of the assignment that follows in her critical reflection text may be construed as her way to experiment with what it would imply to be critical when faced with the empirical reader (whom she knows is me, her lecturer). Ella expresses a certain disappointment about her lack of courage in parts of the assignment in example (103f).

> (103f)[…] I would probably have allowed myself to "play" more courageously, with the different versions […] for the sake of experimenting. […] (Ella)

She wishes she would have been more daring, more playful: "to 'play' more courageously" would have required clearer instructions in this

regard to avoid the inherent conflict between subjective agency and strict goal orientation. However, as she thinks (and writes) through the different stages of the assignment, Ella seems to reach a metacritical standpoint where she gives voice to the obedient student that she referred to earlier in her text.

> (103g) […] During the different steps of this work, I have reflected a bit about people's right to feel anger, and the possibilities available to express it, as part of a process to move on. Why don't we holler, loudly and soundly 'I hate you so much right now!' just like the singer Cole Cane? Could there be some kind of "catharsis" in allowing ourselves to express disappointment and anger? (Ella)

Example (103g) describes an emotional process, and it has been going on "[d]uring the different steps of this work." Probably Ella has had to wrestle with her anger: "to express disappointment and anger" and hold back protests. So, when she finally voices her anger during the act of writing the critical reflection, something else also happens. The *subject* shows awareness of the fact that her personal stance (in the course) is interwoven with difficult societal questions, such as our duty, or our right, to protest as citizens, outside of the course frame, "to avoid the repetition of mistakes from the past," as Ella wrote in (103c). Ella thus reflects about becoming part of a structure, which perhaps is not desirable, by doing what is desirable (complying). Instead of always performing to get good grades and "never" being "a nuisance to the teachers," there may be value in expressing emotions: "to feel anger, and…to express it." In the text, Ella voices this idea through expressions of a critical attitude to authorities, such as the lecturer. In a deeper sense, this attitude may be understood in terms of a liberation process, where the *subject* starts to question certain basic assumptions about her view on writing as well as her discoursal identity as a "super-performer and A-grader" during the course in creative writing. The *subject* orients away from the topic of discoursal identity towards a more general research question about what it means, from a societal perspective, to *not* question authorities, and about courage in a general sense. It seems as if a change in the *subject*'s *motive* has taken place. The example illustrates learning through expansion, as the

critical metareflection shifts from subject-oriented questions, towards an independent, *analytical discussion,* similar to that found in the communicative profile. But in the strategic profile there is also a type of critical metareflection oriented towards identity. It is the discoursal identity as student, and what rights a student has to subjective agency, that is negotiated.

7.5 Concluding Discussion of the Metacritical Results

The different expressions of critical metareflection, can be summarized as instrumental, identity-oriented, and analytically argumentative, oriented towards language critique (including critical empathy and critical evaluation).

In the genre-oriented position, the metacritical perspective is connected to change from a writer's perspective to a reader's perspective. The *subject* relates to the fact that a different interpretation of the narrative text from the one that the *subject* intended is possible. A change of perspective occurs in the encounter between the model reader in the mind of the *subject* and the empirical reader participating in the course. The new perspective is an instrumental and object-oriented metacritical perspective, aimed at understanding readers' reactions to the *subject's* narrative text in order to improve that text.

In the apprentice's profile, learning *outcomes* are linked to new ways to use different *tools* and also to insights about prototypical categorizations through language use in the narratives written by the *subject*. Such *outcomes* are associated with practical use—for example, to how the *subject* may use new knowledge about genre in future texts. The insights are often framed as practical advice to the reader, thematized as how to improve one's writing results, "handy hints." This type of advice and questions about writing are permeated by a discourse of identity: By showing evidence of knowledge of genre, the writer's right to claim authority as writer increases. The perception of the *subject* as writer is reassessed as the *subject* now questions her previous ideas about what she

is capable of writing and is stylistically free to write. It is an *identity-oriented* metacritical perspective that opens up to possibilities for renegotiation: to leave a discoursal identity of an apprentice and to claim a new authority in line with the identity of an accomplished author.

In the process-oriented position, critical metareflection can be defined as *instrumental* when it is oriented towards a certain *tool*. In the empathetic profile, the *subject* changes tools, by change of text type from narrative to reflective text. Thus, also, a shift in perspective occurs through the recontextualization process, as the *subject* moves from a specific to a general understanding of her own narrative text, as illustrated in example (92).

To the *subject*, this is a new way of thinking about the plot, and it opens up new, critical perspectives that may generate learning about analytical thinking and how to move between working with the specific example in a narrative text and working with (inductive reasoning) observing patterns and overarching general perspectives in a critical reflection text.

In the empathetic profile, a metacritical perspective on empathy is expressed when narrative imagination is used for exploratory, analytical purposes, as a research method rather than as a method for emotional experience. Used this way, the narrative imagination becomes a tool for critical metareflection in line with Nussbaum's (2001) description of emotional intelligence. The narrative imagination in this sense may be defined as *critical empathy*, as it generates metacritical perspectives in regard to discoursal identity as well as in regard to questions about prototypical language use found in texts about the dilemma. In the expressive profile, a metacritical change of perspective occurs in a similar way, when a reactive process is exchanged for an exploratory process. It happens when the *subject* learns to use her reactions to explore different approaches in different texts analytically and to *explore* different voices during discussions in class. Such work makes it possible for the *subject* to use the affective *tools* for *critical evaluation* based on emotion, instead of limiting the process to reaction only, when encountering different viewpoints. Other voices are given space to be heard, and discussion can take place, as the *subject* manages to take a stance similar to the one in the empathetic profile.

In the exploratory communicative profile, critical metareflection is seen as an independent, *analytical discussion*. The act of writing is used as

a *tool* to discover prototypicalizations in the subject's own writing and to discover common, prototypical expressions in texts at a general level. In the strategic profile, too, the *subject*s' stance is analytical, but the major learning *outcome* that leads to change is linked to *identity-oriented* critical metareflection and a change of attitude to the self as a university student. Writing is firmly anchored within the university context, not outside of it, as in the critical metareflection in the genre-oriented position. In the end, a negotiation between the *subject* and the university takes place in the text. The object of negotiation is how strongly the *subject* is allowed to claim the right to independence, who is assigned the right to formulate *rules* about research questions, and how much independence a critical student has.

Notes

1. Many researchers have addressed the phenomenon. According to Jack Mezirow (1997), representing the American school of perspective trans-formation, emotional reactions are signs of perspective change that come with a person's change of value ground.
2. In Swedish, which is the language Liv writes in, the example reads "*ensam-stående, dubbelstående, lägre stående, knappt stående. Det är inte lätt att fortsätta dela ansvaret*." The expression for "single parent" is *ensamstående*, and it literally means "standing alone." "Double standing" is a pun to represent the opposite of single parenthood, of course. *Lägre stående* is Swedish for "inferior," and *knappt stående* means that you are almost not standing up.
3. This equates to between 20 and 25 percent of all children in Sweden [author's comment].

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8

A Follow-Up Study: Creative Writing for Critical Metareflection in a Different Context

Can creative writing for critical metareflection be used in any academic writing course, and just as one of many elements in writing instruction on such a course? The follow-up study described in this chapter researches the learning outcomes when creative writing is introduced outside of the creative writing context. The assignment used is similar to the one in the case study, but it is designed for one seminar. In alignment with Chaps. 6 and 7, the results are presented as prototypical writers' positions.

In Chap. 4, Sect. 4.2 I referred to learning in a writing context as expansion (Russel 2009:21), as when learners expand their knowledge, and sees it from new perspectives and learn something new. Closely linked to this idea is the notion of transfer, as when knowledge from one activity system expands into another (Terttu Tuomi-Gröhn & Engeström 2003). To inquire into the transferability of a creative writing method for critical thinking, I launched a follow-up study (referred to as the follow-up) in a different academic writing context than creative writing to research the impact of context on students' learning *outcomes* and to try out the method. This follow-up study was adapted to a one-seminar discussion, and the setting was a freshman writing course for teacher trainees (whom I refer to as trainees hereafter). The assignment on which the follow-up study is based, is very similar to the one presented in (Chap. 3).

One of the major conclusions from the creative writing course case study (referred to as the case study) is the impact of discoursal identity on learning through writing. I thus based the follow-up on the hypothesis that contextual factors will impact on results from any learning situation involving writing. These factors will be accessible through text analysis. A change of writing context might reveal *how* the context is constructed and negotiated and what learning *outcomes* the students retrieve when working with creative writing for critical thinking, defined as critical metareflection. In addition, such a change of context may provide some information about creative writing as a method for critical thinking outside of the context of a creative writing course. My research questions in the follow-up are:

- What is the impact of (the writing) context and of discoursal identity on learning outcomes?
- How do trainees position themselves as writers?
- What do they learn from the writing assignment?
- What are the outcomes when transferring a writing method from one writing context to another?

In the follow-up study, the research questions are designed to inquire into the impact of context and identity on learning critical metareflection through creative writing. A teaching *tool*, a creative writing assignment from one academic writing context, is transferred to another academic writing context, where creative writing for critical thinking has previously not been used. The new context is a three-year teacher's training programme with an intercultural profile, leading to a degree of Master of Arts/Science. The approach in this follow-up study is different from the one taken in the case study. There I set out to gain access to the students' perceptions of their practice by letting the assignment in the case study be one of many "naturally occurring" course assignments (i.e., as part of the practice in the course in creative writing). In this follow-up, although the assignment has been embedded ("sits lightly") in the context of the teacher trainee course, it is presented as an exception to other assignments on that course.

8.1 Format of the Follow-Up Study

Section 8.2 introduces the teacher trainee educational programme, and Sect. 8.3 presents the participants' roles and other aspects of reflexivity (See Chap. 3). Data, data selection and analytical approaches are discussed in Sects. 8.5 and 8.6. Section 8.7 briefly introduces the results from the text-analytical approaches; the details are presented as prototypical writers' positions in the sections that follow. The presentation is arranged in three steps to facilitate a comparison to the case study: First, Sect. 8.8 presents the trainees as prototypical creative writers. Section 8.9 follows with an account of how the trainees negotiate their positions. Section 8.10 presents the result of the negotiation in terms of (hybrid) identity positions. Concluding remarks about discoursal identity are presented in Sect. 8.11, and Sect. 8.12 summarizes the teacher trainee study.

8.2 Teacher Trainee Educational programme Context

In accordance with criterion 2 in exploratory practice—"Work done for understanding […] must not hinder language teaching and learning, and will seek to make a positive contribution to learning" (Allwright 2010: 110)—I looked for a course where the assignment might contribute to learning and where my exploratory practice research would "sit so lightly" that it would not be seen as an extra burden, in Allright's words. The most suitable context I found, given these requirements, was a writing course for a vocational programme for Swedish for upper secondary teaching (years 10–12),[1] first cycle, undergraduate level. The overarching academic aim of the teacher trainee programme, according to the syllabus, is to provide students with a "Degree of Master of Arts/Science in Upper Secondary Education with an Intercultural Focus." On completion of the programme, as one of many learning objectives, the students should

> […] show evidence of subject knowledge required for the professional practice, including broad knowledge in the major areas of the subject, which substantially deepens the knowledge in certain areas of the subject, and deepens insights in research and pedagogical development. (SFS 2013: 1118)

The "major areas of the subject" for upper secondary teaching are addressed in the different courses of the programme, of which one is a nine-credit course in writing. Learning about creative writing in a sociocritical paradigm would thus have the potential to contribute to the SFS (Swedish Code of Statutes) requirement to "deepen insights in research and pedagogical development." The method that I present to the trainees is the result of new research and a development of creative writing for critical metareflection, which is also one of the knowledge areas that the trainees should master, according to the programme description:

> […] In addition, the intercultural profile of the educational program also provides special knowledge and skills…that make the student particularly well suited to work in educational environments where students with different backgrounds and study conditions meet. The program also gives good academic training and solid pedagogical knowledge and skills that can be useful in other areas. (ibid.)

The aims emphasize the "intercultural profile" of the education and that the trainees will be "particularly well suited" to work with students from "different backgrounds." It is a statement that points at the necessity of trainees becoming familiar with critical metareflection, defined by the philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1997) as critical self-reflection, with an emphasis on empathy and on the capacity to walk in others' shoes. Adding to this definition of critical metareflection are some of the specific aims—"local learning objectives"—addressed in the syllabus:

> After the training, the student can:
> - demonstrate a thorough knowledge of how social categorizations such as ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age and disability interact and how they affect students' lives and learning,
> - show […] the importance of liberal education for learning and human development,
> - demonstrate a thorough knowledge of how artistic expression, such as literature, theater and film, can deepen theoretical knowledge and provide opportunities for dialogue and contribute to broaden horizons.

The decision to set the follow-up study in a teachers training context is based on the hypothesis that a sociocritical creative writing method would align

with the specific aims expressed in the syllabus. The writing method originates in Nussbaum's ideas about educating for democratic citizenship, reflected in the syllabus as "liberal education for learning and human development." The fact that the creative writing method aims at critical literacy and language awareness should make it suitable to serve as a *tool* to teach trainees about ways to access critical metareflection in accordance with the aims stipulated in the local learning objectives. Very specifically, working with the dilemma used in the writing assignment may help to provide trainees with *tools* to retrieve "knowledge of … social categorizations such as ethnicity, class, gender.…" In accordance with the criteria in the syllabus, doing educational research with trainees would have the potential to "make a positive contribution to learning" and also to answer questions about transferability.

The notion of 'transfer' relates to "polycontextuality" (Engeström et al. 1995: 320) in the sense that the subject of a certain activity system simultaneously also is engaged in other activity systems. Transfer between activity systems may occur through boundary objects, which are "[…] a shared space, where common objects form the boundaries between groups through flexibility and shared structure […]" (Star 2010: 602). Boundaries are thus intended as a "shared space, where […] the sense of here and there are confounded" (Star 2010: 603), a space where people may find room to act. In other words, boundary objects may be viewed as "the stuff of action" (ibid). Here I view boundary objects as signs in the texts where the writers refer to how they may, or not, use creative writing for actions in their communities as students or in their future professional lives. In this book, transferability refers to the way *tools* and work *objects* that come into practice in the *community* of the teacher's training course are seen by the students as meaningful in a different activity system outside of the teacher's training programme (see Daniels 2010, and Section 9.2.1.).

8.2.1   Writing Course Context

The writing course takes place at the end of the first year of the teacher trainee programme. Before the seminar where I met the trainees, they had completed one term of general teaching and learning in upper secondary education. In addition, they had completed these courses:

"Language, Literature and Learning" (7.5 credits), "Media Texts and Adolescent Culture" (7.5 credits), and "Language Description" (6 credits), and were approaching the end of the 9-credit "Writing and Language Variation" course with these specific aims, according to the course syllabus:

> […] to develop the students' writing skills. […] to write and to give feedback […] on texts from different genres. The texts produced represent […] different genres used in upper secondary school, such as [informative schoolbook texts] and texts written by pupils […].
>   —Course syllabus for Swedish 1 for Upper Secondary Teaching (Years 10–12), Subject 1 (30 credits [my translation]),

Judging by the writing discourses (Ivanič 2004) that occur in the syllabus, the writing course is influenced by a skills-, process- and genre-oriented tradition, where it is assumed that students "develop" their "writing skills" by writing in the "different genres used in upper secondary school" and by working in peer groups with feedback. A variety of "different genres" are introduced, but the main focus is on school manuals "and texts written by pupils." A careful study of the syllabus shows that the narrative is *not* represented as one of the text types that the students explore. In other words, creative writing is not part of what trainees study in their writing course to become teachers. It seems, then, that the local learning objective to "demonstrate a thorough knowledge of how artistic expression … [to] contribute to broaden horizons" is not constructively aligned with any learning activities in the writing course. This is an indication that such objectives are taught in other courses. Although the creative writing assignment will be new to the trainees, the narrative text type is familiar from their earlier school years. Also, the process-oriented design of the assignment is in line with the procedures on the trainee writing course, according to the syllabus above: "to write and to give feedback".

In other words, the content of the 9-credit teacher trainee writing course is very different from that of the one-term 30-credit creative writing course, where the narrative text type is mentioned in the syllabus and practised in learning activities. In the creative writing course, the assignment in the case study is one of many narrative texts that the students write; text types such as school manuals and texts written by pupils are not addressed at all.

8.3   Participants' Roles in the Follow-Up Study

The activity system of an academic course encompasses all the different aspects described by the concepts in activity theory, so implementing change by transferring a method from one activity system to another is a complex undertaking. Any ethnomethodological study, such as exploratory practice, risks rocking the everydayness of the actions in the activity system of a course, which is undesirable, as the objective is to study and describe how informants handle new elements in their everyday practice (how students handle a new assignment in this case). For my presence on the teacher trainee course to sit so lightly that it would not be seen as an extra burden,. it needed to be short, relevant as part of the trainees' writing course, *and* regarded as such by lecturers engaged in the course. As it turned out, a colleague to whom I proposed the idea was very positive. She even thought that my visit would fill a gap by contributing to a discussion about general perspectives on writing that had been scheduled for that particular seminar. In other words, it would sit rather lightly if I came to the group, as a guest lecturer and researcher, to discuss writing and critical metareflection with students, as such aims are stipulated in the curriculum of their teacher's education.

I was thus introduced to the group by my colleague as a senior lecturer and writing researcher, which is a different role from the one I had the case study. There I made a point of emphasizing my function as a teacher, and downplayed my researcher's identity in order not to disturb the environment that I researched, in accordance with ethnographic research methods. The way I gained entry (see Sect. 3.3 in Chap. 3) to the teacher's trainee course in the follow-up was through my uniqueness as a guest researcher, not as a teacher on their course. (My colleague who lectures in the teacher trainee course was present during the final part of the seminar discussion, which might have emphasized my role as an invited guest.) My colleague also gave some instructions to the trainees about the writing assignments, as some writing was to be completed prior to the seminar with me. In other words, she took on the "teaching persona" of the insider, enabling me to appear as someone from the outside but with a specific interest in meeting this particular group for a particular purpose.

It is difficult to know about access, whether I managed to establish a relationship between myself and the students. The discussion was very intense and animated, sometimes hesitantly reflective, sometimes filled with laughter, and the audio recordings support that impression. Some students have specifically commented about the importance of such discussions in their critical reflections, but not all of them did so. It may be that students were interested in the creative writing assignment, because the majority of them completed it, and all of them turned up for this particular seminar, which is not always the case when guests are invited.

8.4   Ethical Considerations

The student participation was based on informed consent. Students were requested to do the assignment, but it would not be graded, and they were free not to allow me to use their writing for research. I started out the teacher trainee seminar by introducing myself as a writing researcher and by repeating what my colleague already had told students in regard to my research and informed consent, including the right to change their minds about consent at any time. I said that I intended to use their texts as well as the seminar discussion we were about to embark on for writing research purposes, should they give their permission, and on the condition that everything would be anonymous. During the seminar audio recordings were made. I put my mobile phone in front of me on the desk and told the students that I would keep the recording as part of my field notes and perhaps also as part of my collection of data to account for how students work with creative writing for critical thinking. I indicated that parts of the recording might be included, anonymously and transcribed to text, in some research publication. My recorder would register anything said in a loud voice in the large-group discussion but nothing that was said in the small groups. Should anyone change their mind about anything regarding my recording, they needed to contact me.

I brought small audio recorders to record the small-group discussions that I had planned for. As I distributed them to the trainees, I informed the students that they had the right to participate in the small-group seminar discussion without recording devices. They were asked to form two groups who discussed the assignment without recording it. Even if

they decided to take part in a recording, they still had the right to change their mind, and that the decision could be made afterwards.

It was also necessary to address the power dynamics of our relationship, the fact that they were students and I was a lecturer/researcher. I informed them that I would not be involved in any assessment of their work whatsoever, not on the writing course or in any other part of their education, and that I would not request any information about them from anyone. I also said that their lecturers would not use any of the data produced that related to this particular assignment. I added that it is not at all unusual that people do not wish to take part in research. As it turned out, all the groups used their recording devices, so five small-group discussions were recorded. However, I decided not to use two of them, as two students did not wish to participate with their texts in the study, and I have interpreted the word "text" broadly.

8.5 Data and Data Selection in the Follow-Up Study

My data consists of

- Critical reflections from 18 students,
- Narrative texts (×2) and short reflection texts (×2) from 18 students,
- One audio recording (90 minutes) from the seminar discussion, and
- Three audio recordings from the one seminar with 22 students.

The data was collected from a group consisting of 22 students. All students attended the seminar. Two of the 20 students who handed in texts did not wish to contribute their texts to the research. My major data thus consists of the critical reflections from 18 students, and the audio recording where I had the tape recorder on my desk and recorded the discussion in the large group. The narrative texts are major *tools* for the students. I have used the narrative texts for triangulation purposes in the same way as in the case study. I also used three audio recordings from the recorded small-group discussions during the seminar for triangulation purposes, and not as major data.

I utilized the assignment instructions from the case study (see Sect. 3.5.3. in Chap. 3) except that there is no step 3 (group discussion) between the first and the second versions of the narrative texts, so the first time the students met to discuss the text was during the seminar with me. The instructions that the trainees accessed by downloading them from the website read:

Assignment Instructions

1. Write and upload two narrative texts and two [short] reflection texts to my inbox on the website *before* the seminar. [The eliciting dilemma is the same as in the creative writing group. See Sect. 3.5.1.].
2. Meet me for a seminar discussion. Bring your texts.
3. Write a critical reflection text [no specification of number of words] for exploratory writing and hand it in to me *after* the seminar. [The questions are the same as in the case study. See Sect. 3.5.3 step 6].].

The Seminar Discussion

To structure the discussion at the only seminar we had, I used the questions in the critical reflections. (See Chap. 3 and Kvale and Brinkmann [2009] for a semistructured interview.) As teaching was a topic raised in quite a few of the short reflection texts handed in before the seminar, I added a question as a topic for discussion: How can teaching and learning be informed by creative writing for critical metareflection?

The critical reflection questions were distributed to the students as they arranged for the small-group discussion. At the beginning and at the end of the seminar discussion, the 22 students sat at tables arranged in a U-shape. During the discussion in small groups, they formed circles around five separate tables.

Comment: My research aim was to study the impact of context on learning critical metareflection through creative writing, so I decided to retain as much as possible from the case study assignment. The transfer process called for a few considerations, however. Given the limited amount of time for follow-up, I prepared for a study where the trainees and I would meet for one seminar. The time limits and the fact that the writing method was unfamiliar to the trainees called for a clear design and structure, which I arranged by letting the trainees write the narratives before the seminar and having them hand in the critical reflection afterward.

The time span of the assignment is thus very different from the one in the case study. Most assignments in the creative writing course stretch over two seminars at least, and the assignment in the case study stretched over a longer period than that. It was intertwined with other writing activities, lessons, and seminars in order to integrate it as a recurring part of the creative writing course during an extended time period. A salient difference between the studies is thus that no lessons or specific reading requirements (step 5 of the assignment in Chap. 3) were linked to the creative writing assignment in the follow-up study. Other than that, the basic step-by-step structure of the work process remains (but with fewer steps). The instructions for the critical reflection text are those that I used in the first group of creative writing students (Chap. 3.5.3. step 6). The distribution and handling of the assignment was done electronically through the course website.

