Beautiful Wastelands:

Teachers Talk Texts in ‘Bog Standard’ Schools

Kelly Maree Cheung

Department of Educational Studies
Faculty of Human Sciences

Macquarie University

This thesis is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Author Note

This research was made possible thanks to an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship through Macquarie University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has been a heart struggle, a dream, wish fulfilment, and the shock of reality over an intense sequence of years.

I wish to thank the English teachers whose experiences contributed to this study. Their trust, professionalism, and generosity in sharing their expertise is deeply valued.

I am truly grateful for the supervision, mentorship, and friendship of Dr. Kerry-Ann O'Sullivan. She has generously shared her knowledge of subject English in NSW and beyond, and gifted so much of her time to bring this thesis to completion. She has been a supervisor extraordinaire and it has been an utter privilege to share this experience with her. Thank you so much, K-A xo

I would also like to thank the most intensely smart edu-women of Twitter who ensured that even though I sometimes felt a little lonely I never travelled the PhD journey alone.
Corinne Campbell, Dr. Amanda Heffernan, Dr. Naomi Barnes, Dr. Claire Golledge, Dr. Christine Grice, Dr. Rachel Buchanan, Dr. Bronwyn Hinz, Dr. Kelli McGraw, Alice Leung, Alice Elwell. Sisters in Solidarity, y'all.

A significant thank you to Dr. Anne McMaugh of the Department of Educational Studies, Macquarie University. She took a phone call, heard my story, and set me on the path that came to be. With gratitude, Anne xo

To Dr. Trudy Ambler, for her guidance into the folds of narrative inquiry.

To my Twitter PLN. You keep me sane and the fires hot.

Finally, my family. Undertaking a thesis is one of the most selfish acts a person can do. Even if and when the knowledge found is significant, the pursuit of it takes time away from those who love you. It robs them of moments they wished to share with you.
Donovan, Ava, and Neave. Thank you for these years. xo

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed) Date: 07/08/2019

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 1

Statement of Originality 2

Abstract 9

CHAPTER ONE: 11

Among the Gum Leaves 11

Welcome to Sydney, NSW, Australia 11

Justification for the study 12

The approach of this study 13

Context of this study 14

Schooling in NSW: The Competitive, The Cut-Throat, & The Culled 19

Global tremors 27

Organisation of this thesis 29

CHAPTER TWO: 30

Fields of Literature 30

Review of the Literature 30

Looking back to look forward 30

'Good' teachers, 'Good' students: Schooling at the turning of the Twentieth Century 31

Romantic tendencies 34

Emerging English 38

English in the Cold War 39

Dartmouth 1966 41

Critical Theorists & Educative Purposes: Origins 44

The New London Group 46

Transformational: The Twentieth Century turns English towards new beginnings 47

Critical Theory and Sociology: Allies or Kin? 49

'New' Times: Neoliberalism, "Common Sense", and Education in Jeopardy 52

Inclusive Schools, Local Worlds: Ideals and Realities 55

'Feeling your way': Teaching is feeling. Feeling is caring 58

English teachers, Identity work and the moral purpose of teaching 61

Subject English and English teachers in Australia 64

Epistemology of Subject English in NSW, Australia 64

The cultural history of subject English in NSW 67

Leavisites and Personal Growth Models of English in NSW, Australia 69

On English teachers and texts: Now 70

The (relative) privilege of English teachers in NSW 71

Fifth columnists and weak links 76

Speaking of experience... 79

Teachers as intellectual workers 80

Conclusion 84

CHAPTER THREE: 86

Ways of Becoming Story(fied) 86

Methodology 86

Qualitative Research 87

Narrative Inquiry 89

Epistemological framing 93

An Arendtian approach to Narrative Inquiry 96

Theorising liminal thresholds of narrative inquiry 102

Recruiting participants 106

The teacher participants and their schools 108

The Interviews 110

Changes within research design 113

Analysing Data 114

Themes and Vignettes 117

The Vignettes and Authorial Integrity 119

The Role of Metaphor 120

Data management 121

Ethical considerations 121

Anonymity 122

Space, place and personal protection 122

Ethics and Social Media Recruitment 122

Conclusion 123

CHAPTER FOUR: 124

Stuck in the Mud 124

Reporting Results 124

Context note 124

Texts, Teachers and the 'Bog Standard High School' 125

Little libraries and English Teacher 'Limnings' 128

Significance of Subject English to these teachers 137

Knowing students in English: stratification and streaming 139

Knowing students in English: who reads, who doesn't 142

English is reading and reading is English 145

The Unavoidable Spectre of Assessment 149

'Culture eats policy for breakfast' 155

Equity and Disadvantage 159

Conclusion 163

CHAPTER FIVE: 165

Beautiful Wastelands 165

Vignette Poetica 165

Teachers Talk Texts 169

Why Popular Culture Texts?.....169

Preparing for HSC English.....170

Presenting new understandings and ways of thinking about the world.....176

For the teachers' own pleasure and enjoyment within their work 182

For the teachers' own intellectual and professional satisfaction within their work 187

Insider/Outsiders 191

Outside insiders 192

How they see the world beyond school for their students.....195

How they see their students.....196

Workplace limitations and tunnel vision 198

Punitive potential of English 202

Bureaucratic tensions 202

Deeper Meanings: English Teachers' Values and Practice 209

'Open the World': Gatekeepers and Knight Seneschals.....211

Conclusion.....215

CHAPTER SIX: 217

Dark Times 217

Enduring 217

Implications of the Research 218

Recommendations for further research 225

Conclusion 225

Epilogue 227

References 228

Appendices 258

Appendix A 259

Ethics Approval 259

Appendix B 261

Semi-structured Interview Questions 261

Appendix C 263

Study Advertisement 263

Appendix D 264

Information and Consent Form 264

Abstract

'Wasteland':

A place where life struggles to flourish
A contaminated, unwanted, dangerous place
A place for adaptation and creativity in survival

A bog standard school is an ordinary school where the grass is always greener at the one next door. Australia has plenty of bog standard schools, many of them, but not always, public schools. Caro (2013) lifted the term out of the Australian vernacular, which in turn had appropriated it from the British (Crystal, 2005), to describe the ordinary if perhaps uninspiring local school which parents dismiss, and at times, outright reject, when weighing up where best to send their younglings (Butler, 2015). The problem for parents as much as for policy makers in Australia is that most schools, of course, are bog standard schools. They are ordinary in as much as school itself is an ordinary feature present in child and teenage life. However, within the ordinariness of bog standard schools are the extra-ordinary details of distinct human lives. From four schools and four English teachers come distinctive limning portraits of these wasteland schools in the Australian state of New South Wales.

This thesis analyses teacher text choices in Grades 9 and 10 English: the pivotal teenage years of identity, struggle, belonging and resistance. In exploring site-specific phenomena and through comparisons of experiences, decisions, and values, stories emerge of teacher identities and their perceptions of their students' coming-of-age within a racialised, unequal, class broken Greater Sydney (Sawyer, 2017). These crystalised stories, collected and analysed through an emergent theorisation of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Caine, Estefan & Clandinin, 2013) and Arendtian philosophy (1958), provide new insights into the ways micro and macro forces are attempting to shape and mould English teachers as neoliberalised agents of the State (Connell, 2013). As such, this work sits alongside those pieces of research coming from America (Apple, 1986/89; Apple, 2018) and the United Kingdom (Ball, 2003; Ball, 2015; Goodwyn, 2016) on English teacher work and identities amidst increasingly precarious times.

This research points to the beauty and preciousness of rich qualitative data (Biesta, 2007) that light previously unseen subjects, deliberately making visible stories from the borders of Sydney's educational landscapes (Solnit, 2005/2016; Ahmed, 2017). From these tales come stories of fierce pedagogy fighting back against racial, gendered, and class oppressions but also illuminated is a more worrying future: a perennial belief in the power of texts to transform lives seems on the point of fracture as the English teacher soul (Ball, 2003) wavers over the question: Whose lives, whose futures, do I serve?

Keywords: subject English, narrative inquiry, curriculum, text choices, popular culture

CHAPTER ONE:

Among the Gum Leaves

If...education means anything beyond the processing of human beings into expected roles...
it implies an ethical and intellectual contract between teacher and student.
(Adrienne Rich, 1979)

Welcome to Sydney, NSW, Australia

Sydney may be the capital city most recognised by visitors to Australia. The Opera House and Harbour Bridge sit positioned on their harbourside beds as twinsome icons to 20th century ingenuity. The Bridge is gunmetal grey. The House an opalescent pearl. Their architectural heritages recall a time in Australian history when great works held a place in pride, politics and the public purse. If one were to travel beyond the bridge and harbourside distractions and venture into the suburbs, walking or driving slowly enough to notice the places where asphalt runs in dusty exhaust-exhaled tributaries, one may eventually pass the local schools. Architecture will vary. There are some reminders of stately stonework of the late 1800s and early 1900s. More frequently seen will be variations of post-war constructions, now in a constant state of being ad-libbed with demountables, cardboard edifices with dubious heating and cooling properties that can be moved in and out as suburban demographics change. Occasionally there will be a glimpse of a new school but those are a rare breed in the public system. They are more often found within the folds of the systemic Catholic population or in the rapaciously over-developed elite Independent sector, bringing perhaps a glint of steel and crest amongst the gum leaves.

The specific purpose of this study is to investigate the question: "For what reasons do secondary English teachers select and use popular culture texts with Stage 5 English students?" The lens of this study is upon four English teachers in New South Wales, Australia, from very different comprehensive public high schools, teaching students in Years 9 and 10. Students within these years of schooling nestle within the rambunctious ages of roughly fourteen to sixteen years in NSW schools. This exploration into the teaching of English and teacher text choices requires a travelling away from the city centre and deeper into the suburbs of the Greater Sydney area. The schools

within this study are not the stately gabled schools designed by nineteenth century architect G. A. Mansfield nor are they the cozy sunlit heritage buildings of the early twentieth. They are the schools of expediency and urban development. The schools in this study have seen intergenerational local families pass through their doors but, for three in particular, waves of post-war migration to Australia have changed the demographic features of the students who pass within the gates.

Beyond the influence of post-war migration as a force for change, (the conceit perhaps) of an idealised nostalgia towards local school for local families, a number of Federal and State education policies have contributed to the 'local schools of last resort' phenomenon, the residualised school. As a number of Australian educational researchers have explored, education policies since the 1990s have increasingly damaged the brand and public trust in the local public school. Divisions of social class and religion have long been a thread in Australian schooling history (see Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, & Dowsett, 1982; Kyle, 1986; Maddox, 2014) but it was the deliberate policies of the 1990s that fully wedged the public school as an underfunded under-resourced sibling within the newly created education market. It is within these intersections that this study into English teachers' text choices for their Stage 5 students has emerged.

Justification for the study

Subject English is a mandatory subject for all students in New South Wales, Australia. The skills of reading, writing, spelling and grammar are tested biannually between the grades of Year 3 to Year 9 through the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). As such, the subject has a power and a presence within the educational sphere and the political realm. Student performance in English has consequences and students, parents, teachers, policymakers, bureaucrats, and politicians all know it. Although, what those consequences may be are contestable and debatable.

It is known that students of Indigenous heritage continue to underperform in national and state assessment measures within Australia but greatly contested are the reasons such underperformance persists despite repeated interventions (Sawyer, 1997; Shopen, 2009; Macqueen et al., 2019). It is recognised that the intersection of geography and economics have an impact on student

achievement in English and that those more proximal to circles of power continue to do better than those more remote, but again, the reasons are contested (Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1997, McGraw, 1997; Vinson, 2007; Vinson et al, 2015; Reid, J-A., 2017). We know doctors beget doctors and lawyers beget lawyers (Ruggera & Barone, 2017; Strømme & Hansen, 2017) and a school market begets residualised schools (Thomson, 2002) but ever argued, in Australia at least, is why this is so.

If subject English has consequences beyond the certification and credentialing of students in their final years of schooling how do teachers of the subject respond? What curriculum choices do they make and why is this so? Hearing from teachers themselves and narrativising their voices through a narrative inquiry methodology is a way of illuminating smaller portraiture, limnings, of education in English in praxis. Such illuminations may be vital for future understandings of why 'things are so' and explorations of 'how else could things be'.

The approach of this study

Participants, Places, Purposeful Sampling

This study identifies and explores secondary English teacher values and attitudes in regard to their text selections from the genre of popular culture with students in Years 9 and 10. A qualitative framework was deemed most appropriate in order to prompt considered reflection from participants and ascertain causal factors within their text selections for English classroom use. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four teachers of English from distinct and different areas of the Greater Sydney region. All of these teachers teach in the public school system of New South Wales and all of them hold significant school and professional responsibilities beyond their classroom roles. The participants were identified from purposive sampling after approaching all NSW public high schools in the Greater Sydney area through a letter writing campaign and from communicating the study on the digital platforms *Facebook* and *Twitter* through English teacher networks. The data gathering techniques also included reference to participants' blog posts on their personal webpages but not their interactions with others on social media sites.

Narrative Inquiry

The methodology of narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) was deemed most suitable for the project as this approach requires the formation of respectful and intimate relationships with participants in order to best give voice to their storied worlds. During the study, the influence of Hannah Arendt's (1958, 1978) writings on the role of the researcher/writer became so strong and conclusive that the researcher realised she was working within a fusion narrative inquiry methodology. As such, theorisation occurred in which the relationship between Connelly and Clandinin's narrative inquiry and Arendt's theories were mapped.

A new narrative inquiry approach has been developed for this study which pays homage to the two theoretical perspectives. It has been called Arendtian narrative inquiry as it draws upon Arendt's perspective that only the outside observer, the researcher, can make sense of what is put before her, and not the participants themselves. In this, Arendt turns away from the democratic leanings of Connelly and Clandinin who share the process of analysis and theorisation with studied participants. However, in all other aspects of the study, the methodological approach draws upon the Clandinin lens (strongly articulated in Clandinin & Murphy, 2009) which prioritises respectful and relational interactions in order to develop trust and intimacies between researcher and participant.

Context of this study

State Responsibilities and Creeping Federalism

This investigation into secondary English teachers' text selections draws upon a long history of research into the subject at state and national levels. This is because curriculum developments and schools were traditionally the domain of each of the Australian states. However, a creeping Federalism has occurred since the Labor Whitlam government of the 1970s responded to inequalities around the funding of Catholic schools within State boundaries. Over time, Federal funding for state-based education has frequently been tied to required actions, behaviours, and/or policy initiatives. As such, while the Australian states continue to oversee and fund public education and pay for public school teachers, the Australian Federal government has a greater influence upon education policies and practice than they once had. The domain of subject English has not been

exempt from this influence, and arguably, the disputed territories of text selections, curriculum content, and literacies, make English a prime target for political involvement.

Control and oversight of what has become the recognised English curriculum has been legislated via a series of Education Acts since the formation of public schooling in the colony of New South Wales in 1848. The NSW Board of Studies, (newly renamed NSW Education Standards Authority, NESA, make of that what you will), has had curriculum control of what is taught within schools since 1990. (Prior to its creation, the NSW Board of Secondary Education oversaw curriculum within the State.) However, the Authority has not had the power to circumscribe how material is taught. Arguably, the amalgamation of the former NSW Board of Studies and the recently dissolved NSW Institute of Teachers, into one super-authority, NESA, may contribute to a dissolution of these prior boundaries between what is taught and how it is taught.

The History of English Syllabi in NSW

The first documented English syllabi in NSW comes from 1911 and established a division between Literature and Language (Watson, 1994). The goal "was to instill in students an aesthetic appreciation of literary merit and the literature selected reflects a strong regard for the transmission of moral and cultural values" (O'Sullivan, 2005, p 16). The Language and Literature demarcation was followed by a third preoccupation of Literacy, more specifically, the minutiae of grammar in the 1940s (Patterson, 2000). Literature choices for subject English at the turn of the twentieth century sustained a dual vision of an Australian 'Crown' identity, the child as an Australian national but British subject (Green & Cormack, 2008). McLean Davis (2012) and Jogie (2015a) both observe that over a century, prescribed texts within English in NSW barely changed, even though the Australian identity itself transformed markedly.

The mid-1960s brought about the development of a senior English syllabi, one orientated towards the propensity for a greater number of students to stay on until later years of schooling in order to complete their Higher School Certificate exams. The 1980s and 1990s brought a hierarchical stratification of English courses. The English senior syllabi branched out to encompass more advanced courses - a differentiated offering that is sustained in contemporary times although the syllabi have been renewed and revamped at various intervals (O'Sullivan, 2005).

Since 2000, in the aftermath of the 1997 McGraw Report which detailed a major review into NSW's Higher School Certificate examinations, English has been a compulsory subject for the full thirteen years of schooling. In response to the diversity of learning needs that contemporary students present there are now six senior school offerings:

- English as an Additional Dialect or Language
- English Studies
- Standard English
- Advanced English
- Extension 1 English
- Extension 2 English

The Extension courses can only be studied by those students already studying Advanced English. English Studies is nominally for those students not seeking tertiary entry although it has recently been added to the list of subjects that can be included in an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank if students sit a final examination.

Precarity in Oz

This study takes place in period of time in which school funding, the restructuring of vocational education to a more expensive price model, the dissolution of qualified teacher-run education programs within NSW gaols, and the ongoing ennui of youth unemployment and casualisation have impacted in different ways across communities in NSW. A 2013 report on the state of how Australians perceive their democracy found respondents to be wary, cynical and suspicious of politicians and the ability of their democratic governance to administer and secure the futures of citizens (Evans, Stoker & Nasir, 2013). As noted in the Evans et al. (2013) report, such sentiments should "be of significant concern that this pattern of discontent has emerged in a period of relative affluence" (p. 20).

Despite relative affluence against global markers, as Evans et al. (2013) observe, Australians feel anxiety in regard to the future. This feeling has only been exacerbated by the passage of time. Australia avoided a global economic downturn in 2008 - citizens received $900 cheques from their government and were encouraged to spend the money at a time when Greek banks were withholding withdrawals from their citizens as their own Hellenic financial crisis imploded (Alexander, 2013; Barrett, 2015). Yet, as of February 2019, consumer spending is down, wage growth has been stagnant and surveyed respondents express concerns as to their ability "to provide for one's family's future" (Boyd, 2019, n.p.). There appears to be a growing sentiment that life in Australia is becoming more precarious.

It used to be an in-joke that Sydney-siders always talked real estate. Now, if they have children, they talk schools. And real estate has even greater cache depending on the kind of public school found within it (Williams, 2016). As economic precarity increases across Western democracies, populism, nationalism, and tribalism play out in ever faster digitised interactions (Schierup & Ålund, 2018). Precarity, as Nässström and Kalm (2018) define it, is "the material and psychological vulnerability arising from neoliberal economic reforms" (p. 556). Yet, some rituals and traditions seem to be sustaining their roles of social placeholders. The physicality of the school within the landscape, and the familiarity of subject areas provide touchstones of security amidst the slippages. Schooling - access to it, experiences within it, selling and buying of it, have never seemed so prescient, or politicised.

Australian Populism Towards Teachers

The politicisation of education has been a long theme in Australian education history, with 'recent' contestations over curriculum and pedagogy harkening back to the progressive/conservative jousts of the 1970s. The latter half of the 2000s however seems to have brought within it a level of populism in regard to teachers and the teaching curriculum. Sengul's (2019) definition of populism is most helpful here. He writes, "Despite the contested nature of populism research, there is a broad consensus within these approaches that all forms of populism, in some way, construct and appeal to a people against an elite" (p. 89, italics in original).

The presence of populism is a reflection of social values and beliefs in flux and aligns neatly to a time when the bedrock of education has become something commercialised and individualised. A communal rite of passage for prior generations now requires parental navigation, investigation, and agitation on behalf of their offspring. Fraser (2019) explains the dangers of populism for societies in that in the long run, rituals that encourage social accordance are fractured and long-held faiths face dissolution. "Each hegemonic bloc embodies a set of assumptions about what is just and right and what is not" (p. 10). A populist culture thrives on divisions and the targeting of others, an orientation that fits neatly into the national and historical psyche of Australia (as those of Indigenous, European, Asian, and Muslim identification know well.)

If the children of the working-class were pathologised for their schooling failures, as Braithwaite (1975) suggests of an earlier era, then contemporary times have brought new scapegoats for the failures of the Australian dream of the 'fair go'. In this new scenario, it is the teachers (with their cultural-Marxist-gendered-feminist-white-man-hating-'Safe schools' ideologies) who represent elite interests and who are failing to meet the learning needs of their students. See the writing and public commentary by Mark Latham, former Prime Ministerial candidate and now senator in the NSW upper house of parliament, for detailed examples of such articulations (Latham, 2017).

The elusive 'fair go'

Populism combined with precarity may lead to the identification of signs or markers of inequality and injustice but addressing or resolving such inequalities requires something more progressive - or even revolutionary - than the state or its representatives has thus far been able to do (Fraser, 2019). Fraser (2019) has been writing on Trump and America but she could easily be addressing Australia and the failures of the 'fair go' narrative. The Australian faith, or ethos, in the 'fair go' shares similarities to that of the 'American Dream'. Both of these jingoistic beliefs draw on a Protestant work ethic imported by British immigrants to each respective country (Weber, 1930/2005). The 'fair go' concept, recently expressed by Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison as, "There is a fair go for those who have a go. That is what fairness in Australia means. This is something we hold very dear to us" (Morrison, 2018, n.p.) To extrapolate, the 'fair go' is meant to bring rewards to those who work hard for them and the circumstances in which they work are meant to be equitable.

The fair go has been hard to find in Australia of late. Even though the world wide economic downturn was avoided, economic hardships have not been uncommon. There is an awareness that there has been slippage in standards of living and doubt that 'good times' will be returning anytime soon. For colonial Australians, the 'fair go' was a mantra aligned with white masculinity - a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, an ethos legislated by the 1907 Harvester judgement which ruled a man's pay should be enough to support himself and his family. The Harvester legislation and the associated 'fair go' beliefs have been a buffer within the Australian identity. It established the country may be part of the British Empire but that Australians were not peasants, slaves or serfs. They were (hard) workers - a meritocratic mythmaking that easily slid into the education sphere and the conception of 'good' students.

Schooling in NSW: The Competitive, The Cut-Throat, & The Culled

To give some explanation for the nature of contemporary schooling cultures in the Australian state of New South Wales it is necessary to backtrack upon certain social, cultural, historical and economic moments of significance. Kyle's (1986) historical overview of girls' education in NSW included the development of schooling from colonial times. In addressing an even earlier era, Campbell and Proctor (2014) touched on the dangers of ignoring pre-colonial considerations of education in the land that became the colony of NSW, before moving into a thorough overview of Australian schooling developments. The scope of a PhD thesis requires a more concise summary of significant events, issues and policy developments. To consider three generations of possible schooling experiences, a lens that Cheung (2018) utilised in her autobiographical chapter on the experiences of girls' education in NSW, continues to be a highly useful lens in regard to time as it fits the scope of lived experiences by those who have family working or attending schools today. For this reason, reference will be made to schooling developments from the twentieth century onwards.

Gentrification of public schooling

Throughout the twentieth century public schools in NSW have had a mandate to provide secular education to boy and girl children up to the age of 12, although as Cheung (2018) and Kyle (1986) have explored, there was a gendered experience in which the education of male children was

prioritised over their sisters in some family situations of working-class origins. While there were pathways for able students to progress from their primary years into secondary education, for the most part these pathways were the domain of the (male) middle-classes, aided by the new professionalisation within the Australian economy (Teese, 1998; Connell, 1989; Campbell, 2015). It would take an exceptional working-class child to crack that glass ceiling. "When tracing the public examination success rates of youth, it was then that the public high school revealed its true significance for children of the new middle-class. They were easily the most persistent and successful users of these schools" (Campbell, 2015, p. 56). The more economically established families, i.e. upper middle-class and wealthier families, were more commonly users of the independent schools for their sons and daughters (Kyle, 1986, Campbell, 2015).

Gentrified public schooling and working-class resistance

The children of the working-class provided the labour for an industrialised country that thrived off the labour of industry, agriculture, and manufacturing (in the post-war years.) For the most part, this served the class interests of those who sustained themselves and their dependents through labour. A strong unionised Australian workforce ensured a high standard of living compared to that of the working-class in Europe, England and America (Bowden, 2011). As reported, "national union density never once fell below 40 per cent between 1913 and 1992, and was typically much higher" (Bowden, 2011, p 51). This mix of unionisation and a sense of social responsibility contributed to the socialist/capitalist character of twentieth century Australia. It should be observed that this character was predicated on a white male identity. The 1907 Harvester judgement had legislated a living wage for a man and his family. Whether labourer or professional the psyche of the Australian job holder had a masculine identity, and was resistant to challenges from those of other races and genders who would undercut a white man's wage.

The preoccupation with labour circumstances in Australia is relevant to this study because schooling has been inexorably linked to the labour market. "A boy or girl who has not a good sound education is not equipped to play his or her part in the modern day game of life," quips the Minister for Education in a 1938 pamphlet celebrating 150 years of NSW schooling (NSW Department of Education, 1938, p. 5). In the early parts of the twentieth century, access to secondary schools

became the funnel through which middle-class children were orientated towards jobs in the emerging professional classes. For as long as aspects of schooling provided a credentialised pathway into individual economic prosperity, the emerging middle-class was there to ensure it was their children who were able to experience the gentrification of what was once the domain of the well to do.

Where the children of farmers and the owners of small businesses had needed little prolonged schooling in the securing of their futures, the new middle-class required a very different relationship with schooling for their children. Their employment was dependent on the new post-agricultural Australian economy, based as it was on industrialisation, increased public services, the growth of the banking, retail and insurance industries and larger corporations in general (Campbell, 2007, p. 1).

The strength of the Australian union movement and the mixed public/private nature of the Australian economy encouraged a certain class resistance. There were strong identities wrapped within each class identification that were resistant to the practices and values of the others. As Western (1999) observes, "if we assume that people take their social circumstances into account when making plans about their own welfare, there should be some relationship between those circumstances and the kinds of material strategies people endorse or reject" (p. 353). Perhaps it is for this reason that middle-class families could find value in the attributes of schooling while working-class families looked elsewhere, to the trades, to sport, to family, even at times to violence, for the foundational and formative experiences of maturing into adulthood (Campbell, 2007; 2005; Connell et al., 1982).

As the post-war generation entered the education system, the NSW practice of siphoning off an identified intelligent young person into an academic path and the rest into a gendered technical voc ed/domestic science path perpetuated the passage of mostly middle-class children through to their professional adult lives (May & Proctor, 2013; Campbell, 2015).

Teenage Penitentiary: The raising of the school leaving age and the gutting of TAFE

For sixty-seven years New South Wales provided students, and their parents, with a school leaving age of fourteen and nine months. From 1943 to 2010, students were nominally encouraged to stay at school until the end of what is recognised in today's New South Wales levels as Year 10, roughly aged fifteen. Educational pathways in the 1950s and 1960s however were not the same as those of current times, or even within the past generation. As such, it is important to clarify that students in the 1950s and 1960s faced a sorting process which would direct less academically identified boys and girls off to technical and domestic educational institutions respectively (Campbell & Proctor, 2014; Cheung, 2018). Only those deemed most suitable by their academic studies and/or results in a school administered IQ test would find a well supported pathway into the higher grades of academic study (Collins & Yates, 2011; May & Proctor, 2013; Cheung, 2018). According to Campbell and Proctor (2014), a combination of educational culture and the sorting processes ensured female students were routinely pushed out of academic pathways in preference for male students. The historical precedence of streaming and segregating students on academic performance and the illusion of a meritocracy was hardly unique for the times (Kyle, 1986; Kenway & Willis, 1993).

In contrast to the first decades of compulsory secondary schooling, the 1970s and 1980s (up to the election of the NSW Liberal government in 1988) provided an influx of educational funding and educational transformation. The short-lived Labor Whitlam government in the early 1970s extended the model of the welfare state to encompass publicly provided health and education supports that could be accessed not just by the socially vulnerable but by most 'average Australians' (Barclan, 1996; Cranston et al., 2010). There was a robust and well-funded vocational educational pathway via The Department of Technical Education and Further Education that combined State and Federal government support in order to provide accessible, affordable, quality vocational education at venues across New South Wales (Goozee, 2001). The vocational centres, known through their collective brand as TAFE (for Technical and Further Education), provided alternative trade routes and competency based trade studies.

It remained common for many students of working-class origin to finish their formal academic studies at the end of Year 10 initially with a leaving certificate, and then in later years with an

academic credential, the School Certificate (Connell et al., 1982). The School Certificate was commonly followed by entry to a TAFE college or an apprenticeship (Connell et al., 1982). According to Proctor and Sriprakash (2017), it took until the 1980s for all schools to have an "opportunity" where all students could continue on to Years 11 and 12 should they be so inclined. It wasn't until the mid-1980s that girls finally overtook boys in staying on at school after decades of being encouraged to leave to avoid 'wasting their time' on academic pursuits that would have little relevance in their post school lives (Barclan, 1996; Weston et al., 2001; Cheung, 2018). However, the reality for many students ill-fitted to the formalised culture of the academic curriculum was to exit at the end of Year 10. Opportunities to stay may have existed but they required students to fit the model of the academically inclined.

A sickness of schools: a prolonged economic malaise and marketisation

There seems to have been a pathologisation of working-class children who were deemed inherent delinquents because of their class origins (Braithwaite, 1975). Braithwaite (1975) was observing American research but similar observations had been made of Australian "incorrigibles". As noted, the full years of schooling and working-class children were an unlikely combination in NSW. It would take an economic recession in the 1990s and a fracturing of the Australian social contract to encourage a normative experience of schooling to be one which included the full sequence of grades to Year 12 for all social classes. In the early 1990s, it was common for some students to leave in Year 10 and enter the vocational education colleges of TAFE.

Changing economic conditions that heralded the end of the 1980s and ushered in the decade of the 1990s markedly changed patterns of schooling. Barclan (1996) reports, "In 1980, 34.5 per cent of the age cohort entering secondary schools had remained to Year 12. By 1986, this figure had risen to 48.7 per cent" (p. 5). Whereas previous generations could have left school in Year 10, the late 1980s and early 1990s brought an end to the era of low-skill highly paid jobs. A 1988 National Social Science Survey found that two-thirds of those surveyed desired "a mixed-economy with a substantial public sector" (Braithwaite, 1988, p. 26). Since that survey, Australians have seen a stripping of their public sectors and a sell-off of public assets to private industries.

School Marketisation

Schooling, and the ways in which private schooling has received advocacy and funding from conservative sides of the political spectrum has only exacerbated the sense that access to 'better and the best' involves substantial withdrawals from a family's budget. More than one politician has linked a parent's willingness to pay for private school fees to their better judgement, implying in turn poor parenting decision-making practices for those who don't behave in such ways (Marginson, 2003; Simons, 2006; Cranston et al, 2010; Bourke, 2019). As Simons (2006) explores, in a neoliberalised Australia "there is no goldrush. There is only education. Education, the sociologists say, is the new proxy for class. So surely any good parent should invest" (p. 90). The effect of these emotive persuasions have become increasingly apparent in the ways parents navigate the NSW schooling sectors and the ways that they seek to better position their own child/ren against others.

Students in the 1990s were encouraged to stay on at school while dabbling in part-time low-skilled service work (Weston et al., 2001; Cheung, 2018). The students of the early 2000s followed similar arcs except rising economic inequalities made staying on at school even more important than ever (Wyn and Woodman, 2006). Many of those that left their studies early contributed to an ever-growing pool of unemployed and under-employed, a particular problem for regional and rural areas of New South Wales (te Riele, 2011; Burrows, 2013).

It is significant to document the impact of the Liberal Prime Ministership of John Howard as his conservative government's schooling reforms during the 1990s brought the first distinct change in how parents responded to the process of schooling for their children. Prior to the 1970s, education policy in Australia was viewed in progressive liberal terms, with education seen as needing to be freely available to all. By contrast, the Howard Government focused on "aspirational" Australia. Here, education was construed as the means of social advancement rather than as a contributor to equality of opportunity (Cranston et al., 2010, p. 187).

What the Howard government brought to schooling was what Fraser (2019) may call a hegemonic counter-narrative. State and Federal policies had created a normative understanding that schooling

was for the betterment of society. The approach of the Howard government and embrace of neoliberalised values of competition and marketisation of public schools repositioned education from a social good to an individual good (Connell, 2013).

Between 1997 and 2004, enrolments at independent schools grew by 27 per cent and at government schools by just 1 per cent. What is more, a 2006 survey by the Australian Council of Educational Research shows that more than a third of parents with children at government schools would shift them to the private system if they could afford to (Simons, 2006, p. 92).

'Winners' and 'Losers'

This normative change in perceiving education and schooling as an individual good and family responsibility has held ground since the Howard years. The consequence for schools has been a system of 'winners' and 'losers'. The 1997 McGraw Report observes the manner in which students of high and low academic abilities are poached or rejected from the alternative schooling options to public schools. With data taken from the 1996 cohort of students who sat the final Year 12 examinations for university entry, students in selective government schools in NSW had an average rank of 80.5, a marked contrast to their comprehensive public school peers with an average rank of 40.5. Filling out the spaces between these two public options, students attending 'Other' non-government school had a rank of 69.9, Catholic Independent students had an average rank of 61 and Catholic systemic students had a rank of 50.1 (McGraw, 1997, p. 110). Socio-economics and social class map clearly against these schooling places and spaces, with working-class students more likely to attend public comprehensive and Catholic systemic schools, and middle and upper-middle-class students to those from elite families most likely to fill the places in the other schools.

The raising of the school leaving age

In 2010 the New South Wales government increased the mandatory school-leaving age from fifteen years to seventeen years. This was subsequently following by the scrapping of the School Certificate in Year 10. The Year 10 credential was believed to have lost its relevance with more students encouraged to stay on to complete the Higher School Certificate in Year 12, the final academic year of secondary studies. Concomitantly, new (at the time) national tests in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy, NAPLAN, also contributed to

the irrelevance of a state wide exam for students in Year 10 (Audit Office of NSW, 2012). Students who leave prior to attainment of a HSC certificate can receive a ROSA: Record of Student Achievement. The ROSA does not hold the same cultural cache or significance as the HSC.

There is concern that in raising the leaving age to seventeen years students who would have left secondary schooling earlier are now staying on but are having a less than satisfactory experience of education (te Riele, 2011; Reid & Young, 2012). Of great concern is that many of the students who would have left earlier may also be experiencing or living with mental health conditions that during their earlier schooling years remained undisclosed and that there is something about the final two years of schooling that brings such conditions to the fore (Reid & Young, 2012). As te Riele (2011), and Reid and Young (2012) have investigated, and the NSW Auditor-General confirmed (2012) secondary schools have struggled to respond to the particular needs of older students staying on in school. This struggle has worsened with massive de-funding and "deinstitutionalisation" (Wheelahan, 2016 p. 189) of the NSW TAFE system and hiking of course fees post 2014.

At a time when secondary school attendance became mandatory for students who previously would have left, the deregulation and privatisation of the vocational education sector meant hands-on apprenticeships and training now came with disturbingly high price tags and a level of corruption that would lead to a Federal parliamentary inquiry (Hurley, 2017).

Over the last twenty years, there have been three distinct disruptions which have disturbed the ways in which the working and lower-middle-classes navigated schools. The first disruption was the dissolution by Prime Minister Howard of public education as a respected public brand and a social norm. The second disruption came with the official raising of the school leaving age from 15 to 17 in 2010. The third has been the privatisation and damage of the post-secondary vocational training sector. The social contract of an economy running on private enterprise alongside public services and public infrastructure, the very mixed economic model that Australians in 1988 desired (Braithwaite, 1988) had been irrevocably torn by the political decisions of the 1990s onwards.

Global tremors

The threshold

Right now in time, western democracies seem to be at a culmination point. We are at a threshold - poised in liminal space between what was known and what may yet come to be. We are, as Apple and Riddle (2019) observe, "in a time of dangerous uncertainty" (p. 1). Where the teacher of English fits within this "dangerous uncertainty" (Apple & Riddle, 2019, p. 1) and how they respond in their teaching to the needs of their local community are necessary experiences to investigate and explore given the broader social, cultural, economic and political challenges of this Anthropocene era.

It is relevant to an exploration of teachers and schools in a politicised era to observe that a 2017 Roy Morgan survey found that 81 per cent of respondents trust Australian teachers for their ethics and honesty whereas only 16 per cent of respondents trust politicians to hold the same qualities (Roy Morgan, 2017, n.p.) Despite public trust in teachers, far higher than that of politicians, it is significant to note that the teacher in public consciousness has been the recipient of a sustained and ongoing disparagement as to their skills, their knowledges, and their very competencies to serve young Australians.

National and state-based newspapers have run a long campaign critical of curriculum approaches and teacher professionalism. The suggestion that Australian students are failing to keep up with international peers in literacy and numeracy because of poor teaching and inappropriate pedagogical choices has been repeatedly printed and televised in various media outlets. Policy responses to such criticisms, such as the introduction of mandatory literacy and numeracy tests during Initial Teacher Education, give support to such concerns (O'Sullivan, 2016; Riddle, 2016; Lampert et al., 2017). This rocky rhetoric has occurred in the same time teacher professionalisation has become an increasingly bureaucratic experience.

Narrative limnings

Amongst such activity it is important to explore the work of English teachers, particularly those serving communities on the peripheries of power, those whose families are least able to navigate the

consolidation of schooling as a middle-class credentialing phenomenon. To peer within their worlds, this study adopts the qualitative methodology of narrative inquiry, drawing out teachers of secondary English to reflect upon their work with Stage 5 students and their popular culture text choices. Narrative inquiry provides a representation of people's stories. In this study, the researcher has served as editor and arranger, identifying significant themes and selecting key vignettes, to reveal aspects of a 'life of English' in 'beautiful wasteland' schools.

It has long been argued that the schooling curriculum is a middle-class curriculum and one that fails to recognise the values and knowledges of working-class families (Apple, 1986/89; Connell, 1989; Freire & Giroux, 1989; Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991). This view is often accompanied by the position that popular culture can be a force for bringing the knowledges of the Other into the schooling curriculum (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994; Alvermann & Heron, 2001; Mayes, 2010; Beavis et al., 2015). For this reason, popular culture was chosen as the vessel upon which this study would focus. The NSW Stage 5 English syllabus is for students in Years 9 and 10. These are the supposed 'trouble' years for adolescents in which their relationship with school and academic life can bring to the fore disconnection and rebellion against the institution of school.

How the teachers of this study respond to their particular confluences of class, geographies, syllabi, expectations, and the students in their respective communities through their text selections and pedagogical approaches reveals significant conflicts within teacher aspirations for their students and their beliefs in regard to the purpose of schooling. The ways the teachers in this study discuss popular culture text selections and their teaching experiences with their Stage 5 students reveals aspects of their pedagogical beliefs. Participant reflections uncover some of their critical curriculum concerns. What also comes through from these teachers is a deeper conceptualisation of their own role as teachers of English in influencing and improving the lives of the young Australians in their classrooms. This conception is one which sees the student as they are and as they may become, with the teacher holding a significant influence upon the potential life outcomes of the young people that they teach.

Organisation of this thesis

This thesis is organised into 6 chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the study and situated the context of the research. Chapter 2 presents a review of the relevant literature. Chapter 3 provides an account of the research methodology employed in this study. The research question is presented and details of the theorisations of narrative inquiry are provided. The strategies adopted for the data gathering, management, and analysis are also described. Chapter 4 presents the research findings on teacher decision-making surrounding popular culture text selection for Stage 5 students in English. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the forces and factors which guide teacher decision-making in regard to text selections for their students. Chapter 6 concludes this study by providing implications of these issues surrounding English teacher text-selections in comprehensive public schools.

Accompanying these six chapters are the References and Appendices, which include copies of relevant correspondence, interview outlines, and ethical approvals from appropriate authorities.

CHAPTER TWO:

Fields of Literature

Review of the Literature

This chapter provides a review of the literature relevant to English teachers as intellectual workers, the discursive conceptions of subject English, and the socio-historical contexts which have left their mark upon collective educational spaces. Due to their dominance and influence upon the educative trends of other nations this overview moves from a macro awareness of topic areas as they have manifested in the United States of America and the United Kingdom before moving into a micro focus on how such trends have played out within the Australian state of New South Wales. This matter situates this study's research within the domains of secondary English teachers' work, English teacher values, and (the heightened stakes for) teachers' professional judgement.

Looking back to look forward

Looking back over the historical movements which gave shape and form to mass education and subject English is a necessary inclusion for any research which aims to present understandings of why it is that English teachers act, and think, and behave in certain ways. The past conditions the present, even when individuals are unknowing of it. As Beavis (2003) explains:

> An examination of past issues and priorities, past constructions of literacy and the child, past expectations of relationships between curriculum and society...can help tease out what we want to keep as central and what needs to change. History thus becomes a way not just of looking (differently) at the past: it relates also to the future and the present (p. 9).

It is for this very reason that this review will spend substantial time accounting for historical actors and movements and the way that such forces have been influential upon the figure of the school and the subject of English.

‘Good’ teachers, ‘Good’ students: Schooling at the turning of the Twentieth Century

“Literacy without radicalism”

Subject English has been a perennial discipline for students to study since the formation of mass schooling in the United States, Western Europe, (and Australia). Knowing one’s letters and having the ability to read and write were believed to be part of the process of a child’s education, one that had broadened beyond the instrumental skills of a self-sufficient life. Although, as Connell (1989) observes, the goal of universal schooling within the Commonwealth (and the United States) was not distributed benevolence but “a political program, literacy without radicalism” (p. 117).

The precepts of British Imperialism held sway across significant territories during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Assimilation of crown subjects into Empire loyalists was encouraged through schooling practices and curriculum choices (Gibbs, Mullins & O’Sullivan, 2005; Kenway et al. 2017). Despite Connell’s wry observation, as any reader of *Jane Eyre* and Bronte’s depiction of the Lowood school would know, surreptitious radicalism has a habit of working its way through textual representations. But, for the most part, the dominant curriculum imbued desired values, attitudes and behaviours required of hierarchical and patriarchal powers. Loyalty, fidelity and obedience held sway under an umbrella of white supremacy sustained by Judeo-Christian religiosity.

Looking through a Foucauldian lens

Seen through the lens of Foucault (1977) the goal of mass education has a conservative core. This view presents schooling as the vessel through which citizens are inculcated with social beliefs and values. Despite arguments from leading figures of the time that linked respectful studiousness with qualities of fidelity and good character (see Horace Mann for America, Matthew Arnold for England) those receiving the benefits of early manifestations of schooling had a habit at times of being resistant receptacles of knowledge, especially when seen through class lines (Thompson, 1963).

Foucault (1977) was aware of these heterogeneous views of educational purpose when he explored the desired comportment of schooling. The 'good' student and the 'good' teacher were those who served as "meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine", one whose motions were directed towards "permanent coercions…(and) automatic docility" (Foucault, 1977, p. 169). Foucault reminds us that schools were, (and are), in the service of the state, and that curriculum reflects the views of the masters.

From Luke (2017) we gain the benefit of a Foucauldian reading of schooling aligned with rich knowledge of literacy and English development. He writes, "the formation of the field of literacy has always been and continues to be a debate over moral and scientific foundations and, as importantly, about cultural and political practices" (Luke, 2017, p. 159). Luke (2017) reminds readers to acknowledge that single theorisations can delegitimize and devalue the individual and collective agency of those whose participation in mass schooling was neither a simple transference of knowledges nor a straightforward process of social controls.

Democratic hopes and mass education in America

The roots of what contemporary English has become are evident in the manifestations of early twentieth century models of the subject. Within national and Imperial settings, the discipline of English began to form as mass education brought schooling to many more children than previously had access to such institutions (Reese, 2001; Reid, 2004). The industrialised world of this time was a more literate and numerate place than those of preceding centuries. For nations of the Commonwealth it was an Imperial world. For the Americans, it was only one generation from their tumultuous Civil War. Language, literacy, and knowing one's letters were in the service of political stability and economic industrialisation, although localised contextual details brought their own specificity.

The American educational philosopher John Dewey (1916) wrestles with the conflicting values of earlier centuries and the democratic hopes of the new when he critiques attitudes which demarcate a population into superior and inferiors and perpetuate social stratification through education systems. Dewey was a babe in his mother's arms during the American Civil War but he came of age in a

country which wrestled with the hopes and aspirations for equality alongside perpetuating and visible inequalities. He writes, "... if democracy has a moral and ideal meaning, it is that a social return be demanded by all and that opportunity for development of distinctive capacities be afforded all" (1916, p. 68).

The African American philosopher W. E. B. Du Bois (1924/1976) also agitated for education as the means for which a nation state could prosper and he did so from a stance which was adversarial to 'respectable' politics of racial suppression in support of a hierarchical status quo. In critiquing the deliberately apolitical stance of his daughter's college, Du Bois signifies that students requires detailed knowledges and cultural nuance within their education that will enable their intellectual and civic awakening. Du Bois (1924/1976) says of students taught in deliberately apolitical ways, "... the difficulty is that they do not know what is for our good or what we think is for our good. They have not before them facts that are well known to us and points of view and considerations which are to us of tremendous importance. It is in this case, as in so many others, ignorance that leads to evil" (p. 51).

Educational philosophers like Dewey and Du Bois influenced the epistemic foundations from which the distinct Americanised interpretation of English could manifest: one that was aimed at the individual flourishing of a child making the most of cultivated talents and robust knowledges.

Social controls and mass education in England

From Gerlach's (2000) explorations within archives and documentary evidence, England is depicted as a far more unwilling participant in the democratic awakenings of the early twentieth century. She posits that despite Dewey's popularity in America, "English teachers in England... continued to rely on grammar and the rote learning of poems... largely because this was the way the subject continued to be assessed" (p. 88). As Gibbs et al. (2005) observe, there were gendered splits that divided grammar and Latin away from literature and the study of texts. The former was held up as masculine, logical, and superior to the feminine forms of poetry and prose which, within such a discourse, were less intellectually rigorous, a rather ironic situation given the heightened status

contemporary conservative politicians like Michael Gove have now assigned poetry within more recent curriculum contestations (see Elliott, 2014 for a summary of Gove's favourites).

In the late nineteenth century, England held onto a certain pedagogical and philosophical orthodoxy even as her own thinkers, like Matthew Arnold, exhorted a change for the country's own self-protection. Arnold (1882) observes:

> the strong feudal habits of subordination and deference continued to tell upon the working-class...that body of men, all over the country, are beginning to assert and put in practice an Englishman's right to do what he likes; his right to march where he likes, meet where he likes, enter where he likes, hoot as he likes, threaten as he likes, smash as he likes... (p. 58).

A reading of Arnold (1882) reveals stability as a preferable outcome to anarchy: education for the masses so they wouldn't turn against their masters. According to Arnold (1882), education would be both pacifier and preventer of the working-class's descent towards anarchy - a genuine concern for those whose grandparents were old enough to remember the violence of the French Revolution and the emancipatory desire of the American Revolutionary War. The French may have called for *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité* but it was a discomforting call for an Empire built as it was off the back of colonisation and ever suspicious of rebels and resistors to British rule.

Romantic tendencies

John Dewey and Matthew Arnold both became figureheads for forms of mass education that took a particular interest in the child as the recipient of learning. Dewey and Arnold became recognisable political frontmen for movements and for progressive philosophies which have an older and far more diasporic lineage than is sometimes thought. It is worth remembering that Dewey and Arnold were influenced by the beliefs and values of the Romantic movement (see Reese, 2001; Reid, 2002; Granger, 2003, Reid, 2004; Carter, 2013).

Romantic lineage

Romanticism, which had its origins in the 1770s, can be perceived as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution and the transformation of Western societies into urbanised economies that brought to the fore the visual reminders of human excess and inequality. Rather than providing a utilitarian answer to the problems of overcrowding, crime, and slum life, Romanticism presented adherents a vision that incorporated the innocence of childhood, the healing qualities of the natural world, and an affinity with art and creativity as a form of healthy personal reflection and expression (Reese, 2001; Granger, 2003). The work was political as much as it was creative, spiritual and aesthetic. As Fulford (1996) recounts, the depiction of labourers and landscapes in Wordsworth's poetry were revolutionary for their time: Wordsworth was challenging the authority of the nobility and the gentry when land ownership conferred legitimacy and its absence indicated inferiority. In giving voice to those silenced by the canonical literature that preceded him, Wordsworth, and others of his period, including Blake and Coleridge, were advancing a vision of human dignity based on the individual as inherently worthy.

Romanticism and the progressive education movement

The progressive education movement is not completely synonymous with Romanticism but the two movements do share significant overlapping qualities such as a burgeoning acceptance in regard to women's' suffrage and equality, a belief in the inherent dignity of the human person and a view of the child as living in a state of innocence separate to that experienced by the adult being (Reese, 2001; Granger 2003). In his work exploring the influences upon early forms of progressive education in America, Reese (2001) identifies a movement towards humanism that sought for all people "the alleviation of pain and suffering and the promotion of moral and intellectual advancement" (p.3).

Romanticism and the Child

Davis (2011) observes Romanticism drew on the Judeo-Christian character of hegemonic religious beliefs in England but also dipped into "speculative Christian mysticism in which the image of the child played a commanding role" (p. 383). Romanticism idealised the 'innocent' child, given nurture and succour in places of play and child-centred learning, as an inoculation against an

eventual maturity into adult depravity. The child was presented and represented within Romantic art, literature, and philosophy as a living vessel of Arcadia: a manifestation of virtuousness and innocence, threatened by the evils of the adult human world.

> At the heart of this view of the child lies the evolving modern belief in the continuity of the self through time, and it is from this point that increasing emphasis is placed upon the connection between healthy early childhood experience and the moral and psycho-spiritual well-being of the adult individual
> (Davis, 2011, p. 386).

The significance of such thoughts and their influence upon the individuals who would push conceptions of education and institutional learning has been recognised by those who observe the Romantic expression within the origins of American-style progressive education (Reese, 2001; Granger, 2003), the English system (Davis, 2011), and the fledgling curriculum developments in the Australian state of New South Wales (Carter, 2013; Manuel & Carter, 2017).

Romantic lineage, women writers, and mass education

Before moving on, it is also important to note the influence of women writers Catherine Macaulay and Mary Wollstonecraft whose own writings within the Romantic period critiquing the limitations of gender and calling for social equalities were disseminated across America and Western Europe. While the gendered, classed and conservative nature of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century maintained a division of women's words from the broader political realm the absence of references to Macaulay and Wollstonecraft doesn't necessarily point to a silencing of their influence within the development of mass education.

Caine's (1997) exploration of Wollstonecraft's influence within the mid-1800s suggests there was a sustained awareness of her work even though her theories and memory were disavowed by the Victorian women writers who followed in Wollstonecraft's wake. Caine (1997) points to Wollstonecraft's liberatory approach to female sexuality as a significant factor in the ostracism of her written ideas by the immediate generation that followed her death. Botting (2013) perceives it was Wollstonecraft's associations with French Revolutionaries that poisoned potential receptivity.

(The very intensity of passions which Romanticism valued in male figures were far less well received when given form by women and expressed through sexual and agentic experimentation.) Yet, as Botting (2013) accounts:

> "...the English text of the *Rights of Woman* was reprinted in London in 1841 and 1844, three times from 1890 to 1892 for its centennial, and in 1896. Its popularity continued in the United States, where it was published in New York in 1833, 1845 and 1856, plus two times from 1890 to 1891 for its centennial" (p. 507).

From investigations by Caine (1997), Ferguson (1999), Fraser (1999), O'Brien (2009), and Botting (2013), Wollstonecraft and Macaulay's respective influences upon the theorisation of mass education can and should be returned to the field of knowledge, as this section attempts to do. These intellectuals highly valued the education of girls and argued for their equal treatment in regard to schooling, not in the home, but through some type of institutionalised system. Macaulay pushed not just for equality but for an "identical education for boys and girls" (O'Brien, 2009).

In advocating for education for boys and girls Wollstonecraft and Macaulay tread the ground Matthew Arnold would later follow: a strong rationale for the betterment of a society because education would temper the transgressions of a tempted humanity. The child would be educated to a moral purpose. From these two women comes the argument of education in the service of (a proto-feminist) conscience, one that recognised equality between the sexes, and sought justice in the world of human affairs, not in one that came as an afterlife (O'Brien, 2009).

This section has turned to historical interpretations of significant figures in the development of mass education in order to present linkages between the rationale for schooling and the constitution of subject English. As researchers (Reese, 2001; Reid, 2002; Granger, 2003; Reid, 2004; Carter, 2013) have explored, there has been an interweaving between the embedded humanism of Romantic writings and the eventual shape of mass education and with it, the formation of subject English. From feminist revisionist writers (Caine,1997; Ferguson, 1999; Fraser, 1999; O'Brien, 2009; and Botting, 2013) comes an understanding that these changes did not occur sans women, even when the historical record is seemingly quieter about their influence.

This literature review will now turn more specifically to the conditions and constitution of subject English in the twentieth century.

Emerging English

To look over the twentieth century is to see three distinct tides of subject English in which those whose views flourished were eventually submerged within the swell of stronger currents before occasionally emerging again in sweeping, unpredictable waves. To discuss historical and social influences this summary sections the emergence of English into the following brief periods of time: 1900-1945; 1945-1966; 1966-2000.

Leavis and English in the early twentieth century

The first third of the twentieth century to the outbreak of the second world war seems a time for subject English in England to be perceived as part of an Imperial project of social stratification with citizens in service to a rigidly bound nation state. This was a time for England's F.R. Leavis (1930) to confidently assert that there were great works of literature and that English culture faced a "crisis" (p. 13) should those texts be lost amongst more favoured entertainment such as the newly (at the time) popularised medium of film.

