

THE ARTICULATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL
FORMATION WITH THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A
FIRST LANGUAGE IN THE CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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University of Cape Town, for the Degree of Master of
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SYNOPSIS

This is an interdisciplinary study which attempts to locate the teaching of English as a First Language in 'white' English-speaking South African secondary schools as an ideological practice within the South African social formation. Assuming that this formation can be identified as racial capitalism, a system dominated by the bourgeoisie and the 'white' ruling caste which is its major constituent, I argue that liberal humanism, which I regard as a suitable term for the ideology that informs the English syllabus, is part and parcel of the hegemonic bourgeois ideology that underpins racial capitalism. I also examine certain patriarchal, technocratic and bureaucratic features of the South African social formation and consider the presence of these features in the English First Language syllabus, the curriculum of which it forms a part and the process by which the official syllabus is revised. I analyse a draft of the new English First Language syllabus as an instance of ideological discourse and try to show how a counter-hegemonic pedagogy can be practised within the parameters of the official syllabus. I also make strategic proposals for alternatives to the existing syllabus, giving examples of counter-hegemonic theatre and media studies and suggesting alternative approaches to curriculum design and development. The research method I employ attempts to relate aspects of Marxist and feminist theory to my own experiences as a participant in the movement towards a radical transformation of the South African social formation. As such I see it as part of an emancipatory process and not as an end in itself.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Philosophy in the University of Cape Town. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.



Terence Edward Volbrecht

.....^{30TH}..... day of^{NOVEMBER}....., 1984

This work is dedicated to the Christ in all of us,
to Gaia, our Earthly Mother and to the children of
Azania.

PREFACE

I undertook this study because I believe that teachers of English have a vital role to play in creating an eco-socialist Azania free of exploitation and oppression. I also believe that this role is likely to remain insignificant unless teachers of English can begin to make sense of the contributions they are making in the process of social transformation. If this study inspires educators and other interested persons to set about redefining the role of the English teacher in South Africa, in theory and practice, so that 'English' can become a genuinely liberatory activity, I shall be very happy.

As I hope to show in the introductory chapter, this study could never have been written without the contributions of other people. Here I can do no more than list with gratitude the names of those people who, in various ways, have had a significant and positive effect on this study through my direct contact with them: Arnold, Carole, Jenny and Kate Abramovitz; Perseus Adams; Mike Adendorff; Neville Alexander; Muff Andersson; Nigel Bakker; Eve Bertelsen; Chet Bowers; Brendan Butler; John Coetzee; Michael Cope; Carohn Cornell; Bill Cowan; Paula de Coito; William Curry; Jane Dederick; David Dietrich; Arona Dison; Ashley du Plooy; my mother, Louise du Plessis; John Evans; Ann Fiske; Tony Frank; Alison Hallatt; Jannie Hofmeyr; Chris Horan; Susan Isaacson; Ivan James; Peter Kallaway; Michael Kantey; Michael King; Koeberg Alert; J.S. Labuschagne; Henri Laurie; Brenda Leibowitz; Steve Lewis; Ronald Lowe; Julia Martin; Kathleen Matthews; Gail and Ewald Meggersee; Hennie Mentz; Frank Molteno; Tony Morphet; Steve O'Dowd; Nancy Plaatjes; Karen Press;

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A special word of thanks must go to my supervisor, Professor Douglas Young.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CED	Cape Education Department
CR	Consciousness Raising
SACHED	South African Committee for Higher Education
SATA	South African Teachers' Association
SA	South African
WESSA	'White' English-speaking South African

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CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

THE ENGLISH TEACHER, RESEARCH AND PRAXIS: TOWARDS A RADICAL PERSPECTIVE

A radical education theory makes sense only if it is seen as part of a total revolutionary endeavour.

Joel Spring (1975:133)

This study seeks to initiate a radical reappraisal of approaches to the teaching of English as a first language in South African secondary schools. It does so at a time when a revised syllabus is about to be implemented after a lengthy process of bureaucratic, consultative research.¹ I hope to show in this dissertation that neither this process nor the syllabus itself is satisfactory.

In recent years, partly as a result of developments in the sociology of education and knowledge, there has emerged a burgeoning genre of curriculum studies which sets out to define the relationship between the curriculum and the society in which it is enmeshed. These studies, usually written by people in tertiary educational institutions, have often stressed how important it is for teachers, individually and collectively, to become engaged in curriculum innovation and development. This, they argue, would entail two essential changes. Firstly, teachers need to come to grips with the ways in which they and their educational practice articulate with the social structure and process, particularly with regard to exploitative and oppressive power relations in society.² As Adams has argued (1982:41),

The English curriculum of the future will have to concern itself more and more with the context of the world in which school students are growing up ... We cannot allow English teaching simply to exist within a museum of the past.

Related to the call for greater self-reflection and social awareness on the part of English teachers is the view that teachers need to see themselves as researchers making public those experiences which are relevant to understanding the relationship between educational theory and practice. Some writers have argued that the inhibitions of teachers in this regard are partly due to prevailing assumptions in academic educational research. Young (1976:187), for example, has said that

... most of what passes for curriculum theory ... confirms for teachers both the irrelevance of theory for practical change in schools, and their own insignificance as theorists: teachers have theories in knowledge, teaching and curriculum which ... are crucially important for the possibilities of change ...

In Apple's view (1977:79):

Educators, and especially members of the curriculum field have taken an outmoded positivistic stance that disavows significant critical self-reflection and have given it the name and prestige of the scientific method.

Bringing together social criticism and self-reflection requires teachers and researchers to adopt a more interdisciplinary approach. After arguing that it is crucially important to formulate and co-ordinate strategies for social and educational change, Chanan and Gilchrist (1974:81) say:

The unlikelihood that research will reveal such possibilities is due to its fragmented state, which echoes too easily the arbitrary categories by which the education system itself is structured: by using divisions of classroom from classroom, subject from subject, 'method' from 'method' and so on as definitions of the contours of research problems, research fails to reveal the deeper patterns of influence which would inform a rethinking of the whole educational experience.

As academic theorists have questioned the validity of traditional research methods, they have also challenged conventional ways of evaluating research, shifting attention from the gradable performance or product to its

place in the social process. Young (1976:190), for example, argues that

The testing ground of a theory is not its conceptual clarity nor its ability to predict outcomes, criteria we have inherited from a narrow conception of philosophising and a dubious scientism, but how such ideas are transformed into action in the practice of teachers and pupils that make up our schools.

In his comparative survey of research methods, Morgan (1983:398-406) arrives at similar conclusions:

The idea of obtaining an objective form of objective knowledge based on the positivist ideal of systematic, comparative, replicative observation and measurement is still used as a point of reference against which all research should be judged. These are the criteria that are often used to disparage the worth of a single case study or of qualitative research, in which the researcher as participant in the situation is really the only research instrument used. Such an approach to evaluation is based on a major fallacy and logical error in that rules for conducting research are mistakenly seen as rules of justification in the evaluation of knowledge. The protocols and aims of positivist research prescribe a way of doing research and have much value in this regard. But they have no logical claim to serve as general standards for the evaluation of research ... the prevailing ethos ... tends to view and organize research as a technical activity to be controlled and evaluated through bureaucratic mechanisms. This ethos depersonalizes the research process and tends to remove responsibility for what the researcher does from the researcher, often reducing his or her role to that of an agent engaging in the kind of research he or she feels the institutionalized system demands.

Morgan's book makes clear that different research methods have different kinds of validity, but it still tends to view research as something to be undertaken by academic experts. All the contributors to his book are academics or professional researchers. I would argue that all human praxis is a form of research, and that the capacity for reflective action can be developed and enable people to take control of their own individual and collective destiny.³ If this capacity is not allowed to develop in

collective research, bewilderment and submission are likely. For most teachers in my experience 'the problems are felt and sensed, but remain undefined, rather than brought into consciousness' (Reynolds and Skilbeck, 1976:31-32). In my view, English teachers need to reflect on the situation in which they find themselves in order to change it. Freire (1972:81) sees the need for reflection as follows:

Reflection upon situationality is reflection about the very condition of existence: critical thinking through which men (sic) discover each other to be 'in a situation'. Only as this situation ceases to present itself as a dense, enveloping reality or a tormenting blind alley, and men (sic) can come to perceive it as an objective-problematic situation - only then can commitment exist. Men (sic) emerge from their submersion and acquire the ability to intervene in reality - historical awareness itself - thus represents a step forward from emergence, and results from the conscientization of the situation.

