

7

# The Language Textbook in a Post-Apartheid Education System

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by

Peter Laque

Faculty of Education

University of Cape Town

Supervisor: Jan Esterhuyse

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Further, I have acknowledged all sources used and have cited these in the bibliography.

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## Abstract

Using the English language textbook as its focal point, this study attempts to determine the extent to which educational publishers are in a position, through their practices, to assist in the transformation of South Africa.

The centrality of language to both the creation of individual consciousness and to the shaping of society inform this investigation. Regarded as integral to these processes is the premise that education is the primary terrain into which language, and its fundamentally moulding potential, is locked. Furthermore, the impact of not only the transition in South Africa, but also of the fluidity of the wider global backdrop on both language and education are acknowledged as crucial influences on all spheres of private as well as public life.

In this context, the study endeavours to locate and define those elements which comprise and inform the practices of educational publishing. It attempts to demonstrate that the broader socioeconomic, political, educational and cultural processes, from which educational publishing takes its signals, severely restrain its capacity for participation in social transformation.

The study concludes with some recommendations for the publishing of English language textbooks in a post-apartheid terrain, and suggests a few areas of research pertinent to such an undertaking.

## Abbreviations Used in this Study

ANC	African National Congress
CLA	Critical language awareness
DET	Department of Education and Training
ESL	English as a second language
IDT	Independent Development Trust
NECC	National Education Co-ordinating Committee
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NLP	National Language Project
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
SAALA	Southern African Applied Linguistics Association
SACHED	South African Committee for Higher Education
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
UDF	United Democratic Front

Does a change of mind mean a change of heart?  
(Lambsdorff cited by Waldmeir 1993:24).

If we have the slightest interest in the maintenance of our society - and of humanity itself - in a form compatible with human dignity, we must make clear to ourselves and to others what strategies and mechanisms are used daily in the "war with words" which is going on everywhere, and what interests and ideologies underlie the constant deception and lies  
(Brekle in Wodak 1989:89).

True liberation of both the oppressed and the oppressor in South Africa will entail a recognition by both parties of the full humanity of each individual, regardless of race, class or gender. It is a process requiring all South Africans to claim for themselves and to affirm for others nothing less than full humanity and dignity  
(Sibisi in Pityana, Ramphele, Mpumlwana and Wilson 1991:136).

## Table of Contents

### CHAPTER

#### THE TERRAIN

1. Introduction . . . . .	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem . . . . .	6
1.2 The Hypothesis . . . . .	7
1.3 Rationale for the Research . . . . .	7
1.4 Significance and Relevance of the Study . . . . .	9
1.5 Contextual Validity in the Discipline . . . . .	10

### CHAPTER 2

#### INTERROGATING THE TERRAIN

1. Introduction . . . . .	11
2. The Background . . . . .	11
3. The Political Terrain: Trading Places? . . . . .	12
4. The Educational Terrain: More of the Same? . . . . .	15
5. The Linguistic Terrain: Tower of Babel? . . . . .	17
6. English: The Means to Power? . . . . .	18
7. The Making of English Language Textbooks . . . . .	20
7.1 Publishers: Watchdogs or Conduits? . . . . .	21
7.2 Educational publishers: Shapers or Empowerers? . . . . .	23
7.3 School Textbooks: Jailers or Liberators? . . . . .	24
7.4 The English Language Textbook: What Kind of Literacy? . . . . .	26

### CHAPTER 3

#### EQUIPPING FOR THE TERRAIN

1. Introduction . . . . .	32
2. Considerations: Quantitative or Qualitative? . . . . .	32
3. Research Objectives . . . . .	34
4. The Terrain . . . . .	34
5. Theoretical Constructs/Conceptual Framework . . . . .	35
6. The Research Paradigm . . . . .	37
7. Methodology . . . . .	38
8. Further Methodological Considerations . . . . .	40

### CHAPTER 4

#### EXPLORING THE TERRAIN

1. Introduction . . . . .	41
2. Background to Data Collection . . . . .	42
3. Phases of Data Collection . . . . .	43
4. Interviews with Educational Publishers . . . . .	45
5. Pattern of Data Collection . . . . .	49

## CHAPTER 5

### THE TERRAIN DEMYTHOLOGISED

1. Introduction . . . . .	50
2. Approach to Data Analysis . . . . .	50
3. Political Considerations . . . . .	51
4. Economic Considerations . . . . .	56
5. Educational Considerations . . . . .	59
5.1 Curriculum: The Stuff of Schooling . . . . .	60
5.2 Selection Boards . . . . .	61
5.3 The Role of English . . . . .	62
6. Cultural Considerations . . . . .	64
6.1 The Question of Unity . . . . .	65
6.2 Values . . . . .	68
6.2.1 Common Cultural Core . . . . .	68
6.2.2 Underlying Orientation . . . . .	71
6.2.3 The Values, English and Textbook Methodology . . . . .	76
a. the functionalists . . . . .	77
b. the centrists . . . . .	79
c. the progressives . . . . .	81
7. In Short . . . . .	83
8. Concluding Remarks . . . . .	84
8.1 Relevance . . . . .	84
8.2 Reliability and Validity . . . . .	85
8.3 Generalisability and Representativeness . . . . .	86

## CHAPTER 6

### REMAKING THE TERRAIN

1. Introduction . . . . .	88
2. A Summary of the Findings of this Study . . . . .	89
2.1 The Political Terrain . . . . .	89
2.2 The Economic Domain . . . . .	91
2.3 The Cultural Domain . . . . .	94
2.4 The Educational Domain . . . . .	97
3. The Future Focus of Education . . . . .	98
3.1 The Location of English Within Education . . . . .	102
4. Tomorrow's English Language Textbook: Some Thoughts . . . . .	103
5. Research Recommendations . . . . .	104
6. Concluding Remarks . . . . .	105

BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	107
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APPENDIX . . . . .	142
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CHAPTER 1  
THE TERRAIN

*We all know where South Africa is, but we do not yet know what it is (Sachs in Brown and van Dyk 1991:117).*

## 1. Introduction

Nearly three-and-a-half centuries of 'evil...racist social engineering' (Wilhelm 1993:12) has left South Africa an 'expression of policy...a condition' (Hope 1988:241) (emphasis original). It has become a distortion of human dignity and social justice<sup>1</sup> in which nearly all have been 'lessened, dehumanised' (Heard 1990:69)<sup>2</sup>.

At the root of this social fracturing along unequal relations of race, class and gender (Alexander 1989:7) were the various mechanisms comprising the practices of apartheid education<sup>3</sup>. The most crucial of these were language policy and school textbooks. Hartshorne captures the essence of the former:

[Language] is the repository and means of articulation of values, beliefs, prejudices, traditions and past achievements...it is at the heart of the culture of a people...it is related to issues of identity, position and power. When it is linked to colour prejudice or class

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<sup>1</sup> See Wilson and Ramphele (1989) for a description of the conditions in which the majority of South Africans were forced to live under apartheid.

<sup>2</sup> See, amongst others, Nkomo (1990:5, 300-301) and Desmond (1993:126) for the impact apartheid has had on the white psyche.

<sup>3</sup> NEPI Curriculum Report (1992:chapter two); Alexander (in Nasson and Samuel 1990:168-169); Nkomo (1990:292-298); ANC January (1994:20-21); Mncwabe (1990:58 and 74-75); Hofmeyr and Buckland in McGregor and McGregor (1992:19ff); Nasson and Samuel, especially part one (1990); Kallaway (1984); see also De Villiers (1990) for a more narrative account).

privilege...[it] can become a highly emotional and political issue, capable of being mobilised as a powerful social instrument (1992:186).

The deliberate manipulation of these qualities intrinsic to language<sup>4</sup> by the ardent desire of the Verwoerdian vision to shape itself (see Hartshorne 1992:chapter two; Giliomee and Schlemmer 1989:chapter two; Auerbach 1965) are vividly reflected in the ANC's observation that

the official language policies in education have been mechanisms for the control of Black people, for reinforcing their exclusion from full social and economic participation and from political power, and for enforcing the cultural agenda of the ruling white group (January 1994:61).

It fell to the textbook to justify, concretise and further perpetuate this marginalisation of the majority. As Giliomee and Schlemmer note, 'they propagated the myth of racial superiority' (*op. cit.*:95)<sup>5</sup>. This underlies Samuel's assertion that

Educational publishing has played a major part in enabling apartheid to take root in South African society (in Kromberg et al. 1993:9).

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<sup>4</sup> See also Pattanayak, who asserts that the individual's mother tongue

is more than just a language. It is linked with social memory and individual and collective dream. [It] is that language in which one is most creative and innovatory and without which one grows intellectually sterile (in Skutnabb-Kangas 1988:387).

<sup>5</sup> See Auerbach (1965); Reid (1982); Dean, Hartmann and Katzen (1983); du Preez (1983); Maree (in Kallaway 1984) Esterhuyse (1986); Drummond and Paterson (1991); Monyokolo (1993) as well as both Potenza and Masokoane in Kromberg et al. (1993:chapters 5 and 6 respectively) for further accounts of how school texts were written and used to fragment South Africa along ethnic, race, class and gender lines.

It is essentially this observation, and its implications for the practices of educational publishers in a post-apartheid education system, which drives this study. For it poses certain unavoidable questions about the nature of this industry which demand answers. Central to these is the issue of what makes the practices of this industry so susceptible to being determined by the logic of a prevailing political ideology?

The primary intention of this study, thus, is to investigate how educational publishing gives expression to the interrelationship between language policy and educational vision, and to demonstrate how both these terrains are a reflection of the dominant political ideology. In other words, it seeks to show how the educational publishing industry, through necessary allegiance to the state, is responsible for creating texts<sup>6</sup> which

✓ at one level...carry the intrinsic values and historical mirror in which the nation wishes to see itself reflected (Gopinathan 1983:345).

This study attempts to draw into critical focus where the English language textbook stands in regard to this notion. The urgency of this task is underscored by the probability that English will be central to both the new educational dispensation and the task of nation-building (Hartshorne 1992:207ff.; Desai in Unterhalter et al. 1991; Alexander 1989:51ff.). In this context, the view that education is more than just a domain for preparing the youth for the labour market (Jeffcoate in Craft 1984; Kraak in Unterhalter *op. cit.*; Lorimer and Keeney in De Castell, Luke and Luke 1989:175;) is accepted as virtually axiomatic. Furthermore, informing the entire investigation is the placing of ✓ education beyond the technicist location of it as a site of

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<sup>6</sup> See Farrell and Heyneman (1989:4-5); British Council (1991); Altbach (1983 and 1989); Westbury (in Elliott and Woodward 1990) and Gopinathan (1983) for the central position of the textbook in education.

inevitable social control and reproduction (McKay and Romm 1992:133-135; Willis 1977; Barton and Walker 1983; Luke 1988; Bowles and Gintis 1975; Apple 1984). Instead, it accepts that schools have the intrinsic potential to be sites that can initiate radical social transformation (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991; Nkomo 1990; Cross 1992).

My concern, then, is to assess the potential impact that English language textbook makers could have on the reconstruction of South Africa through their contribution to education. The investigative frame is the dialectic between the utilisation of English in education as a means to facilitating the creation of a new socioeconomic and political order as articulated by the ANC's emancipatory vision on the one hand, and the current, pragmatic unfolding thereof, on the other. It will examine the position of educational publishers caught, as it were, between these two poles, the ideal and the actual, and will attempt to assess their efficacy, located in this tension, as participants in social transformation.

As an informing backdrop to the transition against which this study takes place (McKendrick and Hoffmann 1990:1; Grundy in Davis jnr. 1991:chapter 2), characterised by inevitable violence (Zaaiman 1993:7), is the wider post cold-war global scenario (Blackburn 1991) in which there is widespread struggle against the monolithic hold of a modernist discourse that has failed to fulfill its objective of progressive enlightenment (Giroux 1992; Spretnak 1991; Wexler 1991).

Colomy describes this international terrain as having a

preoccupation with strains, conflicts, tensions, dilemmas, discontents, paradoxes, breakdowns, bottlenecks, inequalities, domination, arbitrary power, injustice, sexism, racism, and change (1992:18).

In this landscape, the vision of the ANC (as distilled ideology, expressed, for example, in the Freedom Charter) has placed education at the centre of the struggle for authentic individual and social emancipation which will not produce 'a new domination' (Pieterse 1992:14; ANC January 1994). This is founded on the realisation, albeit only theoretical, that it is our educational choices that largely determine the kind of future we envisage (Singh 1992:7).

An essential requirement for achieving this emancipatory ideal is a recognition that 'diversity and not uniformity [is] the pivot of a dynamic human existence' (Singh 1992:9; Lynch 1989; Pattanayak in Suttnab-Kangas, 1988:380). Basic, too, are the issues of human interdependence, and our interrelationship with the ecological macrostructure into which our survival is locked (Meadows, Meadows and Randers 1992; Hallowes 1993; Bennet and Davies 1991).

In this context education is being called upon to facilitate the birth of a new nation, one based on the tenets of democracy<sup>7</sup>. One of its central pedagogical tools will be textbooks (*Report of the Curriculum Materials Model Group Draft 1992*; Samuel 1993:3; Heyneman et al. 1978:1-2).

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<sup>7</sup>See, amongst numerous others, Samuel in McGregor and McGregor (1992:113ff.); Hartshorne (1992:342); Jansen (in Nkomo 1990); ANC (1994); Alexander (in Nasson and Samuel 1990). A crucial concept which emerges here, and which informs much of this study, is the manner in which the 'values of democracy and equity [can be] in strong tension' (Taylor 1993:37) if the overarching socioeconomic and political system is characterised by inherent paradoxes which favour a minority of the population. This concept will be referred to, or drawn on, throughout.

And most crucial and controversial among these is the English language textbook.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Key to this investigation, in which schools are seen as 'political sites [which] both repress and produce subjectivities' (Aronowitz and Giroux 1986:139) (emphasis original), is the concept of the 'selective tradition' (Williams in de Castell et al. 1989:chapter 5; see also Jansen in Nkomo 1990; Apple and Christian-Smith 1991, Liston 1984:241; Luke et al. 1983:111-127). Underlying this perspective is the contention that how

✓ a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge it considers to be public, reflects both the distribution of power and the principles of social control (Bernstein 1981:47).

Within this discourse of power and control, one that requires interrogation (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991) and deconstruction (Knight, Smith and Sachs in Ball 1990:chapter 7) in order to equip students with

✓ the skills and insights needed to question some of the latent assumptions and values within the mainstream society, [and] to think critically about the gap between the nation's ideals and realities, and to develop a commitment to act to help create a just and humane society (Banks in, Lynch, Modgil and Modgil 1992:88),

✓ the role of educational publishers as 'gatekeeper(s)' (Coser in Altbach and McVey 1976:chapter 2) will be critically assessed. This is vital since they make the texts which contain the knowledge and values that are presented to students as the basis of the reality for which education is supposed to be preparing them.

From this concern is drawn the 'superordinate problem' (Macdonald 1990:4) which this study attempts to address, and which, by positing a number of concomitant objectives, will not only 'guide the whole research process' (Clark and Causer in Allan and Skinner 1991:164), but also dictate both its design and methodology (Macdonald *op. cit.*)<sup>8</sup>.

## 1.2 The Hypothesis

Based on Samuel's call to educational publishers (1993:4-5) to wield their considerable influence in the domain of education in order to help redress the 'conjunctural and structural conditions' (Wolpe in Unterhalter *et al.* 1991:1) wrought by apartheid, this study posits the following hypothesis:

English language textbooks publishers, because of their internal composition and dynamic which depends on an external condition of socioeconomic and political stratification, and because of the continually shifting power discourse taking place at a national level, are not in a position to make English language textbooks that will facilitate, in a participatory sense, the creation of an egalitarian democracy.

## 1.3 Rationale for the Research

My interest in this topic has had a long genesis and results from my experience as an English language teacher in Zimbabwe from 1980 to 1991. The English language textbooks

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<sup>8</sup> I will deal with research objectives, the conceptual framework of this study, its actual research paradigm and methodology in chapter 3.

available to me then failed dismally as vehicles not only for facilitating linguistic competence among my students, but also for the formation of a critical consciousness necessary for contributing to the creation of a more human society (Gee 1990:chapter 2; Freire 1973). What struck me most about these texts was the fact that they were distinctly "colonial", but with an African veneer (see Altbach 1983). This was distressing in the context of the noble rhetoric of the liberation struggle which posited the shedding of Western models and the rediscovery of African ways of being. It seemed that the explanations of Wa Thiong'o (1981) held true: the African mind had been "colonised", the upshot of which is a mimicry of the worst aspects of Eurocentricism.

On returning to South Africa, and undertaking this research, it was illuminating to encounter, amongst others, the work of Apple. He articulated notions I had held, but dimly. For example his assertion, along with Christian-Smith that

the controversies over "official knowledge" that usually centre around what is included and excluded in textbooks really signify more profound political, economic, and cultural relations and histories...They signify - through their content and form - particular constructions of reality, particular ways of selecting and organising that vast universe of possible knowledge. They embody...someone's selection, someone's vision of legitimate knowledge and culture, one that in the process of enfranchising one group's cultural capital disenfranchises another's (1991:3-4) (emphasis original).

I began to understand how textbook content and methodology combined to either empower or marginalise learners (see also Tollefson 1991), and how the empowering always seems to take place among those whose culture is dominant, while the marginalising is effected among the subordinate groups (Giroux 1992; Freire 1985; King and Van den Berg 1991).

This awareness raised certain questions. For example:

\* do educational publishers (albeit unwittingly) contribute to this process of stratified socialisation?

\* is there any connection between the fact that they inhabit the domain of the elite, of the empowered, and the reality that it is among the marginalised and subjugated majority that academic failure is so rife?

Turner's words struck a chord:

The inequalities [in South Africa] are the result of the skilful use of power in their own interests by whites, who acted thus because they had internalised the capitalist human model (1978:83).

My curiosity in this direction was further stimulated when I read the NECC Conference Report (1992) and the NEPI Language Report (1992). The keynote paper by John Samuel delivered at the SACHED/NECC Conference (May 1993) and the research report for the IDT by Karen Press on creating new educational publishing initiatives (April 1993) crystallised my thinking. I had to discover to what extent educational publishers generally, and the makers of English language textbooks specifically, are in a position to carry the responsibility of being partners in the shaping of the future, given the power and influence they wield (Cole and Sticht 1990).

## 1.4 Significance and Relevance of the Study

The centrality of English and the school textbook to the educational domain, as well as the influence which the educational publisher wields in relation to both<sup>9</sup>, legitimises this study. For it is essential that the

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<sup>9</sup>These points have been touched on above and require no further elaboration or substantiation at this juncture.

dynamics governing educational publishing be transparent and well understood for us to be in a position to assess its viability as a contributor to national transformation.

## 1.5 Contextual Validity in the Discipline

Applied Language Studies is concerned with praxis in the domain of language. It seeks to articulate the nexus between theory and practice. Thus, within the discourse of this discipline, the present study has undeniable contextual validity. For it seeks to investigate the interface (viz. educational publishers) between learners and realms of knowledge and values. It strives to deconstruct this industry in order to understand its as an agent of society-making. And it attempts to discover whether, especially in the domain of English, it is in a position to assist in the empowerment of the majority, or will perpetuate their relegation to the margins of society.