Leavis (1930) privileged authoritative and canonical works for study. In reflecting the values of his times, Leavis' views on literature and the capacity of great works to be understood by students can today be seen as prejudiced and discriminatory towards minority and vulnerable groups and individuals. Leavis (1930) presented the view that only a minority of individuals have the capabilities of appreciating the aesthetics and intellectual treasure of great literature. A reading of Fulford (1996) helps to establish Leavis' ideology as part of a longer historical discourse of conservatism in which canonical gatekeeping was an instrument of social stratification and elitist hegemony. Of the elite minority, Leavis (1930) writes, "Upon them depend the implicit standards that order the finer living of an age, the sense that this is worth more than that…" (p. 13).

Dewey's influence

From America, Dewey (1925) presented a more equitable vision of education. In presenting readers with two aspects of culture, the finer arts of the refined and the popular forms that springs from the ingenuity of the masses, Dewey states such a dichotomy is a flawed model for schooling. Rather, he extols the benefits an individual and their society will receive should educators bring together student knowledges with broader accepted aspects of literate and literary culture:

> When the instrumental and final functions of communication live together in experience, there exists an intelligence which is the method and reward of the common life, and a society worthy to command affection, admiration, and loyalty (Dewey, 1925, p. 205).

In their respective positions, Leavis and Dewey demarcate the binary oppositions between the canonical and the popular text, and the troublesome proposition that a robust schooling in English subject knowledge is either for all children, or just for some. This historical reflection is pertinent to the themes of this research study on English teachers and their text selections. The enactment of English curriculum and teaching within Western territories occurs within residual tensions of social class and cultural conflict - tensions which have an unresolved lineage for more than a century.

English in the Cold War

The period from 1945-1966 may be thought of the next era for subject English. During this time, the discipline had to accommodate more students staying on at school with broader, if still highly gendered, expectations for young people in their post-school lives. The Boomer years of schooling, so named for the booming birth rates of the post-war years, were characterised by a continuing disciplinary conservatism with some grudging acceptance within the US, UK and Australia that a few 'bright' students may be found beyond the privileged classes (Gerlach, 2000; Peel, 2000; Campbell & Proctor, 2011; Ball, 2013; Ball, 2015*a*).

Secondary education, segregation, and the Boomer generation

In the aftermath of the second world war, the Leavisite tradition faced a challenge when mass schooling incorporated not just the years of childhood but the following few years of adolescence as well. This era brought a salve of sorts to the contestation that certain curriculum and knowledges could be for everyone or, that there should be different kinds of curriculum access for different people.

Academic streaming and the eugenic interest of IQ testing became the next instruments by which broader problems of class, race, and gender could be offered some resolution. The Norwood Report (1943) and the 1944 Education Act in England articulated the dispersion of pupils across streamed lines: the secondary school, the technical school, and the grammar school. (Following the English lead, Australia too segregated students between technical schools and selective schools and, for girls, the domestic science high school (May & Proctor, 2013; Cheung, 2018).) America was confronted with desegregation of schools in 1954 but was otherwise conservative in curriculum developments for English (Gerlach, 2000) due in part to an increased focus on Maths and Science as the Cold War intensified (Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1994; Sawyer et al., 2016).

Economising mass education

In some respects, this change to mass secondary education at the same time Western nations birthed the demographic of the teenager, concomitant to the social, cultural and economic transformations of the post war years provided a zeitgeist for fledgling theorisations which challenged the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the past. By the mid-1960s, social movements were growing that challenged the traditional views of education and to whom it should serve.

Amidst such tumult the certainties of Leavisite thought, and the orderliness of a nostalgic lens upon the past can seem desirable (Ayres, 2006). Others (Teese, 1998; Kenway et al., 2017) provocatively suggest that nostalgia is actually a form of strategy by elite schools and by extension, the elite class to whom such schools belong. Kenway et al. (2017) argue elite schools of Britain's older Imperial ventures have the capacity and willingness to utilise their historical, architectural, semiotic and monetary currencies as a way of sustaining class order. The curriculum that best serves their

interests becomes the one which is held in value and esteem, a point Teese (1998) has observed in regard to the history of curriculum developments and high stakes assessments in Australia.

In the absence of an Imperial heritage to draw upon, America turned to the economists as a way of bringing institutional order to the vexing problem of administering mass education through the secondary years. Milton Friedman (1955) theorised a minimum standards model of schooling: an economic construction with similar consequences for social stratification as England's (elite) public schools. Friedman (1955) barely touched on curriculum development. Instead he sketched a system of school vouchers and inspectorial checks for a system that only needed to uphold minimum standards of literacy for the masses while those who could afford to could purchase a superior education. A user pays model of mass education for a capitalist nation struggling to uphold the vision of a democratic light on the hill.

Dartmouth 1966

The late 1960s brought the tensions of extending mass education through the secondary years to the fore. It is worth taking note of the serendipitous timing: At Dartmouth, in 1966, a gathering of English teachers and academics from America, England, and other countries of the Commonwealth became the catalyst for a (re)newed approach to the challenging educational presence of an increasingly diverse (and occasionally disruptive) student body (Dixon, 1967; Dixon, 2003). 1966 was just at the right time for the first generation of post-war Boomer children to have moved into early adulthood. The post-war austerity of the 1950s had been replaced by an economic optimism and the Boomer generation, some of whom were first in family university students as Dixon was, were in receipt of greater opportunities in education and professional employment than any modern generation before them.

The Personal Growth Approach

The approach to English teaching presented within Dixon's (1967/1975) text became known as the Personal Growth approach. The Personal Growth model of English exhorts creative outlets, dialogue, discussion and debates, and compositional writing as student learning activities (Dixon,

1967/75). It is an active conception of the subject and far removed from the rote learning grammar and skills from previous subject iterations.

The Dartmouth theorisations on subject English opened the borders to so much more than Leavis' 'great works', enabling English teachers to bring to their students a realm of texts for reading, interpreting, and exploration as well as endorsing activities for drama, composition, and experimentation. This appears to have been a distinctive revitalisation for the subject in England (and Australia). Hardcastle and Yandell (2018) suggest the very nature of England's increasing social and cultural diversity combined with a collaborative and decentralised profession encouraged a robust intellectual flourishing during the 1970s. They explain:

> English teachers improvised, experimented, consulted, campaigned for reform, scrutinised policy, made mistakes, weathered criticism, but also, crucially, shared their experiences of success and failure in a generous spirit of co-operation (Hardcastle & Yandell, 2018, p. 565).

It was within this context that the Personal Growth model discussed at Dartmouth began to thrive in England. This was a version of subject English that was "broadly understood in terms of promoting moral, social and aesthetic growth" (Sawyer et al., 2016, p. 43) thereby combining elements of Romanticism, Humanism, and Progressivism with the creative zeitgeist of the age.

As Goodwyn (2016) has explored, Dixon's (1967/1975) Personal Growth model presented a vision of subject English that aligns with a Deweyan sense of child-centred education. Goodwyn (2016) observes, "If Dixon is the father of PG, the grandfather is Dewey" (p. 12). Goodwyn (2016) doesn't go as far is giving Dixon two fathers in his genealogical metaphor but he probably could have, as the influence of Basil Bernstein significantly features in Goodwyn's review of the model's inception.

Receptivity to concerns of social class and the language 'from below', and showing an enthusiasm to learn from students as well as teach to them are particular features of the Personal Growth model, identified by Doecke (2014) in his review of Medway et al.'s history *English Teachers in Postwar*

Democracy. These facets of Personal Growth are worth pausing over. They reflect the cultural changes of class, of understandings of childhood, of recognising the inherent value of each individual for who they are, as well as whom their teacher hopes they may become.

John Dixon's (1967/1975) summary text *Growth Through English* gives an impression of a consensus view of dominant themes to emerge from the conference but, as Doecke (2016) muses, "When located within the context of other material to emerge from Dartmouth, Dixon's account becomes one view among several" (p. 36). What Dartmouth offered attendees, and those who have read the works and engaged with the ideas since, was an epistemic stance of philosophical inquiry into English curriculum and pedagogy (Doecke, 2016; Frawley, 2016; Reid, 2016; Sawyer, McLean Davies, Gannon & Dowsett, 2016). Rejecting a Leavisite approach to the experience of teaching English was intertwined with a similar rejection of hierarchical authoritative instrumentalist cultures of schooling.

However, in as much as Dixon (1967) aimed towards an inclusive, emancipatory vision for English he was limited by the cultural and social rigidity of his times: any difference from a white, male norm were absorbed into a vision of a near universal experience of learning through subject English, even though some class awareness (ala Bernstein) was evident (Doecke, 2014; Goodwyn, 2016; Sawyer et al., 2016). As Goodwyn (2016) notes, "there is an unquestioned assumption that literature somehow can be shared without critiquing its provenance and, often, canonical status" (p. 14).

Remembering Louise Rosenblatt

Useful to this understanding is the observation made by McLean Davies within Sawyer et al. (2016) of the presence of Louise Rosenblatt and her conceptualisation of reader response theory within Dixon's model. In a presentation at the close of the 1950s Rosenblatt submits, "there will be no active evocation of the literary work, no such experience lived-through, if the text offers little or no linkage with the past experiences and present interests, anxieties, and hopes of the reader" (1960, p. 305).

Rosenblatt's preoccupation with linkages in order to stir the reader comes from Dewey and reflects the preoccupation of theorists of literacy and of learning to ensure young minds are sparked by their reading experience with texts. The feudal imagery of a cloistered few disseminating God's law had been broken by Martin Luther's seizure of the printing press. The invisible barrier between the literate superior and illiterate inferior had been cracked and these early twentieth century theorists were pushing at the living consequences of democratic thought.

Democracy needs critical, investigative, curious, activist thinkers to sustain the values of the polity. Education and schools needed to resemble that world view, and for this reason Rosenblatt (1960) urges, "*Potential present meaningfulness* should be the first criterion of (text) selection. Without this...there will be no real literary experience" (p. 307). From Dartmouth and from Rosenblatt come calls for an educative vision that acknowledges the responsibility of the education sphere to respond to the paradigm shift in conceptualising children and young people as having an inherent intellectual dignity.

Throughout the twentieth century, the curriculum of subject English was viewed as highly significant and highly politicised because the knowledge a student gains in their study of English was viewed as contributing to the individual's moral and intellectual betterment. There was also a strong belief that the education of the individual was an investment in the stability and prosperity of their society. Dartmouth, Dixon, Rosenblatt and their intellectual peers were extending the ways in which schooling and subject English could be interrogated and enacted. Yet, by the latter end of the century there was growing acceptance that education and artefacts of learning are connoted with meanings: the 'good' teacher, 'literature' and 'civilised society' became recognisable for their loaded meanings. In turn, the interrogation of language and its relationship to identity politics became part of the work of the English teacher too as this next section on critical theory will discuss.

Critical Theorists & Educative Purposes: Origins

The critical theorists, those whose work interrogated power, language, and social order, were shaped by the context of their times. The optimism of the post-war years was replaced by the

brutality of the Vietnam War, ('the first tv war') and the resistance of many previously apolitical middle-class Americans to their country's actions (Zimmerman, 2017). Martin Luther King was assassinated in 1968. Four students were killed by the national guard at Kent State University in 1970. Women's rights, Civil rights, Sexual rights were given heightened currency by the agitations and activism of those who worked to push values of social justice within democracy into mainstream consideration. The optimism of 1966 and the cloistered intellectual world of Dartmouth could not have seemed further away to Michael Apple and his contemporaries as the 60s came to an end. In his writing, Apple (1986) picked up the threads of Bernstein's class consciousness and wove them, alongside a new awareness of identity politics, into a stronger critique of education philosophies which failed to accommodate the diversity and breadth of American society and her democratic vision.

The Significance of Michael Apple

In 1986 Michael Apple wrote on the intersections of class, race and power which economically privilege and disadvantage students and their families in communities across America. He wrote of teachers siloed by their working lives, moving disconnected and unaware of their students' realities. Apple wrote that these teachers are, "protected" (1986/89, p. 5) from the knowledges of their students' disempowerment and that in turn, this protection absolves teachers from consciously engaging with the battles of poverty, indigence, and inequality that their students confront in their daily American lives. Apple writes:

> By not seeing education relationally, by not seeing it as created out of the economic, political, and cultural conflicts that have historically emerged in the United States and elsewhere, they (teachers) too often place educational questions in a separate compartment, one that does not easily allow for interaction with the relations of class, gender, and racial power that give education its social meaning (1986/89, p. 5).

In *Teachers & Texts*, Apple (1986/89) aims to educate readers that teacher values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours are more than commonsensical classroom wisdoms and, that they are in fact, laden and loaded with power relations of a rich white male hegemony. When Apple writes of teachers "protected" by an ignorance, he does so to provoke greater understanding, empathy, and awareness

by teacher readers. He wants educators to understand that they *are* serious social actors and that it is their responsibility to educate themselves as to the conditions of inequality and injustice which fragment American society.

Apple is hopeful his readers will take on a mission of reflexivity, personal responsibility, and social justice in pursuit of a democratic vision of education. Apple's early work, combined with the theorisations of Hooks (1994), Gee (1989) and Giroux (2003; 2004) provided the foundations from which the critical literacy project emerged in America.

The New London Group

Separate to the work of the critical theorists was another group of researchers who shared similar concerns as to sustained inequities and increasing inequalities that schooling seemed unable to dissipate. This group of researchers were conscious of the ways in which technological advancement seemed to present new platforms and spaces for activism, collaboration, and creativity but they were also wary of the decline in state power that such technologies seemed to bring in (The New London Group, 1996).

The New London Group assembled in 1994 in New London, New Hampshire, America. At the time, it was a group of literacy specialists united by their desire to bring practical pedagogical responses into classrooms in order to transform the outcomes for all students in and beyond their schooling lives (Cope, Calantzis & Smith, 2018; Garcia, Luke & Seglem, 2018). It is important to make mention of their (1996) sensitivity to "fast capitalism" (p. 71) and the cultural flip of private lives into increasingly public disclosure (p. 70).

As founding member Allan Luke (2018) details:

> it's important to see New London itself in historical terms: as an educational response to a persistent unequal distribution of capital, wealth, and power; an emergent technological/scientific revolution; and changing relations between the state, capital, and corporation (Garcia, Luke & Seglem, 2018).

Gunther Kress

Gunther Kress (2003) and the New London Group (1996) developed new theorisations of literacy than encompassed popular culture and new modalities. These theorists pushed for recognition that all texts are laden with meaning and power dynamics while provocatively recognising forms of popular culture as holding the same weight and value as canonical works. In their work conceptualising, identifying, analysing and explaining new texts within academic spaces Gee (1989) and Kress (2003) were extending the English vocabulary, and with it, ways of understanding culture and language. Kress (2003) argues, "Authorship is no longer rare. Of course the change to the power of the author brings with it a consequent lessening in the author's or the text's authority" (p. 6). The seeming relativity within this paradigm presented frightening challenges to those far more comfortable with authoritative, hierarchical worlds (see Brabazon, 2006) even as technological cultures revealed the increasing validity of Kress's and The New London Group's interpretations (Mirra, Morrell & Filipiak, 2018).

Transformational: The Twentieth Century turns English towards new beginnings

The latter end of the twentieth century brought a bricolage of ways of doing and seeing subject English and the work of English teachers. In some respects, the waves of theoretical developments outlined in the above sections should not be seen as paradigmatic movements which swept away all that had come before (Doeke, 2016). Rather, a metaphor of tidal currents, as Manuel and Carter (2017) have used, seems more apt. Theorisations of subject English and ways of teaching English are dependent on political, economic, technological and social forces that are often beyond the tangible reach of those who are affected. Personal and community contexts bring their own shaping to ways in which English is constituted. School curriculum, pedagogical practices, considerations of assessment, operate within and through tidal flows, swells, and running estuaries of philosophy, history, and politics.

A subject at pull to the tides of 'post-isms'

In the final years of the twentieth century, considerations of postmodernism (Foucault, 1990/1978; Foucault, 1980; Aronowitz & Giroux 1991), poststructuralism (Apple, 1986; Kress, 2003) and postcolonialism (Said, 1978; Said, 1993; Spivak, 1999) became accepted lenses through which to consider texts, including the canon, in the English classroom. These acts aimed to enact the theoretical philosophies expressed by Apple, Gee, Kress, and others of The New London Group, but they can also be recognised in the missives from Dixon and Dartmouth, and in the earlier considerations of Dewey to open the classroom to the languages of all students, to bring in their 'lifeworlds' (see Beavis et al., 2015). The growing acceptance within subject English of nuance within personal identities and life experiences meant readers responded in different ways to texts, including canonical works, and that those interpretations had a validity to them.

New mediums, new modes, new texts

Concurrently, new mediums and modes of expression were incorporated within the fold as texts, although their inclusion was not always without contestation (Donnelly, 2010). English teachers brought into their classrooms texts from the medium of film (see Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994; Grace & Tobin, 1998; Buckingham & Jones, 2001; Alvermann & Heron, 2001; Considine et al., 2013), games and digital platforms (see Buckingham, 2007; Apperley & Beavis, 2011; Beavis et al. 2015), comics and graphic novels (see Frey, & Fisher, 2004; Allen & Ingulsrud, 2005; Hughes et al., 2011; Sabeti, 2012; Clarke, 2013; Evans, 2013; Cheung & O'Sullivan, 2017), and popular fiction such as young adult novels (see Gallo, 2001; Johnson, 2011; Simmons, 2012; Wolk, 2013; Singh, 2015). All of these textual forms can be linked to the field of popular culture.

Popular culture springs from the unstable textual and material manifestations of what 'the people' of a society (Fiske, 1989) create, circulate, value, and take pleasure in. As Fiske (1989) extrapolates, popular culture exists within contradictory and contested places and spaces. While capitalism can co-opt the popular, those most powerful within society, "the dominant cannot control totally the meanings that the people may construct, the social allegiances that may form" (Fiske, 1989, p. 47). Popular culture provides an amorphously and transient range of textual possibilities (Luke, 1998).

The NSW K-10 English syllabus (Board of Studies, 2012a) requires students to engage with popular culture texts but, as Cheung (2015) explored, some teachers of English can be hesitant to select texts that represent challenges to their knowledge and authority.

At times, new texts have been greeted by educators with the same tentative caution that Rosenblatt (1960) seemed to be addressing when she urged her listeners to engage with Beatnik thought - the 'hip' sub culture of her era. Yet waves of popular culture are echoed within research on text use in the English classroom, with persuasive theorisations and classroom exemplars of how and why such texts have value. Recurring themes for the inclusion of popular culture texts include: meaningful engagement (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994; Gallo, 2001; Apperley & Beavis, 2011; Beavis et al. 2015), reflections on own society (Considine et al., 2013), orientations towards social consciousness (Johnson, 2011; Simmons, 2012), and the significance of student representation through text choices (Alvermann & Heron, 2001; Frey, & Fisher, 2004; Cheung & O'Sullivan, 2017).

Concurrent to these themes is the concern to equip students with multi-literacies to understand, explore and create texts as independent readers within and beyond their lives in classroom (Grace & Tobin, 1998; Buckingham & Jones, 2001; Buckingham, 2007; Hughes et al., 2011; Evans, 2013). When reviewing these rationales for the inclusion of new texts in English within the literature, student engagement, or, as Beavis et al. (2015) phrase it, "meaningful experiences from their lifeworlds" (p. 31) echoes the sentiments expressed by Rosenblatt (1960), Dixon (1967), and Dewey (1916). Such a rationale also allies with Freirean (1968) thought (to be discussed in the next section) of privileging within the classroom the materials and the matter of the students' world.

Critical Theory and Sociology: Allies or Kin?

Throughout the twentieth century, we see repeated waves of theorists grappling with the incongruities of democracy in action. Mass education held the promise of bringing equality to the next generation yet change, when it came, was often wound back before successive generations could consolidate the gains of their forebears.

Concurrent to the landmark strides of critical theory, from the United Kingdom came the sociology theorists Stephen Ball and Geoff Whitty. Ball (1993b) and Whitty (1997) used their words to push back against the tightening cords of economic rationalism under Thatcherism and then New Labour by developing new sociological theorisations of education within the nation state. Their perspectives share alignment with critical literacies' scrutiny of national power, capitalist behaviour, and school marketisation (see Ball, 1993b; Whitty, 1997).

Working independently of each other, Green, Hodgens and Luke, (1994; 1997), and R.W. Connell (1989) were making similar criticisms of the state in Australia. Apple (2000; 2005) and Giroux (2003; 2004) from America were attendant to these issues too. These writers argued that the nation state had continually failed in its mission to equip all young people with the skills and competencies needed for citizenship, independence, and intellectual awakening by deliberately positioning government responsibility for schools and services as responsibilities for the individual within a family construct (see Apple, 2000; 2005; Ball, 1993b; Connell, 1989; Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1994; 1997; Whitty, 1997). As Whitty (1997) observes:

> The new education policies foster the idea that responsibility for education and welfare, beyond the minimum required for public safety, is to be defined as a matter for individuals and families. Not only is the scope of the state narrowed, but civil society becomes increasingly defined in market terms (p.125).

The influence of Paulo Freire

Critical literacy theorists and their socio-cultural descendants owe much to Paolo Freire's (1968) work interrogating intersections of power and education in his formidable text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and other singular works of note such as Paul Willis' (1977) *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* and Thomson's (2002) *Schooling the Rustbelt Kids*. In the late 1980s, Freire and Giroux worked together, defining the purposes of critical literacy and reasons for looking beyond the traditional core curriculum to the popular artefacts of broader culture. They wrote of:

> a call for situating any debate about what constitutes meaningful knowledge in relationship to considerations that expand rather than limit the potentialities that various students have to be literate not only in the language of their community, but also in the languages of the state and the larger world (Freire & Giroux, 1989, p. xi).

The work of the critical literacy theorists aimed to bring forth an accessible vocabulary that would spread their ideas amongst teachers, parents, and school communities as much as engaging on the behalf of those groups with more powerful members of the hegemonic states. They conceptualised democracy as an equity project that gathered all within the folds of a political moment with schooling having both a humanistic vision and a utopic aim of realised equity.

Freire (1968) theorised that this work could emerge from a setting in which neither teacher nor learner held power over the other but studied alongside one another using the cultural artefacts of the students' world to explore, investigate, and reify language. "The acquisition of literacy thus entailed a process of naming and renaming, narrating and analyzing life worlds" (Luke & Woods, 2009, p. 5).

Positing education and schooling as equitable experiences for all children and young people is a surprisingly contentious stance, particularly in Western democratic societies with their sense of idealised equality within national values and character. As Barton and Armstrong (2008) observe:

> This is not a 'movement' which rolls smoothly forward, unobstructed, for the effects of a global counter-current of 'raising standards' in educational performance, and competition between schools and countries as part of a wider global struggle for economic survival and dominance, present formidable obstacles to developing inclusive education. Against this background, notions such as 'inclusion' and 'human rights' must be seen as contingent, geographically and temporally situated concepts, rather than representing universal, shared values (Barton & Armstrong, 2008, p. 2).

The struggle for inclusive education

A more attentive review of research on inclusive education reveals actual inclusion for all students is a genuine struggle within policies and in practice. In regard to inclusion of students with

disabilities (Graham & Harwood, 2011; Obiakor et al., 2012; Graham, Proctor & Dixon, 2016) have explored challenges while DePalma and Atkinson, (2008); DePalma and Jennett, (2010) are just a starting point for work on LGBTQI students and school cultures. Emma Renold (2001a; 2001b; 2004; with Ringrose, 2017) and Raewyn Connell (1989; 2011; 2013b) have separately worked to extend the field of literature on masculinities and femininities, exploring the consequences of gender and sexual identity within school contexts.

Class, race, religion, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, disability, geographical circumstances, socio-economic status: all of these facets can present in contemporary classrooms and bring forth singular or multiple disadvantages for the students for whom the labels fit. While critical theory and progressive liberalism with democracy posits inclusive ideals for all children and young people, the realities of systemic and structural discrimination, prejudice, and historical exclusion present challenges for teachers and schools to overcome. Being aware of these realities is significant for teachers aiming to uphold the inclusive values of western democratic education and meet many of their responsibilities as writ within school, state, and national policies.

Somewhat ironically, another weakness of critical literacy argumentation against traditional conceptions of schooling came from an older adversary: the need for people to sustain themselves economically to exist within their societies. The dominance of economic rationalists who have marketised the public spheres in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia while curtailing the social security reforms of those self-same states seems to have sidelined the progressive idealism of the critical literacy project. In its place has come the discourse of new economic management and GERM, the Global Economic Reform Movement (Sahlberg, 2011).

‘New’ Times: Neoliberalism, “Common Sense”, and Education in Jeopardy

Kenway’s (2014) Global Assemblages

When it comes to understanding how thoroughly ideologies of school choice, competitive individualism, and the habitus of the corporation have become such a dominant feature of education

cultures in multiple transnational territories, Kenway's (2014) concept of "global assemblage" (p. 277) is a pertinent frame.

A global assemblage refers to the manner in which ideas, values, attitudes and practices become accepted and reified within different states and their respective systems. These features are "abstract, easily mobilized and made mobile and readily rearticulated across diverse spheres of life (e.g. free market ideas)" (Kenway, 2014, p. 277). In essence, the state's retreat from public responsibility in the US, UK, and Australia can be seen as a global assemblage in response to the combinations of multiple factors, such as the ending of the Cold War, changing technologies which radically alter how time, space and distance manifests in human lives, and the strength and reach of pervasive economic thought.

The 1990s was the period when globalisation and its ascendant manifestations were young enough that researchers wrote about the 'newness' of it (Kenway, Bigum, Fitzclarence et al., 1994) but even then, there was an awareness 'the new future right now' was lacking in democratic realities. Kenway et al (1994) reveal the preoccupation of being "concerned with the new: with the new times we are going through; the new education policies and new and pseudo-new education forms that both reflect and help to effect such times; and with the new issues for education that arise as a result of the new" (p. 317). In doing so, the writing team pointed quite clearly to the paradox of globalisation: that the development of the world wide web, the increasing proliferation of computing technologies and transformation of mobilities had not erased educational and social inequalities of earlier decades, even as governments increasingly shifted promise and responsibility onto individuals to make it so. On governmental levels in the US, the UK, and Australia the rationale for mass education was still oriented towards gainful employment for young people in their post-school lives in ways that brought economic benefits for the state *first*. Holistic rationales seem to come in only after the economic modelling has been given its place.

In 1994 Kenway and company were writing from Australia but they were looking beyond the continent to movements in the US and UK. What they were seeing was prescient. They warn of forces which seek the commodification of schooling, curriculum and the student self and the co-option of the teacher into these activities (Kenway, et al., 1994, p. 321).

Economic rationalism and the commodification of the education sphere

Stephen J. Ball (Ball, 1993*a*; Ball, 1993*b*; Ball, 1998; Ball, 2009; Ball, 2015*b*) and others (Dale, 2005; Lewis, Sellar & Lingard, 2015; Goodwyn, 2015) amassed a prolific output of theorisations, offering a chronological UK (and Australian) perspective on economic rationalism and commodification of the education sphere. The end of the Thatcher years and experience of New Labour provided the scope for theorists to track the rapid encroachment of school residualisation (Gewirtz, Ball & Bowe, 1993), school marketisation and constitution of students as 'entrepreneurial' identities (Ball, 1993*a*; Ball, 1993*b*; Goodwyn, 2015), educational privatisation (Ball, 1998; Ball, 2009), and transnational dislocation of state rights in regard to educational policy settings within domestic spheres (Dale, 2005; Lingard, Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2013; Ball, 2016; Lewis, Sellar & Lingard, 2016).

From the US, Apple (2000; 2005; 2018), Giroux (2010) and Cochrane-Smith et al. (2016; 2017) have meticulously tracked the reshaping of American democracy towards one which encourages plutocratic behaviours by a privileged elite and values capitalist marketisation of what was once seen as a common good. Informed by human capital theory (see Sweetland, 1996 for an historical overview) and the values of neoliberalism, American schools and education policies have been given a false democratic veneer through what Cochrane-Smith et al. (2016; 2017) describe as "thin equity". Aptly drawing on metaphor and literal imagery, "thin equity" is the illusion of equity. They explain,

> When accountability initiatives work from a thin equity perspective, the assumption is that school factors, especially teachers, are the major sources of educational inequality. This means that access to good teachers is the solution to inequality. This viewpoint does not adequately acknowledge that inequality is rooted in and sustained by much larger, long-standing, and systemic societal inequities (Cochrane-Smith et al., 2017).

The reshaping of the educational sphere into a contestation of individuals against all others has had a pernicious effect upon the micro worlds of schools and the broader political construct of

democracy. Apple (2000) refers to the recasting of “common sense” (p. 22) by authoritarian populism under Reaganism and Thatcherism in the USA and UK respectfully.

Commonsensical narratives

What becomes commonsensical is the populist narrative. Reality is overwritten, and hard won gains of inclusion, equity, and respect become contested concepts to be battled over again. Within current accepted models of “common sense”, teachers are the most significant factor in an individual’s education and education should lead to gainful employment for the individual and a robust economy for the state. Should this not be occurring, say for instance, that a state’s economy is not competitive against others in a global marketplace, that local unemployment is high, that the cost of living is pushing people into penury, then all that must go back to a fault in the education system: ineffective teachers are to blame (Cochrane-Smith et al., 2018). It is a handy “common sense” argument that absolves the state for responsibility for its citizens and as such, reveals the great jeopardy of education and teachers within democratic societies.

This review of the challenges facing schools, teachers, and students has summarised how theoretical models of critical theory and sociology have articulated the problem of continuing inequalities within nation states as they manifest within the education sphere. This review now moves to consider practical considerations of teachers’ work in enacting the changes they hope to bring into their students’ worlds.

Inclusive Schools, Local Worlds: Ideals and Realities

Amongst the plethora of research discussed thus far much has focused on the hierarchical consequences of the state retreat from educational humanism and the negatives of transnational economic paradigms upon local schooling communities. As a counterpoint to these views it is important to review, if briefly, the arguments for valuing local knowledges, cultures, and values as ways of sustaining healthy school identities and providing necessary contextual details that give understanding into teachers’ pedagogical practices and values. These macro and micro

considerations provide a backdrop to understanding the circumstances of the school sites studied in this research on English teachers and their text choices.

Whose culture – whose literacies – counts?

Lisa Delpit's (1995/2006) writings on the discrimination and prejudice experienced by children of colour in the American school system is a seminal text in this area. *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom* (Delpit, 1995/2006) told the stories of African American, marginalised, and minority children in the classroom. The issue it addresses - of whose culture and whose literacies count - resonates further than just the United States and casts shadows for more than just the black children of Delpit's studies. Delpit's work points to the heart of the contemporary project of education by asking, *Whose humanity counts* in schools?

The 2006 edition adds deepening theorisation and problematisation of systemic and structural discrimination within American schools operationalised by a broader culture of embedded racism and white supremacy. Delpit (1995/2006) responds to the progressive liberalism that underpins critical education theory and is frank in her dismissal of 'do good' white teachers, and even black middle-class teachers, whose diversity work within the classroom shortchanges their students in their educational needs.

Delpit struggles both in the original text and even more so with a new introduction in the 2006 edition with the difficulties for teachers in setting high expectations, valuing local languages, cultures and customs, and teaching an academic literacy to their disadvantaged students in an inequitable society. She originally castigates teachers who fail to equip their students with requisite social capital and academic discourse arguing, "I do not believe that political change towards diversity can be effected from the bottom up...we must take the responsibility to *teach*, to provide for students who do not already possess them, the additional codes of power" (Delpit, 1995/2006, p. 40).

By the time Delpit writes the introduction for the 2006 edition she is in despair. Delpit wonders that even in teaching 'codes of power', it may be impossible for America's issues of racism,

discrimination and structural disadvantage to ever be overcome. Hurricane Katrina and the dichotomous visuals of abandoned Ninth Ward residents against rescued white Americans have tarnished the hope of Delpit's first edition. Her concerns resonate with the circumstances of the Australian teachers in their own 'beautiful wastelands' in this study and will be discussed later in this thesis.

Canonical values and 'character'

From England, Coles (2013) and Elliott (2014) have both explored the ways in which a canon of texts within the English national tradition have been used to assert character values of an older conservative state, one which requires the defence of a 'quality' body of works against the infiltration of an unnamed Other, a loss in national identity, and a slipping of economic prowess. They have been researching during a resurgence of a 'cultural heritage' model of English under the rhetoric of British parliamentarian and former Minister for Education Michael Gove. The Gove ideology presents a conservative argument for curriculum and pedagogy - one which places responsibility for social ills onto those surviving them while exhorting the saviour qualities of fine texts of ye old England. Despite the Govian rhetoric, Coles (2013) found for working-class students, study in Shakespearean texts becomes another experience of watching middle-class peers overtake them within schooling practices. In such an example classroom realities clash against government positioning of a prescriptive curriculum as the answer.

Contemporary influences: 'trigger warnings' and identity sensitivities

It is important to note that all epistemologies of subject English are open to the challenges of context and circumstances. In regard to the practice within critical literacy of encouraging students to reveal personal responses to texts, it is now understood that greater sensitivity and reflexivity are required from educators in regard to text selection and the ways in which students can and may respond (Coles, 2013; Luke, 2017; Carniel, 2018).

Luke (2017) and Carniel (2018) are attentive to the concept of 'trigger warning' within their classroom reflections where the benefit of having sociological awareness alongside a critical literacy epistemic approach becomes apparent. The term 'trigger warning' and its associated

behaviours reflect a flash point where reading and writing acts intersected with both personal and creative digital places: chat groups and fan fiction sites (Vingiano, 2014). Used to demark themes of possible trauma for potential readers, the arrival of such nuanced awareness that texts can and do provoke personal and individuated responses, is the latest progression in conceptualising responsibility and agency in educative reading practices.

> Perspectives on trigger warnings are diverse, driven by cultural and institutional contexts, as well as the intersection between personal and professional politics, but for the time being the problem appears to be here to stay, prompting further emotional, psychological and ethical considerations regarding the content we choose to embed in our courses, and how we present this to our students (Carniel, 2018, p. 144).

As Carniel (2018) observes, the 'personal is political' in contemporary forays of text selection and composition within and beyond educational spaces, encouraging from educators different ways of enacting respectful relationships with students and their worlds.

These intersections of theory and practice reflect some of the challenges the participants within this study of English teachers in New South Wales face in their daily interactions with students. Resonance and echoes can be felt by being attendant to the broader experiences of others within the field of Subject English, and it is for this reason, that the selection of examples from America, the United Kingdom, and the more recent translocatable term 'trigger warning' have been included.

'Feeling your way': Teaching is feeling. Feeling is caring

Considering the rapid social, economic, historical and philosophical changes described by Apple (2000; 2005; 2018), Ball (2009; 2013; 2015*b*), Kenway (2014), and Cochrane-Smith et al. (2016; 2017; 2018) it is no wonder that an exploration of teachers' emotional health has drawn the interest of researchers. Such a rapid and confrontational transformation of beliefs, values, and attitudes requires investigation. Andy Hargreaves (1996; 1998*a*; 1998*b*), and Ball (2003) too have contributed much to understanding the ways such changes in teachers' outer worlds have manifested within the emotional and inner landscapes of teachers' lives.

Emotional landscapes of care in teachers' work

Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) position research into the emotional landscape of teachers' inner worlds as something distinct from cognitive investigations into teachers' intellectual processes. They provide an understanding that caring for students is a deeply felt commitment for many teachers, and something that is seen by teachers as a significant part of the teaching role. In their review of historical and contemporary (at time of publication) literature on teaching through feelings, Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) highlight that too close an attentiveness to teacher feelings can do a disservice to the other aspects of a teacher's role. It can also blur deficiencies within particular school contexts or within a particular teacher's classroom. However, as long as a researcher adopts a critical attendance to the emotional aspects of teachers' work, conscious of neither extolling or excoriating teachers for their moods, an exploration of the emotional landscapes of teacher work can present valuable understandings for smaller and larger insights into school and teaching life.

Nel Noddings (1988/2013) posits an alternative frame of care work in education, one that comes from a feminist conception of teachers' work that has moral and chronological awareness. While Hargreaves is attendant to the stresses upon teachers, Noddings (1988/2013) suggests alternate approaches in order to resolve the disjunction between teachers' time and their desires to know their students well enough to truly and deeply educate them. Noddings (1988/2013) argues the construct of teachers' work as a year long period of teaching could be changed to allow for ongoing relationships in children and young people's lives.

Drawing on her own experiences researching and teaching in schools, Noddings proposes teachers could work with a particular group of students for up to three years - a proposition that embeds a maternality within teacher identity, drawing a closer relationship between child, parents/carers and teacher.

Hochschild's (2011) theorisation of emotional labour is a significant construct when investigating and exploring the emotional aspects of teaching work. Hochschild (2011) draws attention to the

power imbalances within emotional labour when one “regulates...private feelings and bring them in line with social expectations” in order to provide care or a service to others (p. 318). The marketisation of a required performance of mood in service and hospitality work forms much of Hochschild’s critiques. She notes that these ephemeral and transitory moments of human connection require such labour because they are a performance of care and interest in an(Other).

Hargreaves (1996) is interested by Hochschild’s theory but suggests that the care work of teachers holds greater meaning for those engaged in the act of emotional labour because of the nature of teachers’ work. In Hochschild’s (2011) example, Delta airline employees are encouraged to view passengers as family in order to generate a positive emotional response as they respond to ‘family member’ needs inflight. It is a superficial connection from one with another. From Hargreaves and Tucker’s (1991) work observing teachers in schools, they note that teachers do form deep emotional connections with their students and highly value their relationships with them.

There is a weight upon teachers in their emotional labour but it doesn’t come from the performativity as it does for service workers. Rather, it comes from the purposeful direction emotions can give to their work. “Teaching can become an unending process of constant giving” (p. 498). The danger of this for teachers, as Hargreaves (1998*b*) notes, is that the emotional labour from deeply caring, or at times, caring too much, can have debilitating consequences upon the teacher’s sense of self and purpose.

A broader investigation of contextual circumstances has deepened understandings of the emotional darkscapes of guilt, fear and shame within teachers’ work (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991; Hargreaves, 1996) The consequences of rapidly changing political realities (Ball, 2003), increased accountabilities (Buchanan, 2015; Moore & Clarke, 2016), sensitivity to inequalities (Isenbarger & Michalinos, 2006), and the impact of heroic perfectionism within the policy discourse on teacher quality (Bosso, 2017) have drawn study and have been found to weigh heavily upon teacher wellbeing and professional identity. These are all factors which have resonance for the teachers in this study.

As a counterpoint to the disturbing conclusions of some aspects of teacher wellbeing research, it is significant to note that while negative emotions can pull teachers down, positive emotions can also lift them up, and in doing so, contribute to the pleasures of teaching and learning (Hargreaves, 2000). As Hargreaves (1998*b*) exhorts,

> Good teachers are not just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy (Hargreaves, 1998*b*, p. 835).

This exhortation is given further stability in theory via Hargreaves (1998*b*) four understandings of teacher emotions within teaching practice:

> 1. Teaching is an emotional practice
> 2. Teaching and learning involve emotional understanding.
> 3. Teaching is a form of emotional labour.
> 4. Teachers' emotions are inseparable from their moral purposes and their ability to achieve those purposes.
>
> (Hargreaves, 1998*b*, p. 838)

Teacher emotions may be disguised in their daily work with students or they may be at the forefront and obvious to all in their classes. From researchers working in the emotional and affective domain it becomes clear that being attentive to teachers' emotional lives can be just as valuable as investigating other aspects of teaching work. For this reason, this section has attended to the field of emotional labour within teachers' work.

English teachers, Identity work and the moral purpose of teaching

From the wider contextualisations and philosophical theorisations of teachers' work this review now moves to explore the specific research on English teachers and their sense of identity and

locality under the purview of global, national and local forces. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) provided an expansive overview of how teacher identity can be conceived within quite varying discourses. In their 2009 review teacher identity can be construed contextually, narratively, independently or collaboratively. Teacher agency and teacher emotions are both identified by Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) as factors that can influence a teacher's sense of identity.

Typologies of English teachers

Marshall (2000) provides a typology of English teacher identities in her *English Teachers: The unofficial guide*, a text which helps demarcate particular types of English teachers in the UK by their values, attitudes, and beliefs. For instance, Marshall is able to pinpoint teachers as upholding competing identity traditions. She names them: "Old Grammarians A and B; Technicians A and B; Pragmatists; and Critical Literacy. The first four were broadly liberal humanist, the latter two, very loosely speaking, were cultural theorists" (Marshall, 2000, p. 55).

While Marshall (2000) presents and validates distinctively different typologies of English teacher identity through her *Unofficial Guide*, Doecke, Locke and Petrosky (2004) are rather more scornful of those who hold to canonical Leavisite interpretations of the subject, who in doing so, align their professional identity to an older model of English. Writing from an Australian perspective, they posit a critical literacy inclination as a far superior identity for contemporary teachers of English to adopt:

> The intellectual work we are envisaging obliges teachers to confront the connections between their own situation and that of others, to engage in more complex forms of critical reflection than are usually suggested by the literature on practitioner research, and to interrogate the social role they perform (Doecke, Locke & Petrosky, 2004, p. 110).

Doecke continues to write on the importance of English teachers to become more politically-conscious professionals in his co-written (2010) paper with Kostogriz and Illesca. The urgency from which the authors write becomes more vehement as the contextual landscape of English teachers work in Australia (and beyond) intensifies. The modality shifts: in 2004, Doecke et al. use the verbs

‘oblige’, confront’, ‘interrogate’. By 2010, Doecke et al. use the verbs ‘demands’, ‘monitor’ ‘question’:

> The kind of reflexivity that the historical moment demands of all of us involves monitoring the very words we speak, and questioning the ways that we have allowed the language of standards to mediate how we think about our work (Doecke, Kostogriz & Illesca, 2010, p. 97).

Adversarial necessities of English teachers’ work

From the Australian perspective of Doecke and his co-authors in 2004 and 2010 respectively, the English teacher identity is positioned as one which must become assertive if not cautiously adversarial to the broader political currents affecting their work. There is evidence in support of Doecke et al.’s concerns. From Goodwyn’s (2004) research with English teachers in England the language of policy and the Global Education Reform Movement is already becoming visible. Goodwyn (2004) observes that some English teachers in his study have started to identify Literacy as a separate teacher identity, perhaps creating an ‘English and’ identity.

As Goodwyn (2004) critiques, this movement has “great symbolic significance” (p. 123) and represents a distinctive conceptual shift for teachers of English. The reason for this ‘great symbolic significance’ can be found in O’Sullivan’s (2008) exploration of pre-service and experienced teaching identities. While her respondents professed to diverse and distinctive English teaching identities there was consensus in their depth of feelings. The “ardent personal meanings about English lie at the very heart of their professional view of themselves.” (O’Sullivan, 2008, p. 52) A great disrupture within the English teacher identity may yet come to pass if the professional sense of purpose that guides the affective and emotional work of many teachers past and present crumbles against the crushing forces of politicised accountability measures and the instrumentalist definitions of teacher quality.

For English teachers, the consequences of disruptive forces which challenge their curriculum and pedagogical beliefs and values may vary. Some teachers are more able to traverse the shifts that changing times bring (O’Sullivan, 2005). Others may be far more vulnerable and less able to

withstand ideologies which disrupt their sense of self (Alsup, 2006; Vetter, Myers & Hester, 2014; Vetter, Hartman & Reynolds, 2016). Attending to identity work and affective domains are necessary frames when considering attitudes, values and beliefs aspects of English teachers' work.

Subject English and English teachers in Australia

In Australia, States and Territories have responsibility for the provision of school curriculum. However, there has been growing interference from Federal governments who have tied national curriculum initiatives and national test regimes to funding streams that run from the Federal government to the State governments. As such, even though Australia can be said to have a States based system of education management, Federalism in Australian education has been increasing since at least the 1990s with punitive controls seeking to influence and guide State based actions in education (Hinz, 2016). At the same time, there are also vehement state based identities and strong defence of state devised education systems, particularly in the Eastern states of New South Wales and Victoria. Both these states rejected the National curriculum when presented with it, and processed federal requirements through their own state based education authorities.

This review will address the nature of English teaching in the State of New South Wales in order to reveal the specific circumstances that shape and guide English teachers' work within that particular domain.

Epistemology of Subject English in NSW, Australia

English, a subject area which draws in all students in the Australian state of New South Wales as a compulsory discipline for the full thirteen years of schooling is more than the teaching of literacy, literature and language.

It is from Annette Patterson's exhaustive work exploring and investigating the epistemological threads of English that the nature of English in New South Wales (henceforth NSW) becomes visible. Patterson (1990; 1992; 1995) has shown that the subject has utilitarian undertones - the first and most important aspect is the teaching of literacy and language to students - the lighting of the

light in the alphabet darkness. Yet, Patterson (1990; 1992; 1995) has also shown that the alchemy that transforms an illiterate child into a beginning reader and writer is more than utilitarian in purpose. She explains, among others, that from the outset, educators of English have taught children their letters so that those children can use that language and literacy knowledge to question, to explore, and to make sense of their world (Patterson, 1990; Patterson, 1992; Mellor & Patterson, 1994; Patterson, 1995). They impart language and literacy to develop purposeful action and the beginnings of an intellectual, critical life (Marshall, 2003; Green, Cormack & Patterson, 2013).

These democratic intentions within iterations of NSW English syllabi can trace their origins to the classical world of the Ancient Greeks and Romans (Arendt, 1958) and the colonial world of an Empire and a fledgling nation (Dale, 1992; Green & Cormack, 2008). Patterson (1992, 2000) urges researchers and readers to be attentive to these geographical, historical and political placements. She observes that the foundational skills of English are undertaken within a federated democracy and that this is a noteworthy consideration for those seeking to better understand the heteroglossic philosophies (Patterson, 1992; Patterson, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2005; O'Sullivan, Carroll & Cavanagh, 2008) of English in Australia and the ways in which they are enacted in practice.

The significance of subject English

English can be perceived by those within its folds as holding special significance in the development of children and young people as actualised individuals awakening to the possibilities of their [implicitly democratic] worlds (Bousted, 2002; Reid, 2003; Macken-Horarik, 2014; Goodwyn, 2016; Yandell, 2016). As a compulsory subject, English has also been criticised for its imbued classism (Teese, 1998; Macken-Horarik, 2011). Just as Delpit (1995/2006) addressed the paradoxical dilemma of how best to teach marginalised children the codes of power within a broader inequitable American society, English in NSW has raised concerns as to whether it truly serves all children fairly or equitably (Teese, 1998; Macken-Horarik, 2011).

> Students of high ability or symbolic capital (or both) are exposed to a curriculum rich in linguistically challenging texts, a range of interpretive practices and a strong emphasis on essayist literacy (cultural heritage and to a lesser extent, cultural analysis models). Students of less ability or symbolic capital are offered a curriculum

> of ‘thin gruel’: a diet of basic skills or personalist literacy activities or a combination of these (Macken-Horarik, 2011, p. 202).

Marginalised and/or disadvantaged students in receipt of a “curriculum rich in linguistically challenging texts” as many NSW specialists would suggest that they are (Mayes, 2010; Carter, 2013), are more in danger of being slipped onto a “thin gruel” curriculum track because of the pressure to improve their academic performance on narrow measures of accountability such the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) (Ferfolja & Margaret Vickers, 2010). Macken-Horarik’s (2011) fears may have some foundation within them although advocates for the NSW English approach may point to the social, cultural, and economic influences as factors for that.

Some researchers have suggested that the boundaries of national and state testing programs may have established narrower and different goals than that posited by the state English syllabi (Klenowski & Wyatt- Smith, 2012; Simpson Reeves, Exley and Dillon-Wallace, 2018). The competitive framing of the NSW examination culture leaves its own mark - one that cannot be accrued to NAPLAN alone. As Jogie (2015b) found in her research with NSW English teachers the hope embedded within the syllabus that textual experiences will lead to student self-actualisation and a refined appreciation of literature can be hard to realise. One English teacher in Jogie’s (2015b) study was particularly forthright: “‘students will appreciate and enjoy’ ...is absolute bullshit! … Students are only concerned about what they need to know to do well in their HSC, and if we [teachers] actually impart some meaning then that’s a bonus’” (p. 345).

Historical influences, philosophical leanings, contemporary activism and pragmatism working within the embodied psyche of English teachers shouldn’t be discounted. As Bethan Marshall (2000) explored in her text on the discursive philosophies of teachers of English, historical antecedents mix with culture, beliefs and contemporary times. Even as epistemology shifts to the currents of the times, not all prior thoughts are lost.

The cultural history of subject English in NSW

The history of subject English as a democratising force in the State of New South Wales through an ethos of free, secular schooling for all children is evident in the evolution of the subject and its place in the conception of the modern school (Dale, 1992; Patterson, 2000; Green & Cormack, 2008). Much of our knowledge in this area is thanks to Annette Patterson's incisive exploration of the historical archives. She explains:

> ...it was the subject of English that was the main beneficiary of a much older and widely dispersed set of instructional techniques and educational goals arranged around the cultivation of the personality or the character of the child, and around the construction of 'proper conduct'; that is, conduct befitting the citizen of a modern state
> (Patterson, 2000, p. 237).

From the turn of the twentieth century, the study of English in Australia included much of what children and adolescents study today. Shakespeare's plays, grammar recognition, and essay writing were part of the requirements. Of significance for understanding curriculum directives then was the following comment within the Examination Papers for teacher qualification: 'Note: The study of mere verbal minutiae and grammatical form is not required. The works should be read as literature for the sake of their form and content…' (Patterson, 2000, quoting 'Examination Papers leading to the Second Class Certificate for teacher qualification in NSW, 1906', p. 242).

Alterations in English syllabi architecture, NSW, Australia

According to the records, grammar and language experienced a resurgence in the 1940s (Patterson, 2000, p. 247) but never to the extent that linguistic knowledge overtook the transformational aim. Rather, the autonomy of English teachers to craft learning around their community, guided - not standardised - by a syllabus, occurred alongside a supervisory relationship characterised by "care and control" (Patterson, 2000, p. 252) created a cultural touchstone of what 'good' English teaching in New South Wales schools could be. This caring approach within the construct of the English teacher identity coincided with the increased reach of education to young people.

In their historical research of curriculum and policy documents and related public history archival materials Green, Hodgens and Luke (1994) observed that "between 1956 and 1964 the number of sixteen year olds in Australian secondary schools almost doubled," (p. 171). Within those figures, boys accounted for an in-school presence more than girls (Campbell & Proctor, 2011). The 'good' English teacher had the capacity to bridge technical know-how of language with the right 'architectural' professional insights that enabled students to traverse from their world to a wider one where literature are the paving stones of a civilised society.

The millenial turn brought a rather radical interpretation of English in NSW via the 2002 syllabus, one that brought much angst to some teachers of English even as others revelled in the intellectual stimulation and sense of self-determination for their subject (O'Sullivan, 2005). According to Howie (2008), in his reflection on subject epistemic enactment at the time, "English becomes whatever is being done in a particular NSW classroom at a given moment; or, rather, what is being done in all NSW English classrooms at any given moment." (p. 346)

In its acknowledgement of post-structural positions, the 2002 syllabus codified and validated prior and contemporary theoretical positions. Canonical texts retained their value and Marshall's (2000) Old Grammarians still had their place if, as Howie (2008) asserts, they could write localised student-centred programming to substantiate their position. At the same time, a teacher in the classroom next door could potentially be embracing the dynamism of multimodality, and, as long as syllabus outcomes and content were met, text selections and pedagogical approaches could stand in their difference. Exciting times perhaps, but threatening and unsettling.

As O'Sullivan (2005) found in her research with English teachers working in various locations across the state, such a dispersion of disciplinary values left some teachers disenchanted and disenfranchised from their own prior sense of professional accomplishment. These teachers sought authoritative guidance from Departments of Education, Professional Associations, and colleagues. They were adrift in a post-structural world, seeking clearer boundaries and signposts that they were teaching English, doing English, the right way.

In being sensitive to historical patterns within curriculum and disciplinary construction, researchers (and teachers) are more able to make sense of the heteroglossic conceptions of the subject in contemporary discourse and culture (Beavis, 2003).

Leavisites and Personal Growth Models of English in NSW, Australia

Even though Australia is a distinctive country with its own identity, schooling and curriculum influences have drawn from her Commonwealth ancestry. Sawyer (2010) and Patterson (2000) have both explored the historiography of English curriculum formation in NSW. Sawyer's (2010) investigation of the structural approach of James Moffett within the English syllabus of the 1970s draws attention to the shift from privileging skills in parsing grammar to engaging with the rhetorical consequences of 'doing' English. Sawyer (2010) writes,

> Moffett's work explicitly sought to move English from a focus on small units of meaning (words, sentences) to whole units of discourse, with the latter both subsuming the operation of the smaller units and giving them a meaningful context within which to be discussed – to move English, as it were, from 'grammar' to 'rhetoric' (p. 290).

Both Sawyer (2010) and Patterson (2000) track the intellectual flourishing amongst proponents of subject English in the 1970s and, amongst others (see also Goodwyn, 2016) track the influence of John Dixon's model of Personal Growth as a counter to the traditional authoritative Leavisite tradition that had previously held sway upon English curriculum documents in NSW. The Leavisite tradition had been an import from England and, as a philosophical view, can still be found amongst contemporary teachers of English in NSW, especially those whose formative years were spent in England (Cheung, 2015).

The embedded democratic values within the personal growth model of English and then later again, from post-modern and post-structural influences, seem to have dampened the Leavisite view within the curriculum culture of NSW although not without some controversy. As McGraw (2010) details of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the era of -isms, with postmodernism, poststructuralism and

postcolonialism presenting inclusively ‘woke’ models of subject English, conservative voices were whipped into fresh indignations that students were losing out because of subject content, in this case, text choices and positioning. The then-ArchBishop of Sydney Cardinal George Pell extolled:

> “Too much time is given to narratives about sad and dysfunctional individuals and shattered families…students are not forced to confront and learn from the great English classics but are allowed to sink towards the sordid and the dismal rather than strive towards the good and the beautiful (Pell, 2005, quoted in McGraw, 2010, p 136).