In my view, emergence is not the process of acquiring 'objective' knowledge in the positivist sense, but a collective demystification and transformation of those conditions of existence that exploit, oppress and alienate people.

Several writers have stressed the need for teachers to become involved in collective activities that break the isolation of classroom practice. Chanan and Gilchrist (1974:14-19), for instance, feel that

The single most important reform that could be made in schools in the short term would be the designation of one day a week in term time for every teacher to participate in planning and collective assessment of their work ... Only when relationships among teachers become more open and mutually supportive will they feel sufficiently secure to enter into the more equal relationship with pupils on which effective teaching vitally depends.

There are several possible approaches to such collective endeavour, one of the most promising of which is action research. Kemmis (1982) has described the kind of action research programmes that have already been put into

effect in Australia. These programmes are a new formal extension of the principles of praxis and if linked to the activities of other progressive community organisations, would play a vital part in strategies for social transformation.⁴

In the meanwhile, until such research programmes are instituted, teachers need to become aware of and develop their own non-formal praxis. This is why I want teachers to see the arguments put forward in this study as arising from my own praxis in the years of my training and teaching. In this chapter I also want to show, through a reflective description of my praxis, how involvement in various activities fulfilled some of the functions of research. This year's study-leave has given me the opportunity to reflect on my experience, partly through the reading of critical literature, and partly through interviews and discussions with policy makers, representatives of teachers' organisations, teachers, lecturers, school and university students, researchers and friends. I therefore see the research I have conducted this year as an extension and consolidation of my praxis and hope that it will prove useful to teachers wishing to develop their own praxis.

I hope that my critical, constructive self-assessment will make teachers more willing to initiate forms of participatory research based on a realisation that the identity of a teacher is shaped by a dynamic interaction of personal praxis and socio-historical processes. I also wish to encourage teachers to engage in some of the activities I describe, particularly those that encourage self-reflection and a more committed involvement in progressive activities and organisations outside their professional specialisation. My account of my praxis should also serve to introduce some of the issues that would need to be raised if teachers were planning action research programmes. My account should show how one's praxis relates to the choices one makes, both with regard

to one's political orientation and one's personal preference for certain kinds of reading and approaches to research. I have recently become aware, for example, of the extent to which my praxis has been motivated by and rooted in my earliest childhood experiences. Important as this psychological dimension is, I have chosen to focus primarily on my more public activities. I shall nevertheless have reason to reflect on certain 'personal details', not out of any exhibitionistic desire to wear my heart on my sleeve, but in order to show how complex the interaction of the social and personal spheres are. I believe it is particularly important to be aware of the ways in which the dominant ideology is mediated through the gender relations of the petty bourgeois nuclear family, and, conversely, how propensities developed within the confines of the family are mediated as they are projected into other social contexts.

Stressing that I see my individuality as historically and socially constituted, I now turn to a survey of my years as a student and teacher, with a view to showing how my praxis was radicalised.

Having decided with some reluctance to enter the teaching profession, I embarked on a university education. I read English largely because humane and imaginative English teachers had made it (for me) the most enjoyable subject at school. University English was extremely dull by comparison. I particularly resented the tedious grind of practical criticism after years of developing my imagination in 'creative writing'. As often happens, practical criticism killed the desire to write poetry or fiction. Longing to be divorced from the tedium of literary criticism, I was easily seduced by the hedonistic and spiritual fervour of the sixties' counter-culture. Yet in a peculiar way, these influences converged. Leavis made his mark on me, filling me with moral zeal and a belief that Literature could help to save the world.

This, despite the fact that the English Department was clearly no Isle of the Blessed. Of course what yoked Leavis and the hippies was their opposition to industrial capitalism and their inability to understand it in terms of class conflict. My commitment to the use of popular song in the teaching of English stems from my involvement in the 'counter-culture' of this period, when it seemed that rock 'n roll could reinstate oral poetry as a genuinely popular art form.

Then there was English Method in the year of the Teachers' Diploma. I retain virtually no memory of anything learnt in that year. What strikes me most forcibly now, and this holds true of the university years as well, is that there was absolutely no attempt to relate the study or teaching of English to 'the meaning of life' in South Africa. There was also no historical sense of English as a subject. This, I think it is fair to say, remains the case at South African universities today. 'English' ever was and ever more shall be. Other crucial 'lessons' learnt from university and college studies in English were that students are the passive recipients of knowledge, and that learning is, in the final analysis, an individualistic, competitive affair.

In the years 1970-1975 I was married to someone teaching at 'coloured' training colleges and formed friendships with her colleagues and students. The clash of this reality with my daily life at a dual-medium 'white' school made the injustice of unequal racist education obvious. Yet it still did not occur to me that the high moral tone of the syllabus simply did not begin to address, and in fact condoned by its silence, the obscenities of apartheid. There were times when this contradiction threw sparks into my classroom, but by and large my 'progressive' English teaching bloomed in a little England by the sea. As regards my praxis, there was as yet no real dialectic between by teaching and the ongoing abominations of racial capitalism.⁵

In-service training courses in this period were all concerned with the exciting playfulness of 'creative' existentialist teaching. This had its positive aspects but it chafed against the more cerebral and joyless demands of the examination system. Imaginations sparkling like the bubbles we blew in the classroom as a stimulus for poetry writing did not float out of the window to other Group Areas, except in the prescribed work of Alan Paton. Most books on English teaching, including text-books, are written in the creative but naive spirit of that period. And judging by the new syllabus, not even the bullets of 1976 and 1980 have been able to dispel the dream.

In 1976 I took study-leave to do English Honours, hoping that it would rekindle my faith in the moral power of English Literature. The year was a turning point in several ways. Firstly, I became aware of the revolutionary potential of children and the murderous determination of a state determined to repress it. I realised that to think of education as apolitical is sheer nonsense and decided to be far more outspoken in future. This resolve was fuelled by my becoming familiar with alternative approaches to literature. But because English Honours is not designed for teachers, I did not know how, for example, the semiotics of Barthes could be adapted for use in the classroom. The Marxist elements in the work of Barthes and Raymond Williams did not stir my liberal humanist roots. I know this because my dissertation on Bob Dylan tried to get him admitted to the bourgeois pantheon of bourgeois high culture. Williams's The Country and the City did, however, demolish my faith in Leavis's organic community, just as Barthes ended my belief in the 'organic unity' of the text. Studying film in my Honours year gave me a sense of its potential as a medium for study in schools, although I still saw it through the eyes of Leavisite critics like Robin Wood.

Before turning to the crucial year of 1980, I wish briefly to consider the impact of some deschoolers and libertarian educationists on my teaching. In the years 1970-1979 the key writers for me were A.S. Neill, Ivan Illich, John Holt and Paul Goodman. I shall return to some of their ideas. For the present I need to point to the effect they had on my teaching. Firstly, while their loving sense of the dignity of children moved me deeply, they confirmed my feeling that state schooling oppresses young people and cripples their capacities for collective and self-activated learning. This generated considerable tension in me because I felt that I had to find ways of becoming a non-oppressive oppressor. Deep down there was the fear that 'progressive' teaching styles in the context of compulsory schooling could inadvertently become a manipulative confidence trick. Secondly, I felt I had to start looking for ways in which the whole structure of compulsory schooling could be transformed. Unfortunately the writers demanding this offered no plausible strategy.