8.6   Text-Analytical Approaches in the Follow-Up Study

I have assessed the data from the follow-up using the methods that I developed in the case study. (See Chaps. 3, 4, and 5 for details.) The analysis of the data was carried out in two steps: the first one was textual analysis, and the second was by viewing the social functions of the text within the framework of the text-analytical model. (See Sect. 5.1 in Chap. 5 for the model.) The construction of prototypical discoursal identities presented in Sects. 8.8 and 8.10 is based on the results from the textual analyses of the reflection texts, in the same way as in Chaps. 6 and 7 in the case study. However, in the follow-up, I paid extra attention to the audio recordings from the seminar discussion, to gain insights into negotiations in the local course *community*, which were unfamiliar to me and therefore difficult to trace in the texts. For analytical reasons, I considered the recorded discussion to be text written (dictated) by the student collective. The account here of what was said during the seminar is my shorthand of that discussion. By "shorthand" I mean that it was the thematic content of what was said that was analysed, not the conversational patterns.

As I pointed out in Chap. 5, the text is approached as a site of negotiation. The overarching textual functions inscribed in the text by the *subject*

as writer emerge and reveal the negotiation between *subject* and *community* about *object/motive* and about what *rules* should apply, and what should be the "design" of the *division of labour*. By analysing recontextualizations in the text, circumstances such as, for example, what the writer thinks about writing and working with the assignment are clarified. That way the concepts in the model have contributed to map what the trainees have constructed from experiences of doing a creative writing assignment for critical thinking purposes and what learning outcomes the assignment has rendered.

8.7   Results from the Text-Analytical Approaches

Before moving on to the thematized presentation of the results in terms of prototypical profiles, I first present a brief summary of the text analyses. These results are similar to those in the case study, but there are also differences. Writing discourses, discourses of reception and of evaluation are salient features in the data, as are recontextualizations for perspective change. (See Sect. 5.3 in Chap. 5 for details.) There are also similarities in the different writing discourses referring to creative writing. In the discourses and writing discourses, associate emotions and opinions to the writing assignment. A difference between the studies is that there are fewer references to the peer groups and to social interaction among peers or to me, or any other lecturer, in the follow-up. There are also fewer references to model readers or empirical readers of the narratives than in the case study. Some of the similarities can be seen as signs that certain writing discourses are spread outside of the context of creative writing courses. The lack of contextual signs of group interaction or of empirical readers noticeable in the follow-up can be accounted for by the fact that the assignment was never treated in a group setting, apart from the one seminar when we had the discussion. That seminar discussion, however, *is* referred to in the critical reflections (and one question in the instructions also refers to it). To give a more complete picture of the social interaction, I treat these results separately through the analysis of the audio recordings in Sect. 8.9, thereby linking them to the level of *community* in the activity theoretical model.

Another difference between the studies is themes that refer to the social frame of school and to a future as teacher. The narrative text type is associated with the early school years and most often not constructed as a *tool* for the *subject* as an accomplished author. Books (novels) are referred to as texts that the trainees read rather than write. The assignment is often referred to and evaluated in terms of teaching. Also, there are themes that express *rules* and structures in school. Another salient theme in the follow-up is that of amateurism as writer. In what follows, the results are structured and presented as writing positions, constructing prototypical discoursal identities, in the same way that the results from the case-study were presented in Chaps. 6 and 7. The presentation is structured in three steps: Sect. 8.8 present the way the trainees position themselves as creative writers in the reflection texts. Section 8.9 is an account of how they negotiate agency as teachers during the seminar discussion, and Sect. 8.10 is the result of that negotiation, the way it plays out in the reflection texts.

8.8   Trainees as Creative Writers

The positions presented below, reflect differences in expressions of discoursal identity that I have found in the data from the follow-up study. Writers' positions in this book, aim to reflect particular learning trajectories, expressed in the data. The notion of 'position' is used in text- and conversation analysis (Ivanič 2006, Linell 2011) to clarify differences in 'stance' that can be found in texts and speech. People choose particular perspectives on what they express. Such perspectives are thus constructed through language, in which word choice, themes and discourses forge certain viewpoints that are ideologically tinted. Similarly to what I found in the case study, the patterns in the follow-up can be expressed in three prototypical creative writers' positions as introduced in Chap. 6. The *subject* positions in the teacher trainee study are presented as (1) students as fiction writers with a varying degree of claimed skill,(2) as process-oriented writers engaged in emotional processes, and (3) as exploratory writers. In order to facilitate a comparison between the studies, I refer back to the case study in the presentation that follows.

8.8.1   Trainees as Genre-Oriented Writers

In many critical reflections in the follow-up, there are no references to the teaching context. Instead, similar patterns as those accounted for in the genre-oriented position (See Sects. 6.1 and 7.2.) in the case study emerge. Johanna in example (104) exemplifies a *subject* who is involved in creating a good story, in much the same way as the apprentice's profile in the case study, to improve as a literary author. In the critical reflection text, form and content are thematized. The writing *subject* uses *tools*, such as the model reader and ideas about creating a realistic, or thrilling story.

104. **Trainee as genre-oriented writer**

   […] I think this was thrilling because the ending invites the reader to ask questions. You want to know what the parent decided to do. […] (Johanna)

In (104), Johanna constructs an evaluating writing discourse, "I think this was thrilling," as she discusses the ending of her story. She uses the model reader—"you [the model reader] want to know"—as a tool to change perspective from her own writer's perspective to that of the reader. The work *object* is thus oriented towards the narrative text, and *tools* are discussed in their function as *tools* for enhancing the effects of the narrative text on readers. The *motive* can be inferred as subjective, a desire to express or try out the discoursal identity of literary writer. However, as mentioned, contrary to the writers in the case study, in the follow-up, the *subjects* tend to position themselves in the apprentice's profile (see Sect. 6.1.2 in Chap. 6), as students who write assignments.

105. **Trainee as amateur**

   […] I like to write stories, and have always liked it. I think that this assignment was fun, and would like to do many more. […] (Josefine)

Josefine in example (105) clearly positions herself as a student in a writing course. "I like to write stories, and have always liked it" refers to her previous (amateur) writing experience, and the evaluating writing

discourse "this assignment was fun" places the writing activities in the course context. There are no expressions of *motive* to become a professional author by doing "many more" assignments of the kind that Josefine has just written. Instead, she seems to get enjoyment "fun" out of writing "stories", which may very well be her *motive* for wanting to write more, as an amateur. In fact, there are fewer instances of assertive, "expertise" author positions generally in the data in the follow-up. The strongest assertion I have found is this:

106. **Trainee as apprentice writer**

> […] I began to think about if I should start writing a book in the future, as this assignment inspired me to create and to express myself in a personal way. […] (Hedda)

Even if there is an expressed work *object* to write "a book" in example (106), the *motive* to become a professional author is weak, in comparison to how such a *motive* is constructed in the case study, where it is emphasized thematically in the critical reflections. In the teacher trainee study, themes like the one in (106) are rare and are less assertive—"*if* I should"—indicating that other options are possible (such as becoming a teacher). In (106), it is primarily enjoyment, creative flow "and to express myself in a personal way" that come to the fore, not a professional *motive* to become an author. In addition, a certain pride about the narrative text is indicated through the upgrading from the narrative assignment text to thinking about "writing a book" (106). This is similar to how such pride is thematized in the genre-oriented position in the case study.

Critical metareflection outcomes in the genre-oriented position among trainees are oriented towards minor changes in the narrative texts, similar to those the case study.

107. **Trainee expressing instrumental critical metareflection**

> I felt pleased with […] the stories. However, I now think it has a contrite feeling […]. Maybe I could have [a few suggestions for changes in the narrative text]. […] (Anders)

Illustrated in example (107) is a type of critical metareflection that is mainly instrumental, focused on what a particular *tool* would bring about in terms of changes in reading experiences. Anders returns to his text and sees it in a new light, causing him to reflect about whether changes might improve it. This type of critical metareflection is salient in the data from the follow-up when the trainees position themselves as genre-oriented creative writers.

8.8.2   Trainees as Process-Oriented Writers

Many critical reflections contain frequent references to the writing process and also to emotional aspects of the eliciting dilemma, as in the case study. The *motive* for writing is expressed as a desire to grow emotionally through the act of writing.

108. **Trainee expressing emotional focus**

> […] Once I got started, my writing actually went really fast and it felt as if I was one with the character. But the moment that I was disturbed by something it took a while to get into the same flow again. […] (Solveig)

In example (108), Solveig notices the different stages of her emotional and her writing process. The writing stages are linked to her sense of time and sense of self and are thematized in observations about the writing process, that it "went really fast" and that writing is associated to a sense of emergence, of loss of self: "it felt as if I was one with the character." This example illustrates the writing *subject* engaged in affective processes, as was described in the process-oriented position in the case study. In the reflection texts, there is focus on a heightened sensitivity, for example, that the "flow" is interrupted when the author "was disturbed by something." In the critical reflections of the follow-up, emotional engagement is expressed as discourses of evaluation associated with the specific assignment and to pleasures that follow with creativity, freedom of choice, and experimenting.

109. **Trainee in the process-oriented position**

> […] Very enjoyable assignment. You felt quite free to choose how to create the narrative, the setting, and the plot. In my opinion, it was fun to choose to write about a mother who takes the job and abandons her baby, instead of saying no to the job offer, which would have been the realistic solution of course. […] (Viktoria)

Viktoria stresses that her writing process was filled with joy, "very enjoyable," "fun," and creative. She has engaged wholeheartedly in experimenting with her narrative imagination, trying out a perspective that she evaluates as unrealistic, that the character "abandons her baby" instead of doing what Viktoria herself sees as "the realistic solution," which would be "saying no to the job offer." In example (109), a stance is illustrated where the *subject* focuses on emotional processes elicited by the assignment, not on the dilemma or its consequences for the characters involved in it.

However, in some critical reflections, the narrative imagination is used as a tool for perspective change and for critical metareflection as a result of walking in someone else's shoes, as I found in the process-oriented empathetic profile the case study.

110. **Trainee expressing critical empathy**

> […] When I started to write I felt that the mother was a horrible person who thought about leaving her daughter, but when I had finished writing, my perspective changed. I never thought that this type of writing could give me more perspectives on the dilemma. […] (Emma)

Example (110) illustrates critical empathy. It is critical metareflection, where the narrative imagination is used in Nussbaum's (1997) definition, achieved by empathy with other people's conditions. The reflective thinking is anchored, not lacking, in emotion, as when Emma reports that she "felt that the mother was a horrible person." However, as she "had finished writing" and reflected about her fantasy, she discovers that her "perspective changed." The notion of time as a *tool* for critical reflective thinking is emphasized. It is afterwards, as "I had finished writing," that Emma

gets a new view of the mother in her narrative, a more open and under-standing view in this case. Critial metareflection in the process-oriented position, which I have called critical empathy, is constructed similarly to (110) in all the data in this book.

In other words, during the writing process, there is less focus on the discovery of *subject* as an author, hidden within, and more focus on joy and the pleasure of writing, in the process-oriented position among the trainees. Emma in (110) also exemplifies that in the process-oriented position, there are expressions of instrumental, critical metareflection as writers come to new insights about what creative writing as a method may produce: "I never thought that this type of writing could give me more perspectives" is an instrumental, critical evaluation of an old writing method (writing a narrative) that Emma sees in a new light (it can generate changes of perspective), perhaps driven by the underlying *motive* linked to a future as a teacher.

8.8.3   Trainees as Exploratory Writers

Like the salient features found the case study, the teacher trainees' critical reflections contain themes and discourses that are oriented towards an expressive, exploratory view on creative writing. There are references to all the social frames in the text-analytical model in the exploratory position. *Subject* as writer explores the subject matter at hand from different perspectives, from within the subjective frame, for example.

111. **Trainee as exploratory writer**

> [...] it is easy to get stuck in one's own ways of thinking when it comes to class, gender, and ethnicity. I imagined a Swedish white woman brought up in Sweden. It never occurred to me to write about a foreign woman who moves to another country to work, and is forced to leave her child, which is a common fate. [...] (Kalle)

Kalle in example (111) views his choices of narrative components metac-ritically as he sees that "it is easy to get stuck in one's own ways of think-ing when it comes to class, gender, and ethnicity." This type of reflection

is very similar to the one in the exploratory position in the case study, where students also wrote about prototypical language use in their own narratives within the subjective frame. Also, in the exploratory position, there are references to the course context as a social frame and to what the *subject* can learn from the stories written by the group.

112. **Narrative texts as data**

> […] In my group, two out of five [were stories set in fantasy worlds]. I think this is a way to distance ourselves from difficult decisions. There are people in the world who have to face these types of decisions, and we distance ourselves from it if we can. […] (Sussie)

As Sussie compares solutions in example (112), that many texts—"two out of five"—were set in fantasy worlds, she reflects about the reason for similar stylistic choices at group level and concludes: "we distance ourselves from it [the dilemma] if we can." This is an example of an analytical approach to the assignment, where the *subject* uses the narratives as a *tool*, as data to support arguments through inductive reasoning. In that way, she can shift frames from the group to a societal frame and to implications of the dilemma more generally: "There are people in the world who have to face these types of decisions."

In the exploratory position, the teacher trainee texts signal the exploratory *motive* to analyse the textual themes critically, similarly to the texts in the communicative profile presented in the creative writing case study. Also, the work *object* is oriented towards developing the vague questions in the instruction text, as there are more references, more themes in the texts, generally, in the exploratory position. Critical metareflection is constructed in such a way that the writer writes to discover a given subject, independently, with an exploratory *motive.* There are also, in alignment with the patterns in the creative writing case study, signs of a *strategic* stance taken in some texts in the teacher trainee follow-up, a *motive* to write to perform correctly, in accordance with stipulated requirements. The texts then show signs of an analytical discussion. They are paired with expressions of strategic manoeuvring to "hedge" utterances by referring to contextual rules, which is to say with a lesser degree of independence.

The *subject* communicates that there is uncertainty about the requirements for the creative writing assignment.

113. **Strategic manoeuvring**

> […] I have completed the assignment based on how I interpreted the instructions. […] but I did not [*quite* understand them]. […] Should this type of comment be included? It says in our manual that we should write comments to all our writing assignments […] (Mette)

In the case study, I constructed a discoursal profile "strategic exploratory" writer to illustrate that some students can find it difficult to write texts in the exploratory tradition, which is illustrated by Mette in example (113). She gives voice to the confusion that comes with a new assignment when it is implemented into another course context. In the follow-up, the data shows that strategic questions arise among some of the writers, such as in the example where Mette has "completed the assignment" with some confusion about what "comment [to] be included." Mette's comment is not surprising as requirements are meticulously stated in the course syllabus, with no mention of the creative writing assignment. The strategic profile illustrates that all writers must relate to instructions and rules that affect different students differently, as can be noticed in how *object/motive* are expressed differently in the critical reflections.

8.9   Negotiating Discoursal Identity in Context

The results accounted for in Sects. 8.7 and 8.8 basically refer to critical reflections and to the upper part of the text-analytical model (Fig. 4.2 in Sect. 4.1, Chap. 4). Viewed as creative writers, there are clear similarities between the students in the case study and those in the teacher trainee study. This finding indicates that students' perceptions about writing narrative texts are influenced by their previous experience of writing in the typical school genres (Holmberg 2008; Nyström 2000) and by other con-

texts where discourses about creative writing are constructed. However, there are also some striking differences in the data that highlight the impact of context on discoursal identity and on identification processes on learning. Before accounting for how these differences play out in terms of learning in Sects. 8.10 & 8.11, in Sect. 8.9 I present results from the seminar discussion through an analysis of the audio recordings. This is a step on the way towards discussing the negotiation between *subject* and *community*, *rules*, and *division of labour* in the analytical model, to show how different perceptions of context are constructed in the texts.

Some textual differences between the sets of data from the case study and the follow-up can be attributed to the fact that the trainees in the follow-up only tried the narrative once and discussed creative writing once; in contrast, in the case study, there were many seminars with discussions surrounding the assignment. The case study students also wrote more narrative texts. In addition, I was their lecturer, and I have years of experience of working with creative writing students, but not so with trainees. The trainees had very little time to discuss the texts with each other and to use each other as *tools* for learning. These big differences in circumstances are mirrored in the critical reflections to some degree. The follow-up texts present fewer references to the course context and to the group. The conditions that the trainees were presented with signal pedagogical experiment and put them in a position similar to that of a focus group. As I discuss the results from the follow-up in light of what I have just said about the creative writing positions, it may help the reader to keep these differences in circumstances in mind.

The case study and the follow-up both point to the fact that learning through writing is influenced by writers' perceptions of possibilities for selfhood, which is the fourth aspect of discoursal identity (Ivanič 1998). *The subjects* in the critical reflections have forged perceptions about future possibilities in external worlds outside of the activity system they are in at a given point in time, and they textualize these perceptions. The impact of such perceptions is strong in my data. Interestingly, possibilities for selfhood in the future are negotiated socially, within the peer group, as can be seen from examples in the process-oriented position in the case study. (See Sect. 6.2 in Chap. 6.) For example. I found that textual themes expressing

ambivalence towards peers in the creative writing group, signal anxiety about the moment of uptake, about whether the *subject* will be accepted as a good-enough writer. A right to ascribe to oneself the identity of author is negotiated, not only through the display of oneself as a good writer in the peer group (in the profile of expert as in Sect. 6.1 in Chap. 6) but also through how one displays awareness of activity systems outside of the course, such as writing to get published for a commercial book market. The text analyses in the follow-up show fewer themes referring to the *community* of the teacher trainee course in the critical reflections. The interaction between *subject* and the social frame of *community* analysed as very locally situated in the immediate context of the peer group is not mentioned to the same extent in the follow-up as in the case study. I have interpreted this result as based on the fact that the teacher trainee study was socially restricted to one specific seminar, and that the assignment was not at all embedded in the course context, as it was the case study. This is not to say that no negotiations were going on within the social frame of the seminar group, only that they must have been fewer. In what follows, I account for the negotiation about possibilities for selfhood among the trainees by referring to the seminar discussion I had with them.

8.9.1 Negotiating Agency as *Teachers of Writing*

In what follows I refer to data from the recorded seminar discussion (which is about 90 minutes in all) and give examples from an abbreviated transcript of the content of the discussion to show how students negotiate subjective agency through social interaction and associate what they learn by relating to different frames of *community* in activity systems outside of the course. The discussion illustrates the messy and interactional situatedness of learning through identification, a social and *discoursal* process in the here and now, referred to by some researchers as horizontal discourse, as opposed to "coherent, and systematically principled structured vertical discourse." (Daniels 2010: 177).

The discussion started out in small groups and then continued in the large-seminar group, which is the part I will refer to here. During this large-group discussion, the role of teacher and of teacher's agency were

the salient themes. The students started out by discussing how they could use the assignment in their own classrooms. The atmosphere was very animated. The students laughed a lot and participated with what seemed to be great engagement. About 15 minutes into the discussion, Anna and Stephan comment on what kind of learning can be gained from an assignment like the one they have just done.

114. **Potential of the assignment as a tool for learning**

> […] to make them change perspective, to let them continue writing and develop their thoughts through perspective change…and to find new ideas […] (Anna)

> […] yeah…you could work a lot with their own writing process… to develop through writing…to do things in different ways…that's what we want isn't it… that's what we want to do…to get my pupils to write and reflect […] (Stephen) (Transcript of seminar conversation.)

What is reflected in example (114) is transferability, the possibility to use the writing assignment as a *tool* for learning in another context. By associating what they learn to different frames of *community* in activity systems outside of the course, the students discuss possibilities to act as teachers. The assignment may have helped Anna and Stephen to "change perspective" and "to find new ideas"…"through perspective change" while writing. (See Chap. 6, where creative writers made similar discoveries.) The students in (114) express that work generated through the assignment can serve as a boundary (work) *object* between the *writing* course and the school context outside of the course, as it can be used in both contexts. The assignment can be transferred to the *community* of a school for teaching purposes. Anna sees that the assignment has the potential to make "pupils change perspective…and develop their thoughts" that way, as does Stephen. It can teach pupils "to do things in different ways." In (114), Stephen fantasizes about the classroom, sketching out a work *object*: It is himself as teacher, that he refers to as "you," "who could work a lot with their [the students'] own writing process." This work *object* is linked to Stephen's *motive* for teaching: "that's what we want to do…to get my pupils to write

and reflect." Thus, Stephen declares his driving *motive*, what he wants. The choice of pronoun "we want" indicates that he thinks that his peers in the seminar group share the same *motive* to the extent that he and the group are the same "we," so that he speaks for them all in an extended "I" and finishes the sentence in the singular: "to get *my* pupils."

However, as new themes come up, the discussion expands from *motive* discussed in a subjective frame to *motive* placed in the larger context of the *community* of school, as the students start to reflect on the consequences of using the assignment in their professional practice as teachers.

115. **Obstacles I**

[…] is this measurable [?] … is this for grades […] (Jenny)

[…] teachers can't deviate from the standards of the national curriculum… you have to assess and grade….I would really feel under great pressure if I deviated from the standards of the national curriculum. […] (Elsa) (Transcript of seminar conversation.)

Jenny and Elsa draw attention to the fact that the *rules,* to measure and grade, originate in *rules* from an overarching, national educational curriculum. Both women also address the *division of labour* in the school activity system. Who is to grade? they ask implicitly. As teachers, they "can't deviate," but they will have to comply with the *rules* in the "standards of the national curriculum" and "assess and grade." Jenny points at a potential contradiction between the learning potential of the *tool* on offer (the assignment) and the *rules*. Apparently, the assignment will be difficult to measure and grade. Possibly, the students as teachers may not be able to use the *tool* for these reasons, even if it would serve a teacher's *motive* to enhance the freewriting process and critical metareflection among their imagined pupils. In fact, Elsa in example (115) adds to the contradiction between *subject* and *community* by pointing at emotional aspects that come into play when a teacher negotiates agency in the *community* of school. Elsa "would really feel under great pressure" if she did not comply with the "standards" that Jenny has just referred to, about measuring and grading learning outcomes.

What Anna and Stephen in (114) frame as a matter of teachers' rights to decide about writing pedagogies and *tools* to learn through writing becomes a complex matter as Jenny and Elsa bring up a conflicting *object* of being a teacher, which points towards the administrative duty of a teacher to execute power by assessing students in addition to facilitating their learning. During the discussion, the students express that *rules* and *division of labour* in the activity system of school will impact on their professional future all the way down to the level of what *tools* they will be able to use in their own classrooms. The discussion becomes a negotiation about the formation of a boundary object in the local context of the peer group, about subjective agency as professional teachers, given these circumstances.