So perhaps, Leavis haunts some levels of NSW education politics, manifesting within the cultural wars of school curriculum (Brabazon, 2006), even though contemporary life and values seem to have left him far behind.

On English teachers and texts: Now

The current NSW K-10 English syllabus (Board of Studies, 2012a) provides teachers with flexibility and professional autonomy to choose texts for study for their students. It is not until the final year of study, Year 12 English, that texts for study are prescribed for examination purposes. Those final examinations can cause a ripple effect down the earlier years in regard to text choices. Strategies can be applied in order to maximise student performance. A pursuit of complementary consolidation can be in effect, with text choices year by year advancing student knowledges of particular topic areas, authors, canonical areas, or eras. In other cases, text selection can be limited pragmatically to whatever is in the book room.

In effort to encourage a flourishing culture of reading texts within English classrooms, the NSW Education Standards Authority mandates that across the secondary stages of English prior to the senior years - Stages 4 and 5, Years 7-10, students must have access to a broad range of texts from domestic and international voices (Board of Studies, 2012a, p. 26). Texts must include traditional prose, poetry, and drama texts, as well as digital and multimedia texts, picture books, graphic novels, and everyday workplace texts (Board of Studies, 2012a, p. 26). There is a recommended

text list, the *Suggested Texts for the NSW K-10 Syllabus* (Board of Studies, 2012b), mixing contemporary and canonical choices, and becoming ever more out of date with each passing year.

Despite the overarching curriculum goals of NESA, when it comes to autonomy within teacher text choices for Years 7-10, it can often be a teachers' broader philosophical understanding as to the nature and significance of the subject English (O'Sullivan, 2005; Jogie, 2015*a*; 2015*b*; Cheung, 2016) that guides their selection for student study.

The (relative) privilege of English teachers in NSW

In New South Wales, English is a compulsory subject from Kindergarten to Year 12, the final year of secondary schooling. As such, Secondary English teachers experience a privileged position within their high school communities because of one key pragmatic factor: English teachers with permanent positions have guaranteed tenure. While school numbers may fluctuate as a whole, a particular concern for any school experiencing residualisation, the English faculty operates from a space of relative safety. They are required to teach every student from Years 7 to 12. The consequence of this is that English teachers don't need to promote or sell their subject during school subject selection evenings nor do they need to engage in the soft diplomacy of the electives in order for members of the English faculty to sustain their position of employment in the school.

In theory, the job security from the structural positioning of English as compulsory could provide English teachers with a robust place from which to develop a localised educational philosophy and curriculum under the framework of the NSW K-10 English Syllabus and the NSW Senior Syllabi. In pursuing this theory within practical models it becomes clear English faculties and/or individual teachers present variable and reactive responses to broader issues beyond their local spheres (O'Sullivan, 2005; Portelli & O'Sullivan, 2016; Simpson Reeves, Exley and Dillon-Wallace, 2018). This may be because English faculties and individual English teachers have arguably been wedged by the narrowness of accountability controls (Brennan, 2009; Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009; Lingard, 2010; Lingard, 2011; Gorur, 2016), signified by the presence of high stakes tests like the National Assessment Program - Literacy And Numeracy and the Higher School Certificate,

alongside nearly forty years of a message of ‘literacy failures’ within a broader media discourse (Boomer, 1983; O’Neill, 1991; Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1997; Gannon & Sawyer, 2007; Snyder, 2008; Shine, 2015; Mockler, 2016).

Cautious responders

In her distinctive dissertation research on English teachers in response to curriculum change, O’Sullivan (2005) concluded English teachers are cautious responders, despite their depth of subject knowledge and pedagogical acumen. In her research, teachers with years of experience were so dismayed and anxious by the displacement of an older syllabus that they sought ‘authorative voices’ and ‘authorative resources’ to bolster their hesitation amidst a perceived loss of firm ground beneath them. O’Sullivan (2005) observed, “Although the teachers assert confidence about their subject paradigm and their professional role, they cry out for assurance and guidance in teaching the new syllabus” (p. 287).

In more contemporary research with English teachers in the Australian state of Queensland it became apparent that the presence of NAPLAN had been curtailing implementation of the English syllabus in lieu of substantial extra practice and preparation for the national tests (see Simpson Reeves, Exley and Dillon-Wallace, 2018). The ways in which NAPLAN performance becomes an annual media event of winners (with implied silent losers) may be part of why a cautious obedience seems to be a character trait of more than a few current teachers of English.

Being publically visible on the *My School* website comes with the distinct association of accountability to employer, to parents, and to students. The guidance for English teachers may be narrowing as they are presented within powerful media representations of ‘good’ teachers, alongside a structural model of formal accountability, the role modelling of the public school teachers’ union: The NSW Teachers Federation, and their professional association: The English Teachers Association of NSW.

The English Teachers Association of NSW has been carefully navigating the political minefields of literacy and cultural wars that have resurged during the mid and latter years of the twenty teens.

Their communication model has been one which errs towards acceptance of the status quo and tacit neutrality in regard to much contemporary education policy. The NSW Teachers Federation, given their advocacy mandate, is far more adversarial. A particular incident is a useful example to explain the context in which secondary English teachers make text decisions.

LGBTQI in English: NSW Teachers Federation takes a stand

In 2015, two years before the Australian public voted in favour of same-sex marriage in a national plebiscite, the issue of school autonomy and text selections came to a head. Twenty NSW schools planned to show a documentary film titled *Gayby Baby* on 'Wear it Purple' Day, a day that celebrates and affirms the identities of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) people.

As Jeffries (2019) investigates, there was a moral panic, led by conservative media populists on talkback radio and in the tabloid press. This culminated in the then-Education Minister laying down policy 'on the run' and 'banning' the film from being shown in school hours. Minister Piccoli said at the time, "During school hours parents rightly expect that students will be doing curriculum subjects and that's what I expect too. Not movies. Not movies like this. I know it's a very sensitive issue" (Piccoli quoted in Smith, 2015, referenced by Jeffries, 2019, p. 82). As Jeffries (2019) clarifies, the Minister later backtracked through the press and indicated it wasn't a ban on the text per se, but a clarification for schools that learning time should only be used in curriculum appropriate ways. The ambiguity within such an expectation combined with ministerial intervention into a school initiative was probably enough to provide some push back upon any teacher thinking about using texts with LGBTQI themes.

The NSW Teachers Federation responded by launching a teaching and learning program for the text. The resource was woven to the PDHPE curriculum and the event was celebrated with the Federal Opposition Minister for Education delivering the keynote at a launch (NSW Teachers Federation, 2016).

The text was also highly applicable to aspects of the NSW English curriculum. Two year later, the union acknowledged this (see NSW Teachers Federation, 2018) but with an addendum to closely review the NSW Education Department's Controversial Issues in School Policy (2007/2017). The inclusion of LGBTQI representation within secular education accompanied by an advisory flag by the union does not do much to promote teacher confidence in the use of such texts but the union, more so than the professional association, took a public stance at the time that supported teacher autonomy within text choices.

In late 2018, the national journal for the Australian Association of the teaching of English (AATE), *English in Australia*, published a special issue #53:2 with a focus on LGBTQI texts and issues of representation and inclusion in English (McGraw, Van Leent, & Doecke, 2018). By early February 2019, the populist media became aware of the journal's stance and were again presenting critiques against the inclusion of LGBTQI texts within the English classroom. "Identity politics on steroids, and it's really destroying what's most valuable in literature," says education commentator Kevin Donnelly for Sky News Australia (2019, Feb 7). Donnelly may be a populist voice within Australian mass media but his view that texts identified by conservatives as being about 'identity politics' was reflected in the speed of ministerial intervention in regard to the showing of *Gayby Baby* at Burwood Girls High School.

This presents a challenge to secondary English teachers who know their own syllabus requires Stage 5 students to "read, listen to, and view a variety of texts that are appropriate to their needs, interests and abilities" (BOS, 2012, p. 27). Understanding one's own gender identity and sexuality and that of others may be of some concern to 14-16 year old students. It can also be highly relevant for students of this age to develop their media literacy in order to comprehend and perhaps contribute to policy debates in regard to their own gender and sexual identities. As Westcott (2018) argues, "The work of English teachers is crucial in building young people's capacities to critically analyse political debate around policy and speak back to powerful discourses that directly invoke their own subjectivities" (p. 57). While Westcott (2018) presents a powerful 'call to arms', the experiences of recent history present a challenging environment for English teachers in which to make their text choices for classroom study.

English teacher temperaments: nervous dispositions

These examples point to a timid disposition within English teacher identities, and perhaps sound reasons for understanding why that may be so. The good students of the classroom, of which many an English teacher once may have been, turn out to be anxious rule followers and approval seekers in their professional roles. This seems to occur even though the 'rules' or characteristics of 'good' have been given repeated shines through a linguistic turn of 'quality' teaching during the late 1990s and early 2000s (see Gore, Griffiths & Ladwig, 2004; Ladwig, 2005) and in more contemporary times through a framework of 'Highly Accomplished' and 'Lead Teacher' performance awards (Ingvarson, 2010). As early as 2006, Parr and Bellis could point to the "fetishising of 'the quality teacher' and the confident belief that it is only quality teaching that makes a difference, 'regardless of [student] backgrounds'" (p. 8). More than a decade later, frameworks of 'good' teaching abound, crossing cultures and eras (Connell, 2009; Cochran-Smith et al., 2017; 2018).

The Quality Teaching Model

Somehow, despite repeated proformas of excellence offered within the boundaries of the NSW teaching profession, 'quality', 'excellence', and 'good' seem to be elusive models for everyday teachers to embody, at least within the broader social and media discourse of education and perhaps within the mindset of many in the profession. This is despite NSW trialling a Quality Teaching Model of attentive and reflective observational practice during the 2000s (Gore, 2001; Gore & Ladwig, 2004). As a study within the NSW HSIE field concluded, even expert teachers "appeared to be "'teaching defensively' (by analogy with 'driving defensively') or 'playing it safe'" even when actively working under the NSW Quality Teaching Model (Edge, 2012, p. 158).

The ability of English teachers as a group to withstand repeated cycles of moral panic and attack is questionable. Retirement is gutting an older activist generation (Mulheron, 2014) and newer graduates have come of age in an era where union membership has declined (Bowden, 2017). Those that are new to the profession come to it after hurdling repeated obstacles designed to dissuade all but the persistent: literacy and numeracy tests to pass, frequent assaults on their competencies and knowledges in the media, and an employment culture overly fond of temporary and casual contracts. This occurs alongside the 'metrification' of the teachers' role. Data analysis of

quantitative measures is a key part of every secondary teacher's role now, as is improving student performance against their prior levels of competencies. All of this takes place within a culture of visibility of which the *MySchool* website forms just a part of a larger panopticon. A broader view reveals higher cost of living pressures and increased precarity for a profession that seemed grounded in the very stability of the physical schoolhouse. The very instability within their working lives makes it hard for the suspicion of English teachers as counter-cultural agents to be realised. These factors make the employment privileges of English teachers relative to their (hidden) perceptions of professional deficit.

Fifth columnists and weak links

The qualities of the 'good' English teacher have been in flux for at least the past fifty years if not longer: recursive waves of political, social and cultural influences have provoked malleable definitions and forms of what it is that a 'good' English teacher does (Sawyer, 2008; Connell, 2009; Lingard, 2011; Thompson & Cook, 2014; Gorur, 2016; Stacy, 2017). What remains constant is that the English teacher per se remains a thorn in the side of a suspicious polity (see Green, 1999; Brennan, 2009; Green & Reid, 2012 on teachers generally; McKnight, 2015 on English teachers specifically).

English teachers as fifth columnists of the State may seem like the daydream of one on a hot and sticky final period Friday, generated perhaps in the aftermath of a lesson on Suzanne Collins blockbuster novel series *The Hunger Games*. Yet as entertaining an image as that may be to some, in some respects the media and polity at large have positioned the English teacher as a weak link (see McGraw, 2010) in an economic model of schooling which aims to send young Australians into adulthood equipped with self-sufficiency and a "fair dinkum" approach to hard work (Yates, 2009; Lingard & McGregor, 2014).

In real terms, the political goals for federal and state governments are low youth unemployment, a swatch of workers from whom to collect taxes, and a declining necessity for any individual to receive government assistance via the ever-shrinking social security and public pensions (Connell, 2013). As O'Neill (1991) rather dryly observes, "The demand for functional literacy skills re-

emerges, usually in times of economic recession when problems with the national economy or youth unemployment are sheeted home to the failure of schools (i.e. English teachers) to inculcate these skills" (p. 61).

The perception of a crisis within literacy has the potential to creep at the edges of the profession itself and prompt a return to narrower considerations of students as learners within and beyond school. As O'Sullivan (2016), McGraw (2010) and O'Neill (1991) reported, the rhetoric of a literacy crisis can so easily be flipped into the regressive argument that there should be one intellectually stimulating subject for those more capable, and a functional work-orientated literacies stream for the less academically capable. Note the slippage of years in the prior citations. Time slips and students become adults but the literacy 'crisis' is never resolved. The danger in this discourse of 'crisis' of course is that as Teese (1998), May and Proctor (2013), and Cheung (2018) have explored, marginalizations and disadvantages very quickly splinter potential cohorts of young people. Those who start life with more advantages end up being streamed as academically sound, those with the most disadvantages are more likely to be perceived as lacking the skills to be successful in academic surroundings.

The contemporary positioning of English teachers if not as social engineers wearing rose-tinted glasses but as inept or ignorant technicians has historical antecedents: the arguments can be tracked back at least to the 1970s in response to the seminal changes the 1971 English syllabus brought to the field. As Sawyer (2008) details, the 1971 syllabus provided the scope for English teachers to move beyond the teaching of systemic grammar to reshape the subject as one which positioned students as active users, moulders and creators of language in action. Yet, shortly after the changes were brought in, agitation arose as to whether teachers could teach language in action without the systemic rule book that the teaching of grammar had provided.

Politicisation of English teaching and curriculum

Further syllabus iterations in 1987 and 2002 that expanded the understanding of students as users and shapers of language by stretching across a range of traditional and emerging mediums were also followed by concerns over English teachers who struggled to respond and change their practice (see

O'Sullivan, 2005; Sawyer, 2008; McGraw, 2010). The latter syllabi changes were also marked by increased politicisation of teaching and curriculum. It's not that politics and curriculum change always went hand in hand. That would be a generalisation of the relationship between educational change and the state in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

But it is worth observing the way politicians closely marked the progress of curriculum changes and used the spectre of change to divide teachers in their service of students from the parents and communities of whom in their teaching they served and continue to serve (Braithwaite, 1992; Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1997; Mulheron, 2014). The consequence of yet another moral panic over literacy is control of the discourse at large, "conventional wisdom is reconstructed under the assumption that there *is* a literacy 'problem', and that responsibility lies squarely with educational systems and educators" (Green, Hodgens & Luke, 1997, p.9).

NAPLAN and the My School website

In Gannon's (2013) view, policy instruments like NAPLAN tests and their public face via the *My School* website can be perceived as blunt implements of bureaucratic violence upon teaching praxis and vulnerable communities - a point that Cormack and Comber (2013) are in agreement with:

> One key problem with the discourse of data and its various technologies, is that the materiality of poverty and place is backgrounded while reconstituting teachers' work as sets of generic techniques. In this regime, schools are responsible for failure and left with the problems that are identified through standardised tests (Cormack & Comber, 2013, p. 87).

Tests and assessments per se have a place within English classrooms. They undoubtedly aid English teachers in their transformative work with students. The problem as researchers have identified (Cormack & Comber, 2013; Weaven & Clark, 2015) is that the data from high stakes tests like NAPLAN has been used in ways which browbeat English teachers for structural and systemic challenges beyond the capacity for individuals to overcome. Standardisation of learning has been one byproduct of this violence. But standardisation hides a more alarming problem: that English teachers are becoming reluctant to take responsibility for their own curriculum and respond to the

real children in their classrooms. In Weaven and Clark's (2015) research they queried why this could be:

> We remain unsure about why teachers seem reluctant to take charge of their own work, and claim greater pedagogical agency, rather than look for external state intervention
> (Weaven & Clark, 2015, p. 169).

And Cormack and Comber (2013) provided part of the answer:

> With limited resources at their disposal, teachers and school leaders have little choice …
> (Cormack & Comber, 2013, p. 87).

This refrain, that young people are being under-served by their studies in English because of a deficit within their teachers and/or the subject itself becomes the switch from which teachers of English learn the flinch and which curtails some of the privileges and sense of professional confidence that their position in schools could otherwise bring.

Speaking of experience...

A disparity in regard to who 'gets to speak' can be perceived between the profession and those that speak of the profession and for the profession. Individual English teachers rarely get the opportunity to represent themselves and their experiences within the broader media landscape. Those working in NSW public education can find their public lives are circumscribed by the Code of Conduct which requires an apolitical stance. Contributions to research become a relatively safe space from which to speak: anonymity plays a part in that safety.

Those that do write from school sites with the rare quality of bringing together lived experience with scholarly research, as Thomson (2003) did in her phenomenal work *Schooling the Rustbelt Kids: Making the Difference in Changing Times* risk becoming isolated voices that, given time, are

forgotten by a public whose experiences of disadvantage they aimed to represented - if, they were ever reached in the first place.

Advocates of public education (Bonnor & Caro, 2012) and journalists (McKew, 2014) have ventured into the publishing marketplace, writing authoritatively, or at least persuasively, on 'good' teaching and 'good' schooling, yet only Bonner could call upon classroom experience as a backgrounding guide. Bonnor, like Thomson, navigated the written world with a Principalship behind him.

More recently, Stroud (2018) has used the form of the personal essay and memoir to share her experiences of demoralisation and defeat in teaching: a primary teacher beaten out of the system by the forces researchers like Ball (2003; 2015), Hargreaves and Connell (2009; 2013; see also Connell et al. 1982) have spent decades articulating, but of which many an ordinary teacher remains unaware.

There is something problematic with the popularisation of education within the trade publishing medium and, more recently, as reality docu-dramas (Mockler, 2019). Sound bite chapters and reality tv may sell a story but it's one that the lacks substance, nuance, and depth of history, culture, philosophy and theory, leading readers and responders astray even as their reading and viewing encourages a sense of understanding.

Teachers as intellectual workers

Within an Australian context, Connell (2009) and Brennan (2009) have helped distinguish the shape and form of a 'good' teacher as a historical-political construct of the State and, in doing so, helped to explore more contemporary models as well. Traditionally, the 'good' teacher, if male, was an intellectually robust professional; if female, she was an idealised mother figure for her students (Connell, 2009). Historian Noeline Kyle (1986) provides more richly detailed visions of NSW women in education in practice as subverting and transcending the boundaries and expectations the State placed upon them.

Biesta and "acts of creation" in education

What becomes evident is that teachers, whether in service to the State in public education, or in service to their own distinct communities by working in the Catholic or Independent schooling sectors, have long had to grapple with identity pressures about what it is that they actually do in their work and the values their actions reflect. The educational philosopher Gert Biesta's (2015) exploration of existential considerations of education becomes useful here. Biesta (2015) explores what education is, how it looks, when it happens, and when it does not, and provides a theoretical grounding when considering the deeper nature of teachers' intellectual work (See Biesta, 2007; Biesta, 2013; Biesta, 2016a; Biesta, 2016b; Biesta, 2016c; Biesta, 2017; Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, 2017).

From Biesta's (2013) work exploring the educational philosophies of John Dewey comes a careful consideration of how education emerges rather than simply exists. Biesta (2013) is clearly engaging with Arendt's (1958) concept of natality in this theorising, explaining, "I am interested...in education as an act of creation, that is, as an act of bringing something new into the world" (p.11).

In exploring Dewey's (1925) concept that education arrives through the act of communication, Biesta articulates the way that the emergence of expressed language through communicative acts becomes the catalyst for educative potential. "Education...is about those situations in one which really shares or participates in a common activity...participation has the potential to generate *a particular kind of learning*, namely the learning that leads to a transformation of ideas, emotions, and understanding… (Biesta, 2013, p. 32, *italics in original text*). In this conception of education it is of vital importance that the role and place of the teacher is understood. Biesta (2013) explains, "...we should understand the teacher as someone who, in the most general sense, brings something new to the educational situation, something that was not already there" (p. 44).

This paradigmatic conception of education is relational, dialogical, respectful, and open to the risk that the experiment of education can fail. That all the elements of student, teacher, place, space, and content can come together and still, nothing of value may emerge. A student may perform to an

exemplary level in their final exams but if they haven't thought for themselves, if nothing new for them emerged in their educational experiences, then their education has been a failure. Dangerous ideas, especially when flipped towards less idealistic scenarios, perhaps of students failing to progress against externally mandated targets of growth and achievement.

In the danger of Biesta's conception, in the frisson of risk, comes a deeper realisation that education is a training of a mind, for whatever comes next, for whatever world that mind, perhaps in collective action with others, can bring into being. And it is the teacher, whose presence as part of the catalyst of emergence, who is a necessary component of birth. Not for their generic presence, 'the most important factor affecting student performance is the teacher' (Hattie, 2008) but for their distinctiveness that brings into being educative moments for their students in times and places that even if replicated will never exist for the same people in the same way.

Biesta (2013) theorises that when teachers have the capacity to engage in their intellectual work they are able to utilise their specialised knowledges to respond in nuanced and agentic ways on behalf of their students even though the specialised judgements that teachers make may not be clear to outsiders.

The inner world of teacher intellectual work is at odds with current practice of making visible (Hattie, 2008) through verbal articulations to students (and observers) the outwardly tangible signs of teaching as they are happening. Perhaps the theory of Biesta (2013) shouldn't be so marked against those of Hattie's (2008) in binary opposition. Neither theorist may appreciate it although Biesta (2013) does suggest a willingness to engage when he writes, "...there is a strong tendency in the discussion about the role of evidence in education to suggest that such evidence should actually replace and overrule professional judgement, thus leading to a disempowerment of teachers and veering toward a culture of educational positivism" (p. 120).

Biesta (2015) travels in a theoretical branch line shared with Dewey (1910; 1916; 1925) and Arendt (1958): a line that encourages the *thinking* teacher. In this domain, the power of thought is the full inhalation of freedom. This line shares attributes with critical theorists (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991;

Giroux, 2003; Giroux, 2004) who also value freedom to question and interrogate why it is certain values and actions are held up above others and to explore power dynamics within such concepts.

Instrumentalising Hattie

To crudely summarise the instrumentalist approach to the concept of thinking teachers, the Hattie (2008) line, teachers don't need to think because researchers and others more knowledgeable than those at the front of the class have done the thinking for them. Effect sizes have been calculated. In an interview, Hattie explained this position as:

> "Researching is a particular skill," he told TES. "Some of us took years to gain that skill. Asking teachers to be researchers? They are not. I want to put the emphasis on teachers as evaluators of their impact. Be skilled at that. Whereas the whole research side, leave that to the academics"
> (Stewart, 2015, n.p.).

Hattie's theory of visible learning has become so embraced within certain circles of educational management in NSW that the key messages have arguably become more about obedience to the script than freedom to think (Eacott, 2017). Hattie's repeated appointment as Chair of the board of the national government body, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), with the responsibility to lead educational thought and action in the country can be seen as positioning his theories of education as the model for all Australian States and Territories to follow.

As Fitzgerald and Savage (2013) explain, "The management pedagogies that permeate schools are powerful discourses in which no other alternative is open for debate, discussion or action...Dissent and disagreement are neither encouraged nor tolerated…" (p.137). These are tense times for thinking teachers. Sachs (2016) warns:

> When teachers' judgement and decision-making is questioned, it diminishes teachers' self-confidence, creativity and the moral purpose that sustain them in ambiguous and difficult situations. It also corrodes their ability to act with confidence and authority and weakens Trust (p. 423).

The theory of the teacher as an intellectual worker - rather than a technician, a facilitator, or a babysitter, becomes one that is itself under pressure within the new managerialism of contemporary times. Theory becomes a shield and a sword from which to defend professional values. As hooks (1994) reminds, "Theory is not inherently healing, liberatory, or revolutionary. It fulfills this function only when we ask that it do so *and direct our theorising towards this end*" (p. 61, *italics mine*).

To speak with theory and to share theorists like Biesta, Dewey, Arendt and Connell is to reclaim space for teachers to be intellectual workers and to defend that identity from those who seek to displace such behaviours from contemporary school culture.

Conclusion

This review of the literature pertinent to English teachers' work and the manifestation of the disciplinary identity has included historical, philosophical, and cultural materials to best reveal the transnational and local influences that operate within and beyond spatial geographies, and state and national identities. The overview has tracked developments over the twentieth and early twenty first century in the Western democracies of the United States of America and England before addressing more closely the situation within the Australian state of NSW.

By returning to Romantic origins and the revolutionary written acts of Wordsworth, Wollstonecraft, and their like-minded peers, this review has explored the continuing struggle over the nature and purpose of mass education. The Romantics and progressive Humanists placed the child at the heart of mass education: attendance to a child's needs, to their moral, intellectual, and creative development would lead to a well-rounded adult who could contribute to their society. Dewey (1916, 1925) attempted to overcome the challenges of difference by pointing to the importance of being sensitive to the specific features of a child - their interests, their knowledges and then, guiding the child towards an understanding of broader culture too.

Du Bois (1925) reminds us that universality within ‘broader culture’ is a loaded concept - that there can be no universality within education while oppression and iniquity remains a feature of democratic societies. These themes continued to resonate throughout the intellectual and philosophical movements of the twentieth century. Dixon (1967/75) and his contemporaries picked up the work in their meeting at Dartmouth, as did the New London Group (1996), developing particular theories for subject English. Apple (1986), Connell (1989) Ball (1993b) and Kenway (2014) developed significant work that explored, and continues to explore, the forces above and beyond specific disciplinary borders of schooling that have a momentum within schools.

The tensions between educational purpose and nature, particularly within the scope of subject English, remain high. This history has elucidated what has come before in order to best reveal what has come to pass in the experiences of the English teachers in this study of their work in NSW secondary schools.

CHAPTER THREE:

Ways of Becoming Story(fied)

We do not see narrative coherence as the orderly linking together of experiences into a neat chronological frame. Instead, it arises from sitting with stories, with each other, as we seek to compose ourselves in relation.
(Caine, Estefan, & Clandinin, 2013, p. 579).

Methodology

Within a context of rapid policy changes (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009; Lingard, 2010; Lingard, 2011), increasing scrutiny of teachers' work (Thomson & Cook, 2014; Shine, 2015), and a continuing moral panic over falling education standards (Mockler, 2016; Baroutsis & Lingard, 2017), this study aims to investigate the types of popular culture texts that a small group of secondary English teachers are choosing to include within their classrooms, and their reasons for doing so.

This exploration does not aim to present generalisable findings that can contribute to a 'what works' approach. That politicised panacea space of educational research has received a fair share of critique, perhaps most memorably by McKnight's (2016) feminist interpretation of the phallic presence of 'big stick' approaches. McKnight and Whitburn (2018), and Eacott (2018) with his more Marxist-inclined interpretation of the Visible Learning phenomenon, highlight the pervasiveness that has placed the spirit of John Hattie and his numerous Pearson publications within many Australian schools. Yet, amongst certain educational policymakers and researchers, a positivist lens of quantitative measures holds its appeal, the "desire for rigor and concrete data is essential", argues Bergeron (2017, n.p.). There are not many Australian politicians from either of the two major parties who would disagree, harnessed as they are to economic understandings of worth and value.

This research aims to present the quiet stories of English teachers getting on with the job of educating their students within rather tempestuous teaching times (Simpson Reeves, Exley & Dillon Wallace, 2018). In doing so, the study presents the kinds of nuances, complexities, and cultural

details that are more often lost or subsumed by louder voices on State and Federal educational stages.

The research question

The research question posed for this investigation is:

- For what reasons do secondary English teachers select and use popular culture texts with their Stage 5 English students?

Narrative inquiry was selected as the theoretical lens and methodological approach to answer this research question. Narrative inquiry is a way of hearing from people who have chosen to share their particular memories and experiences with a researcher in order for others to better understand the intricacies of distinctive social worlds (Schon, 1983; Clandinin & Connelly, 1990).

Narrative inquiry is about understanding human experience. Within this methodology, the research question guides the researcher in arranging the types of memories sought from participants, who are in turn, prompted in their recollections by semi-structured interview questions. On a deeper level, narrative inquiry is both method and methodology (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990; Clandinin & Murphy, 2009; Caine, Estefan & Clandinin, 2013). There is an ethical and relational understanding within this work alongside a belief that narrative inquiry "requires particular kinds of wakefulness" (Clandinin, Pushor, Murray Orr, 2007, p. 21). This alertness positions the researcher to be reflective and reflexive, attuned to their participants, to the stories that are revealed, and to the tensions that can arise when aiming to capture human experience and reveal aspects of this experience to others through the prose and poetic form.

Qualitative Research

A qualitative research paradigm was deemed most significant to the ambition of exploring the "manifold and controversial human world" (Kvale, 1996, p.3). It is the qualitative paradigm that captures the nuances within teachers' lives by providing the researcher with an ontological frame and epistemic base that enables them to explore the contextual realities of participants within a

study. In contrast to some of the design rigidity within quantitative methodologies, qualitative research offers dynamic flexibility. This provides researchers with processes that permit deviation from their planned data gathering methods to follow data threads that may more deeply explore in timely and intuitive ways attitudes, beliefs, memories, experiences and behaviours (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013). More significantly, qualitative research is operationalised from an ontology that is attentive to the contextual details that shape and influence human experience. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) have criticised the interpretivist dimensions of qualitative research because such studies can become "hermetically sealed from the world outside the participants' theatre of activity" (p. 21). Such a view does a disservice to the role qualitative research plays in providing windows and reflections into the lives and experiences of others.

The windows/reflection metaphor provides an answer to Cohen et al.'s (2011) critique of 'hermetically sealed' studies, a figurative technique in itself that holds within it the implication that many such qualitative studies are never read. As Bishop (1990) reminds, "Through the mirror of literature we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, of reaffirming our place in the world and our society" (p.11). Qualitative research is meant to be attended to, but, much like a book, a study and its findings are not for everyone. Rather, qualitative research is for the right 'someone' – that person or group of people who are seeking a window onto a new view or reflection of something familiar as they search within the infinite multitude of human experiences that exist across time and space.

The goal of this research into teacher text choices was not to merely access a list of recommended titles with teacher evaluations as to whether a text was suitable (or not) for classroom use. Such a goal would play to a 'what works' rhetoric and in doing so, would uncouple the expertise and experience of these investigated teachers within their respective contexts.

Qualitative research provides the depth of inquiry to investigate the 'why?' embedded within the research question. A text may be deemed suitable for the discipline of English, but why for this class, why for this teacher, why in this time and place?

According to Cooper and White (2012), qualitative research:

> considers reality not as a fixed, objective, and constant construct but as a more fluid, ephemeral, and ever-changing thing. As a result of this mode of conception, there are a multiplicity of constructions of reality, limited only by one's life events, historical facts, culture, and imagination (p.6).

It is qualitative research that provides the necessary epistemology and ontology to grasp the distinctiveness of individuals and their particular experiences; that will enable the 'why' to be more thoroughly explored. These kinds of investigations are vital for educational territories like the Australian state of New South Wales where educational positivism holds such sway on policy and political levels (Singhal, 2019).

In choosing narrative inquiry over other qualitative methods it is important to clarify it is not that grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2014) or other potential qualitative choices such as ethnography are lacking. Each methodological domain has its own ethical prescripts and ways of operationalising. However, the epistemology, ontology and methodology of narrative inquiry were more appropriate for this study given the values and beliefs of the researcher and the ways they wished to design this investigation upholding those values and beliefs.

Narrative Inquiry

As the focus for this research was on hearing participant stories, narrative inquiry was deemed the most appropriate methodology. Narrative inquiry is the study of people's experiences viewed through the features of story and/or reconstructed for others as a form of storytelling. (See for example Clandinin & Connelly, 1990.) These two researchers did much together and separately to build the base constructs of narrative theory. They were influenced by the work of Schon (1983, 1987) and his development of reflective frameworks from studying teachers and the ways that they processed professional decisions after they had occurred.

Syntax maps and ontological boundaries of narrative inquiry

The crux of Clandinin and Connelly's earlier work in developing definitions for researching teachers' personal knowledges (1987) led them to the realisation that there was much overlap in the work of biographical researchers, ethnographers, psychologists, and sociologists working within the domain of people's personal and professional lives. "People using different terms often appear in fact to mean much the same thing," they observed (p. 498). However, they also noticed that across disciplinary areas differences arose in the "way we may imagine the composition of teacher thought" (p. 498). By parsing the language connotations of other methods and developing a particular syntax for the narrative approach, Clandinin and Connelly (1987) established a map for a new kind of interpretivist process, one that would be attentive to people's emotional and intellectual responses within their environments.

> Our view is that a cognitive and affective understanding of the personal practical knowledge of teachers will help to produce more living, viable understandings of what it means to educate and to be educated (p. 499).

The early atmosphere of openness within the theoretical territory of narrative inquiry was seemingly curtailed in 2013, in a paper which aimed to establish a clearer rationale of what narrative inquiry is, and what it is not (Caine, Estefan & Clandinin, 2013). The authors were disturbed by the way narrative inquiry, sometimes in different name but within similar intent, was being lifted and applied to research activities absent the deeper principles of their work (p. 575). They write:

> The narrative nature of experience, viewed from within narrative inquiry, necessitates considerations of relational being and knowing, attention to the artistry of and within experience, and sensitivity to the nested and overlapping stories that bring people together in research relationships
> (Caine, Estefan & Clandinin, 2013, p. 584).

Rather than interpreting the work of the 2013 authors as setting boundaries upon narrative theory it is important to note their clarifications establish challenging principles for researchers to follow.

Compared to earlier theorisations, the 2013 paper more thoroughly presents the significance of human experience as it is captured by narrative work in the three domains of methodology, epistemology and ontology. The authors specify the following necessary aspects to work within their defined territory of narrative inquiry: an interest in exploring human experience from an ontological commitment to communion; sharing time, stories, and trust, navigating tensions, and reflexively orientating the researcher within the study, to tell the story shared (See Caine, Estefan & Clandinin, 2013).

> *When I refer back to the hard copy of the 2013 paper by Caine, Estefan and Clandinin I remember the vividness and almost spiritual connection I had with the authors' views. I texted a close friend in absolute excitement that I'd found philosophical kindred spirits in the ideas presented and had an immediate need to share that discovery.*
>
> *Ticking off all of their guidelines with firm pen strokes of eagerness I realised I had been working theoretically within their space during a time when I had believed that grounded theory was my calling. In highlighting the key definitions within their paper, I found within narrative inquiry epistemology a more explicit respect for human dignity than grounded theory had presented me.*
>
> (Vignette interlude, author)

Narrative inquiry to Reified worlds

The suitability of narrative inquiry to explore the research question rather than other qualitative methods came from two distinct aspects: the epistemological framing, which can be seen as a descendent of John Dewey's secular humanism (see Clandinin & Connelly, 1990), and the method of data transformation: from analysed interviews to a 'worlded' story. "As narrative researchers, we study a world that we have helped create," notes Clandinin and Murphy, (2009, p. 601).

The notion of narrative inquirers as world makers requires scrutiny and further unpacking. There is a danger as some have argued (Atkinson, 2011; Sandelowski, 2011) that narrative research can lean towards rose tinted mythmaking rather than scientific investigation. However, rather than absorbing the positivist hesitation expressed by Atkinson (2011) and Sandelowski (2011) it is better to further

define what Clandinin & Murphy (2009) were expressing through their metaphor of a created "world".

Defined by the researcher and the shared stories of participants, the written constructions which form the interim research texts and field texts create the boundaries of the represented world within a particular study. The researcher's analysis and determinations come from the created world, but this creation comes from the participants' verbal and non-verbal expressions, and the observations the researcher accrued during their time in communion with the participants' and their professional lives.

Truth(s)

At this point of definitional statements, it is timely to restate that the outcome of this narrative inquiry is not the presentation of an objective unchallengeable truth within a positivist paradigm. The stories that emerge from the study are truths that exist within an understanding that multiple truths exist within representations of human experience (Cooper & White, 2012). These truths are ones which are bordered and bounded by the traditions of narrative inquiry, a distinction worth keeping close when considering that "imagination is always already tamed and ordered by our being enrolled in one tradition rather than another" (Latimer & Skeggs, 2011, p.395). Denzin (1996) points to a similar consideration of truth in research when he poses the ways genre and paradigm circumscribe otherwise fluid understandings of what could be.

As Ball (2016) provocatively argues for education researchers and teachers struggling to articulate their truths against the 'Truths' of neoliberalism, "the starting point for a politics of refusal is the site of subjectivity. It is a struggle over and against what it is we have become, what it is that we do not want to be" (p. 1143). In knowing what it is we don't want to be, we can use our speech, our words, our acts in ways that step beyond personal landscapes and onto political stages (Arendt, 1958). Texts give shape to the present, and in do so, help shape a future we aim to call into being. Subjectivity becomes the way we move, and truth becomes what is heard by those listening to more than a hegemonic call.

Epistemological framing

The epistemological framing of this study comes from recognition of the cultural hegemony (Fraser, 2019) of capitalism as the significant force which shapes governance, policy, and conceptions of the common weal in Western democracies. Nancy Fraser (2019) is responding to Antonio Gramsci, who was in turn extending upon the critiques of Karl Marx who writes, "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and *how* they produce" (Marx, 1846/1939, p. 7).

The theories of Hannah Arendt (1958) slip into the liminal zone between Marx's focus on the *what* and the *how* of human production. Arendt (1958) attends to the *why* of human production while problematising a split between public and private action. Arendt (1958) believes in a classical dichotomy of action and labour in which acts that occur in the public sphere can be viewed as work and those that take place in the private sphere are understood as labour. Within this understanding, those that create the conditions for action labour on behalf of those that act. The disintegration of public/private gendered spheres of human work/labour under late 20th and early 21st century capitalism has unpicked the split element within Arendt's (1958) theorisation but this hasn't devalued her overall point. Arendt's (1958) exploration of the *why* of human experience is in accordance with Marx's (1846/1939) reminder to focus on the *what* and the *how* elements that give shape to people's daily lives.

With this Marxist-Arendtian epistemology in place, contemporary conditions for teachers in schools can now be outlined. This is what we see.

A culture of new managerialism and performativity (Ball, 2003; Connell, 2009; Lingard, Martino & Rezai-Rashti, 2013; Ball, 2015; Stacey, 2017) which constantly pushes towards individualisation of professional success has conceivably created schisms within education cultures of collaboration and collegiality. Concomitantly, even as a national compliance processes promise to usher in transformative and developmental ways of being a teacher, there continues to be an administrative burden upon teachers to document and annotate their work (Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2009).

During the three year time period of this research project, there has been a distinct acceleration and amplification of a discourse of ‘expert’ teachers (Henebery, 2018; Sonnemann & Goss, 2018) and a celebration of ‘hero’ teachers in New South Wales schools (NSW Government, 2018). The invisible and unlauded are left with the flipside of a rhetoric shaped around ‘the best’; that there are school communities “who can’t access a recognised expert teacher” (Giblin, (@kennyped), 2018); and that in the absence of recognition there is potentially deficit.

There also continues to be concerns as to the ways new managerialism, audit culture, and performativity encourage teachers to act against their better judgement (Blackmore & Sachs, 2007). As Solnit (2005/2016) poses: such a narrative of events can make it feel as though battles are being lost, that “victories slip by unheralded. Failures are more readily detected” (Solnit, 2005/2016, p. xxiii). Yet, as the poet and social critic Audre Lorde (1984/2007) exhorts, “[w]ithout community, there is no liberation, only the most temporary armistice between an individual and her oppressor” (p. 112). But from community - an interdependent community that celebrates difference and diversity as Lorde encourages, present acts “can bring that (better) future into being” (p. 112). This is the (subjective) context (see Ball, 2016) - a reaction against an individualising atomisation of professional teacher identities - which has shaped the epistemological framing of this study.

Relational closeness in narrative inquiry

Narrative inquiry places a greater onus on the researcher to work closer with participants, and to ensure participant agency, as a way of attentively listening and seeing so that participant worlds can be thickly drawn (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007). That closeness brings dangers and the potential for research failure as much as possibilities for new insights to be found. Caine, Estefan and Clandinin (2013) wrote of relational commitments towards participants, of collegially working together to co-curate their experiences within narrative texts, of drawing closer to participants as part of an ethical contract to better represent the complexities within and through participants’ lives.

The design of this study was ontologically oriented towards relational closeness, seeking to recognise and validate the professional intimacies which can arise between teachers of English as

communicators of practice. Others have observed how writing groups amongst teachers of English have facilitated collegiality, personal satisfaction, and professional growth (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Dawson et al., 2013; Fisher-Ari & Flint 2018). There was a considered element within this study design that relationships with participants could be formed, developed and sustained beyond the requirements of data collection necessities in order to a) deepen the rigour within analysis and narrative constructions and b) contribute to professional kinships beyond the scope of this particular study. In this way, acts of speech, text, and action become enactments towards the kind of world envisioned by those operating within narrative inquiry: kind, relational, creative, and constantly remade by those who come after what has occurred in the present.

The proposition that narrative inquiry "is a commitment to a form of togetherness in research that seeks to explore how we are living in the midst of our stories (Caine et al., 2013, p. 576) parallels elements of Hannah Arendt's (1958, 1978) understanding of what it means to be human. There is a sense of the sacred, a spiritual depth, within Caine et al. (2013) and Arendt's (1956, 1978) understanding of the natality of being human (see Irwin, 2015 on Arendt as a 'secular' Biblical thinker). This use of the term 'sacred' is used in the context of this research to nod towards Christian Humanism and Arendt's exploration of 'Love and St Augustine' in her own 1929 PhD thesis (see the 1996 Scott & Stark edition). This usage is separate to Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) own use of the term 'sacred stories' to define the narratives teachers weave when navigating hidden curriculum of their various school contexts (see Elbaz-Luwisch, 2007).

The "commitment to a form of togetherness in research" (Caine et al., 2013, p. 576) transcends the bureaucratic obligations of national policies on human research (See Australia's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2015) because this epistemology comes from an understanding that human beings live in communion with each other (Tatman, 2013; hooks, 2002). Within a research domain, our intertwined lives, deliberately given purpose through a choice to act with love, and through love, are significant not for what secrets may be revealed but for the very essence of humanity held within the lives of the secret-holder and story teller.

> In the last analysis, the human world is always the product of man's *amor mundi*, a human artifice whose potential immortality is always subject to the mortality of those who build it and the natality of those who come to live in it (Arendt 2005, p. 203).

Epistemology gives shape to the way we perceive the world and ontologically, through our actions, we circumscribe the world. A world in which the researcher acts with love is an ontological commitment within this research design.

An Arendtian approach to Narrative Inquiry

Arendt's (1958) treatise on thought, speech, and action, which posits the necessity of community, and interaction with others for an individual to 'act', became a significant theoretical lens for this study. Arendt argues that there is a necessity of externalising an inner world so that it may exist beyond the sphere of an individual. Phenomena held within the mind of a lone individual vanishes upon the death of the person if not before. Phenomena shared beyond the mind however, becomes tangible; phenomena shared and then 'reified', given new shape or form, is given existence in the human world. "Action", she reminds, "is never possible in isolation" (1958, p. 188) but a thought expressed in text brings forth the possibility of dialogical encounters.

To the reader there may be some sense of irony in that the extended works of political theorist Hannah Arendt (Arendt, 1958; Arendt, 1959; Arendt, 1970; Arendt; 1978) have been applied within educational research given that she argued herself that education should be an apolitical space. (She was, at the time, writing on the innocence of children as pre-political actors.) For all her insights into human nature, perhaps it is too much to ask that Arendt could have foreseen the public hazing of schools and teachers (Mockler, 2016, p. 190) so common to our own time, let alone accommodate her judgements to the shifting cultural currents of her later years.

Arendt's political spaces

Arendt's catalogue of works is significant for the lenses they provide in exploring and understanding human nature (1958; 1963), forms of human governance (1951; 1958; 1963; 1970), and the way in which a person can use the written word to think and to act (1978). On the issue of transparency, it is significant to note that Arendt was uncomfortable with the democratising movements of the latter twentieth century which gave voice to those previously marginalised by gender, race, sexuality, and class. Arendt (1958) saw the public world as the political world. This is the space where action that transforms human society takes place. In contrast, the private sphere, which can be found in the home or the schoolhouse are the places where the mores and norms of human society are sustained. To Arendt (1958) the child cannot enter into a political space because they lack the education and maturation to be there.

As Palazzi (2017) reminds, the value that Arendt placed on political and judicial realms within democracy meant she was acutely aware of their fragility. Arendt (1958) saw democracy as the highest form of human government because it enabled and rewarded the pursuit of artistic, cultural, individual, and communal glory. Because of her desire to protect democracy against the unthinking destructiveness of other forms of (delegitimate) authority, such as totalitarianism or fascism, Arendt was discomforted by political action which disrupted her sense of 'civilised politics'. She saw in the descent to the 'mob' the bloodshed of the French Revolutionary Terrors and the Genocide of the Holocaust of which she barely escaped.

Arendt and narrative

Arendt (1958) was aware of the significance of collecting narratives in order to organise a cohesive body of knowledge. She was overtly conscious that the decisions over whose narratives are collected and whose are not contributes to the greater narrative being told on the stage of nation states and body politics (1958, p. 184). She saw the storyteller as one whose work places them

paradoxically at a distance and yet in intimate proximity with those who share their stories. Arendt writes:

> That every individual life between birth and death can eventually be told as a story and end is the prepolitical and prehistorical condition of history, the great story without beginning and end…(Yet) though stories are the inevitable results of action, it is not the actor but the storyteller who perceives and "makes" the story (Arendt, 1958, p. 192).

Arendt perceives the significance of storytellers - of others removed from events - to make sense of and explain phenomena to others. Notably, Arendt's theories (1958) express behaviours of 'world making', ideas that appear to exist sympathetically to those processes explored by Clandinin and Connelly (1990). Arendt (1958) speculates:

> In order to become worldly things, that is, deeds and facts and events and patterns of thoughts and ideas, they must first be seen, heard, and remembered and then transformed, reified as it were, into things...The whole factual world of human affairs depends for its reality and its continued existence, first, upon the presence of others who have seen and heard and will remember, and second, on the transformation of the intangible into the tangibility of things (p. 95).

Perceiving 'Reflections on Little Rock' as narrative inquiry field text

For all her insights into human existence, not all of Arendt's writings are remembered in glowing terms. Her contentious article *Reflections on Little Rock* (1959) is most useful not for the ways in which it propels considerations of human nature, for it does not do that, but for the ways in which Arendt's own locality in time and culture allows others to interrogate her intellectual position. Her 1959 piece provokes responses not to Arendt herself - the woman - but to her expressed ideas - her thoughts, her ideas. A reading of *Reflections on Little Rock* reveals the fallibility of Arendt's insight into human nature but also reveal so much in her values and how she perceives Others in her time.

The piece is a response to a 1957 photo of an African-American student, fifteen year old Elizabeth Eckford, being hounded by a mob of angry white students for 'daring' to try to attend 'their' school

under a new integration policy. Eckford's eyes are hidden by dark glasses but in the images she stands resolute against the faces of other young people whose own white faces are riven with disgust, anger, rage, and contempt.

In reaction to the photo, Arendt writes her response, revealing a damning lack of empathy and understanding of the Black American experience. She absolves the white teenagers for their violence and criticises the mother of black student Elizabeth Eckford for allowing her daughter's school enrolment to become action on a political stage. Palazzi (2017) argues that Arendt's seeming conservatism and paternalism in response to the American civil rights movements and the events at Little Rock came from a misguided reading of the Black American experience rather than an intellectual schism in Arendt's judgement (Duran, 2009).

What Arendt (1958, 1959) missed in all her theorising in regard to human nature within American society was her own place as intellectual (white-passing) insider to her own astonishing times. When she critiques the Little Rock students, Arendt is writing from an insider perspective of white America. To a contemporary reader, Arendt's interpretation of events can seem racist and callous. She seems to scoff at the thought of racial integration, believing it better for black and white Americans to have segregated schools. But, as Lebeau (2004) argues, Arendt perceives the animosity between white and black Americans and, in an utilitarian judgement, places greater value for black and white students in segregated but peaceful schools than violently riven integrated ones.

Allan (2007) provides a particularly insightful commentary on the photo - or perhaps one of the series of photos shot by photographer Will Counts that day as Elizabeth Eckford attempted to enter her new school. He writes:

> I use the word "etiquette" to emphasize that, in the moment when Hazel and Elizabeth were fixed together for posterity by the photographer, Will Counts, each was acting as she had been taught to act — Hazel, having been taught that the public sphere belonged to white people, was protecting hereditary privileges as she had been taught to do; Elizabeth was surviving, in conditions of oppression and unfreedom, as she had been taught to survive, by exhibiting the behavior of the unfree (Allan, 2007, p. 15).

Applying Nancy Fraser's theory to Arendt's 'Little Rock' field text

What integration at Little Rock had triggered was what Fraser (2019) would describe as a counter hegemonic position. Established norms and understandings of the world were slipping. What was once believed to be the 'way of things' was under challenge. The judicial process which mandated schooling integration points to the slippage. But the response of the Little Rock community reveals new attitudes and values imposed by the courts had not, could not, be borne by the people. The community existed in a liminal space throughout those times. The old 'way of things', of segregation, inequality, and prejudice against Black Americans was being undone through legislative action but individuals could not be 'undone' and remade so easily. Values, beliefs, and attitudes between the old and the new rubbed each other raw in tectonic motion.

Arendt herself, in writing the *Dissent* article, was not an objective observer of these events. Through her article, in taking her emotional and intellectual responses to Counts' photos into written published form and by not self-reflexively accounting for her own responses in the piece, Arendt became part of the event. In essence, Arendt's (1958) theorisation of the ways people move within their democracy separated the world into public and private spheres. In doing so, she failed to recognise that the spheres are not disparate spaces but are in fact, overlapping worlds, perhaps especially so for those still living through marginalisation and oppression.

Arendt's death in 1975 from heart failure meant that she was not able to engage through her writing with the intersectional democratic identity movements that were to come. She died six years before Angela Davis' *Women, Race and Class* and bell hooks' *Ain't I a Woman?* were published. But her experiences exploring human nature, forms of human governance, writing as a political act and the incident at Little Rock provided guidance for the methodological approach of this study.

'Little Rock' as a model

Arendt sees in the street protests of Little Rock teenagers, black and white, an unfortunate misstep into political action by those who are too young and inexperienced. In later years Arendt demonstrates a more nuanced understanding of black/white relations but she never quite accepts the

necessity of taking political action into the streets because she is always conscious of how quickly violence in the streets can undermine democracy itself (Palazzi, 2017).

Knowing all this, *Reflections on Little Rock* then becomes a very good model of a narrative inquiry artefact. We can read within Arendt's response the conflicts of time, class, race, and politics. In the ways authors (Lebeau, 2004; Allan, 2007; Duran, 2009; Owens, 2017; Palazzi, 2017) continue to engage with Arendt's (1959) piece we can see the dialogical potential of an Arentian form of narrative inquiry in which a vignette - a storified or reified - version of events speaks and can be spoken back to in turn, long past the death of the author. So, in a cyclical turn, *Reflections on Little Rock* becomes a guide of how narrative inquiry *can* be done, albeit with a caveat - the work requires the closeness and relational intimacy and self-reflexivity of the Clandinin model.

Arendt's piece *Reflections on Little Rock* is actually a very good model of how not to do narrative inquiry. It lacks authorial self-reflection and imposes a paternalistic voice over the experiences of others. This is because Arendt is writing from within an event that she is emotionally involved in. She is on one hand, writing a response to the judicial ruling of integration and it is the judiciary processes of the civil rights movements that have stirred her emotions. Arendt highly values democratic processes of which the judiciary is part. On the other hand, Arendt is writing a response that is about a failing of American democracy - something that she finds quite difficult to accept. Owens (2017) interprets Arendt as presenting American democracy through rose-tinted glasses, suggesting Arendt loses her usual rationality when she explores contemporary American examples. Palazzi (2017) rejects Owens' (2017) analysis as lacking a nuanced awareness of Arendt's other critiques of the United States. There may be some truth in both their interpretations.

From Arendt's emotionality in response to Little Rock comes guidance to this researcher as well. Times that create raw lacerations within values, beliefs and attitudes require great care. The researcher needs to traverse people, places and spaces with a reflexivity as to their own core values and how these may be confronted or challenged by the circumstances of data. Working with another, in this case, a supervisor, provided a necessary valve to test theories and navigate the complexities when beliefs, values, and attitudes clashed against those presented within data.

As teachers' work appears to be a highly political issue on transnational, national, State, and local levels, with intersections across societies and cultures (Sellar & Lingard, 2012; Mockler, 2016) it is appropriate and timely that this study provides overtures for teacher participants to have their stories collected and their voices heard. Within this study, the theories of Clandinin and Connelly (1990) *and* Arendt (1958) held such sway it became necessary to theorise the liminal thresholds of each in order to better understand "the ground on which we stand and the sky that stretches above us (Arendt, 2003, p. 259).

Theorising liminal thresholds of narrative inquiry

A liminal space is a threshold; a place where one waits or from where one turns back, or from where one steps forward into something new. By mapping similarities and differences between the two positions represented by Clandinin and Arendt, it becomes visible that narrative inquiry itself is a liminal method and methodology that encourages dialogue with like-minded thinkers and writers. The Clandinin and Connelly (1990) method of narrative inquiry, developed over time by Clandinin and researchers working within similar domain, can be seen in Figure 1 to share similarities to Hannah Arendt's methodology of why researchers should collect narratives for reification. Reification - or the transformation of words into story - is a created (text)world that creates the (real)world for the future we wish to bring into being while representing a (real)past of human experience.