## CHAPTER 2

### INTERROGATING THE TERRAIN

*...a resolution of the apparent broader political inequities is hardly enough to ensure that individuals in their day to day interaction with society are empowered. In the longer term we are still going to have people who are excluded, silenced or marginalised because they do not speak the right languages, because they do not speak the dominant languages, or because their appropriation of the dominant languages is ridiculed and stigmatised (Willemse August 1992:5).*

#### 1. Introduction

This literature review focuses, in a critical sense, on the numerous elements which inform educational publishing and shape the dynamics of its practices.

#### 2. The Background

We inhabit a multicultural world<sup>10</sup> underlaid by Postmodern 'modes of knowledge and representation' (Waugh 1992:3; see also Luke in Wexler 1991 and Spretnak 1991)<sup>11</sup>, and therefore

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<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Banks (in Lynch et al. 1992); Davis (in Arora and Duncan 1986); Nixon (1985); Wasilewski and Seelye (in Pusch 1979); Stenhouse (1967); Gollnick and Chinn (1990); Willey (1984). All these authors stress the skewed relations between ethnic, class and gender groupings in a society, and how the mainstream serves, through its position of domination, either to marginalise the subordinate groups, or to bring pressure to bear on them which leaves them with little other option than to become assimilated into the mainstream.

<sup>11</sup> For example Muller (in Taylor 1993); Giroux (1992); Aronowitz and Giroux (1991); Cherryholmes (1988); Wexler (1987). A prime concern common, among others, that these writers share, is the way in which education shapes society according to the dominant power relations that characterise the wider society. They all argue that since education

needing to ground my research (Hutchinson in Sherman and Webb 1988) in these concepts, my early readings centred on these discourses. In addition, I focused on language (Gibson 1986; Seelye and Wasilewski in Pusch 1979:43; Gee 1990) as a domain pivotal to education (Alexander 1989; Lockett in Young 1993; Hartshorne 1992; Wardhaugh 1992) in the manner in which it functions to produce knowledge, social relations, and other concrete cultural forms (Rizvi in Dawkins 1991; Freire 1985; Giroux 1991 and 1992; Taylor 1993; Apple and Christian-Smith 1991) that shape society along asymmetrical lines (Tollefson 1991; Fairclough 1992).

Critical to this linguistic realm is de Kadt's assertion that there is a growing 'consensus that English will play a, if not the, major role in our future language dispensation' (in Young 1992:6). If realised, this will have a profound impact on education as a mechanism for the empowering - or otherwise - of those who have been marginalised by apartheid. It will also directly affect the practices of English language textbook publishers (Samuel 1993). The political, socioeconomic and cultural realities of the new South Africa will also deeply effect textbook makers (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991; Apple 1992; Squire in Cole and Sticht 1981; Proctor and Monteith in Kromberg et al. 1993).

### **3. The Political Terrain: Trading Places?**

Since 'no State intends [education to] subvert its purposes, values, ideals...[but to] support and maintain State aims and beliefs' (Gibson 1986:49; see also Freire 1985:102 and 170; Alexander in Nasson and Samuel 1990:166-167), and

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functions thus, inherent must be its potential to function oppositionally. In this way, education is viewed as a domain of either social control and reproduction or social struggle and emancipation.

since, as Samuel points out, textbooks are 'the lifeblood of an education system' (1993:1)<sup>12</sup>, it makes sense to investigate the aims and beliefs of the State in order to see how these impact on the textbook industry<sup>13</sup>.

Prior to 1990 it was relatively easy to define these of both the State (i.e. the Nationalist government) and the "government-in-waiting", as it were, (i.e. the ANC and its allies under the UDF). However, since 1990, the negotiations characterising our current transition have had the effect of forcing concessions from both major players in the political realm. Or, put in other words, the politics of compromise have shifted both the left (the ANC) and the right (the Nationalist party) towards a common meeting ground in the centre<sup>14</sup>. The dynamics inherent to negotiating from a position outside the dominant power structure has had the effect of diluting the demands of the former liberation movement. As Wolpe (in Unterhalter et al. 1990) puts it:

The transition from a politics of confrontation to the politics of negotiation...appears to have the effect of shifting the primary focus from the general goals of the national democratic revolution to the reform or possible transformation of specific spheres of society (5).

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<sup>12</sup> See also, for example, Neumann (1980:71); Boorstein and Squire respectively (in Cole and Sticht 1981:i and 30); Du Preez (1983:11); Altbach (1988:x and 3) who all assert as, does Westbury, that 'textbooks are the central tools and central objects of attention in all modern forms of schooling' (in Elliott and Woodward 1990:1).

<sup>13</sup> Freire asserts, in this regard, 'it is not education that moulds society to certain standards, but society that forms itself by its own standards and moulds education to conform with those values that sustain it' (1985:170). See also Nkomo (1990:302).

<sup>14</sup>While recognising the views of the Nationalist party, and acknowledging these as a covert voice in the discourse of this study, it is the articulation of the ANC's policy positions which forms the overt tenor of this investigation since it is a virtually uncontested fact that the ANC will dominate government after the April 1994 elections.

At stake is the extent to which the new policy-makers can remain loyal to their vision of society as expressed in the Freedom Charter (Wolpe *op. cit*:1). Alexander stresses the dangers to effecting fundamental transformation that this holds:

What is happening...is that in line with overall government strategy, concessions are being made in order to accommodate the aspirations of the black middle class (in Nasson and Samuel 1990:168).

Indications are that a degree of co-option, or what Blackmore terms the 'hegemony of consent' (in Dawkins 1991), has indeed occurred (Fine 1992:81-82). This shift will undoubtedly necessitate a distinct move away from the vision espoused in the Freedom Charter. This is due to the fact that the emergent power elites have, in the course of accepting the compromise of power-sharing, begun to usurp the middle ground held by the white, liberal, middle-class (Pampallis in Unterhalter et al. 1991).

It is essentially this perspective, notwithstanding political rhetoric to the contrary, which will in all probability drive the ANC's future education policy, and thus have an enormous impact on the making of textbooks. For textbook making, in the end, is a political act (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991; Altbach 1988; Krut in Kromberg et al. 1993:5). Related issues concern the ideology and function of:

- a. education;
- b. language in education;
- c. English as the language of Education;
- d. the textbook (specifically the English language textbook).

I will briefly review the literature around these in the light of what appears to be an ambivalence in the ANC's undergirding ideological position.

#### 4. The Educational Terrain: More of the Same?

Of underlying concern here, especially in a multicultural education system that has inherited deeply entrenched anomalies<sup>15</sup>, are the "convergence-divergence" and "equity-excellence" debates<sup>16</sup>. In these terms, the concepts of equal opportunity and achievement driven education policies within a prevailing socioeconomic and political arrangement that emphasises 'the individualistic inflexion of market ideologies and practices' (Nasson and Samuel 1990:2) while the reality on the ground is one of serious inequalities in all spheres, is, as Tollefson observes, to indulge in 'Orwellian newspeak'. It

further inequality in the name of equality and contributes to mass acceptance of privilege for the few (1991:15).

This has the effect of reproducing 'current patterns of social inequality' (Rizni in Dawkins 1991:192). It also neglects the essence of what education should be all about: the creation of critical individuals able to penetrate the *cul de sac* of the present socioeconomic and political discourse thereby placing them in a position to transform it (Young 1992).

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<sup>15</sup>Even the most recent statistics (e.g. the Race Relations Survey of 1993) indicate the depth of these discrepancies, despite attempts to redress the situation. Certainly, in countries like Zimbabwe, where massive percentages of the budget have gone into education since independence, no tangible equallising of educational facilities has resulted in a concomitant levelling of anomalies. In other words, the attainment of independence coupled with huge financial input have not had the effect of empowering the youth (see Reynolds in Nasson and Samuel 1990). This seems to indicate that the root of the problem is not merely a financial one.

<sup>16</sup>See Lynch, Modgil and Modgil (1992:vols. one and three) for an in depth overview of the issues at stake in these debates.

Yet, it is exactly an avoidance of those factors that touch most essentially on our common lives, which seems to be unfolding in the educational domain. The noble vision of education functioning as a key empowering mechanism for participatory democracy based on the development of critical citizens (Samuel 1993; ANC 1993; Aronowitz and Giroux 1991), appears to be buckling under the pressures of economic structures already in place and the need to enskill individuals for the running of the new bureaucracy (Kraak in Unterhalter *et al.*; The Commonwealth Secretariat 1991:73).

In addition, there is the ANC's economic reconstruction programme with its emphasis on trade and technology (The Commonwealth Secretariat 1991:74ff.; Samuel in Innes 1992; ANC 1994) as well as the strong drive of 'affirmative action' (Innes *et al.* 1993). This is reflected in the fact that the ANC's curriculum proposals (1994) increasingly resemble the Education Renewal Strategy (1991) (see Stober in the *Weekly Mail, Review/Education* 3:1, January 1994:1) and the curriculum model put forward by the Committee of Heads of Education Departments (1991)<sup>17</sup>.

The dangers here are multiple. Firstly, that as the new governing elite become increasingly ensnared in the business of running the country, and enticed by the rewards of power, so the agenda for social transformation through a transformed educational practice may wane into the background. Compounding this could be the general orientation of education towards technological development which is regarded as the means to economic growth (Archer 1993:4-6)<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> This is a theme discussed by Wolpe, Badat and Kraak (in Unterhalter *et al.* 1991:chapters 1,2 and 3).

<sup>18</sup> Dawkins (1991:4), writing about the changes taking place in Australia, is worth noting in this regard. He says: 'If the discourse of reform is to lead to a liberatory education system, it must not be subverted to serve instrumental objectives created in the name of economic rationalism and managerial efficiency'. Angus (in Dawkins *op. cit.*:233) sounds a related warning in pointing out that economic imperatives hold the potential danger of justifying

This has been the experience of much of Africa (Kennedy 1989; Graham-Brown 1991; Schmied 1991).

The second danger lies in the language question.

## 5. The Linguistic Terrain<sup>19</sup>: Tower of Babel?

The ANC has declared the eleven main languages<sup>20</sup> spoken in South Africa "official". This is justified since South Africa is a multilingual country (Desai in Unterhalter et al. 1991:112). For far too long has the hegemony of Afrikaans and English prevailed in the various corridors of power in South Africa, thereby effectively marginalising those whose mother tongue is neither of these languages. The effect of this has been to relegate the vast majority of South Africans to the lowest socioeconomic rung in this country (Alexander 1989). For, as has been well-documented, language is one of the most powerful instruments for the shaping of relations of power within a society (de Kadt op. cit.:9; Tollefson 1992; Cobarrubius and Fishman 1983; Alexander in Schrire 1990), as well as being 'the place in which the social individual is constructed' (Coward and

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the provision of elitist education on the grounds that state schooling cannot 'deliver the sort of graduates who can compete for jobs and help to shift the (Australian) economy towards a more secure industrial base that is oriented towards high technology'. Both points are obviously pertinent to our situation.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example Lockett (*NEPI Working Paper on "National Additive Bilingualism"* 1992) and Lockett (in Young 1993:38-60) as well as the *NEPI Language Report* (1993) for in-depth overviews of the language question in South Africa.

<sup>20</sup> These are, with percentages of the population who speak them as mother tongue: Afrikaans (15,66%), English (8,68%), Ndebele (2,02%), Swazi (2,34%), Xhosa (17,44%), Zulu (21,61%), North Sotho (8,70%), South Sotho (6,71%), Tswana (9,11%), Tsonga (3,54%) and Venda (1,93%); (*Nepi Language Report* 1992:22).

Ellis cited by Alexander 1985:145). To demand, therefore, that individuals function in a tongue alien to them is to tamper with their very cultural identity. The results of this on the individual's sense of self can be devastating (Fordham 1988; McElroy-Johnson 1993).

Declaring the indigenous languages official is the first step to empowering them along the route of status planning. Logically, further empowerment should occur in the domains of actual use and through corpus planning.<sup>21</sup> In time, the ideal scenario of all languages being treated on the same footing in all domains of society, and all citizens being fully bilingual (mother tongue and the other main regional language), should unfold. The reality, however, is bound to be vastly different. The mere fact of South Africa being on the verge of becoming 'an advanced industrial society' ( Simkins cited by de Kadt *op. cit.*:8) would dictate English as its national language (*NLP Conference Report* 1991:7; Coutts 1992).

## 6. English: The Means to Power?

Although equality among all the principle languages spoken in South Africa has long been a central tenet of the ANC's democratic ideals (ANC 1993:38), it has openly declared its preference for English as the medium of instruction in schools (Viljoen in the *Argus* 3/4/93). No doubt, this consideration is, partially at least, based on the widespread use of English in international (and local) business and industry (Desai in Unterhalter *op. cit.*:117; de Kadt in Young *op. cit.*:8). Given the ANC's preoccupation with revitalising the economy as a means to social

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<sup>21</sup> There is a host of literature dealing with these two aspects of language planning. See, for example, Alexander (1989); Cooper (1989); Cobarrubius (in Cobarrubius and Fishman 1983); Kennedy (1984); Tollefson (1991); Young (1991).

upliftment (ANC 1993:12-16), literacy in English must be viewed as a central requirement, despite Heugh's assertion that English is not, in fact, the main language of international trade, industry and commerce (1993:31).

This insistence on English as a means to upward social mobility creates a paradox: since English is the mother tongue of less than 9% of the population of South Africa (*NEPI Language Report* 1993:22) importunity on its use as the medium of instruction in schools - from standard three up (ANC 1994; Sanger, personal communication: November 1993) - and as the language of trade, commerce and industry, will have the effect of further marginalising those very people it is supposed to empower. It is in this context that Ndebele's argument that

South African English must be open to the possibility of its becoming a new language...not only at the level of vocabulary...but also with regard to grammatical adjustments that may result from [its] proximity...to indigenous African languages (1987:13)

cannot be summarily dismissed. This is a theme elaborated on by Searle who contends that

...we must re-create English in the image of its users...We also have to re-define our language continually in the process of making a new lexicon that will serve all our children (quoted by Nixon 1985:104).

The point is, as Nixon notes, that ideally mother-tongue usage is non-negotiable in 'any education system which aims beyond a mere instrumentalist transmission of skills and facts' (*ibid.*). The logic behind this is, as pointed out earlier, that the mother-tongue 'is the means by which [the child] gains a sense of herself as a sentient and responsible being' (*op. cit.*:100). The profound implications this has in our context cannot be overstated.

Furthermore, in order not to relegate the struggle for social transformation to the merely utilitarian arena of economics, to the realm in which education makes 'a tool rather than a man (*sic*)', (Morphet in Millar et al. 1991:197), the observation by Aronowitz and Giroux that

the English curriculum has to be seen as a site of struggle, one that generates different subject positions for students around the issue of what it means to be a critical citizen rather than a good one (1991:96),

needs to be borne in mind. It is the light of this notion that People's English (Gardiner 1987; Gardiner in Nasson and Samuel 1990:159-165; Eastman 1990; Kruss 1988; Sebidi 1988; Wolpe 1991) and Critical Language Awareness (Janks in Young 1992; Fairclough 1989:chapter 9) gain their appeal.

I have dwelt at some length on the issues of politics, economics and language because these domains seem to impact directly on the content, methodology and underlying ideology English language textbooks will take in the new South Africa.

## 7. The Making of English Language Textbooks

From the above discussions, the use of English in the wider society appears to be linked to three main functions:

- i. the language of commerce and technology (Murray, personal communication: December 1993);
- ii. *lingua franca* (Kallaway, personal communication: December 1993), and language of wider communication (NEPI 1993);
- iii. the language of national unity (Alexander 1989; Desai, personal communication: December 1993)<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup>Except for the point regarding culture - which is discussed below - these aspects have been integral to the study thus far; hence they require no further discussion at

The central question that these functions of English raises is: How well placed are the makers of English language textbooks to create the kinds of texts able to empower the majority, linguistically, to cope with these functions?

To answer this a number of issues need examining. In addition to the unavoidable and most pragmatic of questions, those relating to meaning-making among individuals on the ground, or as Gee puts it, questions of how '(D)iscourses operate to integrate (and sort) persons, groups and society' (1990:xvi; see also Pitt 1992), there are the macro-issues related to policy decisions which fall beyond the sphere of individual influence.

Firstly, the position of the textbook in education generally; secondly, how educational publishers are located in relation to the discourses governing education; and thirdly, the place of publishers generally in the wider social domain. These are powerful considerations which lock individuals into processes not of their making, which give them little say over their daily lives.

## 7.1 Publishers: Watchdogs or Conduits?

Access to information is linked to human development<sup>23</sup>  
(Shillinglaw 1988; Lightfoot in Altbach and McVey 1976:71).

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this juncture. However, they will later be raised as their lingering presence has an overall profound impact on the possibilities of South Africa's future.

<sup>23</sup> Human development is regarded in terms of empowering individuals through giving them the means to make informed decisions. This means equipping them with those skills necessary for the decoding, deconstructing or demystifying of information that is sent out by those who hold the reigns of power. It also entails the ability, in a linguistic sense, to reconstruct reality along lines more beneficial to both the society and the individual. See, for example Freire's ideas of empowerment (1985); Young (1990:40ff.) and ecological thinking put forward, for instance, by, Hallows (1993).

And it is primarily publishers who make information available<sup>24</sup> (Dessauer 1981). They are a crucial link in 'the circulation of ideas and trends in a society and in economic and institutional structures' (Altbach and McVey 1976:13). The place and practices of publishers as producers of 'cultural artefacts' therefore needs assessing in these terms (see Apple 1984:307-319; Lightfoot in Altbach and McVey 1976:78).

Fundamental to determining the extent to which they are, in fact, open channels for the dissemination of information, has to be an examination of the various restraints within which they operate .

The greatest of these appears to be economic (Altbach and McVey 1976:11; Neavill in Altbach and McVey 1976:50;). Squire puts it, and its causal underpinnings, thus:

...given the high risk [of] investment...few publishers will or can consciously risk exclusion...by ignoring widespread customer preference (in Cole and Sticht 1981:28).

The implication of this constraint is the vast amount of information that is excluded from mainstream circulation on the basis of its lack of financial viability (Altbach and McVey *op. cit.*:10).

Two further important limitations on the degree of freedom that publishers have in the spread of information are:

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<sup>24</sup> The undeniable impact of other media is acknowledged in this regard. And multi-media input in the educational domain may well be the shape of the future. However, three qualifications need bearing in mind: firstly, that publishing can be defined as making public of information by any means (Collins dictionary); secondly, that alternative means of information input have not really superseded the written word (Altbach and McVey 1976:vii); and thirdly, that in the context of a "less developed country", the written word is more economically accessible than other means of information input (Neumann 1980; Heyneman et al. 1976).

\* the demands of the market (Lightfoot op. cit.:72; DelFattore 1992:chapter 5; Brodinsky 1982);

\* the particular ethos of a given publisher (Dessauer 1981; Coser in Altbach and McVey 1976:19; DelFattore 1992).

Both limitations operate in the ideological domain of values, and have the effect of filtering out that which is unacceptable to either party - the producer and the consumer (Altbach and McVey 1976:14; DelFattore 1992).