Strategies for Subjective Agency

As the seminar progresses, it takes the shape of a huge focus group discussion, where the students start engaging in problem solving. They begin to negotiate subjective agency. Given the interplay between *community* and *subject*, to what degree or in what way will they have to comply with *rules* and *division of labour*? What are the possibilities for selfhood within the activity system of school? are questions that emerge. There was, I would add, an atmosphere of great engagement in the room at the time, and it increased as more students contributed to the discussion in what seemed to be an effort to save the assignment as a pedagogical *tool* in their future profession, in spite of the emerging contradictions. For example, there were efforts to legitimize the assignment in spite of its shortcomings as a *tool* for grading:

116. **Negotiating object**

> […] but the problem is that…we have to grade them… but we don't have to grade them because it can be a pleasant break […] (Eva) (Transcript of seminar conversation.)

Eva in example (116) seems to agree that the assignment is impossible to grade, which of course is a problem since "we have to grade them." She then comes up with a solution: By reframing the assignment, stripping it

of measurable learning objectives, and filling it with social objectives that also are important in school, such as allowing pupils a "pleasant break," the assignment will be possible to transfer by exempting it from grading. That way Eva will be able to legitimize the transfer of a *tool* that she has tried out on the course, and found valuable, into a new activity system without breaking *rules* at system level. It also solves a contradiction within the *subjective* frame, as Eva can comply with the *rules*. In this discourse, Eva frames the teacher as someone who engages her pupils in the hardships of assignments that are measurable and gradable and from time to time offers fringe benefits, such as a pleasant assignment for a change. Not only does the assignment become an exception by such a strategy; creative writing also becomes a *tool* for expressive writing as a pastime, not a sociocritical *tool* for learning critical metareflection through writing. The conflict is solved for Eva, but very likely at the cost of the learning potential of the assignment.

Another strategy aiming to reframe the assignment and its learning *outcomes* is illustrated in example (117), where John suggests a possible solution.

117. **Obstacles II**

> […] surely the point here can't be to grade their reflections … their thoughts [?] … it is ok to let loose their own free thinking … you shouldn't have to think oh I have to get an A on this assignment … and then I have to write in such and such a way … instead of just letting go … not having to stick to some template for good results … the whole idea here is to develop pupils' critical metareflection I guess […] (John) (Transcript of seminar conversation.)

In his effort to save the *tool* and the learning *object* of critical reflection, John uses the rhetorical argumentation technique of *divisio*, by which he separates specific examples, "their reflections," which he **would** have to grade, from "the whole idea" (general knowledge) of critical metareflection, which he would not have to grade in such a specific way as suggested by his peers in the seminar group. He thereby creates subjective agency, not only for himself to act in accordance with his work *object* to use the *tool* without breaking any *rules*. He also negotiates subjective agency for

his imagined pupils so that they can "let loose their own free thinking" without having to think strategically, to "stick to some template for good results," as John puts it. John seems rather assertive in his negotiation of *rules* and *division of labour*, as he assumes that he has the right to negotiate what rules should be applied when he teaches his pupils. It seems in fact that John expresses a personal pedagogical credo, an object-driven *motive* as he states his views on gradable learning objects that he is against: "some template for good results." John does not want his pupils "to think oh I have to get an A on this assignment." According to him, such thoughts are detrimental to his work *object*, which is to let pupils work to enhance their capacity to think freely. Finding a solution to a conflict where he is personally involved seems to be a pressing issue to him. It is not only his pupils but also himself as a teacher that he wishes to save from object-driven learning paradigms in his professional future.

The seminar discussion illustrates the expansive nature of social learning. Here it is expressed in arguments about subjective agency. Even if there is disagreement about the learning *object* of the assignment, as illustrated by John (117) and Eva (116), they both contribute to forge an imagined future (Daniels 2010) where there *are* possibilities to exert subjective agency as professional teachers. That way the narrative imagination serves to empower the *subject* to negotiate *rules* and *division of labour* in an activity system they will enter in the future. However, during the discussion, agency too is analysed critically.

118. **Obstacles III**

> […] in our group … it's difficult … the political aspects of this type of assignment… the skills that the pupils will develop won't show in the PISA survey and then they will be judged as absolutely irrelevant [laughter] by those who decide about what school should be like […] (Sven) (Transcript of seminar conversation.)

Sven in example (118) questions the possibilities of negotiating subjective agency in regard to the *rules* and *division of labour* at *community* level. He refers to "the political aspects of this type of assignment," to overarching rules and regulations to be found in power relations, values and beliefs

that surround and permeate activity systems such as schools in society more generally. Such structures show in "the PISA survey" (The Programme for International Student Assessment) for example, where the results of pupils' from different countries are measured and compared. In addition, Sven refers to "those who decide about what school should be like," to the *division of labour* in which he has little or no say. Sven's conclusion seems to be that, as professional teachers, they will have to comply and accept the fact that if the pupils' results are not possible to measure, they will not count in competitive surveys.

Sven concludes that critical metareflection, the way it is defined and worked with in the creative writing assignment, belongs to the category of knowledge objects that are not directly measurable and therefore "judged as absolutely irrelevant." Even if Sven intends to be ironic here, it seems that he becomes a spokesperson who verbalizes a concern shared by many of the students in the room, as illustrated by the previous examples. With Sven's reference to political frames and power—"those who decide"—the rest of the seminar group seems to unite behind a different stance from the one they set out with. They conclude that there will be little agency to act in accordance with personal motives, and the fragility of subjective agency is highlighted (and John's argument in [117] is weakened).

8.9.2   Contradicting Paradigms

During the course of the discussion, the trainees construct not only their discoursal identities as students writing a creative writing assignment within the local community of the writing course. They also negotiate their identities as teachers in an activity system outside of the academy. They do so by using their narrative imagination to create a cohesive narrative about the possible actions they can take as *subject* in the imagined activity system of school, by addressing their possibilities for selfhood within its *community*, given the *rules* and *division of labour*. Towards the end of the discussion, the trainees address a conflict between their personal *objects* and *motives* and the ones they envision within the schools

where they will work as teachers. The most central issues that they negotiate during the seminar are related to pedagogical paradigms. The creative writing assignment elicits evaluation discourses linked to an object-oriented and a liberal educational paradigm, that will impact on the transferability of creative writing as a method for critical thinking. What voices will the trainees be allowed to use? As Ingrid puts it in example (119):

119. **Different activity systems**

> […] look … you could modify a bit here and there but let's face it … we can sit here and talk and dream … but then … there won't be time … reality out there you know […] (Ingrid) (Transcript of seminar conversation.)

In (119), Ingrid concludes that the assignment that I proposed to the seminar group is not going to work. A "time is money" metaphor underpins the juxtaposition of the two activity systems depicted by Ingrid: that of the academy, where "we can sit … and talk and dream" (and waste our time), and that of "reality out there," where that will not be possible. Ingrid thus differentiates between the trainee identities that permit them to "dream" and their identities as professional teachers in "reality," where efficiency is expected. There will be no time for these types of assignments in a paradigm requesting measurable results. As a group, through the discussion, the trainees construct the school they are training for as an object-driven activity system, where it takes robust measurable assignments to meet *rules* such as the "PISA" requirements. In the discourse they construct together, they become subject to a *division of labour* where they have little subjective agency to change anything and where the *community* demands of them to comply, even at the cost of their own personal *motives.*

This way, discourses produced in a group of trainees at a seminar reverberate with discourses from the outside world: fantasies about *rules* and *division of labour* "out there" impact on the discussion among the trainees "in here" at a seminar on a writing course. The examples from the discussion show the interplay between different levels of *community.* The negotiations that students engage in tell about their struggle to

make room for possibilities for selfhood in a future, activity system, other than the one they are currently in, and where there will be restrictions in regard to their subjective agency. In the course of this negotiation, they also produce expectations about these future worlds and possibly also set out restrictions as to what actions in the activity systems "out there" will be possible. In other words, *objects* and *motives* from "out there" permeate the "in here", as expressed in the discussion. However, the *rules* and *division of labour* referred to by John in (117), for example, are in fact rules constructed from building blocks that have been taken from the narrative imagination that he and the group produced during the discussion. Neither the trainees nor the creative writers in the case study have vast experience of the activity systems they fantasize about. In fact, it turns out that these students base constructions of identity on vague assumptions about the future. In the discussion, there are few voices raised about the role of teachers as agents of change, for example, or of critical pedagogy (Davies 2015; Kumashiro 2002, 2015). Such questions remain to be asked, as the students return to the assignment, after the seminar discussion, to write up their learning *outcomes* in the critical reflection text, which is the last step of the assignment in the follow-up study.

8.10 Teacher Trainees as Learners; Results of the Negotiation

In the previous section, the impact of the immediate course context on learning was shown through a seminar discussion. Returning to the critical reflection texts, which were written individually after the seminar discussion and handed in as a final comment about working with the assignment, it is clear that the students renegotiate, in their individually written texts, what they concluded as a collective, during a discussion. In the texts, the picture of what the trainees retain from the assignment in terms of learning *outcomes* is diversified. The hybrid nature of the teacher trainee identity comes to the fore as they negotiate what to make of the assignment, not only as creative writers but also as teachers. Identification processes expressed in the texts mirror the impact of the context surrounding the assignment and show how per-

ceptions of identity influence the learning *outcomes*. Based on what the trainees express in the texts in the follow-up there is reason to speak of hybrid discoursal identities. In what follows, three positions will be presented to discuss the way hybridity plays out in terms of learning *outcomes* in the follow-up. For analytical purposes I have structured the results in three positions to highlight salient features in the expressions of discoursal identity, as: (1) trainee as creative writer (not teacher), (2) trainee as teacher (not creative writer), and (3) trainee as creative writer *and* teacher.

8.10.1 Trainee as Creative Writer

When *subject* as creative writer dominates the hybridity,[2] themes orient towards style and content, such as evaluating the story, or engaging in emotional experiences while writing, thus constructing creative writing as a genre- and process-oriented activity. As presented in Sect. 8.8, the discoursal identity of creative writer is constructed with less authority compared to the writers in the case study, but is still expressed as a dominant work *object* in the reflection text, where themes such as *subject* as a creative writer engaged in writing narrative texts are salient. Teaching is hardly mentioned in connection to writing, as in (106), where Hedda seems to be set on writing a novel (instead of school manuals, which might have been an option). But even when the authorial claim is very weak as in (120), texts that bring out the genre- and process-oriented writing positions put emphasis on the discoursal identity of creative writer and downplay the identity of teacher and of academic student.

120. **Creative writer, not teacher**

> […] It was long ago since I wrote a narrative text, and I like to write texts or short stories. I used to do a lot of such writing before, but right now, I feel a bit rusty. But what comes to life within me when I write completely freely is the possibility to create something which is completely my own. There are no rights or wrongs but it is up to each one of us to form our own stories. **That opens up possibilities to think about other things than the studies [to become a trained teacher] although it is an assignment that must be handed in**. […] (Cecilia)

In example (120), Cecilia expresses that she is not in the habit of writing narratives: "It was long ago since I wrote a narrative text." Therefore, she feels "a bit rusty," which is an "amateur" discourse not found in the case study. Unlike the students in the creative writing class, Cecilia seems to define the assignment as other than studies, more like pleasure, quite different from other assignments she engages in as a student. Apparently, the assignment evokes a forgotten discoursal identity of creative writer from the past: "I used to do a lot of such writing before." Cecilia in (120) exemplifies a student engaged in contextualizing and making sense of a seemingly "odd" assignment on the trainee programme. By referring to her autobiographical self from earlier (school?) years when it was possible to write "a narrative text … completely freely" for pleasure alone, Cecilia frames the assignment as belonging to her private, or personal sphere, in which creative writing for critical metareflection is not addressed. The pleasures that Cecilia gets from the writing experience are associated with "possibilities to think about other things than the studies." By placing the learning *outcomes* from the assignment in a subjective, personal, and emotional frame, Cecilia detaches creative writing from the activity system of an academic course. In other words, the *object* of writing is constructed as incompatible with learning academic literacy or learning teaching methods. In fact, when the discoursal identity of creative writer is expressed as in Sects. 8.8.1 and 8.8.2, it may stand in the way of learning *outcomes* such as critical thinking. Instead, the assignment has functioned as a loophole to escape what seems to be the taxing studies to become a teacher.

Quite a few texts thematize, like Cecilia in (120), a conflict in regard to discoursal identity. When confronted with a creative writing assignment, previous conceptions of what such writing is about seem to trigger certain identity positions that block new perspectives of what it *could* be. The texts in the position described here, frame creative writing as a basically private undertaking. Such results indicate that learning through expansion is complex. Although the assignment has to be "handed in" and clearly is presented as a *tool* to be used in the social context of the teacher trainee course, creative writing is still defined in the position as "other things than the studies". In the critical reflections where the teacher trainee is positioned as creative writer, (not teacher), a conflict between different

identities is thus expressed, where the solution is to reject the identity of student and of (future) teacher. Apparently, even if creative writing is a familiar writing discourse, it is "alien" in the particular setting of the *community* of the writing course, (and it has not been presented as a teaching method by me either). In the position of *subject as* creative writer (not teacher), the *subject* is thrown back in time, to earlier school years, and to pleasurable writing experiences, to the extent that associations to adult teaching and learning get blocked. The learning *outcomes* that are retained link to evaluations of the narrative texts or to the writer's reactions while writing, not to critical literacy, for example, about prototypical language use or any other metacritical learning *outcomes*. Accommodating new knowledge may imply accommodating discoursal identities from the autobiographical past into new contexts, which may generate contradictions within learners. A way to resolve the conflicts is by acceptance or rejection of identities and knowledge formation in the process of learning.

8.10.2 Trainee as Teacher

Another way of handling the hybrid identity of creative writer and teacher is expressed when focus is on *subject* as teacher, not creative writer. It is a position where a professional identity as teacher dominates and where the discoursal identity of creative writer is more or less rejected. *Objects* and *motives* from envisioned futures "out there" impact heavily on the learning outcomes "in here," in the position. Themes that construct a teacher's perspective are salient.

121. **Teacher, not creative writer**

> […] Well, I know how to write narratives already. But, even if I did not learn much new stuff from writing the story, I understand that younger pupils may. By writing narratives from more than one perspective, they can learn to vary their own perspectives. They will be forced to think differently and in new ways. […] (Emil)

Emil in example (121) evaluates the assignment, and it is clear that he sees little learning potential in it for his personal development, either as a creative writer or as a critical thinker, as he knows "how to write narratives

already." In other words, the work *object* to write narrative texts is rejected, indicating that there is no driving *motive* for the *subject* to enhance their creative writing skills. Instead, in (121), the *motive* is oriented towards constructing a teacher's identity. The *subject* views the assignment as a *tool* in a teaching practice: "younger pupils may … learn to vary their own perspectives," which is constructed as a desirable learning *outcome* for Emil's future pupils but not for Emil. The narrative text type is defined as an educational *tool* for children.[3] To define the writing of narrative texts this way, as an activity for children, is verified in research (Holmberg 2008) as a prototypical writing discourse. It is genre discourse of writing, focusing content and style. Example (121) thus illustrates the subject position of the teacher trainee as a teacher, not as a creative writer. It also illustrates a position of expert, similar to the one exemplified in the author's profile the case study (see Sect. 6.1.1 in Chap. 6), with a difference in *motive* and *object* since the author's profile in the case study is specifically oriented towards the narrative text type. The *subject* as teacher already knows what there is to know, as a creative writer, critical thinker, *and* teacher of writing. The narrative text type is not regarded as a *tool* that can generate new learning *outcomes* for Emil and therefore is not included in a work *object* worthwhile doing. It would only be associated to (unnecessary?) repetition of what the *subject* learnt earlier on in the autobiographical history. Expertise in the position of teacher, not writer, is thus expressed in terms of being capable, as a professional teacher, of deciding at what level different assignments may or may not work. The way Emil contextualizes the assignment and integrates it into his discoursal identity as a professional teacher is by defining it as a teaching *tool* for children. It is possible that associations to childhood school experience of writing narratives serve as a boundary *object* for Emil. He sees his previous experience of narrative writing as transferable to the activity system of primary school, where such experience can be put to use when teaching young children to write narratives. In addition, Emil knows about learning *outcomes* from creative writing for critical metareflection already: "they can learn to vary their own perspectives. They will be forced to think differently and in new ways." The assignment seems to serve as a reminder of this fact. In terms of other learning *outcomes*, they are few: "I did not learn much new stuff from writing the story." It is not very likely that Emil will associate the assignment to pleasurable writing, as Cecilia in (120), since he constructs himself as one who already knows "how to write narratives" and therefore

downplays what is expressed as "childlike" discoursal identity as creative writer. Perhaps trainees like Emil will find the assignment useful in their professional lives as teacher in the *community* of school, but it is unlikely to serve as a *tool* when it comes to enhancing their own critical literacy.

There is also the problem with grading that was addressed during the seminar discussion (see Sects. 8.9.1 and 8.9.2). *Rules* and *division of labour* in the *community* of school may affect the learning *outcomes*. In fact, not using assignments such as this one would be a way of resolving the contradiction associated with an object-oriented paradigm (McKernan 2010). There will be no problems with grading or deviating from standards if the creative writing *tool* is avoided. It is very likely that students' ideas about their futures as teachers, if imbued with profound conflicts, will resonate in every aspect of their learning trajectory, making learning through expansion difficult. There is a risk that little or nothing will be retained from the assignment in such cases, in particular if genres associated to creative writing for critical thinking are excluded from the course syllabus and introduced only as a random assignment presented by a researcher as the case is here.

8.10.3 Trainee as Creative Writer and Teacher

In the position of trainee as creative writer *and* teacher finally, the hybridity of writer and teacher is expressed as parallel, not conflicting. There is some variation in emphasis, depending on what creative writing discourses come to the fore in the critical reflections and what *object* and *motive* the discourses link to. In the genre- and process-oriented creative writing positions, there is more emphasis in the writing discourses on creative flow and on content and style. However, as shown in Sect. 8.8.3, in the exploratory position, themes related to writing or to the moral dilemma are permeated by sociocritical writing discourses, including analysis and argumentation, even research questions for critical metareflection. The *subject* positions in the critical reflections point towards different *communities*, some within the writing course and others in different figured activity systems outside of it. In fact, in one example from the teacher trainee data, one student expresses three different aspects of the hybrid discoursal identity in one sentence: that of student taking the course, that of author on a book market, and that of teacher in school.

122. **Creative writer and (liberal arts) teacher**

> […] I loved this assignment! It's great to write stories. I am actually thinking about writing a novel. And I can use the assignment in my classroom. It will be good for the pupils' critical thinking [….]. My future pupils will eventually be citizens […] so as a teacher in the future, I want to teach critical and logical thinking. This assignment will help me with that. […] (Samira)

In the position of student as a creative writer taking the writing course, Samira in example (122) expresses joy: "I loved this assignment." By referring to "the assignment," she associates the work *object* of writing a narrative with part of what she engages in as a student in the teacher trainee course, completing an assignment there by "writing stories," which she thinks is "great." Like Cecilia in (120), Samira also associates the work *object* with different activity systems outside of school, however not with a loophole into the private world of spare time but, on the contrary, with the *community* of a book market. She has discovered a new discoursal identity of "author" as she is thinking about writing a novel, which refers to a publicly defined literary genre, quite different from the text type "stories." The example illustrates a more assertive creative writing identity than the one constructed by Cecilia in (120) and similar to the one expressed in the apprentice profile in the case study, where the writer's *motive* can be constructed as wanting to achieve a professional discoursal identity as literary writer through practice. In contrast to Emil in (121), Samira does not associate the narrative text type with writing activities that are abandoned in adulthood but, instead, to a type of writing that can mature, as the choice of text type indicate, advancing from "stories" to "novel." As a teacher, Samira will use the assignment in the *community* of a school, when she teaches, because it will help her to teach critical metareflection, which is expressed as part of her driving *motive*: "I want to teach critical and logical thinking." There is no indication of what age groups she plans to teach, and it may very well be that the association to "pupils" and to "critical thinking" indicates a wider age group than the one presented in (121). In addition, there seems to be no conflicts between the discoursal identities expressed or the *communities* to which the *subject* associates the scope of the assignment. Neither are there

any references to problems with assessment of the pupils, indicating that issues linked to *rules* and *division of labour* in another activity system are solvable, and not a matter of concern. The position points to a liberal education view on teaching and learning. Samira thus sees potentials for development at a personal level, as a student in the course, as a professional writer even, but also potentials to use the assignment as a *tool* for teaching in school, for her pupils.

In terms of critical metareflection, first Samira expresses an instrumental and subject-oriented type of metareflection. Samira plans to work with creative writing, using *tools* in a way that she did not reflect about before, which is a change of perspective regarding the instruments in question. When she moves on, to think of herself as a potential author, it is a reorientation and change of perspective of discoursal identity, however, not a metacritical change, since she never questions it. Second, when she switches from thinking about her own experience of the assignment to reflect about the learning potential of such assignments for her future pupils, the text signals expansion as she changes the subjective frame of her own writing to thinking about what her imagined pupils may learn. Third, to Samira, the writing assignment holds potential to teach about more than about content and literary style: In the reflection text, she evokes themes such as teaching critical metareflection "to be citizens." Even if this is not the most frequent position found in the data, it shows that in some texts, the *subject* orients *object* and *motive* towards an exploratory, communicative position, both as writer and as teacher, expressing learning *outcomes* in terms of critical metareflection that can be described as independent and analytical. This stance is constructed in thematic choices and in exploratory writing discourses where a metacritical stance is taken to *subject* as writer, to the group and, also, to oneself as teacher of writing, and to the subject matter. In the exploratory, communicative position, a hybrid discoursal identity is constructed that seems to facilitate learning. The assignment is seen by the *subject* as reasonable for a student who learns about creative writing, as well as for a (future) teacher of writing. Such a hybrid identity construction allows for expansion of perspectives as it bridges potential contradictions between activity systems. The assignment with its sociocritical approach and the *outcomes* from doing it seem transferable to other activity systems, and therefore functional.

The position constructs a liberal education view on learning. In contrast to the concerns voiced during the seminar discussion, no contradictions in regard to educational paradigms are addressed here. It is thus clear from examples in the critical reflections and from sections of the audio recording that many students share Stephen's driving motive (in [114]) for wanting to teach critical metareflection: to help pupils learn to think critically by using creative writing in a sociocritical writing discourse.

The imagined future as teacher thus impacts the learning outcomes of the assignment in the present long before the students have experienced these figured worlds in reality. Learning paradigms that the students envision will impact the learning *outcomes* within the writing course. As students taking the course, they may learn about creative writing for critical metareflection, as has been shown, but they may not necessarily take to the ideas, as exemplified in the teacher not writer position. However, when contradictions are not expressed and the hybrid identity encompasses both aspects of writer and teacher, there is a possibility for considerable learning outcomes to arise from the assignment, regardless of how it was introduced in the writing course.