In this study, the narrative inquirer aims to illuminate the work of some English educators within a limited period of time and space. Acts of speech become 'reified' into text and through this transformation the newly created texts, Arendt's "worldly things" given form, become records of human experiences. These are the records of interpretation of the author - the researcher. Their tangibility becomes an overture for participants to speak back to conclusions, and for others to speak on, in refutation, discussion, or dialogue, in the future. As Hill (1979) observed of Arendt, "...she hoped to play a part in an ongoing dialogue of those who think about experience and saw this as the only real justification for her writing." (Hill, 1979, p. *xiii*) Thinking through writing as a process for engaging in further discussion; a future communion between researchers, teachers, and participants becomes the key aspect of this theorisation of narrative inquiry.

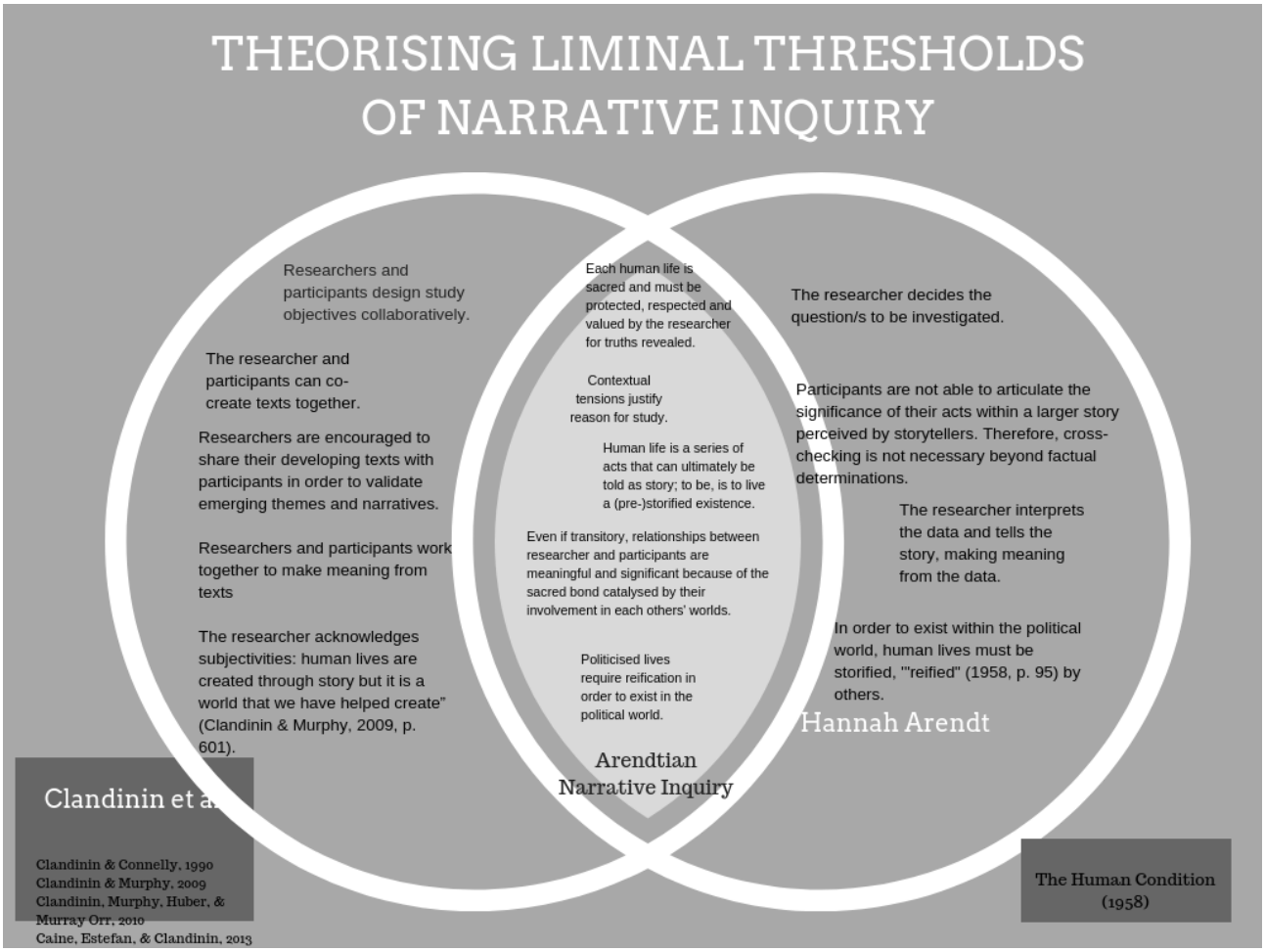

Figure 1: Theoretical thresholds and liminality within Narrative Inquiry

Arendtian Narrative Inquiry

Figure 1, Theoretical thresholds and liminality within Narrative Inquiry, shows that both groups of theorists see human beings as narrative beings whose lives are touched by a sense of the sacred, and whose relationship within research praxis is best achieved through a sense of communion. Arendt sustains the authority of the author as meaning maker of the text, whereas the Clandinin/Connelly group preference collaborative meaning making between researchers and participants.

As a researcher navigating narrative inquiry, the author realised she was working in the liminal space between a Clandinin and Connelly (1990) guided method and methodology and an Arendtian one. As such, a third space, the liminal space was developed and identified as the best place from which this study would be guided. This third space has been named Arendtian Narrative Inquiry. The argument put forward by Arendt and others (Josselson, 2007): that the author makes meaning, and not participants, was most persuasive on a pragmatic level, given the time and space requirements of this PhD study, but more significantly, on a theoretical level, as the thesis becomes a prompt for future opportunities for communion with participants and others through ongoing writing exchanges.

The process of theorising: methodology/epistemology/ontology

The first year of this PhD study was operationalised under a narrative inquiry methodology, guided by the theories expressed initially by Clandinin and Connelly (1987; 1990) and then developed further by a circle of researchers with ties to Clandinin (see: Conle, 2000; Clandinin & Huber, 2002; Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray Orr, 2007; Clandinin & Murphy, 2009, Clandinin, Downey & Huber, 2009, Clandinin, Murphy, Huber & Murray Orr, 2009, Caine, Estefan & Clandinin, 2013).

At the commencement of the PhD in January 2016 and during the period of data collection midway (April-October 2017) the rationale for operating within and continuing to use narrative inquiry as a method remained fairly constant. However, by the midway mark - or the period in which data analysis and early theorising began, there was the developing theorising of an Arendtian consideration of narrative inquiry, which became the Framework illustrated in Figure 1 above. Reflexive reading practices (Pillow, 2003) and vignette memos (Ambler, 2012) reveal why the Liminal Thresholds of Narrative Inquiry Framework became so significant.

> *I want to work together with my participants but they are all so busy; the needs of their students, their classrooms, their professional lives so pressing. Caine, Estefan and Clandinin (2013) urge me to work alongside participants as co-creators of meaning but the teachers who are with me in this project are all managing so many responsibilities that taking on the intellectual labour of research seems like an ask too far. And then there's Arendt (1958): who reminds me that participants are less likely to make meaning out of their own circumstances because the phenomena*

> *participants will attend to may differ markedly to that which the research question orientates us towards. I see that in their answers to the semi-structured interview questions; these participants are embedded within their own contexts, attuned to their own communities. I don't think there is time and space within this PhD to operationalise a study that brings the participants together as co-curators of meaning...Can Clandinin and co. coexist with Arendt without undermining the principles of narrative inquiry that spoke to me in the first place?*
> (Vignette interlude, author)

It is hoped this exploration of the processes of deep thinking presents some understanding into the epistemology, and emerging ontology within and through the methodology of this research project. Memos, (also known as field texts) as seen in the author vignette above, were maintained during stages of reading. This allowed for cross-referencing the development of the researcher's understanding of the two narrative approaches, prompting reflexive discussions with the researcher's supervisor and within the researcher's own notes.

The venn diagram, created through the online software platform *Canva* became a visible representation of the ways the two theories intersected. The method of an Arendtian narrative inquiry is a communion of two theoretical perspectives, presented as a liminal crossing in Figure 1, for the specific purpose of investigating why some secondary English teachers select popular culture texts for their Stage 5 classrooms.

Liminal Crossings and Critical Communion

The intellectual process of applying Arendtian Narrative Inquiry to the datasets will now be described. As Figure 1. shows 'each human life is sacred and must be protected, respected and valued by the researcher for truths to be revealed' at the same time 'contextual tensions justify reasons for study'. Within this study, each participant has been 'protected, respected and valued' through processes such as anonymity and application of individual and school pseudonyms. Throughout this study, the participants have touched the life of the researcher. Their trust and their willingness to share their stories have 'catalysed a sacred bond'. My life has been enriched from their generosity in time, truths, and 'textual tales'.

Encounters between researcher and participants were oriented towards illuminating the at-times challenging work that can occur within neoliberalised cultures of schooling while providing limnings into the personal, creative, and relational actions of participants in their work with their students. While some of the semi-structured interview questions were directed towards uncovering what texts were being chosen and studied with Stage 5 students, other questions, like: 'What does success look like for your school community' provided substantial scope for analysis as to why decisions were being made.

'Contextual tensions' of contemporary times means it is vital the consequences and collateral damage of neoliberalised schooling is illustrated when such examples became evident within the data. Critically, even when analysis came to discomforting conclusions – when lines of thematic reasoning made evident clear differences in values and beliefs between researcher and participants, the researcher placed the dignity of each participant at the forefront of their storyfied worlds. At the end of the day, all of the participants are professional English teachers with positions of responsibility and in whom others place their trust.

It is the researcher's belief that the participants in this study act with the best of intentions for their students. However, at times, participants disclosed decisions and actions that reveal gaps in their own knowledges as to the consequences of their acts and choices. Sustaining the 'rules' within the liminal crossing of Figure 1. the narratives and poetic vignettes of Chapter 5 are politicised characterisations whereby words and phrasings are emphasised and stories are 'reified' to illuminate a political world that celebrates and discomforts in due part.

Recruiting participants

Narrative inquiry requires the development of a trusted relationship between researcher and participant in order to facilitate the deep conversations that can illuminate teachers' work. This

study aimed to include a small group of participants so that relationships between the researcher and participants could be developed within discrete contextualised settings.

With a goal of including participants who are able to offer multiple perspectives on the research question (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013, p. 43) the first recruitment strategy involved communicating the study with public and Independent schools in the Sydney basin and to the region just north called the Central Coast. This was a practical choice given the limited time constraints of the PhD study. Ethics approval for those two systems presented fewer difficulties than the Catholic systemic school system. All Secondary public schools were included in the approval provided by the NSW State Education Research Application Process. Independent schools are able to provide timely approval from their individual school Principals. In contrast, access to the Catholic systemic system requires separate approvals for each geographic region within the state of NSW.

Postal mail, that included letters to Principals and recruitment collateral, was sent to fifteen public schools and nine Independent schools in Sydney, and was also sent to eight public schools and three Independent schools on the Central Coast. This geographic region is deemed part of the Greater Sydney Area (City of Sydney, 2018). These schools also received a follow up phone call to confirm the package was received and a reminder that the researcher was available to discuss the study further in person or over the phone. Three schools opened communication and advised possible interest but dialogue ended with no teachers willing or able to enter the study during the timeframe.

The second recruitment strategy used social media platforms to present the study in spaces where English teachers gather online. *Twitter* was used to promote the study. One tweet, published 10 March 2017, was retweeted 20 times, leading to 5,986 impressions, 180 total engagements, 34 detail expands, and 11 clicks of the link ([redacted] 10 March, 2017). Three participants (Harry, Diana, and Selene) responded to the Twitter campaign.

The third recruitment strategy promoted the study on closed *Facebook* groups for NSW English teachers and one participant (Rose) came through this campaign.

The teacher participants and their schools

Harry, Louisa Lawson High School

Harry teaches secondary English at Louisa Lawson High School. He is also a Head Teacher, responsible for the Teaching and Learning portfolio. This portfolio has cross-curricular responsibilities and he oversees curriculum accountability and student academic performance. Harry has an active online presence across Twitter and closed Facebook groups for English teachers. He frequently shares his teaching resources and analysis of English curriculum requirements on his personal website. Harry is a member of the state association for English teachers and has won an annual competition to attend the national conference as a NSW representative. Harry previously worked as a journalist before retraining as a teacher. He has worked as a teacher for approximately eight years, most of them at his current school.

Louisa Lawson High School is a comprehensive co-educational secondary school to the west of the Sydney basin. In the year data was collected (2017) the school enrolled 430 male students and 407 female students. (ACARA, 2017a). The school's Index of Community Socioeconomic Economic Advantage (ICSEA) rating was 974 (ACARA, 2017a), placing it into the category of a low socioeconomic school. The average of ICSEA ratings is 1000. Six per cent of students enrolled identify as Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander; fourteen per cent identify as having a language background other than English (ACARA, 2017a).

Diana, Hoda Afshar High School

Diana teaches secondary English at Hoda Afshar High School. She is also a Head Teacher, responsible for the English faculty portfolio. Diana has prioritised working in public education throughout her career, mostly working in low socioeconomic schools in Sydney's West, often at schools serving students of refugee backgrounds. She has been at Hoda Afshar High School for four years. Diana's extensive knowledge of the NSW English curriculum has been recognised in her multiple secondments to work within the Department of Education on curriculum development and curriculum leadership. She has worked as a teacher for approximately eighteen years.

Hoda Afshar High School is a comprehensive girls' secondary school within the inner south-west of the Sydney basin. In the year data was collected (2017) the school enrolled 497 female students. (ACARA, 2017b). The school's ICSEA rating was 934 (ACARA, 2017b), placing it into the category of a low socioeconomic school. No enrolled students identify as Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander; ninety-seven per cent identify as having a language background other than English (ACARA, 2017b).

Selene, Faith Bandler High School

Selene teaches secondary English and Human Society and its Environments (HSIE) at Faith Bandler High School. HSIE includes History, Geography, and other social science combinations. Selene also has a background in learning support. She is a classroom teacher with additional whole school responsibilities in English as an Additional Language and Gifted and Talented coordinator. She provides accreditation and mentoring support for beginning teachers within her school. Selene works closely with the state professional association for English teachers and frequently presents on topics within her professional interests, especially technology integration in English. She has worked as a teacher for approximately seven years, most of them at her current school.

Faith Bandler High School is a comprehensive co-educational secondary school to the west of the Sydney basin. In the year data was collected (2017) the school enrolled 562 male students and 424 female students. (ACARA, 2017c). The school's ICSEA rating was 990 (ACARA, 2017c), placing it into category of a low socioeconomic school. Two per cent of students enrolled identify as Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander; fifty per cent identify as having a language background other than English (ACARA, 2017c).

Rose, Ruth Park High School

Rose teaches English at Ruth Park High School. She is also a Head Teacher, responsible for the English faculty portfolio. Rose has been a recipient of the prestigious NSW Premier's Teachers Scholarship. During her scholarship research, Rose explored English teachers as writers with the National Writing Project in the United Kingdom. She continues to design and lead professional learning for English teachers as creative writers at many venues along the East Coast of NSW. She

works closely with the state professional association for English teachers. She has worked as a teacher for approximately twenty years.

Ruth Park High School is a comprehensive co-educational secondary school beyond the Sydney basin, in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. In the year data was collected (2017) the school enrolled 336 male students and 309 female students. (ACARA, 2017d). The school's ICSEA rating was 978 (ACARA, 2017d), placing it into category of a low socioeconomic school. Six per cent of students enrolled identify as Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander; five per cent identify as having a language background other than English (ACARA, 2017d).

The Interviews

In-depth interviews were chosen as the best instruments for this study for theoretical and pragmatic factors. The dialogue created within the borders of an in-depth interview reveals a far deeper lens than a non-human instrument can detect; after all, only the participant can reveal what meaning their experiences of phenomena have had for them (Kvale, 1996; Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013, p. 116). Theoretically, guided by a series of semi-structured interview questions participants volunteer stories of experience, records of beliefs, and future forecasts of what could yet be. This is significant material for a narrative inquirer to probe and explore. Pragmatically, given the time pressures of the participants, who each had a number of school and subject-orientated responsibilities on top of their classroom teaching load, interviews presented the best use of our limited time together.

The importance of rapport

Within the operationalisation of narrative inquiry, it is important to clarify that it is important, if not vital, that the conversation is more than a simulacrum of rapport. The interviewer should not be feigning an engaged and curious manner; they are deeply engaged with the participant because whoever they are, and whatever knowledges they have to share, first and foremost they are a person. An effective in-depth interview should look and feel for participants like a conversation with "an ultrainterested and attentive conversational partner" (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013, p. 114).

In discussing rapport, Lichtman (2013) explains that in sharing similarities through meaningful anecdotes she believes it is possible to offset power imbalance between researcher and participant. This researcher too was conscious of power imbalances. She evoked the shared identity of 'English teacher' through anecdotal references and classroom examples of her own to stimulate conversation and engender trust between her and her participants. This is what Josselson (2007) has identified as "self-disclosure" (p. 547) - a way to share conversational moments within the interview to deepen the developing relationship. It is the awareness of the inherent dignity of the participant and the personal relationship that comes from two brought together in dialogue that sustains the narrative inquirer and ensures the work stands distinctively against other interview methodologies.

The semi-structured interviews

Participants were all asked a series of semi-structured interview questions. The questions were planned in advance for a sequence of two interviews. This structure was designed so participants could discuss their lesson planning prior to texts being taught, then reflect upon their experiences in the classroom once they had finished teaching their unit with popular texts.

Interview 1

- *When you were a teenager, what texts did you like?*
  Probe: Do you think your students engage with similar texts now? Why/Why not?
- *How would you describe yourself as an English teacher?*
  Probe: in terms of your views/attitudes about your subject and your pedagogy, particularly in relation to popular culture texts and Stage 5 English.
- *Do you think it's important for teachers to know what is popular with their students? Why? What is popular?*
  Probe: Could you give me examples of 'things' you have done, books you have read, movies/tv shows you have watched with your students in mind.
- *Do you use online platforms in your work as an English teacher? Which ones? Tell me more about what you do.*

Probe: How do you characterise your online behaviour? (i.e. Lurker or interactive?) Why go online? What are the benefits for English teachers? Do you think much about professional Codes of Conduct when interacting online?

Interview 2

- *In your recent teaching of Stage 5 can you tell me about a popular culture text you chose and why you chose it?*
  Probe: What was your goal? What's in it for your students to study these types of texts?
- *You've recently reflected upon your Stage 5 lessons using popular culture texts. How did it go?*
  Probe: Were some lessons more memorable than others? If so, in what way? What were any challenges in reflecting on your lessons?
- *In what ways do you see success in English for your students?*
  Probe: What does it look like for your students? What does it look like for your school community?

In practice, the experience of interviewing reflected the realities of school life; we responded to whatever circumstances were presented to us in situ. Selene and Rose were formally interviewed twice. Diana was interviewed three times due to the interruptions of her young children during interviews. Harry received a visit from the researcher very early on to discuss his involvement in the study that was not recorded, then ended up having his next interview after he had taught the units we had previously discussed. Harry is a prolific blogger. As such, Harry's blog was folded into the data collection to make up for what was missed in the absence of a second formally recorded interview. Note: Harry's blog posts have been anonymised and redacted through black highlighting in the References. Rose also blogs and made it clear during interviews that the data collection could include her blog posts too. However, given the depth of discussion during interviews between Rose and the researcher it was decided Rose's blog posts were not necessary within the data collection.

During the interviews, the conversation occasionally drifted from the planned questions and we ended up discussing education topics and policy directions that were of particular concern during the time interviews took place. The National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy

(NAPLAN) and its impact within the respective schools came up repeatedly despite not being a focal area of planned questioning.

Interviews were held in places that responded to the participants' needs and comfort. For example, interviews with Harry were always held in a meeting room at his school. When meeting with Rose, who was the farthest participant, we first met in public gardens near her home, and then again in public gardens near the researcher's home at a time when Rose was visiting Sydney. Diana brought her toddler son to an interview at the researcher's home, and in turn, the researcher visited Diana at her home as her children played around us. Selene first came to the researcher's home, and then the researcher visited her at her school for the second interview.

The researcher and participants also orbited each other through the close nature of the English profession in NSW. We bumped against each other in social media spaces such as Twitter and Facebook, and saw each other at professional conferences. These spaces provided informal moments to chat and to watch each other at work beyond the boundary of the in-depth interviews.

Changes within research design

At the PhD proposal stage the research design for this study involved three layers of data collection, believed at the time to be necessary for triangulation purposes and to create archival materials on 'contemporary teachers work in English'. Participants were to be asked to micro-blog the teaching of their popular culture units, sending messages via the social media platforms of *Twitter*, *Facebook*, or *Instagram* to the researcher. Participants were also informed that they would be filmed in their second interview.

What became apparent is that even though participants were frequent users of social media platforms, they used those spaces for their own reasons, pleasures, and professional capacities. All four participants found the process of sending short lesson summaries in brief social media bursts problematic in terms of timing, remembrance, and willingness. We, the researcher and participants, decided that the social media 'data bursts' would not be necessary.

In regard to filming the second interview, participants seemed to be uncomfortable with being visible in filmed recordings. Diana was the first participant to reach the second interview stage and showed through her body language, recoiling away from the mention of filming, that this was an experience she did not want to contribute. The researcher observed that Diana's physical response was more than just shyness – the participant did not want to be filmed but she was trying to feign enthusiasm to please the researcher. When it was suggested the interview could be audio-recorded like the prior one, Diana's body language completely changed and she was much more comfortable. For this reason, filming was then viewed as something to be negotiated with participants but all seemed much more comfortable with the audio-recording process.

At the same time participants reached the possibility of being filmed, the researcher was also making deeper understandings into the theory of narrative inquiry. The reminder from Caine et al. (2013) to let the participants help shape the nature of the study confirmed researcher intuition that audio-recordings would be valid data, and that the changes made to the research design were appropriate and necessary to the study.

Analysing Data

The researcher used systemic processes to analyse the data in this study.

Computer Assisted: Dedoose

During the first phase of analysis, data for this study were analysed using a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDA) program. The software chosen was the cloud-based *Dedoose* which enables the researcher to explore, sort, and retrieve large amounts of text-based data in an orderly and structured way (Tracy, 2013). The benefits of CAQDA programs is in the way they provide a systematic, transparent, and visualised contextualisation of data (Costa, Neri de Sousa, F., Moreira, & Neri de Sousa, D., 2017). *Dedoose*, the chosen platform for this study, has an added benefit of being cloud-based, providing flexibility of access to the researcher. Most importantly, *Dedoose* is engineered to be organic and intuitive for ease of use by researchers of varying digital proficiency. *Dedoose* offers video tutorials, the technical support team was easily contactable via

email for questions, and the platform was user friendly without losing coding and category functionality.

Coding and Categorisation

The second phase of the analysis involved coding the data through Dedoose. Coding is an iterative analytical process that enables qualitative researchers to systematically order, sort, and reduce their data so new knowledge and understanding can be perceived (Huberman & Miles, 1983; Creswell, 2009; Saldana, 2009; Geilser, 2018). The coding process involves the development of a personal 'shorthand' by the researcher who "... creates and assigns a word or phrase to symbolize, summarize, or otherwise capture some attribute" (Geilser, 2018, p. 219) within their data. The researcher's codes arise from their language and understanding of the data, the details of the field of study, and their own particular insights. This can create some concern in regard to the validity of coding as a process. As Geilser (2018) explains:

> It is impossible, in other words, for a coding scheme to be as "complete and unambiguous" as Neuendorf (2016) exhorts for content analysis. When coding language in its full complexity, coders will always need to draw on their intuitions about what language does and means (p. 230).

It is the intuition of the researcher that is a valuable and inherent quality within qualitative research (Huberman & Miles, 1983). As Saldana (2009) rather drily observes: "Qualitative researchers are not algorithmic automatons" (p. 24). It is important to remember that in this study, intuition is guided by the research question. In this respect, Structural Coding was deemed most appropriate as this approach to coding is deliberately seeking answers to the research questions (Saldana, 2009, p. 73). Coding occurred at the end of data collection and not throughout (a methodological difference from Glaser & Strauss' (1967) Grounded Theory.) However, during the writing process, codes were reviewed to check if they still held up over time, a process that Elliott (2018) has described as, "revalidation of earlier coded material" (p. 2859).

In reading across all transcripts from all interviews, the first coding run led to the following breakdown (see Table 1) of codes and extracts. Subsequent coding runs increased the amount of codes dramatically before saturation was realised and categorisation could occur.

Example of Structural Coding: Initial Coding Run

Code	***# of Code Excerpts***	***Notes***
Pedagogy	*15*	
School context	*9*	
Engaging with parents/parental values	*7*	
Local Context	*5*	
DER Policy	*1*	*Start a Technology code*
Residualisation	*1*	*Start a School context*

Table 1: Structural Coding: Initial Coding Run

Example of Categorisation

Codes	**Categories**
Local Context, School context, Residualisation, DER Policy	*'Bog Standard' schools*
Engaging with parents/parental values	*Insiders/Outsiders*
Pedagogy	*Deeper Meanings: Practice/Values*

Table 2: Example of Categorisation

Using Dedoose, early structural codes were systematically organised through successive readings and explorations of the data. Then in latter phases of analysis, the coded dated were merged into stronger codes to form categories, or were discarded as empty trails. Categories become the lexical placements from which themes were named and reified (Elliott, 2018). Creswell (2009) explains that this type of analysis can seem rather sweeping and generalised as a process. "Often we see qualitative data analysis reported in journals articles or books that is a generic form of analysis. In this approach, the researcher collects qualitative data, analyzes it for themes or perspectives, and reports 4-5 themes." (Creswell, p. 184). The process can look simple but is actually quite complex as it draws upon the researcher's knowledge of the field and disciplinary vocabulary to make visible to others what lies within the data (Saldana, 2009; Geisler, 2018).

Themes and Vignettes

Themes that were "plausible, internally consistent" (Huberman & Miles, 1983, p. 293) and could be corroborated within the transcripts were identified through progressive coding and analysis of categories within the data. The identified themes have been storified - or 'restoryfied' to follow the grammar established by Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002, p. 330). They write, "[r]estorying is the process of gathering stories, analysing them for key elements of the story (e.g. time, space, plot, and scene,) and then rewriting the story to place it within a chronological sequence" (p. 332). In this study, the emphasis within restorying was less on following the narrative dimensions of Freytag's pyramid (the common structure of Western narrative) as the stories being told lack the finality and denouement of those types of tales.

In this research, the themes are restoryfied as narrative and poetic vignettes (Ambler, 2012) so that they may provide deep insights into the decision-making processes and influences upon the participants in this study.

> Vignettes are the literary equivalent of a snapshot, often incomplete or fragmentary. Characteristically, the snapshots are short pieces of writing that capture a moment, scene or incident that tells a compelling part of a bigger story
> (Ambler, 2012, p. 184).

This process of shaping data threads into narrative works has been called "representative constructions" by Bold (2012, p. 145). Working across the domains of academia and journalism, it has also been suggested that these types of works can also be viewed as creative non-fiction (Avieson, 2014):

> Creative non-fiction utilises methods of research and knowledge creation that go beyond reportage and analysis – including emotional connection, empathy and context – while allowing for the hesitancy, passion, confusion and emotion that the academic voice otherwise conceals (Avieson, 2014, p. 178).

Byrne (2017) used the poetic vignette form, arguing that, "Poetry is a distillation, rather than a fragmentation of language, into its purest form" (p. 44). Poetry became a way for Byrne (2017) to resolve her concerns regarding the power dynamic a researcher has when they use participants' words to create a reified world. Per Byrne (2017), the poetic form also allows the researcher to reveal themselves within the world they are creating. *Vignette Poetica*, an arrangement formed from the voices of participants within this study of Beautiful Wastelands, can be found at the beginning of Chapter Five.

Untangling the data threads

Giving form and substance to the untangling of data threads that weave behind, within, and through narrative inquiry investigations, narrative and poetic vignettes are a way of restorying (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002, p. 330) data into significant synthesised moments in order to present answers to the research question. These answers cannot be seen under a positivist lens of Truth but require understanding that these are representations of truths that come from, and through, this study design (Bold, 2012).

This untangling is not a singular process in time. Rather, much like an actual experience of untangling a knotted ball of wool, the experience of arranging and ordering data threads comes with some frustrations as much as successes *over time*. Written analysis in draft form became a valuable

process in which themes, through vignettes, could be tested for stability. Earlier versions of interpretations have been stored for verification and to demonstrate process if required.

Much like Ceroni (2006), “I wanted my stories to capture the intimacy of the conversations I had with my participants ... I wanted my stories to convey my empathic understanding of their stories” (p. 119) in order to respect and honour the truths participants had revealed in their time spent contributing to this research project. It was also essential that the theorisations that form the argument for this thesis are stable, believable, and trustworthy. At the end of the process, this thesis as a whole needs to present a valid interpretation of data that adds to the integrity of narrative inquiry as a methodological approach.

The Vignettes and Authorial Integrity

In the vignettes of the Reporting and Discussion chapters, characterisation and setting ground the reality of thematic truths while sustaining anonymity for the individuals and their respective schools. In the Discussion chapter, a series of poetic vignettes become a prologue for the deeper issues interrogated and explored. The narrative and poetic vignettes have been selected by the researcher from extended transcribed texts and, in the case of Harry, his blog posts. This process did not include participant corroboration of stories. This decision is at odds with Byrne’s (2017) choice to include participant corroboration but her experiences support the choice of this study. As Byrne (2017) found, her participants were rather quiet in regard to the offer she made to include them. She observes, “My participants’ reluctance to edit the narrative I had produced” (p. 43) may have been influenced by the proximity of their relationship, but she ultimately received no answers in regard to their decision not to engage in the writing process.

The choice to not include participants within the writing is a reflection of Josselson’s (2007) perspective that:

> ... the primary ethical attitude in the report rests in the researcher's authority, stressing that the report is the researcher's understanding or interpretation of the

> text...the report is not “about” the participants but “about” the researcher's meaning making (p. 549).

This position led to the decision that vignettes should sustain their (original) first person voice, lifted as they were from reflective conversation, and reintegrated into the (written) world the researcher perceives and reifies through writing. The integrity of the work, the decision not to include participants during the writing process, lies within the world presented in the final examined thesis. It is only at the end that the ‘world’ this thesis has produced will hold stable. That final world, the published thesis, is the one for participants to respond to, should they be so inclined.

The Role of Metaphor

The suitability of metaphor within qualitative research has been addressed in the work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Miles and Huberman (1994), and within narrative inquiry by Clandinin and Huber (2002), with some caveats to be aware of. As Carpenter (2008) warns, “Researchers must examine their motivation for employing metaphors, weighing creativity and novelty with clarity and understanding” (p. 281).

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) assert that humans are comfortable in using metaphor as a conceptual way of creating and understanding schema but to be wary in using metaphor so loosely that it blurs cultural distinctions or overgeneralises human experiences. Miles and Huberman (1994) clarify that metaphor can illuminate realities previously unrecognised. Clandinin and Huber (2002) qualify the practice of using metaphor in narrative inquiry, noting that in earlier research they were resistant to overtly applying labels to human experience. However, by 2002, they had come to recognise the significance of applying metaphor to deeply convey a “three dimensional narrative inquiry space” (p. 163).

Metaphor serves a significant role in this thesis in providing lexical markers for readers and in providing the pillars for an integritous world. The title of this thesis comes from Caro’s (2013) use of the phrase bog standard in application to public schools. While Caro’s usage aimed to connote the ordinariness or similarity of public schools, the imagery within the word ‘bog’ provides more

imaginative evocations. Bogs may be seen as sticky, dirty places by outsiders forced to wade through them. But bogs have their own eco-systems. They are fragile places, taking thousands of years to develop. For older civilisations, bogs were places of ritual. For all their unsightly textures (and biting inhabitants) bogs are precious places.

Metaphor proved useful again in conceptualising the methodological process of interpreting and organising materials that formed the basis of arguments. ‘Unraveling’ was a particularly apt image for the researcher in making sense of the data and the processes that occurred. Finally, in the final months of writing, the metaphor of a wasteland became visible, a paradoxical beautiful wasteland that conveys the teaching landscape of those this study aims to illuminate.

Data management

Data were collected from the semi-structured interviews. Copies of the audio files were held within a password protected *Google* cloud account. An external transcription company was hired to transcribe the audio into text files. The company policies included maintaining confidentiality of all transcriptions and deletion of audio files after three months, which occurred as planned. Transcribed files were also stored under password protection on the *Google* cloud account. Printed hard copies of the transcribed interviews were held in a locked drawer at the researcher’s home.

Ethical considerations

This study was submitted for consideration to the Human Research Ethics Secretariat of her research institution and the NSW State Education Research Applications Process, approval from the latter is required for research in NSW public schools. Approval was received. The reference number for this study is: 5201600745. See Appendix A.

Anonymity

All participants and their respective schools have been given pseudonyms to protect their identities. Participants were offered the choice to change their pseudonyms. All chose to keep the ones developed by the researcher post-interviews.

Space, place and personal protection

Moving through places and spaces with participants in ways that were comfortable for them raised some potential concerns. For instance, the researcher travelled to new geographical areas of Sydney and beyond in meeting with participants. She also met with participants in their homes and welcomed them into her home. The ability to cross personal thresholds does in some way reflect the welcoming culture of English teachers in NSW. There is also a gendered element to consider. With three of the participants and the researcher identifying as female, there was a feeling of trust and security established by the shared identity of being women English teachers. Harry, the only male-identifying participant, chose to hold all his interviews on his school premises. When arriving on the grounds for an interview and upon leaving at interview-end the researcher provided location details to a trusted person via SMS messaging so time, date, and place details were recorded in the (unlikely) chance of an adverse event occurring. For home visits, the researcher sent SMS messaging before and after the interview had taken place.

Ethics and Social Media Recruitment

The use of social media platforms to recruit participants for research may raise some ethical concerns (see Gelinas et al., 2017). The close world of NSW English teachers who interact in online and real spaces presented some challenges in this study. Three participants in two separate communications made themselves visible to other participants and members of the broader social media space. For instance, Harry and Diana disclosed their participation in the study on a subsequent recruitment post in a closed *Facebook* group whereas Selene posted on *Twitter* that she had met with the researcher within a few hours of her first interview. These disclosures were revealed by participants within their real identities. In these three instances, the communication was

limited to simple enthusiasm for their experience and the study. For this reason, it was decided by the researcher and her supervisor that no harm was caused.

The seeming dissolution of older boundaries caused by the instant interactivity of social media - and the potential of an inadvertent disclosure by a participant, led the researcher to be acutely mindful of the public nature of some digital interactions. She decided to limit public conversations with participants in online spaces to provide a more conscious border across social media interactions.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a summary of how a method of narrative inquiry, influenced by the seminal work of J. D. Clandinin, Connelly and their circle of protégés and fellow researchers, guided the research design, data collection, and analysis during this investigation. The chapter also revealed how the development of an Arendtian framework for narrative inquiry brought together two theoretical bases for collecting stories in order to present new understandings of human experience. By detailing the manner in which the study was undertaken, it is hoped others may find some usefulness in the results and conclusions.

The next chapter will provide a summary account from the semi-structured interview data.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Stuck in the Mud

Reporting Results

This chapter presents the central research findings to the question: 'For what reasons do secondary English teachers select and use popular culture texts in Stage 5 English?' These results have been gathered from the semi-structured interview data described in the previous Methodology chapter. Reported here are the views of the four teachers from their distinct school contexts as they discuss their experiences as teachers of English who use popular culture texts in Stage 5 English classrooms.

While the participants had differing years of experience in teaching English, all were familiar users of popular culture texts with their students. Rose was distinctive in discussing her work with music videos and Diana spoke of picture books and graphic novels, as a reflection of her perception of the need for multimodal texts in the English classroom. Selene discussed a variety of novels. Harry discussed the teaching of one novel, *The Wave* by Todd Strasser, during his interview. His blog posts provided further information on his teaching of the novel *Jasper Jones*. The novel *The Wave* was the only text mentioned by more than one teacher in this study.

Using the qualitative research program *Dedoose*, the participant interviews plus Harry's blog post data were coded individually before a cross-comparison was made. By looking across coded individual data the researcher sought to identify any similarities or differences in participant reasoning for using popular culture texts with their students that could be observed. Teachers' discussions about text choices, their pedagogical approaches and experiences in the classroom were all of significance when investigating the research question. This chapter reports in detail on what was found.

Context note

It is worth observing that in New South Wales, it is the teacher, the faculty, or the school that decides the texts for Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10) English. Text determinations come from internal

negotiations over curriculum, syllabi and student needs in accordance with English syllabus content and text requirements (BOS NSW, 2012a). There is no prescribed text list for English in Stage 5 as this is only mandated within the English programs in Stage 6. In theory, NSW teachers have the intellectual agency and professional autonomy to design curriculum materials to best meet their students' needs. The reality is that many schools in NSW, particularly public schools, maintain book rooms where texts are loaned to students for a period of time rather than require students to purchase personal copies of texts for class study.

Due to the limited funding of public schools, the budget for books can be variable and the English book room contributes to a culture of text re-use. Teacher desires to teach texts they are familiar with (O'Sullivan, 2005) and titles that have been validated by authoritative voices can also sustain book room stagnation and curriculum inertia (Jogie, 2015a; Cheung, 2015). Text refreshment can be linked to changes in syllabus: when there is a change in the set texts for Stage 6, as there was in 2017 (NSW Government, 2017), new texts may be purchased and previously studied senior texts can be reshuffled to other years. There is a suggested text list for the new K-10 English syllabus (BOS NSW, 2012b), called the *Suggested Texts for the English K-10 Syllabus*. This document exists to offer guidance and support for teachers in their text choices when designing curriculum for Kindergarten to Year 10 English. None of the teachers in this study made mention to any of the recommended texts in the *Suggested Texts for the English K-10 Syllabus* document.

Texts, Teachers and the 'Bog Standard High School'

The semi-structured interviews invited participants to discuss in depth a unit of their teaching with popular culture texts. The parameters of what popular culture texts could be included were deliberately left open so that through their discussion participants could present their understanding of what kinds of texts are popular culture texts.

This investigation aimed to include participants from distinctive and diverse contexts in order to explore the perspectives of teachers who teach in the colloquially coined 'Bog Standard High Schools' (Caro, 2013; Caro, 2018) of New South Wales. Caro's Bog Standard High Schools are

notable for their mundane ordinariness. Servicing local communities these are the schools that rarely make the top 10 of school leagues tables - or even, truth be told, the top 100.

For a country with a jostling history of multiculturalism, overlaid over a geographic awareness that space and place gives shape to identity - the bush and beach war of the ultimate '*strayan* individual, education narratives within public discourse in NSW have been overwhelmingly standardised and pin plotted against a map of Greater Sydney. Within the broader media discourse, there appears to be a temptation to deliver the same stories again and again: These schools have won or lost places in the examination showdowns. Those schools are in the news again - was it a stabbing or a teen radicalised towards terrorism? A media landscape that derives substantial income from real estate advertisements has only a slight pivot to perform when it is time for the annual full colour advertorials extolling the virtues of the Independent school sector.

In contrast to a media discourse of 'bests' and 'worsts', the Bog Standard High School is framed within a noun phrase that connotes a sense of underwhelming averageness and similarity. For an Australian reader, the phrase may draw to mind the block colour uniforms of the public high school made famous in the rocker wear of AC/DC guitarist Angus Young or the chequered pinafore uniforms of generations of girls' schools, the colour scale shifting from suburb to suburb. The etymology of the phrase points to its earlier usage within Australian vernacular before public education advocate Jane Caro turned the phrase to her own purposes.

A bog is a sticky, dirty, muddy place. Individuals struggle to make gains against the bog; the mud holds onto them, and even if they manage to pull themselves bodily out of the bog, the mud sticks, a coarse and gritty plastering that overcoats limbs and shoes and clothes. As anyone who has struggled their way through a bog knows, the mud washes off. But memories remain. Of the physical struggle to push through; the mental load to persevere. Of what was abandoned, and to what held fast.

Yet, even bogs have their own eco-systems, their own delicate balance where life thrives. The Bog Standard High Schools are distinctive places, particularly so within the lens of narrative inquiry. Serving local communities, the Bog Standard High Schools - the ordinary public schools where

ordinary people struggle against the muck of life, bring together unique individuals whose explored lives can offer a portraiture of English teachers' work within localised contexts.

The teachers in this study all teach in what can be characterised as Bog Standard High Schools. In exploring their approaches to popular culture texts within the English classroom these teachers have provided insight into the realities of their local school contexts as well as revealing aspects of themselves as teachers of English. The four teachers have brought texts that they know and that they value into their classrooms for study. What makes these choices distinctive is that they are a blending of each teacher's personal and professional reading histories, and these teachers' respective knowledges of their current students and of their learning needs. So, for instance, we find Rose with her love of contemporary rock and pop radio: "Triple J, Double J" music, and the memories of her anti-establishment father bringing in political music videos when teaching a differentiated poetry unit.

Diana draws upon her experiences as a first generation Australian; she sees in the challenges and strengths of her students historical parallels of the Australia her parents endured before her. Diana reflects, "It's like the fifties and sixties generation of the Greeks and Italians. They all live near each other because it's a safe haven for many. (Now) We get a lot of Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Indonesian...it's comfortability for those kids".

Selene brings her love and passion for books and reading, something that stood her in good stead as a student in the same school that she now teaches in, and she showers her students with books that she thinks that they will love, topping up her enthusiasm with iced lollies "zooper doopers" and offers comfortable pillows to cover a notable four books a year.

Similar to Selene, Harry draws upon his personal knowledges of the local area of his school. He observes, "There's problems with kids in the west and in this particular community…There's not many lawyers that grow up out here. There's not many doctors that grow up out here". Harry speaks from experience. His third generation Maltese-Australian father was the first in his family to go to university and he followed a familiar path for working-class individuals tentatively crossing social strata. His father became a teacher. Harry too now follows that path.

These four teachers in their schools do not and can not represent the experiences of other teachers of English in NSW high schools. Their experiences and their insights however, may find resonant echoes or stand in solitudinal portraits for those who wonder at the intricacies within English teachers' work in the ordinary, unique biodomes of these Bog Standard High Schools.

Little libraries and English Teacher 'Limnings'

These four summaries of each teacher participant are individually contextualised within their communities to provide a brief portraiture report, a limning perhaps, named for the miniature portraitures of the 16th and 17th centuries which cast a light upon their subjects. In this case, the limnings illuminate these teachers' pedagogic and curriculum choices in regard to popular culture texts.

Diana

Diana teaches in Hoda Afshar High School where the predominant religious group of students are those who hold to the Islamic faith. The students are all female. What may appear a homogenous gathering of an Islamic community belies the multi-country origins of many of Diana's students, some of whom are recent refugee arrivals. Diana clarifies her students come from many of the world's Islamic centres. Their ethnicities link to the Rohingyas of Myanmar, to Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran, and Indonesia. The religious differences amongst her students of Islamic faith can require sensitivity and careful stepping by Diana, who is not Muslim but Greek Orthodox in her own religious identification, and who is working under the secular umbrella of the NSW public school system. These religious elements are important to note because as Diana observes, her students can't escape them, even if they try to. She explains, "because so many of them wear the hijab they become the physical visual targets of any kind of racial slurs."

In her role as English teacher, Diana selected the following texts for a unit exploring justice and injustice in the contemporary world:

- *Malala, A Brave Girl from Pakistan/Iqbal, a Brave Boy from Pakistan: Two Sides of Bravery* by Jeanette Winter; (picture book)
- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi; (graphic novel)
- *Parvana* by Deborah Ellis; (novel)
- *I am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai; (autobiography, co-author Christina Lamb)

These four texts explore feminine experiences of Islamic life but notably, the narrative choices are geographically expansive, taking readers from Pakistan, to Iran, and into Afghanistan. Diana consciously chose the four texts for curriculum reasons. There is a requirement to include multimodal texts, picture books, graphic novels, and novels within the English syllabus. But to choose this combination of texts in her current teaching context is to recognise the diversity within her students' cultures and countries of origin. The texts provide for multiple levels of learning. Diana is teaching reading, comprehension, and the English language. She is teaching visual grammar and representation. She is also deliberately creating a space for her students to explore the similarities and differences amongst themselves and those of the protagonists in the selected texts.

During an earlier interview, Diana spoke of her hesitancy in regard to using *Persepolis* in her classroom. Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel tells the story of the author coming of age during the Islamic Revolution in Iran in the early 1980s. There are depictions of violence within the art and Diana was unsure whether or not she would show it after all given the trauma some of her students had recently experienced. When the next interview took place, Diana had taught the text and she explained why the historical and cultural specifics of *Persepolis* were significant in making the text so valuable for her class.

> *One of my students is from Iran as a refugee and understands the discussion around the Islamic revolution in that text. The reason she understood it so well is because she's been targeted (by her fellow Hoda Afshar students) for not wearing her hijab [correctly]. The other girls wear their hair completely covered but the Iranian girl shows her hair - her fringe.*

The text became a resource to explore the reasons why Iranian girls may reveal their hair when wearing a hijab or why some Iranian girls reject the hijab completely. Diana's choice of texts provided moments for students to reflect upon their own reasons for wearing hijab and provided role models that could affirm the visual and the deeper aspects of her students' identities.

The subjects of two of the studied texts are well known identities within their respective domains. Malala is probably one of the most well known advocates for girls' education in the world and Marjane Satrapi, the author and illustrator of *Persepolis*, is recognised within the cross-over space of graphic memoir and film making, yet these women and the intricacies of their lives were little known to Diana's students. Her classroom provided a place and space to unpack, explore, and discuss themes and issues about justice, girls' rights, and the experiences of Islamic women.

Diana evaluated each of the texts included in this unit as to their suitability for her current students and the NSW K-10 English syllabus. When the students read the picture book on Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai they were drawn to her story "...the girls got so interested in Malala." The tonal change between Diana's interviews reveal how well chosen texts can reflect and expand aspects of readers' lives. Her initial hesitancy and uncertainty were replaced by tones of exuberance and exhilaration at the success of the unit, her surprise at how responsive students were to Malala, and her satisfaction that she had carefully navigated the potentially trauma-inducing aspects of *Persepolis*. Diana had included Deborah Ellis' *Parvana* as well, bringing a Canadian lens to the coming of age Muslim-girl theme. She was conscious that Ellis had written a text based on the composite stories of real Afghan girls but that, as a white woman, Ellis is not an '*own voices'* narrator. Diana respected Ellis' text because it met the requirements of including a novel in her unit and the vocabulary of *Parvana* would challenge her students in their developing English.

Diana concludes, "The kids got a lot out of it. Some of them will never get the marks that other kids will get but it's not about that. It was about being able to understand where they are even coming from." Diana's conclusion that the learning within the unit held more meaning for its embedded affirmations and moments of self-reflection reveals she perceives subject English as formative for her students' emerging and evolving sense of identity. Diana's throw away line in regard to marks,

"it's not about that" signposts her commitment to English as a subject of personal growth and maturation for her students.

Harry

Harry shares his Year 10 English class at Louisa Lawson High School with a colleague. This makes for an interesting exchange within the interview whereby Harry spends more time explaining the processes that give organisation to a shared class and his pedagogical approaches when teaching a studied novel. It is not until later, in the period of analysis, that the researcher remembered that when the recording device was turned off Harry advised he would blog about the novel for her to read as well. The analysis in this section comes from Harry's interview and from his blog post on the studied text *Jasper Jones*:

- *Jasper Jones* by Craig Silver; (novel)
- *The Wave* by Todd Strasser; (novel)
- 'The Asch experiment', unidentified You Tube clip.

Harry's focus on pedagogy and lesson organisation was apparent within his interview and his blog. His focus on processes and pedagogy seemed surprising to the researcher, especially in contrast to the passionate and detailed ways the other participants in the study spoke about their love of texts. This dispassionate approach to the teaching culture of English drew in some way from Harry's practical realities of having a split teaching load and the allocation of new responsibilities. At the time of the second meeting between the researcher and Harry he had taken on an acting leadership role within the school. Harry explains the way he is approaching organisation of a Year 10 class with his colleague:

> *I'm sharing the Year 10 class with another teacher now. So, I'm four periods and she's the other four periods. I need to say to her, 'okay, we're up to chapter five. She needs to have a specific chapter that she's up to when she tells me where we're back at so we're not covering the same ground.*

There appears to be a distinct preoccupation within Harry's organisational style with order and control. This desire for tidy chapter closure for ease of teacher transition is indicative of an approach whereby lessons can be ticked off on a checklist or program. There does not appear to be much room for interruption, creativity or deviation from the plan.

Harry reflects, "... when I approach teaching, I don't think of myself as an English teacher. I'm a high school teacher". This distinction, between being an English teacher or a high school teacher, reflects a demarcated perception of teacher identity. It also posits the leadership ambitions beyond the English faculty that Harry seems to be working towards. The short sentence and repeated use of the personal pronoun provides the assertion from which Harry sets the boundaries of his teaching identity. Harry separates himself from the stereotype of the teacher who defines their professional identity through their disciplinary orientation.

This distinction is reflected in the way Harry discusses his current unit. The title of his Year 10 set text *Jasper Jones* is not mentioned while the recording device is on, the literary qualities or otherwise of Craig Silver's work are not unpacked. Harry talks instead about supporting students in their reading, comprehension, and analysis. He covers lexical density, grammatical intricacy, and narrative voice in his blog post. The text itself does not seem to be the focal point. Rather, Harry focuses solely on the English skills his students will need to mediate and hopefully for some, master, as they navigate their way beyond the suburban boundaries of which the Louisa Lawson High School community is drawn. Harry recalls:

> *I liked that idea of the colour coding, so I went and drew up a schema for the kids to use on how they can colour code their books. They've got six different categories of how they could code their book and they pick what colour matches up with which category. So, monitoring for new words that's - they might pick purple. Questions that they want to ask when they read the text. Connections to the theme of the unit, which is conflict and so on and so forth. They just sit there and put all their post-it notes into the book.*
>
> *One of the boys went and asked me at lunchtime yesterday if he can go get his book out of the classroom and show a student in another Year 10 class because he said it made him look really smart to have all these post-it notes in his book. So, he went and got it. Then when his mum came to parent/teacher night last night I showed her a photo of what his book looks like because he wanted to show her as well.*

This vignette was drawn from Harry's reflections on the colour coding of comprehension and analysis that he had heard about from Chris Tovani, an American teacher and reading specialist who

had spoken at an Australian conference for teachers of English and Literacy. While Harry didn't agree with everything Tovani discussed he had been impressed with the practical strategy of colour coding texts, which reinforced annotation behaviours he had already been teaching and using with students in his classrooms.

The anecdote reflects Harry's approach in appropriating pedagogical ideas and redesigning the processes to suit the students in his classrooms. It also indicates the structure and control Harry prefers to have over his students' reading and learning in English. The student has to ask permission to take his copy of the novel out of Harry's classroom as Harry has inevitably learnt that books that go home with students don't always come back when it's time for English. Harry's story, captured above, also reflects the outcomes that he aims towards in his teaching practice: student ownership and pride in their learning under his guidance, and celebrating that behaviour and attitude with parents.

There is also something more at work. Harry seems to exhibit a skills and process model of English whereby units of learning are ticked off in predetermined time frames. Such a model includes visible 'signs' of learning: the colour-coding and post it notes stuck on and through set texts become semiotic cues of intelligence and effort. The books become artefacts of English, artefacts of becoming or being "smart" that can be displayed to others for their regard. Harry's approach of order and 'tidy' visibility of teaching and learning echoes the epistemology of new managerialism in education, expressed in John Hattie's (2013) *Visible Learning* and the increasingly espoused discourse of 'learning intentions and success criteria' (AITSL, n.d.) From Harry, performativity in English becomes an implied stepping stone to further successes in and beyond Louisa Lawson High School for his students, and perhaps, for himself.

Rose

Ruth Park High School is further south than the rest of the schools in this study. The suburb is far more more Anglo-Australian than those of the other three schools. In the 2016 census the most common reported ancestries seem like a time capsule of colonial Australia with English, Australian, Irish, Scottish, and German taking out the top 5 spots (ABS, 2017). Rose teaches a mix of comprehensive students from town and some who come in from local farms and landholdings. In

the semi-structured interviews she focuses mostly on her work teaching Year 9 literacy students who struggle with abstract concepts of analysis in subject English. Rose chose to explain her use of music videos to support those students in their exploration of a topic initially themed around war poetry that she adapted the following year to focus more on 'making own choices'. Rose used the following texts with her class:

- *I was only 19*, Redgum, (music video)
- *I was only 19*, The Herd cover, (music video)
- *Brothers in Arms*, Mark Knopfler, (music video)
- *Wide awake*, Katy Perry, (music video)
- *Belfast Child*, Simple Minds, (music video)
- *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, Patrick Gilmore, (song)
- *The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down*, Robbie Robertson, (song)

Rose brings texts that she has a fondness for into her English classroom, sharing family connections alongside guided analysis and collaborative learning. Her Dad had a soft spot for the old jingles of the American Civil War - and her family line harks from Ireland, hence songs from 'The Troubles'. Rose is not concerned that these texts will be unfamiliar to her students. She has found that new technologies and emerging and contemporary ways of reading and viewing have fragmented the popular culture knowledge of her current batches of students. Rose explains, "there's been a shift in the way they view. Like once upon a time you could make a popular culture reference to *The Simpsons* as an example of a parody... Everyone got it. They don't get it now.... There isn't that commonality in the room, that connection. So that's a sign that I'm aging, but it's also a sign that our students, their viewing or their connection is shifting, I think".