1980 was crucial for me in several ways. I was at the time living in a communal house in Observatory, heartland of the 'white left'. One of my housemates was teaching English at SACHED and challenging my liberal humanist assumptions about education at every turn.⁶ His friends, students and colleagues teaching in 'coloured' schools shared his views. Then the boycott struck and I was fully immersed into an ongoing analysis of the crisis, both in informal discussions and in written bulletins from the battlefield. My faith in the capacities of young people to take control of their educational and personal destiny was consolidated by this experience. At the same time I was engaged in working on a book I had been commissioned to write on the use of popular song in the teaching of English. My readings in the sociology of popular music and culture led me inescapably to the conclusion that understanding the class struggle is

essential to an understanding of cultural production and reproduction.

This insight is central to the book I wrote and is possibly the main reason for its being turned down by the publishers. But that is another story. What has to be grasped here is the basic question my new insight raised with regard to my teaching the children of the ruling class. It has become increasingly clear to me that my whole educational project up to 1980 had been moulding me as what Gramsci would call an organic intellectual of the petit-bourgeoisie. However, I thought that if I could be persuaded to defect, even if within certain limits, then the possibility could be presented to children of the ruling class as well. This, I hoped, would be a small counter to the Urban Foundation's plans to swell the ranks of the petit-bourgeoisie.⁷ I had become aware of the Urban Foundation's role in the class struggle while teaching guitar at the Community Arts Project.⁸ There was a bitter controversy at the time about the advisability of accepting funding from the organisation.

After the profound ideological shift I had undergone during 1980 it was hardly surprising that I decided to attend the 'Curriculum Innovation in South Africa' conference at U.C.T. in January 1981. Apart from confirming the political nature of all education, what the conference made me feel strongly was how inadequately I had been trained as a teacher to participate in curriculum development. Unfortunately most of the papers delivered were analytic rather than strategic and I left with no new insights as to how I as an individual could initiate fundamental changes in the English syllabus and the Cape Education Department curriculum of which it forms a part. It was therefore with high hopes that I attended the 'English in the Eighties' Conference in April of that year. To my dismay not one paper at the conference made any reference to the issues raised at the earlier

conference. It was with frustration bordering on despair that I returned to the isolation of my classroom. I should perhaps point out that the conference was initiated by the S.A. Council for English Education which defines itself as a 'non-political body devoted to the maintenance and improvement of English'.

In order to keep in direct contact with the realities analysed at the earlier conference I decided to begin working part-time at SACHED, first as a tutor in the UNISA English I course, then as a tutor in the English Foundation Course, and then as a student in the African Studies Foundation Course. The UNISA experience deepened my anger about the cloistered political irresponsibility of English academia in South Africa. Apart from this negative experience, working at SACHED has had an enormous impact on my teaching. In the foundation course we attempted to combine training in study skills with a critical approach to the role of ideology in education and work. As a result of the African Studies Foundation Course I began to read more widely in African history, literature and political economy. I began to use resources in the SACHED library as an alternative to the Anglo-centric material in my school text-books.

It was my involvement with SACHED that led me to ask my fellow committee members at the Mowbray Teachers' Centre what we could do about introducing more African literature into schools. We immediately became aware of the bureaucratic haze that surrounds the prescription of books in the C.E.D. We asked the Chief Inspector for English to explain the process to us and became aware of the SATA book selection committee. Some of us attended its next meeting and raised the idea of recommending more African (including South African) literature. The response was mixed, cautious but not unsympathetic, and more African literature began to appear on the recommended lists. I shall have more to say about this matter in a later chapter. It is at present difficult to estimate the

outcome of this kind of initiative, but it is clear that direct intervention in decision-making processes can alter the content of the syllabus. Moreover, progress made in the acceptability of African Literature can encourage one to look for other loopholes in 'the system'. I have, as I shall show later, found other ways of incorporating African Literature into the syllabus.

In addition to the venture in promoting African Literature, I have used the Teachers' Centre in other ways to improve my praxis as a teacher. I have given talks hoping to encourage more dialogic and politicised teaching and I have gained valuable advice on developing practical skills in my teaching. Two important limitations of the Centre arise from the nature of the prescribed curriculum. There is as yet no basis for an interdisciplinary approach to existing subjects, and activities concerned with the subjects tend to be confined to the more prescriptive parameters of the syllabus.

The same holds true for Crux, the South African journal for English teachers, and for English Department meetings at school. The latter are usually held within the highly pressurized time schedules of everyday working life and have in my experience not provided an opportunity for deeply reflective and collective work. I still have a lot to learn about how an English Department can become a radical, self-evaluating unit.

Looking for new insights into the role of a radical teacher in a 'white' school, I decided to attend the Culture and Resistance Symposium in Botswana in July 1982. Delegates and participants were all defined as cultural workers, and it was made clear that in one's work one either transformed or perpetuated the status quo in South Africa. A friend and I befriended two 'white' school students at the conference and decided on our return to start a discussion group to see what we could contribute to 'the struggle'. Other school students joined the group but it soon started to fall apart for a variety

of reasons. On one occasion we arranged for a leader in the 1980 boycott to speak to the students. This seemed to intimidate some students and ironically reinforced class and race prejudice. One of my students remarked that it was all very well for 'them' to demand their rights because they had nothing to lose. Then a disturbed parent phoned a 'white' headmaster who told a prefect in our group that he was considering calling in the police and that 'arrests would be made' if he did so. The tendency to quail also appeared when a group of prefects and I drew up some proposals for the abolition of the prefect system and the introduction of an S.R.C. with real power. When our headmaster rejected the proposals as 'too radical' the prefects decided to drop the matter.

The discussion group spluttered on for a while but we soon realized that talk was not productive enough. At my suggestion four of us decided to write a play that would raise the issues we had been discussing. I shall discuss this venture in more detail in one of the appendices. What I wish to stress here is that scripting and staging a play of this kind is, in my view, considerably more educational than the 'close reading' of a Shakespeare text.

Despite the demise of the small discussion group, I decided to become involved in the Social Issues Group, which some members of 'the white left' had started with a view to politicizing school students in 'white' schools. S.I.G. has done some valuable work, giving talks at schools, organising workshops and social history tours and meetings with 'black' students. I would have liked to see more involvement by students in the planning of activities, but this may come in time. In order to further S.I.G.'s aims I started a Current Affairs Society at school, but such extra-mural activities form such a small part of the curriculum that their impact is likely to remain small.

I turn now to the next important development in my praxis, which is my research into the relationship between gender and the teaching of English. This research began when I joined a men's consciousness-raising group in August 1982. The aim of this group, which met once a week for two to three hours, was to explore the subjective experience of being male in South African society. I joined the group because for the second time a long-term love relationship had broken down, with my commitment to my work again being seen as a major factor in the process of estrangement. I felt it necessary to explore in depth how my work ethic, my personal relationships and my subjective identity were related to one another.

After the Men's Group Exhibition at the Cape Town Art Centre at the end of 1982, it was decided, at the suggestion of feminists who were present, that two mixed gender groups should be formed. I joined one of the groups, which has met once a week for two to three hours ever since. In later chapters I shall consider the impact of gender relations on English teaching in more general terms. At this point I shall indicate briefly the relationship between my own socialisation into gender and my 'career'. My interpretation is based on insights gained in group discussions and from a fairly extensive acquaintance with feminist writings.

Within the first four years of my life, I sensed that my mother was trapped into an unhappy marriage and that this was preventing her from giving the nurturance I needed. It was too frightening to confront the possibility of my mother's not loving me, so I thought firstly, that I was 'bad' or guilty and secondly, that I would prove to her that I was lovable by being 'good'. My sense of guilt was intensified when at the age of four I opposed the prospect of my parents' divorce. In doing so I sensed that I was condemning my mother to a future of imprisonment. This impulse to take responsibility for the suffering of my mother is, together with my sense

that my needs as a human being were not being met, arguably at the root of my concern for children, women and the poor as oppressed groups.