8.11 Concluding Remarks About Discoursal Identity and About the Impact of Context

I set up the follow-up to learn about the impact of the writing context and the impact of discoursal identity on learning outcomes. Students in a writing course for trainees were asked to do a very similar creative writing assignment as the creative writing students in the initial case study, which was set in a course in creative writing. In both studies, the aim was to find out about learning critical metareflection through creative writing. In the follow-up, a research question was how trainees position themselves as writers. It turns out that they also position themselves as teachers and that it is relevant to speak about a hybrid discoursal identity that trainees handle in different ways. The results indicate that learning through expansion is linked to perceptions of discoursal identities in the

community where the students currently find themselves, but learning *outcomes* are also linked to the possibilities for selfhood in *communities* in other activity systems that students wish to expand into. The expressions of the driving forces of *object* and of *motive* in the data vary considerably but follow certain patterns. When trainees relate to the assignment as creative writers, patterns similar to the ones found in the case study can be found. In a genre-oriented position, form and content and readers' reactions are constructed in the writing discourses. In a process-oriented position, writing is associated to joy and to pleasures that come with the act of writing. In an exploratory position, *subject* is oriented towards exploratory writing discourses and to learning through exploratory writing.

But, as was clear from the analyses of the critical reflections and the discussion with the trainees, there is reason to speak about a hybridity of discoursal identity when vocational aspects from the teacher's education context are added. To some it appears to have been a strategy to handle the narrative text type by emphasizing either the writer *or* the teacher of writing rather than to integrate both identities as described in the exploratory position. As teachers, the discoursal identity of creative writer is constructed as just a part, albeit varying in strength (see Ivanič 1998, 2006 on discoursal construction of self), and in some cases, in fact, rejected it. So even if the assignment would help the *subject* to develop as creative writer, such a development is not always the *motive*, when the writer also is in the process of developing as a teacher.

In the exploratory position, however, creative writing for critical metareflection is viewed as a pedagogical method with potential. It is a position where the work object is oriented towards perspective change for critical metareflection to develop critical literacy as an academic student, and to explore possibilities of such objects as a teacher in a classroom in some other activity system where the student will work in the future. The impact of vocational aspects thus leaves patterns in the data from the teacher trainee study.

A driving *motive* is constructed in evaluating discourses about becoming a *good* teacher. In this regard, the imagined vocational futures are influenced by discourses from two educational paradigms, and they

impact on what the trainees learn from the assignment. A comparison to the case study can be made. In the creative writing group, there are all sorts of contradictions, at the *subject* level in particular, as the creative writers struggle with performing or finding out about themselves as fiction writers. They express problems with the *tools* available. For example, the assignment's focus on the moral dilemma is sometimes considered unsuitable in regard to the creative writers' *object* to write completely freely. According to this view, restrictions of thematic choices in the dilemma jeopardize the *motive* to search for a true discoursal identity hidden within. Also, very clearly, the focus for many students in the creative writing course is on the narrative text type. For example, the critical reflection text in the author's profile is more or less rejected, as it is construed as a text type with no value to a professional fiction writer's identity. In other words, the creative writing students engage in learning that will serve to improve their skills as writers of narratives. To them the narrative text is a *tool* to prove whether they are "in it or not" (Gee 2001) as literary authors, and the imagined futures they construct focus on activity systems such as book markets and publishing, not on teaching (which of course would be an option for them professionally, given the popularity of creative writing courses for amateur writers, but this is not addressed in their texts).

The trainees too may have one or two things to say about the dilemma as a *tool*, but they do not seem to link their *motive* and discoursal identity to the narrative texts, as do the creative writers, and the discussion about what *tools* are required to express the identity of literary author is almost absent in the teacher trainee data. In themes that refer to the discoursal identity of creative writer, the assertiveness is comparatively weak. For example, some trainees construct themselves as amateur fiction writers, "rusty," as they have not written narratives since they went to school. Such relatively weak claims to professional positions, where *subjects* allow themselves to "play around" with the assignment, as a "pleasant break" from their studies, indicate that it is not the act of writing a narrative text that will decide whether the *subjects* are "in it or not" as teachers.

What, at the moment of uptake, will pass as acceptable by the other *subjects* at the community level of the course? What displays of identity will it take for the *community* to decide "whether I am in it or not?" With what voices will I have to affiliate to "become" a teacher? These questions underlie the themes discussed and what is negotiated by the trainees. The stakes are high, as the responses to the questions will decide the legitimacy of a claimed identity. Will others address you as a professional (or at least a professional in the making)? Will you be attributed the identity of teacher by others as they talk about you? It is possible to construe the strong engagement during the seminar discussion, as a sign of an identification process through negotiation. The discussion focused the assignment, and whether it could be used as a pedagogical tool or not. A salient theme that was negotiated had to do with the assignment as a boundary object, in particular its potential to create agency for the trainees to act as teachers. Initially the group stated that the assignment would serve well to enhance pupils' critical metareflection, but in the end, they decided that it would not be possible to grade the results and therefore it would not be possible to use the assignment. Through the discussion it is possible for the students to *think* aloud, to try out and to *display* to others in the group, how well *subjects* as teachers master what I would define as a discourse of sound judgement. The discussion is also used as a *tool* for the trainees to try out their critical stance and to demonstrate that they are independent and capable of critical metareflection, even when authorities (me, the researcher who proposes the assignment) suggest ideas about teaching and learning to them. Construed that way, sound judgement was tried out and expressed as a particularly salient skill during the discussion, and it is also a salient discourse in the critical reflections although it was less polarized there (but found in many texts as sound judgement applied). In fact, the reflective text type seems to function to renegotiate what was said during the seminar, for the *subject* to be able to decide among everything available, to make informed, sound judgement about which *tools* are good to use to develop one's creative writing skills and which ones can be used in the activity system of school. For example, when referring to the seminar discussion, many texts thematize the differences in the narrative texts that the trainees

produced and were asked to compare. In evaluating discourses, many reflection texts link what was rewarding about the seminar to *subject* as teacher.

123. The discussion as a tool in the text

> […] To me, the discussion during the seminar was the most rewarding part of this assignment. I also believe that pedagogically, it is through discussion that you can get the most out of the assignment. Of course, writing can generate critical metareflection, new thoughts and perspectives, but there is no guarantee. It is during the discussion that follows, I think, that some form of new thought processes occurs, almost always. I think that the best, and most efficient ways to create these skills [critical metareflection] specifically, is when we share and develop our collective knowledge. (Viktor)

In example (123), Viktor illustrates how a discussion is later recontextualized into a theme in the critical reflection text. Viktor evaluates the seminar discussion as the most useful *tool*: "[T]he discussion during the seminar was the most rewarding." In fact, he gets more out of the discussion than out of writing the narrative texts. From these experiences, he concludes that "[o]f course, the act of writing can generate critical metareflection … but there is no guarantee." It may not be the act of writing that generates critical metareflection, but in fact talking about writing. In other words, Viktor analyses the pedagogical *method* expressed in the assignment and evaluates the different stages of the process of developing new knowledge. These types of observation may be construed as a result of affiliation to a teacher's identity and to possibilities for selfhood in the activity system of school, where the students will no longer be trainees but professionals, expected to make informed decisions, about, for example, methods for learning through writing. In this example, Viktor voices an epistemological belief based in Vygotsky's social view on learning: "I think that the best … ways to create these skills … is when we share and develop our collective knowledge." Clearly, Viktor shows knowledge of theories of social learning, which is a way of displaying (to me as a reader of his text) that he affiliates himself with the kind of teacher he wants to be, one whose teaching is firmly rooted in theories about how we "develop

our collective knowledge." It is also very likely a sign of appropriation, where he applies a theory that he knows about to this new suggested way of working with creative writing in a sociocritical discourse of writing. Themes such as these that link to thoughts about teaching others are absent in the case study but present in the teacher trainee data. They can be summed up in one representative example.

124. **Discussions about imagined futures**

> […] The most interesting topics in our discussion were … why writing narratives is a good idea, what different results it can generate, and how we can use it in our teaching when we become professional teachers. (Alexander)

In the reflection text, Alexander in example (124) sums up "the most interesting topics" and associates them with how the trainees "can use it" in their own classrooms. Many trainees define the creative writing assignment as a teaching method suggested to them. In the critical reflection text, they write that they need to think about "what different results it [the method] can generate" in view of their own future work as teachers of writing. The example in (124) also illustrates that the discussion about educational paradigms—"how we can use it"—is not settled. In particular, it is in the exploratory position that the reflection text has been used as a *tool* for thinking about the profession of teaching similarly to methods described by Schön (1983). In the writing process, *subjects* recontextualize the discussion, by retaining parts of it and turning it into ideas about what teaching will mean to them. The concern about not being able to grade students, which is salient during the seminar discussion, is basically absent in the critical reflections. Instead, an appropriation process seems to be occurring, where ideas about creative writing for critical metareflection are reflected upon in what seems to be a dialogue with *me* as a reader of their texts. This too is a different stance from the one taken by the students in creative writing, who do not claim that they need the critical reflection for professional *objects*, such as discussing writing pedagogy. Thus, it seems that a driving *motive* and one that impacts the learning process is associated with ideas of what it means to be a good teacher, and

sound judgement is a core value. In the social encounter with peers dur-
ing the seminar, the discourses of sound judgement take on a different
shape from the critical reflection text addressed to me.

Interestingly, the expressions of "good" reverberate of discourses from
contexts outside of the course. During the discussion, and resonating in
the critical reflections, there exists a profound conflict between two epis-
temological beliefs. In a liberal education paradigm, the assignment will
work well: "to make them [the pupils] develop their thoughts … to
reflect." In an object-oriented paradigm, the assignment is less likely to
function: "is this measurable [?]" to assess and grade. It is in accordance
with these epistemologies that the trainees negotiate their discoursal
identity.

It seems that included in "sound judgment" is knowledge about the
community "out there." There is a boundary crossing to other activity
systems outside of academia altogether, to society at large through issues
evoked by the dilemma, or to activity systems such as the commercial
book market and the *community* of school. The students use their narra-
tive imagination to forge imagined contexts, activity systems in which
they will be *subjects* in the future, and of their possibilities for selfhood in
these systems. In the data, these external contexts come out as discourses
expressing *rules* and *division of labour,* from activity systems outside of the
course. The discourses indicate a complexity of activity systems that
impact the students' learning trajectory, and they also show that students
themselves actively decide as to how and what they learn. The learning
outcomes are thus linked to a future as teacher, and to how the assignment
can come to use in such future contexts. In other words, and taking into
account the results from both case studies, a major part of what is negoti-
ated in the texts may be summed up as subjective agency and discoursal
identity positions. In the texts, these positions are constructed as con-
cerns about how others talk to us, address and talk about us, concerns
about attribution, for example, as students in a writing course or as pro-
fessional authors or teachers. This in turn is reflected in concerns about
affiliation, how the students manage to "talk" in the voices of those they
wish to resemble, by choice of discoursal resources. In this regard, stu-
dents draw on discourses that they know about and have come across
earlier in their autobiographical writing lives, and during their studies, in
the context of the course, where they forge and negotiate possibilities for

selfhood through different social moments of uptake, such as discussions and texts, where their discoursal identities are read.

8.12 Summary of the Teacher Trainee Study

Students' reflection texts can provide interesting insights into the problems and possibilities of creative writing as a method for learning critical metareflection. The case study and the follow-up point to the fact that although many of the differences in learning *outcomes* among the students can be accounted for in terms of their previous writing experience, or lack of such experience, it is when the results are linked to theories about discoursal identity and context that specific patterns in the learning *outcomes* emerge. In particular, it has become clear that writers' conceptions about discoursal identity are forged in the social context of the course and strongly influenced by imagined futures in other activity systems outside of the course. All this impacts on the learning *outcomes* within the course. There is considerable variation in the data in terms of learning *outcomes*. Students in the teacher trainee programme display a hybrid discoursal identity, but one that is somewhat more complex than in the case study: as student in a teacher's training programme, as creative writer, and as teacher. They negotiate their discoursal identity as writers as well as their professional identity as teachers. The *motive* is linked to a future professional identity as teacher in which the discoursal identity of writer is just a part, and the specific identity of creative writer may be weak. So even if the assignment would help the trainees to develop as writers, such a development is not always constructed as a driving *motive*, as it is to a high degree in the case study.

A salient feature of critical metareflection among trainees is a discourse of sound judgement, but learning *outcomes* vary according to how trainees construct themselves as learners. Some learn little, others a lot, as discussed earlier. The major learning outcomes for the trainees are about the importance of perspective change for critical metareflection and their own prototypical language use in narratives. However, trainees also learn about creative writing for critical metareflection as a teaching method, epistemological paradigms linked to teaching and learning, and conflicts generated by differences in beliefs, at individual and societal levels.

These last two themes were not addressed by the students in the case study. By changing the context in which the creative writing assignment about the single parent was tested, it becomes clear that the immediate writing context has a substantial impact on how writers construct their discoursal identities and what learning *outcomes* result. But in addition, the students use their narrative imagination to forge identities intended for imagined future contexts, activity systems in which they will be *subjects* in the future, and where they perceive possibilities for selfhood. These constructions of identity through discourse impact on the learning *outcomes*. What/who the writer becomes through discoursal choices creates a dominant perspective through which the writer views the assignment, and this has a decisive impact on what the writer learns.

8.12.1 Creative Writing for Critical Thinking: A Transferable Method?

Implemented as a single seminar during a vocational trainee writing course, the assignment generated learning outcomes similar to the ones in the case study, but exceeded them in some parts. For example, the assignment generated important and critical questions about epistemological paradigms in schools and in curriculums. These questions were later recontextualized and brought up as positions in the reflection texts where they were expressed as *motives* and *objects* in the trainees' constructions of themselves as teachers. In particular, in the *trainee as creative writer and teacher* position, the learning *outcomes* in terms of critical thinking were considerable.

These results are interesting since they describe learning through expansion from one assignment and one seminar discussion in a course quite different from the creative writing context. It would be interesting to scale up the study to encompass more seminars and assignments in more groups to test the results.

Notes

1. Syllabus from Södertörn University spring term 2016.
2. The hybrid nature of the teacher trainee discoursal identity comes to the fore as the students negotiate what to do with the assignment, not only as

creative writers but also as teachers. Hybridity is a multifaceted notion. Some associate hybridity to a "third space"— the site and moment of hybridity, of ambivalence, of reworking and renaming, of subverting and recreating identity from among multi-embedded social constructions (Ivanic 1998)—representing "the site and moment of hybridity, of ambivalence, of reworking and renaming, of subverting and recreating identity from among multi-embedded social constructions" […] (Luke & Luke 1999: 234). In the case of the teacher trainees, hybridity would represent the space where the trainees construct and try out different identities to create a "sense of multiplicity, hybridity and fluidity" (Ivanic 1998: 10) in their effort to make sense and learn from a writing assignment that they perceive as experimental. The discoursal identity of creative writer and teacher would then represent one such instance of "hybrid identity" as a tool for learning.

3. In fact, in the data, no texts deny that pupils in school would learn from the assignment.

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Concluding Discussion About Discoursal Identity and Learning Critical Thinking Through Creative Writing

This book reveals the complexity of learning through writing as well as the complexity of transferring situated knowledge and educational methods. The chapter concludes and discusses the previous chapters and makes some comparative remarks. It discusses conclusions and comments regarding patterns of learning in the different profiles and the impact of discoursal identity. The concepts of the text-analytical model are discussed, in particular some theoretical concerns related to the concepts construed as text-analytical tools. In the data, there are different types of critical thinking that link to constructions of discoursal identities. The follow-up study has shown that the impact of the learning environment on learning *outcomes* is considerable. Students learn different things and form different discoursal identities in different learning environments even though the assignment is more or less the same.

In a case study on a course in creative writing, I researched learning through writing, based on the hypothesis that creative writing can be used as a method to practise critical metareflection as part of academic, critical literacy. In a follow-up study, I tested the same assignment but in a different setting, a teacher's training writing course, to describe the

impact of context on learning critical metareflection through creative writing. As a starting point, and based on Nussbaum's (1997) theories about critical self-reflection, I constructed an expressive writing assignment about a moral dilemma. However, the assignment was adapted in order to exceed Nussbaum's ideas about reading literature for moral aims and, instead, to allow for writers to relate to and analyse ideological aspects of linguistic categorizations in narrative texts. The dilemma read: "A single parent gets a job offer far away from home. The job lasts for two years. During this time, the parent and the 11-month-old child cannot meet." The particular dilemma was chosen for its evocative nature. It points towards a discourse that is deeply rooted in our society and invites numerous different interpretations. In accordance with an empirical aim to show learning in context, I analysed the different critical reflection texts about the dilemma to test connections between critical metareflection and creative writing and to point at different types of reflections and discoursal identities that follow. Indeed, I have found different types of critical metareflection in the data. Through the follow-up study, I also found that the impact of the learning environment on the learning *outcomes* is considerable, and that students form different discoursal identities in different learning environments even though the assignment is more or less the same. In Sect. 9.1, I discuss the empirical aims and results of the research presented in this book. The theoretical aim, to develop a model for text analysis informed by activity theory, is presented in Sect. 9.2. In Sect. 9.3, discoursal identity is discussed in terms of a context-specific negotiation process, and in Sect. 9.4, discoursal identity is linked to text types. Finally, in Sects. 9.5, 9.6, and 9.7, the impact of discoursal identity on learning is discussed.

9.1   Critical Metareflection and Writers' Positions

The case study and the follow-up show that creative writing can be used as a method to practise critical metareflection, by which I mean awareness about ideological aspects of linguistic categorizations in narrative texts. By viewing creative writing as a socially constructed way of writing,

just like any other kind of academic writing, I created an assignment where writers could explore culturally based prototypical assumptions in their narrative texts by studying linguistic categorizations in them. What I specifically wanted to clarify are occurrences of different types or sorts of metacritical reflection. To this end, I focused my analysis on metacritical expressions in the students' reflection texts, defined as changes of perspective in the texts, where the writer indicates that perspectives other than the ones the writer chose are possible. It turns out that there are different degrees of critical metareflection in the data. In the case study I found three major ways to relate, to the writing assignment, and in each position, I found a specific variation. The differences are linked to ideas about discoursal identity: who you are or who you become through writing. Based on these observations, I developed three major positions that creative writers take to the assignment: a genre-oriented, a process-oriented and an exploratory position.

In a follow-up study, teacher trainees did a similar assignment based on the dilemma and on one seminar discussion, during which all students were present. Based on the analysis of the critical reflections and of the written transcripts from the audio recordings of the seminar discussion, I constructed three positions that mirror a hybrid discoursal teacher's identity expressed in the data. The positions represent how trainees relate to the assignment: emphasizing the creative writer, emphasizing the teacher, or integrating both these discoursal identities. A summary in Sect. 9.1.1 indicates how the discoursal identity of creative writer impacts on the learning *outcomes* in the creative writing case study. In Sect. 9.1.2 follows a presentation of how discoursal identities have influenced the learning *outcomes* in the follow-up among the teacher trainees.

9.1.1 *Subject* as Writer in a Creative Writing Course

Critical metareflection becomes polyphonic as its meaning is shaped and interpreted by the *subjects* who work with the assignment in a specific context. In the genre-oriented position, the main *object* is to acquire knowledge about the narrative text type defined as a literary genre, and the *tools* are viewed with an emphasis on practical purposes, not theoretical ones. In the

authors' profile in the genre-oriented position, the driving *motive* is performative, to show evidence of a discoursal identity as a literary author in a *community* outside of the course in creative writing, by staging a professional author's identity within it. In the apprentice's profile, the driving *motive* is self-improvement, to try out and improve literary skills in order to affiliate with the identity of an accomplished author in the future. Major *tools* are the narrative texts, the mental construction of a model reader, and real, empirical readers of the texts. In the authors' profile, the relationship to other *subjects* in the *community* of the course is expressed similarly to that of a focus group of readers, to test reader's responses. The role of the teacher is constructed like that of an editor. The course *community* mediates between the *subject* and a commercial market outside of the course. In the apprentice's profile, the discoursal identity of author is claimed with less authority. The *subject* is expressed as an apprentice who is part of the course *community* but who aims at changing discoursal identity in the future, to a professional author's identity. The course is seen as vocational, an education for professional authors, and its practical "skills" objectives are commented on. In the authors' profile, the critical reflection text takes the shape of a short evaluating review of the narratives; in the apprentice's profile, discourses of evaluation also thematize *tools* that will lead to self-improvement—for example, the assignment as a *tool* to learn more about how to enhance the effects of the narrative text on readers.

In the genre-oriented position, the *subject's* major *motive* is to confirm the discoursal identity of literary author. A contradiction between different discoursal identities available will have an important impact on learning. The *subject* oscillates between writing as an amateur and writing as a professional author. The desired discoursal identity lies outside of the academic *community* of the university course, with a difference in authorial strength, however, depending on how strongly the identity is claimed, as illustrated by the two profiles.

The relationships between *subjects* within the activity system are conceptualized in such a way that other *subjects* become mediating means for the *subject* to acquire the sought-after identity as author. The metacritical reflection thematizes the most important *tool* (reader's response) that the *subject* needs to resolve the contradiction between the available identities, which is the moment of uptake, when readers will decide whether the *subject* is "in it or … not" (Gee 1990: 155). Does the writer

have the skill it takes to call herself an accomplished author? If the *subject* can see her narrative text as readers see it, it becomes possible to make the text more attractive to them, and thereby the contradiction between the identities available for the *subject* will be solved. The drive to show evidence of accomplishment is thus linked to writing oneself out of one activity system and into another, by means of a change of identity, from a student identity to an author's identity. The *outcome* in terms of critical reflection is instrumental, focused on the narrative text as a *tool* for displaying good writing performance and performance of discoursal identity. The function of the *community* is reduced to that of a focus group of readers, to test readers' responses. The critical reflection text is used restrictedly and takes the shape of a short, evaluating review about how the subject can use the *tools* more efficiently to enhance the effects of the narrative text on readers.

In the process-oriented position, the *object* is process-oriented and formative, focused on writing to discover the "shape" of the *subject's* discoursal identity by experiencing affections. An authentic or inherent discoursal identity lies hidden within the subject and can be unearthed through social and emotional processes within the course *community*. In the empathetic profile, the driving *motive* to find a true discoursal identity is expressed as emotional, or empathetic, and the direction is inward, to emotions and feelings experienced during the act of writing. In the expressive profile, the *motive* is expressed as affective and reactive, directed outwards.

It is by experiencing feelings while writing and in social encounters that the *subject* can get into contact with an authentic discoursal identity that has been hidden or not yet clearly expressed. Major *tools* are emotions: empathy in the empathetic profile and affective reactions in the expressive profile. The *subject* uses the same emotional *tools* in the narrative and in the critical reflections to come into contact with her discoursal self while writing. The course *community* too becomes a mediating *tool* between the *subject* and a subconscious discoursal identity. The *subject* views herself as being part of the course *community* of the other *subjects,* and the lecturer is ascribed supportive, sometimes therapeutic functions. The critical reflection text takes the shape of a long, meandering "freewriting" (Elbow 1973) text, particularly in the expressive profile, giving room for the *subject* to express herself.

In the process-oriented position, the *subject's* major *motive* is to unearth a dormant, genuine discoursal identity, hidden within. A contradiction between monologue and dialogue, between wanting to step out and be part of the *community* or to stand outside of it, will have an important impact on learning. The *subject* is caught between different emotions and reactions through different emotional experiences on offer within the frames of the course. The *subject* does not claim the right to a specific discoursal identity but rather the right to emerge into different affective processes in search of authenticity. A salient thematic feature that indicates this stance is the fact that the narrative text and the critical reflection text are expressed as *tool*s to process emotions and affects during the act of writing.