Amongst the shifting, changing dynamics of her students' viewing habits and Rose's own repertoire of cultural knowledge comes her awareness of her students' local links within the community. Knowing that some of her students are familiar with guns, either through family members in the armed services or from their farm life, she was fairly confident that they would respond positively to her text choices. Rose recalls, "Mark Knopfler's standing there and his gun. It just spoke to them. They could unpack the symbolism". Then, for the four female students outnumbered in a literacy class of boys, Rose added Katie Perry to the text list too, explaining, "to keep the girls happy I did that Katy Perry *Wide Awake*. Because she makes a choice. Well, that's what I was saying to them.

She's making a choice about that life wasn't working and this life is [worth it] ... There's all these iconic symbols, and the girls got that".

When Rose speaks about her teaching, there is a vivid and dynamic sense of her working the classroom, guiding, prompting, sparking engagement with English concepts through textual choices. Rose speaks colloquially and freely, intermingling family anecdotes with classroom decisions, and about her ways of responding to the Year 9 literacy support class. Some teachers put on a mask in front of their class. Rose needs no mask. She is authentic and lively, conscious perhaps that she is aging, further away from the teenage concerns of the adolescents in her classroom every year but adept still at reaching them, and guiding them, valuing them for who they are, and the critically aware young men and women she hopes they will one day become.

Rose's educational philosophy reflects a mix of a personal growth model of English and a critical literacy approach without speaking specifically of either in terms of theorists. Rose spoke a lot about student 'needs' and being guided again and again by the needs of different kids. She defines English teachers and indicates her respect for them through her views of their competency to identify and focus on the particular needs of students. Rose says, "... that's always the interesting point within classroom teachers *who are professionals*, who identify and work towards solving a need, but without necessarily a theoretical background".

The way in which Rose creates a new step of teacher classification within her own definition is interesting. Rose's professional classroom teachers of English are those with the competency to *identify* and *develop approaches* for individual students to thrive in and beyond the classroom. It is a definitional approach that values teacher agency and judgement - even if, as Rose observes, the teacher can't namedrop theorists. In this definition, the experiences of working with students and the development of practical knowledges are valued. She identifies herself as "a humanist. I just want the kids to be the best person they can be". To Rose, subject English is a space for developing students' literacies and competencies with English communication modes but it is also a place for cultivating new ideas and new ways of thinking about their world.

Selene

Selene loves teaching. Selene loves teaching English. She loves books. She loves her students. She loved her school so much she returned to teach in it once she gained her teaching qualifications. Selene is enthusiasm personified and remarkably tireless and even though such energy may seem annoying from a distance - the Reese Witherspoon character from *Election* comes to mind, Selene is actually more like Witherspoon in the film *Legally Blonde*, intelligent, assertive and effervescent in her professional joy. During the two semi-structured interviews Selene discussed teaching the following texts with students in Years 9 and 10 English:

- *Jasper Jones*, based on the novel by Craig Silver, (play) *Yr 9*
- *First Contact*, directed by Ronan Sharkey, (documentary) *Yr 9*
- *Swim the Fly*, Don Calame, (novel) *Yr 9*
- *Spanking Shakespeare*, Jake Wizner, (novel) *Yr 9*
- *The Sidekicks*, Will Kostakis, (novel) *Yr 9*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee, (novel) *Yr 10*
- *Serial*, Sarah Koenig & Julie Snyder, (podcast series) *Yr 10*
- *The Wave*, Todd Strasser, (novel) *Yr 10*
- *A Property of the Clan*, by Nick Enright, (play) *Yr 10*

Thanks to her mother, Selene's childhood and adolescence was richly populated with books. Her mother would pass on novels she had read for Selene to read too, as well as buy any titles that Selene showed an interest towards. In turn, Selene seems eager to recreate that generosity by showering her students in books that they are more likely to read and engage with. Selene explains:

> *People love 'The Outsiders'. Whilst that is a relevant novel, it doesn't really affect the kids that we have at [Faith Bandler High]. We needed to get things, I think, that are more suitable. I'm a big fan of coming of age stuff. An example of a novel that we now have for Year 9 is called 'Swim the Fly'. It's an awesome text. If I have a low ability 10 class, or a Year 9 class, I always read it. It's about three boys and their mission is to see a naked girl throughout the summer. It's all the different battles that they go through to get this.*
>
> *It's very clever because there's a lot of intertextuality in it. For example, they call their dog Onomatopoeia. There's heaps of different references to 'Lord of the Flies' and things like that. Some of the higher kids are able to make those connections, but even the lower ability kids are able to realise*

> *what's happening and engage with it ... It's just - the kids love it because it's so vulgar.*

This vignette reflects the professional and personal layers within Selene's identity as an English teacher. She is conscious of the canon of English literature as well as the English classroom. There is a smooth diplomatic deftness in the way Selene weaves criticism of *The Outsiders* - it is a 'relevant' text but she believes it doesn't have the hook, 'affect', needed for her students to read it. In turn, Selene is able to persuasively advocate for the text she does admire, mixing an awareness of what her students love about the text, the vulgarity, with English concepts of intertextuality and figurative language.

This one vignette reflects the poise and professional patter in which Selene always holds forth. She speaks of differentiation, local context, English concepts. Selene is very much a model of the modern performative (see Ball, 2003) teacher of English. Selene may not intend to be performative. She speaks earnestly. She must work hours each week juggling her multiple school responsibilities beyond the classroom. But out of the four participants, Selene stands alone in one key way. She is a model neoliberal teacherchild come to adulthood within a panopticon of Standards and Accreditation. The new English teacher. She's very good at embodying it.

This section was a brief contextualised summary of the English unit/s discussed and an account of some of the text/s the four teachers identified when speaking about popular culture texts for classroom use with their Stage 5 students.

Significance of Subject English to these teachers

This next report on these teachers brings together a brief discussion on similarities and differences across their professional values and attitudes in regard to the significance of subject English for them.

Passion and love of subject English unite the three female teachers. Diana, Rose and Selene share a similar lexicon of emergent natality: the power of the English teacher to birth their successors

through inculcation and celebration of shared humanistic values. Diana speaks with repetition to demonstrate the strength of her emotions, “I love - I love what I do and I love my subject and I want kids to want to come along on that journey with me through that passion”. Rose too uses emotive language to convey the heart always embedded within her professional intellectualising, “... it's a passion of mine. English and words has always been a passion”. Like Diana, Selene also uses repetition, referring twice to English as a conduit for a “lifelong love of learning”.

Perhaps rather true to stereotypes regarding masculinity, Harry does not discuss passion or love of the subject using the emotive words of his female counterparts. Harry sustains a professional pragmatism when discussing the significance of subject English yet there is an echoing emotional cadence within his discussion of why English is important. He says, “You want to expand their (the students) repertoire or their field of knowledge. You want to find things, the sort of things that they might like, but that they just wouldn't have had contact with. You want to broaden their horizons”.

Perhaps Harry uses the second person to distance himself from the power of the emotions, he does after all identify as a ‘high school teacher’ - not an ‘English teacher’. His use of second person may be indicative of a reservoir of deeper feelings unsaid. There is an emotional connection nonetheless within the quest-like imagery of ‘finding things’ and ‘broadening horizons.’ However, Harry appears to be atypical in regard to Goodwyn’s (2012) research with English teachers on what matters in English. While Goodwyn’s (2012) participants (254 practicing teachers) spoke to the importance of literature and the joys of reading as part of their professional identities, Harry does not. Harry treats the cultivation of reading with the same organisational pragmatism that he applied when arranging lesson sequences with his job partner. The goals of ‘finding things *for* students’, ‘getting through the text’ and focusing learning time on assessable content seems to be valued more than encouraging students to develop their own (perhaps incorrect) responses. Like Harry, Diana too speaks of quests and journeys that English takes students and teachers alike on but she allows for meandering sidequests and false starts.

Selene and Rose articulate what ‘broadening horizons’ could mean more specifically for students and their immediate life contexts. They could “string together a sentence or fill out a form,” says Selene. Or, as Rose identifies, “some of [those] kids might not have a real job. [They] might be at

Maccas, [they] might be a part time retailer or whatever it is [they're] going to do. So why not put them in touch with other ideas". English becomes a catechism, an inclination towards the metaphorical light of books and reading, even if the sun glints off Golden Arches instead of yonder Golden Gates and paths unexplored.

The four all speak of books and texts, even Harry. He's "just trying to get kids interested in a wider range of texts". There may appear to be a weariness in Harry's tone but it must be heard alongside his strategic work positioning his students for better life prospects beyond their schooling years. Harry says he's 'just trying' but it seems that on some level he is hoping dearly that some of his students at least will take from English something that will make their lives better, more purposeful, more meaningful.

All these teachers know of students who have fallen by the wayside: students who slip away from books and English and school itself despite the feelings and the emotions and the relationships these teachers bring into their classroom. Diana knows not everyone will come along on the journey but, "when they do engage in that way, they do" continue a journey of English, one which the three female teachers posit as an illumination. English is presented as the subject which offers some protection against the darkness of the world within and beyond the school gates.

This report brought together a summary of these teachers' values and attitudes towards subject English, finding the three female participants held similar emotively drawn perspectives on the significance of subject English. In contrast, Harry appears to perceive the subject through a more instrumentalist lens even though, like the female participants, he harbours hopes that the experience of learning in English may push his students beyond the limitations of geography and local knowledges in their post-school lives.

Knowing students in English: stratification and streaming

This section of the report will now present observations in regard to academic streaming and ability-level grouping within these comprehensive schools and how subject English manifests within these environments. This is relevant because nominally these four participant schools are comprehensive

schools and, given the long history of contestable versions of English, it is highly significant to explore and report on the shape and form of subject English these teachers present to their students. Are these teachers offering their comprehensive students, seemingly low in social capital, a "thin gruel" (p. 202) version of English, as Macken-Horarik (2011) apprehends? Or are they responding to the weight and depth of the NSW K-10 English curriculum within their lesson design? These are the underlying questions which this section of the report considers.

All of these educators teach in comprehensive high schools. Streaming or ability-grouping, is evidently in practice within some schools more than others. Selene's school appears to run a selective stream alongside comprehensive classes, increasing her awareness of grouping students by ability levels. Selene more commonly described classes as "high ability", "low ability", "top class", "bottom class", and "selective stream". But Selene is not the only teacher within the study to discuss students in terms of ability. Harry referred to "low ability", and "mixed ability" classes. Rose used the terms "top class", "bottom class", "difficult kids", "mainstream", and "lower class".

In contrast to the other three teachers, Diana more often used the language of the English curriculum to more accurately describe student abilities generally and those of her students specifically. For example, she says, "when you have kids that are - Year 7 kids, I have Year 7 kids that are at Stage 1, Stage 2;" or "... our best Year 9 students. They were getting Band 10s". Diana's use of NSW specific educational jargon reflects her confidence and knowledge of the NSW system and its assessment practices. Students in Year 7 'at Stage 1 or 2' are demonstrating the capabilities of students in Years 1 to 4 in primary school English.

Diana's descriptions reflect her caution when discussing student abilities in English and her desire to positively represent them within this research project. Rather than characterise her students as 'weak' or 'poor', Diana uses the teaching language of Bands to more accurately describe their abilities, reflecting on her conscious awareness of her students' contexts and for many, their refugee backgrounds. However, Diana too captured the frustration of working with students whose English capabilities are well below what is expected in secondary schooling. She described a group of students as "lower ability", clarifying "it's the ones who are really struggling and you can't talk - it's hard to talk to them about that because they just get very shut down".

Diana's qualifier carefully set the perimeters of how her students could be characterised by her description. It's not that they can't speak English well enough for communication and dialogue. Sometimes emotional factors impede the teacher talk that happens between students and teachers when educators like Diana try to boost esteem and skill levels through relational outreach.

All the educators in this study could discuss individual students and the dynamically different moments that arise within ability groupings of students. All of them had a warm affirming anecdote to share, such as this one from Diana:

> *One of my girls actually, who writes poetry, because she wants to be a creative writer and she's a beautiful writer and her poetry is stunning, what she does is she writes a narrative in poetry because that's what we run - we run a poetry slam at my school...She got the top of the top Band 10. She aced her writing.*

The vignette above reflects how working with young people at their respective levels of English can draw out strong emotional responses in their teachers. Diana's use of the possessive "my student" and the noun phrase in which she manages to include "beautiful", "creative" and "stunning" to characterise the girl and her writing reflect Diana's admiration of the girl's skills. This student "got the top of the top"; she "aced her writing" a collection of effusive phrases from a teacher who more commonly spoke carefully and circumspectly. In her delighted memories, Diana's careful characterisation to evoke objectivity and impartiality towards her students slipped away.

This one, (edited) came from Selene and her memories of a student:

> *He's very much off-task no matter what, quite immature as well. So when he didn't get the Band 8 (in NAPLAN), he like, scrunched up his results, threw it in the air, like ran and jumped across the table, and was like, carrying on. So we find that sometimes he's a little bit out of control. But he's not malicious, he's just silly - like really, really immature and like nothing's ever good enough for him, and like why do we have to do this, why do we have to do that, and it's like no matter how much effort you put in, or how much everyone else in the classroom will be totally engaged, but he's always your battle.*

> *So last week he thanked me for the lesson, and I almost died. I was like can I hug you - like no, I won't but…he just gave me - and just the looks he gives me in the lessons, these looks of disgust, but yeah, I think that was one of the best memories so far with that Year 9 class.*

In discussing a student whose experiences within subject English had proven to be repeatedly challenging, Selene uses metaphor to convey her delight in his and her momentary success. Selene's long run-on sentence of the ways the boy rejects the culture of her classroom, "...not malicious...just silly..." ends on the metaphor, "he's always your battle". This sets up an emotional pendulum within her vignette when he thanks her for the lesson; an innocuous moment for any other student but a significant milestone for this particular one. Selene's metaphor extends, "I almost died", and we see the impression this experience has had on her. These emotional responses speak to the deep connections that form between teachers and their students: even for moments that seem fleeting, that may well be short-lived for the student, impress upon these teachers with gravity and weight.

This characterisation of students in regard to ability level within English seems indivisible from their teachers' understanding or perceptions of their students. These educators speak with fondness, with exasperation, with pride of their students and the ways in which the students respond to their teaching. Yet always implicit in their characterisation of their students is a sense of their students' ability in English.

This may seem obvious to observe but it is necessary to note; these teachers know their students through relational, ongoing, experiences but their perceptions seem to always plot the student of English in regard to their ability level within English. 'Knowing students' is revealed as perceptively accounting for individual strengths and weaknesses and filing that knowledge within the teachers' memory for future recall when planning for and enacting English lessons with these particular students.

Knowing students in English: who reads, who doesn't

Reading is the one key behaviour within subject English that all four participants explicitly discussed in detail. All four participants are readers. We discussed at the beginning of the semi-

structured interviews the reading habits that formed their childhood and adolescence. Notably, all four participants spoke of popular culture texts forming the memories of their own adolescent reading patterns.

Diana recalled Francine Pascal's *Sweet Valley High* series alongside *Frankenstein*, “one of my all time favourite books which I read as a teenager”. Selene reminisced the power of Bryce Courtenay’s *Tandia* at a time when she was admittedly a little younger than the usual demographic audience. Selene remembered, “My mum would just be giving me the books that she read...I just always thought that young adult stuff was babyish”. Harry read *Dr Who* novels, “the only thing I read by choice in my own time,” and his school texts, “I enjoyed most of the school texts,” he noted. Rose spoke of the intertwined memories of reading and her father. “I loved reading and I loved reading History. I used to read lots of History and would talk to Dad…”

What is clear is that these four teachers were readers before they were teachers of English. These moments of reading for pleasure stand out in stark contrast to the desiccated culture of reading that they describe some of their students exhibiting and that these four teachers are doing their best to overcome.

Rose is quite direct in appraising the literacy shortcomings of her students, “...the students, they don’t read and they basically have a fear of writing”. Harry too bluntly acknowledges, “there are kids in there who just will not read on their own”. Many of Selene’s students are likely not habitual readers, especially in her ‘lower-ability classes’ but Selene has embedded a culture of reading to make up for that. She describes her practice and smiles at the memories, “like I always think back to - particularly with the lower ability class - thinking back to when you have children and you read to them and you're modelling how reading should occur and your use of tone and things like that, and that's what I like to do in my class”. Now, Selene does not have children of her own. She is using the second person to evoke personal authority and likely drawing on her own memories of childhood. In doing so, Selene evokes a maternal concern for her students who don’t read and has created a culture where non-readers are engaged in nurturing reading processes.

In contrast to Rose and Harry's straightforward evaluations, and Selene's recollections, Diana sidesteps answers which reveal weaknesses in her students' literacies or those that may imply determinism because of cultural origin. She is overtly conscious of how a deficit description could be wrongly interpreted by others lacking the contextual knowledges that she has, especially given the language and social background of her students. Diana pauses and hesitates before carefully revealing, "[i]t's culture. I'm skirting culture. There are some cultural limitations ... I'll just say that. Okay. Therefore these kids are not exposed to the same as others. Success for kids like that is different". Diana uses the noun "culture" to substitute for more specific identifiable markers of ancestry, language, and behaviours. She is far less comfortable in drawing attention to the ways her students do not mirror middle-class 'good reading' behaviour even though she has been articulate and detailed elsewhere in our conversations delineating the geographical differences within her students' backgrounds.

Diana's hesitancy is a reminder that those most othered within society may require greater sensitivity when discussing the ways they live up to, or not, societal ideals. It is not coincidence that Harry and Rose, whose students more commonly draw from Anglo-Australian ancestry can speak more freely on their students' lack of reading culture. The stereotype of Anglo-Australian kids being more sport orientated and uninterested in books can be navigated because there is far less damage in that connotation for Harry and Rose than there is for Diana's students. Diana's students, as immigrants, as refugees, as speakers of multiple languages, who return to suburbs where signs are in Arabic rather than English, are more overt politicised figures within narratives of 'good students/good readers'.

Knowing students' literacy needs draws upon a teacher's knowledge of individual students but also draws upon their awareness of students and their, at times, diverse home cultures as well as the culture created by the teacher within the classroom environment. These four teachers are working within their local contexts to create a gathering of readers in the hope that today's students are well springs for their respective communities in the future.

English is reading and reading is English

Overwhelmingly, these respondents value and prioritise reading behaviours for all of their students, even though, as noted in the previous section, they understand that some students are resistant to participating in the act of reading. All four participants discussed behaviours such as reading practices, including modelling the act of reading, and reading with and for their students as pre-eminent activities within their classrooms. Three of the four participants presented classroom examples of reading print texts while Rose focused her discussion on developing her students' skills for deeper reading of music videos. Rose also explained that her school has a whole school reading program, *Kick off with Reading*, (discussed later in this chapter). This broader definition of reading reflects the definitional breadth within the NSW K-10 English Syllabus (BOS NSW, 2012c) that "Texts include written, spoken, non-verbal, visual or multimodal communications of meaning" (p. 222).

The expectations created by the NSW K-10 English Syllabus (Board of Studies, 2012a) set a high standard for teachers of English in regard to reading practices. From the rationale:

> "The study of English from Kindergarten to Year 10 should develop a love of literature and learning and be challenging and enjoyable" (p. 10).

It is not enough that students are exposed to select examples of literature or that their teacher reads to them in class. The syllabus rationale establishes an expectation of curriculum and pedagogical mastery from the teacher in order to create a space where students are inculcated into holding particular values and into feeling particular emotions about literature and learning. Love and joy are meant to be part of the process as much as the experience of being challenged. Implied within the English syllabus rationale is an awareness of required pedagogical models which place the student/child's emotional wellbeing as much as their intellectual wellbeing at the centre of the English classroom.

On reading aloud to students in Years 9 and 10, Selene creates a comforting image of her practices as to how she manages to get through four books a year with each of her classes. She uses audiobooks and reads aloud to help her students follow the words along in their copies of the texts.

Selene clarifies how expectations are different depending on the needs of her students. For a strong class, “a high ability class”, “they can be trusted to read individually, whereas with my bottom class, no, no, no. I’m reading. They like the voices or the audio. I think that’s just good practice for kids who can’t read”. For a period when students are more likely to be irritable, disruptive, or disengaged, a solution is to read aloud; a reading lesson becomes a positive reward.

Selene explains to an imaginary class, “...I know how hard it is for you to concentrate on Friday period four, so we’re going to make that our reading period”. She slips away from memory and back to the researcher to reflect. “That’s something that’s worked really well because they know what to expect, particularly in summer. We don’t have air conditioning. We’re in the top building, so it gets very hot, 38, 39 degrees in that room plus 30 kids. They know they can sit on the floor. We’ll have the fans on. Buy them Zooper Doopers. That’s how we’ll spend the period. That works well. They like routine”.

Selene’s experience may suggest some infantilization of the practice of reading. She is after all talking about teenagers between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. But she is also discussing teenagers for whom middle-class reading practices are quite unfamiliar who are also studying in classrooms ill designed for the extremes of Australian weather. The buying of iced blocks, and the accumulation of furnishings designed to evoke comfort and relaxation are purposeful. Selene is trying to recreate the experience of reading for pleasure for her students, just as her mother once did for her. She is creating a shared reading culture which for some students may be a new experience or a practice to which they hold some resistance. While Selene shows awareness that some students will read on their own, her willingness to accommodate those who won’t, and create conditions to better support them in reading reflects her professionalism and commitment to her students’ learning in English.

Within a slightly different scenario, Diana shared her experiences with a top senior class who she trusted to read a studied text but who returned to her in dismay, revealing a lack of cultural context to truly ‘read between the lines’ of classical works. Diana recalls that even, “in Stage 6 I'm just looking at (Emily) Dickinson, and I love her poetry, but the kids took it home and they read it and they were like oh Miss, I don't understand. But when I was reading it to them they said, ‘oh I like it

better now that you're reading it because there's a sense of performance and there's a sense of a pause and understanding where things... - the ebb and flow'. That's needed and it's necessary and unless you have that monologue, that inner voice that does that for you, which can come with growth and age and time, it's very hard to establish that as a teenager".

In this moment of recollection, Diana demonstrated her capacity to put herself in the space of her students, remembering the time even for herself when the rhythm and cadence of canonically distinct works presented a barrier to understanding. For Diana now, reading the poetry of Emily Dickinson comes as easy as code-switching between Greek and English is for her. Her understanding appears seamless. However, her use of the tricolon "growth and age and time" demonstrates her awareness that code-switching between languages or canonical works of literature requires a sustained and ongoing experience of learning and immersion. She knows this. She understands this.

Diana doesn't get frustrated that her senior students have not yet grasped the 'inner voice' of the confident and sophisticated reader of English nor does she demand of her students an affectation of passing - pretending to be what they are not. Instead, she reads aloud to them, performing the poems so the girls can work on tuning their 'inner voices' at a developmental pace that is appropriate to them.

In contrast to the ways that Diane and Selene represented their professional spaces, Harry presents a rather isolated image in his work as an English teacher because of the ways his professional judgement in valuing reading aloud has been undermined by a lack of internal faculty support. He explains, "... the new head teacher of English is against it and says you shouldn't be reading to Stage 5. She didn't say it specifically to me, but she just said it generally in the faculty meeting ... You pick your battles". Now, Harry does read aloud to his students. Reading aloud is a professional decision he has weighed up after years of experience with different cohorts of teenagers moving through Louisa Lawson High School.

Revealing that he is acting in opposition to his head teacher's professional judgement was not something he took lightly. In order to sustain a sense of collegiality, Harry stays silent even when

what is expressed runs counter to his own practice and judgement. His choice to read aloud becomes adversarial with the values of an English teacher - who should not need to read aloud to Stage 5 students, as expressed by his boss. Perhaps this moment has contributed to Harry's dislocated sense of identity. As noted previously, he perceives himself as a high school teacher - not an English teacher.

In the extracts above, Selene, Diana and Harry recall conversations that have shaped their attitudes and perceptions around reading aloud in the classroom. Selene's conversational style, particularly with her 'lower ability' students is to adopt a maternal 'this is what we are doing' instructional voice. Selene is operating from her teacher intuition; she doesn't "trust" certain students that she characterises as "lower ability" to read their set texts beyond the school environment but she will create the conditions within her classroom to ensure they do.

Diana trusted her students to go read their set text of poetry at home but the honest conversation with students that followed, "oh Miss, I don't understand", where the students revealed their uncertainty and discomfort in reading the text, enabled Diana to model an inner voice for students to work towards emulating in class time. Diana and Selene's vignettes end on an upbeat promise; the students are working "well"; the students like Dickinson's poetry "better now". In contrast, a conversation that resonates with Harry about reading aloud to students that he has chosen to share is one in which his values and beliefs about activity value have been threatened. Harry uses a metaphor of confrontation, "you pick your battles" to infer that his thinking on the practice of reading aloud is resolute but he is less likely to advocate for the practice in a way that could lead to confrontation within his faculty.

These teachers are working in schools where their local communities are less likely to be engaged in middle-class reading practices, where books are not commonly found in their students' homes. Their knowledge of their students and their experiences modelling and extolling the virtues of reading arise from a firm understanding that students must internalise 'good' reading behaviour if they are to achieve in English yet it is evident struggles occur between different attitudes and beliefs about students and what they should be able to do. Even Diana, with her knowledge of her students' cultural knowledge gaps, initially sent her seniors home to read Emily Dickinson on their own.

However, Diana was able to confidently pivot her lessons in response to student difficulties and willingly modelled reading aloud to help her students hear Dickinson's voice in order to explore the layers within the poetry texts.

Harry's experiences in his school have taught him that many of his students will not read a set text for study if he doesn't read it aloud to them. These different professional experiences of a similar classroom challenge - helping students to read the set text - have undoubtedly impacted on these teachers. Diana, Selene and Rose have experienced support and understanding; Harry, far less so. In turn, Harry is less likely to 'pick a battle' within his faculty over the value of reading aloud. A loss perhaps, for future students of his school.

This sequence reported on the attitudes of these four teachers towards the relationship between subject English and the act of reading. Localised contextual circumstances give shape to the ways in which these teachers respond to the students in their classrooms. Diana, Selene, Harry and Rose may share the stereotype of resistant readers in their classroom but their pedagogical behaviour in response indicates their willingness to see past stereotypes in order to nurture and encourage their students in the act of reading.

The Unavoidable Spectre of Assessment

All four participants discussed aspects of assessment as part of their curriculum and pedagogic work. For these participants, assessment underpins their decision-making processes in regard to text selection yet they each approach assessment with a conscious awareness of their students, and how those students will experience and undergo assessment procedures. The following sequence of vignettes provides a pathway into each teacher's perspective and understanding of aspects of assessment in English.

Diana has a stronger sense than many teachers as to assessment in English and why summative marks shouldn't be seen as the end goal driving her work with students. Working in some of

Sydney's most disadvantaged schools with students facing multiple vulnerabilities has given her a pragmatic eye in evaluating the impact of state and federal assessment policies. She turns away from memories of earlier years in her career and settles on her current students. During the time this research was operationalised, a State government initiative brought a new challenge to her classroom. Her Year 9 students need to achieve a Band 8 in the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in order to access their end of school exams in subsequent years. At the time of our conversation we are both uncertain as to how schools, parents and young people will deal with the operational logistics of that policy decision. Diana is talking to the researcher but she is also elsewhere, thinking through strategies for her current students, what she can do to get them as close as she can to that needed Band 8.
She reflects:

> *I think we're really caught up in our society today about that mark, and that is not success for me. In any way, shape or form, that final mark is not a deem or culmination of success. They don't take any of that into consideration, that you're dealing with human beings. It's not numbers. Band 8 is a number, it's not a human being, and that disconnect is huge because when you're at places like my work, the majority of the students don't get a Band 8 but at least 30 percent of our students will achieve some sort of success in their results in HSC, and (an) even a smaller percent will surpass their value added in their Band 8s or their Band 6s.*

Diana's frustration and her anger towards educational policymakers, the 'they' who work in offices far removed from classroom realities, is palpable in the vignette above. Diana's language uncouples itself from the careful ways in which she has traversed the other semi-structured interview questions. She speaks a discourse of dehumanisation that assessment policies applied from above can have upon those living with the realities of their policy conclusions. 'Band 8 is a number, it's not a human being', she fiercely counters, and the spectre of eugenics and human lives and the value found in a single life haunts the conversation.

Diana is frank even in her anger. She doesn't talk up her students' results or speak of their results as a deficit. Their reality is 'at least 30 percent will achieve some sort of success in their results in the HSC'. For other schools in other contexts, only 30 percent of students achieving success would be anathema, a sign of failure. Perhaps to the policy makers who set such barriers the 70 per cent of

students who don't achieve a Higher School Certificate, who leave Hoda Afshar High School with a Record of Achievement and not a HSC, is a sign of failure. To Diana, who has worked in the marginal schools of Sydney for most of her career, celebrating a win is win. So too is celebrating those students who may not perform or achieve within academic frames of reference but who leave her classroom with the compounded interest of Diana's efforts to teach them the breadth and depth of subject English, even if they cannot yet articulate that knowledge within a traditional academic performance or timeframe.

Many kilometres away from Hodar Afshar High School is Harry's school, Louisa Lawson, where the demographics reflect an older immigration period of Australian history. The closest city is far more Anglicised than the one that pins the Sydney CBD on the map. There is so much that separates the students of Diana and Harry's schools. Diana's students may be daughters of refugees and migrants. Harry's are the children of an older working-class and a nouveau riche made prosperous off the back of small businesses in the traditional trades of building and construction. But they are similar in one key way: students of these schools live with intergenerational deficits that come from an ignorance of 'good' Australian schooling behaviours. In response, Harry focuses on writing, reading and vocabulary development. These are the areas that Harry's students have an advantage over Diana's. They are mostly native speakers of Australian English. But that's not advantage enough when it comes to thriving within NSW's circumscribed school culture that is constricted by the constant presence of high-stakes assessment.

Harry has read literature on class deficits and knows the statistics of youth unemployment. Harry's goals are attuned to the young people whose lives are encircled within their aspirational suburb that was literally built with only one road in and out. He knows for a lot of his kids the only academic support they get is what their school provides. "...what I've found is kids in Western Sydney in particular when they do their class work, if they know it's assessable they'll do it properly", says Harry.

> *They only care about what's on their report a lot of the time. You need to run the assessments as projects so they run long ways through the term and you work with the kids on how to get their assessment done. If I have an assessment on writing an essay, I'll build into the assessment a draft section where they have to hand in a draft*

and I give feedback on it. So, they're being guided in how to get full marks and you end up getting quite a few kids getting really good marks, but that's because you've helped them. Some people might say that's not a reflection of their real ability if they were chucked into a room and told to write an essay, but they've learnt from it.

Isn't that the point; we're teaching them how to do things?

Harry's rhetorical question points to the philosophical tension that recurs again and again amongst teachers of subject English and the broader media and policy landscape. Harry's experiences with his students point to an 'underperformance' in literacy: they don't read enough, they can't write well enough, they need step by step guidance to achieve good marks. Questions over teacher influence versus interference in student assessment coalesce. Answers don't come in an easy tick and flick package.

"Every kid handed something in on the due date which, for a bottom class, definitely was the text and the options that they got. It worked really well for them". Selene teaches in a comprehensive school on the suburban outskirts of a thriving metropolis. There is a lot of competition amongst schools in this area with low-fee Catholic systemic schools and mid-range Christian schools poaching students from the public school offerings. The public schools can face community stigma as the 'schools of last resort' - the flip image of the Bog Standard High School - but the embedded fears within the stigma are unrecognisable in the students who guide the researcher around the grounds. The school grounds reveal flourishing bushland, gum trees and timber walkways that curve their way intuitively around the landscape. Selene explains much of the timber works have been built by students. The lushness can be a little disorienting for someone seeking the visual cues of traditional school architecture but it turns out the authentic learning practices of the woodwork and carpentry lessons extend across the school - even in English.

Selene explains, "we've had faculty meetings where the idea has been put across to have the same across-the-board assessment, but most people are against it. Because they like having the flexibility and they like being able to differentiate...Particularly if you do have a bottom class I feel like there's a lot more scaffolding that's needed and there's a lot more time spent in class to work on that task".

Selene has taken on many roles, often concurrently, in her work holistically supporting students. Those roles: Year Advisor, English teacher, Gifted and Talented coordinator, English as an Additional Language coordinator, have provided her with experience and knowledge that she uses when programming units of work for her students. Concomitantly to her work in school, Selene also marks NAPLAN, an externally paid role. This training has given her a new lens to see through when evaluating student writing and explaining how assessment differentiation works in practice at her school. Selene clarifies, "...their Band may not have necessarily changed from Year 7 to Year 9, but being an experienced NAPLAN marker, I can actually go in and look and be like yes, okay, they didn't get the Band, but look how much their handwriting's improved...They only wrote a paragraph in Year 7, but they wrote a page in Year 9; you know like those sorts of things I think are really good".

Here in this moment Selene brings forth the dilemma for teachers operating under the auspices of national testing protocols. In knowing the student, Selene can celebrate the development of their writing and their ability to go from writing a paragraph to a page. A school culture that provides teachers the authority and autonomy to develop their own internal assessments may well be the kind of culture which supports the literacy development of a students who only writes a paragraph to an extended response task in Year 7 but manages a page two years later.

Only those that know the student, that know of the work involved to get the student to that point, can celebrate that success. As Selene observed - the recorded band of achievement remained unchanged. There may very well have been no 'value added' perceived within the NAPLAN data for that individual student. They are still performing well under the expectations for someone in Year 9 English. Yet Selene noticed the developmental changes, recognised the growth in being able to express ideas in writing, and valued that achievement because she had the contextual awareness of what had occurred over the two years between NAPLAN tests within her school.

> *...when it came to the horrible assessment task, I'd given them library time, three or four lessons in the library, because everyone was unsure on the lyrics. Then they had to come and answer unseen questions as the task. I'd said, we're going to go to the library and you can research this song, hoping*

> *like hell that they look at the music video or figure something out for themselves without my direction.*

Rose tells this story and laughs with weary resignation. Some of her students are recreational shooters or have members of their family serving in the armed forces. In teaching a unit on conflict, one which referenced the Irish Troubles, the Falklands War, and the American Civil War amongst other violent clashes in history, she knew that there are always students hooked by the visuals of tanks and rifles and uniforms. The difficulty, as always, was in teaching independent analysis of texts. Or perhaps, to rephrase, the difficulty was in her students learning to independently analyse and produce that in writing.

> *Anyway, when they got their assessments back and the faces went down a bit - I mean, a couple of kids did pretty well ... I said, hands up whoever has written an essay before? I said, No. You've been writing paragraphs to prepare you for an essay, which is their next task at the end of the year. I said, this is your start. This is your starting point. Wherever you are now, it only gets better. A few people took that on board and others just went yeah.*

This vignette brings up an image of Rose's students in their classroom shuffling test papers pushed to the bottom of their backpacks. Rose's voice carries her dismay that all their moments of learning, those moments of connection when her students 'got it', were dissolved in an instant by a grade.

For these teachers, knowing their students means working closely with them and alongside them to develop their skills and competencies in English. Challenges occur when their students receive feedback from external tests like NAPLAN that do a disservice to the pace and approach of contextualised learning and assessment. These teachers' awareness of their students' learning needs are intensified when academic performance within schools operate within high-stakes assessment cultures. There is a justifiable concern by these teachers that high stakes assessment cultures diminish the light of individual gains students make in their studies within the English classroom.

‘Culture eats policy for breakfast’

The home schools of the teachers in the study are very different from one another. Each school has a distinctive culture that this research project can only glimpse momentarily through the stories of participants. Yet these glimmerings of culture can provide some insight into aspects that influence learning culture within these school communities. These four teachers provided distinctively different scenarios when discussing the ways in which a culture of reading is embedded within their practice and is then consolidated within their school community. The structure for this section is to share participant stories that reveal distinctive aspects within their school cultures and then discuss the significance of these initiatives after the accounts.

Rose’s school runs an ambitious and expensive whole school reading program. Costing around $15,000 annually, funded by the school Parents and Citizens Association (P&C), each member of the school community receives a copy of a book that the whole school will be reading, discussing, and engaging with. Rose explains how the program, *Kick off with Reading*, works:

> *...every student and every teacher at our school gets the same book at the beginning of the year...It came out of National Partnership Funding...The fact that we managed a few years in a row of everyone has a book and everyone’s going to read it...you’re going to be referring to this book, you will have it in roll call. You will be reading it in roll call.*

Books have included *Wonder*, *The Happiest Refugee*, *Light Horse Boy* and *Everything to Live For*, the autobiography of a Turia Pitt, a runner who survived full thickness burns to sixty-five percent of her body after a bushfire overtook competitors during a 2011 ultramarathon. As of 2018, the program has been running for five consecutive years.

Rose’s school was lucky to initially receive seed money from the Federal government in support of a plan that puts physical books in the hands and homes of the local community. Once the Federal funding had been exhausted, the school’s P&C covered the $15,000 annual cost. This strategy knowingly engages with the perception that middle-class homes with their family libraries of books make a difference in the lives and futures of young people.

The branding of the program “Kick off” speaks to the active sporting culture of the local community. The metaphor within the verb to “Kick” is connoted with the deeper goals within this initiative; that these gifted books will be just the start of a life-long connection to reading culture. The choice of books; a variety of genres and mediums (students received the picture book *Tales from Outer Suburbia* by Shaun Tan in 2018) invite students to read through a collective experience, renewed at the beginning of each successive school year.

Diana reflected on the importance of a strong school librarian as a powerful force for embedding a culture of reading in her school. She explains:

> *at my school we are blessed with an amazingly fantastic and young librarian, so a lot of what we have in the library has been transformed into what the kids want. They have suggestion boxes; they fill out recommendations for the books; they have like a little tick thing and they can actually say if the book's great or not. She will purchase anything that the kids recommend, after she's obviously vetted them, and so most of what is popular comes through.*

Diana spoke of this librarian in another meeting (unrecorded) and her admiration for this young woman’s work was evident. Diana’s example of a robust school library and a librarian responsive to their students is a different example of how reading culture is embedded and sustained. Her students are not likely to have books in their homes but some of them at least are very keen readers, able to contribute to the book catalogue within the school through “suggestion boxes”. The influence of the individual teacher librarian points to the effect one person can have on a school. Diana uses the verb “transformed” to evoke the huge change that has occured since the arrival of the teacher librarian to the school. Youth culture - the age of teacher librarian and the choices of books made by the students are seen to be intertwined. The library, the librarian and the books “transformed” have become a place for Diana’s students that doesn’t exist in their lives beyond the school. Knowing this, Diana supports her colleague and her students, encouraging the formation of positive relationships with the library as a place, the librarian as a person, and the books as objects; all valued and worthy of student attention.

Selene recalled her work consolidating a culture of reading within her school beyond her assigned English classes:

> *I did 'Green Valentine' by Lili Wilkinson with a Year 8 ESL geography class the last couple of weeks of school. We'd finished all the content. They'd been moving on to Year 9 and it was an ESL class. They were a behaviour class as well, so it became really difficult to manage, particularly in the last couple of weeks. It was hot. They were rowdy. A lot of different personalities. They were a behaviour class the whole year, and it just escalated towards the end of the term.*
>
> *I chose a novel that would meet geography outcomes, things about the environment and sustainability, but something that would engage the kids that had a Romeo and Juliet storyline. They really enjoyed it... Again, they were listening to me read or the audio, so they could follow along...we got five or six (copies of the text) and they just shared one between two.*

In contrast to Rose and Diana's situations where larger initiatives with school-wide reach are supporting cultures of reading, Selene provides an insight into the work of a single English teacher sustaining an 'on-brand' message that books are best beyond her English classroom. It can be very tempting for teachers eying off the end of the school year to bring in a film text, even more so for teacher who is looking to wrap the end of the year with a Year 8 class characterised as "rowdy", "a behaviour class". Yet Selene sources, plans, and programs a novel that links to the Geography course, using the experience of reading aloud to soothe students and de-escalate their unwanted "rowdy" behaviours.

Knowing her students and that reading aloud would likely benefit their English as a Second Language (ESL) learning needs, Selene chooses to use a text that offers greater academic value than the end of year film that so commonly turns up in the final weeks of the school year. Selene's choice also reflects on her own comfort and long held security in books; when challenges arise, she turns to a book for answers.

In speaking on cultivating English behaviours, Harry took a different approach and explained how he could connect a class of disaffected senior students with an English mode of assessment within the NSW Stage 6 English syllabus called Representation. This mode "addresses the way ideas are

portrayed and represented in texts, using language devices, forms, features and structures of texts to create specific views about characters, events and ideas" (Board of Studies, 2012c, p. 216). It is a mode that encourages experimentation, creativity, and adaptation by students. Harry explains that he was able to use the digital platform of Instagram to encourage students to read, research and respond through the mode of Representation in ways which were contextually relevant to their lives. He says:

> *We went on an excursion... The module was called On the Road. It was a travel unit about travel writing. They're not going to write - they're not the sort of kids who can write. We did a representation activity. If I couldn't use Instagram that just wouldn't have worked...and the kids loved it because they don't get to use Instagram in the classroom. They all did it. These are kids who have N awards and things like that for English normally. They all - I got 16 kids up there. It's the only time we've ever taken English Studies on an excursion at this school. English studies isn't the group that you would normally take on excursions because they're not ATAR and they seem to get forgotten about a bit, but it was a really - it was probably my best excursion I've been on; taking those 16 kids up to [there].*

Harry's work with his group of senior students is included in this sequence of narrative vignettes because it reflects the values of inclusion and differentiation that drive Harry's pedagogical and curriculum work. Within the scope of student characterisations, this group of students could be seen as weak students, as poor students of English. Harry explains, "they're not the sort of kids who can write...These are kids who have N awards and things like that for English normally".

N awards are incomplete penalties. A student who accrues three N awards for a single subject will not pass that course in their senior years, putting in jeopardy their Record of Achievement or Higher School Certificate (the two official certifications that students can receive in NSW schools.) Harry's work in crafting an activity that requires reading and writing processes through the use of the *Instagram* digital platform and an excursion to a beautiful landscape and its local town had authentic relevance to his particular students. Harry had also engaged the local tourism authority to provide real feedback to the students on their work.

In planning and delivering this English experience, Harry was affirming to his students that they are valued within the school community and that he values them. Importantly, the authenticity of the task through the involvement of the local tourism association also affirmed to students that their subject specific English skills have relevance and value in their lives beyond school. The consequence of full attendance on the excursion reflects the ways teachers can provide inclusive learning places to students less receptive to the academic English curriculum. Furthermore, it is likely the recognition the students received from completing the activity enhanced the foundational work towards further success in their senior studies within the Louisa Lawson High School community.

In sharing aspects within their school communities that encourage a culture of reading these four teachers have provided a glimpse into the challenges and initiatives that take place within their local contexts. In Rose's school, seed money was the impetus for an initiative, *Kick off with Reading*, that the local community found value in, and continue to support. Diana spoke of the significance of the school librarian and implied within, the importance of a robust budget for book purchases. Selene and Harry shared individualised stories of themselves as teachers, doing their best to sustain and cultivate a readers demeanour in their students.

Equity and Disadvantage

The economic circumstances of their respective schools is a conscious factor that influences the curriculum and pedagogical decisions these four teachers make in their work. At times, economic circumstances curtail innovations and experiments in curriculum design. In other moments, pedagogy is affected because of a lack of resources that require students to share texts instead of having their own copy for personal use. Despite describing her year 10 class as "heavily ESL" Diana will teach *Macbeth* - a classic Shakespearean play that will present vocabulary challenges to her multilingual students.

Text limitations

As a way of differentiating the lessons and sustaining an inclusive classroom space, Diana plans to teach using a free online website *No Fear Shakespeare* that presents the original language side by

side with a modern translation. She also makes a decision, “to purchase the shortened appropriated graphic novels of *Macbeth*. We can't afford to purchase 30 so it's a smaller amount, of course, and we'll share and we use No Fear and all the other ways around that you do to be able to engage with the text”. For Diana, teaching with workarounds is common practice. She can intuitively plan for ‘all the other way rounds’ for her students to be able to ‘engage with the text’ because working in low SES schools with students with multiple disadvantages has been part of her long years of teaching experience.

Book loving Selene is frank in regard to whether local families would purchase novels for class study, rather than relying on texts purchased by the school. She says, “In terms of them being able to go and purchase the novels, it's not going to happen. We get kids who (don’t) bring exercise books or pens, let alone asking them to go purchase their own novel. It's quite a conundrum”. In regard to text choices, Selene is adventurous and brave. As much as she loves the physicality of prose books, she is also actively seeking new texts and new types of texts that may engage her students. The difficulty for her in making these choices is even more profound when a desired text comes from a technology medium. Selene clarifies further:

> *I find that’s always a problem too when you want to do a text that is unique. It's trying to find the budget to be able to purchase the text that you want to do. Having the justification to do that sometimes is quite difficult - all the recommended games you need to pay for...You can't just go on a computer and type in a link or a website and that pops up. So at the moment we have iPads which you can borrow from the library, so that's fine. But then there's equity; I can't use the iPads every lesson - not every kid will get an iPad, and I think at the moment, looking at just under $200 to get these games - the two games that I want on these iPads...for me, I don't think twice about it. I'm like, oh there's this iBook, I want it - I just get it straight away, like, done. Whereas they can't always do that and I think that's a shame, I think. I wish we had more money to invest in things like that, like, reading and quality resources.*

The narratives these teachers share in regard to the economic considerations at play in their pedagogical and curriculum decisions are telling. There are compounded disadvantages within their school communities that can be too overwhelming for individual teachers to overcome. Texts and

resources are shared between and among students as Diana and Selene recount. As cosy as this sounds there are entrenched structural inequalities at play when moments like this happen.

In NSW schools, different school systems develop their own policies in regard to texts and technology resources. In many of the elite AU$20,000-AU$35,000 annual fee independent schools, parents are issued a text list and are required to buy studied texts for their children to take to school for study. Traditionally, low fee Catholics schools and public schools operated their own book room model for students, lending out texts for study and having students return them for use by others later on. A book room is a small library of texts owned by a school, purchased by the school for repeated use by students in their studies of English. The book room model lends itself to the common practice of prioritising new senior texts believed to confer advantage within Higher School Certificate examinations. As titles move off prescribed text lists for HSC English exams those texts can be relegated to Years 11 and 10 English programs. Some low fee Catholic schools have started to imitate their independent school brethren and now require parents to purchase texts for study. Data into book buying, storing and programming practices of English faculties continues to be an under-researched area in NSW (McLean Davis, 2012).

The consequence of differing experiences of studying a novel or a text means that some students are disadvantaged by the cultures that surround the process. This disadvantage is compounded when a student doesn't even have access to their own (borrowed) copy of a text and must share it with two to three other students during class time. As Harry indicated earlier in this chapter he is less likely to let students take their novels home - they must leave their annotated school copies of studied texts in his classroom. This is a very different experience of learning in comparison to a student whose studied texts are available to them at school and at home, and who owns their copy, and can write and annotate within the resource itself, as well as on the frequently mentioned (and memed) post-its that flutter out of many a book's pages.

Technology limitations

Technology innovation in NSW schools has also brought equity challenges within the English classroom. Given her longer years of experience in the classroom, Rose has seen more than a few

technology directives and policies come and go. In contrast to Selene's enthusiasm and desire to persevere with technology experiments, Rose has had enough:

> *I was in the classroom when those DER laptops came out and Moodle was supposed to be big in the department schools, all of its fallen apart. There's just no support. We've got - [our school] was built in 1963. How could it possibly have the technology - the infrastructure to support things that we want to do? It's just madness. I've done it - tried Edmodo at another school. No one would do it outside of home. When are we going on the computer then Miss? I'm going, no you're supposed to read someone else's comment on the book and then write something. No. Okay...Some kids don't have internet connection. Some kids don't have computers at home, or they have one shared amongst a large family. Some have really sophisticated phones and some don't.*

Rose's exasperation is evident in the tone of her narration. In confronting policy mandates, the limitations of school architecture, and a technologically-fragmented and dispersed student community, Rose's persistence in certain technology innovations within the English classroom has hit her limit.

Like Rose, Harry too knows technology can weaken and even undermine pedagogical intentions and curriculum design. This is especially evident to him when there are financial consequences for his students and their families because policy decisions lack a sense of localisation and immediate need. In Harry's school, phones are the most common digital device students have access to but as he observes, "Kids won't use their phones if it's going to eat into their data". What he means here is that students won't use their data for school purposes if it is going to cost them money and potentially burn up their access to their 3 and 4G networks earlier in the month than they and their family budgeted for.

At the same time, the school, (alongside many others) continues to grapple with a debate over whether students should be allowed to use their phones within school grounds because evidently, while not in use for learning purposes, phones are a constant sight within the school. The frustration ripples out of Harry's reflections: "I think we will eventually become a BYOD [Bring Your Own Device] school. How does that work when we're telling kids not to have their phones out? What if that's their device?"

In these tales of inequity and disadvantage there is a sense of resolute forward movement and entwined frustration. Diana is adept and pragmatic in her work. She focuses on what is achievable and knows not to hope for more, a painful contrast to Selene's optimism and dreams of technological 'what ifs'. Rose and Harry grapple with similar issues of policy ideals failing to connect with the specific challenges of their school communities.

These are layered challenges. As ubiquitous as smart phones have become they are not a teacher's first preference for a digital device in an English classroom if that device is also required for writing, editing and multimedia text creation. Even if only using a device for reading - if, for example, Diana had her students access *No Fear Shakespeare Macbeth* to read in class - screen size presents another factor alongside the inequality of phones being blocked from the wifi within DET schools. Technology, texts, and digital devices continues to be a problem for English teachers to overcome a decade after then-Prime Ministers Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard promised in 2007 and 2013 respectively to fund laptops and infrastructure for all students in Australian schools (Taylor, 2013).

This sequence of reporting shared teacher experiences with classroom resourcing and technology to explore experiences of inequality and disadvantage within localised contexts.

Conclusion

By providing narrative vignettes in which the teachers' stories reveal the reasons behind their text choices within the Stage 5 English classroom, this Chapter reports on the significant forces the four participants: Diana, Selene, Rose and Harry, are buffeted by in their teaching practice. Force is used here with particular purpose. As their stories unfurl, these teachers' accounts of their choices reflect the weariness and weight of working in Bog Standard High Schools within a wider rhetoric of success and academic shine pivoted off the (monetary) sparkle of Selective Schools and Elite Independents.

It is these latter schools who form much of the broader culture and milieu of what school should be and how learning should be enacted, and it is against their success that the Bog Standard High Schools are judged. What sustains these teachers - operating counter to the spheres of gloss and spin, are their students.

Close relational work - the proximal work of English teachers in the zone - keeps their hopes and aspirations for themselves and their students flowing swifter and surer than movement within the boggy territories of their structural inequalities may actually allow.

The following chapter presents a discussion of these findings and offers a deeper analysis within localised and broader constructions of English teaching, text selection, and visions of success.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Beautiful Wastelands

Vignette Poetica

Vignette # 1. *What is Unspoken* - Diana

I'm not in a place where
Academia is
the foremost priority
It is important and we genuinely
WANT what is
best for our kids academically
But
Teaching isn't that.
Teaching is making sure
that
They're socially capable human beings

That live in our world
With all its vices
In a really holistic way
And they Become
resilient
to
All of it.

Vignette # 2. *McDonald's* - Rose

I look around and I go, some of you kids might not have a real job.
You might be at Maccas, you might be a part-time retailer…
Whatever it is you are going to do.

So why not put them in touch with other ideas…

Something that keeps them

Interested
Motivated
Off drugs

Whatever

It's good for the soul. These are life skills.

Vignette # 3. *Disjunction* - Selene

There were 20 or so kids that didn't make it through...the positive being that these kids - most of them, have elected to repeat…

All the other Year 10s are handing in their work because they know that we're not making it up and they're like,

"Oh my gosh! This person's in my class who could be in Year 11."

…

As year advisor I've seen that a little bit
Where we've got parents…We're concerned…
"She's quite apathetic about everything, and we're concerned,"

We're concerned
We're concerned
We're concerned

"...if she doesn't have a change in attitude and we don't get your support to work together the end result,"

end result
end
en

"...is not going to be a positive one for her."

This student is now repeating Year 10.

Well.

She actually doesn't come anymore.

Vignette # 4. *They just don't get it* - Harry

They just don't get it.
I'm off to another meeting with another department.
They keep pinging the kids with 'N' awards.
The students may have submitted part of a task.
I have to keep explaining
to colleagues
that they can't just give out 'N' awards if the kids submitted something.
They don't get it.
What it means.

Vignette # 5. *Secret Reader* - Harry

I'm reading to the class. Not because I don't think they'll read it on their own,
but just so I can keep perfect track of where the book is up to…
I'm reading out loud.
They're reading in their heads…

***

At least this way, when I get to the end
Of the book
Everyone in the class has actually read the book
So they'll be ready for their
Assessment task.

If I let them read on their own
Anywhere between 20 to 40-50 percent probably won't read it

Or finish it.

...They might read a bit of it.

Vignette # 6. *Tossed* - Diana

when you have kids that are - Year 7 kids, I have Year 7 kids that are at Stage 1, Stage 2. I'm not expecting these students to be 20 out of 20 students, but if I see any kind of growth and they're happy at the end of their 12 months with me and they are wanting and loving and wanting to learn more and not disengaged,

that's successful.

It's all about that engagement in school, and you get to Stage 5, which is where a lot of your target is, and there's a lot of disengagement and a lot of what we do that's lost. A lot of that passion gets lost because of their teenage stuff and all of that stuff they bring to everyday. On top of that, if they're refugees that have lived in camps and have no families here and are tossed in and out of homes, and then to expect them to also do as well as a kid in the eastern suburbs that has had a very stable environment their whole lives, that have been read to their whole lives, we cannot compare.

So success is about growth. I think success is about being able to create stability for some kids, and school gives them that. Success is being able to see a difference, and when they leave and at the end of their six years, the thank you.