My mother had been drawn into marriage before the completion of her tertiary education whereas my father soon established himself as a brilliant academic, teacher and psychologist. Intensely competitive, he soon instilled in me the sense that the way to be 'good' in the world was to be a professional, intellectual 'winner'. This was tied in a complex way to the Protestant ethic in the spirit of capitalism, an ethic of individualism, hard work, competitiveness and social service.⁹ For me, failing to measure up to my father's standards would mean a failure as a human being. This interiorisation of my father's petit bourgeois, patriarchal value system is at the root of my ambivalent feelings about academic success. In this system, which arises out of complex historical processes, appreciation and approval of intellectual performance come to override a nurturant valuation of the human being. At the intersection of maternal and paternal influences I came to believe that I should use my intellect to make the world loving, lovable and whole. This quest for wholeness, arising out of my sense of a broken home, is at the heart of this research project, which seeks to move from a vision of an alienated, fragmented world to a vision of those values, commitments and changes that would begin to make it whole.

In my teaching, the patriarchal and maternal influences derived from my own interpellation as an historical subject have coalesced with the set of gender relations that have been structured historically into the teaching of English.¹⁰ In my own case, the need for nurturance is one of the factors motivating my move from a maternal, patriarchal domination of pupils to a learning relationship of equivalence and mutual trust.

I have mentioned this biographical socialisation into

gender because I believe that teachers should seek to understand the emotional needs and propensities that inform their teaching styles.

Perhaps the most valuable result of my involvement in these consciousness-raising (CR) groups has been a much greater emotional and intellectual openness in my own teaching style. This has allowed for far more trusting relationships in the classroom. In addition, I have found that feminist issues fascinate young people if properly handled. Students have proved quite capable of extending my awareness of sexism in school culture. There is also, I have learned, considerable potential for the introduction of feminist approaches to the study of literature.

A few points should perhaps be made about feminist CR groups as a form of research. Firstly, the discourse is oral rather than literate and therefore the written recording of data and outcomes is not essential. Secondly, members of the group participate on the basis of equality. There is no dichotomy between the researcher and the researched. Thirdly, abstract or intellectual theorising has to be integrated into a subjectively expressed emotional reality. Fourthly, the insights in the group discussions are tested against actual experiences outside the group, so that a continuous dialectic of exploration and evaluation is established. These features of CR research have vastly increased my capacity to digest feminist writing. I had responded positively to feminism on an intellectual level as early as the late sixties, but now can perceive a huge gap between acknowledging the validity of feminist values and actually living them. There is no doubt in my mind that this 'credibility' gap is of central importance in approaches to the teaching of literature.

I now turn to the last major influence on my praxis to have emerged in the last few years. This concerns my involvement in the anti-nuclear movement. When I first

joined a nuclear issues group at the Cape Town Art Centre and then Koeberg Alert, I had no clear idea of how it would affect my understanding of education. To my surprise it has been a rich source of insight on many levels. Firstly, I learned how difficult it is to establish genuinely democratic practices. Tendencies to be excessively bureaucratic and technocratic kept creeping in. Secondly, I realised how difficult it is to dovetail radical and counter-cultural approaches to an issue of common concern. This difficulty, and the difficulty of mobilising conservative conservationists, is one of the central concerns of the German Green Party and its imitators in other countries. Thirdly, I began to realise that there is a direct relationship between choice of technology (hard or soft) and civil liberties. This led me to the writings of those Marxists who analysed the role of technology in the world economy. Previously I had thought that this economy was indefensible because it did not ensure an equitable distribution of resources. What writers such as Bahro and Gorz as well as artists like Joseph Beuys have shown is that there is a devastating and potentially catastrophic contradiction between the laws of capital accumulation and industrial growth and the capacity of the ecosystem to withstand the consequences of depletion, pollution and destruction. And at the heart of this particular darkness, this psychosis which E.P. Thompson calls exterminism, is the arms race, which threatens us all with annihilation.

Extending the work of radical ecologists, several writers have begun to explore the relationship between modern science, capitalism and patriarchy. In relation to my own work, I began to understand how a technocratic scientism pervades virtually every aspect of the curriculum. These issues should, in the view of many, be central to the concerns of all educators. Asking the occasional pupil to write a poem or do an oral on nuclear power is not going to solve the problem. A co-ordinated

effort needs to be made to ensure that young people facing this ominous future have a comprehensive understanding of the issues involved. I shall examine some of these issues in Chapter 3.

Merging with my praxis as described so far has been my ongoing quest for an apprehension of spiritual reality. My father's sudden death in 1964 demolished my faith in the Protestant deity and I have been trying to rediscover and reconstitute God ever since. I won't go into the details of this long and complex process, but must offer a brief account of my present position in order to clarify the epistemology which will inform my analysis of the English syllabus in later chapters.

My present vision of spiritual reality rests in part on my readings in comparative religion. Those religious cosmologies which I find most appealing and convincing are Gnostic Christianity, Sufism, Zen Buddhism, Vedanta, and Taoism. What has interested me particularly in my study of these and other religions has been the notion of spirit, an irreducible, unifying, joyous, loving and creative principle which is immanent in all being. It is interesting to note, for example, that the African work ki and the Chinese word chi, strikingly similar in sound, both refer to an essentially similar spiritual reality. Modern psychoanalysis has in various ways tried to describe this primordial reality, and there are recent indications of a possible convergence of religious, scientific, political and psychoanalytic accounts of reality.¹¹

A recent metaphor by Rudolf Bahro (1984:215) is useful in helping to explain the epistemological framework of my thesis which is in essence suggesting that the bourgeois conception of the individual human subject in society which informs the English syllabus perpetuates an oppressive ideology. Bahro, in an interview, is answering the question, 'You see exterminism as something anchored in human psychology?'. Bahro replies:

Yes. In fact I would fault Marx for not having been materialist enough, in that he undervalued three levels of reality which have their weight in a monistic conception. Marx took the level of objectification and on this basis built up a historical materialism. But this presupposes the level of reality which is objective spirit, at the summit of which is the fact that the human being possesses consciousness. Marx said himself that everything goes through the head. Beneath this is the level of human nature as a whole, and beneath this again is nature, from which we originate and which Marx regarded as somehow passive. In other words, his static model did not take sufficiently into account the impulses which brought forth the human being in the first place. I believe the truth lies somewhere between this static model and the Aristotelian entelechy.

Now, when I speak of psychology, I am speaking of the quintessence of this process of development. This is where the psychodynamic, the sociodynamic begins. History is primarily psychodynamic.

In my view, the goal of all education should be to integrate the spiritual, human and natural levels in Bahro's metaphor. I see this as both an individual and a social project. For me, historical materialism tends to focus too exclusively on the middle plane. The limitations of this position have been passionately expressed by the American Indian Russel Means (Croall and Rankin, 1981:120):

Europeans may see (Marxist materialism) as revolutionary but American Indians see it simply as still more of that same old European conflict between being and gaining. Being is a spiritual proposition. Gaining is a material act. Traditionally, American Indians have always attempted to be the best people they could. Part of that spiritual process was and is to give away wealth, to discard wealth in order not to gain. Material gain is an indicator of false status among traditional people while it is 'proof that the system works' to Europeans ...

Most important here is the fact that Europeans feel no sense of loss in this. After all, their philosophies have despiritualized reality so there is no satisfaction (for them) to be gained in simply observing the wonder of a mountain or a lake or a people in being. Satisfaction is measured in terms of gaining material - so the mountain becomes gravel and the lake becomes coolant for a factory ...

I do not believe that capitalism itself is really

responsible for the situation in which (American Indians) have been declared a national sacrifice. No, it is the European tradition. European culture itself is responsible. Marxism is just the latest continuation of this tradition, not a solution to it. There is another way. There is the traditional Dakota way and the ways of the other American Indian peoples. It is the way that knows that humans do not have the right to degrade Mother Earth, that there are forces beyond anything the human mind has conceived, that humans must be in harmony with all relations or the relations will eventually eliminate the disharmony.

All European tradition, Marxism included, has conspired to defy the natural order to all things. Mother Earth has been abused, and this cannot go on for ever. No theory can alter that simple fact. Mother Earth will retaliate, and the abusers will be eliminated. Things come a full circle. Back to where it started. That's revolution.

This, despite its ethnocentric and idealist oversimplifications, is a challenging prognosis. The 'European tradition', if there is one, needs to take it into account. As I have already suggested, there are signs of a converging of influences which might prove fruitful, and those who are engaged in the study of language are in a vitally important position to promote emancipatory tendencies in individuals and groups, and to promote an understanding of the complex tensions between ecosocial being and human subjectivity.