The relationship to other *subjects* in the activity system is conceptualized in such a way that other *subjects* mediate between the writer and the writer's subconscious emotional reactions in order for the writer to discover a true discoursal identity. This relationship to others is ambivalent. It is when the *subject* manages to transgress the ambivalence and open up a dialogue with other *subjects* within the *community* that the contradiction between claiming individual, subjective agency and submitting to the *rules* of the collective can be solved.

Process-oriented expressions of critical metareflection are characterized by a pattern where the *subject* succeeds in turning emotion as a *tool* for affective experience into a *tool* for thought. In the critical reflections, it is manifested as a pendulum motion between themes and linguistic markers expressing emotion and themes expressing thought. An emotional process seems to interact with an analytical one. In the empathetic profile, there is a strong connection between emotional reactions and reading and with emotions of empathy for characters in fictional worlds. Frequently such emotions result in insights about prototypical assumptions in the writer's own texts. In the expressive profile, the reactions are extroverted and directed outwards, towards social processes in the group.

The critical metareflection is thus oriented towards what the *subject* needs to solve the contradiction between monologue and dialogue. When the *subject* becomes aware of emotional processes, she can take command

of them and use them analytically to explore linguistic, prototypical assumptions and to question ideas about her discoursal identity. Control in this way increases the dialogue with other voices and thereby also the possibility to bridge the contradiction between the individual and the *community*.

The profiles in the exploratory position share the work *object* of exploring creative writing as an academic subject through the assignment, and the approach is analytical. In the communicative profile, the driving *motive* is communicative, to understand and learn through exploratory dialogue; in the strategic profile, the driving *motive* is strategic, to achieve. A significant characteristic of the position is that all the *tools* offered through the assignment are tried out, mainly analytically: The *subject* oscillates between specific and general observations. Another specific characteristic is that the narrative texts are subject to analysis, both as "literary" artefacts and as data for studies of prototypicalizations in narrative texts, for example.

In the communicative profile, the *subject's* epistemological beliefs converge with the liberal view expressed in the assignment, whereas the *subject* in the strategic profile expresses a goal-oriented epistemological belief that conflicts with the liberal structure of the assignment.

The *subjects* in the exploratory position construct themselves as being part of the course *community*, as students in an academic course. Other group members are also viewed this way, as students to cooperate with. The lecturer is given the function of lecturer in an academic discipline, as encouraging mentor in the communicative profile, and as examiner in the strategic profile. The critical reflection text is used in an exploratory way: in the exploratory position to explore the subject at hand through the assignment and in the strategic profile with an emphasis on the strategic function of the text, to show evidence of achievement. The course may serve as a mediating *tool* between a discoursal identity of writing student in the specific course and of writing student in some other academic course.

Finally, in the exploratory position, a contradiction between two different ways to view academic studies has a central impact on learning. The *subject* in the communicative profile constructs academic studies

as liberal and independent, while the *subject* in the strategic profile expresses a *critical* stance that is goal oriented.[1] It is the authority to claim the right to independent critical metareflection that is negotiated, not the discoursal identity as a student. In the text, the *subject* takes an analytical stance and uses the narrative text *and* the critical reflection for exploratory, analytical purposes in regard to the subject at hand, and not specifically to express or discover a specific discoursal identity through the assignment. The relationship between the *subjects* in the activity system is conceptualized in such a way that other *subjects* become mediating *tools* for knowledge formation. Contradictions between different epistemological beliefs come to the fore, and the differences will lead to different learning *outcomes*, depending on the profile within the position. In the communicative profile, no ambivalence occurs as the view on epistemology held by the *subject* and the academic *community* converge, and thus the *subject* gains full access to all *tools* available in the course, depending on what the research questions require. In the strategic profile, however, the vague questions put in the assignment very likely give rise to problems and anxiety.

A characteristic of the exploratory, dialogical approach to critical metareflection is that the *subject* adopts a multivoiced and analytical work *object* when exploring the questions of the assignment. In the texts, the analytical stance is expressed in an analytical, written discussion. Thematically, the narrative texts are discussed as a writing assignment in critical metareflection. But the reflection texts also address narrative themes and stereotypical language at a general level, in terms of instantiations of societal discourses and ideological implications that follow. It is thus the basic approach to the assignment that is metacritical and analytical, and the variations in stance described in the communicative/strategic profiles mirror a negotiation about degree of independence as a student in regard to university *rules*. The critical metareflection is oriented towards what the *subject* needs to resolve the contradiction between academic work as independent or as goal oriented. It is when the *subject* can overcome the ambivalence and create room for subjective agency *and* at the same time keep up a dialogue with the *community* that the contradiction can be resolved.

9.1.2 *Subject* as Writer in a Teacher's Training Course

When the creative writing assignment is tried out in a different context, learning patterns become even more complex. To some, using a creative writing method for critical metareflection creates rather than dissolves contradictions and conflicts in regard to *subject* position, and this is what is negotiated to a high degree in the critical reflections. The follow-up teacher trainee study shows that ideas about discoursal identities carry with them traces of autobiographical selves from the past—for example, of writing as a pupil in school—expressed and negotiated in the here and now during the course, where they are collectively reconstructed. New discoursal identities are also impacted by figured worlds, permeated by discourses from activity systems outside of the course in which the students are currently involved. Next I discuss the *outcome* of that negotiation.

There are clear similarities between the students in the creative writing case study and the teacher trainees in the follow-up when they are viewed as creative writers, in the sense that there is an awareness of *communities* outside of the course. For example, texts in the authors' profile in the genre-oriented position in the creative writing study show signs of *subject* construction as hybrid, and contradictory. The texts construct the subject as an accomplished author, writing for the *community* of a commercial publishing house, while having to put up with the discoursal identity of a student writer within the course *community*. Among the teacher trainees, the influence from the activity system of "school" is striking, and it is possible to construct the writing *subject* in the trainee texts, not only as creative writers but also as teachers of writing. Such hybridity of discoursal identity in the data from the follow-up, has called for the construction of three additional prototypical, discoursal identities that express positions taken in regard to creative writing—*trainee-as-writer* (not teacher), *trainee-as- teacher* (not writer), and *trainee-as-teacher-and-writer*—to describe the differences in learning *outcomes* that are expressed in the texts. Discoursal identities thus play out differently when they are constructed as hybrid discoursal identities mirroring a context outside of a creative writing course.

In the *trainee-as-writer* position, *subject* as writer (not teacher) is primarily expressed as process oriented, wanting to emerge in enjoyment associated to creating good fiction or to emerge in the emotional act of writing. There are no constructions of assertive, "expert" author in the texts but many signs of an "amateur" position as creative writer. The features may be construed as signs of a weak *motive* to identify with professional authors. Instead, the *subject* position is mostly process oriented, and the *motive* is expressed as subjective, to emerge in play. The narrative text type serves as a *tool* to engage in the pleasures of the creative writing process. In the *trainee-as-creative-writer* position, the *subject's* major *object* is to return to a creativity that may have been dormant since childhood. In terms of critical metareflection *outcomes,* there is a risk that the *subject* retains very little, if the assignment is perceived as a *tool* for personal pleasure writing, and rejected as a *tool* to think critically about prototypicalizations in narratives or to teach students about critical metareflection in school. Viewed this way, a contradiction between play and responsibility emerges. Creative writing becomes subjective, a loophole to write oneself out of the *community* of responsible teachers, out of the local *community* of the writing course, and into the subjective frame of personal development and what the assignment offers as a *tool* for emotional experience. Defining the narrative text as a *tool* for play does not mediate between *subject* as responsible teacher trainee and *subject* as playful student. The critical aspects of the assignment are rejected as the *subject* refrains from switching from emotional empathy in the narrative text to critical metareflection and analysis of experiences in the critical reflection text. In this way, the *subject* claims the right to emerge into different affective processes, all related to the social frame of the individual *subject.* The orientation has an important impact on learning. There is a risk that the contradiction between the requirements stipulated in the *rules* of the academic *community* and the subjective interpretation of such *rules* jeopardizes the chances of learning through expansion into wider social contexts. To expand and learn, the *subject* will need to cross social frames and link the *tool* to critical metareflection *objects* by using the tools for such purposes within the *community* of the writing course. Only then can the assignment serve as a mediating *tool* to transgress the ambivalence between play and responsibility, which seems to be a prerequisite for both text

types to function for critical metareflection. The site of negotiation is thus oriented towards what the *subject* needs to resolve the contradiction between creative play in the subjective frame and critical metareflection in interaction with others. The *subject* needs to become aware of emotional processes in order to take command of them and to use them analytically. This is achieved when the *subject* views the assignment as a *tool,* not only for play but also for the development of critical literacy on an academic writing course, in other words as a *tool* to expand by changes of perspective. Control in this way is necessary to bridge the contradictions between two, seemingly juxtaposed discoursal identities and conflicting modes of thinking.

In the *trainee-as-teacher* position, *subject* as teacher (not writer) corresponds to the authors' profile in the genre-oriented position in the case study, but with differences in *object/motive*. In the *trainee-as-teacher* position, the *motive* is expressed as wanting to acquire or to display a certain discoursal identity as teacher, not as creative writer. There are differences in expressed authority, as apprentice's teacher or as expert. The *subject* is focused on the *object* of teaching others, not on learning herself. The desired discoursal identity lies outside of the academy, in the *community* of "school," in which the assignment might serve as a *tool* to teach children about perspective change in a narrative text, not as a mediating *tool* for the *subject* to expand her learning. As the *subject* rejects the identity of learning student, the assignment will not mediate between *subject* as learner of critical metareflection and *subject* as teacher, and therefore learning outcomes are likely to be few. The driving *motive*, to show evidence of skill as teacher, is thus linked to resistance, expressed as rejection of an undesired discoursal identity as learner. Learning through creative writing is associated with discoursal identities of pupils in school. The subject's *motive* is to display skill and authority as teacher, by writing the self away from, not back into, the identity of pupil, which belongs to the past. The activity system of school will be accessed through an expert identity of teacher, which the *subject* already ascribes to herself. Thus the *subject,* through the *tool* of expertise, mediates between which *rules* and *division of labour* to comply with in the writing course and which ones to ignore. The orientation has an important impact on learning. The contradiction between the identities available for the *subject* will remain

unresolved or solved by rejection of *objects* that might generate learning. The *outcome* in terms of critical metareflection is instrumental, mainly focused on how the assignment as a *tool* for teaching can serve the *subject* in an imagined future as a teacher.

Another contradiction in the *trainee-as-teacher* position is expressed as problems with transfer of *tools*. The suggested creative writing method will not mediate between the academic writing course and its liberal education ideals and the activity system of an object-oriented school. A contradiction lies in epistemological beliefs, with issues concerning *rules*. Unless these conflicts are resolved, learning is unlikely to happen as the conflicts inhibit expansion. The *outcome* in terms of critical reflection is mainly instrumental, highlighting different perspectives on the applicability of the assignment as a teaching *tool*. There is the risk that the contradictions involved with the assignment will be solved by rejecting it completely, both as a *tool* to appropriate academic literacy and a *tool* to use later on in a future teaching practice. The *subject* will need to become aware of prototypical ideas about identities linked to the narrative text type and to epistemological beliefs in order to bridge the contradictions between discoursal identities that prevent learning through expansion.

Finally, in the *trainee-as-teacher-and-creative writer* position, *subject* corresponds to the exploratory position in the case study. The *subject* sets out to explore a certain proposed method for creative writing as it has been presented in an assignment on an academic writing course. The *subject* in the exploratory position as teacher expresses academic studies as liberal, and independent, rather than as goal oriented. There are no contradictions expressed between the identity of trainee as creative writer and teacher trainee as teacher. In this position, the *subject* claims the right to both discoursal identities, the right to belong to the academic *community* as a teacher trainee student now and to the *community* of school, as a teacher in the future. The way the assignment is used, it becomes a mediating boundary work *object*, where functions in one system become transferable to another. In the text, this is expressed by the *subject* using the narrative text *and* the critical reflection text for exploratory, analytical purposes. The narrative text type serves as a *tool* to engage in exploration of the subject at hand. The moral dilemma is explored, as well as the potential of the assignment as a *tool* for teaching. The *motive* is oriented

towards exploration and research, not towards displaying or discovering a certain identity. Instead, learning expands through the social frames of *subject,* through the local *community* of the writing course, and beyond to the *communities* found in school and in society.

There are no negotiations of contradictory epistemological beliefs expressed: The assignment is constructed as in line with the *motives* of *subject* as writer *and* as teacher in the activity system of the writing course as well as in that of school. The learning *outcomes* in terms of metacritical reflection in the communicative profile are considerable, as the *subject* gains full access to all *tools* available through the assignment, opening up for multivoiced and analytical work. This is a different stance from the imagined future as teacher in an object-oriented teaching and learning paradigm. Thematically, the narrative texts are discussed as a writing assignment in critical thinking. The assignment is conceptualized as a potential *tool* for teaching pupils about critical metareflection based on what the trainees themselves see as learning *outcomes*, not based on what they already know as experts, which is a different stance in regard to the hybridity of discoursal selves evoked by the narrative text type to the trainee-as-teacher (not writer). In the exploratory position, both identities are accepted by the *subject.*

As in the exploratory position in the case study, it is the basic approach to the assignment that is metacritical and analytical in the *trainee-as-teacher-and-creative writer* position of *subject*. The critical metareflection is oriented towards what the *subject* needs to resolve the contradiction between academic work as independent in the liberal sense, and academic work as goal-oriented. In the exploratory position, the contradiction is resolved. It happens when the *subject* has transgressed the ambivalence and created room for subjective agency *and* at the same time manages to keep up a dialogue with the *community* of the course and the *community* within the activity system of school.

I have found different types of critical metareflection in the data. Both studies show that learning through writing is a process impacted by negotiations between the writing *subject* and the surrounding context, and they seem to be negotiations over time. The *subject* needs to bridge time scales in order to learn. All we have to lean on in a given writing situation is our autobiographical writing selves. We engage in a learning process

through a social trajectory within an activity system, and when writing is in focus, the trajectory is outlined in the text types available. Text types carry with them possibilities for selfhood, and these possibilities are bearers of worlds possible to "figure" and to identify with, or to reject, as the case may be. Students form different worlds and thereby different discoursal identities in different learning environments, even though the assignment is more or less the same. It turns out that the farther we have expanded in appropriation processes involving writing, the less dependent we are on "figured worlds" and the more inclined we are as writers to engage in the here and now of a specific course context and act as writing students within it. There will be text types with different discoursal identities built into them available, through different social writing acts. These acts can be construed as paths for identification, like crossroads where the immaterial figuring of worlds meets the materiality of the texts, calling on *subjects* to use different *tools* to appropriate different bits of learning and thus, also, constantly, identifying the *doing* with *being*. Contradictions in this process will have to be solved for learning to happen.

9.2   A Model for Text Analysis

Activity theory as a text-analytical model to map the learning processes involved in writing reveals text as a site of negotiation between students' individual goals, in conflict or in alignment with learning objectives expressed in course syllabuses, such as learning about cultural prototypes constructed in language in this case. When discoursal identity is linked to activity theory, through the concept of *subject* the critical reflection text reveals the interplay between discoursal identity and learning *outcomes*. The model allows for a detailed mapping of the negotiations that occur between the subjective and the collective perspectives within a writing course. Contradictions and conflicts, as well as learning patterns caused by expansion through participation in an activity system, emerge through the analysis. It becomes possible to get a snapshot view of students in action at a particular moment in time, working with a particular assignment, by viewing the text as an imprint

of the writer's actions within the activity system and the students' perspective on these actions, what *tools* they use and with what *object* and *motive*.

In accordance with the theoretical aim, I developed a model for text analysis informed by activity theory. The theory is originally an organizational, *context* theory. When applied on text, the context inscribed in the text opens up for interpretation through the theoretical concepts. The discourse analytical hypothesis, stipulating that texts are permeated by context, is confirmed. In other words, the text-analytical model makes it possible to theoretically describe differences in the learning trajectories and learning *outcomes* of the assignment that students complete in the case studies. Although the assignment was designed to aim at critical metareflection, beforehand I could not foresee the learning *outcomes*, and certainly not the diversity, in the responses to the assignment. After repeated close reading of *all* my data, different patterns emerged. Interestingly, the patterns proved to be in line with prototypical, expressive writing discourses. I also found links among the writing discourses, the text types, and socially established ideas about discoursal identities that seem to follow certain organizational *rules* associated with the text types. In the genre-oriented position, the negotiation is focused on the degree to which the *subject* has the right to ascribe to herself an author's identity. In the process-oriented position, the emphasis in the negotiation is on the issue of authority to claim the right to individual uniqueness and exemption from collective *rules*, for example. In the exploratory position, the negotiation is about what *rules* and to what extent, in regard to *division of labour*, a student is free to work independently with research questions when solving an academic writing assignment. The data reveals the encounters between the writer and the course, as perceived through the perspective of three different, prototypical *subject* positions in a creative writing course and through three different *subject* positions in the teacher training follow-up study. Through the teacher trainee follow-up, it has also been possible to establish that the learning patterns described in the prototypical positions in the case study persist and that they are influenced by imagined possibilities for selfhood in imagined futures, the fourth aspect of discoursal identity, in activity systems outside of the course.

However, activity theory per se is not an analytical method immediately applicable to text. To access the concepts of activity theory and frame them in a text-analytical model, linguistic methods are needed. Different text- and discourse-analytical approaches have been applied to the texts. The approaches may, in themselves, generate important results. However, activity theory adds specific *contextual* aspects to the interpretation of the textual data that other theories do not. For example, some theories about academic writing emphasize the context in terms of *discourse community* (Swayles 1990: 24ff.). In one of Ivanič's earlier works (1998), for example, she sees discourse community as a suitable framework for looking into discoursal identity. However, discourse community is not a permeable theoretical term. Swayles (1990: 24) claims that although the term originates in an academic context, discourse community connotes, more broadly, any kind of group that has certain interests in common and is recognizable through shared discoursal practices. Activity theory, in contrast, aims at theorizing organized, *object*-driven product production to explain change and learning through expansion within organizational activity systems. The theory explains how expansion within the activity systems causes contradictions, conflicts, and change. It is a sociocultural or, more correctly, sociohistorical theory of human action, originating in Vygotsky's psychological theories about the zone of proximal development, where learning is defined as basically a social phenomenon, enacted in the social interplay between teacher and learner. It is thus Vygotsky's zone of proximal development that is conceptualized within an object-driven organizational framework that is introduced in the third generation of activity theory (Engeström 1987). By using the text-analytical model (see Sect. 5.1 in Chap. 5), I have applied the concepts on texts in order to account for what learning in terms of critical metareflection has taken place during the textualization process.

One important aspect of learning through writing is the notion of discoursal identity. For the purpose of text analysis, it has been necessary to link discoursal identity to the concept of *subject*, but it does not stop at that. As has been said earlier, it is not until the encounter between the *subject's* personal *object* and *motive* and those of the *community* has been clarified that learning *outcomes* become possible to map. The text then

reveals how the *subject* has understood what it means to learn through expansion as a writer, in a collective, artefact-mediated and *object*-oriented activity system (Engeström 2001: 136ff.). The contradictions and conflicts that occur in the encounters between different discoursal identities and their *objects* and *motives* in alignment or in conflict with *objects* and *motives* at the organizational level have thus been accessible for analysis and mapping and able to be understood in the light of *rules* and *divisions of labour* that impact on the learning *outcomes*.

It is activity theory, not Swayle's discourse community, that Ivanič (2006) turns to when she discusses discoursal identity in association with learning within a particular context, specifically a trainee restaurant in a vocational programme. In Fig. 4.3, Ivanič shows that goal-oriented *actions* and learning lie close to one another. In fact, they are contextualized as integrated actions executed by a *subject*, in an activity system.[2] Figure 4.3 illustrates that the actions are incorporated in the activity system that in turn is incorporated in a broader cultural context. The figure shows that the discoursal practices, genres, and discourses are situated *within* the activity systems. It is in this regard that activity theory as a model for text analysis reveals its strength. The text-analytical model, (Fig. 5.1) can serve to analyse, the way different contextual social frames are conststructed in a text, in order to find contradictions. Conflicts may occur in the encounter between *subject*—for example, specific interest groups, such as students in a writing course—and *community*, in relation to different components of the activity system, such as its *rules* and *division of labour*. As I have constructed and used it here, the model reveals the negotiation between a student's perspective and a university perspective. It describes contextualized processes of identity and identification as *object*-oriented learning in a *community*, which is the zone where the subjective level of learning meets the collective, situated context of the course, as this is expressed in the critical reflection text. Thus, the project highlights the link between discoursal identity and the concept *subject* in relation to *community*.

Subjects in activity systems are not only entities organized in certain groups but also embodied individuals with their own private agendas, *objects*, and *motives*, which of course will affect the *outcome* of their work within the activity system. The concepts in the model bring out different

aspects of the actions within the system and their influences on learning. For example, previous experience of writing academic texts as well as personal expectations have a decisive impact on the actions, and the model maps *how* they impact on the learning *outcomes* when students engage in writing. This question of how students engage themselves when learning is an aspect of academic learning that needs more attention. In much research about teaching and learning (see, e.g., Biggs and Tang 2011 and Havnes and McDowell 2008 for summaries), strategic *motives* and *objects*, such as assessment, are emphasized as the most influential *tool* to affect the work of students (and teachers). You simply get the answers that students think are expected of them (see Wiliam 2008: 269ff.), and this seems to be the case in my data too. It becomes particularly clear when the assignment questions are vague and the students have to rely on their previous experience and ideas about what is expected of them in order to live up to assessment criteria. However, the picture that emerges through the analysis is much more complex than can be accounted for in terms of previous experience or how to deploy writing techniques to get certain results. (In addition, students were informed that the assignment in the studies would be graded pass or fail and, to get a pass, they needed to complete the assignment in accordance with the instructions.)

The model reveals where there is harmony and where there is contradiction between *subject* and *community* as expressed by the writer. It highlights how *tools* are applied and what the specific applications may generate in terms of different learning *outcomes*. Also, as has been shown through the teacher trainee study in particular, the model tells how these contradictions are influenced by activity systems outside of the course *community* and what impact perceptions of *rules* and *division of labour* in other activity systems may have on learning *outcomes* achieved within the course. In the case study, there is a strong impact from possibilities as a literary writer on a book market, and in the teacher trainee study, the impact is from possibilities and constraints as a professional teacher. In the texts, these possibilities are realized as themes related to *rules* and *division of labour*. The model thus facilitates a mapping of the variations in the critical reflections that were handed in and shows what impact discoursal identity has on learning through writing in a certain social context. The results tell more about what actually goes on in writing activities

in an academic course than vague statements about expectations based on an object-oriented view on learning, which claims that students produce only what is expected of them, or statements that what is mirrored in the texts is previous experience or lack of experience of academic writing. Such very vague explanations cannot account for differences in the texts regarding different learning trajectories or expressions of learning through expansion.

