In his book *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis* (1999) Gee posits that social domains, like higher education settings, can never be known directly; rather, they are always constructed, or given meaning, through language. This conceptualisation of how one experiences the world was part of what Gee (1996) in an earlier work termed the “social turn”, a shift, he argues, that influenced all social sciences in the latter half of the twentieth century by challenging old certainties and hierarchies. Informed by the “social turn” this chapter considers how dominant academic writing practices and research literacies, especially doctoral writing in education and the social sciences generally, are reproduced within the social domain of higher education. The research literacies that inform this domain are concerned primarily with how post/graduate writers come to recognise, or are inducted into specific forms of what I have termed disciplinary-congruent forms of academic writing in higher education settings.

Between dominant discourses there always exist alternative, liminal spaces through which other meanings form and move, that are neither visible nor understood. As I began to deconstruct the dominant research literacies that I was working with, I found myself moving between some slippery, liminal spaces concerning identity, power, epistemology and pedagogy. What has emerged out of these spaces is not an evidence-based qualitative research project on what it means to be a post/graduate writer/researcher, but something that more resembles a conversation between the extant literature, the research participants and myself about our lived experiences of post/graduate academic writing and research literacies practices in higher education. This chapter reflects on the insights gained while writing my doctoral thesis.
Questions of Identity

As part of my approach I took the position that research always constructs an identity for the “researcher”; indeed Foucault (1972) saw research as an important “practice of the self”. For this reason the question of the postmodern researcher’s subjectivity, is as important as the subjectivities of the research participants, as they and the researcher are all engaged in producing narrative texts and identities that: “produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently” (St. Pierre, 1997a, p. 175, emphasis added) as part of the research process.

In my PhD thesis I was, therefore, deliberately conscious and reflexive about my emotional, subjective and personal experience of academic writing practices and research literacies, as I was emotionally and personally involved in those practices and literacies as I wrote up my research. That is, as a lecturer in higher education writing up my doctoral research, I shared many of the academic writing practices, research literacies and experiences of my research participants and I was simultaneously present, positioned and constructed in my research as an employee, colleague, academic, educator, student, researcher and research participant.

The complexity of research subjectivities in a thesis like mine highlights how the relationship between researchers and their participants is often convoluted and messy. It is therefore not easy to tease out the many subject positions available in the research process. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) regard even primary identities, such as “researcher” or “research participant”, as emergent and transient, held artificially, as in aspic, for the purposes of creating a particular research narrative. Critically evaluating relations with participants within the research domain is, therefore, an essential part of the role of a reflexive post-qualitative researcher. This is because, as Gubrium and Holstein (2003) contend, participants cannot help but be affected by the biases, subject positions and possibly disciplinary concerns of the researcher.

Critiquing Traditional Models of Academic Writing in Higher Education Research

The work of early linguists like Bloomfield (1933) treated formal writing as a decontextualised set of skills. This skills model, which Street (much later in 1984) termed “autonomous”, represented spelling, punctuation and grammar as a “neutral technology” which, once acquired, could be applied by individuals universally without reference to any ideological and cultural values. Defined