Basic to Marxism is the idea of human subjectivity as an ensemble of social relations. Developments in modern linguistics have taken this idea an important stage further. Saussurean linguistics has shown that words, and the things they seem to refer to, derive their meanings from their place in an ensemble of linguistic (paradigmatic and syntagmatic) relations. Structuralists have extrapolated this idea to refer to all signifying practices. Other linguists, such as Volosinov and Raymond Williams, have shown that language and other signifying practices are constituted in and through social and historical processes.¹² Writers like Jung and Chomsky, reviving ancient knowledge contained in the

universal teachings of Christ and the I Ching, have identified archetypal structures that inform all human consciousness. All these trends, despite certain unresolved contradictions between them, point to the vision of 'being' as a unified field, a vision which modern physics and information theory is beginning to confirm.

What are the implications of the convergence of Marxist historiography, economics and social theory, linguistics, psychology, political ecology, feminism, comparative religion and radical science for a researcher and for a teacher of English in a 'white' school, trying to help students discover their personal and social identities? Let me consider the problems of the interdisciplinary researcher first. English has always been the most open or, in Bernstein's terminology, the most weakly 'classified' of secondary school subjects, and this has been a major factor in my choosing to do interdisciplinary research. However, starting in a particular discipline, it is difficult, given the available curricula, to devise a research paradigm that will do justice to the depth of each traditional discipline. At Muller and Crewe (1981:9) point out,

Research can be one of two operations. It can apply known rules to new cases and this is the aim of most disciplinary research. Searle would call this generating non-constitutive knowledge. To do this, a firm grasp of the constitutive principles is necessary. Much less frequently, but no less crucially, research can try to generate new principles and structures of knowledge - in other words, to evolve new constitutive insights. When these are developed, they tend to transform the nature and basis of the discipline.

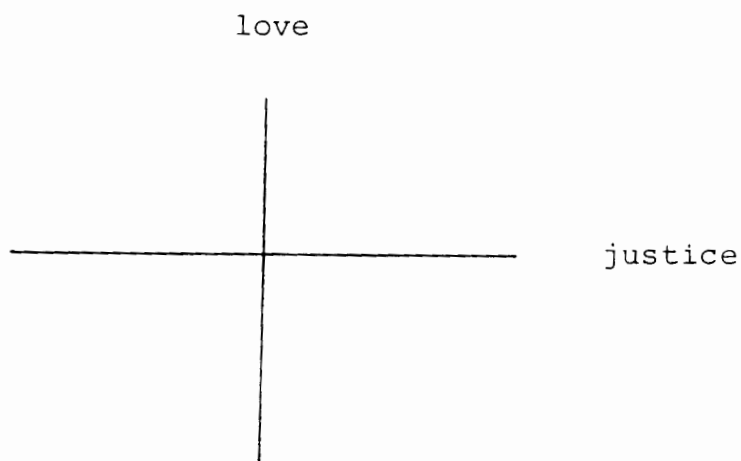
It follows that constitutive interdisciplinary insights can only be generated when the constitutive principles of the core disciplines are mastered to some degree.

This indicates my limitations and difficulties as an English teacher doing interdisciplinary research. On the one hand the praxis I have described has led me

inescapably to the conclusion that English teachers need a rigorous interdisciplinary grasp of their subject. On the other, the sheer magnitude of the task threatens to be overwhelming, giving one a sense of the puny insignificance of over-simplified insights. Nevertheless, there remains the conviction that this kind of research, despite its limitations, will reveal the need for more interdisciplinary curricula and research.

Since different disciplines have different discourses, and since my feminist inclinations are in conflict with the unemotive rational intellect of traditional academic research, readers may find the jostling of registers in this dissertation somewhat jarring. I apologize for this stylistic jaggedness but feel that it faithfully reflects the transitional, exploratory and multi-faceted nature of this research project. At the same time, it is perhaps worth recalling McLuhan's observation that 'until more than two centuries after printing nobody discovered how to maintain a single tone or attitude throughout a prose composition' (McLuhan, 1971:135).

Now let me consider the position of the English teacher in a 'white' school. I must mention in passing that much of what I have to say applies to all educators and learners. One way of providing a simple framework for the development of interdisciplinary awareness is to think of two intersecting axes, each a function of the other.



The vertical axis is the realm of love, freedom, spirit, gnosis, the Logos, the realm of sacramental 'being' in the sense used by Russel Means, religious mystics and some existentialists, anarchists and phenomenologists. It is on this axis that the divine Self can degenerate into egotism and solipsism. The horizontal axis is the plane on which the vertical realm materializes, the realm of necessity, of justice among people, of non-exploitative, non-oppressive relationships between people and between nature and people. It is on this horizontal plane that feminism and historical materialism move towards the sense of a common humanity. In the words of 'The Great Treatise' in the I Ching (1968:281):

Tao, which manifests itself as kindness, corresponds with the light principle, and justice corresponds with the dark principle: the one relates to the exalting and the other to the broadening of man's (sic) nature.

It is at the intersection of these two axes that Christ's dictum, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself', finds its perfect realisation. I see the role of the English teacher as helping students to find that centre through an exploration of the relationship between these axes. In our encounters with language we can begin to sense what is happening as all revolutionary forces fulfil themselves. This is how the poet Gary Snyder (1972:49) expresses it:

REVOLUTION IN THE REVOLUTION IN THE REVOLUTION

The country surrounds the city
The back country surrounds the country

"From the masses to the masses" the most
Revolutionary consciousness is to be found
Among the most ruthlessly exploited classes:
Animals, trees, water, air, grasses

We must pass through the stage of the
"Dictatorship of the Unconsciousness" before we can
Hope for the withering away of the states
And finally arrive at true Communism

If the capitalists and imperialists
are the exploiters, the masses are the workers
and the party is the communist.

If civilization
 is the exploiter, the masses is nature
 and the party
 is the poets.

If the abstract rational intellect
 is the exploiter, the masses is the unconscious
 and the party
 is the yogins.

& POWER
 comes out of the seed-syllables of mantras.

With this vision in mind I repeat that there are two essential tasks facing the teacher of English (and everyone else, for that matter!) and these are to mobilise, in thought, feeling and action, the revolutionary energies on the two axes I have referred to. Most of this dissertation will focus on the horizontal axis, where collective struggle and an awareness of conflict are preconditions for emancipation. Before outlining how I propose to present this in the following chapters, I should, however, like to make a few observations about the nature of individual consciousness. Recent findings in physics and biology, again reaffirming ancient religious knowledge, are of immense significance in encouraging a sense of personal power in the revolutionary process.

There is a growing body of evidence that revolutionary transformations in individual consciousness seem to trigger simultaneous and similar transformations in other parts of the biosphere. Hazel Henderson (1983:205-206) writes:

New scientific research and theories (so many of them lovingly collected and offered to us by Marilyn Ferguson in Brain-Mind Bulletin and The Aquarian Conspiracy) are giving us a new basis for understanding our own power and shared responsibilities. The biologist Rupert Sheldrake writes of the possibility of morphogenetic fields, and of research which can be interpreted to imply that species as a whole can learn from the isolated innovation of any small group. Imagine the new potentialities if learning is proven to be contagious! We would have a new scientific basis for believing in ourselves and in our collective power

to pull back from the disastrous brink. To chart a whole new course with new leadership based on 'sapiential authority' wherever it emerges, and shared power and information in networks of autonomous people and communities sharing a similar vision of the human family on our precious little planet. Similarly heady implications are inherent in the Nobel prize-winning chemistry research of Ilya Prigogine, who in 1977 showed how living systems operating far from equilibrium can create more ordered structuring through fluctuations. We need no longer bound our imagination with the dismal deterministic view of a universe winding down like a closed system. In fact, Cartesian science's search for certainty, equilibrium, predictability and control is a good definition of death.