Adults are not blank slates. They enter into activity systems with autobiographical selves, formed by previous experiences that will influence what they do, what they learn, and what they *want* to learn. In turn, such *objects* and *motives* may be driven by notions of identity that were formed in other activity systems than the course they are enrolled in at the time of writing. By creating writers' positions and trying out these positions in a follow-up study in a new context, I streamlined three major perspectives, with a variation in each to describe the learning processes that I found in the specific activity system of a course in creative writing. The positions as creative writers that I found in the textual patterns in the case study repeat themselves in the follow-up, which confirms that certain prototypical discourses associated with creative writing activities are widespread. Learning through writing in a certain setting is thus impacted by contexts from other activity systems and by cultural values and beliefs that permeate the actions that go on within the systems. In the model, this is described as different levels of *community,* very locally, in social interaction between individuals, as well as at a cultural level, through the ideologies exerted through discourses. Differences in students' learning profiles as *subjects* and contradictions that occur in encounters with *community* can thus be described in terms of a negotiation between the *subject* and different social contexts that are expressed as relevant to relate to by the *subject* in the texts. It is the negotiations between the *subject* and these different social encounters within the *community* that are expressed as a tension in the concepts of the upper and lower parts of the triangle in the text-analytical model. Through the analysis, it becomes possible to follow how tension accumulates and how (and if) it dissolves. This is a new understanding of differences in *outcomes* resulting from learning through writing in a writing course.

9.2.1   Broad Concepts

The theoretical aim to develop a textual model based on the concepts in activity theory highlights some of their complexity. In addition, as pointed out earlier, for text-analytical aims, other text-analytical approaches are needed to unlock the texts in order to apply the concepts onto them. The analyst must address this lack of precision throughout the analytical work , and I suggest that the concepts be viewed as different, sometimes overlapping, aspects of context in text, aspects that influence learning and therefore constitute holding points in the analysis. Defined this way, the concepts contributed to new insights to what happens when creative writing is used as a method to practise critical metareflection in a creative writing course as well as in a writing course for teacher trainees.

An important point to observe, then, and a difficulty when applied in text analysis, is the broad and vague nature of the concepts in activity theory. The concept of *tool* can serve as an example: Language, defined as a *tool*, becomes infinite, basically. Similarly, the entire course could be categorized as a *tool*, as could the different steps of the assignment where different short texts were produced. The concepts of *subject* and *community* are equally complex.[3] In spite of the fact that I have split *community* into different contextual frames in the model, *community* can still be difficult to specify in a text. The differences between *rules* and *division of labour* are not clear in textual expressions either. For example, as has been shown, they can refer to a number of different contexts. The model thus lacks in capacity when it comes to accounting for different levels of social interaction, to cover the spectrum ranging from one individual to the entire *community* of the course and, beyond that, into other activity systems. However, a point in question is whether, perhaps, the problem with models based on activity theory is not so much the concepts but the messiness of all the different actions that go on in situated learning that resist "coherent, and systematically principled structured vertical discourse" (Daniels 2010: 177) that any model tries to cast upon "reality." When linked to language and discourse, the model helps to clarify some of the sites of contradiction between individuals and groups and the overarching structures of the activity systems in which they are situated. The

concepts cast light on the connections between the *subject* and the context, expressed as different layers of *community* linked to learning. In the text analysis, I highlighted contradictions between *subject* and *community* in terms of *object* and *motive* and conflicts that can arise when the perspectives between *subject* and *community* diverge. The follow-up also clarified the complexity of *community*, how it is forged through discoursal constructions by social interaction among *subjects* and its impact on learning *outcomes*. I used theories about discoursal identities, originating in ideas about subject positions in writing and identity processes. When the British linguist Paul Gee (1990: 155) suggests that as a writer, "You are either in it or you're not," he refers to the way writers learn to appropriate discourses and at the same time discoursal identities. However, the question of exactly *what* we are "in" is an interesting one. Both studies show that discoursal expressions of *community* in the texts refer to a multitude of different *communities* that students fantasize about being "in," now or in the future, such as the book market and that of school, apart from all the other local levels of *community* expressed in the texts. In fact, the texts seem to express an ongoing negotiation about what *community* and at what level exactly one is "in" at different points in time during discussions and writing processes. These discoursal expressions illustrate the messy and interactional situatedness of learning through identification that was referred to earlier as a social and *discoursal* process in the here and now—"the horizontal discourse," as opposed to the "coherent, and systematically principled" structured "vertical discourse" (Daniels 2010: 177).

There are some difficulties linked to the discussion of *subject* position and discourse within the framework of activity theory (see British activity theorist Harry Daniels [2010] article on which I draw in what follows). As mentioned earlier, I have used the concepts of activity theory as a heuristic for text analysis. I have constructed discoursal identities to track the learning trajectories in the data, in spite of the fact that 'identity' is not one of the concepts in activity theory. However, by associating the concept of *subject* to mean discoursal identity in a text (see Chaps. 4 and 5), I have circumvented this problem in parts. Shaping identities in activity systems is a complex undertaking since so many aspects of identity formation is engaged in learning within an organizational context. A very

interesting notion to account for how we transfer knowledge and understanding between activity systems, is that of figured worlds. The concept originates in Holland et al. (2003 [1998]: 41) and, much understanding about formation of identity can be gained from it (Daniels 2010). There has arisen "a need to develop the notion of "figured world" (Daniels 2010: 176) in such a way that we can theorize, analyse, and describe the processes by which the world is "figured." The example from the teacher trainee group is enlightening in this regard, as it seems that the students use their narrative imagination as a tool to construct a figured activity system of school, with figured *rules* and a figured *division of labour*. This figured world forms the basis on which they make their assumptions about what is important to reject and to retain in their learning process during the course they are currently taking. Sven's PISA survey argument (see Chap. 8, Sect. "Strategies for Subjective Agency" example 118) illustrates a writer who refers to rules in a *community* outside of (a figured) school that impact his (figured) work in school and at the same time influence discoursal actions that he takes in the writing course. As he discusses with his peers on the course *rules* and *division of labour* that have to do with his future teaching career in school (not the present writing course), his discoursal affiliations impact on how he displays his identity as future teacher in the writing course and also, very likely, his fantasies about his possibilities for selfhood as a teacher in the future. By drawing on the PISA survey, Sven points at how power and social relations will impact on his abilities to use certain assignments in his future profession. Daniels (2010) draws on Bernstein's notion of boundaries to discuss how language and discourse could be intertwined in concepts such as *division of labour*. He suggests that such divisions are linked to boundaries at structural levels in complex and highly specialized organizations. One way that these boundaries are expressed in situated contexts is through discourse (174). Applied on a specific example: Sven displays his identity as a future teacher as lacking in power. He fears that he will have little personal say in what he can and cannot do in his classroom in view of the impact of structural levels (expressed in the PISA survey). Sven thus perceives that the *division of labour* is such that he and his peers are at one side of a boundary, and they do not have the power to cross it in order to change *rules* or *division of labour* to make it possible for them to work in ways that they would like. In view of political, societal decisions relating to school, he is subordinate

and has to comply. Example (118) illustrates how discourses are renegotiated in situated interaction and how they contribute to form and affirm values and beliefs associated with power in social contexts.

Linking the concept of *division of labour* to discoursal expressions of boundaries this way, a possibility opens up for researching the "messy […] interactional levels […] of everyday, situated activity expressed in (embodied, situated and local) horizontal discourse" (Daniels 2010: 177).[4] For one thing, such an approach supports the view that social interaction within activity systems is accessible to textual analysis, based on the concepts in activity theory. The concepts unlock how the different aspects of an object-driven activity system play out in texts that have come about through a *subject's object*-oriented textualization actions, situated, locally produced, and expressed in texts. In this project, with its focus on how students work with creative writing for critical metareflection, the text analyses reveal that learning through writing within the activity system of a course consists of a series of social actions where boundaries among individuals, groups, and representatives of the system, such as a lecturer, are continuously negotiated and subject to alterations. The boundaries appear at the crossroads between *subject* and *community*, where they play out through the different concepts of the text-analytical model, as shown in the data analysis . To *subjects* engaged in learning, it is identification processes that come to the fore in their texts, and these are discoursally expressed. The texts thus mirror the "messy, horizontal" identification processes as embodied "talks and walks," as it were, represented in texts as socially distributed patterns, expressing boundaries. One aspect of this is how *division of labour* is expressed in the texts as different social frames associated with the concept *community*. The texts reveal how writers express these relations in discourse. Clearly, but to varying degrees, the trainees in the follow-up, as well as the students in the case study, negotiate the meaning of the concepts *division of labour* and *rules* from figured, future worlds long before they have entered into them. The writers' negotiations are accessible through text analysis that shows how such figured worlds impact on what students learn through writing and how they interact within the activity systems they are in at the present moment in time.

Texts thus reveal the sites of negotiation between *subject* with agency and *subject* as subject to the agency of others at different collective levels

of the activity systems. In addition, imagined futures that shape the learning in the present are played out, embodied, staged, and orchestrated within the seminar room, in social interaction, such as the discussions in small and large groups. This "messy" interaction contributes to shaping ideas about a professional identity of teacher or professional author and contributes to transfer ideas about who is authorized to walk and talk in what way, as it is expressed through the *division of labour* in the texts. I have found *community* to be a very complex concept to account for in a text-analytical model. For example, together these students construct ideas about the activity system they will enter in the capacity of teachers in the future. During the discussion, they negotiate what subjective agency the *rules* and *division of labour* the system will allow. This way, students express learning through writing as a very complex web of collective discoursal actions. *Community*, in a reflection text, is expressed as discoursal negotiations at levels suggested here. Identities should be viewed in the plural, constantly shifting, and in alignment with different social activities (Ivanič 2006) and activity systems.

It is not at all surprising that the concepts become vague when applied for text-analytical purposes in a text-analytical model or, in fact, for any other type of analysis based on activity theory applied on micro levels, such as in this project. One explanation can be traced back to the origins of the theory. Engeström (2001: 135) emphasizes that the theory varies from Vygotsky's original, individual-focused view on social learning. Engeström presents the theory to explain learning, expansion, and conflicts, but with a focus on big organizations and entire societies. Engeström et al. (1999: 380) defines activities thus: "Activities are social practices oriented at objects. An entity becomes an object of activity when it meets a human need." However, he does not define *object* at an individual level, and he emphasizes that there is a risk of misunderstandings: "[…] objects are not to be confused with goals. Goals are attached to specific actions. Actions have clear points of beginning and termination […] Activity systems evolve through long historical cycles in which clear beginnings and ends are difficult to determine." (ibid.)

When researchers claim to have used activity theory as a zoom lens to focus on individuals, for example, or as a heuristic tool, and perhaps restricted to certain concepts of the theory, as Ivanič does or as I have applied the theory in the construction of the theoretical model for text

analysis, it is relevant to ask if it is correct to define this work as an example of activity theoretical analysis (and a reason to refer to Leontiev's [1978] second-generation activity theory where some of the individual aspects remain). According to the quotations from Engeström et al. (1999: 381), "actions," for example, are not the same concept as "activity". "Actions" may be executed by individuals. "Activity," in contrast, connotes the entire collective's goal-oriented actions. Applied to the individual writer or a group of writers, the somewhat paradoxical border between what is individual and what is collective appears. Writing is performed by a living person in a situated reality. Often it is done in seclusion, to the extent that special office rooms (in organizations) have been constructed for the purpose of writing. At the same time, writing is social and collective through language, through discourses mirrored in the texts created by individual writers, and through the formats, genres, and text types used. The writing person is in fact a nice illustration of the crossroads between the materiality of people's everyday lives and language-based thoughts, such as theoretical concepts that are materialized in texts and in writers' imaginations. The immaterial power structures of discourse get entangled in the material world of everyday life through our ideas and ideologies about it, which is illustrated in the way the students discuss the prototypical function of their narratives, for example.

A model for text analysis that aims at explicating learning through writing has to account for the impact of materiality in some way. I have taken the position that context, defined as observable in an activity system such as an academic course, can tell more about learning in that context than a more abstract, overarching, constructivist model of context: "[I]f we cut an idea like 'discourse community' off from real individuals, it may be possible to theorize about, but it becomes difficult to research" (Ivanič 1998: 78). It is living people who write and learn, and whose *objects* and *motives* urge them to get into contact with organizations, driven by motives and *object*-driven production. Without *motive*, people would not have applied to a certain educational institution, which, for some reason, they found interesting. If activity systems are places situated in some material reality[5] where actions of different kinds can be executed, then activity theory as a text-analytical model describes a discursive territory,[6] where those places are construed through people's temperament and *object*-oriented actions. For such reasons, I have found that

the theory of activity systems better accounts for the material circumstances that influence writing than the idea of discourse community, for example. Activity theory aims at describing learning within *object-driven* organizations. As it turns out, writers too are *object* (and *motive*) driven, and the two perspectives are expressed in texts and accessible that way to the analyst. The influence on writing of the surrounding (organizational) context is complex and substantial, and can be analysed through the activity theoretical concepts of the text-analytical model in a unique way.

It would be interesting to ask research questions more in line with broader ideas expressed in activity theory directed at researching the organization containing writing courses and how changes of different kinds affect these courses. For example, research questions could address what a change of knowledge *object* brought about by a new, expressive writing paradigm in a sociocritical writing discourse would generate.

9.3   Negotiating Discoursal Identity

Academic writing research has paid attention to the relational aspects of learning through writing, as discussed earlier, but it has not specifically addressed creative writing methods, other than to help students to revise their texts through peer reviewing. (See Chap. 2) In this project, however, social processes proved to be a major factor not only in revising but in learning through creative writing. In fact, the best terms to describe the learning processes found in my data are learning through identification and imitation processes. Both studies show that perceptions of discoursal identity have considerable impact on learning. The creative writing course and the teacher trainee writing course can be seen as two different activity systems, sharing similarities, of course, as they are academic writing courses, but with differences in regard to work *objects* and intended learning *outcomes*. As shown, these similarities and differences play out in the way that students position themselves as writers. The positions are strongly influenced by possibilities for selfhood in activity systems outside of the course. In the texts, ideas about these other systems are expressed as figured worlds that writers imagine themselves to be part of in the future.

However, there is also evidence of the writers' autobiographical selves in the data. Prior experience (or lack of it) of academic writing, for example, leaves traces in the texts, as does all our previous experience of writing. Not until the results are interpreted through the lens of discoursal identity do different patterns in regard to learning *outcomes* get a more specific description. The presentation of these patterns in terms of prototypical writers' positions allows for differentiation and less sweeping explanations of variations in the learning *outcomes*. It turns out that the double meaning of *subject*, as in subject to other people's actions and subject exercising agency (Ivanič 2006: 11), adequately sums up and explains the differences in learning *outcome* in my data. The agency we are able to enact as writers depends on our previous experience and is shaped in the negotiation with others within the framework of a specific activity system and in anticipation of an imagined future as writing *subject*. Erik in the case study (3 a–d) in Sect. 4.4.1 of Chap. 4 may serve as an example to illustrate how the negotiations can play out. Erik expands his writing ability from a way of writing narratives, with himself as the only reader, to a dialogical way of writing them, addressing empirical readers in a writing course. The results of his writing efforts will reveal his writing skills and tell whether he can affiliate with writers he wishes to identify with or not. There is a substantial shift in Erik's discoursal self, as he discovers his own text, through readers' reactions, and becomes aware of how he is perceived as a writer by these readers. He is *subject* and agent in his desire to become an accomplished author, but at the same time he is *subject to* change his way of writing in accordance with evaluations from his readers. In addition, regardless of his personal preferences, he is subject to the demands of the university, in that he is expected to complete the different steps of the complex assignment in order to pass the course and get his course credits.

Similarly, most students in the teacher trainee course have *motives* that drive them to pass the course. However, outside of that immediate course context lie challenges in regard to discoursal selves that are different from the ones facing the creative writing students. The main struggle for the creative writing students is to change their discoursal identity from apprentice to accomplished author. The trainees are less concerned about the identity of creative writer and more concerned about the identity of

teacher. For example, the most salient feature in a teacher's identity expressed in discourses in the data is to show evidence of sound judgement, not evidence of accomplishment as a literary author. The trainees display critical metareflection by evaluating a *tool* available to them as teachers, critically, during a discussion. Such evaluations can be construed as signs of *motive*: The trainees are capable of performing what it takes to affiliate with professional teachers in a specific pedagogical paradigm. In two discoursal identity positions, the trainees *struggle* with integrating the identity of creative writer into a professional identity of teacher. This lack of resolve is expressed as contradictions in the texts. For example, when creative writing is expressed as a loophole activity to escape from the studies, as one student put it, it is a sign that identities remain unintegrated and in conflict. Expansion is not likely to occur until the contradictions between different discoursal identities have been bridged. Integration is exemplified in the position where the *subject* sees new possibilities as a teacher of writing by adding new perspectives of creative writing as a pedagogical *tool* and integrating new possibilities for selfhood as creative writer with existing autobiographical selves. The possibility to exercise subjective agency is thus closely linked to desires of wanting to become, and what we want to become is restricted by what we know at a certain point in time. The prototypical writing positions show that a number of different negotiations go on simultaneously among a group of students. Different *subjects* in the activity system are driven by different *objects* and *motives*. The differences are reflected in the variations of learning *outcomes* of the assignment.

9.3.1   Impact of Context

Probably most students struggle to pass the course and to challenge their discoursal selves, to see, as Professor Paul Gee puts it, "whether they are in it … or not" (Gee 1990: 155) as writers and teachers. Will they succeed in "talking" like others in the *community* to which they wish to belong? This is decided at the moment of uptake, when their identity is read by others. These "readers" of identity consist of real, empirical readers such as their peers, and me, but also of model readers in figured future

worlds. Thus students take into account a hybridity in regard to context as they forge their discoursal identities. However, different students weight differently imagined contexts of activity systems outside of the course that to some extent form part of the *object* and *motive* for taking the course. For example, in the "teacher not creative writer" position, the discoursal identity of creative writer is only part of an identity as teacher, and to some a completely rejected part, viewed as an affiliation quite outside of the discoursal identity as teacher and expressed as immature and rather unattractive. To others, though, a change of discoursal identity as teacher seems to come about upon completion of the assignment. These students integrate creative writing as part of what would be an acceptable affiliation. As they revise their previous ideas about creative writing, by seeing the narrative text type in a new light, they seem to expand their learning by perspective change and appropriate a new *tool* for teaching critical metareflection. This is important not only because critical metareflection may be part of a curriculum in school but because it turns out to be a way to construct a teacher's discoursal identity, by exhibiting proof of sound judgement discoursally, through "talking" and writing. That way, the influences of address, how others talk to us, and attribution, how others talk about us, emerge. In other words, what these displays of identity express is an appropriation process where students display how they understand what it is to *be* through discoursal actions in a particular context. As discussed earlier, students draw on discourses that they know about and have come across in their autobiographical writing histories to create new possibilities for selfhood. It is at the moment of uptake that they are read, by peers and by lecturers, for example, when we assess them.

There is considerable variation in the data from both groups in terms of how discoursal identity plays out. The moment that a writer expresses a certain discoursal affiliation, other possibilities for selfhood are rejected, which will have consequences for learning. The text-analytical model has shown that these factors are accessible through text analysis. They can clarify what happens in negotiations during the textualization processes and *where* in the encounter with the activity system the sites of negotiation actually lie, given a certain writer's position.

9.4   Text Type and Discoursal Identity

One way in which affiliation is expressed is through preferences of text type. We talk like others by using the text types available for expressing different discourses. Who the writer *becomes* is thus mirrored through what text types the writer prefers, as there are "prototypical subject-positions for writers inscribed in genres" (Burgess and Ivanič 2010: 250). Metaphorically, the text is a social costume: "[…] discourse is a sort of 'identity kit' that enables human beings to take on recognizable social roles" (252).

The results of this project reflect precisely these circumstances. For example, the narrative text type allows for the construction or display of the discoursal identity of author, which is associated with a certain social context that many students express as desirable: "People's identities are constructed not only by their deployment of semiotic resources but also by the practices in which they participate" (Ivanič 2006: 20).

By choosing the narrative text type, students do not only deploy certain "semiotic resources"; they also engage in a certain literary writing practice, thereby constructing a discoursal identity as literary writers (albeit with differences in degree of accomplishment). The reflection text, however, is a loosely specified text type, associated with some specific course context, and it offers the writer the discoursal identity of academic student. Students in both studies write quite a few reflection texts throughout the courses, and in this project, specific questions accompany the reflection, which is called *critical* reflection. Some of the students in the data express through the texts that they wish to affiliate with the *community* of academia or with the *community* of professional teachers at school. However, identities associated with certain texts do not appeal to all writers. For example, "semiotic resources" available in the critical reflection text offered an affiliation with academia and with a student identity that was rejected by some creative writing students. However, the text type presented to the students as "critical reflection text" has proven to mean many different things, when the writers were given permission to define the text type through their writing, as has been the case here. Some defined it as an evaluative review, others as a meandering diary-like thought protocol, while others used the text type to express their personal

beliefs. Very likely, such interpretations of the text type reflect how the students perceive themselves as students in an academic course. Some students in the case study more or less rejected the critical reflection text, as expressed in the genre-oriented position, where they turn down the identity of student. Instead they claim an author's identity to the extent that there is reason to doubt whether the assignment generated any significant learning *outcomes* in terms of critical metareflection, as the possibilities to act in accordance with the desired discoursal identity of author made it difficult to write the critical reflection text. In the follow-up, a similar conflict is expressed but in regard to the narrative text type, when the *subject* rejects the identity of teacher as writer because the narrative text is associated with childhood activities or to hobby writing. It is also rejected when the teacher as creative writer affiliates with an object-oriented view on learning, where assignments that may prove difficult to grade will be rejected as teaching *tools.* In such cases there is a risk that no or very little learning will come out of the assignment.

These results could be contrasted to the exploratory position in the case study and the "trainee as writer and as teacher (of writing)" position in the follow-up study, where both text types gain acceptance. Thereby room is made for affiliation with an exploratory stance as student, as author and as teacher. Many of the trainees in the follow-up allow the critical reflection text to serve as a *tool* to construct and display the discoursal identity of teacher. Even though the text type has been defined differently by different students in the follow-up as well, as an evaluative review or as an exploratory analytical text, the critical reflection is a text type that provides room for students to try out semiotic resources that are associated with practices in which they will take part in the future, with a teacher's discourse of writing as a reflective practitioner, described by Schön (1983), giving room to express sound judgement. This is not always the case with the narrative texts in the follow-up, where in fact expressions of sound judgement can lead to doubts about the benefits of writing narratives or give rise to a lack of interest in them. The differences in preferences of text types between the students in the studies thus mirror the impact of discoursal identity on writing behaviour. The way that students wish to affiliate themselves as writers tint what text types they want to write, and in what *community*. The narrative text type and the

critical reflection text that constitute the assignment are thus carriers of resources for expressing ideas and ideologies about discoursal identities and about the writer's relationship to *community*. A writer who rejects a certain text type simultaneously rejects the *community* represented by that text type. Thus, to some writers, the text types available through the assignment are in conflict with their discoursal identities.