This brief survey of publishing indicates that publishers play, both by choice and necessity, an important "gatekeeping" role in society by having a direct influence on what is published, and in what final shape (Altbach and McVey 1976:14; FitzGerald 1979). It seems fairly obvious to conclude, thus, that the operational conditions in which they are embedded are not fully conducive to the production and spread of the widest possible spectrum of information (Cody in Elliott and Woodward 1990:136ff; Apple in Apple and Christian-Smith 1991:chapter 2).

## **7.2 Educational publishers: Shapers or Empowerers?**

Although the educational market in publishing is far more lucrative than general publishing (Dessauer 1981:63; Czerniewicz 1993:20) due to the current centrality of textbooks to the education system (Samuel 1993:1; ANC's Election Manifest 1994), it nonetheless operates under the same limiting constraints as the wider publishing industry.

Firstly, there is the need to make a profit or, at least, remain financially viable by ensuring financial self-sufficiency. This means that educational publishers are hesitant to risk publishing innovative curricula materials (Whitten in Altbach and McVey 1976).

Linked to this is the nature of the educational market itself, and the manner in which it acquires textbooks for

use in schools<sup>25</sup>. This domain is characterised by a curriculum underwritten by the skills and values held in esteem by the socioeconomic and political macrocosm which strives to sustain and reproduce itself through education (King and van den Berg 1990; Freire 1985:130; Apple 1982). Thus, for educational publishers to thrive they have to ensure that both the content and ideology in textbooks closely mirror those in the curriculum. In other words, the selective tradition features strongly in educational publishing (Williams in deCastell, Luke and Luke 1989).

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that educational publishers have to be placed in the category of "shapers" or "gatekeepers" for it is through them that preordained ordered and selected knowledge and values are allowed into circulation with the end to creating a certain type of individual for a certain type of society (Apple 1982; Westbury in Elliott and Woodward 1990).

A closer examination of the dynamics of the textbook will further illuminate this thesis.

### 7.3 School Textbooks: Jailers or Liberators?

There exist two main lenses through which one can view the school text: the instrumental or the ideological. The former would have 'schools...considered merely instructional sites' (Giroux in Freire 1985:xiv) which prepare the youth for participation in the 'demands of capitalist rationality and the imperatives of the market economy' (*ibid.*:xi). The function of textbooks here is to enskill in a technical sense. The latter regards schools as sites of struggle where meaning and power relations are either reproduced in the mould of the dominant culture or transformed according

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<sup>25</sup> See, for example Cody (in Elliott and Woodward 1990), Procter (1993) and Kantey (1993) for an overview of how the process of textbook selection and adoption influences educational publishing, especially in editorial terms.

to the voice of the individual (*ibid.*:xiii, xxi and xxiii). School textbooks take on a vastly different function seen in this light, especially due to the fact they they are regarded as central to educational discourse (Altbach 1983:315; Westbury in Elliott and Woodward 1990:1; Neumann 1980:71; Squire in Cole and Sticht 1981:30; Burke Jr. *ibid.*:46).

From this perspective, viewed in conjunction with their efficacy in the educational procedure in the way that they shape classroom practice (Neumann 1980:title page; Boorstin in Cole and Sticht 1981:i; Altbach 1988:x; Hyneman et al. 1978:4; Pearce 1983:27), textbooks are regarded as 'one element in a socially organised instructional system' (Scribner in Cole and Sticht 1981:6) which, in turn, forms part of a 'complex social system' (Walker following Cronbach *ibid.*:3). In other words, textbooks 'are not produced in a vacuum' (Altbach and Kelly 1988:6). Rather, they

are at once results of political, economic, and cultural activities and battles and compromises. They are conceived, designed, and authored by real people with interests. They are published within the political and economic constraints of markets, resources, and power (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991:1-2).

As such, they perpetuate the hegemony of the ruling class since they

hold(s) a unique and significant social function: to represent to each generation of students an officially sanctioned authorised version of human knowledge and culture (de Castell et al. 1989:vii).<sup>26</sup>

Thus, far from being liberatory by definition, textbooks in fact 'represent the medium and outcome of a pedagogical struggle between knowledge and power as well as a struggle over the construction and the development of the political

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<sup>26</sup> See also Stubbs (in Collinge 1990), Freebody and Welch (1993), Luke (1988).

subject' (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991:27). It is with this perspective in mind that I now turn to a brief examination of the literature dealing with the English language textbook.

#### 7.4 The English Language Textbook: What Kind of Literacy?

English in educational practices functions largely to construct both individuals and the collective socioeconomic, cultural and political configuration in which they are embedded. As such, its envisaged central role in our linguistic terrain (Chick in Young 1992), which is characterised by multilingualism and ethnic diversity (Desai in Unterhalter et al. 1991; Heugh 1992; Alexander 1993), is rendered complex. In the first instance, there is the

principal disadvantage...that it may promote neo-colonialism [and so] interfere with the goals of a truly democratic society by putting power in the hands of an English-speaking elite (Chick in McGregor and McGregor 1992:284; see also Eastman 1990).

In the second instance, unlike in the USA, the UK or Australia, where it is a majority language, and where one of the problems associated with it is how to draw the linguistic and cultural margins into the centre without the tyranny of assimilation (Baker 1993; Jeffcoate in Craft 1984; Smolicz 1993), in our context English is a minority language (*NEPI Language Report* 1992). Yet, it, and the Western, Eurocentric values it carries, has appropriated, through schooling, the centre of the major practices and discourses in this country (de Kadt *op. cit.*; see also Verma 1988). The effect is that those languages and cultures which should make up the centre have been degraded and marginalised in their own domains. This means that in order for the majorities to participate in the mainstream spheres

of socioeconomic and political practices, they have to subjugate their own languages and cultures (Luke 1988:27; Fairclough 1992) to those of the dominant discourse, English.

For a number of reasons this is untenable. Firstly it amounts to 'linguicism' (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988:13), the effect of which on the subordinate groups is twofold. On the one hand, because they are forced to function in a tongue which is not theirs (in competition with first language speakers), they invariably land up in a relegated position (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988; Alexander 1989). The centres of our various social practices are just not designed to accommodate the 'interlanguage' (Selinker 1992) or 'code-switching' (Nixon 1985:96) of the margins attempting to incorporate themselves into the mainstream. On the other hand, this insistence of the system on English, and the majority's acquiescence to this demand, has the effect of demeaning their language and culture in their own eyes, thereby alienating them from those very forces which should nourish and shape both individual and social identity (Luckett 1992; Verma 1988; Verma and Mallick in Verma 1988). It also has the added effect of creating a small educated elite (viz. those who had the means to attend "good" schools) thus further fragmenting society, albeit along intraethnic lines (Luckett *op. cit.*)

Underriding both these positions is the concept of language being the central medium through which individuals both make themselves, and are made (Giroux 1991 and 1992; Freire 1985; Verma 1988; Wardhaugh 1992).

Then there is the issue of ethnicity itself (see Bullivant 1987; Alexander 1985). As Kanpol observes, 'we can no longer sanctimoniously count on a harmonious society that simply embraces a dominant status quo and its values and norms' (1992:217). This is the reality of a postmodernist world (Giroux 1992), and finds its reflection in our terrain in calls for ethnic self-determination. To ignore these voices would be to deny the very essence of

what gives individuals their self-esteem, uniqueness and group cohesion (McElroy-Johnson 1993; Beard and Gaganakis 1991; Fordham 1988). Here, the agenda for English as a common language binding us together linguistically (Chick in Young 1992:39; Alexander 1985:89), and through the values mediated by this tongue (Desai *op. cit.*), is thin (Gamaroff 1993; Brice-Heath 1991). Across the world those on the margins are demanding that they be heard on an equal footing with the 'grand narratives' (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991) of the modernist era.

Finally, there is the controversial and problematic area of language and cognition, made even more complex in our context where ethnicity was used as a smokescreen to put in place discriminatory educational practices which have resulted in segregation and inequality (Kallaway 1984; Nasson and Samuel 1990; Hartshorne 1992; Millar *et al.* 1991)<sup>27</sup>. At the crux lies the realisation of 'the important role of language in the development of higher cognitive processes' (Ghuman cited by Verma 1988:10), and that the cognitive styles of children from diverse ethnic, cultural, class and geographical (eg. rural versus urban) backgrounds do, in fact, differ, having immense impact on academic attainment if unitary modes of instruction are employed (Vasquez in Lynch *et al.* 1992; Wasilewski and Seelye in Pusch 1979:70ff.). To unilaterally insist on English as the medium of instruction, and on a teaching/textbook methodology grounded in Anglo-Saxon, Western, urban, middle-class cognitive patterns, is to ensure failure amongst children whose mother-tongue is not English (Macdonald 1990; Tshabalala-Magadime 1988; Mwamwenda 1989). As Nasson and Samuel (1990) note, to treat all children equally when

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<sup>27</sup> See also, for example, Southey (in SAALÄ 1993:part 2) and Peirce (1991:21-24). The former feels that the "English first language (E1) - English second language (E2)" distinction must, because of our historical background, be destigmatised by the creation of a single English language syllabus. The latter asserts that not to name E1 as different in relation to E2 is to perpetuate divisiveness as a subtext under the guise of equality.

differences in cognitive style exist, is to favour those of the dominant class, thereby creating a culture of failure.

Clearly, thus, an insistence on English as the means to empowerment is extremely problematic. Yet, its centrality to not only the educational processes in South Africa, but also to the wider social practices, persists. This holds immense implications for the makers of English language textbooks.

At one extreme we have what might be termed the utilitarianists; at the other, the progressives. The former would view the acquisition of English in purely functional terms. It needs to be learnt for 'instrumental purposes...for participation in a modern economy' (Dzvimbo 1993:8). As such, a 'model of controlled English for giving access to English' (Bruckmann in Young 1992) is proposed. The latter see the need for a local version of English being grafted onto "standard English" so that a variety that accommodates "interference" from the various indigenous mother-tongues emerges (McDermott *ibid.*). To some extent, People's English is also placed here, although it has distinct overlaps with the other two approaches which I want to briefly discuss.

Holding the middle ground is the array of methodologies broadly termed communicative<sup>28</sup>. Amongst the numerous problems that this approach creates, by virtue of its objectives, three stand out boldly. Firstly, there is the problem of the idiomatic, the connotative harmonics and gestural aspects of communication which simply cannot be learnt in the classroom sense of the word (Burgess 1992). They are imbibed in growing up in the language, as it were. Secondly, and resting heavily on the former, is the inherent danger of linguistic and cultural assimilation which become almost inevitable in this context: to communicate effectively in English, one has to "become" English

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<sup>28</sup> A lot of research has been done in this area, initiated by Hymes (1971) who coined the approach 'communicative competence'. See also Cummins and Swain (1989); Cummins (1983); O'Malley (1988) and Ireland (1987).

(Bullivant 1987; Baker 1993; Craft 1984). This relates to the third problem. While communicative competence may be empowering in the sense of allowing second language speakers to participate more fully in the dominant mainstream, it does not equip them to understand how they have been constructed by this mainstream. As Peirce observes, in a system characterised by inequalities, language (English) must be employed to

help students explore alternative possibilities for themselves and their societies...[therefore] we need a more powerful theory than that of communicative competence (1989:407).

This leads us to the other extreme, that of Critical Language Awareness - CLA - (Janks in Young 1992; Janks 1993; Calfee in Collins and Mangieri 1992). The fundamental drawbacks of this approach are twofold and emanate from inherent contradictions. Firstly, the reality of the labour market. It demands not that workers have a critical awareness of how they have been constructed by a dominant linguistic ideology, but that they can function competently in the discourse of a specific industry within the socioeconomic domain. This then should surely be the primary prerogative of the English classroom. However, doing so makes the learner a victim of the system (Snow 1991:21). So we have the first contradiction. The second contradiction arises from the degree of linguistic sophistication required to interrogate one's construction as a socioeconomic, cultural and political entity through language. This exercise necessitates a metalanguage, the creation of which is, perforce, based on an ability to think and communicate effectively in the language (English). So CLA finds itself ensnared in a classic "catch-22". English as utility webbed in, and webbing English as critique (Eagleton 1991). Along the continuum of this tension, English language textbooks will function either to marginalise and thus further ensnare the majority, or facilitate the creation of critical awareness, and so be

emancipatory (de Kadt in Young 1992; Edmunds in Boughey 1992; Janks in Young 1992; Snow 1991:22). As such they will reflect a position somewhere along the scale between outdated, outmoded modernist discourse on the one hand, and, on the other, the liberation offered by a radical form of democracy that has as its basis the empowerment of individuals and communities in control of their own destinies which are locked into an awareness of their inextricable participation in an ecological reality (Spretnak 1991; Giroux 1991 and 1992).

This brief overview of the various problems related to language generally, and to the domain of English in South Africa specifically, point to some of the issues at stake, which makers of English language textbooks and curriculum material have to bear in mind. They are complex, perhaps with no solution that can fulfil the demands of each problem and paradox. But they have to be confronted, wrestled with, and solutions sought, if we are to be serious about the challenges of the future.

CHAPTER 3  
EQUIPPING FOR THE TERRAIN

*[Research is] always time-bound...and interest-  
relative...and culturally, historically,  
politically, and economically situated  
(Cherryholmes 1988:12).*

## 1. Introduction

Within these parameters my choice of a qualitative research orientation<sup>29</sup> has to be justified. In doing so, the 'five general standards for validity in educational research'<sup>30</sup> (Eisenhart and Howe in LeCompte et al. 1992:657-663) also require inclusion.

## 2. Considerations: Quantitative or Qualitative?

Research design, as 'the overall structure and orientation of an investigation' (Bryman 1989:28, cited by Clarke and Causer in Allan and Skinner 1991:168), is fundamentally contingent on the overall nature of the 'empirical unknown'

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<sup>29</sup> See, amongst others, Hitchcock and Hughes (1989), Bogdan and Biklen (1982), Cohen (1980), Burgess (1984) and Macdonald (1990) for a comparative analysis of these two broad approaches.

<sup>30</sup> The standards advanced as guidelines 'for making valid arguments in educational research' (Eisenhart and Howe op. cit.:657) are as follows: i. The fit between research questions, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques; ii. The effective application of specific data collection and analysis techniques; iii. Alertness to and coherence of prior knowledge; iv. Value constraints; v. Comprehensiveness.

(Pitman and Maxwell in LeCompte et al. 1992:761) posed by a study.

In the current investigation this 'empirical unknown' is whether educational publishers are in a position to publish English language textbooks in the new educational dispensation and political order which can assist in empowering and transforming students so that they are able to contribute to the building of a new nation. It therefore calls for the following to be considered in order to decide on an overall research orientation:

i. that educational publishing is located within a given socioeconomic, political and cultural context, and is 'defined by the educational policies of the government in power' (Krut in Kromberg et al. 1993:5);

ii. that '(T)extbooks advance social meaning' (Cherryholmes 1988:50);

iii. that meaning is socially constructed (Melucci in Pieterse 1992:43ff.; Giroux 1992) in a dialogical sense (Freire 1972:chapter 3);

iv. that meaning is thus 'somewhat unstable' (Cherryholmes *op. cit.*:55).

A qualitative paradigm to attempt to elaborate coherently on the ideological and practical issues at stake in educational publishing therefore seems both logical and appropriate.

Next required is the formulation of a conceptual framework which clarifies the central issues involved. A research design that is both functionally and ideologically appropriate to the discourse under interrogation can then be named. However, I had to bear in mind the subsidiary 'research objectives' (Clarke and Causer in Allan and Skinner 1991:164-165) which both underlie the hypothesis and develop from it. Furthermore, the terrain which needed traversing in order to investigate those variables which impinge on the hypothesis under scrutiny, and which therefore play a major part in determining research design

(Hammersley in Burgess 1984:62; Hitchcock and Hughes 1989:57), had to be considered. Finally, 'the theoretical constructs [which are] most likely to guide data collection' as well as the 'theoretical perspective' of the researcher required consideration (Pitman and Maxwell *op. cit.*).

### 3. Research Objectives

My hypothesis generated a number of questions which required addressing to achieve a sharply focussed comprehension of how educational publishers are located in relation to the task of creating empowering and transformative texts.

- a. what is the function of educational publishing in the wider socioeconomic and political domains;
- b. what are the influences which inform educational publishing;
- c. what is the function of education in the creation, reproduction or transformation of societies;
- d. what is the role of language in both education and the configuration of societies;
- e. what is the discourse of the current political transition;
- f. what is the current "zeitgeist" both locally and globally.

With these research objectives in place, it was necessary to define more clearly the terrain which needed exploring.

### 4. The Terrain

Although the focus of this study is the publishers of English language textbooks, it became clear to me after my first interview, with the managing director of a multinational publishing house, that there are numerous

factors which both impinge on, and inform this industry, and would have to be subject to scrutiny. Hence, it was essential to investigate the wider political climate, the views of education authorities and academics involved in language research, as well as the feelings of English language teachers. The position of educational publishing generally, as a component of the broader publishing industry, also had to be considered.

This broad spectrum of "players", all ultimately tied up in the making of English language textbooks, dictated certain related theoretical constructions within which to locate my investigation.

## **5. Theoretical Constructs/Conceptual framework (Harley 1992:27)**

The central pivot of this study is the question of how to reconcile individual autonomy with social justice (Ingram 1990:174). As Hartshorne (1992:332), in his discussion on the 'age-old issue in education' as to whether it should serve primarily individual (the Western liberal notion) or social (the Marxist notion) interests notes

Crucial as the role of education is for the individual...in liberating the human mind and spirit...[it] cannot remain remote from the two major challenges facing the world today...the need to learn to live together in peace through the conquest of inhumanity, prejudice and self-interest; and the need to cope with the economic imperatives of society through the conquest of poverty, hunger and unemployment (332-333).

That educational publishers could have considerable influence in this discourse is clear from the above literature review. However, what requires elucidation in order to create a conceptual framework for the investigation at hand is an understanding of the conditions within which school textbook makers operate. The literature reviewed

above suggests four primary frames which dictate the ideological mechanisms at work in this industry:

- \* economics
- \* politics
- \* education
- \* culture

As such, the conceptual framework adopted in this investigation finds its roots in five major concerns:

i. the "political" nature of educational publishing, and the attendant factors associated with this notion (Lankshear with Lawler 1989:chapter one; Apple and Christian-Smith 1991; De Castell et al. 1989);

ii. the thesis that 'schooling...[is] a site of struggle' (Christie and Collins in Kallaway 1984:164; see also both Jansen and Mzamane in Nkomo 1990), and that its 'primary task [is to be a] place(s) of

critical education in the service of creating a public sphere of citizens who are able to exercise power over their own lives and especially over the conditions of knowledge production and acquisition (Giroux 1991:47);

iii. the highly politicised character of South Africa, the way in which the contestation for the control of power is being shaped by a tension between "Modernism" (the Charterists) and "Postmodernism" (the Federalists) and the peculiar manner in which class is drawn along racial and gender lines<sup>31</sup>;

iv. the ideological latitudes of living in a post-Iron Curtain age (Blackburn 1991; Wexler 1991; Pieterse 1992; Colomy 1992);

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<sup>31</sup> See, for example Muller (in Taylor 1993:chapter 3), Newfield (in Evans 1992:chapter 3); Giroux (1991); Eagleton (1991); Apple (1984); Skelton as well as Woods and Grugeon (in Woodhead et al. 1991).

v. my own centrality to the research as the main instrument of data collection and interpretation, and the implications thereof (Steier 1991; Jansen and Peshkin in LeCompte et al. 1992:chapter 15; Carspecken and Apple in LeCompte op. cit.:511; Kincheloe 1991:3, 26 and 29).