All English teaching is essentially concerned with communication. If Henderson's vision of ecological communication can be combined with the sense of social communication in the work of Jürgen Habermas (1979), and can be embodied and enacted in people's curricula, the possibilities for creative growth are limitless.¹³ But before I get lost in enthusiastic fantasy, let me return to the idea of the individual person which is central to the English syllabus.

One of the most useful ideas to have emerged in the attempt to wed historical materialism, feminism and structuralism is the notion of interpellation, which refers to the ways in which individual subjects (people) are constituted or 'hailed' by various signifying practices or sign systems. I shall relate interpellation to ideology and hegemony in Chapter 2. Here I merely wish to note that a multiplicity of semiotic categories interact in individual people, giving them their sense of identity and their uniqueness. For most people these categories (such as class position, nationality, religious identity, gender identity and sub-cultural identity) are in a state of disequilibrium and tending to harmony or entropy. It goes without saying that language is absolutely fundamental in the constituting of these categories. Now what I see as an essential task of the language teacher is the facilitation of the

tendency to integration rather than entropy, both at the level of individual consciousness, and at the level of social dynamics.¹⁴ This does not mean the necessary elimination of conflict. As I suggested earlier, conflict is often a necessary precondition for resolution and synthesis. What I propose to do in the following chapters is to show how the English syllabus as presently conceived tends to promote an interpellation of the individual subject which is antithetical to the revolutionary perspective I have tried to outline in this chapter. I shall now give a brief indication of how I propose to present a radical reading of the syllabus, one which attempts to demystify the 'commonsense', 'taken-for-granted' assumptions that are integral to its production and reproduction.

AN INTRODUCTORY SURVEY OF CHAPTERS 2-7 AND THE APPENDICES

In Chapter 2, assuming the perspective I have outlined in Chapter 1, I shall attempt to show what is involved in the interpellation of the category 'white' teacher of English in a 'white' South African secondary school' and how racism and the teaching of English are related to each other in the South African social formation. Most English teachers in my experience deplore racism but tend, as I once did, to see it as an affront to the values of liberal humanism rather than as a set of institutional practices one of which is the teaching of English as a First Language. In contrasting the liberal humanist and radical perspectives, I shall try to combine (a) a subjective sense of how I saw myself in this role in 1970, suggesting tentatively the factors that would make my case typical of liberal humanist ideology, and (b) the interpretative framework provided by historical materialism (including its structuralist variant) and

feminism. I shall outline the rise of English Studies in England, showing how it was used to establish bourgeois hegemony. This will be followed by an attempt to place this tradition of English studies in the South African context. To do this I shall try to relate it to the nature of British imperialism and settlement in South Africa. The interpellation of the category 'English teacher' will be related to the various ways in which the category 'white English-speaking South African' ('WESSA') has been interpellated. I shall argue that we have to see the interpellation of 'WESSA's as arising out of their sense of themselves as colonizers and settlers in economic, political and cultural terms. I hope to show that for 'WESSA's there is a tension between their identity as colonizers and settlers, and that this tension is exacerbated by the economic, political and cultural roles they have assigned themselves. The 'WESSA's sense of 'race', 'ethnicity' and 'nation' will be analysed in this context.

In Chapter 3 I shall attempt to situate the English First Language syllabus in the context of WESSA school culture. My focus here will not be the syllabus itself but the curriculum and 'school community' which provide the institutional framework in which the goals of the English syllabus are supposed to be realised. Developing the theoretical perspective I used in Chapter 2, I shall consider 'ideology across the curriculum in the WESSA school community'. By highlighting the oppressive and alienating aspects of this ideology I wish to suggest, firstly, that the WESSA school is a pathological institutional form which will have to be transformed if it is to achieve a healthy relationship with the South African social formation, and secondly, that the nature of the WESSA school must be taken into account when teachers are considering the objectives of the English syllabus and the possibilities for syllabus revision and curriculum innovation.

Having focused on the WESSA school as the institutional context of the English First Language syllabus in Chapter 3, I turn in Chapter 4 to a consideration of bureaucracy as the institutional form in which the processes of syllabus revision are embedded. Although I see bureaucracy as an inescapable part of complex societies, I share the views of writers like Gorz and Bahro who argue that bureaucracy can become a pathological institutional form which is inimical to democratic decision-making processes. After outlining some of the general features of bureaucracy and their place in the South African social formation, I describe the process of syllabus revision in the years 1980-1984 to show that the English First Language syllabus is bureaucratically rather than democratically constructed and formulated. My main purposes in Chapter 4 are to show that bureaucracy is a general social problem which all people concerned with education should address and that teachers, whether administering the syllabus in the classroom or engaging in the processes of curriculum development, need to be aware of how they resolve the tensions between democratic and bureaucratic imperatives in their own praxis.

My description of the process of syllabus revision is based primarily on a long interview I conducted with Mr J.S. Labuschagne, Chief Superintendent of Education (Planning) in the Cape Education Department, and a discussion with Ivan James of the Teachers' Centre in Mowbray. My description of the South African Teachers Association's (SATA's) role in curriculum development is based on an interview with Clive Roos, general secretary of the organisation.

In the light of what has been said about the syllabus in Chapter 1-4, Chapter 5 will present a critical analysis of the document itself. The purpose of this analysis is to show that the syllabus is an instance of ideological discourse containing problematic assumptions and important contradictions.

In Chapter 6 I shall examine the extent to which a radical interpretation of the syllabus can be implemented in practice. To do this I shall describe my own attempt to devise an 'integrated' work-scheme with a Standard Seven class in 1982. I shall give examples of the work which the students and I did, leaving the reader to make the evaluations s/he may consider necessary. This chapter may encourage other teachers and students to be more adventurous in their approach to the syllabus and provide a model against which their own practice can be evaluated.

Chapter 7 will draw conclusions and address the problem of change and suggest strategies that would transform the role of English in the curriculum. Amongst the questions that will be raised are:

- How can greater teacher and student participation in the production of the syllabus be developed?
- What kinds of links are desirable between schools and other institutions or organisations?
- What alternatives to the present syllabus are possible?

There will be two appendices. The first will describe an extracurricular project related to the teaching of English, namely the writing and production of 'Matric Dancing' (also known as 'Transparencies'). My purpose here will be to show, through an example of counter-hegemonic theatre, what kind of cultural production is possible when school students and teachers try to work together as equals.

The second appendix will present approaches to the teaching of popular song that run counter to the approach to media studies advocated in the new syllabus. In contrast to the evaluative or discriminatory approach proposed by the syllabus, I propose exploratory approaches to the economic, political, social and psychological aspects of popular media.

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

ENDNOTES

1. I have decided to confine this study to the English First Language syllabuses designed for the Cape Education Department because a comparative study of the many First and Second Language syllabuses in use in South Africa would have introduced complications that would have hampered the thrust of my argument. As regards the First Languages syllabuses, I believe that, for my purposes, the Cape syllabus is sufficiently representative of the ideological position that informs all First Language syllabuses. A thorough exploration of the problems involved in eliminating the distinction between English as a First and as a Second Language would require a different research methodology from the one I have chosen. I do, however, hope that my research will prompt investigation into this important area and give some pointers as to the perspective which should frame such research.

2. Ideally, this would entail a knowledge of interlinking local, national and international social formations, an awareness of the relationship between economic, political and cultural factors in these formations and an understanding of the processes that change them.

3. I see praxis as the constant interplay, in human beings, of being and becoming, action and reflection, question (enquiry) and answer, speculation and experiment. Research, in the academic sense, is a particular, institutionalised form of praxis - a conventional codification and use of human cognitive capacities and processes. According to Piaget, these processes include assimilation and accommodation. The former is 'the process of incorporating new objects and experiences into existing schemas' and the latter 'the process of modifying schemas to solve problems arising from new experiences within the environment' (Beard, 1969:3-4). If we regard forms of academic research as schemas ('well-defined sequences of action' (Beard, 1969:3)), then they too may be modified according to the principles of accommodation. According to Beard (1969:5) 'each individual becomes adapted to his (sic) environment by developing a sufficient repertoire of schemas to deal with the common round of events'.