9.5   Discoursal Identity and Learning

Ideas about discoursal identity expressed by the students in the data are anchored in their autobiographical selves, through previous personal writing experiences. Writers always bring such past writing experiences with them, in all new writing contexts they encounter. For example, in the authors' profile in the case study, a prototypical expert identity is expressed, whereas in the exploratory position, a student identity comes to the fore. In the follow-up, similar themes and discourses related to expertise emerge in the data, as expressed in the *trainee as teacher-not-creative writer* position. The position expresses a discoursal identity of an expert, object-oriented teacher analogously to the expert author in the authors' profile. However, there are more metacritical comments in the critical reflections in the exploratory than in the genre-oriented position in the case study, and similarly there are more metacritical comments in the *trainee as creative writer and teacher* (of writing) than in the *trainee as teacher* position in the follow-up. The results show that writers who see themselves as students in a writing course write complex and elaborate texts, with many perspectives and references to different social frames, whereas students who see themselves as experts produce very short texts, mainly focusing on the subjective frame of the writer's own discoursal identity as author or as professional teacher.

A possible interpretation of these results, then, is that a writer who feels at ease with her discoursal identity will not bring it out as a textual theme and that the writer's positions express the process of appropriation: Learning expands from the centre towards the periphery. A focus on themes within the subjective identity frame, and restricted to themes such as accomplishments as a literary author or, in the follow-up, performative

expressions of professionalism as a teacher, may be construed as a first step in such a development. As the learning process proceeds, expansion will generate an increasing degree of general perspectives on the assignment questions, and less textual space will be given to themes such as performance of identity through the textualization process. The expert discoursal identity described in the studies might thus be viewed as a provisional, auxiliary identity. The notion of a possibility for selfhood as a professional writer or teacher in the future becomes the *motive* for different social actions, such as taking a course in order to try out, or "play," what would be involved in affiliating with such an expert identity in reality (i.e., in a different activity system) and using the course to stage such a possible future. In terms of activity theory, the course becomes a *tool* at the macro level to try out new identities. However, it turns out that certain provisional, auxiliary identities are less favourable for practising critical metareflection, particularly those that are not compatible with the activity system of the course that the students are taking. Yet in the case of identities with a given place within the activity system, such as that of student in an academic course, no conflicts occur for obvious reasons. The writers described in the exploratory, communicative profile, *trainee as teacher and creative writer* position, see themselves as students taking an academic course and see other group participants in the same way, as students to cooperate with. The critical metareflection text type of the creative writing course and the narrative text type of the teacher trainee course seem to have helped them as *tools* to expand their learning to encompass new ways of understanding what can be learnt through writing.

The writers' positions presented here can be said to illustrate the link between accommodation processes and notions of identity that students bring to the course and that will have a substantial impact on what and how they learn. The effects of identity on learning are in fact very down to earth (Ivanič 1998). It is in the encounter with specific, material instantiations of language use among language users that people form their discoursal identities, and it is done through imitation. For example, an encounter with someone the writer admires in a course may initiate the process of imitation (Ivanič 1998: 213). My data points very clearly in this direction. Students construct templates for imitation through the

contact with concrete textual examples that they come across and read. Also, it is living people whom they have met and meet (and admire) that show them new possible ways of writing. It is thus such concrete, social encounters that generate new possibilities to reach for new social contexts surrounding the writer, and new "possibilities for selfhood" (Ivanič 1998: 27f.) which is the fourth aspect of discoursal identity. The expression refers to discoursal selves that can be achieved because there are sociocultural institutional contexts, outside of a course, for example, that provide them (ibid.). The writers' positions in this study mirror some of these social *motives* as the texts revealed what the writers are interested in and influenced by and also thereby what possibilities for learning are available.

It is likely that many students in creative writing have aims other than to continue their academic studies to earn degrees in creative writing. The creative writing course in this study is not linked to any such academic programme, nor is it described as vocational in the course syllabus, in contrast to the teacher trainee course. Research shows that a majority of university students do not plan to continue their studies towards an academic career (Blåsjö 2004 for a Swedish study), and in most cases, a student identity is of a mediating and *transitory* nature (Burgess and Ivanič 2010). Writers may experience ambivalence towards this albeit transitory yet unavoidable identity (230). In my data, the ambivalence manifests itself by rejection of text types that do not offer any possibilities for a desired selfhood, which clearly indicates that some writers are ambivalent about accepting themselves as students, student writers, or trainee teachers (Burgess and Ivanič 2010: 228; Ivanič 1998).

To appropriate knowledge means to make it one's own (Wertsch 1998: 54). However, at the core of appropriation lies an identification process, so that hand in hand with learning something—for example, to write—comes learning about being in the world (Bruner 1996). Taking a one-term course in creative writing is a completely different undertaking from taking a writing course as part of a vocational teacher trainee programme. Students come to these courses with very different ideas about what they are going to learn and about what they are going to be. Yet it turns out that, in their reflection texts, they express similar creative writing discourses about the act of writing narratives, which is an indication that

prototypical creative writing discourses are widespread and, probably, to most students, associated with writing stories and other narratives that they learnt about in their early school years. However, there are differences between the groups in how they express identification: Students in creative writing (in my data) do not associate their discoursal identity with educational professions or with school. To a high degree, they express that the course will help them to define who they are going to *be*, with the *motive* to become accomplished, literary authors. That is not the case with most of the trainees, who tend to see themselves as amateur creative writers, orienting their identification processes towards becoming teachers (of writing), which to them is a different identity. Many of them categorize creative writing as belonging to the past or to spare-time activities. In fact, the course syllabus implies such a view of writing narrative texts, as creative writing is not even an option for the course (until I asked a group of students to do a creative writing assignment). Of course, discourses and values permeating the immediate context expressed in a course syllabus, for example, affect how students view the narrative text type and influence their thinking. I would argue that in this case, as a consequence of the fact that creative writing is not on the syllabus, some of the trainees handled the confusion, or contradiction, in regard to the identity of creative writer by rejecting it. It is unlikely that questions about whether they are in it or not as teachers will be associated with creative writing and narratives, but such questions will definitely be asked by the creative writing students. As the trainees have not come across the method of creative writing for critical metareflection presented in this book, they are not very likely to ask about it. But when presented with such *tools*, they are also presented with offers of figured worlds outside of the *community* of the course, and that affects learning *outcomes*.

How trainees perceive themselves as writers and how such perceptions impact on their ideas about themselves as teachers turn out to be a complex web of actions that I have accounted for through the concepts of the text-analytical model. Part of what students have to *learn* is the ability to differentiate between personal *objects* and *motives* and those of the activity system. It seems then that students appropriate what it means to be *subject* in a collective activity system *to different degrees*. The writers' positions illustrate different expressions of this process. The positions show that

different perceptions about discoursal identity can remain more or less constant, be put into question, remain in a state of uncertainty, or pass into new perceptions about discoursal identity. It is reasonable, then, to view students' understandings of identity as provisional and transitory, in particular as it is a matter of fact that students can only seek for identities that they know about. Therefore, expressions of discoursal identity can be seen as expression of ongoing learning. A firmly claimed discoursal identity can be interpreted as a sign of appropriated knowledge about writing and about being a writing *subject* at a particular point in time, one that probably will change as different kinds of knowledge increase.[7] A reorientation of discoursal self generates new ideas of what is interesting to learn, that is to say, a new perspective is added to previous ones, which is the process that I have defined as metacritical metareflection and which, in activity theoretical terms, is called learning through expansion.

9.6   Concluding Remarks About Discoursal Identity

The theories I have drawn on are about discoursal identity. It is a paradigm where learning is linked to identification processes (Barton 1994; Gee 2001; Ivanič 1998). These theories provide a stepping-stone towards understanding performative actions as expressions of *subjects* engaged in learning within activity systems, which I have found to be a major feature at textual level in the data. It is through performance in writing that writers prove (or not) that they are familiar with certain writing practices and, at the moment of uptake, are judged by readers as worthy of ascribing to themselves a certain discoursal identity, a major driving force for learning. Theories of identity and identification have also turned out to be an important key to understanding differences in learning *outcomes*. By linking the different patterns found in my data to differences in expressed discoursal identity, I have been able to chisel out six prototypical *subjects'* perspectives, with some variations, in an activity system and to show how these different ideas about discoursal identity have influenced the learning outcomes of the assignment. Through different types of textual analysis, I have been able to establish some specific writing discourses in the

data. The discourses have revealed certain ideological values attached to writing and writing traditions, such as those described in the creative writing tradition. It seems they have had substantial impact on how the students have approached the assignment in the case studies. By linking perspectives such as these to textual analysis and then by viewing the analytical results through the concepts of the text-analytical model, I have researched the social function of the texts, thereby casting light on what it means to learn critical metareflection through creative writing.

9.7   One Last Word About Transfer

There are some final comments to be made about transfer of the creative writing method. As I set out to arrange for the follow-up study, I took a series of steps to adapt the assignment to sit lightly in a new educational context. I read the course syllabus and the learning objectives to make sure that creative writing would gain acceptance, not only by the students, but also by colleagues, so that I could gain research access. But what does it mean for research to sit lightly? Can we only research contexts in which we just slip in and know in advance that we will contribute? Surely a number of courses within different disciplines would be interesting as testing grounds for the method in order to develop it, even if it is impossible to know how lightly the research would sit. Critical thinking is vital in these times, and much more research about creative writing in a sociocritical paradigm is needed to develop more educational and instructional approaches. What would the learning *outcomes* be if creative writing for critical thinking was tested in contexts quite different from academic writing courses? This remains to be researched.

Notes

1. Engeström (1987: 8, chap. 3) discusses the differences in position between these standpoints based on Schön: "Problems do not present themselves to the practitioner as givens. They must be constructed from the materials of problematic situations which are puzzling, troubling, and uncertain" ([Schön 1983: 40] discussed in ibid.). "If the subject is given, the subject

asks: 'What is the meaning and sense of this problem in the first place? Why should I try to solve it? How did it emerge? Who designed it, for what purpose and for whose benefit?'"

2. Figure 4.3 shows that Ivanič only uses the upper part of the triangle in her account of learning through writing. My analysis shows that the picture becomes more complex when the lower part of the triangle is added but that learning and doing can be described in the same integrated and contextualized way as in the figure.

3. This has also been pointed out by Ivanič (2006) in her analysis and discussion of *subject*.

4. As opposed to "coherent, and systematically principled" structured vertical discourse (ibid).

5. Material reality is construed in an extended sense, encompassing computer technology, which after all is based on materiality, such as electricity and machines, placed somewhere geographically, traceable on a map, and possible to access for people in space and time, by virtual or material means of transportation.

6. The French professor of Nordic literature and Scandinavian languages Sylvain Briens describes a "terrain de discours" in connection to analysis of Nordic literature and links between such literature and geographical locations. https://prezi.com/rk_03s4to6vo/percees-mondiales-de-la-litterature-nordique/.fr. See Sylvain Briens (2010), *Paris: laboratoire de la littérature scandinave moderne, 1880–1905* (Paris: Harmattan). The metaphor of "terrain de discours" is well in line with what can be acquired with activity theory as a tool to mapping learning in a certain kind of discoursal terrain.

7. At an individual level, however, such explanations become very problematic. For example, students may very well take a course in creative writing for pleasure or to develop a personal, literary voice and be uninterested in other learning objects, such as theory. Their object may very well be to explore the specific case of themselves, at a particular point in time.

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10

Creative Writing for Critical Metareflection: Some Educational Implications

This chapter addresses some basic ideas about teaching creative writing for critical thinking. It starts out by discussing what a situated view on learning implies and then points out some consequences of critical learning objectives in practical teaching. One result of the research presented in this book points to the fact that writers try out the identities they wish to ascribe to themselves and leave out those that they are uninterested in (See Ivanič 1998, 2006), which may result in poor learning outcomes. In sects. 10.3–10.4, insights into such key factors are discussed in the light of constructing syllabuses and assignments in creative writing that aim at enhancing critical thinking. A few ideas for educational designs of assignments are also presented and summed up in 10.5.

A traditional view on learning tends to take for granted the transferability of acquired skills across different activity systems. Such paradigms assume that what students learn in one context, within or outside of academia, will be readily accessible and applicable in new contexts. However, the results presented in this book show that the assumptions about transferability of knowledge and skills (*and* methods) must be subject to further research, in particular concerning links between transferability and identification processes.

A constructivist view (Biggs and Tang 2011; Ivanič 2006) holds that learning is context specific, and a rhetorical view adds that it is negotiated within that context. The learners learn and construct knowledge through identification processes and by imitating specific individuals, specific groups, or specific texts that they come across in particular social situations and that they are interested in interacting with. Any learning *outcome* in an academic context is thus firmly rooted in an (academic) activity system, where there will be *rules* stipulating requirements and regulating organizational *objects*. It is in negotiation with such rules and learners' personal *motives* that learning takes place. Thus, an important conclusion to draw from the case studies presented in this research is that critical thinking is a situated literacy, formed by and dependent on context-specific circumstances and also linked to individual *motives*. It should not be taken for granted that such literacy is automatically generalizable and possible to transfer for application in other contexts. For example, when the word "critical" is interpreted as synonymous with having a negative opinion about something (which is, of course, a sensible understanding of the word outside of an academic course), it is a sign of affiliation to discoursal identities that are not academic. It is also a sign of transferability of learning retrieved from systems outside of the academy that are not viable within it and will have to be changed to function to meet academic requirements. As mentioned earlier, the *outcomes* of the writing assignment in this research may very well reflect the fact that some students in the data sample encountered reflective writing earlier in their writing careers, perhaps in their A-level writing in upper secondary school or in other university courses. Certain characteristics in the critical reflections that I have defined as exploratory are in fact signs of mastering a certain type of academic literacy that I implicitly requested. Texts that show us such characteristics represent evidence of transferability of literacy between different academic courses that function well when it comes to writing critical reflections. These signs may also be construed as evidence of the formation of the discoursal identity of academic writer. Transferability of knowledge and skills might thus be understood as a learning trajectory involving formation of discoursal identities *over time*. Students may very well have learnt about critical analysis from other activity systems outside of academia. However, the knowledge is not nec-

essarily appropriated in terms of a new way of *being* to be transferable and put to use within the academic activity system.

Adult students who enrol in creative writing courses or teacher trainee programmes have *objects* and *motives* that strongly motivate and affect what they do and what they learn. Their discoursal identities are forged by what they know now and are shaped by ideas of who they *were* as writers in the past. For these reasons, working with critical metareflection in a course in creative writing is viewed differently by different students. For example, many of them are sceptical of learning *objects* that aim at critical metareflection, because they consider such *objects* a breach of the *rules* that they associate with creative writing and have come to know from their previous experience of writing. In other words, some areas of conflict concern prioritized text types. To many students in creative writing, it is very important to acquire knowledge about the narrative text type and readers' evaluative responses to their own narratives. However, in a sociocritical writing paradigm, critical reflections are just as important as narrative texts, and the type of response that these students request is not a priority—in fact, it even is considered undesirable, since evaluations of (narrative) texts originate in ideological ideals. Among the trainees, however, the reactions to the text types are different. As they express envisioned futures as teachers, not authors, their *motives* are linked to discourses associated with sound judgement and critical metareflection, not to the production of literary form and content, as the case is with the creative writing students. However, the follow-up is smaller than the case study. At this stage, it is hard to say how creative writing for critical metareflection will play out in different course contexts, and it is certainly an interesting field for further research.

10.1 Sketching a Method

The following discussion is based on the results from the two studies presented earlier. Here I sketch out a few thoughts about teaching and learning based on creative writing for critical thinking.

Even if students are subject to the *motives* and *objects* of others, they are also *subjects* in their own right, with agency to act and to influence the social

environment (Ivanič 2006, 2010). These aspects need to be taken into account when designing syllabuses and assignments for creative writing in courses with a critical aim, in a constructivist paradigm such as the ones discussed here. Possibilities for learning through writing depend on how students identify themselves as learners of an academic subject in a particular environment, in this case, who they become while writing to learn critical thinking. It seems that such identification processes change over time with increased knowledge. While learning, writers forge boundary *objects* between the academic system that they are currently in and the imagined futures of different systems they envision for themselves. These figured futures impact on what students learn through writing at a present moment in time. (See Burgess and Ivanič 2010 about time scales.) One such boundary work *object* can be to stage a certain discoursal identity on a course—expert, for example. That way a link is created between the now of the course context and the imagined future of working as a professional writer or teacher in another activity system. However, such strong expressions of the need for a vocational identity seem relevant only at a certain stage in the appropriation process. Rebuilding the university to make it resemble a publishing house where creative writing students could enact working as professional authors, for example, would perhaps work well for some students and for a time. However, the prototypical discoursal identities (described in Chaps. 6 and 8) represent a learning trajectory. In the exploratory position and in the *trainee as teacher and creative-writer* position in the follow-up, students do not primarily use social identity as boundary *object*; other *tools* have that function, such as knowledge about a subject. It makes sense to a *subject* in the exploratory position to accept a student discoursal identity and to focus the work *object* on exploratory learning. In the exploratory position, a whole range of *tools* can serve as boundary *objects*. It is impossible to know the exact nature of envisioned futures students may plan for, or the driving *motive* that makes them explore the subject matter. It may even be that they do not know this themselves. However, in the exploratory position, a researcher's way of approaching subjects is expressed, and that works well in an academic context where students are asked to do just that. It may be that it is the researcher's discoursal identity that we want to encourage in all our students, because research (and a researcher's exploratory discoursal identity) can serve as a boundary *object* between the academy and a great many other activity

systems where such identities and mastering of *tools* are required. Defining research *objects* and helping to open up a variety of possible futures might be a major focus of negotiation between students and lecturers, and the lecturers may contribute with their interpretation of what it means, in terms of discoursal identity, for a student to be a researcher of a particular subject. The challenge to a lecturer would be to create common boundary *objects* between the academic course and imagined futures, permitting students to envision that the exploratory position as a writing student makes sense to them in their current lives. Interesting research about students as researchers has been done by a great number of researchers, for example, the British educational researcher Mick Healey. (See Healey 2014 for an overview.) In the Netherlands, experimental new educational writing research in contextualized settings has been carried out by educational writing researchers such as Gert Riljaarsdam. (See Graham and Riljaarsdam 2016 for a brief overview of writing education internationally.) Creative writing for critical metareflection in a sociocritical paradigm opens up new ways for students to engage in exploratory writing with an aim to enhance their academic, critical literacy. Much of what is expressed in prototype theory by Eleanor Rosch (1973) in the 1970s or by the Swedish educational and writing researcher Gunilla Molloy (2001) point in this direction, as does, of course, rhetorical theory originating in Aristotle's writings about the function of the specific example, authentic or fictitious, as means of persuasion. Traits observable in the narrative text type are in fact ubiquitous in language (Linell 2009, 2011), so learning about such traits would enhance critical, academic literacy.

10.2 Text Types for Creative Writing and Critical Metareflection

The "socio" in "sociocritical" stands for social factors linked to writing. Some of these factors refer to social patterns and perspectives that can be analysed in the texts we write. In a sociocritical creative writing discourse, style and content become tools in a working method that aims to develop awareness of the link between language and cultural expression in narrative texts and awareness of style and of personal preferences in choices of style, text types, topics, and perspectives. (See Davies 2015 on creativity

in critical thinking and criticality. See also, e.g., different approaches in critical discourse analyses: Fairclough 1992; Kumashiro 2002, 2015; Lykke 2010; Mills 2011; Wodak and Chilton 2005 to name a few perspectives that can be linked to creative writing assignments. Also see Nussbaum for *Socratic*, critical reading [Nussbaum 1997, 2001].)

The "socio" also stands for the choice of work method in a course, or part of a course, which means an emphasis on social perspectives on text and writing. (See Brookfield 2012 for suggestions about seminar settings.) This is not to say that all the learning activities need to be organized as group activities. It is important to allow writers to work individually in order to establish a perspective before opening up for perspective change, as students move between text discussions in different groups settings (on- and offline) and writing. This also addresses the "critical" in "sociocritical." It is through the pendulum shift between specific (my specific narrative) and the general frames of *community* (all our narratives, narratives in various cultures, etc.) that students can forge *tools* for critical exploration of language in texts and explore boundaries between the individual and the social/cultural ideas and ideals and the impact these factors have on them and on others. In other words, a basic assumption that underlies critical metareflection is perspective change, which is a prerequisite in any pedagogical design aiming at critical thinking.

10.3   Writing and Reading for Critical Thinking

Two modes of thinking are brought to the fore by Nussbaum (1997, 2001): critical metareflection that includes emotion and narrative imagination on one hand and critical metareflection that encompasses inductive reasoning on the other (cf. Elbow's [1994a] discussion about two orders of thinking). The thinking modes call for different text types. In this research, short story writing based on eliciting premises served the aim of using creative writing for critical metareflection. The text type opens up for the narrative imagination, and the writing process allows the writers to engage emotionally. In addition, most students are familiar

with short story writing and seem to feel that such texts are relatively unproblematic to produce.

Choosing an eliciting dilemma is a matter of meticulous concern. Some students in the creative writing group remarked about the dilemma presented to them as fictitious and unauthentic and difficult to relate to. Such remarks have been interpreted as related to the writer's identification processes and to the fact that for some students, "authenticity" means familiarity and recognition as a prerequisite for engagement. One way of creating such authenticity might be by situating writing assignments in very local contexts and in dilemmas created by the students. For example, in one creative writing course that I gave, students were asked to go out on a bus tour in small groups to observe passengers. They were asked to select a passenger and to observe the passenger for 30 seconds. In a second step, the students were asked to write a short story in which the passenger is the main character who has to solve a dilemma that the student thinks is an urgent one. I also asked them to formulate the questions for critical reflection. In the discussion that followed, it turned out that they often created different settings for the dilemmas, but the dilemmas boiled down to critical questions similar to the ones they formulated about the single parent. Their main concerns, however, were less about the dilemma of the characters in the narratives they had created and more about reflexivity as observer of people on a bus. One critical question they formulated was: On what grounds do we view and fantasize about others the way we do? Research questions about social roles and intersections related to power, gender, and ethnicity, and others can be added readily when working with this type of assignment. For critical metareflection purposes, the narrative text type provides resources to create any number of dilemmas involving social roles, gender, ethnicity, and others for critical analysis.