Vignette # 7. *Post its* - Harry

I went and draw up a schema
For the kids
To use on how they can colour code their books…
Monitoring new words - that's purple.
Questions.
Connections.
They just sit there and put all their post it notes in their books.
One of the boys went and asked if he can go get his book from the classroom
And show another student in another Year 10 class
Because he said it made him look really smart
to have all these post its in his book.

Then, when his mum came to parent teacher interview
I showed her a photo of what his book looks like
Because he wanted to show her as well.

Teachers Talk Texts

This discussion brings together answers to the research question: For what reasons do secondary English teachers select and use popular culture texts with their Stage 5 English students? The answers may seem straightforward as the first section of this discussion will reveal. Yet, as the poetic vignettes which lead this Chapter indicate, even straightforward decisions can be tightly laced by unquestioned cultural and social corsetries. In releasing these teachers' voices through the vignette form, this Chapter provides a space for unbinding what has been unspoken. The vignette limnings provide an illumination into the thinking that occurs beyond the spaces where the light falls. This Chapter explores those darker terrains as well as those that are well-lit in order to deeply probe the reasons within English teacher text selections for their Stage 5 students.

Why Popular Culture Texts?

The English teachers in this study select and use popular culture texts for their Stage 5 students for four distinct reasons:

- To prepare their students for the future requirements of the HSC English courses, and within such orientations, to meet local school and community expectations and aspirations of the HSC experience, *within the teachers' construct of subject English*.
- To present new understandings and ways of thinking about the world to their students in order to guide them through painful moments within contemporary times so that they will be stronger and more resilient adults, *within the teachers' construct of how adulthood should be constituted.*
- For the teachers' own pleasure and enjoyment within their work, *reflecting their values of what 'good teaching' is and how they embody that within and through their text choices.*
- For the teachers' own intellectual and professional satisfaction within their work, *reflecting the philosophical values that underpin their teaching identities.*

The particular school contexts of each of the participants give unique shape and substance to the ways these four reasons flow in, around, and through their work with Stage 5 students.

Preparing for HSC English

The significance of the NSW Higher School Certificate exams as a causal influence upon English teachers work has been recognised in prior studies, for instance, Jogie (2015b). The reflections from the teachers within this study reveals that Jogie's (2015b) findings may not be an isolated example. The presence of the HSC exams in the final years of schooling seem to be steering the courses of non-HSC Enlish study in these four different schooling sites, albeit in quite different ways. What becomes apparent in the pedagogical and curriculum pathways of these teachers are the ways in which decisions are made always with student performance in the Higher School Certificate exams in mind. These teachers are mindful of teaching foundational skills of subject English in order to orient their students towards becoming more competent and expressive users and manipulators of language. The four participants knowingly teach the metalanguage of English as part of the emergent skills of literary analysis. They prompt, cajole, and push their students to get their thoughts in writing, conscious that is the writing skills that matter most, more so than capacities in drama, rhetoric, and representation when it comes to final ranks in the HSC year.

Diana

In her popular culture unit, Diana's curriculum choices present to her students texts which offer access and challenges to their current reading and comprehension levels. She uses the picture book *Malala, A Brave Girl From Pakistan* by Jeanette Winter as an accessible text for all her students. The combination of simple low-lexical words and gentle coral-toned images belie the symbolism that Diana can unpack with her students as she differentiates instruction around their comprehension and language development. For some students, newly arrived from the local Intensive English Centre, the inclusion of this text within Stage 5 learning may be useful to Diana as she confirms their comprehension and literacy of simple sentences.

> ‘Everyday the Taliban broadcast their warnings.
> “No school for girls,” they say.
> But Malala is a brave girl who speaks out’ (Winter, 2014, n.p.).

This book however, offers extension to her students whose command of the English language has them ready for the breadth of the Stage 5 English course.

‘The schoolroom holds their sun
And blocks the threatening shadows’ (Winter, 2014, n.p.) states a page, accompanied by the image of a pink schoolhouse, its red doors open, inviting readers to come inside its red tinged rooms as ashy beasts battle in a sky hedged by grey mountains. The colour symbolism and metaphor within the text provide ample challenge for more able Year 10 students whose learning in turn guides others into the processes and expectations of the Stage 5 English course. Winter’s picture book becomes a way to embed the metalanguage of visual and text analysis while offering students a gentle touchstone to an Islamic story in a place of Islamic heritage and culture.

Diana also includes within this unit, suitably called ‘Justice’ the graphic novel *Persepolis*, the novel *Parvana*, and the autobiography *I am Malala*. These choices offer increasingly cosmopolitan windows into Islamic femininity while increasing the textual rigour for her students to dissect and comprehend. Diana acknowledges that some students will struggle with the extended prose of the novel and autobiography. Reading substantial blocks of prose is beyond the capabilities of some of her students, for whom the English tongue may be their second, third or fourth language. For this reason she cuts and weaves extracts for reading and discussion in class time, supporting all students in their engagement in this unit.

Diana knows that some of her students will end the Stage 5 English course and commence the Stage 6 course having only mastered the skills and competencies of the earlier English courses. She explains, “the majority of the students don't get a Band 8 [in Year 9 NAPLAN] but some of our students will achieve some sort of success in their results in HSC, and even a smaller percent will surpass their value added”. Despite this reality, Diana orients her students towards the HSC English course. She believes in their capacity to complete the ritual of schooling and leave Hoda Afshar

High School with the final external credential, an important step for her students as they move into the adult lives.

Rose

In Rose's popular culture unit for her Stage 5 students on 'Conflict and Choices' most of her text selections present images of young men confronted by the overwhelming consequences of violence and war. In the only female authored and oriented text, Katy Perry's music video *Wide Awake*, the iconography sustains the theme of war with the self within a soft pastel vision of feminine empowerment. These representations of personal responsibility and agency make for an interesting overarching narrative for her students. It is very much a vision of gender stereotypes even though there is a probing question, 'What would I do in these circumstances?' for her students to consider.

Rose makes these text choices for her students knowing the nature of music videos will aid in their comprehension and analysis of written lyrics. She also selects these texts for engagement and accessibility purposes. Nominally, the unit is a poetry unit. War poetry. Yet, these are not classic war texts of the English curriculum. There is no Sassoon, Owen or Brooke, and the assessment task for all students is based around the stimuli of an iconic Australian song, *I was only 19*. The song, by the band Redgum, is relatively well known in Australia as a perspective of a young man serving during the Vietnam War. This arrangement points to some bending of traditional boundaries of poetry within this school's context in order to a) encourage student receptivity to studied texts and, b) enable students to develop their comprehension and analysis skills of lyrics through film images and mostly low lexical texts with straightforward examples of figurative language. For instance, in an example of lyrics from *I was only 19* Rose's students may be able to recognise repetition, alliteration, rhyme and metaphor because the language of the text is so accessible to their literacy levels and understanding of Australian English vernacular.

> Frankie kicked a mine the day that mankind kicked the moon
> God help me
> He was goin' home in June (Redgum, 1983, n.p.).

Rose explains how her pedagogy involved guided instruction and time for students to research contextual information themselves. She hoped the combination would build schemas for the students to draw upon during the assessment. Rose explains, “when it came to the horrible assessment task, I'd given them library time, three or four lessons in the library, because everyone was stuck on the lyrics...Then when they got their assessment back and the faces went down a bit [at their marks]...But I said to them this is your start. This is your starting point. Wherever you are now, it only gets better”.

Through this mix of curriculum programming and pedagogical practice, Rose orients her students towards the practices of the senior English curriculum such as when she programs independent research and writing time in the library. She affirms her students’ writing, exhorting them to celebrate the win of their current skills sets while encouraging them to persist in writing more, and writing with deeper attention to the set question next time. Rose’s work with her Stage 5 students is about building up their stamina and motivation to persist in the written aspect of subject English – the part they find most challenging. Rose also guides and supports her students’ engagement in English through the deliberately popular and accessible text choices.

Selene

In regard to preparing students for HSC English, Selene seems to articulate and reinforce to her students the qualities required of senior studies. She wants them to become proactive readers and responsible learners.

Selene shows students through their time in Stage 4 and 5 English that students of English must read, and that reading can be a pleasurable, enjoyable experience. Selene makes deliberate choices in selecting contemporary texts that are funny and age appropriate, and that also allow her to differentiate learning experiences for her students. With a text like the novel *Swim the Fly*, Selene can develop student metalanguage for the Stage 6 English courses. She can remind students that the dog in the story, called Onomatopoeia, is named after a sound technique, and she can develop student awareness of how texts have intertextual elements. She explains, “There's heaps of different

references to *Lord of the Flies* and things like that. Some of the higher kids are able to make those connections, but even the lower ability kids are able to realise what's happening and engage…"

These moments of revealing the layers within a contemporary text sustain Selene's message to her students that knowledge and understanding comes from a lifetime of reading, and that they should read as much as they can if they want to be prepared for Stage 6 English. By teaching English metalanguage like intertextuality and examples of figurative language, Selene consolidates her students' subject-specific vocabulary.

The other key aspect for Selene is for her students to be practical and responsive to the policies and processes of the HSC experience. Selene teaches her students the importance of meeting deadlines and submitting something on assessment due dates. She explains, "They call me the fussy English teacher. My Year 12s call me the devil as well. I take that with pride. It's because I have high standards and they need to work until they meet my standards. I have pet hates, such as no capital letters at the beginning of a sentence. I can't tolerate it. There's things like that. They're like oh, but I've done the work, stop being so fussy. I'm like no, do it properly, do it again". The choice to program popular culture texts is twofold for Selene. It encourages student engagement and in turn, reinforces the practices and processes of 'doing' English, especially in preparation for the final English course of the HSC.

Yet, Selene's Janus side, her "devil" side, indicates a willingness to engage in practices against students who fail to conform to her model of English. Selene will draw upon school and Department of Education policies to punish students, even to the point of supporting grade repetition, "there were 20 or so students that didn't make it through". In this statement, "make it through" is a euphemism for being flunked out of their current Stage of English, necessitating a repeat of at least half of their current English course timetabled over one year of study before they can move on to the next Stage.

Selene knows that the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) policy requirement that senior students receive zero marks for school assessments submitted late without cause can have a huge impact on their final marks. Rather than have her students become apathetic to such assessment

processes, Selene uses rewards and affirmation to encourage their willingness to engage with 'good student' behaviours in English. However, students who fail to adhere to Selene's model of subject English can face severe consequences.

Harry

In contrast to the boundary stretching textual patterns presented by the other three teachers in this study, Harry's popular culture choices are rather conservative in tone. The two novels discussed for the unit titled 'Conflict', *Jasper Jones* and *The Wave*, are well regarded, and well, rather safe choices to make. Harry describes *Jasper Jones* as "the great Australian novel" ([redacted for anonymity], 2016, p.34), a turn of phrase that reveals the choice may have been less about book room limitations and more a deliberate choice to embed a recognised literary text in his students' lives. In teaching the 1981 novel *The Wave* Harry includes You Tube videos of people unknowingly participating in Asch experiments - clips which had some viral life online in the time this research was conducted. These choices along with Harry's described pedagogy present a more 'serious' or literary version of Stage 5 and 6 English.

Through Harry's learning activities, of having students explore lexical density within texts, and guided parsing of textual matter, Harry offers students a cerebral and clinical version of English. The thematic concepts of conformity and rebellion are similar in scope to those of the other teachers' classrooms but his teaching method and text selections suggest a more prescribed vision of subject English. As he explains in an article written for an audience of fellow English teachers, "The two main kinds of criteria employed in the assessment of English are analytical and holistic, and I have to admit here that I am a big believer in the use of the analytical kind." ([redacted for anonymity], 2016, p.36) Harry's sense of Stage 5 English seems to be one in which HSC outcomes, and his students' performance against them, are never far from his curriculum choices and pedagogical practice.

***

While it may be acceptable and unavoidable that some overlap of HSC English skills and competencies should occur over the two years of the Stage 5 English course it is worth questioning the extent of orienting the HSC English exams, to be held as long as two years later in a student's life, as an end point alone. These site specific examples indicate that the HSC can be viewed as certification into adulthood via the ritual of matriculation. However, the ways in which these teachers supported their students through this process varies.

Such variability is indicative of each teacher's sense of the English teacher identity and their role in working with young people. For instance, Diana and Rose present to their Stage 5 students a nurturing and supportive space in which to learn, a pedagogy which seems to share some affinity with the gradual release model (Collett, 2012). The gradual release model works toward student efficacy and independence as learners but supports their journey in realising that level of competency. In contrast, Vignettes 3 and 7 reveal that Selene and Harry are much more didactic teachers, establishing far narrower borders in which their students can learn, grow and thrive within the boundaries of the subject. Within Selene and Harry's classrooms, learning in English seems to be oriented almost solely towards HSC knowledges and behaviours, leading to qualification and certification.

Presenting new understandings and ways of thinking about the world

"I wish them to be taught to think -- thinking, indeed, is a severe exercise," extolled Mary Wollstonecraft (1797, p. 22), in her writings on education. For Wollstonecraft, thinking meant abilities beyond repeating what others had said. Wollstonecraft believed in the necessity for students to question, to read widely of topics that interested them, and to probe the ethical and moral reasons within their own hearts when contemplating the norms and values that governed human behaviour in her time.

A question for NSW public school teachers, especially so within the mandated policy constraints of required apolitical behaviour, is whether or not English educators respond to the intellectual inclinations embedded within the historical and philosophical lineage of the subject in their work with students. For Diana and Rose this work with students appears to be held dearly and with

Romantic inclinations. In their turn, Selene and Harry present far more pragmatic conceptions of what new understandings and ways of thinking about the world can mean. These inclinations reveal the depth of values that orient these respective teachers in their work with students. Thus, Diana's feminism aligns with her critical literacy leanings, Rose's humanism affirms her personal growth work. Selene and Harry operate within different value boundaries. For Selene, a cultural heritage model of English, one that highly values the literary text and literary subjectivities, interplays with some personal growth leanings as long as students comply with the mores of NSW schooling. Harry's values lead him to find comfort and support in cultural heritage and Leavisite models of English in an acknowledgement perhaps that it is far easier to climb a hegemonic wall than smash one down in resistance.

Diana

For some of Diana's students, their lives beyond their school may be quite circumscribed by family and cultural expectations. Rituals and responsibilities for young Muslim women may involve taking on care work and domestic labour for others, and early marriage and motherhood, (see Pe Pua, Kendera, Katz & O'Connor, 2010). As a first-generation Greek-Australian woman Diana has some sympathy for, and understanding of, the navigational challenges her students must traverse.

In her text choices Diana presents visions of independent Islamic womanhood. She is not challenging the values and expectations of her students' families per se, but she is presenting windows into lives her students may not have much experience with. Diana is teaching her students that an intellectual independence awaits them and offering visions of a richly educated Islamic feminine life.

The protagonists within Diana's text choices demonstrate initiative, independence, and courage in circumventing and subverting social and cultural expectations. The cartoon imagery of young Marjane Satrapi in *Persepolis* and the words of Malala Yousafzai in her autobiography explicitly present visions of rebellious Islamic girlhood discovering civic and political agency as much as themselves. Diana may be deliberately reinforcing the qualities and characteristics of these protagonists when she takes students to the school library and draws attention to the graphic novels

of the American-Islamic superhero *Ms. Marvel*. She explains why such texts hold such significance in her classroom, “These kids...face it and it isn’t just racism. It’s bigotry. It’s ignorance. It’s listening to [far-right conservative politician] Pauline Hanson with the burka idiocy and watching that and seeing their faith ridiculed”.

For Diana, text selections for the English classroom can be signposts and signals to her students that affirm their identity and individual agency within a social and cultural milieu that persists in demonstrating visible discomfort with difference. The texts she brings into her student’s lives have multiple purposes. Diana hopes reading such texts may encourage her students to read more widely. In her work are the hopes that her students will spring board from *Ms. Marvel* and land perhaps one day in the future on contemporary literary works by Arab-Australian women writers or be one of those writers themselves. Diana’s work from a feminist/critical literacy value set is reflected in her pedagogical and curriculum acts.

Rose

Rose uses her text selections to prompt students in their thinking and to engage with broader socio-cultural issues. Rose’s text selections aim to crack the geographical insularity of her students and present a vision of globality, with all its ascendant political complications. “When I did Simple Minds’ *Belfast Child*, they had no knowledge of the Irish issue at all...That line in the song, ‘when the Belfast child sings again’, someone in the class actually said, ‘Is that a metaphor, Miss?’ In exploring the nuances of context, language and meaning, Rose allows moments for her students to make their own discoveries within texts. Her described pedagogy has moments of pauses for her students’ intellectual unfolding and group collaboration. Rose encourages her students to fumble and to leap in their analysis of texts.

Rose is also cognizant that in other school contexts these texts may not work. *The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down* could be highly inappropriate and culturally inflammatory given the sympathies the lyrics evoke for the Southern position in the American Civil War. Rose explains, “...with Trump and the whole confederacy and white supremacy, I had to sort of - I just touched lightly on that”.

Touching ‘lightly’ on white supremacy within a conservative white community is probably enough to push her students further into a place of values discomfort. Her students were more interested in the romanticised version of the American Civil War, “I’m Virgil Caine and this is what’s happened to my family. They found that really interesting”. While a critical race scholar may find fault in Rose’s text selection and the rather blinkered ways her students responded it is important to remember that Rose’s students have started from an insular and limited understanding of history and politics.

In the aftermath of the ‘Conflict’ unit Rose’s students have been presented with visions of war across time and cultures. Rose acknowledged her presentation of history to her students is “potted” but through her text selections they have ‘visited’ Ireland, the American south, and the Vietnam war. More significantly, they have considered how people have responded in these moments of crisis. By drawing her students’ attention to American and Irish histories Rose is using popular culture texts to encourage critical thinking, prompting her students to explore, ‘what would I do?’ if faced with similar moments of provocation.

Rose’s humanism affirms her personal growth work with students. She seeks neither to indoctrinate her students to her own beliefs and values nor force them to align themselves to her views in class time. Rather, as evident in Vignette 2, Rose uses text choices and the accompanying pedagogical and curriculum moments to affirm a world in which human dignity and individual freedoms are entwined with a social conscience. She seeks for her students an independent mind – one that will enable them to think and question the world around them.

Selene

Selene’s text selections are playful and fun for her Stage 5 students. She is aiming to change her students’ perception of books and reading away from a sense of boredom and disinterest into engagement and embracement of book culture. Selene is also conscious of who her students are in this work. There is a stereotype that her students, many of who are young men of Pacifika-Australian, Lebanese-Australian and Anglo-Australian culture, will not read. She aims to break that

stereotype by offering them humour and the occasional glimpse of the female form seen through the eyes of a lusty protagonist.

Selene also wants to offer the world of canonical English texts to students whose home environments have very likely left their knowledge of that domain relatively scarce. She explains in regard to the Harper Lee novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. "That's a classic that I always do with the top class...I appreciated the novel myself as a student, in Year 8, and I fell in love with the idea of Atticus and the idea of justice really spoke to me...and I think with some classics, particularly like that, they're going to be spoken about forever and I don't want to have them miss the opportunity where they don't understand or they have no reference or just not know about, particularly for a top class". This reflection of Selene's points to her aspirations for further doors opening for her (top) students in their future, doors perhaps into a middle-class life where recognition of canonical text references cements their inclusion and belonging.

For Selene, a personal growth model of English seems present in her work with students but it is limited in its extent. Within Selene's purview, students must comply with the values of NSW schooling, that students are productive and compliant members of their school community, that they follow the rules and demonstrate assessable and non-assessable outputs. At the same time, Selene models a cultural heritage model of English, perhaps with postmodern leanings. Selene's view of texts that can be considered within English is expansive. She includes contemporary novels, games, and podcasts alongside canonical works as worthy texts for students to study but her reasons for valuing such texts are tied to assimilation. It may be that Selene values such texts because assimilation into a middle-class milieu is tied to be being conversant with a wide range of texts.

Harry

Harry's decision to use the novels *The Wave* and *Jasper Jones* are interesting choices for his school context, situated as it is within a more working-class locale of Western Sydney. Harry's selected texts are both highly regarded and award winning texts, thematically similar perhaps to Rose's choices, although very different in plot, characterisation, and accessibility. These texts, like Rose's

music choices, prompt students to consider, ‘what would I do?’ in times or moments in which values are challenged. *The Wave* presents a female protagonist as heroine, *Jasper Jones*, a male. Harry’s text selections show a consciousness towards the co-educational community of which he teaches.

Both texts explore moments of increasing tension within local town communities in which sport provides some relief to the fomenting prejudices of racism. These representations may help Harry’s students, many of whom draw from Anglo-Australian families, find comparison within their own life circumstances and allow them to consider issues of racism and prejudice within Australian society. In his article on assessment, Harry gives some indication that this may have occurred. He writes, “The students, on the whole, rather enjoyed it [the text *Jasper Jones*] and readily engaged with the issues it raised about Australian identity, conflict, context and culture” ([redacted for anonymity], 2016, p.34). Harry did not discuss these contextual aspects of teaching the novel in any further detail in either his blog posts or during his interview.

Interrogating the Australian identity and conflicts around it did not seem to be a point of interest for Harry in his teaching of *Jasper Jones*. He was much more focused on increasing student vocabulary in regard to language techniques and improving their capacities to structure their responses according to marking criteria. He explains, “the criteria should make it easier for students to be able to break down what it is that is required from them in the assessment task” ([redacted for anonymity], 2016, p.36).

It seems that, within Harry’s acceptance of a competitive HSC culture, his Stage 5 students are much better served by their teachers if their time together leads to a breaking down of assessable criteria, rather than breaking down a social construct of power as depicted within texts and reflected within contemporary Australian society. Under this lens, English is a subject of certification. English is something for students to demonstrate competencies in so that they can receive a Record of Student Achievement (ROSA) at the end of Year 10 and move on towards pursuit of a Higher School Certificate (HSC) at the of Year 12. English most definitely is not about politics. Such a position takes a Leavisite view of texts. Under Harry’s eye, there are right answers (and wrong

ways of heading) so the emphasis for teachers is to teach and accept the right answers and for students to demonstrate their knowledge and acceptance of such positions.

***

The participants in this study presented divergent conceptions of why popular culture texts are inherently valuable within their classroom cultures. While there was some agreement that such texts present students with new knowledge and ways of thinking about the world, and their place within it, the scope of what new knowledge could entail differed markedly. Diana and Rose seem to see the role of text selections in English as a way of showcasing the world to such an extent that students are prompted to move beyond their own borders intellectually as much as geographically.

Selene and Harry seem to perceive the role of popular culture texts in encouraging some visitation of new territory but such landscapes are far more prescribed. Selene seems to see text awareness as middle-class acculturation, an accumulation of knowledges that will enable her students to slip between the cracks of working and middle-class Australia. Harry presents a vision of new knowledge that is almost solely centred on the acquisition of vocabulary and analysis skills for the HSC English exams.

Worlds may open through text selections but some worlds, as presented through the pedagogical and curriculum responses of participants, seem far more expansive and enriching than others.

For the teachers' own pleasure and enjoyment within their work

The role of emotional affect within their work seems to be a strong influence for three out of the four teachers in this study. That teachers of English can find pleasure in their text selections and their students' responses to such selections speaks to the heart of a model of English that nurtures, that is relational, and that values human connections in a space that is increasingly being reshaped into a highly quantified and measurable zone.

Diana

Diana is a very well read teacher of English. She moves from canonical works to popular culture easily within interview reflections and assumedly within her classroom practice. For instance, she explains:

> *...your Austens, your Shakespeares, your Shelleys, all of the texts that we value as classic, and yet popular culture gets limited because it's popular. However, when you look at things like Watchmen and certain graphic novels that are now deemed as highly valuable texts, we need to keep going in that direction I think.*

Diana enjoys her work as a teacher of English and she enjoys the processes and experiences of the English classroom. In her years of teaching, she has taught many different texts to a wide range of students. Diana's text selections for the students within the scope of this study reflect the joy she finds in putting together a mix of texts that she views are 'perfect' for a current group of students to be taught.

Diana's text choices show that teachers can find enjoyment in reading and studying texts alongside their students. Through Diana's reflections, particularly illuminated in Vignette 6, we are presented with relational descriptions of a teacher at work and the affirmation she feels through her students' discoveries in English. Diana's recollection of how her students could discuss the differences in the ways that they wear the headscarf because of their reading of studied texts reflects her pleasures in bringing together the facets of English for moments of relational learning and critical thinking. "The other girls wear their hair completely covered but the Iranian girl shows her hair - her fringe". Reading and studying *Persepolis* became a catalyst for a deep discussion around femininity, cultural expectations, and personal values. This lesson was a significant memory for Diana. The experience reinforced her judgement that text choices in English "need to keep going in that direction", to be inclusive and open to the breadth of students, and the knowledges that they bring, in the class.

Rose

Rose's choices for her music video unit draw upon her own heritage and family ancestry in Ireland. When Rose chooses to use Simple Minds' *Belfast Child* and the old American song of the Civil War *The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down*, she is making choices that allow her to share in the personal meaning of those texts. Rose explains that telling stories to explain context "connects the kids better", and for this reason she personalises her students' burgeoning awareness of context with anecdotes. As Rose explains during her interviews, the American Civil War songs meant a lot to her father, who took from the songs the spirit of perseverance and courage against incredible odds. In teaching texts that have a spiritual connection to her family history Rose's own personal context and identity is refreshed.

Rose is conscious of the relational nature of teaching and that a story about her experiences or those of others she has known are a successful hook for students to understand context. There is also pleasure beyond the sharing of stories in these choices. These choices draw upon Rose's relationship with her much loved father. In one anecdote recalled during the interviews, Rose recalls her own HSC exams:

> *I remember getting into the bath at 5:30 in the morning before the first exam in 1980 and thinking it was a good time to start taking notes. I remember going out to Dad, his coffee and cigarette breakfast, and he's sitting out in the kitchen. It was 7:00. I said, 'Dad, I don't know about the exam.' He went, 'it's too late now, love. Just going to have to go in and do it'.*

In teaching these particular texts Rose sustains her memories of her father. At the same time, through teaching these texts Rose mirrors her father's values to her students. From Rose comes the message that learning isn't about giant leaps or league tables, that learning comes from persistence and the courage to not give up. It may be that Rose enjoys her teaching work because she gains positive emotional affect from and through her text choices.

Selene

A love of books and reading may be one of the drivers within Selene's work as a teacher. Being able to share the experience of reading with her students is something that brings her great pleasure. Selene's school operates with a deliberately purposeful localised responsive culture to their students. The teachers have the freedom and the autonomy to write their own assessments and units in order to best meet the needs of their students. When describing faculty collegiality Selene explains, "We'll talk about what we're doing, but I never do the same thing. We really cater to our class and what needs they have. So I love it - I wouldn't change it".

The trust the school executive offers Selene and her colleagues may be remarkably distinctive against broader NSW English teaching culture. Being given that trust, autonomy, and support to create student-specific units, to choose accessible materials, and to develop targeted localised assessment that aligns with the teachers' goals for their students may be rare, but the experience evidently contributes to Selene's sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

There may also be a maternal quality within Selene's text selections and practices. "I'm always like, read a book. I don't care what you read as long as you're reading something", she says. As she and her mother swapped books and shared a reading culture, Selene creates a similar culture with her students. The creation and sustenance of this culture appears to be something Selene finds fulfilment from.

Harry

Harry is a self-professed Dr Who and comic book nerd. However, he doesn't appear to bring his personal reading preferences into his work with Stage 5 English students. The inclusion of the Asch experiment *You Tube* clip reflects some nod towards contemporary social media culture but the selection is strongly aligned with the unit overall. Harry appears to have a more deliberate split

between his private and professional reading identities, a reflection of his desire to be seen as a serious literary teacher of English.

Harry's decision to prioritise more serious and canonical texts, notably when contributing to a study on popular culture texts, reveals contradictions and juxtapositions within his teaching identity. In his interview Harry revealed that the only exposure that he had to such literary works when he was a teenager was through assigned texts in his own English classes. Significantly, these were texts that he *liked to read*. "I'd read the school texts and I enjoyed most of the school texts. I remember *Wild Swans*...that was a memoir of China. I really liked that. We did *Out of Africa*. I didn't like that as much. Coleridge for poetry", he remembers.

Harry's decision to draw more towards canonical and serious literary texts, and a more Leavisite approach within his teaching, starts to become clearer. It appears to be that for Harry, access to 'real literature' was the passport out of his Western Suburbs locale and into a professional middle-class world.

Harry's own reading pleasures, the pop cultural world of Dr. Who and comic books, do not have the same gravitas. And so, perhaps out of desire to stabilise his middle-class identity as a well-read, well-educated teacher of English, Harry shuns the cross-overs between popular and canonical texts that Diana and Rose present in their English work.

***

It is rather promising that in a time when Australian teachers are reportedly experiencing high and sustained levels of stress in response to the intensification of their working lives (Stapleton, 2019) that three of the participants could find joy in their work through their inclusion of popular culture texts. Notably, the pleasure in their work came from relational experiences with students, from being able to develop teaching experiences that sparked deep conversations with their students, and from the respect shown towards their agency and autonomy as teaching professionals within their respective internal school cultures. Harry is a notable outlier in this discussion.

For the teachers' own intellectual and professional satisfaction within their work

The position that education is about the creation of something new (Dewey, 1925; Arendt, 1958; Biesta, 2015) and that it always arrives with the risk of failure, the risk that the seed will not sprout, that the leaves will not bud, is a philosophical thread running through the work of these teachers. Diana, Rose, and Selene present a more selfless, perhaps feminised, ethic of care (Noddings, 1988/2013) in regard to their experience as intellectual teachers. These are very smart women but they use their intelligence, their patience, and their humour to bring out the capacity of their students to develop as emergent thinkers of their own.

It seems that the male figure in this study leans towards a more Leavisite understanding of the English teacher. Harry presents as an intellectual professional and his theorisings, his efforts, appear to be directed towards his own professional development. Harry's work is about his deeper understanding of the requirements of subject English - a notable intellectual endeavour for a teacher of English - but interesting in that Harry's exploratory, investigative, intellectual work seems to be at odds with his own classroom practices for students. There is a sense that only the most talented and adept of Harry's students are trusted to become independent students of English. Most are shepherded along far more controlled trails of thought and learning.

Diana

With the mix of texts she has curated, Diana engages with the intellectual work of English teaching. Diana brings to this work the judgements she has made in regard to her students' current learning needs, her awareness of cultural specificity and difference within the local Islamic community, and her detailed knowledge of the HSC English experience. Diana's decision to teach with these texts reflects her capacity to take risks in her teaching.

In an early interview she was apprehensive about teaching *Persepolis* due to certain images of violence within the text. Diana was worried how such images would be received by her students, some of whom have lived with trauma and violence in their own pasts. Yet, she was conscious of

the literary quality and skill within Marjane Satrapi's graphic novelisation. Diana deemed *Persepolis* to be worth the risk. A subsequent interview revealed her decision was well founded. Diana's students had enjoyed the unit immensely and wanted to stay in class past the bell discussing the texts that they had been reading.

Diana's reflections also indicate the burden and the challenge in being this kind of teacher, one who prioritises the intellectual capacity of students alongside her own professional growth. She explains, "You don't work until one in the morning every night to get results; you do it because you want the kids to feel something". *Feel* is the decisive word in her rationale. The intellectual being who thinks and feels brings together reason and passion and this is the experience of English that Diana values most for her students.

Rose

Rose is at a point in her career where she has the time and the experience to investigate and explore a number of intellectually stimulating pathways. She has been awarded a NSW Premier's Teaching Scholarship and serves with the NSW English Teachers' Association. However, she is still conscious of evaluating what works and why within her teaching. She uses the Stage 5 popular culture unit to consider which texts worked best with her students of weak literacy development while also trying to extend student capabilities. Rose blogs both as a way to reflect upon her processes and to demonstrate the evolving iterations of her English programs. In one instance, a student took the time to comment on the public world of Rose's work. She remembers:

> *This kid in my year 10 class, he's one of the six that will probably do really well, said, Miss, I was looking at your blog. You've done heaps of stuff, haven't you? You've written heaps of things.*
> *And I went, yeah. He goes, that's really cool.*
> *But it was just that quiet - you know, that quiet near the door as we go out, that kind of thing. I went, yeah good on you, mate.*
> *I feel good and you feel good too.*

This reflection illuminates how a teacher's intellectual work can be a reciprocal experience for the educator and their pupil. Rose's blog presents a reality of intellectual work, a glimpse behind the curtain of the mind that energises her classes. Her response to her student's peek into that space is warm and affirming to herself and to her student. Rose is confident leading her faculty in pedagogy and curriculum approaches which aim to include all students, and to ensure each of them can experience some success in the subject. Her blog becomes a space for student enrichment for those of her pupils with the curiosity to look beyond learning within the walls of the school.

Selene

As an early career teacher Selene is experimenting with her pedagogy and curriculum choices. She is also a leader with specialities in diverse areas such as technology, English as an Additional Language, and Gifted and Talented. This leads Selene to be conscious of differentiation and using books and other engaging texts to hook students into 'good student' competencies.

When Selene's students acquiesce to her desires she is happy for them and for herself. Her language reflects the way she perceives the struggle between student perceptions and behaviour and her goals for them. "You're like oh, this is going to be a battle, but it actually worked out really well, which is something I'm very proud of. Proud of all of them".

When Selene's students follow the processes and practices of 'good' students, Selene's sense of being a 'good' teacher is affirmed. In Selene's classroom goodness is associated with students showing compliant on-task behavior, meeting set deadlines, and demonstrating through their writing that they are improving. Selene explains that the right text selections can help her, "Feel like I won them over. Now they're like, what are we doing next, which is really good. Every kid, for both tasks, handed something in, which was quite uncommon across the board. Every kid in my class handed something in on the due date".

Selene's language reflects her willingness to engage in processes that encourage students to comply to her expectations, a "battle", and that she is willing to forgo the pleasures of easy rapport in order

for students to recognise and respond to her on a professional level. She is able to take pride in her students' accomplishments and in turn, feels pride in her own work as their teacher - the one who was able to decrease student non-submissions, who increased student on task behaviour.

Harry

Harry's text selections seem to satisfy his intellectual and professional desires. Harry writes up his pedagogical approaches on his blog and in English teacher publications where he leads others through his examples. There is a sense that Harry's online persona is recognised and celebrated by the English teaching community in ways that affirm his professional identity as an English teacher. Concurrently, Harry's work in his school and the way he discusses it, reveal a regulated approach in teaching English.

To some extent, there may be some validity in the observation that Harry prioritises his own intellectual and professional satisfaction with his work over that of his students' intellectual experience in English. He acknowledges, "We're not the HSC," i.e. his school community don't comport themselves as 'good' students, nor do their capacities for English match those of the HSC elite schools, but Harry teaches most of his classes as if they are in the competition with some 'skin in the game'. He explains, "It's about generational change and playing the long game".

Despite Harry's earnest desire that his students will know their studied texts and be familiar with the processes of parsing and annotating a studied text, (take note of Vignette 7), there is a sense that Harry's students are presented with English as a competency to be ticked off via their HSC exams, and not as an experience to carry with them into their lives beyond school. English is Harry's job. Not theirs. This is a puzzle. Harry appears to be protecting some of his students from the depth of English. Rather than risk failure in pedagogical approaches or curriculum choices that may spark *feeling*, (what Diana stays up till one in the morning to achieve) Harry keeps his students busy with parsing paragraphs and counting up lexical density.

Harry appears to hold a view that English is only for those naturally receptive to a specific aspect of her culture - one mediated by an authoritative and policy influenced view of English teacher practice. This is a view that can shut out some students before they even get their feet on the road of reading for pleasure. It is a view complicated by his understanding of Western Sydney from having grown up there (to be discussed in the next section). He wants his students to have a positive experience of English but he is also reticent to bring in pedagogy or curriculum choices that may spark significant risk in how they experience the subject. If they find it dry or unappealing he will keep them busy on more immediate observations, the kindling of grammar awareness, rather than reshape an English world around his students' knowledges and interests.

Harry's classroom pedagogy seems to stand in contrast to the intellectual work Harry engages with online. Through his blog and social media interactions, Harry presents thoughtful, if at times, didactic, interrogations of syllabus requirements and senior text prescriptions. Harry's digital publications position him as a thinking teacher of English, one who is capably weaving political and syllabus threads around his students' experiences of the subject. Despite this work, questions remain as to the nature of the experience of English his students receive.

***

The participants in this study demonstrated a willingness to select and use popular culture texts with their Stage 5 students in order to cultivate intellectual effort. As observed, the three female teachers appear to share a belief in the value of subject English in sparking intellectual effort and nourishing original buds of thought in their students. In contrast, Harry's work presents a more self-oriented experience. Harry immerses himself in an intellectual thinking world of subject English but seems to keep his students on the shoreline.

Insider/Outsiders

Even though they are aware that the circumstances of their communities are very different to others elsewhere and share similarities in some ways as well, Harry, Rose, Selene and Diana, appear to be *knowing their students* as best as they can. Still, this knowing is limited by their collective sense of

the past, and what 'has been'. In some respects, this sense of the past in guiding present pedagogy and curriculum approaches may be due to the liminal identities these participants happen to share. As Harry observes, "we're not teaching people like us. We're the minority". What he is alluding to is that many of his students are not traversing class and cultural boundaries and that he, a teacher who is bookish and intellectual, is a minority in a place that doesn't value such qualities.

What Harry doesn't quite interrogate is that he is a minority within a minority. He is a working-class man with specific insights into the social codes and cultures of his region because of his origin. There is an awkward fit - or so Harry feels, in his masculine identity of an intellectual educator - a teacher of English, and the working-class community of his school. Harry, Rose, Selene and Diana are all insider/outsiders in some way to their school communities. The nature of their insider/outsider dualities differ but the existence of the split within their teacher identities that makes for particular convergences will be discussed in this next section.

Outside insiders

Harry, Rose, Selene and Diana are all teachers who have returned in some way to the types of schooling communities from which they came. Harry, Selene and Diana have all returned as teachers to schools in the local areas where they underwent their own schooling. Their work placements are not exact echoes. Selene has returned to teach in the high school of her own adolescent years. Harry and Diana are within seven to ten kilometres of the geography that shaped their own high school years. Rose has stayed within the same region and social milieu.

Diana's area has undergone the most transformative demographic change since her own years of schooling; Rose's the least. Selene and Harry's have changed at a more moderate pace as the diaspora of older waves of immigration reached the outer suburbs of Western Sydney. The distance of Rose's school to the beachside suburbs of the East coast of NSW is proximally similar to Harry's. However, being more geographically distanced to the far south-west of Sydney-city, Rose's area has held onto more traditional patterns of Anglo-Australian demography.

Their familiarity with the communities, with a sense of 'place', with the feeling of a suburb, and those who call such places home, can be advantageous to teachers who return to work in schools of their childhoods and adolescent years. In this study, these teachers are able to draw upon their 'insider' cultural knowledge to be sensitive to the challenges particular to those young people of these areas and to be responsive as teachers to their students' circumstances.

Yet it is important to note that the educational worlds of their own adolescence have moved on markedly - the rapid gentrification and diversification of Sydney's suburbs is a factor to be aware of, and that, in becoming teachers, the participants traverse the places and spaces differently. This is why perhaps Diana speaks so earnestly of 'opening the world' up to her students so that even if their lives present pathways of early marriage and motherhood, her students will have access to the currents of literacy and literature in ways that may bring them back to education at a point when they are ready to seize it for themselves.

Vignettes 1 and 2 from Diana and Rose indicate their familiarity with their students' contexts and similar motivations appear to be driving their text selections. While some of Rose's female students may be more likely to be single-mothers than married women, or to leave school headed for the perennial pathway of a hairdressing apprenticeship or burger flipping at McDonald's, she hopes for their return and eventual awakening to the attributes of critical thinking and literary engagement.

Diana and Rose are drawing upon their own lived knowledges of navigating that junction of geography, gender and social class. Diana is perhaps more conscious than Rose of how explicitly cultural patriarchy and family expectations can circumscribe female agency in those late teen/early adulthood years. Diana's Greek-Australianness doesn't give her the exact cultural insights into her students' boundaries but it does provide Diana with sensitivity as to the challenges of gendered expectations that her students may need to overcome in their futures beyond their schooling years. Similarly, Rose's experience working within the vocational education sector and her own life trajectory has deepened her social class awareness of what the future may bring to her students when they move beyond her classroom.

Selene and Harry's working geographies bring two different approaches of insider/outsider knowledge within their respective school communities. Selene appears to hold different cultural experiences in regard to reading and literacy than the students of who she teachers. Selene recounts the significance of books within her teenage years and the swapping of books with her mother. While it is perhaps stereotypical to ascribe book ownership and readership solely to middle-class parenting, research suggests there can be some truth within the stereotype (Whitmore, 2011). Yet, as others (Comber, 1998; Merga, 2014; Merga & Ledger, 2018) have observed, intergenerational reading patterns and social class correlations are an under-explored area within the Australian context. This in turn, makes contextual site-specific research more significant while reminding us of the importance of taking generalisations in regard to adult reading behaviours in Australia with the colloquial 'grain of salt', i.e. rather carefully and warily.

Vignette 3 reveals that Selene showed no qualms in a circumstance that saw a significant number of Year 10 students repeated for failure to submit work, a response that showed some blindness to culture, socio-economics, and consequence. As observed, Selene rewards her students for their adoption of 'good' student behaviours. The flipside of her teaching persona is that she has also brought down punitive controls on those whose behaviours deviate from 'good'. As a 'local', for whom books and reading became a part of career and professional and personal satisfaction, Selene presents to her students behaviours that highlight the importance of books and reading as a way of life. Selene's pedagogy ensures her students receive positive reinforcement that reading can be for pleasure. Yet, at times, Selene's response to the consequences of grade repetition evokes some disconnection with those who fail to fit easily into the formal culture of schooling.

In contrast to Selene, in Vignette 4 Harry demonstrates greater acuity in regard to the consequences of failing students and using policy processes as a lever to force grade repetition. Repeating a school grade has been found to have pervasive negative impacts upon the student who repeats, especially if they are from a non-white racial background (Eide & Showalter, 2001; Goldenring Fine & Davis, 2003; Martin, 2010). It is important to note here that it is difficult to find data for the Australian or NSW context on grade repetition as Australian sources seem to present generalised reviews of international literature (McNeilage, 2014; Romanes & Hunter, 2015) or draw on meta-analysis by corporate/educational think tanks (Social Ventures Australia, n.d.). With these factors in mind,

Harry shows sensitivity to the consequences for his students if and when protocols were applied which could result in grade repetition. Harry's vignette # 4 captures his frustration towards teaching colleagues who use policy processes to drive students towards flunking out of their senior studies.

The familiar landscapes in which these teachers work are rapidly evolving communities. While the teachers in this study appear to be drawing on their own insider knowledges such understandings do not make them infallible in their judgements. We find within the participants' stories an interior convergence of their personal and professional selves at the same time as the limitations of prior knowledges within schooling become ever more visible. The participants may be using their own navigational histories to guide the ways they direct current students through the path of subject English but the world has changed indeed since they were students.

How they see the world beyond school for their students

There is a sense from the participants that the world beyond school - the world that they are preparing their students for, is a place that rewards certain behaviours. Diana perceives the dominance of a cultural patriarchy that may require of her students a critical disposition and courageous attitude if they are to weave around expectations in pursuit of own dreams. Rose is conscious many of her students will pursue economic independence within the lure of the local familiarity of home. Selene and Harry seem to see the values of middle-class respectability as the path for their students: obedience, compliance and conformity as the bringers of rewards.

All of them are keenly aware that schooling is essential for their students and that the gaining of the HSC credential is a significant token on the quest to independent adulthood. This reflects some awareness that schooling is a ritual of adolescence and that they themselves hold a certain role as mentors of their young pupils. Perhaps it is for this reason that the driver of thinking critically comes to the fore even when classroom pedagogy seems to blunt the cultivation of such faculties. In this observation it may be that Selene and Harry value critical thinking but not so much in ways that would bring about subversion. In contrast, Diana and Rose seem to show greater awareness of the role subversion plays in freeing their students from the restrictions of class, gender and geographies.

How they see their students

All these teachers see their students within the boundaries of subject English. In regard to the purpose of English, collectively these English teachers present a united voice in regard to the suitability and relevance of the subject for all students in Stages 4, 5, and 6. Despite the challenges of individual students with the language, skills or behaviours required within subject English, none of the participants suggested, inferred, or stated outright that the subject should be limited in scope or skills based on aptitude, assessment marks, or any other quality their students may hold. It is significant to note the ways in which these participants, whose four schools exhibit diverse cultures of their own, uphold the current norm that subject English is a valid compulsory offering for all their students.

The Stage 5 student particularly is seen by these participants as a liminal creature. As students in Years 9 and 10 these students are leaving behind the years of childhood but they have not yet reached the age of responsibility and duty of young adulthood. Students in Stage 6, the final two years of schooling, carry the burden of the HSC examinations. Stage 5 students in contrast can be "silly - like really, really immature". They can be ignorant, "They don't have any context on what that means either." Yet, they can be perceptive, "'You've written heaps of things.' He goes, 'that's really cool'".

As Diana observes, "you get to Stage 5, which is where a lot of your target is, and there's a lot of disengagement and a lot of what we do that's lost. A lot of that passion gets lost because of their teenage stuff and all of that stuff they bring to everyday". Through these representations, the liminality of Stage 5 students becomes evident. These are students on the cusp, and there are particular responsibilities for teachers in responding to that developmental spatiality.

In this time of student life in their journey through the wasteland of outer suburbia, the miasma surrounding their bog standard public school presents the most dangers - there may be budding sexual attractions, the lure of drugs and alcohol, the temptation of after school jobs and the flush of independent income, resistance to authority, and resistance to self and who their body seems to be revealing them to be. There is a lot happening 'out there' beyond the classroom walls that comes in

over the school gates with Stage 5 students, and their teachers need to navigate that emotional, psychological, spiritual, and physical turbulence as they call their students back to their English work.

Despite the possibilities of 'lost' students and 'lost' knowledges, 'lost' time and 'lost' opportunities, all the participants describe their pedagogy as aiming to provide direction for their Stage 5 students. They all appear to hold high expectations for their students' learning in English. These are not teachers who have given up - or given in - to the challenges of their schools or their students. Selene and Harry are active and purposeful in their respective practices to ensure their students are exposed to reading cultures and the sound and rhythm of words read aloud. Diana deliberately weaves the library and the librarian as place and personage of high value to English and her students. Rose sustains her broader schooling culture of integrating a text gifted to every person (student, teacher, executive staff, administrative officer) in the school within elements of her English lessons.

In these practices, the participants are not engaged in an erasure of difference, nor are they blind to the multifaceted learning needs of many of their students. Their anecdotes and stories speak to a culture of English that aims to be inclusive of all. Significantly, they appear to see their students as individuals. Not every student will get their time or their attention in the classroom or after school hours but these teachers appear to know their students. They see them as school children, *children* in the Arendtian term of pre-political subjects.

Diana, and Rose, Harry and Selene all call their students "kids" in their interview reflections signifying the coltish ebullience, energy, and not-quite-innocence that is a 15 year old adolescent. They see these children of worthy of their respect, even if at times, they struggle with the daily realities of students not submitting work, or doing the set readings, or turning up for class, or carrying the 'right' disposition.

What Selene and Harry seem to grapple with, (far more than Diana and Rose), are the nuances of class, culture and geography. What does it mean to be a school child of their school? How is it different to school children in other places? Diana and Rose both show some sensitivity to the specificities of childhood and maturation within their communities. Diana always sensitive to

confluences of culture and gender, Rose to culture and geography. Selene seems conscious of her students' childishness - her zooper dooper rewards and cushions, and Harry feels social class pressing upon his students, hence his *Instagram*-inspired excursion. While neither Selene or Harry seem to shape their pedagogy and curriculum choices in response to the specificities of their students' ages, their developmental stages, and their life circumstances to the same depth as that displayed by Diana and Rose this may be an obvious limitation due to their fewer years of teaching. Under the lens of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers Selene and Harry make sound choices that are indicative of their professional judgements at this point of their careers. Under the same lens, Diana and Rose, with greater professional and practical experience, may be exceptional teachers of English.

Workplace limitations and tunnel vision

To a certain extent, the workplace pressures upon the participants, identified as pressures of funding, of time to respond to student needs, and of their own desires for professional fulfilment and growth, seemingly curtail them from engaging more thoroughly in thoughtful pedagogical practice. The decision making practices around text selections point to an experience of a severing occuring within the professional lives of these English teachers. Their working conditions seem to be moulding them into knowledge-light, disciplinary distant, policy reactive beings.

Even though the participants appear to be grasping for pedagogical and curriculum substance their responses reveal their experiences in schools have not yet given them time - or the right conditions - to learn and to enact that which jostles in their minds as pressing concerns.

Harry is particularly concerned with his students' vocabulary gaps, making general reference to the 'vocabulary gap' of working-class children in comparison to middle-class peers. He may be referencing the Hart and Risley (1992) study, a significant piece of social class research of the vocabulary development of children. Rather problematically, the Hart and Risley (1992) results seem to have become apocryphal within education parlance (Kamenetz, 2018). Harry has heard the argument, that working-class kids have a vocabulary gap and that this gap perpetuates their disadvantage. He doesn't know the Hart and Risley (1992) study had a sample of 42 families,

limiting the generalizability of their findings. Within his teaching context, Harry is not in a position to explore his curiosity about vocabulary significance further, and so, he makes pedagogical and curriculum choices as best as he can, but not within the scope of what could be best practice - a research informed position as an educator within his specific community.

New technologies, new media, and new platforms for extending student interests in English are of interest to Selene, perhaps due in part to the rhetoric of STEM which pervades educational spaces and her own professional interest. She proudly shows off a painted green wall when she meets with the interviewer, an eye catching feature in a classroom fashionably kitted out with cushioned seats and movable furnishings. Selene speaks of her students creating their own films and using the greenscreen to manipulate images. She also discusses how she'd like to move into digital games with her students of English but is limited by the faculty budget and the prohibitive cost of such experimentation. With appropriate funding and access to subject specific literature on such texts in English (such as Beavis and Charles, 2005), Selene could initiate ground breaking curriculum that may lessen the problem of student disengagement and drop out in her school context. But this is not a current reality for a teacher in a public school.

Diana too highlights budgetary limitations that can curtail her work with students. She explains why, apart from syllabus specifications, that she believes it is important for students to read and understand Shakespeare. She says:

> *Okay, so if we're looking at Macbeth, for example, we place Shakespeare in the middle of our cultural ethos in English, like the teaching of English is necessitated around the fact that Shakespeare is our crux; he is our middle and Western Euro literature is based around that. So it's really significant they have an understanding of Shakespeare and the language and where it comes from and the cultural influence, even to this day 500 years later.*

Diana is teaching "a heavily ESL class so I have quite a few refugee students and quite a few students that will struggle quite significantly with the language of *Macbeth*" yet she believes that it is "really significant" her students experience a canonical grounding within subject English.

The way she does this, acknowledging the low literacy levels of her students, is to support their comprehension with images via a graphic novel of the play. She explains, “We can't afford to purchase 30 so it's a smaller amount, of course, and we'll share and we use No Fear [Shakespeare] and all the other ways around that you do to be able to engage with the text”. Public school students share texts, and access free online versions of the play, but never in Diana’s mind would she not teach Shakespeare to her students. What is unspoken within Diana’s reflection is the knowledge and skill she brings into the classroom as she differentiates teaching *Macbeth.* Whether the student in front of her has demonstrated below minimum standards in literacy or whether the one at the desk next along will likely achieve academic success in HSC English, Diana grounds the girls’ understanding of Western European literary history, sharing canonical and popular versions of the studied play, and stretching resources as best as she can.

As the participant with the most experience and longest lineage in observing changes in NSW education policies, Rose draws attention to the weariness and emotional fatigue of working closely with students in their local school in a society that seems set on reconceptualising teachers’ work as a series of accountability measures. She perceives, “[i]t's just a crumbling world. Even now I still - doesn’t matter how experienced you are. There'll still be times when just, I want to walk. I've had enough”. Of all the participants, Rose is able to sense the disintegration within her English teaching work and give voice to what is happening on an emotional level. Her palpable frustration is evident in this aside, slipped in amongst a more lively discussion of bookish culture and teaching anecdotes.

The accelerated working lives of these participants encourage a compliant tunnel vision model of subject English - not a thinking one. It is for this reason that Harry and Selene seem to be making curriculum and pedagogical decisions sans a deeper understanding of what it could truly mean to *know your students* as active children on the cusp of their emergent political (in the Arendtian term) lives.

Diana knows her students as girls on the cusp of womanhood in a country that still seems discomforted by the visible signs of Muslim faith. In speaking of entwining Shakespeare and rap music through the rhythm of iambic pentameter, Diana says, “All of this angst, all of these issues, all of these problems come from somewhere, and this is where *we* start. So trying to create those

small tenuous connections throughout is how we do it". Diana sees her students as individual beautiful human beings but she also sees the shape of the worlds around them. Diana's willingness to risk failure, to risk rejection even as she reaches out to standoffish students stands against Harry's submission to the stereotype of 'the West'. Harry explains, "There's problems with kids in the west and in this particular community, where their parents have made a lot of money without going to university".

Harry's students may well be resistant to learning and the experiences that schooling offers them. As he observes, his students have role models who show life success and financial distinction through pathways that are not typically-aligned to subject English sensibilities. In turn, Harry appears to feel that English is a hard sell to these students. Perhaps, within his context, it has become that hard sell. Yet, Harry has a heart warming anecdote of taking senior students who have chosen a non-examined course of English (English Studies) on a learning excursion. The full vignette is as follows:

> *These are kids who have N awards and things like that for English normally. They all - I got 16 kids up there. It's the only time we've ever taken English Studies on an excursion at this school. English studies isn't the group that you would normally take on excursions because they're not ATAR and they seem to get forgotten about a bit, but it was a really - it was probably my best excursion I've been on; taking those 16 kids up [there].*

It is highly relevant to observe the problem here: a belief that subject English is manifesting as exclusive to those who can adopt the right behaviours and ways of thinking, and too distant for average 'Aussie' students to engage with. As Diana has shown, the subject can and does exist for all students regardless of their current competencies with the English language. As Rose has shown, differentiation and some bending of genre borders can draw students in. However, what all participants present within their reflections are the pressures upon their classroom work. There is the externally set construct of English as a competitive subject within NSW schooling culture and the policy lever of literacy applied through the instrument of NAPLAN testing.