In order to accomodate such a broad framework, I felt it necessary to employ an eclectic research paradigm.

## 6. The Research Paradigm

Underpinned as this research is by profoundly ideological issues involving contestations over domination and power, its paradigm, of necessity, has to include elements of not only the concept of social control, but also of emancipation (Quantz in LeCompte et al. 1992; Gibson 1986; Ingram 1990: 110-111). Furthermore, the field to be explored demands an overarching critical perspective (Shor 1992; Gibson 1986). Finally, since my main concern is more 'with the drawing of a detailed picture' (Macdonald 1990:8)<sup>32</sup> that is an accurate reflection of where educational publishing is, and where it seems to be heading, than with the discovery of some immutable truth<sup>33</sup>, it is necessary to ground the evolving paradigm in an 'illuminative' research model (*ibid.*:19-21).

In short then, Steedman's observation that in qualitative research 'there is neither a single truth to be found...nor a single method by which to proceed in such

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<sup>32</sup> The justification for this logic lies in the notion that the current research is not attempting to "prove" something; rather, it sets out to describe a discourse embodied in a certain practice that is both self-defined, and defined by wider circumstances. It is from such a description, a composite and meaningful picture (Macdonald 1990; Bogdan and Biklen 1982), that extrapolations, which may lay the basis for corrective action, can be drawn.

<sup>33</sup> In other words, 'a social constructionist view' (Gergen and Gergen in Steier 1991:77).

work' (in Steier 1991:57) justifies the employment of a 'methodological pluralism' (*ibid.*:61; see also Roth 1987) in the current study. However, it is an 'eclecticism' firmly entrenched in critical ethnography (Carspecken and Apple in LeCompte et al. 1992:chapter 11)<sup>34</sup>.

## 7. Methodology

Broadly defined, methodology is a chosen procedure for generating the kinds of information necessary for answering the central question posed by the study, as well as its offshoots (Pitman and Maxwell in LeCompte *op. cit.*:761). The current investigation dictates an exposition of the following aspects in order to instigate the fruition of the type of data requisite for a full comprehension of the issues at hand:

- a. an analysis of English language textbooks in current use at a broad cross-section of high schools in the Cape Peninsula<sup>35</sup>. My findings here were used to generate the types of questions to be put to publishers;
- b. a critical review of pertinent literature;

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<sup>34</sup> Also important here, amongst others, are writers like Giroux (in Sherman and Webb 1988), Cherryholmes (1988), Kincheloe (1991) and Young (1992).

<sup>35</sup> There is a wide range of literature dealing with criteria for the evaluation of textbooks. I consulted the following: Marsh (1992); Mbuyi (in Altbach and Kelly 1988); Mukherjee and Ahmed (in Altbach and Kelly 1988); Woodbury (1979 and 1980); Harrison (1980); Chall and Conrad (1991); Kotei (1981); Spiller (1986); Auerbach (1965); Cherryholmes (1988); Richard-Anato (1988); Stodolosky (in Jackson and Haroutunian-Gordon 1989); Walker (in Young 1987) and Gilbert (in De Castell, Luke and Luke 1989).

- c. the formulation of questions to be put to English language commissioning editors<sup>36</sup>;
- d. actual interviews (see appendix);
- e. a data analysis strategy couched in a combination of the approaches described by Strauss (1987); Erikson (in LeCompte et al. 1992) and Garner (in Ely et al. 1991). Broadly speaking, this employed a method that sought out overlapping commonalities in the data obtained from the interviews;
- f. an application of trends and themes to theory in a 'recursive' manner (Pitman and Maxwell in LeCompte et al. 1992:761);
- g. a drawing of 'generalisations' (Hitchcock and Hughes 1989:39-42) in order to arrive at a descriptive exposition of the constituent elements of educational publishing, and how these interrelate.

It must be stated, however, that the methodology did not unfold as planned. I found that focussing on English language textbook publishers exclusively did not shed sufficient light on their practices. From the outset it became quite apparent that their activities are subject to a wide range of influences (Walker and Squire in Cole and Sticht 1981). Thus, in order to realise a more meaningful and complete picture of their ontology, and why it appears

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<sup>36</sup> I decided to use unstructured, open-ended interviews as my main data-gathering tool. This method was chosen for two main reasons: so that I could find out more about an area I was reasonably unfamiliar with (Merriam 1988:74); to let the respondents talk about those areas they felt were of most concern to them (McCormack Steinmetz in Ely et al.:58). However, in all instances, I ensured that the broad areas that I wanted to investigate (i.e. that had been determined by general reading, textbook analysis, an analysis of relevant government and ANC documents and my own hunches and theories) were covered in each interview. In preparing for the interviews I consulted the following literature: Cohen (1980:chapter 13); Merriam (1988:chapter 5); McCormack Steinmetz (*op. cit.*:57-69); Bogdan and Biklen (1982:96-101); Stenhouse (in Burgess 1984:222-228) and Measor (in Burgess 1985:chapter 2).

so steeped in opacity, I needed to uncover the other 'voices' (Schratz 1993:1) that inform their operations. To this end, I devised a set of questionnaires to be sent out to the following groups:

- \* English language teachers;
- \* Academics involved in language research;
- \* Education authorities;
- \* Policy makers;
- \* Publishers (see appendix).

I based the design of my questionnaires on aspects that had arisen from my interviews with commissioning editors and on the guidelines suggested by Cohen (1980:80ff.).

## **8. Further Methodological Considerations**

i. All recordings of interviews, transcripts, questionnaires, names and designations of those who were contacted for information, as well as all correspondence pertaining to this research are held by me, and are available on request.

ii. All respondents requested anonymity, which has been respected. Their responses, comments and observations are, in chapter 5 of this research, recorded in double inverted commas (i.e. "...").

CHAPTER 4  
EXPLORING THE TERRAIN

*...qualitative study is forged in the transaction among what is done and learned and felt by the researcher. It is an intensely recursive, personal process...[which]...is crucial to the qualitative way of looking at life (Ely 1991:1).*

## 1. Introduction

In the data collection process I regarded as axiomatic a number of assumptions associated with qualitative research which seemed most relevant to my study:

- i. that data collection is a recursive process (Ely 1991) during which the researcher has to remain 'receptive to new issues and undercurrents' as they emerge (Allan in Allan and Skinner 1991:181);
- ii. that data should be gathered on multiple levels<sup>37</sup>;
- iii. that 'knowledge (or information) cannot ultimately be compartmentalised' (Lankshear with Lawler 1989:2-3);
- iv. that if interviews are to be a central data-gathering device, two factors have to be kept in mind:
  - \* they should remain as unstructured and open-ended as possible (Measor in Burgess 1985:67);
  - \* they 'cannot be divorced from looking, interacting, and attending to more than the actual

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<sup>37</sup> Hitchcock and Hughes (1989:43) term these 'first order' and 'second order'; Carspecken and Apple (in LeCompte et al. 1992:512-514) describe them as 'monological data collection' and 'dialogical data generation'. In addition to serving the purpose of allowing the researcher to gain richly textured and layered data, such an approach facilitates data validation by means of triangulation (Hitchcock and Hughes 1989:104-106; Cohen and Manion 1980:chapter 15).

interview words' (McCormack Steinmetz in Ely 1991:43);

v. that in this type of research there exists a dynamic, ongoing dialectical relationship between the data collected and the analysis thereof (*ibid.*:86-90; Hitchcock and Hughes 1989:42).

In other words, the assumptions that guided my data collection located this process in a 'pluralist approach' (Roth 1987:ix; Kincheloe 1991:chapter 6), that did not follow a 'linear progression' (Allan in Allan and Skinner 1991:180).

## 2. Background to Data Collection

In order to equip myself for exploring the educational publishing terrain I carried out a limited survey of English language textbooks in current use at a number of Cape Peninsula high schools. My focus was on the kinds of values which underlie both the content and the methodology of these texts. The logic behind this exercise was to place myself in a position from which I could question publishers on why certain types of information, attitudes, values, pictures and methodological approaches had been allowed into a given text despite an explicitly overt racist, sexist, discriminatory or manipulative slant to them<sup>38</sup>. I felt that it was from this location that I could best attempt to 'get beneath the surface of...institutional structures' (Schratz 1993:1) in order to discover what elements lie at the motivating heart of this industry.

In addition, due to the highly ideological nature of the issues I had encountered in the analysis of these text, and because of the 'new conceptualisations' (Allan in Allan

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<sup>38</sup> The nature of this study precludes a presentation of these findings. However, they share much in common with Du Preez's summary of values she identified in school textbooks (1983:13-15).

and Skinner 1991:181) they generated, it was necessary to embark on an extensive supplementary reading programme which could help ground the contentious areas I had discerned in these texts in relevant theory<sup>39</sup>.

### 3. Phases of Data Collection

Data collection comprised two interrelated phases:

i. interviews with publishers (as the primary gathering data means, it is the only one which will be described in this chapter).

ii. questionnaires to:

a. English language teachers (one regarding the English language textbooks in current use at their schools, and a second dealing with the kind of English language textbooks envisaged for a new South Africa. The first questionnaire was used to identify the texts employed in classroom practices, and to discover teachers' feelings about their viability and suitability in the context of the politically shifting terrain in South Africa. In addition, they were used to assist in formulating areas that I wanted to probe in my interaction with publishers. The second questionnaire was compiled during the interview process, and was informed by a number of issues which had arisen from

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<sup>39</sup> Some of the areas I covered include: language and power (Fairclough 1992; Wodak 1989;), power and education (Dawkins 1991; Freebody and Welch 1993; Nkomo 1990; Willis 1983; Barton and Walker 1983), language and class (Bissert 1979; Bernstein 1981); language and cognition (Vygostsky 1986), ideology and education (Ashley 1989; Gee 1990; Morrow 1989); education and social reproduction (Giroux 1988; 1991; 1992); education and emancipation (Freire 1972 and 1989; Shor 1992); language acquisition (Ellis 1992; Cook 1991); language, education, race and culture (Klein 1993; Westbury and Purves 1988; Buttjes and Byram 1991) and issues generally surrounding current political debates (Giliomee and Gagiano 1990; Giliomee and Schlemmer 1989; Frederiekse 1990; Etherington 1992; Alexander 1985; Caldwell 1992; Davis Jr. 1991; Smith 1992).

these interviews. It was designed to fulfil two main functions: firstly, just to gain some insight into what sort of perspective a broad cross-section of English language teachers had on the future of English, and the role of the text in this domain. Secondly, to note whether there were any correlations between how teachers viewed the text in the new South Africa and the kinds of initiatives publishers were undertaking);

b. Education Authorities (my concern here was to discover what "official policy" was related to an issue as sensitive and as complex as the English language question. I was also interested, as in the case of teachers, to see whether there was any congruence between the thinking of "officialdom" and the unfolding plans of publishers);

c. Political Parties (as in "b" above, except for the additional impetus this domain wields in that if a given political party dominates the political terrain, its policies become the sanctioned version of the total possible experiences, points of view, knowledge, values, attitudes etc. which then become inscribed in educational practices, predominantly through the school textbook);

d. Academics (the questionnaires directed to this terrain were motivated by two considerations. I felt that not only would I be able to gain some kind of informed and reasonably ideologically balanced input, but that I would also be in a position to assess to what extent the assertions by educational publishers that they were committed to incorporating current research findings into their texts was in fact the case).

As regards all four groupings above, as crucial as their influence on text-making may be, my main concern was not with their input *per se*; rather I wanted to see how their views correlated with the data I was getting from educational publishers. As such, the process of gathering data from these players will not be discussed. Rather, the

information obtained from them informs my analysis, in the next chapter, of the data received from publishers].

e. Educational publishers (questionnaires, which closely echo the central concerns of the interviews I had had with accessible publishers, were sent to all the publishers I had interviewed, as well as to those I had been unable to interview due to distance, time and finance. The reason for sending out this questionnaire was threefold: firstly, to reach a wider selection of publishers; secondly, to have some standard criterion to which all publishers had to respond. This lent a certain quantifiable uniformity to the data which aided analysis (Alan in Alan and Skinner 1991:185). Thirdly, the questionnaire functioned as a kind of validity check on the information I had obtained in the interviews).

#### 4. Interviews with Educational Publishers

On entering the terrain, my primary concern related to the awareness that I was the sole instrument of data gathering. As such I was apprehensive about my possible subjectivity not only attempting to steer the interview along lines that suited the undercurrents of my hypothesis, but also functioning as a filter which might skew each piece of data as it came in, thereby casting the next probe in a distorted frame (McCormack Steinmetz in Ely *et al.* 1991:53-54; Grant and Fine in LeCompte *et. al.* 1992:432-434; Jansen and Peshkin *ibid.*:703-712).

Ely's observation, however, that

No doubt about it, one of the maddening though constructive truths of becoming a qualitative researcher is that one must learn by doing (1991: 15)

had the effect restoring a degree of equilibrium to my anxious frame of mind. So did my recollection of the point made by Carspecken and Apple (in LeCompte et al. 1992:511) that all research carries an implicit bias since it emanates from certain subjective assumptions about the terrain out there.

The first interview seemed to go far better than I had anticipated it would. Certainly I spent far longer there than I had banked on. There was also a far freer flow of information than I had bargained for.

However, on going through the recording, I began to realise the dangers inherent in an unstructured approach to interviewing that is not carefully monitored. I also noted how volunteered information can function to detract from what is not being said, thereby keeping the crucial issues at stake off the agenda. My own ignorance regarding the practices of the publishing industry also showed (much time during the interview was spent on me asking for clarification of certain terminology). Thus, while I had an abundance of material dealing with educational publishing in general, I had very little that appeared useful for my purpose.

This prompted me to take a number of corrective actions:

i. I listened and relistened to the recording a number of times. I then transcribed it, and noted those broad categories of information (Anzul in Ely et al. 1991:145-146) which appeared most relevant to the investigation at hand.

ii. Around these broad categories I drafted a set of recursive questions to be asked in my next interview. My intention here was to keep going back to the issues I felt important, but from a different angle. I felt this would serve not only the purpose of a kind of 'within method validity check' (Hitchcock and Hughes 1989:105; Clark and Causer in Allan and Skinner 1991:172), but would also

facilitate a deeper probing of those publishing activities I felt were crucial.

iii. I did some further reading related to qualitative research generally, interviewing as a specific type of data-gathering tool and critical theory. As regards the former issues, two useful insights were gained: firstly, that those

who work within the naturalistic paradigm operate from a set of axioms that hold realities to be multiple and shifting, that take for granted a simultaneous mutual shaping of knower and known, and that see all inquiry, including the empirical, as being inevitably value-bound (Ely 1991:2).

Secondly, regarding interviewing, I found Measor's perception that interviewing

involves entering another's world, and their perspective, but remaining alert to its configurations at the same time. [Therefore] (I)nterviewers need to keep their antennae up for pointers, which lead into the meaning of what is being said, and for data which fit the themes of the research (in Burgess 1985:63)

both illuminating and placating.

Regarding the latter, (i.e. reading around critical theory) confirmed for me that the kinds of questions I wanted to ask were indeed relevant not only to my hypothesis, but also to its objectives and to my research paradigm<sup>40</sup>.

iv. I acquainted myself more sufficiently with the jargon of publishing. A revisiting of Dessauer (1981) and Altbach and McVey (1976) proved useful in this regard.

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<sup>40</sup> For example, a reading of Agger (1991:chapter five) in which he discusses the hegemony of the textbook in perpetuating mainstream values in the light of Luke's agenda for critical theory (in Wexler 1991:21-23), and locating these in Kincheloe's assertion that 'Critical research is praxis...thus the truth of research must be proved in practice' (1991:20).

The pattern of the first interview much repeated itself in the second, except for the fact that I kept more closely in focus, not so much the type of answers I wanted to hear, but more the terrain I wanted to interrogate. In other words, throughout the interview, while keeping in mind all the observations about qualitative interviews discussed above, foremost was the concern that my interviewing technique should yield the category of data which would contribute to a forceful and coherent exposition of the underlying question that drives this study (Hammersley in Burgess 1984:60).

Certainly this more controlled, open-ended, interviewing technique began to pay dividends. I realised the immense value of being conversant with the jargon of the domain I was investigating. Furthermore, a greater awareness of the substratum of the issues I wanted address lent a confident pertinency to my queries. In short, while retaining the kind of looseness and flexibility which meant, to an extent, moving 'away from the designated areas...[in my mind so that I could] reach(es) the data that is central to the client' (Measor *op. cit.*:67), my informedness allowed me to come away from the interview with a wealth of data that had both direct application to, and indirect implications for, the tentative objectives of my study.

An analysis of the interview yielded two important trends. The first was to have an influence on the internal composition of the structure of the study<sup>41</sup>. The second made it clear that while educational publishers (and all

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<sup>41</sup> By this I mean that the responses I received to certain questions, and their close correspondance with those from the first interview (either as similar, or parallel or so directly antithetical that some form of symbiosis could hardly be denied) led me to feel that there are certain issues at stake in educational publishing that require consistent confrontation so as to uncover their substance and motivation. Thus, while still maintaining a largely open approach to interviewing, a definite "agenda", based on my reading, my hypothesis and the paradigm I had adopted, began to evolve: I wanted educational publishers to confront certain specific issues.

publishers) have the ultimate say as to whether to publish or not, if they decide on the former course of action, the number of influences external to themselves is considerable. These would therefore require some degree of investigation if a more composite description of publishers' cultural production was to be achieved.

## 5. Pattern of Data Collection

The pattern of data collection remained consistent throughout the study and took the following shape:

- \* interview;
- \* listening to the recording and transcribing it;
- \* coding for two types of information:
  - i. that which concerned my hypothesis;
  - ii. that which might affect my methodology
- \* intensive reading around three main areas:
  - i. qualitative research
  - ii. critical theory (my chosen orientation)
  - iii. a wide range of literature relevant to the various discourses generated by my investigation.

CHAPTER 5  
THE TERRAIN DEMYTHOLOGISED

*Between the idea  
And the reality  
Between the motion  
And the act  
Falls the shadow  
(T. S. Eliot)*

## 1. Introduction

The data yielded by this study are characterised by an underlying opaqueness. As an expression of both the effect that the uncertainties and paradoxes inherent in the current transition (Newfield in Evans 1992:39) is having on educational publishers, and of the fact this industry is reluctant to disclose information regarding its practices (FitzGerald 1979:27), this is to be expected. So is the ambiguity and indecision of the voices which inform educational publishing. Consequently, analysis of the findings was complex, often terminating in contradictions and dead-ends. Nonetheless, through the employment of a critical qualitative research paradigm, certain consistent trends are rendered meaningful (Quantz in LeCompte *et al.* 1992:chapter 10; Carspecken and Apple *ibid.*:chapter 11; Cherryholmes 1988:111-115; Kincheloe 1991; Agger 1991).