The analytical steps of a writing assignment involve reading, and here Nussbaum (1997, 2001) is a source of input for ideas and examples. However, quite a few other suggestions for working with critical metareflection align well with what has been said about the expressive sociocritical writing discourse way of approaching writing, and here I address one or two. The American professor and activist Kevin Kumashiro (2002, 2015) suggests different critical reading techniques as a pedagogical strategy for critical

metareflection. Kumashiro (2002: 56ff.) discusses "queer" reading strategies as part of what he refers to as "anti-oppressive pedagogy." The strategies aim to deconstruct social categories by opening up texts for alternative interpretations. In all the academic disciplines, he argues, we want to "look beyond what is being learnt and already known" (60), and he warns against a strict focus on differences, because

> […] any given text will reflect the realities of some people, but miss those of others; will represent the voices of some groups but silence those of others and as a result will challenge some stereotypes while reinforcing others. […] (61)

Kumashiro thus sees a risk in "adding differences" (55f.) because the differences themselves become normative, whereas in fact they are always intersected with a multitude of perspectives and factors. In regard to the example of the bus ride observation assignment, questions that would perhaps generate much deeper and more challenging critical thinking are those that were never asked and observations that never were made. In order to understand the complexity of social categorization and mechanisms of othering, Kumashiro suggests that we should set out to find what is not explicitly expressed in a story, since "the unsaid, is what gives the said its meaning," (2002: 61) referring to the fact that hegemonic discourses hide what constitutes the hegemony—for example, that "whiteness" is not mentioned but taken for granted until explicitly pointed at (61f.). He suggests a reading strategy where "students can learn to read for silences and the effect of those silences on the "meaning" [quotation in original] of a text" (62). I suggest that Kumshiro's reading strategies can be applied to students' own texts, by asking them to deconstruct their own constructions. For example, students can read about "the other" in their own texts to see how they have constructed their perspectives in certain ways and then choose to construct the world in writing in other ways. We can thus ask these questions in regard to our own narratives (as well as to observations we make in our encounters with other people, of course). In addition, we can ask critical questions about what and who we do *not* observe in our local environment and on what grounds we fail to notice them and fail to write about them, or frame them in specific ways in our narratives (and, of course, observe similarities elsewhere, such as social media). Kumashiro particularly

refers to researchers who suggest reading "the collection of voices" as a strategy, since "an assembly of voices indirectly tells us an underlying story, one that will always exceed what the individual voices say explicitly" (58). For example, when researching the students' narrative texts about the moral dilemma, I found that they often focus themes and settings that are familiar to the writers. Many of the narratives try to solve dilemmas pertaining to desired life goals, such as landing a top career by abandoning the child. There is a tendency in the narratives to "other" characters who abandon the child by situating the dilemma in a foreign country, or in a very unusual situation (such as persuing a career as a Mars spaceship astronaut). Such narrative strategies frame the abandonment of a child to an exceptional situation, and one that cannot happen in the students' backyard, as it were. This is a conclusion that is expressed in quite a few of the texts in the data, as a result of taking part of narratives written by themselves and by peers. Patterns and perspectives become visible through inductive reading (and writing). Such analyses may result in seminar discussions and new assignments where students are asked to change social categorizations in narratives for exploratory purposes to see what can be understood, or not, through different categorizations.

Kumashiro also suggests that students explore their reading preferences and norms. What is *good*? is a question that can be applied to texts in order to explore partiality by "trying to read against common sense" (2002: 62f.; see Rosenblatt 2005 on efferent reading), for "learning and unlearning" (Kumashiro 2002: 63) about the ways that we have been taught to understand quality in texts. These are strategies that will cause reactions. Kumashiro even speaks of a "pedagogy of crisis," (2002: 62ff., 2015: 29ff.) pointing at the fact that no change will come about "without addressing the ways students and society resist change" (2002: 62) but also that it will be necessary to create spaces to "work through crisis" (63) when change happens. In other words, there needs to be an understanding of the fact that critical metareflection as a pedagogy for *change* will engage and even upset. (See Kalonaityté 2014; Kumashiro 2015.)

Vygotsky (1995, 1978) also emphasizes emotional engagement as a key factor in learning. Such engagement is prevalent in creative writing groups, as it is the students themselves who are the "authors." It is their

own narratives (short stories) that are used for their text discussions, in combination with readings of literature and of theoretical texts about the subject matter under study. There is special value in the fact that texts such as short stories are seen by the students as contributions to the "big culture" (Bruner 2002). In this way the texts are also of emotional significance to their producers, and thus they also are pedagogically important, as *tools* for learning. The results in the case studies indicate that emotion is important, but there are variations in the degree of importance, depending on the students' personal *motives*. (See the profiles in Chap. 6.) Some are emotionally engaged in the dilemma, some in the writing process or in discovering new perspectives on a subject, such as language. Many students take an interest in personal development and use the assignments to explore their emotions and opinions through the writing process.

Creative writing assignments are likely to be more effective for critical metareflection purposes if they include individual work steps, mixed with social activities for perspective change through comparison with other peer writing. If such assignments are accompanied by theoretical perspectives, depending on what particular theoretical focus is desirable, they should have the *potential* to serve as *tools* for critical metareflection. However, as has been explained in the process-oriented position and in the teacher trainee study, any lecturer who embarks on trying out creative writing methods in this way must keep in mind that emotional engagement can be very strong and may even create loopholes where writers get stuck in emotion and learning ceases to expand. It is the constant swing between emotion and cognition that seems to be the hallmark of critical thinking processes. (See Billig 1996 on the pendulum structure of thought processes.) When the writer becomes aware of internal processes and reactions, and manages to control them, she can use emotions as *tools* for analysis and critical thinking. Therefore, it seems that a method that allows for emotional engagement also needs to provide ways to channel and structure the engagement, if it is to serve as a *tool* for critical thinking. Otherwise, there is a risk that such assignments may have positive effects on engagement but not necessarily on critical metareflection. Further studies are needed to scientifically investigate learning *outcomes* from creative writing assignment designs, such as, for example, engaging dilem-

mas, role play (walking in the shoes of another person), and different types of situated methods, such as field studies. For all these reasons, courses that engage need to be designed carefully.

10.4 Deconstructing Vocabulary for Critical Metareflection

When students are included as producers, not only consumers, of texts, the pedagogical possibilities expand, as it becomes possible to use a variety of text types. Assignments aiming at developing a sense of literary style, for example, can be linked to critical learning objectives, particularly because they align well with many students' personal *motives* for taking a course in creative writing, in view of a future professional career. Teacher trainees too might find this type of assignment in line with their *motives* to teach critical language awareness to pupils in school.

Liv, in example (101c), offers an interesting example of working with critical metareflection at the vocabulary level, as she deconstructs the Swedish word for "single parent" in her critical reflection, thereby revealing associations to social inferiority linked to that word. Her approach is a reminder of theories found among French deconstructivists, such as Jacques Derrida, and poststructuralist linguist Roland Barthes. Numerous examples may be used as templates for the construction of "exercises de style" (Queneau 2013) within the surrealist tradition, as within the French *oulipo* writing movement with writers such as George Perec, for example (and innumerable contemporary works). Assignments for deconstructivist writing and reading based on these traditions may serve as *tools* to enhance critical language awareness (cf. also systemic functional grammar for linguistic structure with semantic meaning). Assignments aimed at developing literary style *and* critical thinking may thus be constructed so that style also serves analytical and critical purposes, in the way that Liv in (6.3, examples 77–79) exemplifies. This type of work may expand into spoken word festivals or different internet productions if one wants to emphasize their contributive values as parts of the "big culture."

10.4.1 Essays for Critical Metareflection

The writing methods used are based on Elbow's (see Chap. 2) theories about freewriting but with a clear focus on working with perspective change and language prototypes to generate possibilities for critical metareflection. The narrative text and the critical reflection text provide space to move between the writing modes of emotional engagement and inductive reasoning. However, the results indicate that writers in a basic course in creative writing or at the beginning of a teacher training programme do not automatically interpret the term "critical" in the academic, analytical sense. Critical thinking is a technical term, interpreted in accordance with the writer's autobiographical writing experience. As discussed earlier, students have suggested that critical reflections are reviews, thought protocols, confessions, letters of praise or of complaint, and personal, academic essays about writing or some other topic (family/public life in this case). In other words, the concept of analytically based critical reflection is academically advanced, and not a very democratic or socially inclusive text type, unless accompanied by explicit instruction about genre requirements and by possibilities for students to practise.[1] In view of the various interpretations of what is intended by a critical reflection text, likely it would help many students to provide them with structures for writing (cf. the Australian school of genre pedagogy). However, although there are generic social functions mirrored in the academic genres, they are, basically, strictly context-dependent. Expectations about academic texts follow academic traditions within specific subject domains and communicative purposes. (See Applebee 1996 about discourses and education. See also in Dias et al. 1999 for a discussion about the explicit teaching of textual features.) In fact, the development of reflective writing genres and methods has been an ongoing undertaking since antiquity in Western higher education. Manuals preserved from ancient Rome present meticulously structured exercises such as the *kria* and the *paraphrasis*. Methods such as the *dissoi-logoi* (written by an anonymous ancient rhetorician), where students presented arguments for a certain topic that they then refute by presenting counterarguments, served to foster skilled rhetors, not critical thinkers, but the methods

certainly still function as *tools* for generating perspective change. Some of them can be used in essay writing.

In addition, academic text types and genres in themselves mirror and construct ideologies. Genres reiterate values and beliefs when they are taught and practised by students (Hyland 2002; see also Lykke 2010). They offer privileged discoursal identities that will "provide writers with the means to display their credentials as disciplinary insiders and to persuade readers of their claims" (Hyland 2002: 219.) Deconstructing academic genres thus may be yet another *tool* for creative writers to access a deeper understanding of the relationships between genres and claims of social authority, as Hyland, for example, suggests. In what follows I give a brief account of a method for essay writing, developed over time in the creative writing course on which the case study in this project is based and used (differently by different lecturers) during the final five-week course module. It illustrates one of a number of approaches to creative writing for exploratory purposes. The essay is a text type that makes room for the discoursal identity of a reflective researcher of a certain subject (See Chaps. 6, 7, and 8): The writers are offered *tools* and work *objects* to facilitate a researcher's *motive* and work *object* to write an academic text. In many cases students end up with some really interesting texts and new exploratory questions. As mentioned earlier, the method is based on Elbow's *freewriting* techniques (presented in Chap. 2) working with writing, peer reviewing, and revising. The students are informed that they will explore a traditional, rhetorical genre, still used in academia and elsewhere. They then embark on writing about a subject of their own choice, be it family, flies, or football. (Later on, students write an essay on a given subject where they are required to use texts from the reading list.) Leaning on the advice of sixteenth-century essay maestro Michel de Montaigne (and on Elbow's), students are encouraged to write as much as possible about their subject and to study sources of information about it as they come upon questions that they want to find out more about. Formative feedback is provided during the five-week writing process by peers and by the lecturer in small-group "tutorials." Also in discussions at seminars during this part of the course, differences between social functions of text types are studied, such as differences between a private diary to

express a personal opinion and an academic essay to find out new knowledge by standing on the shoulders of the giants in order to expand one's knowledge about a subject.

In the revising stage, students are encouraged to be aware of the differences between personal opinions in their texts and arguments based on scientific evidence. They are asked to help each other categorize the supporting evidence of their arguments as personal opinion ("this is good because I say so") and degree of authority ("this is good because mum/my friends/research report such and such/says so"). A frequent discovery at this stage is that the writers have failed to evaluate the reliability of their sources. This is often a point in the learning process where requirements regarding text types and expectations of writers are negotiated during the seminar. I have found it to be important to take part in such discussions, to observe ongoing learning in order to plan steps forward.

As the course proceeds, more specific information and advice is provided about the requirements for arrangement of the text. Three perspectives to think about in personal essay writing are presented. They go back to the duties of the rhetor (Cicero, *De Oratore* Book II), which were to please an audience, *delectare*; to teach the audience about the subject matter, *docere*; and, last, to move the audience emotionally, *movere*. Applied to the duties of a writer, the perspectives would be to express a character in the text, *ethos*; to expose and explain the subject matter, *logos*; and, finally, to appeal to emotion, *pathos*, through the text.

The Writer as a Character in the Text, *Ethos*

At this stage, students are asked to think about language as style. It is assumed that the reader wants to hear the writer's voice (*delectare*). This is expressed through the choice of formality of style in the language used, through choice of vocabulary and sentence construction, for example, but also through choice of content and graphic design. However, in an essay, it is assumed that the reader also wants to hear the conversation that the writer engages in with other writers. The essay writer invites the reader to the conversation by quoting other writers

and then by responding in the text to those quotations. The students are told that the sound of an essay is the sound of a social gathering with many participants discussing the same subject. In addition, the students study a few essays to get familiar with the genre.

The Subject Matter, *Logos*

Here students are asked to think about the subject matter of the text. It is assumed that the reader wants to learn (*docere*) something from the text so the writer should tell or teach new knowledge to the reader. The subject should be presented in such a way that the reader can understand it. The students are informed about rhetorical structures—for example, deductive and inductive reasoning—and about how to structure reasoning by analogy, by sign, or by cause and effect. Students are also told that rhetorical figures may help understanding—for example, by antithesis, comparison, contradiction, and example. They are referred to reading lists about the rhetorical canons and rhetorical tropes, such as metaphors and metonymy (e.g., Hellspong 2011).

The Emotional Appeal, *Pathos*

Here students are asked to think about the emotional content of the text. It is assumed that readers want to feel something (*movere*) when they read. Emotional appeal in the text can sometimes be expressed through the subject in itself as well as through stylistic choices and through presentations of emotional content/arguments.

Students are informed about the lack of boundaries among the three arguments, *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*, and that a vague guideline for structuring and arranging the text is to create *ethos* for trust initially and emotional appeal towards the end.

Writing an essay in steps, as just presented, can generate a deeper understanding among many students of the differences between personal opinion and structured argumentation in a personal, reflection text. It may also provide a way for them to understand what is meant by a

research question as opposed to the everyday meaning of the word "question." Through the suggested structure, students are provided an approach to academic writing in the exploratory position and provided with *tools* to expand their learning about academic writing. However, asking students to produce certain text types—free essays, for example—automatically also implies asking them to *be*, to perform a certain discoursal identity through the identification process that writing a certain text type will generate. Perhaps this is not the first thing a lecturer would inform students about as they begin the writing process. Rather the lecturer might suggest it as a question to analyse critically afterwards, by including critical discourse analysis and feminist and postcolonial theory on the reading list, and in discussions about text types, power, inclusion and exclusion produced through writing.

10.5   Concluding Remarks

Based on results of the case studies presented in this book, I have shown that working systematically with *object*-driven social interaction and specially designed writing assignments and seminars may provide a starting point for a method for sociocritical creative writing for critical thinking. The approach presupposes a situated view of learning. Such a stance puts focus on the social actions within the academic activity system of a "course in creative writing" or a "course in academic writing in a teacher's training program." Critical thinking is defined as a critical literacy where students show evidence of a trained sense of critical language awareness in regard to linguistic prototypicalizations as carriers of cultural values and beliefs. As pointed out in Chap. 3, a prerequisite for critical thinking is the metaperspective. We need the ability to see that it is possible to "see what you see" in a different way, and, to that end, we depend on the narrative imagination. Another assumption is that perspectives form an implicit part of any utterance (Linell 2002) and have to be pointed out and conceptualized in words in order for writers to see them. This is also true for hegemonic discourses. Creative writing as a method for critical thinking needs to be designed in accordance with these assumptions. It

also must allow for writers to work with establishing perspectives and then to change them. A step-by-step construction of writing assignments, allowing for time to pass between the steps, will probably enhance the likelihood that perspective change and critical thinking will occur. As to the writing assignments, their content, structure, and sequence need careful attention to make room for emotional as well as for cognitive processes.

This book has presented some implications of working with the narrative text type for creative writing as a socio-critical method. The analyses have clarified discoursal identities that writers express when writing these texts and what learning their writing generates when different discoursal identities are expressed. The results show that creative writing as a method for critical thinking can serve as a tool for learning about linguistic prototypicalizations in narrative texts. Creative writing opens up a number of possibilities for critical analysis, which in turn may facilitate ideological, critical analysis by pointing at "orders of discourse" (Fairclough 1992) in different ways in different texts (including academic genres).[2] Focus on theory and analysis works particularly well for students whose discoursal identities orient towards research, such as academic work, where exploratory writing is in focus. In the exploratory writing positions, students take an interest in engaging emotionally in the narrative imagination as well as in theoretical questions that the assignments give rise to. In the exploratory position (presented in 6.3 and 8.6.3), the *subject* tends to explore their own writing in a wider, societal context, similar to a researcher's stance. Based on that particular position, in a sociocritical approach to creative writing, it would be useful to make room for

- identification and identity processes,
- perspective change and perspective transformation by systematic use of time and timing,
- shifting between working individually and working with others for social interplay between students to promote perspective change,
- shifting perspectives between different fantasy worlds by taking part of many different narratives based on a common starting point (such as the premises of a dilemma),

- shifting between personal engagement and emotion to cognitive processes by moving from the specific example to general conclusions and vice versa,
- studying style and content in literary texts, and
- reading and discussing theories about ideological implications of style and content.

As indicated by the results presented in the book, students' perceptions about possibilities for selfhood impact their *motives* and what *tools* they will be inclined to use and, also, how they use those *tools* and what the learning *outcomes* will be. In the case study and the follow-up with the teacher trainees, I found a variety of learning *outcomes*, but if I were to read all the texts as written by one writer, the outcomes of the assignment might be summed up as potentials for expansion in terms of learning

- to reflect about narrative texts in writing, and to talk about them and to give feedback to those who wrote them,
- about one's personal perspective by walking in someone else's shoes through narrative imagination,
- about impacts from culture on one's personal perspectives,
- about differences between personal opinion and evidence-based argumentation (the specific example/inductive reasoning),
- about the scientific method through analysis of data,
- about one's personal learning profile, motives, and preferred work objects and learning to think critically about them, and
- to think critically about language—language prototypes, text types, power, and discourse; in other words, acquiring critical literacy.

The academy is a writing organization, where all of its *subjects* are expected to engage in writing. The case study and the follow-up with the trainees both point to the fact that education where writing is involved needs to take into account the students' autobiographical writing selves. However, the notion of discoursal identity is complex. Therefore, appropriation processes linked to identification trajectories in writing contexts within and outside of creative writing courses are areas of concern since

academic performance to a large extent depends on the development of academic literacy amongst the students.

However, activity theory stipulates that any change, anywhere within the activity system, will affect everything else in the system. The activity system of a university is a sluggish structure in many ways, all the way down to the course level. Anyone who is set on implementing change may need to keep in mind that such undertakings, even relatively small ones, are likely to cause contradictions of different kinds. The greater the change, the more the effects will be, of course, since changes call for collective involvement and investment of subjects' time and engagement. Behind *tools* such as course syllabuses and reading lists lie not only epistemological ideas and ideals, but also huge investments of lecturers' time and engagement. Even minute changes in a syllabus, for example, may generate huge effects for the individual lecturer in terms of workload. In addition, there will be practical matters to consider, such as time schedules that do not synchronize. This complexity may be one reason for resistance to change within systems. However, it is not something that I have looked into in this research, although aspects of implementing change of writing practices need to be taken into account when planning for change, and also subject to further research.

In historical overviews of teaching and learning traditions in academic writing (e.g., Blåsjö 2010; Ivanič 2004), ideological roots emerge that relate to societal demands for capable and competent citizens. Such social qualities, however, have been defined very differently during different periods. Similarly, research overviews of critical thinking show that connotations of the concept change with time. (See, e.g., Brodin 2007; Toulmin 1992; Walters 1994). Therefore, we need to think carefully about what we really mean when we say that students need to practise critical thinking. What exactly is it that needs practice, and why, one may ask, and what types of critical thinking do we aim for on courses in higher education? Many university lecturers have not yet answered the type of questions that came in the aftermath of the Bologna process where objectives such as employability are enscribed as educational goals in university curricula all over Europe. How do we work as researchers and lecturers within a paradigm such as critical pedagogy and criticality (Davies 2015) in university education, given the fact that many

universities nowadays are driven by new public management ideals (Ledin and Machin 2016)?

Is it time to reconsider the raison d'être for liberal educational and the compatibility of such paradigms with employability? Education in critical thinking is basically a sociopolitical concern with ideological roots and with vague contours in need of careful analysis.

In a discussion about assessment, the Norwegian writing researcher Olga Dysthe (2008: 27) sums up a few issues that occur when educational paradigms change. She raises a cautionary hand and points at the naive claim expressed in many goal-oriented paradigms that states that educational quality can and should be measured in figures, graphs, and anticipated goals. A much wiser approach to such claims in the long run, she says, would be to remain critical and to remind educators that demands for measurability within the educational field are always driven by political agendas. Dysthe also warns about a return to an older, much shallower view of writing education, one focused on correct language use and driven by a result-oriented, skills writing discourse. Unfortunately, in many places, a skills view of writing education has replaced teaching and learning about academic writing based on deep, sociopolitical, textual understanding. Instead of aiming at learning objects such as in-depth understanding of writing and textual functions and improved teaching methods, the measurement-oriented paradigm has resulted in a deterioration of writing education to such a degree that many pedagogical achievements have been destroyed. The goal-oriented paradigm has had a substantial influence on assessment policies and led to changes in how students are examined and assessed. As a consequence, teachers during the 1980s focused on students' abilities to write well in many different genres, by providing them with deep, general knowledge about texts and writing. Thirty years later, teachers educate their students in isolated writing skills and grammar (26). It is inevitable, according to Dysthe, that discussions about theories of teaching and learning end up in questions about ontology, "what it means for somebody to be," and not only in epistemological issues (21). The formation of social identities must also be a central point in question as our understanding of learning in different paradigms develops. A sociocultural view of learning implies that students become agents, that is to say, subjects, not "objects of assessment" (ibid.). Instead, Dysthe

argues that we should consider that learning within a sociocultural paradigm means that students are not only monitored and assessed according to fixed standards but that they are also co-creators and designers of their education. This should be true for the development of assignments as well as for assessment methods, if writing instruction is to generate learning. In this discussion, Dysthe's (21f.) topic is assessment: individuals assess themselves based on of how others assess them. To this statement, Ivanič adds that the bottom line of what is at stake is identity, which, when we speak of texts, is evaluated and assessed at "the moment of uptake" (Ivanič 2006: 7): That is the moment when the readers decide, not only about the quality of your writing, but about the right to be who you want to be in and through your text, and the right to think the way you want to think, critically or not. This is what is being negotiated in the process of learning. What it means to *be* through writing is an interesting question for further research within the field.

Notes

1. Cf. Catarina Nyström (2000: 231ff.) , who writes about A-level students and their writing in typical "school" genres. The text types that Nyström describes are expository texts, such as reports and book reviews. Such texts may have influenced the way students in the case study perceived the text type critical reflection, as a "school genre," similar to those they faced during their A-level writing assignments.

2. In this book, I have adhered to the general requirements for academic texts. As part of my own reflexivity, I note that the text thereby contributes to perpetuating certain power relations: "Whether writers decide to establish an equal or hierarchical affiliation, adopt an involved or remote stance, or choose a convivial or indifferent interpersonal tenor, they are at least partly influenced by the dominant ideologies of their disciplines which are exercised through the patterns of the genre they are participating in. These ideologies help establish cohesion and co-ordinate understanding through mutual expectations and so provide writers with the means to display their credentials as disciplinary insiders and to persuade readers of their claims. In so doing, however, they also sanction particular relationships of authority" (Hyland 2002: 219; see also, e.g., Lykke 2010).

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Index[1]

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refers to notes.