There are the challenges of resource acquisitions, funding and need. These forces have become a hurdle not just for the teachers to overcome internally with their students but as visible barriers for their students to overcome in order for their respective schools to be taken seriously in their communities.

Punitive potential of English

It is also significant to note the ways that subject English holds punitive potential. During the time this study was undertaken the NSW government mandated that students needed to receive a particular score on a national literacy test taken by all students in Year 9, in order to proceed to their senior school certification. This policy has since been renegotiated but in essence, all NSW students must demonstrate a minimum level of literacy in order to receive their HSC certification when they finish school. While ostensibly student literacy is a whole school responsibility, much of the work (and the approbation for failure) in ensuring students can demonstrate certain levels of competency fall onto English teachers. All of the teachers in this study were aware of this responsibility and, given the timing of the new minimum standards for students, were conscious of the impact this could have upon their students.

However, what becomes apparent is that some participants understand English within instrumentalist and narrow constraints. English may open the world but it is a bureaucratic experience, much like going through the processes of organising a passport, (the repeated rejections of photographs, *too light, too dark, too smiley)*, than the thrills and joys of journeys and travels. The English teacher as bureaucrat is a forbidding image but their profession has become increasingly bureaucratised. What these participants have made visible, what their vignettes illuminate, are the effects such bureaucratisation have had on their practices of 'doing' English.

Bureaucratic tensions

The English teacher of NSW, Australia receives exhortations towards bureaucratic action from layers of expressed and hidden professional culture. This layering of education bureaucratisation, new managerialism, and marketing, becomes particularly evident in the rhetoric of those whose

proximal placement in Australia's political system ensures their policy influence within the education sphere. When (former) Federal Education Minister, Simon Birmingham, spoke to a gathering of teachers who had met the benchmarks for a new qualification that rewarded best practice he was also celebrating the culmination of a long campaign to stratify individualised teacher performance through an externally evaluated certification process (Vickers, 2015). Birmingham (2017) said:

> One of the important characteristics I have seen in the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers I have met is the setting of clear ambitions and high expectations for their students and the translation of this into teaching practice in their classrooms. This leads to real improvements in student outcomes, and teachers ought to be recognised and rewarded for this.
>
> I'm really pleased to see more and more teachers seeking certification at the Highly Accomplished and Lead Teacher levels. More than 350 teachers are now certified and many have joined this HALT Network. Each and every one of you is demonstrating the value of certification and connecting expert teachers with each other (n.p.).

Birmingham's speech was a clear acknowledgement of John Hattie's meta-analysis research on teacher quality (see for example, Hattie, 2008). He would refer to Hattie during his speech and Hattie's "expert leadership" (Birmingham, 2017, n.p.) As Vickers (2015) poses, the governmental embrace of Hattie-style research reflects a choice:

> to focus quite selectively on research findings that spoke to the positive outcomes associated with quality teaching, while neglecting complexity of this field of research and the role that other factors (such as peer influences, parental involvement, or sociogeographical factors) may play. (Vickers, 2015, p. 82)

The Birmingham (2017) speech is an exemplar of the celebration of individual action, absent of an acknowledgement of the intellectual and communal work behind acts. This rhetoric of "*demonstrating the value of certification"* has been an increasing presence within the Australian educational landscape but has now reached saturation within NSW with the State government aligning NSW certification processes to the Federal policy level, the Australian Institute of

Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). It has been hard for any teacher to avoid the phenomenon of hero adoration and martyr teachers in the media representations of Australia's schooling lives (Baillie, 2018). Problematically, much of what is showcased is the flamboyant acts of visible teaching. Much harder it is to uncover and explore the quiet work of the mind, and really, this quiet unobtrusive slow work is not the work that the politically powerful laud.

Through the mandatory cycles of professional learning and reflective practice the NSW Education Standards Authority establishes a construct of what it is English teachers must exhibit to be deemed proficient or to be graded at higher levels of performance. 'Construct' and 'exhibit' are deliberately chosen words here. They refer to the phenomenon of the extroverted performative teacher. The teacher who needs to be seen, not just by their students, but by the increasingly public requirements of their professional world and who can, in turn, contort a summary of their practice into five yearly cycles of digital documentation. Documentation of 'impact' is required.

Out of the four participants in this research, Selene and Harry appear to be most at ease in this new world of documentation and 'impact'. Selene is a young teacher, young enough to be on the cusp of the Millennial/Generation Z demographic (Dimock, 2019). Selene shares characteristics of Generation Z in that she is technologically savvy within her pedagogy. She hashtags resources or events through social media and was able to persuade a panel of potential employers that she was their best candidate by exhibiting her practice via deliberate hashtag curation. "Social media, constant connectivity and on-demand entertainment and communication are innovations Millennials adapted to as they came of age. For those born after 1996, these are largely assumed" (Dimock, 2019, n.p.)

In her career as a teacher Selene has never known a culture that is not visibly accountable through post-tertiary certification. She has developed professionally through a discourse of the 'quality teacher' and appears to have internalised much of the messaging. In turn, Selene seems to be 'on brand' all the time.

Selene is proficient at describing her pedagogy using the language of The Australian Teaching Standards. Her teaching practice aligns with what seems to be 'high expectations' for all students.

Yet, as noted in the previous section, Selene appeared to think that grade repetition for a number of students was an appropriate consequence for the young people failing to accede to schooling procedures. In almost all ways, Selene has either sustained or adopted the 'quality teacher' discourse of which Birmingham (2017) is just a part. She shows little to no critical insight into the ways such a discourse positions her within her school and the ways her own privileges of coming from a family of 'book people' have eased her own experience of schooling and career path.

Harry, like Selene, is highly fluent in the linguistic acrobatics of 'quality teaching' discourse. He also appears adept at responding to political currents and concerns within the education sphere. He has positioned himself as a teaching leader of literacy, presenting on the topic at conferences and sharing resources and curriculum insights through his public blog.

Harry's literacy focus may draw in part from the needs of his school. In the snapshots provided by the *My School* website, students at Harry's school showed some growth in their reading capabilities between their National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests in Year 7 to the time they took the tests again in Year 9. Their like-schools performed similarly. Despite this growth, Harry's students demonstrated reading abilities below that of their 'schools in comparison'. (My School, *Louisa Lawson* (anon), n.d.) In the 2013 to 2015 cycle, the comparative schools increased their distance from that of Louisa Lawson High School, i.e. the Lawson students continued to perform under the state average in reading and below the performance of their schools in comparison.

However, by 2017, the growth in reading from Years 7 to 9 by Louisa Lawson students had improved substantially. They had almost closed the gap between their school and comparative schools in reading, although Lawson students and those from schools with similar students still performed below the Australian average in reading in NAPLAN.

With an awareness of the political discourse on literacy AND 'impact', it is likely Harry and his colleagues were under certain pressures to ensure their students showed visible improvements in externally validated assessment measures like NAPLAN. Thus, the prevalence of a discourse of literacy and the improvements happening over time within Louisa Lawson High School may have

some correlation. Harry's pedagogical emphasis on the visible acquisition of literacy by his students may also correlate with the phenomenon of literacy growth during the years 2012-2017.

In scrutinising two examples within Harry's reflections the extent of the pressures he may be experiencing require further unfolding. Example one, Vignette 5 *Secret Reader*, comes from Harry's admission that although he highly values reading aloud to all his students, including seniors, he chooses not to challenge or criticise a faculty culture led by a newly arrived head teacher that rejects reading aloud as worthwhile pedagogy for seniors. Example two, Vignette 7 *Post its*, draws from Harry's anecdote about his pride in the ways senior students are able to physically annotate their studied novels and how such practice can inspire and inform others as to the intellectual rigour of English work.

There is something within Vignette 5 in Harry's behaviour that points to his political acumen and ways of eliding around moments of professional discomfort. In a school where student performance in national tests indicate a weakness in reading, and likely, an absence in book culture in general, Harry is in a position to lead through his practice. He could use the examples from his classroom of reading aloud and scaffolding assessments, and his rationale for doing so. Perhaps in the future he may do so. He explains, "I'm pretty quiet in faculty meetings because I don't want to invite any conflict which is basically a test of different opinions, different world views and you're not going to change that". As Arendt (1970) observes, "Near is my shirt but nearer is my skin" (p.70). For a white male on the cusp of leadership ascension, Harry's silence on the topic of contentious pedagogy is indicative of his conflict avoidance strategies at work.

Harry's observation of 'conflict' is actually quite apt to the dilemma for contemporary teachers. The scenario is that Harry scaffolds assessment materials and reads aloud to his students. This occurs within a landscape that values quantitative reporting of student improvement. Harry may never be able to prove that reading aloud to his students improved their experience in English. There are too many variables within classroom circumstances to prove reading aloud as a determining factor in his students' performance. And so, Harry stays quiet.

Inadvertently, the *Secret Reader* Vignette (#5) which reflects a concern of keeping secret what occurs behind the classroom door, finds a window in *Post its*. This is a reflection that holds within it key aspects of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. In establishing a method of teaching literature comprehension and analysis for his seniors, Harry appears to have developed a culture of high expectations and is able to communicate that process and the intellectual rigour implied within it to a parent while verbally acknowledging and validating the students' own work. "They just sit there and put all their post it notes in their books", he explains. Importantly, the book, the post-it notes, are visible. *They can be seen*. These behaviours reveal Harry as someone who has internalised the expectations and culture of the Australian Professional Standards. This is pedagogy that can be photographed and documented. It can be role modelled and teacher-led. It is a culture of educational bureaucracy, not one from the lineages of subject English.

Harry explains, "They go can you show us how to do that? They don't have the confidence to just have a go at that. They don't have any context on what that means either". This statement conveys the crux of Harry's pedagogical dilemma. He is trying to teach the habitus of the 'good' English student. He is teaching his students middle-class behaviours of responding to a text, aiming to build 'confidence' and 'culture' at the same time he is trying to improve their skill sets in English. He is having his students carry a double load of learning, aiming to teach them modes of English behaviour - this is how we do literature - alongside the skills of literacy and language.

Harry may be training his students for their run at the Higher School Certificate yet he paradoxically summed up his school's identity that "...we're not the HSC". In this statement, Harry unknowingly speaks to the conflict within his professional role and teaching identity. So much of NSW schooling culture has oriented towards the HSC and strong student results that Harry struggles to shape his practice away from this dominant discourse even as he recognises in the Louisa Lawson student body, cultures and practices that are at odds with a competitive academic schooling world. This is even more apparent in this vignette from his interview:

> *People can't break out of that mindset a bit and they just see a bunch of kids who just refuse to do things. It becomes very punitive and we need to move away from that and think about how can we have a positive experience for kids who aren't going to*

> *go to university, so that the next generation doesn't come to school hating it, before we even start.*

Harry seems to be conscious of the HSC certification as his students' passport out of their suburban wasteland. He also seems to be acutely aware of a confluence of culture, deprivation, and social class that have undermined his aspirations for students in the past. But in responding to this all, he has circumscribed subject English as a process for his students. English has become a formula, deliberately so, as a way of engaging, "Those who are not 'English-minded'. This means using analytical criteria where possible, calculating lexical density, utilising a range of numeracy-based approaches, and looking at grammatical intricacy - methods that can assist the more naturally mathematically or scientifically-minded in finding access points to English" (Harry's blog, 2017, April 20).

Yet, as his vignette makes clear, Harry is acutely aware that his work with current students will be shaping the culture and expectations of these students in their future lives, as they grow to adulthood and perhaps continue the cycle of sending their children to the local public school. Harry appears to want to construct an English pedagogy and curriculum that will break cycles of antagonism and antipathy for working-class communities - cycles which Connell et al (1982) reported on a generation earlier. He wants to change social values and cultures "so that the next generation doesn't come to school hating it, before we even start". Harry perceives the problems of intergenerational antagonism to schooling cultures but he doesn't interrogate why this is so. He appears to be unable to empathetically understand those who do respond to schooling in these ways. In the absence of empathy and understanding, perhaps in the absence of a sociological lens through which to view his community, Harry only has a bureaucratic tools at his disposal. He aims to make school a "positive experience" within the scope of policy rules and levers.

Harry appears to be attempting to 'use the master's tools' to paraphrase Audre Lorde, even as some part of him seems to recognise they will never 'dismantle the master's house.' *Post its,* his blog extract, and his final vignette point to the way that for Harry, the studied text has become an artefact of intellectual effort, something to be presented as evidence of intellectual process in lieu of actual processes which may be invisible, messy, or obtuse to the outside observer. It may be useful to

reflect upon the ways in which the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, politicised within a broader rhetoric of 'teacher quality' and student literacy failures, has led to Harry limiting his aspirations for his students to truly experience high expectations. Harry can make 'thinking' visible but it is unclear if he helps them actually to think. Ironically, such contortions are in allegiance with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and enable Harry to position himself *visibly* for his own career sustainability and potential ascension.

This section has presented the pernicious, if unintended, consequences of bureaucratisation upon English teacher pedagogy. The following section will explore the manner of professional identity conflicts which can reinforce and circumscribe particular approaches and decisions in the English classroom.

Deeper Meanings: English Teachers' Values and Practice

As others (Marshall, 2000, Goodwyn, 2004, O'Sullivan, 2005) have explored, English teachers hold their professional identities closely within their sense of self. At the forefront of these identity conceptions are recurring, and at times, heteroglossic values. Heteroglossia draws upon Bakhtin's (1981) conception of language as one which is dynamically flexible to intergenerational changes in meaning and interpretation, and able to withstand the tensions of socio-ideological markers (p. 272). Heteroglossic values in English can be identified in the way that views that seemingly would be in opposition to each other can merge and co-exist within the discourse, such as in the way the high culture boundaries of Leavis' (1930) canon lives within the subject alongside a fluid and curious interest in new forms of language expression (The New London Group, 1996; Kress, 2003; Luke, 2017; Garcia, Luke & Seglem, 2018).

The teachers in this study reflect the cultural and historical lineages within the English teacher identity. Evident in their decision making and practice are elements of Leavisite thought, the Personal Growth models of Dixon (1967), and the boundary-pushing Romanticism of Wordsworth and Wollstonecraft (Reid, 2002; Reid, 2003; Carter, 2013). Their behaviours, attitudes and values also point to new trends that may be finding encouragement within the increasing precarity of contemporary employment lives within the Australian state of New South Wales.

There is a distinct and almost fervent preoccupation with career progression and being 'visible' in teaching, as observed earlier in this chapter. For Selene and Harry there was a conscious performativity in wanting to 'do English right' and to stay within safe boundaries of pedagogy and curriculum. This desire for 'safe' English teaching can seem paradoxical to the frames of this study on popular culture texts. Wouldn't teachers who self-identify as those who select and use popular culture texts in their classroom be at the forefront of shaping new approaches in pedagogy and curriculum? Prior research by practitioner researchers points to an exciting intellectual journey as teachers explore new mediums and types of texts within the boundaries of subject English, such as when Frey and Fisher (2004) discovered graphic novels and comic books, or when Dixon and his contemporaries (1967) extolled the benefits of drama and playacting in the classroom, or when Rosenblatt (1960) urged the pedagogical benefits of 'beatnik' lyrics.

While Selene and Harry demonstrate excitement in new texts and technologies their fervour occurs within the context of a pedagogy that is bounded by the assessment policies and procedures of internal and external testing requirements. A concern with 'what is best for the students' is constantly mediated by a preoccupation with how students can best demonstrate literacy acquisition and comprehension, and perhaps use their certification in English as a stepping stone towards university and an economically independent post-school life. It all feels very *safe*. While safe undoubtedly has value, as Biesta (2013) reminds, safe is not where learning ends. In fact, safe may not even be where learning begins.

> I will suggest that we should understand the teacher as someone who, in the most general sense, brings something new to the educational situation, something that was not already there (Biesta, 2013, p. 44).

The bringing of a popular culture text within the bounds of the English classroom may seem to be the act of doing 'new' but, as noted within the literature review, over her history English has always enveloped new mediums, new forms of language, new texts. The new isn't in the medium or even the text but in what the teacher does with it. As Biesta (2013) writing on Arendt observed, "What makes each of us unique is the potential to do something that has not been done before" (p. 105). In

their work with popular culture texts, the teachers in this study replicate comprehension, reading, and responding practices that can be applied to any other types of texts in the English classroom. For the most part, their described practices don't appear to demonstrate *new* or even adaptive.

These four participants uphold practices of English for all of their students through a weaving of different theoretical traditions. They do so in order to consistently uphold a clear ethos in English as the subject which opens the world to their students. A belief in the inherent worth of subject English regardless of student characteristics points to a deeply held ideology that the subject holds, as Leavis (1930) articulated, the essence of humanity. Significantly, the text selection practices and pedagogy of these four teachers supersede the class, gender and race prejudices of Leavis.

There is Rose, who teaches poetry through music videos to her students with low literacy levels. Selene brings to her 'non-readers' a plethora of contemporary humorous texts in order to immerse students within reading culture. Diana sends her seniors off to an evening with Emily Dickinson, and Harry persists in reading texts aloud, knowing that to do so, puts him at odds with colleagues within his school. Yet, only Rose is able to clearly articulate humanism as a theoretical model within her practice. It is a huge loss to the profession and for their learners when teachers know not why they do what they do.

'Open the World': Gatekeepers and Knight Seneschals

In some respects, there are two distinct roles an English teacher can play within the construct of contemporary schooling. They can be gatekeepers or they can be seneschals.

Gatekeepers are characterised by their dutiful officiousness in streaming students into ability level groupings, by ensuring students are punished for infractions and any missed deadlines regardless of circumstance, by overseeing 'right' ways of teaching English and doing their best to hold their colleagues to self-same visions of what English teaching 'is'. Diana perceives gatekeepers as operating within the educational bureaucracy. Rose laughs at the gatekeepers, safe in her years of experience and qualified by her expertise, that she can circumnavigate around them. Selene perhaps aligns at times with gatekeeper positions. She has not yet gained the experiences which encourage a

questioning of other ways. Harry probably doesn't want to be a gatekeeper. At times, he shows some indications of wanting to be something else for his students - someone to break the cycle of intergenerational antagonism and antipathy to schooling. But Harry also recognises the power and influence that comes to those who, recognised by their superiors, are known for carefully guarding the keys to the doors of knowledge.

In contrast to gatekeepers, who lock students in and out of respective English spaces, knight seneschals open doors, they guide and protect, and yes, they go into battle for their students in their own quietly determined English way. The term knight seneschals has been lifted from the Medieval world of the French court and from the Arthurian legend. "As internal administrator of the palace, he (the seneschal) was in charge of the education of the prince, the rearing of young people at court, the arrangement of the royal tent and bearing the standard in times of war, the hospitality of the palace…" (Herman, 1989, p. 22). A romantic term perhaps for a democratic discipline but one which at its heart, always values a good story.

As a knight seneschal, Diana deliberately programs text choices of independent female protagonists who, in their narrative encounters, present life pathways beyond marriage and motherhood to her students. Rose works on self-efficacy and self-confidence, building up her students and their sense of self no matter their struggles with the academic curriculum. Selene works towards the kinds of practices valued by gatekeepers: she upholds the formal school curriculum without question, she values NAPLAN as a diagnostic test, she oversaw a circumstance which led to a number of students repeating Year 10, observing the process as a learning experience for those who repeated and as a warning for those who came after them. Yet these moments happen alongside her boundless energy in presenting read alouds to her students, in reconfiguring curriculum approaches within English, in pioneering technology practice within her school. And Harry works from a threshold, teaching his students formulaic patterns of coding their reading, a literacy *etude* of formwork and practice, where repetition aims to build muscle memory for stronger analysis and writing. Possibility flickers like a lit candle around Harry.

In their discussions of craft and pedagogical work it becomes clear that these participants are grasping at older lineages and identities of what it means to be English teachers, and their place as

mentors, as teachers, of young people. But so much within the professional identity of the English teacher has been lost that, for the most part, these participants don't even know what it is that they are grasping for. Rose alone is able to articulate some kind of connection to a theoretical model of learning. She knows she fits into some kind of Humanism-lineage. She "really loved Raymond Williams...loved the Birmingham school...but in terms of my own educational theory I'm a humanist. I just want kids to be the best person they can be".

For the younger participants in this study there seems to be a gap between their professional identities and why they think subject English is significant for their students. Selene and Harry particularly are portraitures of a compliance model of English, one which has come of age in an era of governance but without an ascending culture of questioning why or how else English could be. There is a sense of the Romantic in their aspirations for their students - they want to 'open the world' for them - but also an absence of Romantic sensibilities and knowledge as to how that could be done.

Rose contends English teachers don't need theory to guide them. They have their gut instinct and that is enough. She explains, "...that's always the interesting point within classroom teachers who are professionals, *who identify and work towards solving a need, but without necessarily a theoretical background*". What this study has revealed is that working towards solving a need sans a theoretical background makes for a rather blinkered teacher of English. The teachers in this study can confidently identify student strengths and weaknesses within the English classroom but not all of them can articulate, or perhaps even see, the political, cultural, and historical currents swirling around their students' lives. Harry can identify that many students are not like him, he can observe the self-made nouveau rich elements of his local community that value education and schooling in very different ways. He can even point to some research evidence that supports his pedagogical practice such as when he references the vocabulary gap or the influence of reading consultant Cris Tovani in the development of his post-its activities. But he doesn't question why some of his students are antagonistic to schooling, he doesn't seem to ask on a deeper level 'why is this so?'

What does it mean to these teachers to 'open the world' for their students? These teachers are highly conscious that their students will leave school and will need to sustain themselves within an

economic model of individuality and selfhood. Perhaps this conception is an inevitability of forty years of neoliberalism shaping the educational terrain in New South Wales, as it has elsewhere. This individualised economic understanding of students and their future selves is an improvement from one which posited male students as family breadwinners and their female peers as future homemakers and mothers, as once was understood within Australia (Connell et al, 1982; Cheung, 2018). Change for the better can happen.

According to these teachers, the future graduate of today's subject English is an individual who has economic prospects because of the skills, knowledge, and understanding that they have gained through their time moving through the NSW English courses. This conception is far broader than a narrow instrumentalist consideration of English as the provision of literacy alone (Lewis & Wray, 1999; Lewis & Wray, 2001) or as the intellectual inheritance of a shared cultural heritage (Coles, 2013; Ward & Connolly, 2008; Elliott, 2014).

Rather, English is viewed by these participants as honing student capabilities in critical thinking, empathy, entrepreneurship, and civics. These capabilities can be found within the NSW cross-curriculum priority areas and established rationales of general capabilities. All subjects in K-10 are meant to encourage this small 'l' liberal humanist disposition (see BOSTES NSW, 2012d) but English, perhaps more so than any other subject, embeds these qualities and characteristics within syllabus, practice and, significantly, pedagogy.

It is for these reasons that Rose chooses to use music videos with her Stage 5 low literacy students when teaching poetry. The lyrics are poetry albeit in another medium - the multimodal music video. Her students are analysing the visuals, the sounds of the instruments, and the lyrics because a combination of the visual, aural, and textual mediums provides her students with a level of textual accessibility that they may not receive from just 'text on the page'. As Rose explains, "...I found music videos fantastic...they just got it, they got it straightaway...It just spoke to them. They could unpack the symbolism". At this point in the interview Rose recalled specific songs and relived the memories of those lessons. She was excited by the memories and satisfied with where those lessons had taken the students - into moments of personal introspection and avid discussion, into the library for research, and eventually, into an assessment task. Mention of the assessment is where Rose's

tone flattens and her response shortens. In one reference Rose quips, “when it came to that *horrible* assessment task…” She sums up with, “Hopefully they can remember it if they’re in an exam as well. I’m just playing on that visual culture in that sense of recall”.

For Rose, the assessment task is just a checkpoint in the year. The content of English and the learning experiences she provides for her students is where she lives and thrives. Embedded in her pedagogy is the sense that for all her students, English is the subject in which they become part of whoever it is that they will be in the future. In some respects, Rose acknowledges the economic being of that future identity, but in the end, it is ultimately that subject English “is just good for the soul. These are life skills”.

This vision of English is one which weaves Romantic Humanism as an essential aspect of human nature, not just for the individual but for their society as well.

Conclusion

Subject English is seen as providing students with an entry into cultures of reading: of literal text comprehension, of the pleasures of enjoyable texts, and the ability to ‘read’ analytically, drawing on understandings of history, semiotics, codes, and theory. This is why the choices of English teachers take on such weight and gravity. Text choices, ways of interacting, methods of writing, what content is included and what is cut out: these decisions all become part of a disciplinary culture orientated towards ‘opening the world’ for those who live, for thirteen years, within a liminal place.

The school student is of their own family, their own culture, their own community. While still students they are constructed by social and schooling policies as dependents. In NSW, students must be enrolled in formal study between the ages of 6 and 17. Their English teacher, even if from the local community as Selene and Harry in this study are, live and move in a different space. Intergenerationally older than their students, English teachers can bring their own insights of race, class, gender, and sexuality to their selection of texts and learning designs but they cannot live their students’ lives for them.

Much as the knights of the Arthurian legend, English teachers as knight seneschals are fallible. They are human with all the contradictions entailed within humanity. Yet, these participants in their work with young people have orientated their understanding of their subject, their content knowledge, their pedagogy to embrace a liberal humanist vision of English as one which ‘opens the world’.

CHAPTER SIX:

Dark Times

> *There have been dark times before—this is the significance of the plural noun, the reason why we speak of dark times rather than a dark time or a world cast into darkness. Indeed, there is something perversely hopeful in the appellation: dark times are episodic and finite, to be contrasted with an enduring condition or teleological trajectory*
> *(Brown, 2005, p. 9).*

Enduring

Dark times have indeed come to social and education worlds. As Rose perceived, "it's just a crumbling world". One where inequality has become entrenched, where federal and state governments apply punitive controls against vulnerable populations, those more likely to live within Wasteland territories (see Eltham, 2017; Knaus, 2018 on 'illegal' social security attacks by government departments against working poor, single mothers, and the elderly).

Wastelands know dark times. Those whose lives are made matter in the wasteland know the pattern of their geographies. They know "the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief, and the dry stone no sound of water" (Eliot, 1922). How English teachers respond to the shadows cast within such geographies reveals their capacity to whisper:

"(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different…"
(Eliot, 1922).

Eliot's persona cajoles from under the shadow of their red rock within the wasteland. The persona promises something other than the familiar sights and spirals of life. Like Eliot's persona, calling the listener as some have suggested (Weston, 1920) to a quest for the holy grail, the teachers in this study have aimed to direct their students to quests of their own.

What differs markedly amongst the teachers in this study is their sense of their Wasteland and the territories beyond. Some of the participants perceive the way geographical wastelands are manifested through poverty, inequality, resource scarcity. All of them seem to understand that

Wastelands can take root in the mind. They all sense that English teachers hold a distinctive place in society in alleviating the spread of an intellectual malaise, one caused by a starvation of accessible and engaging texts of literary and popular origin.

They all see subject English as a panacea but there is division amongst these alchemists of the mind and heart. Some appear to recognise their presence as key to the catalysation of their students' intellectual awakenings. But there is also a didactic hardness in others – an unwillingness to bear the burden of mentoring students who may fail the quest, who 'choose wrongly', and in doing so, mark a teacher with the stain of also being of a Wasteland.

Implications of the Research

This research aims to present the quiet stories of English teachers getting on with the job of educating their students within rather tempestuous teaching times (Simpson Reeves, Exley & Dillon Wallace, 2018). In doing so, the study presents the kinds of nuances, complexities, and cultural details that are more often lost or subsumed by louder voices on State and Federal educational stages.

Popular Culture Texts

In this study the boundaries of what popular culture texts could be interpreted as were deliberately left open for participants to identify. Through their self-identification of what constitutes such texts, a mix of perspectives became apparent. Texts were identified as popular culture because they were perceived by participants to be a) contemporary texts with links to societal issues, for instance *I am Malala*, *Parvana*, *Swimming the Fly*, *The Sidekicks*, *A Property of the Clan*; b) texts with young adult protagonists such as the novels *Jasper Jones* and *The Wave*; and c) texts of diverse and non-traditional mediums, seen in the selection of the graphic novel *Persepolis*, the picture book *Malala, A Brave Girl from Pakistan/Iqbal, A Brave Boy from Pakistan*, the podcast *Serial*, the documentary *First Contact*, songs, *The Night they Drove old Dixie Down*, and music videos from Katie Perry, *Wide Awake*, and *Belfast Child* by Simple Minds.

These identifications reveal a broad definition of what constitutes ‘popular culture’. As stated within the NSW K-10 English syllabus, text selections require “quality literature”, “Australian literature”, “a wide range of cultural, social and gender perspectives, popular and youth cultures”, “nonfiction, picture books and graphic novels” and “an appropriate range of digital texts” (Board of Studies, 2012a, p. 26). It may be that these teachers engage in necessary definitional reshuffles as they ensure their text choices meet the necessary checkpoints of the NSW K-10 English syllabus (Board of Studies, 2012a).

The text selections of these participants are indicative of their teaching preferences but also hint at financial limitations within public school book rooms. The eclectic mix of titles across the four school sites convey the agency and judgement of these teachers in making selections that meet their professional teaching goals, discussed in Chapter Five, for their students. However, the presence of the 1981 young adult novel *The Wave* within two of the school sites may also point to financial constraints.

Why a thirty-eight-year-old novel is still being taught in two of the sites is puzzling, especially because neither of the participants discussed the novel in any great length. Absent within the discussions was commentary as to the quality or student appeal of *The Wave*. It could be that some public secondary schools face budgetary factors that limit text refreshment and/or release time for teachers to engage in their own professional learning and programming with popular culture texts. Sans adequate financial support, some texts recirculate far beyond the zeitgeist that placed them for a time within the genre of popular culture. The continual use of older ‘once’ popular texts leads to the next iteration of a book’s life in subject English. It may be that some texts take on canonical status within certain school sites linked by geography, similar economies, and experiences of disadvantage. While *The Wave* could be an appealing novel for students to study, its longevity within these schools hints at missed opportunities for students to have read other novels more contemporary to their own times.

New Managerialism in and through subject English

This study has shed light on the encroachment of new managerialism into the practice and praxis of English teaching. Selene and Harry most visibly manifested their acceptance and comfort with a world in which young people's passage through education occurs through processes of testing, verification, and certification. That such a system disqualifies some students from their studies, that such a system is inherently unfair to those whose lives differ from a middle-class norm, does not appear to greatly trouble Selene or Harry to such an extent that either questions the presence of bureaucratic controls within education spaces. Rose and Diana's contexts and experiences provide for more nuanced understandings of their students' lives. Rose and Diana are more able to articulate the flaws in a system which can close doors and lock out young people prematurely. This study has revealed how the nature of bureaucratic tools shape these participants' praxis in the English classroom.

These contributions of the participants also illuminated a disturbing osmosis of new managerialism theories into participant perceptions of their professional identities. Long into her career as a teacher of English, Rose is able to scoff at layers of accreditation and certification that younger colleagues must engage in. Diana seems to view such processes with weary acceptance. Selene and Harry however, appear to have embraced the processes and philosophies that constitute a contemporary 'twenty-first century leader' of subject English. In such acceptance, the newer teachers here reveal a markedly different perception of their professional life. They appear to be seeing their work as a job, not a vocation – and this delineation conveys worlds of difference between them all.

English teaching as a job positions the teacher within a context of middle-class consolidation of professional roles in society at a time when the Australian middle-class faces precarity and instability across employment sectors. Front line teaching seems to be safe (for now) from automation, outsourcing, and sub-contracting. But a society and culture that increasingly preferences economic independence over altruism, and that surveils teaching practice through numerous quantitative measures is undoubtedly reshaping values and priorities. Thus, Diana may work until one in the morning to ensure her students "feel something" – an act of self-sacrifice on

behalf of her students. Selene and Harry may also work late hours but their actions seem to be more oriented towards their own professional advancement – a commonsensical approach for professionals within these precarious (and performative) times.

It may be that younger, less experienced teachers of English are being inducted into a context and culture that views their subject as a process of certification, not an initiation into worlds of words, story, and narrative. An ethos of care seems to have been set adrift in this narrowed conception of an English teaching world.

Risk in subject English

The text selections and described pedagogies of participants in this study point to some specific deliberations that go beyond simplistic or cautious interpretations of the NSW English syllabus. These teachers are experienced, intelligent, intuitive teachers of English. They guide others in how subject English in NSW could and should be manifested. Their curriculum and pedagogical decisions reveal deliberately political and agentic interpretations of how best to navigate their students around risks in and beyond NSW education culture.

Harry's cautious, visible pedagogic practices point to a wariness in regard to risk in the English classroom. He appears to be most conservative in his text choices. Harry stays close to canonical interpretations of quality and authoritatively-endorsed pedagogical practices. Harry's response to risk is to stay within safe boundaries and to endorse such boundaries through his own practice.

Selene is much more adventurous in her text choices but she, like Harry, values established boundaries and borders of acceptable student behavior. Selene's pedagogy presents novelty, innovation, and pleasures for students, but importantly this appears to be conditional on their acceptance of her rules and expectations for their learning journey.

Diana and Rose are much more flexible, inclusive and accepting of their students and the temperaments, personalities, values, cultures, and academic qualities their students bring into their classrooms.

The different approaches of the participants in this study illuminate how a highly competitive schooling landscape and inequitable distribution of resources and funding can encourage teachers within Wasteland territories to take on unenviable identities. There is always the professional risk that an English teacher within a Wasteland school will become stained by the Wasteland. To traverse unscathed, Harry rather knowingly, recognises the value of paying tithe to the hegemonic order. Selene is comforted by its presence. Diana and Rose are far less enamoured of such gestures, sensing the futility and limits such genuflections will bring to their students' futures. It is Diana and Rose who risk the stain of becoming one with the Wasteland in order to orient their students onwards into worlds of words in their post-school lives.

In perceiving such diverse navigations amidst contemporary experiences of teaching we ask where to from here for subject English in New South Wales? There is some hope that this study will provoke discussions and reflection as to the agency of secondary English teachers in enacting their version of subject English for their students. There is hope that future dialogical encounters will come. That secondary teachers of English can be prompted to pause in their frantic work towards the next looming priority for their learners and to breathe as they consider what it is that drives them. It is true that we:

> need to find ways of looking at the world of the classroom and literary study in contemporary times that are open to the complexity with which knowledge is understood, mobilized and valued, and to [acknowledge] the forces and experiences outside the classroom that mediate these experiences
> (Yates, McLean Davies, Buzacott, Doecke, Mead & Sawyer, 2019, p. 13).

Can the pressures and expectations of student performance in Higher School Certificate exams be separated from how teachers understand and enact English for students in Years 9 and 10? Will secondary teachers of English find ways to withstand the forces and influences which are reshaping conceptions of human worth and dignity around neoliberal models? Will those who draw upon older Romantic lineages of the child and their intellectual awakenings in enacting subject English soon be dusty memories of a time long ago?

Subject English in New South Wales is in a process of becoming, but what will be birthed is yet unknown. Wastelands are known for their monsters. There is some foreboding at what may yet come to pass. But there is hope too. Ursula Le Guin reminds, "We live in capitalism, its power seems inescapable – but then so did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings" (Le Guin, 2014, n.p.). If secondary English teachers can find the space, place, and time to think through why it is that they do what they do, to explore the historical lineage of their subject and the positionality of contemporary philosophies that impact their work, they and their learners will be in a much better place to confront the future.

New theory, New approach: Arendtian Narrative Inquiry

This study provides education researchers with a new methodological approach when seeking a narrative inquiry lens that responds to the tempests of contemporary times. The significance of this approach for researchers is that Arendtian narrative inquiry includes the relational commitment instigated by the work of Clandinin and Connelly (1990). This commitment orients the work within a sacred sense of the human individual (Arendt, 1958) and reminds the researcher that despite differences that may be sensed between researcher and participants we work through participant disclosure and acknowledge their bravery in allowing us into their world. We work to bring light into spaces hereto hidden by shadows.

Teachers of English did not ask for the matter of their working lives to become the political footballs of politicians and policy makers. Teachers of English would much rather get on with the work of educating young people. But – given the politicisation of NSW schooling, teachers, and elements of English curriculum, discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, it is vital that research works where teachers' voices and stories are presented to become a more recognised and accepted contribution to public discourse and the literature field. From a confluence of context and culture Arendtian Narrative Inquiry emerged. Figure 1 (p. 103) illuminates that within Arendtian Narrative Inquiry 'contextual tensions justify reasons for study' and that 'politicised lives require reification in order to exist in a politicised world'.

The processes of reification required the researcher to reflect upon participants' stories and view them through multiple lenses. The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers provided a rationale for teacher decisions and actions. However, significant too were theorists whose work aims to bring some critical consideration of action, power and privilege within uncertain, unequal times. Fraser's (2019) work on hegemonic narratives, Apple's (1986/89; 2000) arguments regarding social inequalities and the consequences of continuing manifestations, Biesta's (2013) probing what makes risk an inherent quality of learning, and Arendt's (1948/2003; 1958; 1970) catalogue of works deconstructing and exploring power, privilege, and being human were essential theoretical voices for this task. Judgements and conclusions came from this alchemic mix of policy understanding, theoretical insight, and attending to the stories of participants within their specific contexts.

The distinctiveness of this approach is that this theory confronts the power dynamic between researcher and participants. Rather than try to resolve or dissolve power inequalities through co-writing with participants, Arendtian narrative inquiry acknowledges that the researcher alone holds the power for their interpretation of the world. This thesis, as an example of Arendtian narrative inquiry in action, represents the researcher's analysis, theorization, and understanding of these participants' professional lives in their Beautiful Wasteland schools. The natality of this thesis brings forth into the world a position which participants, or others, can address in their turn, through their own responses.

The appropriateness of this methodology within the current research paradigm of qualitative studies sustains the value of small scale studies which provide rich details of specific people, places, and spaces. The methodological approach of this study stands as an important counterpoint to the quantitative methods, and the stories such methods tell, within current practices of the NSW Department of Education and the Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority (ACARA).

The stories of this thesis could never have been realized through quantitative methods or other qualitative approaches. The researcher needed the theorization of Arendtian narrative inquiry in order to manifest the Beautiful Wastelands and their 'bog standard' public schools.

Recommendations for further research

As acknowledged, this research was situated within four sites, listening to the reflections of four participants from those sites. Further research into how English teachers of 'bog standard' public schools, and their systemic Catholic counterparts, are essential if a clearer conceptualisation of how English teachers generally perceive and understand the nature of their subject, and manifest that understanding with their students, can be illuminated.

Given the politicisation of literacy and the competitive education culture of the NSW HSC certification, further exploration of how subject English is programmed, resourced, and experienced by Stage 5 students, those adolescents in Years 9 and 10, is a vital investigation to be had as well. Such an investigation from a qualitative lens would present salient and necessary data to complement the quantitative tools already in use by the NSW Department of Education and the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Further research into text refreshment, recirculation, and renewal within public high schools would also be highly useful for understanding how secondary English teachers are using their text selections to develop their students as readers for pleasure and purpose. McLean Davies (2012) provides a methodology for this approach that may assist future developments in this area.

Conclusion

At the end of all, the English teacher must separate from their students. Their pupils need to continue their journeys into adulthood and life beyond school. As explored by a different tale from a Wasteland (King, 1982) this separation is something that young people ken.
"Go then," the boy tells the Gunslinger.
"There are other worlds than these."

There are so many ‘other worlds’ for students to venture but, as this thesis has illuminated, the English teacher holds a key place as knight seneschal in the cartography of their students’ post school lives. The text selections of English teachers can become signposts and markers of people, places, and philosophies, known and unknown. These choices hold gravity. They must be more than convenience and comfort for a teacher if they are to become what the old tellers whisper they can be.

“Choose wisely,” whispered the old knight (Spielberg, 1989).

“Choose wisely.”

Epilogue

May this thesis illuminate the path for those who seek the Tower,
and know the scent of the Rose in their heart.

References

ACARA. (2017a). [de-identified school: Louisa Lawson High School] Retrieved from: [redacted] Accessed: 21/06/2018.

ACARA. (2017b). [de-identified school: Hoda Afshar High School] Retrieved from: [redacted] Accessed: 21/06/2018.

ACARA. (2017c). [de-identified school: Faith Bandler High School] Retrieved from: [redacted] Accessed: 21/06/2018.

ACARA. (2017d). [de-identified school: Ruth Park High School] Retrieved from: [redacted] Accessed: 21/06/2018.

Ahmed, S. (2017). *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke University Press: North Carolina.

Allen, D. S. (2007). Further reflections on Little Rock. *Schools: Studies in Education, 4(2),* 13-19.

Allen, K. & Ingulsrud, J. E. (2005). Reading Manga: Patterns of Personal Literacies Among Adolescents. *Language and Education, 19(4),* 265-280.

Alexander, D. (2013, August 28). How Australia weathered the global financial crisis while Europe failed. *The Guardian* [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/aug/28/australia-global-economic-crisis Accessed: 27/05/2019.

Alsup, J. (2006). *Teacher identity discourses: Negotiating personal and professional spaces.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Alvermann, D., & Heron, A. (2001). Literacy Identity Work: Playing to Learn with Popular Media. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 45(2),* 118-122.

Amberlyn, H. (2017, April 20). [redacted] Accessed: 05/10/2018. *(Note: this is 'Harry's' anonymised & redacted blog publication)*

Ambler, T. (2012). Autobiographical Vignettes: A Medium for Teachers' Professional Learning through Self-Study and Reflection. *Teacher Development, 16(2),* p.181-197. doi: 10.1080/13664530.2012.679864.

Arendt, H. (1929). *Love and Saint Augustine*. (Eds.) J. V. Scott & J. C. Stark. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Arendt, H. (1948/2003). *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Schocken Books: New York.

Arendt, H., (1958). *The Human Condition*. (2nd ed.) The University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

Arendt, H., (1970). *On Violence*. Harcourt: New York.

Arendt, H., (1978). *The Life of the Mind*. Harcourt: New York.

Arendt, H. ([1959] 2003). Reflections on Little Rock in (ed.) Jerome Kohn, *Responsibility and Judgement*. Schocken Books: New York.

Arendt, H. (2005). In J. Kohn (Ed.), *The promise of politics*. New York: Schoken Books.

Arnold, M. (1882). *Culture and Anarchy*. Project Gutenberg: Oxford. Retrieved from: https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/4212/pg4212-images.html Accessed: 28/11/2018.

Apperley, T. & Beavis, C. (2011). Literacy into action: digital games as action and text in the English and Literacy classroom. *Pedagogies: An International Journal, 6(2)*, 130-143.

Apple, M. W. (1986/1989) *Teachers & Texts: A political economy of class & gender relations in education*. Routledge: New York.

Apple, M. W. (2000). *Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*. Routledge: New York.

Apple, M.W. (2005). Are markets in education democratic? Neoliberal globalism, vouchers and the politics of choice. In (eds. M. W. Apple, J. Kenway, M. Singh) *Globalizing Education*. Peter Lang Publishing: New York.

Apple, M. W. (2018). Rightist gains and critical scholarship. *Educational Review, 70(1)*, 75-83. doi: 10.1080/00131911.2018.1388609

Aronowitz, S. & Giroux, H. A. (1991). *Postmodern education: Politics, Culture & Social Criticism.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Atkinson, P. (2011). Narrative Turn or Blind Alley. In (Eds. P. Atkinson & S. Delamont) *Sage Qualitative Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, (2017). *2016 Census QuickStats.* Retrieved from: http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC12739?opendocument Accessed: 14/10/2018.

[redacted] (2017, 10 March). Call for participants in research study: Secondary teachers with Stage 5 classes in 2017. [Twitter Post]. Retrieved from: [redacted] Accessed 23/06/2018.

Ayres, P. (2006). Cheerless Culture Killers. *Quadrant, 50(6)*, 20-24.

Ball, S. J. (1993a). What is policy? Texts, trajectories & toolboxes. *The Australian Journal of Education Studies, 13(2),* 10-17. doi: 10.1080/0159630930130203.

Ball, S. J. (1993b). Education policy, power relations and teachers' work. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 41(2),* 106-121. doi: 10.1080/00071005.1993.9973954.

Ball, S. J. (1998). Big Policies/ Small World: an introduction to international perspectives in education policy. *Comparative Education, 34(2),* 119-130. doi: 10.1080/03050069828225.

Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy, 18(2),* 215-228.

Ball, S. J. (2009). Privatising education, privatising education policy, privatising educational research: network governance and the 'competition state'. *Journal of Education Policy, 24(1),* 83-99. doi: 10.1080/02680930802419474.

Ball, S. J. (2013). Education, justice and democracy: The struggle over ignorance and opportunity. [Policy paper]. Centre for Labor and Social Studies: London. Retrieved from: http://classonline.org.uk/docs/2013_Policy_Paper_-_Education,_justice_and_democracy_(Stephen_Ball).pdf Accessed: 30/11/2018.

Ball, S. J. (2015a). Accounting for a sociological life: influences and experiences on the road from welfarism to neoliberalism. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 36(6*), 817-831. doi: 10.1080/01425692.2015.1050087.

Ball, S. J. (2015b). Education, governance and the tyranny of numbers. *Journal of Education Policy, 30(3),* 299-301.

Ball, S. J. (2016a). Following policy: networks, network ethnography and education policy mobilities. *Journal of Education Policy, 31(5*), 549-566. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2015.1122232.

Ball (2016b) Subjectivity as a site of struggle: refusing neoliberalism? *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 37(8),* 1129-1146, doi: 10.1080/01425692.2015.1044072.

Barclan, A. (1996). Attempts to reform Australian state school, 1979-1996. *Education Research and Perspectives, 23(1),* 1-45.

Baroutsis, A. & Lingard, B. (2017) Counting and comparing school performance: an analysis of media coverage of PISA in Australia, 2000–2014. *Journal of Education Policy, 32(4),* 432-449. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2016.1252856.

Barrett, B. (2015, June 30). Greece's Empty ATMs show the surprising power of cash - even in 2015. *Wired* [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.wired.com/2015/06/greece-atms/ Accessed: 27/05/2019.

Barton, L. & Armstrong, F. (2008). Introduction. In (eds. L. Barton & F. Armstrong), *Policy, Experience & Change: Cross Cultural Reflections of Inclusive Education*. Springer: Dordrecht.

Beauchamp, C. & Thomas, L. (2009). Understanding teacher identity: an overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 39(2),* 175-189. doi: 10.1080/03057640902902252.

Beavis, C. (2003). English Teaching and the Uses of History. *English in Australia, 136*, 9-13.

Beavis, C., & Charles, C. (2005). Challenging Notions of Gendered Game Play: Teenagers playing The Sims. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 26(3*), 355-367.

Beavis, C., Walsh, C., Bradford, C., O'Mara, J., Apperley, T., Gutierrez, A., (2015). 'Turning around' to the affordances of digital games: English curriculum and students' life worlds. *English in Australia, 50(2),* 30-40.

Bergeron, P-J.(2017). How to Engage in Pseudoscience With Real Data: A Criticism of John Hattie's Arguments in Visible Learning From the Perspective of a Statistician. McGill Journal of Education / Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill, [S.l.], 52(1). Translated by L. Rivard. Retrieved from: http://mje.mcgill.ca/article/view/9475/7229. Accessed: 24/06/2019.

Biesta, G. (2007). Why 'What Works' won't work: Evidence based practice and the democratic deficit in Educational Research. *Educational Theory, 57(1),* 1-22.

Biesta, G. J. J. (2013). *The Beautiful Risk of Education*. Paradigm: Boulder, Colorado.

Biesta, G.J.J. (2015). How does a competent teacher become a good teacher? On judgement, wisdom and virtuosity in teaching and teacher education. In R. Heilbronn & L. Foreman-Peck (Eds), *Philosophical perspectives on the future of teacher education* (pp.3-22). Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Biesta, G. (2016a). Reconciling ourselves to reality: Arendt, education and the challenge of being at home in the world. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 48(2),* 183-192. doi: 10.1080/00220620.2016.1144580.

Biesta, G. (2016b). Who's Afraid of Teaching? Heidegger and the Question of Education ('Bildung'/'Erziehung'). *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 48(8),* 832-845. doi: 10.1080/00131857.2016.1165017.

Biesta, G. (2016c). The Rediscovery of Teaching: On robot vacuum cleaners, non-ecological education and the limits of the hermeneutical world view. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 48(4),* 374-392. doi: 10.1080/00131857.2015.1041442.

Biesta, G. (2017). Education, Measurement and the Professions: Reclaiming a space for democratic professionality in education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 49(4),* 315-330. doi: 10.1080/00131857.2015.1048665.

Biesta, G., Priestley, M., & Robinson, S. (2017). Talking about education: exploring the significance of teachers' talk for teacher agency. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 49(1),* 38-54. doi: 10.1080/00220272.2016.1205143.

Bishop, R.S. (1990). Windows and Mirrors: Children's books and parallel cultures. California State University, San Bernadino Reading Conference. (eds. M. Atwell & A. Klein). Retrieved from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED337744.pdf#page=11 Accessed: 26/06/2019.

Blackmore, J. & Sachs, J. (2007). *Performing and reforming leaders: gender, educational restructuring, and organizational change.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Board of Studies NSW. (2012a). *NSW K-10 English Syllabus.* Sydney: Board of Studies. Retrieved from: https://syllabus.nesa.nsw.edu.au/english/english-k10/ Accessed: 27/09/2018.

Board of Studies NSW. (2012b). *Suggested Texts for the NSW English K-10 Syllabus*. Sydney: Board of Studies. Retrieved from: http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/assets/global/files/english-k10-suggested-texts.pdf. Accessed: 27/09/2018.

Board of Studies NSW. (2012c). *NSW English K-10: Glossary.* Sydney: Board of Studies. Retrieved from: https://syllabus.nesa.nsw.edu.au/english/english-k10/glossary/ Accessed: 27/09/2018.

Bourke, L. (2019, April 24). 'Private schools are far superior' Liberal candidate claims. *The Canberra Times* [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6087344/private-schools-are-far-superior-liberal-candidate-claims/?cs=14350 Accessed: 29/04/2019.

Bowden, B. (2011). The rise and decline of Australian unionism: a history of industrial labour from the 1820s to 2010. *Labour History, 100,* 51-82. Retrieved from: https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/bitstream/handle/10072/40801/69891_1.pdf Accessed: 25/04/2019.

Boyd, T. (2019, February 7). Consumer anxiety rises, discretionary spending falls as households fret about future. *Australian Financial Review* [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.afr.com/news/consumer-anxiety-reaches-highest-level-in-3-years-20190207-h1aybx Accessed: 29/04/2019.

Brabazon, T. (2006). Thinking pop literacies, or why John Howard should read more. *Australian Library Journal, 55(4)*, 285-300.

Braithwaite, R. J. (1992). Through a glass darkly - curriculum control in New South Wales schools. *Curriculum Journal, 3(1)*, 41-52. doi: 10.1080/0958517920030105.

Brennan, M. (2009). Steering teachers: Working to control the feminized profession of education. *Journal of Sociology, 45(4)*, 339-359.

Brown, W. (2005). *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. Princeton University Press: New Jersey.

Boomer, G. (1983). The wisdom of the Antipodes: What's working for literacy in Australia. *Journal of Reading, 26(7)*, 594-601.

Bonnor, C. & Caro, J. (2012). *What makes a good school?* UNSW Press: Kensington.

Bosso, D. (2017). *Teacher Morale, Motivation, and Professional Identity: Insight for Education Policy Makers from State Teachers of the Year*. The National Network of State Teachers of the Year | Teacher-Researcher Policy Paper Series. Retrieved from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED581425.pdf Accessed: 05/12/2018.

Botting, E. H. (2013). Wollstonecraft in Europe, 1792–1904: A Revisionist Reception History. *History of European Ideas, 39(4)*, 503-527. doi: 10.1080/01916599.2012.725668

Bousted, M. (2002). Personal Growth through English - policy and practice. *Changing English, 9(2)*, 185-196, doi: 10.1080/1358684022000006294.

Bowden, B. (2017). Three charts on: The changing face of Australian union membership. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from: https://theconversation.com/three-charts-on-the-changing-face-of-australian-union-members-80141 Accessed: 11/11/2018.

Boyd, T. (2019, February 7). Consumer anxiety rises, discretionary spending falls as households fret about future. *Australian Financial Review* [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.afr.com/news/consumer-anxiety-reaches-highest-level-in-3-years-20190207-h1aybx. Accessed: 04/08/2019.

Buchanan, R. (2015). Teacher identity and agency in an era of accountability. *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice, 21(6)*, 700-719. doi: 10.1080/13540602.2015.1044329.

Buckingham, D. (2007). Media education goes digital: an introduction. *Learning, Media and Technology, 32(2),* 111-119. doi: 10.1080/17439880701343006.

Buckingham D., & Jones, K. (2001). New Labour's cultural turn: some tensions in contemporary educational and cultural policy. *Journal of Education Policy, 16(1),* 1-14. doi: 10.1080/02680930010009796.

Buckingham, D. & Sefton-Green, J. (1994). *Cultural studies goes to school: reading and teaching popular media.* Taylor & Francis: London.

Byrne, G. (2017). Narrative inquiry and the problem of representation: 'giving voice', making meaning. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 40(1),* 36–52. doi: 10.1080/1743727X.2015.1034097

Caine, B. (1997). Victorian feminism and the ghost of Mary Wollstonecraft. *Women's Writing, 4(2),* 261-275. doi: 10.1080/09699089700200009

Caine, V., Estefan, A., & Clandinin, D. J. (2013). A Return to Methodological Commitment: Reflections in Narrative Inquiry. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 57(6),* 574-586.