## 2. Approach to Data Analysis

Broadly following Bogdan and Biklen (1982:chapter 5), Hitchcock and Hughes (1989:97-106), Erikson (in LeCompte *et al.* 1992:217-225) and Garner (in Ely *et al.* 1991:42-156), I adopted a thematic approach to data analysis. This entailed sifting through the data until loosely-linked categories

began emerging which gave rise to 'generative questions' (Strauss 1987:17). These, in turn, as they yielded explanations, functioned as links between the disjunctive categories. By relating these resultant 'conceptual densities' (Strauss 1987:21) to my research concerns through further elaboration, 'integration' (Strauss 1987:18) began to occur. In other words, the central 'dimensions, distinctions, categories [and] linkages...[which formed] the core of [my] evolving theory' (*ibid.*) became increasingly discernable.

Four central issues around which educational publishers' practices tended to revolve, namely politics, economics, education and culture were identified. Each of these appeared to operate as a generic concept within which are subsumed a number of related elements.

In the analysis which follows an attempt is made to demonstrate how these core concerns, and those aspects which comprise them, combine to render educational publishers seemingly ineffectual as agents for social transformation. This conclusion will be achieved by pointing out how educational publishers are a microcosm of the larger socioeconomic and political configuration on which their existence depends. Thus, the extent of their contribution to the restructuring of society is contingent on the degree of the changes taking place within that broader domain.

Although these four domains necessarily overlap, the following analysis will treat each separately.

### **3. Political Considerations**

Educational publishers' current and projected initiatives regarding the making of English language textbooks appear to be framed by a tension underlying the political domain. On the one hand, they have to take cognisance of the

theoretical position of the African National Congress<sup>42</sup>. This is especially so in the light of Samuel's observation of the role that educational publishing played in 'enabling apartheid to take root in South African society' (in Kromberg et al. 1993:9) and the manner in which this statement is transformed into a thinly veiled threat:

The extent to which a new government intervenes in shaping the course of educational publishing therefore depends on the extent to which publishers commit themselves visibly to the development of a local publishing industry which fosters indigenous thought, democracy and educational development (*ibid.*:10).

In fact, most of the publishers I spoke to admitted having had "extensive contact with the ANC Education Desk in the UK and in Lusaka, reaching back to the mid-'80s". A number had also shown their political correctness by "sponsoring NECC conferences and making financial donations to SADTU". As one commissioning editor stated "publishers are **frantically** trying to position themselves". Moss articulates their positioning beautifully:

Certain publishers have worn down the carpets in their attempts to reach the doors of the ANC...which they perceive as the most influential stakeholder in future policy and practice in educational publishing (in Kromberg *ibid.*:21).

It is in this context that educational publishers are attempting to align themselves with the ideals of the political rhetoric of the ANC which, theoretically at least, is radical. Its aim is emancipation and critical empowerment in order to achieve the

objective...[of] transfer(ing)...power to the people as a whole, and the us(ing) of that power to construct a socio-economic system that will

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<sup>42</sup> See, for example, ANC (February 1991:21); ANC (March 1991:11-16); Gerwel (1992:11-28); ANC (March 1993:28-30); ANC (January 1994).

meet the aspirations of all the people of our country (ANC 1991:10).

Central to this kind of transformation is the need to

educate students...to learn to read society differently so as to apply the principles of a critical democracy to the creation of new and radical forms of community (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991:97).

For it is they who bear the responsibility of the future (Singh 1992:15).

But, to engage in a discourse of this nature, language textbooks have to be created which, in addition to empowering students linguistically for participation in the economy (Dzvimbo November 1993:8), will equip them to demystify, reinterpret and thereby reconstruct (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991; Davies in Gillham 1986) 'the historical and structural context' (Tollefson 1991:39) in which they have been located, and which has shaped their reality.

However, the production of language texts of this kind requires the nurturing presence of a political order which is in active sympathy with such an exercise. For, as Westbury notes,

The [publishing] industry is a faithful reflection of the system, i.e., the markets that it serves and of the larger context in which it works (in Elliott and Woodward 1990:18)<sup>43</sup>.

And as Heugh (1992:1) observes, without the support of the social and political infrastructure the entire transformation of our educational practice 'in order to redress the imbalance of inequality' cannot take place.

However, it is increasingly doubtful whether the ANC will, in fact, provide the necessary climate. There is mounting opinion that, except for tokenism in the form of

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<sup>43</sup> See also, for example, Krut and Holland (in Kromberg et al. 1993:5 and 107 respectively); Agger (1991:chapter 5); Lankshear with Lawler (1989) and Cherryholmes (1989).

the illegalisation of racism and sexism, and an Africanisation of government structures, the ANC is beginning more and more to resemble the Nationalist government<sup>44</sup>. Slovo, cited by Harris, puts it thus

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<sup>44</sup> This argument has, as its starting point, Giliomee's (1992) contention that a factor contributing to the unbanning of the ANC in 1990 was its perceived harmlessness in 1989. Its development is, in part, based on commentary in the press. For example, Robertson, in an article "Will the ANC really break with the past?" asserts

...its [the ANC's] capacity to imitate the past mistakes of the NP [Nationalist Party] when confronted by the temptations of power appears to have been demonstrated (the *Argus* 7/12/93:14).

And Laurence (1993:43) writing about Press Freedom contends that

The real threat lies in the future rather than the past; and it emanates from black nationalists - the "New Nats".

Van Niekerk, in the *Weekly Mail* (17-22 December 1993), describes the situation as follows:

Given what it is up against, one should not be surprised that the ANC is hatching plans to entrench its power in the state (14).

Schrire expresses this concern in the following terms:

...the ANC has not allowed principles to stand in the way of power...(I)t is a worldwide practice for politicians to put power before principles (the *Cape Times*, 7/3/94:4).

Furthermore, the argument is located in the broader context of Pieterse's observation that

Emancipation in the sense of a new group entering into dominance without the "rules of practice" being altered, may in the last instance not be distinguishable from the reshuffling of elites (1992:32).

The outcome of such is that we 'remain prisoners of dominant discourses-practices' (Cherryholmes 1988:96).

the national struggle has stopped in its tracks and is satisfied with the co-option of a small black elite into the presently forbidden areas of economic and political control (July 1993).

As Green and Wilhelm, in an interview with Meyer and Ramaphosa, note 'they have defined and appropriated the centre of South African politics' (1993:16).

In other words, it seems that at a fundamental level the terrain will remain largely structurally unchanged. Indeed, the majority of educational publishers cited political pressure as a major constraint on their future practices<sup>45</sup>. Their position seems to be summed up in the headline of a leader article in a recent *Sunday Times* : "SA on the road to more of the same" (30/1/94:18).

Ironically thus, the interregnum (Proctor and Monteith in Kromberg et al. 1993:38) in which educational publishers find themselves, does not fully facilitate experimentation and innovation. Despite the "crippling constraints"<sup>46</sup> that were in place prior to 1990 being largely out of the way, the current breakdown of 'the circuit of cultural

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<sup>45</sup> Some of their comments follow:

\* There will be a lot of pressure from the future government on publishers. We will have to go through it. We can't expect something democratic, balanced, fair. We have to strive for that. In the meantime, I think we are in for a lot of slanted viewpoints in the future.

\* We'll get back into the same set up as in the past, only this time it will be ANC driven, unless the grassroots can deconstruct itself.

\* Publishers have to accept government policy and we're caught up in this too.

\* Many publishers are uncertain about the future and are ready to jump ship at any moment.

<sup>46</sup>These were, amongst others, the need for stringent adherence to the principles of Christian National Education (see, for example, Ashley 1989:chapter 2; Christie 1991:chapter 6) and the widely acknowledged corrupt practice of textbook approval and selection (see, for example, Proctor and Monteith, and Kantey, in Kromberg 1993:chapters 4 and 13 respectively).

production' (Carspecken and Apple in LeCompte et al. 1992:541)<sup>47</sup> has not opened the way for publishers to take the lead in curriculum materials development<sup>48</sup> because they are still constructed by 'asymmetrical power relations' (Quantz *op. cit.*:478).

In short, the broader political terrain functions as a powerful coercive framework on publishers' activities. Their practices are largely dependant on the signals they receive from the overarching political domain. Since these are tending to the centre (a theme I will develop more fully later), their production is likely to follow suit.

#### 4. Economic Considerations

Publishing is essentially a capitalist enterprise Kantey (in Kromberg et al. 1993:149); Krut (1992:65-68); Apple (1984); Neavill (in Altbach and McVey 1975:chapter 5) which has a tendency to treat books as 'assembly-line products' (FitzGerald in Cole and Sticht 1981:51). Altbach and McVey (1976:11) declare that 'the most serious problem affecting publishers is economic'. And since 'textbook publishing is the backbone of the broader publishing industry' (Czerniewicz in Kromberg et al. 1993:84), it goes without saying that the profit motive has to be all important to

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<sup>47</sup> Textbooks, especially language textbooks - since language is regarded as 'a powerful symbol of heritage and identity' (Baker 1993:253) - are regarded as 'cultural products' (Carspecken and Apple *op. cit.*).

<sup>48</sup> Contrary to the position taken by Proctor and Monteith (in Kromberg et al. 1993) I feel it is incumbent on educational publishers to be directly involved in the drawing up of curricula. This assertion is obviously premised on the notion of them having sound educational visions as driving motives rather than mere profit being the impetus for their intervention.

this practice as well (*Report of the Curriculum Materials Model Group Draft June 1993:27*)<sup>8</sup>.

Concomitant is the danger of risk-taking: the overall feeling among respondents was that "economic survival and profitability are the cornerstones of the industry".

This means, as the commissioning editor of a multinational educational publisher explained, especially in "the light of the huge investment in terms of time and money<sup>9</sup> required for the launching of a new English language series, we can't be too innovative, or risk a series that will either go out of fashion in the next five years or be applicable to only a tiny market". Another educational publisher, whose main concern is "not the making of huge profits, but the producing of first-class quality textbooks", describes the position thus: "If a commissioning editor comes up with a lovely, exciting but financially risky proposal, I call in the Sales Manager to discuss hard figures with her. We need to look at viability in cold blood". "Basically, it comes down to finance" is the way one publishing director summed up this central concern.

The condition of essentially being a capitalist enterprise attempting to produce educational materials which, in our context, carry the additional responsibilities of social transformation<sup>10</sup>, thus expresses the central paradox of this industry. It begs the question raised by Westbury:

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<sup>8</sup>This point is especially relevant in the light of Kantey's assertion that by the year 2000 expenditure on textbooks will reach 'a whopping R2,6 billion!' (in Kromberg et al. 1993:149).

<sup>9</sup> All publishers claimed that the commissioning of a new English language textbook course required "an investment of upward of R1.5 million, and that it would take between 5 and 10 years before they began to see a return on their investment. See also Altbach (1983:324); Pearce (1983: 328) and Apple (in Apple and Christian-Smith 1991:28ff.).

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, *The Report of the Curriculum Materials Model Group Draft* (June 1992:3).

...does a profit-seeking industry...have the capability that is needed to function both as a national curriculum authority and as an effective developer...of school books? (in Elliott and Woodward 1990:8)

Or as Apple (1984 citing Coser 1982:7) states it:

The industry remains perilously poised between the requirements and restraints of commerce and the responsibilities and obligations it must bear as a prime guardian of the symbolic culture of the nation (309).

Luke (1988:28) further alerts us to the fact that textbooks are conceived, designed and authored 'within the economic constraints of the commerce of text publishing'.

The centrality of the financial aspect is further borne out by the various academics I contacted. All of them felt that one of greatest restraints on future textbook making would be economic.

Furthermore, as the *Report of the Curriculum Materials Model Group Draft* (June 1992:8), notes 'patriarchal relations are firmly entrenched in the corporate (publishing) world'. Moreover, this patriarchy is white and middle-class (Cachalia in Kromberg et al. 1993:156). Thus, educational publishing is 'not merely marked by the rise of capitalism, patriarchy, and Eurocentrism' (Quantz op. cit.:482); these forces have formed it. This effectively renders educational publishers incapable of participating in a social transformation geared towards equity and equalitarianism since, by definition, this enterprise can only function within a capitalist economy. To operate otherwise would have the long term effect of cutting off the hand that feeds it (Apple 1984). Hence, its most basic commitment must be to reproducing the prevailing structural anomalies in our society, characterised by a fundamental capitalism, since it is within these conditions that educational publishing ultimately thrives (Gilbert in de Castell et al. 1989:chapter 6).

## 5. Educational Considerations

The devastating violence and social instability which permeates our daily lives as a direct result of apartheid education (Hofmeyr and Buckland in McGregor and McGregor 1992: 18-19) is well documented (Christie 1991:chapter 1; Ashley 1989:67-68; Davis 1991:2-9; Alexander 1988; Mckendrick and Hoffmann 1990). It is therefore apparent that to achieve a more harmonious and stable society, education clearly has to undergo a radical transformation (Mncwabe 1990:59-60; Mzamane in Nkomo 1990:chapter 15). For it is in education that the 'struggles of transformation...are rooted in the material and ideological conditions in which people find themselves' (Cross 1992:159) and is therefore the primary means to 'offer a vision of unity and hope for our country' (Samuel 1993:3).

Educational publishers are aware of this, although their responses indicate an uncertainty of how to "cope with the demands of transformation". However, issues of more immediate and urgent concern to them is summed up in the following observation by Hofmeyr and Buckland:

Education systems do not change just because there is a change of government. The notion of an immediate replacement of the existing education system with a new, ideal one is false. The existing structures and vested interests, material constraints, the interplay of competing ideologies and the very process of negotiation will produce compromises between ideals and reality (in McGregor and McGregor 1992:17).

This raises three concerns which educational publishers currently regard as problematic to the smooth functioning of their practices:

- \* curriculum issues
- \* textbook selection committees
- \* the status of English

## 5.1 Curriculum: The Stuff of Schooling

Curriculum is, as King and Van den Berg (1991) note, a complex concept involving 'key decisions' in a wide spectrum of concerns (Altbach 1983:322). Jansen puts it this way:

Curriculum is a powerful indicator of who rules in a given society...[therefore] there can be no neutral curriculum (in Nkomo 1990:327).

As such, a full discussion of it here is not possible<sup>11</sup>. Let a succinct definition suffice:

The curriculum is central to the education process...[and] it refers to the teaching and learning activities and experiences which are provided by the schools (NEPI Curriculum Report 1992:1; see also Muller and Taylor in Taylor 1993: 312).

By definition, therefore, textbooks are interlocked with curriculum since they 'support, direct and sustain' it (Report of the *Curriculum Materials Model Group Draft*, June 1992:12).

English textbook makers are thus perturbed by the current "curriculum void". According to one commissioning editor, "the curriculum is a huge problem for all publishers. The current one is outmoded; the new one is not yet in place". The publishing manager of a multinational publisher said, "although we treat the old syllabus with disdain since it is so out of touch, we still have to take it as it is". And when I asked the ESL commissioning editor of another multinational publishing house why they don't take the initiative and produce some really radical materials that challenge the whole system from a critical perspective, she replied somewhat bluntly: "But how do you put that into practice when you've got a curriculum of

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<sup>11</sup> See King and van der Berg (1991) and the NEPI Curriculum Report (1992) for fuller discussions.

language acquisition? We can't just take the lead. We're the agents of education departments".

In this context, although there is the hope expressed that by getting texts in place, a "bottom-up" contribution to curriculum development can be made, there is an acute awareness that ultimately the drawing up of any curriculum is a political act (King and van den Berg 1991:26; Muller and Taylor in Taylor 1993:313).

Respondents from other sectors confirm this view. Officials from various education departments and political organisations, teachers and academics generally felt that the English language textbook "will enact the curriculum rather than construct it". "It will reflect the end product of the syllabus with textbook writers and publishers being motivated by market share - i.e. trying to please selectors who will comprise the core English committee".

Curriculum, or the absence thereof, is thus a huge constraint on educational publishers. And since curriculum and political vision are so closely related, there is the distinct danger of power politics holding final sway over both the letter and the spirit of the new curriculum.

## 5.2 Selection Boards

Although there is the hope that the ideal situation of textbook selection occurring at 'institutional level' (ANC 1994:77) will prevail, educational publishers, to varying degrees, felt that corruption regarding this practice would continue (Kantey 1992; Monyokolo 1992;)<sup>12</sup>. It was also felt that this would influence textbook making. Academics expressed a similar reservation. One was quite unambiguous in her thoughts on the matter:

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<sup>12</sup>See *Phi Delta Kappan* (October 1982, 64:2. pp. 87-98) and DelFattore (1992) for interesting comments around the issue of textbook selection. Proctor and Monteith as well as Kantey (in Kromberg et al. 1993) provide illuminating insights too.

The greatest stumbling block to the production of good textbooks at the moment is corruption. For as long as textbook production is centralised and enormous financial power is placed in the hands of a small group of people, there will always be a temptation for publishers to offer bribes and for officials to take them.

Textbook selection procedures are therefore a pivotal influence in the actual making of educational materials (Squire in Cole and Sticht 1981; Apple and Christian-Smith 1991).

It is clear, then, that the uncertainty surrounding the drawing up of the new English language curriculum and the future status of textbook selection committees both function as restraining factors on publishers' current initiatives. Together with the influence of economics and politics these factors help fashion publishers as agents that participate in moulding society according to the prevailing 'dominant political, social and economic groupings' (King and Van den Berg 1991:3).

### 5.3 The Role of English

Despite the premise that South Africa is a multilingual society (Desai in Unterhalter et al. 1991:112), a fact reflected in our schools (Heugh 1992:1), and in spite of the recent declaration of 11 official languages, sober predictions from all quarters indicate that English will continue to dominate every aspect of life in this country<sup>13</sup>. Not only is this due to the 'complicated set of relationships between overt political ideology and the more covert aspects of [our] political economy' (Heugh 1993:1); the 'hegemony of western political economy...which places

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<sup>13</sup> See, for example, the language policy options put forward by Lockett (1992) in her NEPI working paper: *National Additive Bilingualism* and those along similar lines in Heugh (1993:11-15).

high status on English' (*ibid.*), and which has a strong influence on our political economy, also accounts for this.

Thus, despite research findings to the contrary, and the experience of the rest of Anglophone Africa (see, for example, Rogers in Kennedy 1989:chapter one), it seems that the 'hegemony of English will triumph' (Heugh *op. cit.*:12) in every sphere of South African life.

My data, too, bear this out. All respondents felt that not only would English be adopted as the medium of instruction, but that it would also be the *de facto* official language, the *lingua franca*, the language of trade, commerce and industry as well as the language of the media, politics and wider communication. In short, the language of access to upward mobility and power (Laitin 1989:46; Eastman 1990:17). This raises numerous questions relating to social transformation<sup>14</sup>.

That the hegemonic presence of English has powerful implications not only for our society at large (Ndebele 1987; Nixon 1985:chapter 6), but also for the makers of English language textbooks (Press 1991) goes without saying. As regards the former, it virtually guarantees the continued stratification of our society along racial and class lines (Harlech-Jones 1990; Lockett 1992). For the latter it draws into focus the question of their prospective markets and how best to cater for these. Also to be considered is that language, as the 'hallmark of a [people's] humanity' (Alexander in Herbert 1992:147), functions as the 'site of struggle over meaning, access, and power' (Peirce 1989:405) in the social and educational domains (Harlech-Jones 1990; Aronowitz and Giroux 1991; Delgado-Gaitin 1990; Freebody and Welch 1993). As such, it creates a number of concerns with which English language textbook makers are currently grappling in order to ensure their survival in the new South Africa. It is to these that this analysis now turns.