One of my aims in this chapter is to situate the writing of this dissertation within a wide range of modes of enquiry which constitute my own praxis or 'repertoire of schemas'.

4. Kemmis (1982:7) describes 'the four fundamental aspects of the process' of action research and 'the dynamic of complementarity which links them into a cycle' as follows:

To do action research one undertakes -

- to develop a plan of action to improve what is already happening
- to act to implement the plan,
- to observe the effects of action in the context

- in which it occurs, and
- to reflect on these effects as a basis for further planning, subsequent action and so on, through a succession of cycles.

But isn't this what every practitioner does? To a degree, of course, this is so: But to do action research is to plan, act, observe, and reflect more carefully, more carefully, more rigorously than one does in everyday life; and to use the relationships between these moments in the process as a source of both improvement and knowledge. It should also be mentioned that the action researcher will carry out the four activities collaboratively, involving others affected by the action in the research process.

I want to add that action research may become another technicist institution unless it is informed by radical theories than can contextualize each stage in the process. In South Africa, with its Group Areas Act, action research could easily remain blinkered by racist, bourgeois ideology. Feminist perspectives would also have a significant effect on the process and direction of action research.

5. According to an unidentified writer in Social Review (Anonymous:1984:9)

In the last five or six years the concept 'Racial Capitalism' has been used quite widely within the South African (SAn) democratic movement to describe SAn society. This general concept has proved very useful because it points to the connection between racial oppression and capitalist exploitation. The concept of 'racial capitalism' has been used successfully against the crude versions of Black Consciousness that were around in the 1970's, and which insisted that class exploitation was an irrelevant problem in the SAn struggle. Likewise, the concept has also been used against sectarian ultra-left positions, which has (sic) regarded the struggle against racial oppression as irrelevant.

Alexander (1983) justifies the use of the expression through historical analysis:

In South Africa ... the national bourgeoisie had come to consist of a class of white capitalists. Because they could only farm and mine gold and diamonds profitably if they had an unlimited supply of cheap labour, they found it necessary to create a split labour market, i.e. one for cheap black labour and one for skilled and semi-skilled (mainly white labour). This was made easier by the fact that in the pre-industrial colonial period white-

black relationships had been essentially master-servant relations. Racist attitudes were then prevalent in one degree or another throughout the country. In order to secure their labour supply as required, the national bourgeoisie in South Africa had to institute and perpetuate the system whereby Black people were denied political rights, were restricted in their freedom of movement, tied to the land in so-called 'native reserves', not allowed to own landed property anywhere in South Africa and their children given an education, if they received any at all, that 'prepared them for life in a subordinate society'. Unlike their predecessors in the 18th and 19th centuries, the colonial national bourgeoisie in South Africa could not complete the bourgeois democratic revolution. They compromised with British imperialism in 1910 in order to maintain their profitable system of super exploitation of Black Labour.

6. SACHED is the South African Committee for Higher Education, a non-State organisation which provides a variety of services for a mainly 'black' clientele. It produces correspondence courses, provides tutorial services to those doing university correspondence courses, provides courses for workers wishing to improve their education, provides 'foundation courses' aimed at bridging the gap between school and university, runs workshops and provides a library including teaching materials.
7. The Urban Foundation was launched by South African capitalists in November 1976 in response to the unrest of that year. Its declared aim was to improve various aspects of the living conditions of 'urban blacks', but many political commentators have seen its activities as designed to create a black middle class that would embrace capitalism and act as a buffer against the black working class. (See, for example, Davies, 1984:353-354.)
8. The Community Arts Project is a cultural institution aimed at providing a venue for anti-racist cultural activities, including drama, painting and sculpture.
9. Tolson (1979) has provided an excellent analysis of the relationship between capitalism and the patriarchal work ethic.
10. 'Interpellation', which I shall define more fully later, refers to the 'hailing' or 'constituting' of human subjects by categories such as class, gender and nationality.
11. See, for example, Capra (1982).
12. Williams is, of course, not a linguist in the narrow sense, but has important things to say about the relationship between linguistics and Marxism. See Williams, 1978:20-44 and 1981:329-331.

13. Unlike Saussure, Chomsky and the formulators of the English syllabuses with which I am familiar, Habermas's notion of communicative competence seeks to bring together the insights of linguistics, psychoanalytical theory and historical materialism. Habermas (1979:29) defines communicative competence as follows:

By "communicative competence" I understand the ability of a speaker oriented to mutual understanding to embed a well-formed sentence in relations to reality, that is:

1. To choose the propositional sentence in such a way that either the truth conditions of the propositions stated or the existential presuppositions of the propositional content mentioned are supposedly fulfilled (so that the hearer can share the knowledge of the speaker);
2. To express his (sic) intentions in such a way that the linguistic expression represents what is intended (so that the hearer can trust the speaker);
3. To perform the speech act in such a way that it conforms to recognized norms or to accepted self-images (so that the hearer can be in accord with the speaker in shared value orientations).

As Brown (1973:82-83) points out, 'from this perspective, neurotic and psychotic symptoms are seen as forms of distorted or repressive communication', and since these forms of behaviour

rest not only on language but also on work and on power relations, it follows that inasmuch as the typification schemes of language come to constitute the most fundamental rules of everyday life, they find their social expression in the formation of institutions. In this regard it is clear that language, as the fundamental means of sustaining institutions - which, in fact, are themselves a sort of language, just as language itself is an institution - provides a crucial and hitherto missing link in our analysis of the "ontogenetic" and "phylogenetic" spheres. Habermas has reformulated this relationship as involving not only the means by which the human species ensures its survival through the creation of systems of social labor and coercive self-assertion, but also as involving the creation of relatively stable forms of traditionally mediated common life in colloquial linguistic communication. What characterizes institutions, for Habermas, is what characterizes their similarity to pathological forms: they represent devices for the exchange of acute external force for the permanent internal compulsions of distorted and self-limited communication which, like neurotic solutions at the individual

level, function as collective solutions to the problem of self-preservation - "like the repetition compulsion from within, institutional compulsion from without brings about a relatively rigid reproduction of relatively uniform behaviour that is removed from criticism".

Cf. Lao Tsu (1973:75):

... when Tao is lost, there is goodness.
 When goodness is lost, there is kindness.
 When kindness is lost, there is justice.
 When justice is lost, there is ritual.
 Now ritual is the husk of faith and loyalty, the beginning of confusion.

Inasmuch as the English syllabus is an institution with its own repetitive rituals, embedded in other institutions, Habermas and Lao Tsu point to the need to examine the syllabus, not as an instrument that can unproblematically promote linguistic competence, but as an instance of systematically distorted communication.

14. It is important to note that I regard the concept of the self in liberal humanist ideology as a form of alienated ego-consciousness which may be a step towards a realisation of the Christ-self (or Atman, in Vedantic terminology), but may also be a barrier against self-transcendence and self-realisation on the individual level, just as it is a barrier to collective transformation of alienated, exploitative conditions on the social level.

It is also important to note that socialist ideologies may also be undermined by the interpellation of false ego-consciousness.

CHAPTER TWO: RACISM AND THE ENGLISH TEACHER: A
HISTORICAL MATERIALIST VIEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN LIBERAL HUMANISM, 'ENGLISH STUDIES',
BOURGEOIS HEGEMONY AND RACIAL CAPITALISM
IN SOUTH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

Racism is generally considered to be one of the central problems confronting those who wish to make South Africa a happy, peaceful country. It is also widely recognised that education has a vital role to play in anti-racist strategies. I do not propose to enter the often sterile debate about the inevitably counter-revolutionary effects of schooling.¹ Instead I wish to consider what relationship, if any, exists between racism and the English First Language syllabus in its present form. In this chapter I shall tentatively argue that the syllabus and racism have to be seen as hegemonic ideological forms which have to be seen in relation to the rise to power of the bourgeoisie in England and in South Africa. Although I recognise that the historical antecedents of racialism and the English syllabus precede capitalism, I shall focus on class struggle under capitalism because I believe that this will show how the English syllabus, as a historically 'depoliticized' cultural discourse condones the economic and political conditions that perpetuate racism. In considering hegemony I shall draw a contrast between liberal humanist and radical perspectives. The basis for this contrast is partly experiential, in that I have moved (or have been moved) from a liberal humanist to a radical position in the course of my teaching career. I now see liberal

humanism as part and parcel of a dominant bourgeois ideology which is intrinsic to the system of racial capitalism in South Africa.