Carniel, J. (2018). [Insert image here]: a reflection on the ethics of imagery in a critical pedagogy for the humanities. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 26(1),* 141-155. doi: 10.1080/14681366.2017.1364784.

Caro, J. (2013, September 6). No school is perfect. *ABC Education*. Retrieved from: http://education.abc.net.au/newsandarticles/blog/-/b/209194/no-school-is-perfect Accessed: 19/11/2018.

Caro, J. (2018, February 7). St Posh vs Bog Standard High: how the school system can fight poverty and privilege. *ABC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-02-07/school-catchments-best-public-schools-best-private/9381942. Accessed: 19/11/2018.

Carpenter, J. (2008). Metaphors in Qualitative Research: Shedding light or casting shadows? *Research in Nursing and Health, 31,* 274-282.

Carter, D. (2013). "Ars Poetica," Romanticism and English Education: Poetic Inheritances in the Senior Secondary English Curriculum in New South Wales, Australia. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 12(1),* 46-63.

Charmaz, K. (2007). Tensions in Qualitative Research. *Sociologisk Forskning, 44(3),* 76-85.

Charmaz, K. (2014). Grounded Theory in Global Perspective: Reviews by International Researchers. *Qualitative Inquiry, 20(9),* 1074–1084. doi: 10.1177/1077800414545235.

Cheung, K. & O'Sullivan, K-A. (2017). 'Big fans', 'Experts', and those 'In need of a challenge': Teacher attitudes to manga and anime kids in the secondary English classroom. *English in Australia, 52(2),* 28-39.

Cheung, K. (2015). Learning past the pictures in the panels: Teacher attitudes to manga and anime texts. [Masters thesis, Macquarie University].

Cheung, K. (2018). Locked out, Left out: Three generations schooled and classed. In (Eds.) D. M. Netololicky, J. Andrews, & C. Paterson. *Flip the System: Australia*. Routledge: London.

City of Sydney. (2018). The city at a glance - Greater Sydney. *City of Sydney* [webpage]. Retrieved from: https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/learn/research-and-statistics/the-city-at-a-glance/greater-sydney Accessed: 01/05/2019.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1987). Teachers' personal knowledge: What counts as 'personal' in studies of the personal. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 19(6),* 487-500.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (1990). Narrative, Experience and the Study of Curriculum. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 20(3),* 241-253.

Clandinin, D. J., Downey, C. A., & Huber, J. (2009). Attending to changing landscapes: Shaping the interwoven identities of teachers and teacher educators. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 37(2),* 141-154.

Clandinin, D. J., & Huber, J. (2002). Narrative Inquiry: Toward Understanding Life's Artistry. *Curriculum Inquiry, 32(2),* 161-169.

Clandinin, D. J., & Murphy, M. S. (2009). Relational Ontological Commitments in Narrative Research. *Educational Researcher, 38(8),* 598-602.

Clandinin, D. J., Murphy, S. M., Huber, J., & Murray Orr, A. (2009). Negotiating Narrative Inquiries: Living in a Tension-Filled Midst. *The Journal of Education Research, 103(2),* 81-90.

Clandinin, D. J., Pushor, D., & Murray Orr, A. (2007). Navigating Sites for Narrative Inquiry. *Journal of Teacher Education, 58(1),* 21-35.
Collet (2012) The Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model: Coaching for Teacher Change, Literacy Research and Instruction, 51:1, 27-47, doi: 10.1080/19388071.2010.549548.

Clarke, J. S. (2013). "Your Credibility Could Be Shot": Preservice Teachers' Thinking about Nonfiction Graphic Novels, Curriculum Decision Making, and Professional Acceptance, *The Social Studies, 104(1),* 38-45, doi: 10.1080/00377996.2012.665957.

Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. L. (1993). *Inside/Outside Teacher Research and Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College.

Cochran-Smith, M., Stern, R., Sánchez, J.G., Miller, A., Keefe, E.S., Fernández, M.B., Chang, W., Carney, M.C., Burton, S., & Baker, M. (2016). *Holding Teacher Preparation Accountable: A Review of Claims and Evidence*. Boulder, CO: National Education Policy Center. Retrieved 03/12/2018 from http://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/teacher-prep. Accessed 18/10/18

Cochran-Smith, M., Baker, M., Burton, S., Carney, M. C., Chang, W. C., Fernández, M. B., Keefe, E. S., Miller, A., Sánchez, J. G., & Stern, R. (2017). Teacher quality and teacher education policy: The U.S. case and its implications. In M. Akiba & G. LeTendre (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of teacher quality and policy*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Cochran-Smith, M., Carney, M. C., Keefe, E.S., Burton, S., Chang, W. C., Fernández, M. B., Keefe, E. S., Miller, A., Sánchez, J. G., & Baker, M. (2018). *Reclaiming Accountability in Teacher Education.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Coles, J. (2013) 'Every child's birthright'? Democratic entitlement and the role of canonical literature in the English National Curriculum. *Curriculum Journal, 24(1),* 50-66. doi: 10.1080/09585176.2012.744697.

Collet, V. S. (2012). The Gradual Increase of Responsibility Model: Coaching for Teacher Change. *Literacy Research and Instruction, 51(1),* 27-47. doi: 10.1080/19388071.2010.549548

Cooper, K., & White, R. E. (2012). *Qualitative research in the post-modern era: contexts of qualitative research*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Conle, C. (2000). Narrative Inquiry: Research tool and medium for professional development. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 23(1)*. 49-63.

Connell, R. (2009). Good teachers on dangerous ground: towards a new view of teacher quality and professionalism. *Critical Studies in Education, 50:3,* 213-229, doi: 10.1080/17508480902998421

Connell, R.W., Ashenden, D.J., Kessler, S. and Dowsett, G.W., (1982). *Making the Difference: Schools, Families and Social Division*. Allen & Unwin: Crows Nest, Sydney.

Connell, R. W. (1989). Curriculum politics, hegemony, and strategies of social change. In (eds. H. Giroux, R. Simon & contributors). *Popular Culture: Schooling & Everyday Life*. Bergin & Garvey Publishers: Massachusetts.

Connell, R. (1989). Cool Guys, Swots and Wimps: The interplay of masculinity and education. *Oxford Review of Education, 15(3),* 291-203.

Connell, R. (2009). Good teachers on dangerous ground: towards a new view of teacher quality and professionalism. *Critical Studies in Education, 50:3,* 213-229, doi: 10.1080/17508480902998421.

Connell, R. (2011). *Confronting equality: Gender, knowledge and global change.* Allen & Unwin: Crows Nest, Sydney.

Connell, R. (2013b). *The Men and the Boys.* Oxford: Polity Press.

Connell, R. (2013). The neoliberal cascade and education: an essay on the market agenda and its consequences. *Critical Studies in Education, 54(2),* 99-112. DOI: 10.1080/17508487.2013.776990.

Considine, M., Mason, H. & Nijjer, R. (2013). Daria, Buffy, Dawson and Britney: Discourses of family, school and teenagers for media texts and society's values, VCE media unit 4 [online]. *Screen Education, 71,* 64-73.

Cope, B., Kalantzis, M., & Smith, A. (2018). Pedagogies and Literacies, Disentangling the Historical Threads: An Interview with Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis. *Theory Into Practice, 57(1),* 5-11. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2017.1390332.

Cormack, P. & Comber, B. (2013). High-stakes literacy tests and local effects in a rural school *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 36(2), 78-90.

Costa, A., Neri de Sousa F., Moreira, A., Neri de Souza, D. (2017). Research through Design: Qualitative Analysis to Evaluate the Usability. In (Eds.) Costa, A., Reis, L.P., Neri de Sousa, F., Moreira, A., Lamas, D., *Computer Supported Qualitative Research.* Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Cranston, N., Kimber, M., Mulford, B., Reid, A., & Keating, J. (2010). Politics and school education in Australia: a case of shifting purposes. *Journal of Educational Administration, 48(2),* 182-195. doi: 10.1108/09578231011027842.

Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches* (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Crystal, D. (2005). Bog Standard. *BBC Learning English* [online]. Retrieved from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1728_uptodate/page25.shtml Accessed: 04/08/2019.

Dale, L. (1992). Whose English? - Who's English: Teaching Literature in Australia. *Meanjin, 51(2).* 393-409.

Dale, R. (2005). Globalisation, knowledge economy and comparative education. *Comparative Education, 41(2),* 117-149. doi: 10.1080/03050060500150906.

Davis, R. A. (2011). Brilliance of a Fire: Innocence, Experience and the Theory of Childhood. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 45(2),* 379-397. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9752.2011.00798.x.

Dawson, C., Robinson, E., Hanson, K., VanRiper, J., & Ponzio, C. (2013). Creating a Breathing Space: An Online Teachers' Writing Group. The English Journal, 102(3), 93-99. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org.simsrad.net.ocs.mq.edu.au/stable/23365380 Accessed: 10/11/2018

DePalma, R. & Atkinson, E. (2010). The nature of institutional heteronormativity in primary schools and practice-based responses. *Teaching and Teacher Education 26,*1669-1676. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2010.06.018.

DePalma, R., & Jennett, M. (2010). Homophobia, transphobia and culture: deconstructing heteronormativity in English primary schools. *Intercultural Education, 21(1),* 15-26. doi: 10.1080/14675980903491858.

Denzin, N. K. (1996). The facts and fictions of qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry, 2(2),* 230-241.

Dewey, J. (1916/2011). *Democracy and Education*. Simon & Brown: Milton Keynes, UK.

Dewey, J. (1925/2016). *Experience and Nature*. Dover Publications: NY.

Dimock, M. (2019, Jan 17). Defining generations: Where Millenial Ends and Generation Z begins. *Pew Research Centre* [online webpage]. Retrieved from: https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/ Accessed 03/08/2019.

Dixon, J. (1967). *Growth through English: A Record Based on the Dartmouth Seminar 1966*. Reading, England: NATE.

Dixon, J. (2003). Two Steps Forward; One - Or Two - Steps Back? Reflections on Dartmouth 1966. *English in Australia, 36, Autumn,* 85-86.

Dixon, J. (2015). Developing English. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique, 14(3),* 427-434. doi: 10.1108/ETPC-04-2015-0031.

Doecke, B., Locke, T., & Petrosky, A., (2004). Explaining ourselves (to ourselves): English teachers professional identity and change. *English in Australia, 139,* 103-112.

Doecke, B., Kostogriz, A., & Illesca, B., (2010). Seeing “things” differently: Recognition, ethics, praxis. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 9(2),* 81-98.

Doecke, B. (2014). Time Travel (Knowing our history as English Teachers). *English in Australia, 49(3),* 96-105.

Doecke, B. (2016). History * autobiography * growth (fifty years since Dartmouth). *English in Australia, 51(3),* 33-39.

Donnelly, Kevin. (2010). The ideology of the national English curriculum. *Quadrant, 54(5),* 26-31.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1924/1976). *Education of Black people: ten critiques, 1906-1960*. Alexander Street Press: Amherst, MA.

Duran, J. (2009). Arendt and the social: 'Reflections on Little Rock'. *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy, 12(4),* 605-611. doi: 10.1080/13698230903471392.

Eacott. S. (2017). School leadership and the cult of the guru: the neo-Taylorism of Hattie. *School Leadership & Management, 37(4),* 413-426. doi: 10.1080/13632434.2017.1327428.

Edge, K. R. (2012). 'Playing it safe': Quality teaching in expert teacher classrooms. [PhD thesis: University of Newcastle] Retrieved from: https://ogma.newcastle.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/uon:12134 Accessed: 10/11/2018.

Elbaz-Luwisch, F. (2007). Studying teachers' lives and experiences: Narrative Inquiry into K-12 Teaching. In (Ed.) D. J. Clandinin, *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*. Sage Publications: California.

Eliot, T. S. (1922). The Wasteland. *Poetry Foundation*. Retrieved from: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47311/the-waste-land Accessed: 07/03/2019.

Elliott, V. (2014). The treasure house of a nation? Literary heritage, curriculum and devolution in Scotland and England in the twenty-first century. *Curriculum Journal, 25(2),* 1-19.

Elliott, V. (2018). Thinking about the Coding Process in Qualitative Data Analysis. *The Qualitative Report, 23(11),* 2850-2861.
Retrieved from: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol23/iss11/14 Accessed: 11/12/2018.

Eltham, B. (2017, June 21). 'Robo-debt and Denial: The protocols of Centrelink'. *New Matilda*. Retrieved from: https://newmatilda.com/2017/06/21/robo-debt-and-denial-the-protocols-of-centrelink/ Accessed: 30/06/2019.

Evans, J. (2013). From comics, graphic novels and picture books to fusion texts: a new kid on the block. *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education, 41(2),* 233-248.

Evans, M., Stoker, G., & Nasir, J. (2013). *How do Australians Imagine Their Democracy: Australian Survey of Political Engagement Findings.* ANSZOG Institute for Governance: University of Canberra.
Retrieved from:
http://www.governanceinstitute.edu.au/magma/media/upload/ckeditor/files/DEMOCRACY%20REPORT-%20final(1).pdf Accessed: 27/05/2019.

Ferfolja, T. & Vickers, M. (2010) Supporting refugee students in school education in Greater Western Sydney. *Critical Studies in Education, 51(2),* 149-162. doi: 10.1080/17508481003731034.

Ferguson, S. (1999). The Radical Ideas of Mary Wollstonecraft. *Canadian journal of political science Revue canadienne de science politique, 32(3),* p.427-450.

Fisher-Ari, T., & Flint, A. (2018). Writer's workshop: a (re)constructive pedagogy for English learners and their teachers, *Pedagogies: An International Journal,* doi: 10.1080/1554480X.2018.1440560.

Fiske, J. (1989). *Understanding Popular Culture*. Routledge: London.

Fitzgerald, T. & Savage, J. (2013). Scripting, ritualising, and performing leadership: interrogating recent policy developments in Australia. *Journal of Educational Administration and History, 45(2),* 126-143. doi: 10.1080/00220620.2013.769432.

Foucault, M. (1990/1978). *The History of Sexuality*. Pantheon Books: New York.

Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Pantheon Books: New York.

Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews*. Vintage: New York.

Frazer, E. (2011). Mary Wollstonecraft and Catharine Macaulay on education. *Oxford Review of Education, 37(5),* 603-617. doi: 10.1080/03054985.2011.625165.

Fraser, A. S. (1999). Becoming Human: The Origins and Development of Women's Human Rights. *Human Rights Quarterly, 21(4),* 853-906.

Fraser, N. (2019). *The Old is Dying and the New Cannot be Born*. Verso: London.

Frawley, Emily. (2016). Growth through Teaching. *English in Australia, 51(3),* 58-62.

Friedman, M. (1955). The role of government in education. In (ed.) Robert A. Solo, *Economics and the Public Interest*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. Retrieved from: https://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/330T/350kPEEFriedmanRoleOfGovttable.pdf Accessed: 30/12/2018.

Freire, P. & Giroux, H. A. (1989). Pedagogy, Popular Culture, And Public Life: An Introduction. In (eds. H. Giroux, R. Simon & contributors). *Popular Culture: Schooling & Everyday Life*. Bergin & Garvey Publishers: Massachusetts.

Frey, N. & Fisher, D. (2004). Using Graphic Novels, Anime, and the Internet in an Urban High School, *The English Journal, 93(3),* 19-25.

Fulford, T. (1996). *Landscape, liberty and authority: Poetry, criticism and politics from Thomson to Wordsworth.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gallo, D. (2001). How Classics Create an Aliterate Society. *The English Journal, 90(3),* 33-39. doi:10.2307/821305.

Gannon, S. & Sawyer, W. (2007). "Whole language" and moral panic in Australia. *International Journal of Progressive Education, 3(2),* 30-51.

Gannon, S. (2013). My school redux: re-storying schooling with the My School website. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 34(1),* 17-30. doi: 10.1080/01596306.2012.698861.

Garcia, A., Luke, A., & Seglem, R. (2018). Looking at the "Next" 20 Years of Multiliteracies: A Discussion with Allan Luke. *Theory Into Practice, 57(1),* 72-78. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2017.1390330.

Gee, J. P. (1989). Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics: Introduction. *Journal of Education, 171(1),* 5–17. doi: 10.1177/002205748917100101.

Geisler, C. (2018). Coding for Language Complexity: The Interplay Among Methodological Commitments, Tools, and Workflow in Writing Research. *Written Communication, 35(2),* 215-249. doi: 10.1177/0741088317748590.

Gelinas, L., Pierce, R., Winkler, S., Cohen, I. G., Fernandez Lynch, H., & Bierer, B. (2017). Using social media as a research recruitment tool: ethical issues and recommendations. *The American Journal of Bioethics, 17(3),* 3-14. doi: 10.1080/15265161.2016.1276644.

Gerlach, J. (2000). Teaching English in the United States. In R. Peel, A. Patterson & J. Gerlach (eds.) *Questions of English: Ethics, aesthetics, rhetoric, and the formation of the subject in England, Australia and the United States*, 254-282. London: Routledge.

Gewirtz, S., Ball, S. J., Bowe, R. (1993). Values and ethics in the education marketplace: the case of Northwark Park. *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 3(2),* 233-254. doi: 10.1080/0962021930030205.

Gibbs, D., Mullins, T., & O'Sullivan, K-A. (2005). Reinventing English: Texts Lists and Curriculum Change in Ireland and Australia. In (ed. J. Zajda, *International Handbook on Globalisation, Education and Policy Research*. Dordrecht: Springer.

Giblin, K., (@kennyped) (2018, 3rd September; 3:08pm). 'Yellow Dots = HALTS' [tweet]. Retrieved from: https://twitter.com/kennyped/status/1036737795203653632 Accessed: 22/09/2018.

Giroux, H. A. (2003). Public Pedagogy and the Politics of Resistance: Notes on a critical theory of educational struggle. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 35(1),* 5-16. doi: 10.1111/1469-5812.00002.

Giroux, H. A. (2004). Cultural studies, public pedagogy, and the responsibility of intellectuals. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies, 1(1),* 59-79. doi: 10.1080/1479142042000180926.

Giroux, H. A. (2010). Dumbing Down Teachers: Rethinking the Crisis of Public Education and the Demise of the Social State. *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 32(4-5),* 339-381. doi: 10.1080/10714413.2010.510346.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine.

Goodwyn, A. (2004). The Professional Identity of English Teachers. *English in Australia, 139,* 122-130.

Goodwyn, A. (2012). The status of literature: English teaching and the condition of literature teaching in schools. *English in Education, 46(3),* 212-227.

Goodwin, M. (2015). Schools Policy, Governance and Politics under New Labour. *Political Studies Review, 13,* 534-545. doi: 10.1111/1478-9302.12054.

Goodwyn, A. (2016). Still growing after all these years: The resilience of the 'Personal Growth Model of English' in England and also internationally. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 15(1),* 7-21. doi: 10.1108/ETPC-12-2015-0111.

Gore, J. M. (2001). Beyond our Differences: A Reassembling of What Matters in Teacher Education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 52(2),* 124-135.

Gore, J., Griffiths, T. & Ladwig, J. G. (2004). Towards better teaching: Productive pedagogy as a framework for teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20(4),* 375-387.

Gorur, R. (2016). The performative politics of NAPLAN and MySchool. In (Eds.) B. Lingard, G. Thompson, & S. Sellar. *National Testing in Schools: An Australian Assessment*. Routledge: New York.

Grace, D. J., & Tobin, J. (1998). Butt Jokes & Mean-Teacher Parodies: Video Production in the Elementary Classroom. In D. Buckingham (ed), *Teaching Popular Culture, Beyond Radical Pedagogy*. London: UCL Press.

Granger, D. (2003). Expression, Imagination, and Organic Unity: John Dewey's Aesthetics and Romanticism. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education, 37(2),* 46-60.

Graham, L. J., & Harwood, V. (2011). Developing capabilities for social inclusion: engaging diversity through inclusive school communities. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 15(1),* 135-152.

Graham, L. J., Proctor, H. & Dixon, R. (2016). How schools avoid enrolling children with disabilities. *The Conversation*, 28 January, 1-3. Retrieved from: https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3027&context=sspapers. Accessed: 06/12/2018.

Green, B., Hodgens, L., & Luke, A. (1994). *Debating Literacy in Australia: A Documentary History, 1945-1994.* Australian Literacy Foundation. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277997733_Debating_literacy_in_Australia_a_documentary_history_1945_-_1994 Accessed: 28/11/2018.

Green, B., Hodgens, L., & Luke, A. (1997). Debating literacy in Australia: History lessons and popular f(r)ictions. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 20(1)*, 6-24.

Green B., & Cormack, P. (2008). Curriculum history, 'English', and the New Education; or, installing the empire of English? *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 16(3)*. 253-267.

Green, B., Cormack, P., & Patterson, A. (2013). Re-reading the reading lesson: episodes in the history of reading pedagogy. *Oxford Review of Education, 39(3),* 329-344.

Groundwater-Smith, S. & Mockler, N. (2009). *Teacher Professional Learning in an Age of Compliance: Mind the Gap.* Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Guest, G., Namey, E., & Mitchell, M. (2013). Sampling in Qualitative Research In Guest, G., Namey, E., & Mitchell, M. *Collecting qualitative data* (pp. 41-74). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi: 10.4135/9781506374680.

Hardcastle, J. & Yandell, J. (2018). 'Even the dead will not be safe': the long war over school English. *Language and Intercultural Communication, 18(5),* 562-575. doi: 10.1080/14708477.2018.1501849.

Hargreaves, A. & Tucker, E. (1991). Teaching and Guilt: Exploring the Feelings of Teaching. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 7(5/6),* 491-505.

Hargreaves, A. (1998*a*). The Emotional Practice of Teaching. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 14(8),* 835-854.

Hargreaves, A. (1998*b*). The emotional politics of teaching and teacher development: with implications for educational leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 1(4),* 315-336. doi: 10.1080/1360312980010401.

Hargreaves, A. (2000). Mixed emotions: teachers' perceptions of their interactions with students. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 16*. 811-826.

Hart, B., & Risley, T. R. (1992). American parenting of language-learning children: Persisting differences in family-child interactions observed in natural home environments. *Developmental Psychology, 28(6),* 1096-110, doi: 10.1037/0012-1649.28.6.1096.

Hattie, J. (2008). *Visible Learning*. Routledge: New York.

Henebery, B. (2018, 19 March). The movement shaking up educational leadership. *The Educator Australia*. Retrieved from: https://www.theeducatoronline.com/au/news/the-movement-shaking-up-educational-leadership/247852 Accessed: 22/09/2018.

Hill, M. (1979). *Hannah Arendt: The Recovery of the Public World*. St Martin's Press, New York.

Hinz, B.A. (2016). Federalism and Schooling Reforms in Australia. [PhD dissertation], The University of Melbourne. Retrieved from: https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/92270 Accessed: 07/12/18.

Hochschild, A. R. (2011). The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling. In (ed. J. O'Brien), *The Production of Reality: Essays and Readings on Social Interaction*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Hollingsworth, S., & Dybdahl, M. (2007). Talking to learn: The critical role of conversation in narrative inquiry. In (Ed.) D. J. Clandinin, *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*. Sage Publications: California.

Hooks, B. (2002). *Communion: The Female Search for Love*. William Morrow: New York.

Howie, M. (2008). Problematising Eclecticism and Rewriting English. *Changing English, 15(3),* 339-350. doi: 10.1080/13586840802364251.

Huberman, A. M. & Miles, M. B. (1983). Drawing valid meaning from qualitative data: Some techniques of data reduction and display. *Quality and Quantity, 17,* 281-339.

Hughes, J., King, A., Perkins, P., & Fuke, V. (2011). Adolescents and "autographics": reading and writing coming-of-age graphic novels: reading and writing graphic novels can be motivating for struggling students and reluctant readers, and can also support development of the multimodal literacy skills needed for school and workplace success in the 21st century. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 54(8),* 601-612.

Hurley, P. (2017). Why exploitation and corruption continue to dog Australia's VET sector. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from: https://theconversation.com/why-exploitation-and-corruption-continue-to-dog-australias-vet-sector-80321 Accessed: 25/04/2019.

Ingvarson, L. (2010). Recognising accomplished teachers in Australia. Where have we been? Where are we headed? *Australian Journal of Education, 54(1),* 46-71. doi: 10.1177/000494411005400105.

Irwin, C. (2015). Reading Hannah Arendt as a biblical thinker. *Sophia, 54*, 545-561. doi: 10.1007/s11841-015-0503-z.

Isenbarger, L. & Michalinos, Z. (2006). The emotional labour of caring in teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 22,* 120-134. doi: 10.1016/j.tate.2005.07.002.

Jeffries, M. (2019). Examining media discourses of diversity and 'indoctrination:' Public perceptions of the intended screening of Gayby Baby in Schools. In: A. Baroutsis, S.Riddle, & P. Thomson, *Education research and the media: Challenges and Possibilities* (pp. 80-96). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Jogie, M. (2015*a*). Too pale and stale: prescribed texts used for teaching culturally diverse students in Australia and England. *Oxford Review of Education*. doi: 10.1080/03054985.2015.1009826.

Jogie, M. (2015*b*). Desperate shadows of '*Belonging'*: Revealing pedagogical issues with teaching prescribed English texts in the NSW Higher School Certificate (HSC). *Australian Educational Researcher, 42,* 335-352. doi: 10.1007/s13384-014-0166-8.

Johnson, A. B. (2011) Multiple Selves and Multiple Sites of Influence: Perceptions of Young Adult Literature in the Classroom. *Theory Into Practice, 50(3),* 215-222.

Josselson, R. (2007). The ethical attitude in narrative research: principles and practicalities. In (Ed.) D. J. Clandinin, *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*. Sage Publications: California.

Kamenetz, A. (2018). Let's stop talking about the '30 million word gap'. *NPRed [National Public Radio]*. Retrieved from: https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2018/06/01/615188051/lets-stop-talking-about-the-30-million-word-gap Accessed: 21/06/2019.

Kenway, J., Bigum, C., Fitzclarence, L., Collier, J., & Tregenza, K. (1994). New education in new times. *Journal of Education Policy, 9(4),* 317-333. doi: 10.1080/0268093940090403.

Kenway, J. (2014). The Knowledge Economy as Global Assemblage. A.D. Reid et al. (eds.), *A Companion to Research in Education.* Springer: Dordrecht.

Kenway, J., Fahey, J., Epstein, D., Koh, A., McCarthy, C., & Rizvi, F. (2017). *Class choreographies : Elite schools and globalization.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

King, S. (1989). *The Gunslinger*. Hatchette Australia: Sydney.

Klenowski, V. & Wyatt-Smith, C. (2012). The impact of high stakes testing: the Australian story. Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 19(1), 65-79. doi: 10.1080/0969594X.2011.592972.

Knaus, C. (2018, December 18). Expert attacks Centrelink robo-debt and 'moral bankruptcy' that allows it. *The Guardian* [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/dec/18/expert-attacks-centrelink-robo-debt-and-moral-bankruptcy-that-allows-it Accessed: 30/06/2019.

Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. Routledge: London.

Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. California: Sage Publications.

Kyle, N (1986). *Her natural destiny: the education of women in New South Wales.* Kensington: New South Wales University Press.

Ladwig, J.G. (2005). Monitoring the quality of pedagogy. *Leading and Managing, 11(2),* 70-83.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Latham, M. (2017, October 31). Mark Latham: Safe schools the toxic weed we can't stamp out of the schoolyard. *The Daily Telegraph* [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/mark-latham-safe-schools-the-toxic-weed-we-cant-stamp-out-of-the-schoolyard/news-story/e832d4cf5b7b66be8686e51ac7039cdd Accessed: 29/04/2019.

Latimer, J. & Skeggs, B. (2011). The politics of imagination: keeping open and critical. *The Sociological Review, 59(3),* 393-410.

Leavis, F. R. (1930). *Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture.* Minority Press: Cambridge.

Lebeau, V. (2004). The unwelcome child: Elizabeth Eckford and Hannah Arendt. *Journal of Visual Culture, 3(1),* 1-12.

Le Guin, U. (2014). Ursula K. Le Guin's speech at National Book Awards: Books aren't just commodities. *The Guardian* [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/nov/20/ursula-k-le-guin-national-book-awards-speech. Accessed: 04/08/2019

Lewis, S., Sellar, S., & Lingard, B. (2016). PISA for Schools: Topological rationality and new spaces of the OECD's Global Educational Governance. *Comparative Education Review, 60(1),* 27-57.

Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative Research in Education: A User's Guide* (3rd ed.) California: Sage.

Lingard, B. (2010). Policy borrowing, policy learning: testing times in Australian schooling, *Critical Studies in Education, 51(2),* 129-147, doi: 10.1080/17508481003731026.

Lingard, B. (2011). Changing Teachers' Work in Australia. In (Eds.) N. Mockler & J. Sachs. *Professional Learning and Development in Schools and Higher Education, Rethinking Educational Practice Through Reflexive Inquiry: Essays in Honour of Susan Groundwater-Smith*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Lingard, B., Martino, W., Rezai-Rashti, G. (2013). Testing regimes, accountabilities and education policy: commensurate global and national developments. *Journal of Education Policy, 28(5),* 539-556. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2013.820042

Lingard, B. & McGregor, G. (2014). Two contrasting Australian Curriculum responses to globalisation: what students should learn or become. *The Curriculum Journal, 25(1),* 90-110. doi: 10.1080/09585176.2013.872048.

Lorde, A. (1984/2007). *Sister Outsider*. New York: Ten Speed Press.

Luke, A. (1997). New narratives of human capital: recent redirections in Australian educational policy. *Australian Educational Researcher, 24(2),* 1-21.

Luke, A. & Woods, A. (2009). Critical Literacies in Schools: A Primer. *Voices from the Middle, 17(2)*. 9-18.

Luke, A. (2017). No Grand Narrative in Sight: On Double Consciousness and Critical Literacy. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method and Practice, 66,* 157-182. doi: 10.1177/2381336917718805.

Luke, C. (1989). Pedagogy and Authority: Lessons from Feminist and Cultural Studies, Postmodernism and Feminist Pedagogy. In D. Buckingham (Ed.) *Teaching Popular Culture, Beyond Radical Pedagogy*. London: UCL Press.

Macken-Horarik, M. (2011). Building a Knowledge Structure for English: Reflections on the challenges of coherence, cumulative learning, portability and face validity. *Australian Journal of Education, 55(3),* 197-213.

Macken-Horarik, M. (2014). Making Productive Use of Four Models of School English: A Case Study Revisited. *English in Australia, 49(3),* 7-19

Macqueen, S., Knoch, U., Wigglesworth, G., Nordlinger, R., Singer, R., Mcnamara, T., & Brickle, R. (2019). The impact of national standardized literacy and numeracy testing on children and teaching staff in remote Australian Indigenous communities. *Language Testing, 36(2),* 265-287.

Maddox, M. (2014). *Taking God to School: the end of Australia's egalitarian education*. Allen & Unwin: Crows Nest, Sydney.

Manuel, J. & Carter, D. (2017). Continuities of influence: A critical analysis of subject English in the New South Wales' secondary curriculum of 1911. *History of Education Review, 46(1),* 72-94.

Marginson, S. (1993). *Education and Public Policy in Australia*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Marshall, B. (2000). *English Teachers: The unofficial guide - researching the philosophies of English teachers.* Routledge: London.

Marshall, B. (2003). The write kind of knowledge in English. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique, 2(3),* 83-94.

Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1939) *The German Ideology, Parts I & III* (New York, International Publishers). Original published 1846.

May, J. and Proctor, H. (2013). Being Special: Memories of the Australian Public High School: 1920s-1950s. *History of Education Review, 42(1),* 55-68, doi: 10.1080/00220620.2017.1343289.

Mayes, E. (2010). Cultural capital and popular culture in Year 11 Standard English: fostering student choice and synthesis. [online]. *English in Australia; 45(2),* 47-54.

McGraw, B. (1997). *Shaping their futures: Recommendations for reform of the Higher School Certificate*. Department of Education & Training Coordination: Sydney. Retrieved from: https://digitised-collections.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/191172 Accessed: 30/04/2019.

McGraw, K. (2010). Innovation and change in the 1999 NSW HSC English syllabus: challenges and problems. [PhD Thesis: University of Sydney]. Retrieved from: https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/16459/1/KelliMcGraw_f1_2017022818-13-21.pdf Accessed: 30/10/2018.

McGraw, K., Van Leent, L., & Doecke, B. (2018). Editorial. *English in Australia, 53(2),* 2-3.

McKew, M. (2014). *Class Act*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

McKnight, L. (2016). Meet the Phallic Teacher: Designing Curriculum and Identity in a Neoliberal Imaginary. *Australian Educational Researcher, 43(4),* 473-486.

McKnight, L. & Whitburn, B. (2018). Seven reasons to question the hegemony of Visible Learning. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* doi: 10.1080/01596306.2018.1480474.

McLean Davies, L. (2012). Auditing subject English: A review of text selection practices inspired by the National Year of Reading. *English in Australia, 47(2),* 11-17.

Medway, P., Hardcastle, J., Brewis, G., & Crook, D. (2014). *English Teachers in a Postwar Democracy: Emerging Choice in London Schools, 1945-1965.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mellor, B. & Patterson, A. (1994). Producing readings: Freedom versus normativity? [online]. *English in Australia, 109,* 42-56.

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded source book* (2nd ed.). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Mirra, N., Morrell, E., & Filipiak, D. (2018) From Digital Consumption to Digital Invention: Toward a New Critical Theory and Practice of Multiliteracies. *Theory Into Practice, 57(1),* 12-19. doi: 10.1080/00405841.2017.1390336.

Mockler, N. (2016). NAPLAN and the problem frame: Exploring representations of NAPLAN in the print media, 2010 and 2013. In (Eds.) B. Lingard, G. Thompson, & S. Sellar. *National Testing in Schools: An Australian Assessment*. Routledge: New York.

Mockler, N. (2019). Televising the revolution. #RevolutionSchool and representations of education across traditional and social media. In (Eds. A. Baroutsis, S. Riddle, & P. Thomson) *Education Research and the Media: Challenges and Possibilities.* London: Routledge.

Moore, A. & Clarke, M. (2016) 'Cruel optimism': teacher attachment to professionalism in an era of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy, 31(5),* 666-677. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2016.1160293.

Morrison, S. (2018, August 24). Transcript of new Prime Minister's Scott Morrison's first press conference. *Australian FInancial Review*. [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.afr.com/news/transcript-of-new-prime-minister-scott-morrisons-first-press-conference-20180824-h14h1a Accessed: 28/04/2019.

Mulheron, M. (2014). If we forget history: The 30 year war against public education. NSW Teachers Federation: Marrickville. Retrieved from: https://www.nswtf.org.au/files/if-we-forget-history-update.pdf Accessed: 11/11/2018.

Näsström, S. & Kalm, S. (2015) A democratic critique of precarity. *Global Discourse, 5(4),* 556-573. doi: 10.1080/23269995.2014.992119

National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). (2015). National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Retrieved: https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research Accessed: 30/08/2018.

New South Wales, Dept. of Education, & Australia's 150th Anniversary Celebrations Council. (1938). *Practical education in public schools: Commemorative exhibition, Sydney Town Hall, 23rd, 24th & 25th March, 1938*. Retrieved from: https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo.31924012988691;view=1up;seq=8 Accessed: 04/05/2019.

New South Wales, Department of Education. (2007). Controversial Issues in Schools - Procedures. Retrieved from: https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/associated-documents/controversial-procedures.pdf Accessed: 31/07/2019.

New South Wales Government, Department of the Premier. (2018, 2nd March). 'Award winning Eddie Woo appointed NSW super teacher' [press release]. Retrieved from: https://www.nsw.gov.au/your-government/the-premier/media-releases-from-the-premier/award-winning-eddie-woo-appointed-nsw-super-teacher/ Accessed: 22/09/2018.

NSW Government, (2017, April 3). HSC English Texts for 2019, *NSW Government: News: Education News*. Retrieved from: https://www.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/news/hsc-english-texts-2019/ Accessed: 10/10/2018.

New South Wales Teachers Federation. (2016, May 16). Successful launch of Gayby Baby schools resource kit. [Media release]. Retrieved from: https://www.nswtf.org.au/news/2016/05/16/successful-launch-gayby-baby-schools-resource-kit.html Accessed: 07/04/2019.

New South Wales Teachers Federation. (2018). Using films as learning resources. [LGBTIQ newsletter]. Retrieved from: https://www.nswtf.org.au/pages/using-films-learning-resource.html Accessed: 07/04/2019.

Noddings, N. (1988/2013). An ethic of caring and its implications for instructional arrangements. In (eds. B.J. Thayer-Bacon, L. Stone, K.M. Sprecher), *Education Feminism: Classic and Contemporary Readings.* SUNY Press: Albany.

Obiakor, F. E., Harris, M., Mutua, K., Rotatori, A.,& Algozzine, B. (2012). Making Inclusion Work in General Education Classrooms. *Education and Treatment of Children, 35(3)*, 477-490.

O'Brien, K. (2009). *Women and enlightenment in eighteenth-century Britain.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ollerenshaw, J. & Creswell, J. W. (2002). Narrative Research: A comparison of two restorying data analysis approaches. *Qualitative Inquiry, 8(3)*, 329 - 347.

O'Neill, M. (1991). Competing Claims: English Teaching Politics. *English in Australia, 97*. 61-71.

O'Sullivan, K-A. (2005). Silent Voices: A Study of English Teachers' Responses to Curriculum Change. [Doctoral dissertation, Macquarie University].

O'Sullivan, K-A. (2007). Seeking the self: professional identity and the teaching of English. *Illuminations: Journal of the Arts, English and Literacy Education Research Network, 1(1)*, 44-54.

O'Sullivan, K-A., Carroll, K., & Cavanagh, M. (2008). Changing teachers: Syllabuses, subjects, and selves. *Issues in Educational Research, 18(2)*, 167-181.

O'Sullivan, K-A., (2016). "Contested territories": Subject English, teacher education and professional standards in Australia. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique, 15(1),* 55-73.

Palazzi, F. (2017). 'Reflections on Little Rock' and Reflective Judgement. *Philosophical Papers, 46(3),* 389-441.

Parr, G., & Bellis, N. (2006). To be strictly educated? Learning and teaching in an age of neo-liberal agendas. *English in Australia, 41(1),* 7-17.

Patterson, A. (1990). Changing the questions: The construction of alternative meanings in the English classroom [online]. *English in Australia, 94,* 59-72.

Patterson, A. (1992). Individualism in English: From Personal Growth to Discursive Construction. *English Education, 24(3),* 131-146.

Patterson, A. (1995). Supervising freedom: The English Profile - English curriculum; English pedagogy [online]. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy,18(2),*105-115.

Patterson, A. (2000). Beliefs about English in Australia. In R. Peel, A. Patterson & J. Gerlach (eds.) *Questions of English: Ethics, aesthetics, rhetoric, and the formation of the subject in England, Australia and the United States*, 254-282. London: Routledge.

Peel, R. (2000). English in England: its history and transformations. In R. Peel, A. Patterson & J. Gerlach (eds.) *Questions of English: Ethics, aesthetics, rhetoric, and the formation of the subject in England, Australia and the United States*, 254-282. London: Routledge.

Pillow, W. (2003) Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 16(2),* 175-196. doi: 10.1080/0951839032000060635.

Portelli, L. & O'Sullivan, K-A. (2016). Teachers' perceptions of the influence of assessment on their teaching of Year 9 English. *English in Australia, 51(1),* 71-80.

Reese, W. J. (2001). The Origins of Progressive Education. *History of Education Quarterly, 41,* 1-24.

Reid, I. (2002). Wordsworth institutionalised: the shaping of an educational ideology. *History of Education, 31(1),* 15-37.

Reid, I. (2003). The Persistent Pedagogy of Growth. In B. Doecke, D. Homer, & H. Nixon (Eds.) *English Teachers at Work: Narratives, Counter Narratives and Arguments* (pp. 97–108). Kensington Gardens, South Australia: AATE/Wakefield Press.

Reid, I. (2004). *Wordsworth and the formation of English Studies*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate.

Reid, I. (2016). Literary Experience and Literature Teaching since the Growth Model. *English in Australia, 51(3),* 11-18.

Reid, J. (2017). Rural education practice and policy in marginalised communities: Teaching and learning on the edge. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education, 27(1),* 88-103.

Renold, E. (2001*a*). 'Square-girls', Femininity and the Negotiation of Academic Success in the Primary School. *British Educational Research Journal, 27(5),* 577-588. doi: 10.1080/01411920120095753.

Renold, E. (2001*b*) Learning the 'Hard' Way: Boys, hegemonic masculinity and the negotiation of learner identities in the primary school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 22(3),* 369-385. doi: 10.1080/01425690120067980.

Renold, E. (2004). 'Other' boys: negotiating non-hegemonic masculinities in the primary school. *Gender and Education, 16(2),* 247-265, doi: 10.1080/09540250310001690609.

Renold, E. & Ringrose, J. (2017). Selfies, relfies and phallic tagging: posthuman part-icipations in teen digital sexuality assemblages. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 49(11),* 1066-1079. doi: 10.1080/00131857.2016.1185686.

Rich, A. (1979). *Claiming an Education. On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978*. W. W. Norton & Company: New York.

Riddle, S. & Apple, M. W. (2019). *Re-Imagining Education for Democracy*. Routledge: London.

Rosenblatt, L. (1960). Literature - The Reader's Role. *The English Journal, 49(5),* 304-310 + 315-316.

Roy Morgan. (2017). Roy Morgan Image of Professions Survey 2017, # 7244. [Press release]. Retrieved from: http://www.roymorgan.com/findings/7244-roy-morgan-image-of-professions-may-2017-201706051543 Accessed: 27/04/2019.

Ruggera, L., & Barone, C. (2017). Social closure, micro-class immobility and the intergenerational reproduction of the upper class: A comparative study. *The British Journal of Sociology, 68(2),* 194-214.

Sabeti, S. (2012). Reading graphic novels in school: texts, contexts and the interpretive work of critical reading. Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 20(2),191-210.

Sachs, J. (2016). Teacher professionalism. Why are we still talking about it? *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 22(4),* 413-425. doi: 10.1080/13540602.2015.1082732.

Sahlberg, P. (2011). *Finnish lessons: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* New York: Teachers College Press.

Said, E. (1978/2003). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin.

Said, E. (1993). *Culture and Imperialism.* New York: Knopf.

Saldana, J. (2009). *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Sandelowski, M. (2011). Reembodying Qualitative Research. In (Eds. P. Atkinson & S. Delamont) *Sage Qualitative Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Sawyer, W. (1997). Measuring up: Literacy and social disadvantage in Australian schooling. *English in Australia, (119),* 71-77.

Sawyer, W. (2008). English teaching in NSW since 1971: Versions of Growth? *Changing English, 15(3),* 323-337. doi: 10.1080/13586840802364244.

Sawyer, W, McLean Davies, L., Gannon, S. & Dowsett, P. (2016). Mid-atlantic crossings: Some texts that emerged from Dartmouth. *English in Australia, 51(3),* 40-51.

Sawyer, W. (2017). Garth Boomer Address 2017: Low SES contexts and English. *English in Australia, 52(3),* 11-20.

Schierup, C-U. & Ålund, A. (2018) Re-imagineering the Common in Precarious Times. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 39(2),* 207-223. doi: 10.1080/07256868.2018.1448694.

Schon, D. A. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner: how professionals think in action.* New York: Basic Books.

Schon, D. A. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner.* London: Jossey-Bass.

Sellar, S. & Lingard, B. (2012). The OECD and global governance in education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 28(5), 710-725. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2013.779791.

Sengul, K. (2019). Populism, democracy, political style and post-truth: issues for communication research. *Communication Research and Practice, 5(1),* 88-101. doi: 10.1080/22041451.2019.1561399

Shine, K. (2015). Are Australian Teachers Making the Grade: A Study of News Coverage of NAPLAN Testing. Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy, 154, 25-33.

Simmons, A. M. (2012). Class on Fire: Using the Hunger Games trilogy to encourage social action. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 56 (1),* 22-34. doi: 10.1002/JAAL.00099.

Simons, M. (2006). Beyond the comfort zone: [The factors underlying the move to private schools and the realities of education today. Paper in: Getting Smart: The Battle for Ideas in Education. Schultz, Julianne (ed.).] [online]. *Griffith REVIEW, 11,* 87-106.

Simpson Reeves, S., Exley, B. & Dillon-Wallace, J. (2018). Secondary school English teachers caught in the NAPLAN fray: Effects of the disparate responses. *English in Australia, 53(1),* 24-32.

Singhal, P. (2019, June 24). 'More practice tests': New NAPLAN targets for tens of thousands of students. *The Sydney Morning Herald*. [online]. Retrieved from: https://www.smh.com.au/education/more-practice-tests-new-naplan-targets-for-tens-of-thousands-of-students-20190624-p520pb.html Accessed: 26/06/2019.

Singh, S. P. (2015). 'Twilight or Middlemarch?' A teacher's refusal to choose. *Changing English: Studies in Culture and Education, 22(1),* 3-13. DOI: 10.1080/1358684X.2014.992211.

Snyder, I. (2008). *The Literacy Wars*. Allen & Unwin: St. Leonards, Sydney.

Spivak, G. C. (1999). *A critique of postcolonial reason: Toward a history of a vanishing present.* Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Shopen, G. (2009). Challenging the achievement gap: teaching English in Indigenous schools [online]. *English in Australia, 44(3),* 9-17.

Sky News Australia. (2019, Feb 7). Group of teachers calls for students to study more texts about same sex relationships. Retrieved from: https://www.skynews.com.au/details/_5999544335001 Accessed: 07/04/2019.

Solnit, R. (2005/2016). *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities*. Edinburgh, GB: Canongate Books.

Sonnemann, J. & Goss, P. (2018, May 4). Gonski is right: We must make better use of our best teachers. *ABC News*. Retrieved from: http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-04/gonski-is-right-we-must-make-better-use-of-our-best-teachers/9722556 Accessed: 22/09/2018.

Spielberg, S. (1989). *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*. [director]. Paramount Pictures/Lucasfilm.

Stacey, M. (2017). The teacher 'problem': An analysis of the NSW education policy *Great Teaching: Inspired Learning. Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 38(5),* 782-793. doi: 10.1080/01596306.2016.1168778.

Stapleton, P. (2019, June 7). Teachers are more depressed and anxious than the average Aussie. *The Conversation*. Retrieved from: https://theconversation.com/teachers-are-more-depressed-and-anxious-than-the-average-australian-117267 Accessed: 16/06/2019.

Stewart, W. (2015, April 22). Leave research to the academics, Hattie tells teachers. *TES*. Retrieved from: https://www.tes.com/news/leave-research-academics-john-hattie-tells-teachers Accessed: 12/11/2018.

Strømme, T.B., & Hansen, M. N. (2017). Closure in the Elite Professions: The Field of Law and Medicine in an Egalitarian Context. *Journal of Education and Work, 30(2),* 168-185.

Sweetland, S. (1996). Human Capital Theory: Foundations of a Field of Inquiry. *Review of Educational Research, 66(3),* 341-359.

Tatman, L. (2013). Arendt and Augustine: More than one kind of love. *Sophia, 52,* 625-635. doi: 10.1007/s11841-013-0363-3.

Taylor, J. (2013, May 21). Australian government quietly ends laptops in schools program. *ZDNet.* Retrieved from: https://www.zdnet.com/article/australian-government-quietly-ends-laptops-in-schools-program/ Accessed: 26/10/2018

Teese, R. (1998). Curriculum hierarchy, Private schooling, and the segmentation of Australian Secondary Education, 1947-1985. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, (19) 3,* 401-417.

The New London Group. (1996). A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures. *Harvard Educational Review, 66(1),* 60-92.

Thompson, E. P. (1963). *The Making of the English Working Class*. Vintage Books: London.

Thomson, G. & Cook, I. (2014). Manipulating the data: Teaching and NAPLAN in the control society. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. 129-142, doi: 10.1080/01596306.2012.739472.

Thomson, P. (2002). *Schooling the rustbelt kids: Making the difference in changing times.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. Chichester, West Sussex, UK : Wiley-Blackwell.

Vetter, A., Myers, J., & Hester, M. (2014). Negotiating Ideologies About Teaching Writing in a High School English Classroom. *The Teacher Educator, 49(1),* 10-27. doi: 10.1080/08878730.2013.848000.

Vetter, A., Hartman, S. V., & Reynolds, J. M. (2016). Confronting unsuccessful practices: repositioning teacher identities in English education. *Teaching Education, 27(3),* 305-326. doi: 10.1080/10476210.2016.1145203.

Vinson, T. (2007). *Dropping off the edge: The distribution of disadvantage in Australia.* Melbourne: Jesuit Social Services, Catholic Services Australia.

Vinson, T., Rawsthorne, M., Beavis, A., & Ericson, M. (2015). *Dropping off the edge 2015: Persistent communal disadvantage in Australia.* Melbourne: Jesuit Social Services, Catholic Services Australia.

Watson, K. (1994). *English teaching in perspective in the context of the 1990s*. (3rd ed.) Sydney: St. Clair Press.

Weaven, M. & Clark, T. (2015). Discretionary space: English teachers discuss curriculum agency. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 38(3),* p.162-170.

Weber, M. (1930/2005). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Routledge: London.

Western, M. C. (1999). Who thinks what about capitalism? Class consciousness and attitudes to economic institutions. [An earlier version of this paper was presented in a seminar series devoted to the 'Citizen Beliefs and Attitudes' strand of the Reshaping Australian Institutions Project at the Research School of Social Sciences, the Australian National University.] [online]. *Journal of Sociology, 35(3),* 351-370.

Westcott, S. (2018). The politics of safe schools: Opportunities for intervention in the English classroom. *English in Australia, 53(2),* 49-58.

Weston, J. L. (1920/1957). *From Ritual to Romance*. Cambridge University Press. [Online repository: Representative Poetry Online] University of Toronto Libraries. Retrieved from: https://rpo.library.utoronto.ca/poems/waste-land#33 Accessed: 30/06/2019.

Whitty, G. (1997). Education policy and the sociology of education. *International Studies in Sociology of Education, 7(2),* 121-135. doi: 10.1080/09620219970200013.

Williams. S. (2016). Boom times in top school catchments. (News). *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, Australia), p. 18.

Wolk, S. (2013). Reading Democracy: Exploring Ideas That Matter with Middle Grade and Young Adult Literature. *The English Journal, 103(2),* 45-51.

Wollstonecraft, M. (1787). *Thoughts on the education of daughters, with reflections on female conduct in the more important duties of life* / Mary Wollstonecraft. (Social theory). London: J. Johnson.

Yandell, J. (2016). Growth and the category of experience. *English in Australia, 51(3),* 19-24.

Yates, L. (2009). From curriculum to pedagogy and back again: knowledge, the person and the changing world. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society, 17(1)*, 17-28. doi:10.1080/14681360902742837.

Yates, L., McLean Davies, L. Buzacott, L., Doecke, B., Mead, P., & Sawyer, W. (2019). School English, literature and the knowledge-base question. *The Curriculum Journal*. doi: 10.1080/09585176.2018.1543603.

Zimmerman, B. (2017, Oct 24). The four stages of the antiwar movement. Vietnam '67. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/24/opinion/vietnam-antiwar-movement.html Accessed: 05/01/19.

Appendices

The following pages contain

Appendix A: ethics approval,

Appendix B: the semi-structured interview questions,

Appendix C: the study advertisement, and

Appendix D: a sample of the participant information and consent form.

Appendix A of this thesis has been removed as it may contain sensitive/confidential content

Appendix B

Semi-structured Interview Questions

📖 Area 1: Focus of investigation: views of texts, perceptions of value/worth, affective and/or intellectual considerations.

When you were a teenager, what texts did you like?

Probe: Do you think your students engage with similar texts now? Why/Why not?

📖 Area 2: Focus of investigation: views of subject & pedagogy, practice, perceptions about self as teacher, the culture of an English teacher.

How would you describe yourself as an English teacher?

Probe: in terms of your views/attitudes about your subject and your pedagogy, particularly in relation to popular culture texts and Stage 5 English.

📖 Area 3: Focus of investigation: curriculum and culture: internal and external influences upon text choices and pedagogical approaches.

In your recent teaching of Stage 5 can you tell me about a popular culture text you chose and why you chose it?

Probe: What was your goal? What's in it for your students to study these types of texts?

📖 Area 4: Focus of investigation: Communicating within online spaces for professional purposes.

Do you use online platforms in your work as an English teacher? Which ones? Tell me more about what you do.

Probe: How do you characterise your online behaviour? (i.e. Lurker or interactive?) Why go online? What are the benefits for English teachers? Do you think much about professional Codes of Conduct when interacting online?

📖 Area 5: Focus of investigation: sharing curriculum choices through micro-blogging.

What do you think of micro-blogging for English teachers? From your experiences what benefits and/or limitations arise?

Probe: How could micro-blogging be used to share the teaching and learning in English at your school? Is micro-blogging for everyone or just for some? Please explain why you think so.

📖 Area 6: Focus of investigation: understanding curriculum choices and pedagogy, knowing students.

Do you think it's important for teachers to know what is popular with their students? Why? What is popular?

Probe: Could you give me examples of 'things' you have done, books you have read, movies/tv shows you have watched with your students in mind.

📖 Area 7: Focus of understanding: understanding curriculum choices and pedagogy, knowing students.

In what ways do you see success in English for your students?

Probe: What does it look like for your students? What does it look like for your school community?

📖 Area 8: Are there any thoughts from today you want to return to? Do you have anything else to share?

Thank you very much for your participation :)

Appendix C

Study Advertisement

Appendix D of this thesis has been removed as it may contain sensitive/confidential content