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Peirce (1990:21-24); the *NLP Conference Report* (September 1991:6-7 and 18-19); Heugh (October 1992:2-4).

## 6. Cultural Considerations

Culture can be defined as 'the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action' of a people (Collins 1991:237). As such it is both conceptually and practically complex. One hand would view a peaceful future as being dependent on forging a single nation underpinned by a 'common core culture' (Alexander 1989 and 1990; see also Gopinathan 1983:344). English is regarded as the unifying thread which runs through this common culture (Desai in Unterhalter *et al.*:121; Alexander in Schrire 1990:135;) since it is largely seen as 'supraethnic' (Harlech-Jones 1990:105; Schmied 1991:102).

On the other hand, we have those who regard South Africa as comprising a number of distinct nations, each with their own language and cultural heritage (see Giliomee and Schlemmer 1989:chapter 5 and Adam in Schrire 1990:447ff. for a discussion of both positions). Much research into language has shown that the imposition of a single language as the primary medium of communication across a multilingual nation has the reverse effect to unifying it (Lockett 1992:33).

The crux of the dilemma is thus two-fold: whether it is legitimate to have, as a grounding ideology in the language textbook, the notion of South Africa as a single unitary state; and, if it is legitimate, how can English be utilised as the means to convey this unity, and its concomitant values, since English has been shown to 'reflect and exacerbate class conflict in African societies' (*ibid.*; Rogers in Kennedy 1989). Furthermore, there are the related questions of underlying orientation (Eurocentric, Afrocentric, global etc.) and the values which comprise these.

## 6.1 The Question of Unity

Educational publishers generally felt it necessary for the English language textbook to "foster national unity". It is viewed, in the words of one commissioning editor, as "essential since only some common South African feeling can accomodate our diversity. It's never been there and we can't move from the past to the future without it".

However, all warn against taking a simplistic view of the "vital exercise of nation building which needs all the help it can get". The textbook, while it should encourage "xenomania rather than xenophobia must respond to diverse constituencies to assure them that their interests are appropriately and effectively represented since diversity is a fact of South African life".

Essentially, however, unity is seen as necessary to ensure peace and national progress along modernist lines (Cross 1992:Chapter 7; see also Fine and Davis 1991:chapter 11; Tucker and Scott 1992). The vision is to "create a nice multicultural environment where kids can be safe and warm". Thus, while only two of the publishers I spoke to feel the English language textbook should take an overtly middle class perspective, the general consensus is that nation building and unity can only be achieved by catering for the "passions, wishes and dreams" of pupils. That these can be summed up as "the average South African child wants a pair of Nike trainers and a bicycle", and happen to be white and middle-class, is not seen as problematic. In other words, unity is viewed from a democratic liberalist perspective (Schlemmer in Butler, Elphick and Welsh 1987:chapter 23) in which, among other factors, a '[S]hared...consumerism' (Adam cited in Giliomee and Schlemmer 1989:223) forms the foundation for 'building a transcendant South African nation' (Giliommee and Schlemmer 1989:241).

Educational publishers want to portray an "ideal" society that should be striven for rather than using the actual one that has "created" the present reality of the

pupils as their starting point. Their general orientation can be summed up in the following exchange:

Q: So you would like to see a middle-class along Urban Foundation lines emerging?

A: No, no, no, no! But we mustn't portray reality, the violence and poverty of SOWETO or Khyalitsha, because this will upset everybody. Education is seen as a way to get out of the poverty trap, not as a means to understanding why they are in it. They don't want those images in the textbooks. The true reality of South Africa is so bloody horrible that you can't show it.

Q: But don't you think that the only way to work through it is by confronting it, not by denying it?

A: But is the textbook the place for this? It's main function is educational.

Q: But what is education?

A: I don't know. But the textbook should show what we want to achieve.

Two important factors seem to have been overlooked in this approach: firstly, that the aspirations posited are out of the reach of the vast majority of South Africans (even more so if access to these is to be achieved through a proficiency in English, an idea I will further explore shortly). The result of this, inevitably, will be a greater polarisation between economic classes based predominantly (in our context) on racial lines (Graham-Brown 1991). Secondly, whether the vision and its constituent values are, indeed, legitimate (I will take up this theme in more detail shortly).

Peirce's observation captures the dilemma:

The teaching of English...can reinforce existing inequalities in a society, but it can also help

students to expose these inequalities and, more important, help students to explore alternative possibilities for themselves and their societies. It follows that if we wish to be part of a discourse that opens up possibilities for students, we need a more powerful theory than that of communicative competence to inform our teaching (1989:407)<sup>15</sup>.

There seems little awareness among educational publishers for a radical type of interrogating text along the lines of Janks (1991;1992), Johnson (1991), Cherryholmes (1988) or Giroux (1988). Whilst imbuing the textbook with democratic values that will help achieve national unity, the envisaged society is one drawn firmly along current lines: Western, capitalist and liberal. The makers of textbooks do not feel that national unity could be achieved by a fundamental reconfiguration of society.

As a central ideological tenet to underlie the English language textbook, therefore, is a notion of unity which favours the already affluent white middle-class and its emergent black counterpart. In other words, the position of educational publishers favour the dominant socioeconomic and political order, and view the vast majority as having to "catch up".

This perception is consistent with the developing thesis of this study. Educational publishers' practices are firmly embedded in both the prevailing economic and the political superstructures, as well as the cultural currency derived therefrom. Their orientation is determined by those elements upon which their enterprise rests as well as the dictates of the socioeconomic and political terrain in dominance.

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<sup>15</sup> I will examine this concept shortly when I look at a) the question of English and unity, b) issues related to methodology from publishers perspectives.

## 6.2 Values

Linked directly to the concept of national unity, is the issue of a 'common core of cultural' experiences, values and materials (Alexander 1990:197 and 205). In addition to, and possibly underpinning the notion of a common core culture, is the question of fundamental orientation. Schlemmer seems to have an inkling of this when he states

Liberalism in South Africa has been sustained substantially by values rooted in the social experience of Europe and the United States...[but]...If South African liberals are to promote the processes which will yield a democratic outcome, they will need a more indigenous social theory of liberalism (in Butler et al. 1987:397).

Then, too, there is the question of religion and the other various values that make up the culture of a people.

### 6.2.1 Common Cultural Core

Van Rooyen (1988:1), citing article 27 of the *United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, puts the contradictions intrinsic to the idea of a common core culture firmly under the microscope:

...in those states in which ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such communities shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion and to use their own language.

Although this does not conflict with either the position of the National party or the ANC (Adam in Shrire 1990:448), and is to be enshrined in a Bill of Rights<sup>16</sup>, the potential for

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<sup>16</sup> See Caldwell (1992) for an interesting critique of the ANC's Bill of Rights.

political conflict is alarmingly present 'especially in plural societies when one segment of the population tends to become politically dominant' (van Rooyen *op. cit.*). Recent events in the South African terrain clearly illustrate this.

While national unity scored high on publishers' agendas for transformation, the response to a common core of cultural values was somewhat more ambiguous and covered a wide spectrum. As such, their position seems to reflect that of the various constituencies which should inform their practice<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Among teachers (who were split down the middle on this question) the response to whether the English language textbook should promote the concept of a common core culture ranged from "the melting pot is a must" to "I hate the idea of a common core culture; I celebrate diversity". The general feeling is that while the textbook has a role to play in creating awareness of cultural differences which could lead to some "cross-pollination of cultures" and perhaps to greater tolerance of difference, the main function of the English language textbook is "to teach and develop good use of English".

The education departments and the political groupings I contacted generally feel the need for the creation of a set of values common to all South Africans.

Academics, however, like their counterparts in high schools, appear divided on the issue. Most of them graded the inculcation of a common culture as the second lowest (out of 9) priority in terms of the functions of the English language textbook. It is regarded as problematic with implications for democracy, the recognition of cultural plurality and individual human rights. In this regard, the observation by Altbach and Kelly (1988:11) bears scrutiny:

In plural societies of the Third World, most textbooks tend to avoid the obvious problems of tribalism and ethnicity. Instead, when they focus on nation-building, they do so by denying ethnic heritages.

Rather, it was felt, the textbook should promote independent thinking, "the idea that culture is not static" and "primary human values such as love, compassion, flexibility, ecological sensitivity, wisdom, non-sexism, non-racism, creativity, courage, joy, wonder, human generosity".

I mention the responses of other players at some length because educational publishers across the board indicate that in future textbook making a wide spectrum of consultation will inform their publishing. Thus it is interesting to gain a glimpse of the opinions of this wide

Firstly, barring one, the publishers I contacted felt that the promotion of a common core culture is important. Its centrality is seen as reflecting the diversity of South Africa underpinned by those "basic needs and characteristics common to everyone which will help close those gaps among us created by the divisive rule of apartheid".

Seen from this perspective, the concept of a uniting, overarching core culture is representative of "bread and butter issues" such as the common need for food, housing, education etc. Contentious, ideological aspects, other than the taken for granted factors of racism and sexism, are largely avoided. The notion of a common culture is thus viewed through a safe, liberal, middle-class lens which regards itself, and its values, as those which largely comprise this common ground. Other than this, it is beheld as "an appreciation of South African climate, flora and fauna, and a tolerance-cum-respect for various art forms indigenous to the various cultures of the country". At bottom, it is regarded as the development of those "attitudes, skills and values which society cherishes" in the attempt to create "decent citizens who are skilled, thinking, caring members of the world community".

There seems to be a pervasive evasiveness in this perception. It does not attend to the reality that culture is a socio-historic creation (Cross 1992:179 and 184). It represents the contradiction inherent in two different political constituencies and appears to function on the seemingly apolitical premise of similitude of needs and desires, but tends to overlook the way in which these were constructed. It assumes their rightness and does not allow for different modes of being. Reality is viewed from a mono-perspective, in apparent keeping with the overall vision

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spectrum. Clearly teachers and academics do not view the issue of a core culture as paramount; indeed, many of them regard it with a distinct scepticism. It is, therefore interesting to view the response of publishers to the question of a common core culture in the light of the response from other constituencies.

that the future government has. In spite of the acknowledgement of differences, these are papered over by the bigger scheme of things: the unitary state made up of one big happy family of loyal South Africans - a truly Charterist vision forged in an outdated modernist mould.

That publishers have to comply with this vision seems fairly obvious. During the apartheid era they needed to survive and so subscribed to the ideology of that period. Likewise, their future survival is linked to at least paying lip-service to an adherence of whatever predominant ideology emerges. Politics informs their policy since it is on their acceptance by those in power that their economic well-being is assured. And it is their policy, informed by politics, that goes into school books.

Thus, it is in the interest of neither discourse that the fabric of society be ruptured through an interrogation of governing assumptions. In the words of McCarthy

...the most pernicious feature of this dominant approach to school knowledge and textbook presentation is the tendency to avoid complexity and conflict (1990:123).

Or, to concretise his observation in our terrain, Dhlomo asserts that

A strong and united South African nation of the future can only rise from the foundations and not the ruins of our rich and diverse cultural and ethnic heritage (cited by Cross 1992:175).

Which brings me to the next question.

## 6.2.2 Underlying Orientation

Sparks (1990:xvii) ascribes much of the strife endemic to this country to the fact that

White South Africans [are] blinded by the illusion they have created for themselves: that they live in a white country in Africa, that it belongs to them by right and to no others, and by the self-centeredness this has induced. From the beginning they have regarded the people of Africa as "aliens", foreigners from beyond the frontier...The notion of a border behind which white civilization must protect itself against the coming of the black barbarians is fundamental to the white South African psyche.

Giliomee (1990:4) expresses this divide as follows:

Settlers were not only what they were but also what they were not: they were not primitives, heathens, heretics or natives, but a special kind of people, perhaps even a Chosen People. Their superiority, their uniqueness depended on the natives' inferiority. To grant the subordinate community equal status was to destroy the distinctiveness of the settler community. Indeed it put at risk its very political survival. The quest became political sovereignty based on the exclusion of the other (emphasis original).

Thus, it is the 'Western values of racial superiority, exclusionism, and exploitation...narrow, narcissistic self-interest' (Sparks 1990:399) imposed by more than three centuries of colonial rule that have resulted in the current 'structural error...in the fabric of South African society, namely a skew development in the power structure and a consequent accumulation of lines of conflict' (de Kock, cited by Zaaiman 1993:5). The solution, according to Sparks (*op. cit.*) lies in 'Africa's ancestral past and its spirit of communalism...[which] affirms the spirit of *ubuntu*, nonracialism, collectivism, and humanism'. It is on 'predominantly African values' (*ibid.*) that the "new" South Africa must be built.

A similar theme is explored by Van Niekerk (1993) who comes to the conclusion that Western and Eurocentric values are largely alien to African consciousness, and are therefore untenable as a system upon which to base our society. Turok puts it this way:

...we should affirm our identity with the Third World. We are not Europeans. We are Third World people. It is not a question of colour. We must oppose the notion that South Africa is part of Europe and Western culture. It is with the Third World, and in particular the African part of the Third World, that our solidarity belongs (in Hallows 1993:309).

This calls into obvious question the basic orientation of education. Mulusa (1992:159) places this issue in the historical framework of the nationalist struggles in sub-Saharan Africa against colonial domination:

Colonial education was seen by African nationalists as irrelevant at best to the African environment. It was imported from industrialised, Western and Christian societies and could not fulfil the needs of a rural, peasant society...At worst, colonial education was a process of dilution of African traditions and aspirations, and an imposition of European norms and values. Furthermore, colonial education was characterised by discriminatory practices based on ethnic, religious and gender differences; disparities in the distribution of educational supply between different regions and communities; and the evolution and/or enhancement of inequalities between individuals and communities.

Gordon's (1980:9) feeling is that the 'answers to Africa's problems of development...lie [in] her past, her cultures and splendidly complex ecosystems' together with an education that is firmly grounded in contextual relevance.

From this position Western education is seen as inappropriate for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is based on the concepts of competition and individuality, factors which have led not only to the structural imbalances in our society along the lines of race, gender and class, but also to immense environmental degradation. Thus, it is not in a position to put on its agenda

...a nurturing of attitudes by which the present generations can identify with future generations and develop a new consciousness of nature based on

a sense of harmony and caring, and not of conquest and depredation (Singh 1992:11).

It is regarded as incapable of restoring humanity to Africa through the central African value of *umntu nguntu ngabanya abantu*<sup>18</sup>. It is seen as unable to foster those values associated with the communalism and cooperation inherent to African civilisation (Mbuyi in Altbach and Kelly 1988:chapter 8).

Secondly, a western based education, firmly rooted in technology as it is, is viewed as inappropriate for coping with the mass unemployment and poverty of less developed countries (Boyd and King 1980:501; Van Rensburg Nov/Dec 1991:29-32) of which the manner in which the vast majority in South Africa live is a typical example. Greater emphasis must be given to an education that prepares the majority of the youth for self-reliance based on a world view and system of values that is not oriented towards materialism and consumerism. Clearly, from its track record, Western education and its underlying value system is not in a position to do so<sup>19</sup>.

Being as rooted as they are in a Western Eurocentric framework, it is therefore not really surprising that most publishers I contacted are somewhat suspicious and sceptical about the idea of "Africanisation". Typical responses to my questions regarding an underlying African orientation in textbooks were: "it is a thorny issue" or "that whole thing is a very difficult area".

Such hesitations are superficially articulated along the following arguments:

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<sup>18</sup> This translates as 'a person is a person by means of other people' (Wilson in Pityana, Ramphela, Mpumlwana and Wilson 1991:18; see also Blondel and Lamb 1985:1).

<sup>19</sup> For an important overview of the whole concept of the "Africanisation" of education, see Salia-Bao (1989 - especially Part Two)

a. textbook makers are firmly placed in a Western, Anglo-Saxon, middle-class, liberal tradition out of which they cannot think themselves. Even with affirmative action, and more blacks taking up key positions, these individuals, too, have been schooled in the Eurocentric mainstream, and identify more with Western values than African ones. The makers of school textbooks are therefore in a position to perpetuate only their world view. And, as Milazi (cited by Alexander in Giliomee and Gagiano 1990:220) points out:

Liberal(s)...cannot effectively be part of...a (national liberation) struggle - for (they) cannot practise what (they have) to preach [because] liberalism is consistent with the hegemony of the bourgeoisie...Liberalism is (and remains) a rhetoric - for the simple reason that the bourgeoisie as a class cannot produce the conditions of economic democracy which are the necessary condition of the realisation of its own rhetoric.

This economic factor, firmly placed in Western, liberal capitalism, leads to the next point:

b. textbook publishers are driven by the market which comprises: government policy, concomitant education policy, and end-users' aspirations. The central imperative is material development along Western lines, calling for scientific and technological education which will develop the economy of the country and so assist in breaking the poverty cycle (*Ready to Govern* 1993:28 and 33-35).

The danger here, however, is that such an emphasis, through education, perpetuates

those things which are regarded as valuable...by a ruling...elite...[and] that the interests being protected and served are essentially those of a dominant middle class (King and Van den Berg 1991:5).

In this way, the

dominant culture (Western) represents itself as the culture, and tries to define and contain all

other cultures within its inclusive range (Cross 1992:183) (emphasis original).

The upshot is that educational publishers serve the interests of the ruling elite rather than taking a proactive role in social transformation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the ground-level values which comprise the overarching core of common culture, itself based on a Western orientation, are those cherished by a liberal, humanist framework steeped in a Western-type democracy with its roots in capitalism (see, for example, Bullock 1985 for a discussion of this tradition).

### **6.2.3 The Values, English and Textbook Methodology**

Publishers generally feel that "the English language textbook can, and does, have a huge, absolutely huge impact on peoples' attitudes and values, both personal and social, and therefore is a crucial, crucial part of any language course". This is due to the fact that "language and the way we think and live are indivisible".

This influence of the textbook on socialisation, however, has to be problematised in our context, especially regarding the use and teaching/learning of English. Broadly speaking, in this connection, the data yielded by this study indicates that currently publishers can be divided into three categories:

- a. the functionalists
- b. the centrists
- c. the progressives

It must be borne in mind, that despite clearly drawn differences among these perspectives, all three groupings, as a point of departure, have as a common goal the creation of citizens, who while not being mere passive receptors, must fulfil their socioeconomic role in a system that is

increasingly taking liberal capitalism as its *modus operandi*.

Furthermore, notions such as non-racialism, non-sexism and democratic principles currently form an intrinsic foundation of all of the publishers' manifest ethos. How could they not given the ANC's policy, and with the understanding that textbooks 'are educational tools that also have important political and social messages' (Altbach and Kelly 1988:15)?

#### **a. the functionalists**

This position accepts that English will be the language of the "new middle class, (by default) and thus the language of politics, economics and education"<sup>20</sup>. Access to these domains will therefore depend on proficiency. As such, these publishers are concerned with the functionally illiterate.

They hold no overt ideological agenda because English is viewed as a "tool which pupils have to learn to use". The textbook is regarded as one of the means of "inputting this English". In this context, English is seen as divorced of cultural values since it is not thought of as a means of "enculturation", but as a means to "make the children familiar with the different discourses needed for their other school subjects". Furthermore, this "functional and utilitarian approach [is adopted in order to] give the pupils the vocabulary and concepts they need to cope in the predominant technological reality". Mastering English, in this sense, is regarded as equipping the students with "bread and butter skills" which will, in the long run, facilitate their individual fulfilment by ensuring that, via the learnt proficiency, they will obtain work.

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<sup>20</sup> With responses ranging from satisfaction to gloomy despondancy, all the other sources of information I contacted (i.e. academics, education authorities, teachers etc.) also feel that English will retain its hegemony.

The domain of exploration and critical thinking, it is felt, belongs to the first languages. Individual empowerment is seen as being achieved through the access to the world of work that having English skills will facilitate.

That there is something fundamentally flawed in this approach seems obvious. The most blatant revolves around a number of contradictions: the comparative status of the various languages in South Africa and the way in which the gap between English and the rest will be widened; the fact that our dominant reality is constructed in English and therefore needs to be deconstructed through it; and the fact that a second language learner will always find it difficult, if not impossible, to compete with a mother-tongue speaker if the teaching/learning approach for the former is merely functional.

Furthermore, no language is ideologically neutral. As Haarmann (1986:chapter 5) has shown, on-going contact with a language not one's own has the long-term effect of 'acculturation...[i.e.] the adoption of (foreign) cultural patterns'. The danger here is that prolonged contact and interaction with a "foreign" tongue and culture, results in, as Freire noted, 'the very structures of their (in our context, the black majority) thought [being] conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped' (1974:22). This is reminiscent of Reid's observation that:

...many Africans are...not interested in...radical reforms of the curriculum...Their...goal is undifferentiated schooling for all in South Africa and a common curriculum for all schools, to the standard of the present "white" curriculum (1982: 14)<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> See also Maree (in Kalloway 1984:158) who describes this neo-colonial possibility as follows:

Demands for integration, or for the abolition of Bantu Education...may only be asking for more of the same one-dimensional way of seeing the world,

In this context it is useful to recall Peirce's observation that 'if we wish to be part of a discourse that opens up possibilities for our students, we need a more powerful theory than that of communicative competence' (1989:407). The functionalists do not even strive to achieve this minimal criterion.

#### **b. the centrists**

Like their functionalist counterparts, the centrists too are primarily concerned with the enskilling of students so that they can cope with modern life. The English language textbook is seen as a vehicle to familiarise students with much of what they will encounter in their other subjects, and, more importantly, in the wider context once they leave school. Thus, while the textbook will have a strong cross-curriculum approach, its main emphasis will be to "try and turn out kids who are not afraid of forms or menus or invitations or bus timetables"; students, who through the textbook, are familiar with issues like "drivers' licences, hire-purchase and AIDS".

However, the centrists have a far more "values agenda" than the pragmatists. Although they feel the English language textbook is not the vehicle for ideology, or for the fostering of a radical and critical consciousness<sup>22</sup>, they do see it as having to meet certain criteria:

- \* it must contain no race or sex stereotypes;

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and for fewer radical ways of visualising the future...

<sup>22</sup> For example, the questioning of authority. The general feeling is that in a context which is so torn by violence and a lack of respect for any type of socially sanctioned authority (e.g. parents, church leaders, teachers etc.), one needs to exercise extreme caution not to exacerbate matters by including provocative materials in the textbook.

- \* it must present issues in a neutral way as a point of departure for debate;
- \* it must be informed by the basic human rights of freedom of speech, religion, association etc.;
- \* it must nurture tolerance for difference;
- \* it must stress the idea that effective communication is the best means to solve inter-personal problems.

From this point of view, English for the majority, and thus the manner in which it will inform the textbook from an ideological position, is seen as a carrier of meaning, but a meaning that is a reflection of the values of the publishers. And, as one of the leaders in the field admitted, "our ethos is broadly liberal". This clearly delimits the potential for true empowering of students, for as Aronowitz and Giroux put it, empowerment 'consists in the capacity of people and groups to transform knowledge in accordance with their own plans' (1991:22).

Two further points need noting. Firstly, the perception that while "the textbook must strive to be multicultural, it must not present the demographic composition of South Africa as it is since this may skew things. Names and pictures must reflect a 50/50 mix as regards race and sex". An attempt to achieve this type of "equity" seems illusory, a hankering after a Europeanised world that refuses to admit demographic and geographical realities.

Secondly, it is felt that although the education system will open up considerably, the reality is that "95% of the classes will be all black". Thus, the textbook will have to have inbuilt "enriching material" ('a la Hirsch 1987) in order to bring the "disadvantaged onto a par with the privileged". This compensatory aspect is regarded as being most pronounced across the rural - urban divide, and differentiated "world views" are regarded as a problem to the making of unitary texts.

The problem here is the assumption by the dominant class that the knowledge and experience of the majority is somehow deficient, and requires both bolstering and supplementing to bring it up to scratch with the ruling point of view. This perspective ignores the validity of other forms of knowing, that the grand narrative embedded in Western, Eurocentric patriarchy is not the sole interpretation of existence. It denies the most fundamental of democratic principles, that '(T)here are no [normative] requirements [which can be] imposed from above' (Aronowitz and Giroux 1991:21), that the imposition of a unitary value system amounts to tyranny (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991).

Nonetheless, the general feeling is that a unitary text will have to be the norm, in the short-to-medium term anyway, since differentiated texts would echo too closely a kind of neo-segregation along the lines of the "culture of difference that has for too long been created in South Africa". It was felt that while enormous differences in levels of proficiency do exist, for a range of complex, historically and culturally related reasons, for the sake of unity, it is more important to play these down at present. And, "after all", as one person placed high in publishing rather cynically put it, "we are all equal now".

### **c. the progressives<sup>23</sup>**

Central to this educational publishing position, too, is the mastery of those linguistic skills necessary for optimum functioning in a complex, Western oriented society. However, at this point the similarities begin to diverge. For this progressive school accepts, fundamentally, the enormous power that publishers wield as "gatekeepers or filters of knowledge and values". In this regard they would concur with Coser's observations (in Altbach and McVey 1976:chapter 2). This stems from a two-fold realisation.

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<sup>23</sup> Only two of the publishers I had contact with can be unambiguously placed in this "school".

On the one hand there is an awareness that it is, ultimately, a combination of the public image the publishing house wants to generate, and the image that the publishing director/commissioning editor has of herself or himself which determines, within overall market constraints, the shape and substance of the textbook. On the other, there is the responsibility they have as to the content and values of the textbook since it is accepted as nothing less than a "fertile, ideological, consciousness-forming territory".

However, this line of educational publisher is quick to point out that "this influence they have must not be exercised as shapers of society"; their function is to "empower by presenting ideologically contentious material in as neutral a way as possible, and allowing the kids to evaluate it and take up a position that is their own". This empowering function also finds expression in a more active sense as well. For example, in addition to elements like ecology, violence, religion, sexuality, democracy and peace forming part of the content, this line of thought would like to see "conflict resolution, listening to others, asserting your own point of view as crucial features of any language textbook series". It is felt that by utilising "a pupil-engaging methodology in the context of a holistic approach around such issues, peace and empowerment can be attained".

A further example of the kind of empowerment this trend has in mind involves materialism. Social values present in both the text and the illustrations should "steer clear of American or British images which might create inappropriate aspirations". Somehow, the notion that "bicycles are better than cars" has to be put across in an undogmatic way. Central to the future prosperity of South Africans must be "...a new pride in a simpler kind of consumerism".

Thus, although not "revolutionary fireworks", this approach to educational publishing certainly seems to have an inkling of the issues at stake and some notion of potential directions to take. As such, it is interesting to note to what extent their position is reflected positively

in the attitudes of academics, while the position of the functionalists and the centrists finds parallels in the views of most teachers, education authorities and policy makers. This may be an indication, that on the ground, in the discourse of classroom practices, meaning is created which is contrary to even the best efforts of educational publishers' intentions

## 7. In Short

The conclusion to be drawn from these broad observations is that, as in the past, the majority of educational publishers will toe the government line, and thus turn out materials that bolster the prevailing status quo. As a number of academics put it, "endemic to publishing is the fear of causing offence; hence publishing lacks a culture of risk-taking; thus the blandness of most textbooks". Then there will be a tiny fraction who, since they are concerned more with "the spread of knowledge and learning", will take their role in society more seriously, and pay heed to current research as they attempt to produce quality within the constraints of reality.

Overall, however, we can expect the patterns of the past to repeat themselves. Education will see to it that minority privilege remains entrenched at the expense of majority deprivation and marginalisation. And central to this perpetuated scenario will be the practices of educational publishers. For these are merely a reflection of the structural hegemony of the ruling class.

## 8. Concluding Remarks

In this section I will briefly examine the findings of this study in terms of relevance, reliability, validity, generalisability and representativeness in context.

### 8.1 Relevance

The relevance of this study to the ongoing education debate in South Africa, with particular reference to the role that English will have, not only in the short term (i.e., during the so-called "transition"), but also in the long-term, on the socioeconomic and political configuration of this country, is founded on a number of premises.

1. that education is a powerful domain for the socialisation of the youth, either for the reproduction of the a prevailing status quo, or for its transformation (Van den Heever 1988:9; Mncwabe 1990:71; Aronowitz and Giroux 1991:96-97; King and Van den Berg 1991:4; Freedman in Popkewitz 1987:chapter 3; Silver and DeYoung 1986:51);

2. that the textbook (English language) is central to educational practice (Westbury in Elliott and Woodward 1990 2-3);

3. that its demise is certainly nowhere near imminent (Dessauer 1981:15; Altbach 1983:315);

4. that, by definition, it is a highly ideological instrument, and therefore wields much influence (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991:chapter one).

If one accepts the validity of these premises, then the relevance of this study is self-evident.

## 8.2 Reliability and Validity

These two central components of research (McCormack Steinmetz in Ely et al. 1991:94-95) need, for a number of reasons, to be problematised in the context of the current study.

1. The entire South African situation is extremely volatile at present. As Hofmeyr and Buckland note, 'the terrain is constantly shifting' (in McGregor and McGregor 1992:42) 'and the situation [is changing] so rapidly that events overtake their description' (Newfield in Evans 1992: 39). In this context, validity is derived from the realisation that

The inability of a research orientation to produce infallible research outcomes is not a mark of failure; it reflects the inherent properties of the reality under scrutiny and the types of complex questions that [are asked] about the meaning of that complex reality (Kincheloe 1991:131).

2. A second problem is dealt with by Cherryhomes (1988:110). As he points out, 'external validity problems' are bound to emerge when the research deals with 'nonsampled settings, places and times' (*ibid.*). However, as he goes on to argue, validity in critical and interpretative research is derived from its discursive discourse:

Subjects of research as well as researchers as subjects are central to the discourse, modes of argument looser, the range of metaphor wider, and the continuing social construction of our institutions and interactions explicitly acknowledged...validation moves closer to life as experienced and lived, because secondary constructs of social researches...are explicitly derivative from and thereby validated by first-order constructs of everyday life (111).

3. The ideological position adopted by the research can also be regarded as problematic since taking a position could have the effect of skewing data according to a pre-determined bias. Two counter-arguments must be raised here. Firstly, in the current research, it was the analysis of the data which, by and large, demanded that a critical perspective be taken. In other words, as I sifted through the data, and began to take note of correlations and patterns which emerged as core themes, so it became increasingly apparent that these fitted a critical social theory.

Secondly, as Carspecken and Apple (in LeCompte *et al.* 1992:511) note, fundamental to a critical research approach is, from the outset, a set of questions in the mind of the researcher that has been informed 'by a particular orientation that implicitly or explicitly bears a theoretical point of view'. In addition, Kincheloe (*op. cit.*:135ff.) and Cherryholmes (1988) posit a number of criteria to apply to the analysis of data obtained from critical research. Among the most important are:

- a. 'Credibility of constructed realities' (Kincheloe: *op. cit.*:135) and
- b. 'situational validation' (Cherryholmes 1988:113).

In the context of possible ideological biases, I further draw on these two criteria for validity and reliability.

### **8.3 Generalisability and Representativeness**

These evaluative aspects of research 'raise questions about the choice of situations, subjects and groups' (Hitchcock and Hughes 1989:45) in order to discern how typical they are of the field investigated, and to what extent the findings can therefore be generalised. As regards the former, using Kantey's list (1993:16) of the top ten publishers for DET

schools as a starting point, it is reasonable to conclude that my sample is representative of the field (see appendix 1).

In terms of the latter, I can only once again point to the fluidity of the present. In the context of an ever-shifting terrain, it is difficult, if not hazardous, to make generalisations.

And related to both criteria, the fact that the findings of the study with regard to English language publishers seems to be applicable to educational publishers per se, stands as a further validation.

CHAPTER 6  
Remaking the Terrain

*...we are fighting to free the land, the sky, the waters as well as the people...the greening of our country is basic to its healing (Sachs cited by Ramphela in Bennet and Davies 1991:202).*

## 1. Introduction

This study has attempted to assess the extent to which English language textbooks publishers, through their practices, are able to contribute to social transformation. It has investigated their location within the current transition in South Africa, and against shifts in the broader global terrain (Turner in Colomy 1992:chapter 9).

In these contexts, Freire's observation that

a society beginning to move from one epoch to another requires the development of an especially flexible, critical spirit (1989:7),

and his perception that the development of such a faculty is dependent on a facilitatory context, have both been regarded as crucial (*ibid.*:4). They seem to encapsulate the intersection of those forces that lie at the heart of our present. It is only a climate of tolerance<sup>1</sup> that will bring about the fruition of the type of individual necessary for the transformation of our society.

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<sup>1</sup> Here the concept of tolerance is understood in the Freirian sense of the 'rediscovery of the Other' (1989:71ff), or that articulated by Buber's philosophy of the 'I-Thou' way of envisaging human relations (1970).

## 2. A Summary of the Findings of this Study

Within these parameters, this study clearly indicates the degree to which educational publishers are grounded in those conditions which not only comprise their actuality, but also, and far more fundamentally, determine the precincts of their practice. Politics, economics, education and culture determine this industry; they also delimit its sphere of activity.

### 2.1 The Political Terrain

Educational publishers have demonstrated that their viability is closely linked to a collaboration with whatever political ideology holds present currency. As Apple points out 'political realities structure text publishing (in Apple and Christian-Smith 1991:6). Problematic in this context is the modernist nature of our emerging political discourse. As Touraine notes, modernity functioned

solely by the force of reason...that nothing should resist that universal inspiration which would destroy all social and cultural tradition, all beliefs, privileges and communities (in Featherstone 1991).

Clearly, in a context in which there is an increasingly strident call for self-determination, and which is characterised by widespread social and environmental ills, paying heed to a political ideology which holds a modernist concept as its central tenet, does not bode well for our future<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> My argument here is based on two premises. Firstly, the well-documented, virtually immutable position of the ANC as regards its vision of South Africa as a single unitary state. Secondly, its emphasis, through education, of economic growth through industry and technology. Its position seems to echo that of Coutts who states that

However, due to their dependency on acceptance by the political domain, educational publishers may be forced into producing the kinds of materials that maintain a discredited position. At best, this would translate into having to reflect the values inherent in a compromise: a thoroughly middle-class stance which would have the effect of perpetuating our social divide (Giliomee in Giliomee and Gagliano 1990:300). An example of the kind of values it may have to reflect due to the pressure of the governing class is expressed in Maurice's contention that the ANC leadership all send their children to elitest private schools (the *Weekly Mail* 3 to 9 April, 1992:23). At worst, it would imply kowtowing to a new rigorous and authoritarian style of government<sup>3</sup> as it grapples to contain the groundswell of dissatisfaction emanating from its inability to deliver the masses from their poverty. As Waldmeir succinctly notes

...democracy is scarcely the obvious solution for a country where the majority is poor, black and impatient and the minority white, rich and powerful... (A)ny post-apartheid government will find it desperately difficult to make the people happy. It may choose instead simply to make the people obey (1993:23).

The implication of this is that the establishment of a context conducive to full participatory democracy (Turner 1978; Giroux 1988) is doubtful. In addition, it virtually

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education must 'provide the managerial, scientific, linguistic, mathematical and technological skills to enable South Africa to compete in world markets' (1992: 66-67). Both these positions appear untenable in the current global (and local) climate.

<sup>3</sup> Eglin, for example, points out that the defeat of colonialism in Africa and of Nazism in Europe did not automatically lead to the establishment of democracies. He also points out that the ANC 'will...come into power without having experienced the constraints on the use of power' (the *Weekend Argus* 19/20 February:16). See also, for example "Despotic leaders to blame for the demise of Africa" (Deedes in the *Cape Times* 10 January 1994:6).

presupposes the frustration of the immense expectations that the marginalised and deprived have of education as a means of upward mobility (Samuel in Innes 1992; Hofmeyr and McLennan in Schrire 1992). In order to address these potentially explosive issues, individuals have to be acutely aware of why the prevailing conditions are as they are, and how they have been constructed by these. It is only from a position informed by this kind of awareness that the latent destructive anger of discontent can transform itself into a form of liberating action (Freire 1972; 1985).

The extent to which English language materials can be developed and produced which will assist in the creation of individuals capable of this type of critical thinking - a prerequisite for democracy - (Wright 1992:37-43; Collins and Mangieri 1992) who recognise not only how their subjugation has been deliberately constructed, but also both the implications of 'radical pluralism' (Giroux 1988:30) and their embeddedness in the 'earth matrix' (Pearce 1992:16-23) is therefore somewhat dubious. Instead, educational practices will be designed around the economic motive in an attempt to stabilise the country politically. And it is to these "technicist" ends that textbook making will have to be directed (McKay and Romm 1992; Aronowitz and Giroux 1986).

There is a huge paradox in this state of affairs in that it is precisely the kind of transformative education necessary for preempting grassroots discontent by translating it into positive social action (McLaren in Minami and Kennedy 1991:286-309; Freire 1985 and 1989; Spretnak 1991:174) that will not be allowed to flourish due to efforts by the power elite to contain that very discontent.

## **2.2 The Economic Domain**

This study has also shown that the educational publishing industry is firmly locked into the economic imperative,

despite the fact that business and education make uneasy partners (Graham with Tytler 1993; Westbury in Elliott and Woodward 1990). As Sanger notes education should not be at the 'beck and call' of the economy, and that big business should not have a 'controlling say in the education system [if it] is to produce holistic people' (cited in the *Argus* 17/2/94:5). Both Omar and Carolus of the ANC, too, warn of dangers that economic restraints hold for the development of education (the *Argus* 7/12/93:10).

Currently, however, education is a distinctly economic activity. In fact, Papenfus describes it as a 'growth industry' (the *Weekly Mail* 3 to 9 April 1992:23). And since, as noted above, textbook publishing is the backbone of education, Apple's observation (in Apple and Christian-Smith 1991:chapter 2) that the financial stakes in educational publishing is 'definitely not a pittance' (28), is most apposite.

This has two broad implications for future publishing initiatives. Firstly, publishing cannot afford to take risks in terms of developing innovative educational materials which embody a break with past practices. The financial stakes are just too high (Apple 1982). Indeed, one of the more progressive English language publishers speaks of the virtually insurmountable resistance he encounters from management at the slightest mention of wanting to produce English language materials of a slightly radical nature that take into account, for example, concepts like 'additive bilingualism' (Lockett in Young 1993:38-60) or 'critical language awareness' (Janks 1992 and 1993). Management prefers to stay with the tried and tested "systems-based" publishing formulae of the past since they feel these guarantee profitability. Hence, they would rather utilise their backlist publications, or merely update these to suit current ideologies regarding race and gender issues.

Secondly, it is doubtful whether educational publishers will be able to make an impact where it is most needed: the

poverty-stricken, marginalised majority. The production of the kinds of educational materials which could make a difference to the quality of education in this constituency is said to be prohibitive in terms of cost (read "inroads on profit margins"). It will have to make do with cheaper materials which, necessarily, have not had a high level of input in their making. As regards English language materials, probably the best that could be hoped for is an updated version of a thoroughly conventional textbook like *Advance with English* (Cobb, Mawasha and Gilfillan 1990). The likelihood of imaginative and challenging materials along the lines of the *Ruimland* series (Esterhuysen et al. 1992) being produced for the mass ESL market is extremely slender. It just cannot afford texts of this nature, and publishers are too unwilling to lower their profit margins to create such texts at a more accessible price (see Apple op. cit. 1992:chapter 2 for a fuller account of the economics of publishing).

In this context, the market for the better quality materials will be the already affluent middle class, especially the previously marginalised who have been co-opted by capital into this comfortable middle ground (Alexander in Giliomee and Gagliano 1990:211ff). The consequent repercussions on the entire fabric of society could be enormous. As Adam notes

The danger for South Africa lies in the temptation to create the semblance of a formal democracy, with the universal franchise and veto powers for entrenched interests that leave the enormous economic inequality basically intact. As long as political freedom does not translate into substantial economic restructuring...South Africa is likely to decline into Brazilian conditions with crimes of poverty invading the privileged enclaves or permanent repression as a response (op.cit.:241).

Samuel (in Innes 1992), for example, as well as both Moulder and Hofmeyr and McLennan (in Shrire 1992), shows a clear grasp of the financial implications of education on the

aspirations of those who have been the victims of the 'ravages of apartheid' (Samuel in Innes 1992:275).

The acquiescence of educational publishing to capital, therefore, resounds with concerns related to the undermining of what the entire struggle for liberation has embodied: the emancipation and empowerment of the broad mass of humanity which comprises the average South African.

## 2.3 The Cultural Domain

This study clearly indicates the impasse within which educational publishers find themselves since the issue of culture is so completely unresolved in South Africa. At the root of this dilemma is, as Coutts notes, the paradoxical situation where

we have an indigenous **majority**...who have historically been outside the mainstream of Western industrialised culture upon which the country's schooling, economy and technological advancement largely depends (1992:37) (emphasis original).

The crux here is whether, through education, to assimilate this majority into the Eurocentric, liberal, middle-class position of the minority culture in the name of economic advancement or whether to adopt an alternative route which is founded on the values<sup>4</sup> that, despite apartheid, have been preserved in African society (Desmond 1993:127).

The former seems to be the stance of the nation-builders who would like to see the emergence of a national

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<sup>4</sup> Essentially, what is meant here is the spirit of *ubuntu* (Sparks 1990:399), that lies at the heart of African communalism or, in Nyerere's term, 'Ujamaa' (Hurry 1987:35-36 and 117-118).

core culture<sup>5</sup>. Theirs is the Hirschian position that advocates 'cultural literacy' as a means to unity (Hirsch, Jr. 1987; see, also, Westbury and Purves 1988), but ignores the contention by Apple and Christian-Smith that there cannot

be one textual authority, one definitive set of "facts" divorced from their context of power relations. A "common culture" can never be an extension to everyone of what a minority means and believe. Rather, and crucially, it requires not the stipulation and incorporation within textbooks of lists and concepts that make us all "culturally literate", *but the creation of conditions necessary for all people to participate in the creation and recreation of meanings and values* (1991:15) (emphasis original).

This notion is of central importance in our situation where there are powerful calls from certain sectors of the population for the retention of their own ethnic identity, groupings who do not wish to be identified with a common South African image. It calls into question, for example, the PAC position which demands an unwavering allegiance to Africa, and to being an African<sup>6</sup>. Where does this leave the minority, whose culture forms the dominant mainstream?

Then, too, there is Coutts's contention that for the majority, at least, education will be geared to 'instrumental survival' entailing a shift in education towards 'culture invariant subjects such as mathematics, science, technology and vocational subjects [which] tend to diminish' the centrality of culture to human development (1992:69). These are some of the issues with which English

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<sup>5</sup> This position forms the basis of the *Freedom Charter*, and has been articulated *ad infinitum* by Mandela; thus it requires no further substantiation.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Alexander's comments in the *Argus* 18/2/94:4 and those of Buthelezi and Pretorius in the *Weekend Argus* 19/20 February 94:16 and 17 respectively.

language textbook publishers need to grapple as they attempt to forge an underlying ethos to inform their practices.

Nonetheless, the current impasse shows distinct signs of collapsing into a direction unbounded by the ethical considerations demanded by the complexity of the dilemma. Its cue is twofold: educational publishers' own culture based on their internal demography (Coser in Altbach and McVey 1976:19; Apple 1991:chapter 2), and that of the emergent ruling class. In both instances this means that educational publishers have to imbue their practices with the "big happy family" syndrome which views reality from the vantage point of affluence (see the *Argus* 17/12/93:1).

Transformed into practical terms as regards the cultural values to underlie the text, little more radical than paying heed to political correctness will emerge. Thus, though being free of such obvious aberrations as racism and sexism, the opportunity to create materials which can call into question the entire value system of the dominant ideology which forms the basis of socioeconomic and political organisation, will be by-passed (Gilbert in de Castell *et al.* 1989). Instead, we will be offered a compensatory ideology (to make up for past deprivations - see Quelane 1993:22-27) rooted in a liberal definition of equality that takes for its justification the "American Dream" concept, itself steeped in a Calvinistic, post-Descartian, Darwinian type ethic (Coutts 1992).

This is the position of those in power, and as the publisher of English language materials of a leading local publishing house blandly put it: "the closer we mirror society, the more successful we are". The chance to create materials which call for a critical analysis of how ethnicity and culture, and the values springing from these terrains, are constructed (Cherryholmes 1988; Duke 1988) is thus given little opportunity to come into being. Mbeki articulates the obduracy of the ANC position in this regard: 'there are certain basic values that will have to be observed. Without them, no-one will be free' (1993:36).

What his dogmatism does not consider, however, is Giroux's crucial observation that the imposition of any form of authoritative discourse, no matter how sound its values, is tantamount to structural tyranny that disempowers, thereby defeating its very purpose (1988:162ff.). Students have to be afforded the space within which to develop

an understanding of how cultural processes are produced and transformed through discourse of production, text analysis, and lived cultures (*ibid.*:165).

As Cross, discussing culture in the South African context, puts it:

What seems urgent is a reconceptualisation of culture with a new ideological and political content based on esteem and appreciation of humanity...the educational and cultural struggle should incorporate the struggle for reconciliation, reconstruction and national unity, in which cultural and ethnic diversity is not an obstacle but a fundamental and necessary ingredient (1992:186).

## 2.4 The Educational Domain

It is in this terrain that educational publishers express their most telling doubts. This is to be expected since not only is this the field in which they are most actively involved, drawing their very sustenance from their contribution to it, but it is also this domain into which all the other fundamental considerations both defining educational publishing, and functioning as its various catalysts, feed.

In addition to the central practical concerns, namely the current curriculum void, the future position of textbook selection committees and the envisaged status of English - all of which are having a somewhat debilitating effect on publishers - there is the more pervasive question of

"education for what?" The intent of the ANC is ambiguous in this respect. On the one hand there are powerful signals that education will have to ensure that students are equipped for the world of work. A basically technologically grounded curriculum (ANC 1994:69) with its emphasis on the vocational, reminiscent of both the *Education Renewal Strategy* (see Coutts 1992:69ff.) and the national curriculum developed in the United Kingdom under Thatcher's rule (1990), here seem to dominate. On the other hand is the assertion that

The education system must liberate intellectual and imaginative energies...and re-establish the hard but rewarding disciplines of thought, criticism and creativity (Samuel in Kromberg et. al. 1993:12).

In addition to this tension, educational publishers also have to cope with relying on mere policy signals from the ANC as to curriculum. An added constraint is their uncertainty to what extent centralised textbook selection practices will again form the order of the day. Neither are they entirely sure as to the actual commitment, articulated through political rhetoric, of the ANC to a multilingual education policy.

These concerns must all be framed in full cognisance of the monetary implications of the ANC's election manifesto statement regarding education, namely that it undertakes to 'double the number of free textbooks within one year' (the *Argus* 22/02/94:15). Educational publishers are thus held in a quandry: lucrative potential exists, but what is the means to it?

### 3. The Future Focus of Education

That education has generally failed humanity is reflected in the current state of affairs, both global and local. These

need no documentation<sup>7</sup>. What needs cognisance, however, is that these failures constitute the starting points from which education should restructure itself (Freire 1985, 1989). In addition, the fact that education is a major determinant of the type of society we wish to create needs to be continuously borne in mind (Singh 1992:7). Another factor worth consideration is that the whole concept of education itself is, having been humanly defined, subject to redefinition. This is the point that Finn, jnr. makes when he asserts that not only could education be based on a completely different set of delivery systems, but also that education could be viewed in terms of results achieved rather than objectives to be attained (1990:584-592). These are some of the issues which should inform the future orientation of education.

Translated into 1994 actuality, education in South Africa, over the last few decades, has resulted in racism, sexism, hatred, violence and crime, drug abuse, environmental degradation on a life-threatening scale, extremes of poverty (95% of the population) and wealth (5% of the population)...and so on. An analysis of the type of education which has led to this situation should give some indication as to what should be avoided in the future: qualitatively differentiated notions of ethnicity, modernity and their agendas.

At the least, then, education should attempt to facilitate the creation of a world that is thoroughly human, one devoid of the gross evil and destruction of the past. An 'overarching concept' of humanity that will put an end to

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<sup>7</sup> ...'widespread ecocide, nuclear arms, the globalisation of unqualified-growth economies, and the plunder of...peoples' cultures and homelands...loss of community...the dynamics of an increasingly manipulative, globalised, consumption-oriented political economy based on rapacious growth and the supposedly pragmatic destruction of being-in-relation' (Spretnak 1991:4-9). Also, the horrendous results of 'the evil work of racist social engineering' (Wilhelm 1993:12).

'conflicts and wars; genocides and expulsions' (Mitter 1992:34). As Rulcker states it

A huge effort is required for the Other to be accepted in everyday life. We have to resist our tendencies towards both discrimination and acceptance and make it our constant duty to consider the Other in his [sic] otherness. Such an attitude calls of course for changes in people's minds and in their hearts. It is here that education is required to fulfill its role (1992:53).

Then, too, there are the problems of unemployment and environmental destruction. Somehow education must discover the means to reconciling the tension that inevitably results from this dichotomy. For it is unemployment that lends itself to quick solutions based on further exploitation of natural resources. Individuals have to be imbued with a spirit of sustainable employment based on a harmonious coexistence with the earth. In turn, this calls for the inculcation of an alternative to modernist material consumption. Here the ideas of Turok, who advocates 'people-centered sustainable development' (in Hallows 1993:245) comes to mind. So does the perspective of Randle who makes the following point:

The old paradigm on which our culture is based - man has conquered nature; man can exploit the earth and, for ever, gain more and more material goods; man can exploit other men, and women; man can treat himself and other people as mechanical components, or economic units, whose purpose is to serve the mega-machine - has been obviously faulty for a long time. A new paradigm, with co-operation and sensitivity to the earth and to each other as the dominant value, is required...When we know how all the elements of the ecosystem are linked together, we cannot, as happens today, then mistreat one part and hope that others are unaffected. When we learn to treat people, including ourselves, as whole beings - physically, emotionally, spiritually - we cannot deal with another person as if with a machine for consuming (1989:2-3).

The position that I am labouring somewhat is that education needs to undergo a radical refocus of orientation and priorities. To plug away at the type of education that creates material aspirations based on the conquest of nature through technology is to lead the future up a *cul de sac* of no return. As Giroux puts it

there is the need to constitute a protest against those existing ideological and social practices that further the mechanisms of power and domination at the level of everyday life...[there is] the task of developing a radical ethics as a vital part of a radical theory of education [that] involves developing a vision of the future, one rooted in the construction of sensibilities and social relations that give meaning to a notion of community life that understands democracy as a struggle for extending civil rights and seriously improving the quality of human life (1988:39-40).

Finally, there is that seemingly irreconcilable divide between individual freedom and social responsibility. In this regard Spretnak's (1991) observation that we are all linked together by nothing less than the common air that we all breathe should shed some light on this dilemma. It both encompasses and extends the notion of unique individuality. It attempts to grasp, on the one hand, the humanist concept of the individual. Westen describes this position as follows: humanism

posits an active, creative self unencumbered by, or acting freely within, the parameters of natural law...[It is] extremely individualistic, substituting private meanings for public meanings (1985:16).

And undergirding this stance it draws in the observation that

self is culture - specific. It cannot be separated from notions concerning the constituents of human substance, the construction of the world and the place of human beings in it (Sarkany 1992:22).

As such, it endeavours to bridge this tension in terms of Fromm's perception that the individual's formation occurs in the interplay between intrinsic 'psychic' factors and external socioeconomic ones (1982:14). Silin, perhaps, captures the delicate balance between these two traditionally mutually exclusive positions best when he asserts that we need to adopt

a more complex, multivocal concept of subjectivity, one that posits the individual and the social not as binary oppositions but as parts of a single regime of truth...[able to achieve both] individual growth...[and] societal transformation (in Pignatelli and Pflaum 1993:222).

In turn, this reflects Stevick's 'five emphases within humanism' (1990:23-24) which span both the individual and the social by forwarding the thesis that the individual, psychosocially actualised from within, naturally encompasses social and environmental responsibility as normative practice: to do otherwise would be a contradiction in terms since it would imply being neither an individual nor a human being.

Viewed from this perspective, one which incorporates the individual's wholeness in terms of an inner fulfilment finding necessary correlation with an outer expression, this stance certainly has incalculable merit as a basis for pedagogical principles. And, possibly, the most profound domain on which it can impact within educational practice is language teaching.

### **3.1 The Location of English Within Education**

In the South African context the question of English is extremely problematic. Our situation must be one of the very rare within which a minority, alien language has assumed the dominant position that it has (only +/- 8,6% of

the population of South Africa has English as its mother tongue: NEPI 1992:22). So powerful and all encompassing is it that it is regarded as the central key to unlocking the door to upward mobility (see, amongst numerous others, Kennedy 1989; Eastman 1990). That there is something dysfunctional within this reality appears obvious. Certainly the fact that the predominance of such a situation results in the socioeconomic marginalisation of the majority of an indigenous population seems to confirm that something fundamental is amiss. How to rectify this anomalous set up is the central challenge that English language textbook makers have to face.

#### ✓ 4. Tomorrow's English Language Textbook: Some Thoughts

As both a methodological and a content base for English language textbooks for the "new" South Africa, Freire's concept of dialogics (Freire 1968, 1985, 1989) seems most pertinent. Methodologically, it would employ English as a means, a vehicle for exploring the terrain. As such, it would function as an intrinsic motivator to acquire the language. It would also demand a learner and use centred approach to acquisition (Nunan 1988). Within this kind of "learning condition" students would not feel that extraneous facts and mechanisms are being imposed upon them. Rather, the experience would be one of internal exploration and discovery mirrored in an increasing ability to articulate external conditions.

In terms of content, a dialogical methodology would utilise, as starting points, those realities which impinge directly on the learners' lives. In other words, content would be issues driven with the view to deconstructing these in order to discern not only their inherent flaws, but also future directions that could shape and give increased meaning to our lives.

An approach of this nature would lock into an English language course an integrative and thematic orientation (Lipson et. al. 1993:252-263). It would also be based on the Blakean notion that 'less than everything cannot satisfy man'. As such, it would tap into the fundamental curiosity underlying human nature (Wlodkowski and Jaynes 1991; Galloway and Edwards 1992). It would also acknowledge the delicate balance between the individual and the dynamic composition of society (see, for example, Lynch 1989; Gollnick and Chinn 1990) necessary for our mutual survival. Furthermore, it would have as a central focus the irreplaceable uniqueness of each individual life and the implications of such an awareness. And finally, it would forward the notion that we need to create a society in which

we prefer people to things, a society based on freely expressed love...[a society in which one can be] free from external coercion...[a society in which one can do] meaningful and creative work, work that is an expression of [one's] own autonomous being (Turner 1978:37).

Underlying this would be the facilitating of a comprehension of how individuals are constructed by the dominant socioeconomic, political, educational and cultural structures in place which find their expression through language. In other words, the textbook would actively nurture an awareness that we are linguistically constructed, and that, therefore, there are other ways of saying things.

## **5. Research Recommendations**

An area that requires urgent investigation, since it would be of immeasurable assistance to the practices of language textbook publishers, is 'what teachers and students actually do with textbooks' (Scribner in Cole and Sticht 1981:6). This is especially important in multicultural and multilingual classrooms where students come from a

multiplicity of socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In this context, what is needed is an account of the kinds of discourses generated from the interaction among teachers, students and texts. This would have to take the form of a qualitative, action research-based ethnographic study of how meaning is made in the classroom with the language textbook as the central catalyst.

The findings of such research would indicate to publishers how their texts are employed to both facilitate linguistic empowerment and to create meaning, values and attitudes. Insight of this nature should have the effect of enhancing their practices, placing them in a position to create more effective and relevant educational materials.

A further area for research is outlined by Apple (in Apple and Christian-Smith 1991). He indicates the necessity for a more profound understanding of 'how the economic and ideological elements...work through...the largest of all text markets...the elementary and secondary schools' (36). To accomplish this would require

...a long-term and theoretically and politically grounded ethnographic investigation to follow...a textbook from its writing to its selling (and then to its use) (*ibid.*) (emphasis original).

The benefits of an investigation of this nature would be a clearer grasp of the manner in which politics, economics and culture interact to create a certain type of knowledge, values and meaning in educational discourse.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

This study has shown how complex the whole practice of educational publishing, especially in the domain of English language, in fact is. The wide array of elements that lock, in an overlapping sense, into the making of the text renders a neat analysis of this industry virtually impossible. Nonetheless, 'as long as the text dominates curricula'

(Apple *op. cit.*), and as long as we rely on education as one of the principle mechanisms for socialisation, ongoing investigation into the politics of textbook making, so that we can understand more precisely how we are constructed, is essential. For, as FitzGerald puts it 'textbooks have become the lightning rods of...society' (1979:42).

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## APPENDIX

Publishers contacted during the course of this study:

1. Those interviewed

Heinemann-Centaur  
Juta & Co., Ltd.  
Maskew Millar Longman  
Nasou Ltd.  
Oxford University Press

2. Those to whom questionnaires were sent

In addition to the above, the following

Macmillan Boleswa  
Lexicon  
HAUM  
Via Afrika  
Shuter & Shooter  
Perskor