A CONFRONTATION WITH RACISM IN A WESSA CLASSROOM -
A LIBERAL HUMANIST RESPONSE

Let me begin by recounting, in a somewhat fictionalised but representative way, the kind of confrontation that frequently occurred in my early teaching experience:

WESSA Pupil: Sir, tell this kaffir to leave my lunch alone!

Teacher: Look, Simon, the kind of language you use in your private life is your business, but in my classroom you will never use that word again. Is that clear?

What I want to explore, in an admittedly simplified and tentative way, is the nature of the English teacher's response in the heat of this enormously complex and significant 'historical moment'. At moments like this, the child's utterance is like a thunderclap reverberating through the intricate psychological and ideological structures in the liberal teacher's consciousness.

No analysis can do justice to the full complexity of such moments, but it is necessary for our purposes to highlight some general features that may provide the basis for further exploration.

Rather than make generalisations about a hypothetical English teacher's reaction, I shall first attempt to characterise my own response with the assumption that my case will prove, at least in some respects, to be typical.

How, then, did I view this disconcerting irruption into my own curricular project? In emotional terms, my response was one of shock, confusion, fear, helplessness and moral indignation. Underlying each of these emotions

was a whole set of historically and socially determined assumptions. At the time, however, these were not brought into consciousness. What I propose to do now is to describe my response in terms of what I now believe to have been my assumptions at the time. I shall then challenge these 'liberal humanist' assumptions with a more radical problematic. It should become clear in the course of my discussion that each viewpoint has determining effects on one's sense of the relationship between the English syllabus and the social formation in which it is enmeshed.

Central to my sense of shock at the child's utterance was my sense of our being interpellated in the classroom discourse as 'white English-speaking South Africans'. This shock was not present in the same form when I was confronted with the racist language of Afrikaans-speaking pupils. It was, rather, rooted in a contrast between these 'ethnic groups'. I believed at the time that South African history was essentially a three cornered conflict involving 'Afrikaners', 'white English-speaking South Africans' ('WESSAs') and 'non-Europeans'. In my eyes what distinguished 'Afrikaners' and 'WESSAs' was their attitude to the 'non-Europeans'. The essential difference, in my view, was that WESSAs saw 'non-Europeans' as human, whereas Afrikaners saw them as subhuman. This distinction made the Afrikaners' attitude inhuman and the WESSAs' attitude humanistic and humane. If 'Afrikaners' had the same attitude as 'WESSAs', I thought, 'non-Europeans' would be allowed to participate freely in South African social, political and economic life. What was required of the Afrikaner was a moral shift towards the attitude of 'WESSAs'. The purpose of Westminster parliamentary democracy was to provide the platform on which Afrikaners (and those WESSA racists whose existence I tended to repress or ignore) could be persuaded to change their hearts and minds.

This level of political action was completely separated

in my mind from the realm of economic reality. As I saw it, the 'non-Europeans' had 'shared' in the building of the South African economy and should therefore be allowed a say in the running of the country.

To return to the incident in the classroom: what shocked me was that an English speaker could be so nakedly racist, could betray the English-speakers' historical mission so blithely. I had not yet learned to look for racism in its more subtle forms. I shall return to these shortly.

My confusion, as well as my shock for that matter, came from the irruption of an utterance of obvious political import into the supposedly apolitical discourse of an English lesson. My response was to denounce the utterance and then suppress it, so that the lesson could proceed on its chartered course. What I did not realise at the time was the repressing my confusion and the boy's display of racism was itself a profoundly political act. A friend of mine once called liberals 'closet fascists'.² There is an indication of this in my response, in which there is a confused recognition of the right to individual freedom while suppressing it. We should also note how my sense of freedom was informed by notions concerning private property.

What was my fear? Firstly, this rested on the intuition that moral conversion of racists would be impossible without an overtly political approach, and since this was the moral issue for a WESSA like me, the whole project of teaching English threatened to become trivial and self-indulgent. Another fear was that racism might alienate me from the pupil and others like him. This threatened my hope of establishing open, spontaneous relationships with the pupils in the classroom. Thirdly, there was the fear that suppressing the overtly political discourse was in some sense a betrayal of the voteless South African majority, a refusal to speak on their behalf. Fourthly, I feared that my denunciation, if

allowed to pursue a logical course, would end in a condemnation of the child's parents, and this, if reported, would jeopardise my career.

Entangled in this state of shock, confusion and fear, and without an analysis that could find the historical roots of these feelings, I predictably felt quite helpless. What pedagogic soap was there to wash this terrible language out of the mouths and minds of children? And it was out of this complex of feelings that my indignation sprang forth, in a desperate attempt to maintain the viability of my moral mission as a teacher of English.

As I see it now, what has to be grasped about the responsibilities of the teacher of English in relation to racism, is the difference between racism as an indefensible moral attitude residing in individual members of dominant 'ethnic groups', and racism as an ideology.

A CONTRAST OF LIBERAL AND RADICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY AND SOCIETY: IDEOLOGY, HEGEMONY AND INTERPELLATION

In order to explain the shift involved here, I shall begin by giving a very simplified account of the differences between the liberal and radical interpretations of South African history and society. This will entail an alternative view of the role of 'WESSAs'. In order to clarify this role I shall explain and use the concepts of 'ideology', 'hegemony' and 'interpellation'.

These concepts will provide a theoretical framework in which I shall give a brief account of the rise of compulsory schooling and the curriculum as we know it in 'WESSA' secondary schools. This will be followed by an attempt to place 'English studies' in their historical context.

In liberal ideology there is a tendency to separate four spheres of activity in what is called 'society':

the economic (in which there is 'free' enterprise; the legal (in which there is an 'independent' judiciary); the political (in which 'the people' are free to change the government); and the cultural, which includes academic education and 'the arts', and which is best enjoyed, appreciated and understood without reference to the other spheres. And, of course, moving through and between these spheres, 'the free individual'.³ If, as I am suggesting, the liberal humanist tends to see the political, economic, legal and personal spheres as somehow separate, this may mean that a person within this compartmentalised ideological structure will be interpellated in such a way that the relationship between the spheres cannot be grasped. Thus, for example, a liberal humanist may be interpellated as a benevolent carrier and transmitter of liberal culture on the one hand and economically 'privileged' on the other, without seeing any relationship between economic exploitation and cultural domination. 'Society', then, is nothing more than the context in which unrelated interpellations co-exist.

Radical theorists tend to prefer the term 'social formation' because it emphasises that society is a unified structure of relations. Bennett (1977:58) provides a succinct definition of 'social formation' in this sense:

... it refers to the complex structure of relations between the economic, political and ideological levels of human activity and to the relationships of effectivity which these levels have in relation to one another, thus embodying a conceptual framework within which their reciprocal interaction can be understood.

It is with this kind of distinction between 'society' and 'social formation' in mind that we must approach the concept of ideology. Bearing in mind that the true nature of ideology is still a matter of some controversy amongst Marxists as much as between Marxists and non-Marxists, we can suggest that for the liberal ideology

is primarily a set of ideas or beliefs common to a particular group, whereas for the Marxist it exists in a dialectical relationship between consciousness and a mode of production. In this definition

ideology is neither reduced to a simple 'super-structural' reflex directly readable from 'the economy', nor to a deliberate mystification of real relations manufactured with manipulative intent in the minds of capitalists or bourgeois politicians ... Rather, ideology is seen as an objective systematised representation of social relations embodied in real material institutions. As such it has a real determinate presence.

In this conception then, the ideas, the mental images, the systems of representation which social agents hold of the material world form a vital part of the processes of social reality. As both products and representations of material reality and struggle, ideologies constitute the system or representation through which the various collectivities of social agents define for themselves the parameters and limits of social interaction (class struggle) and so mediate their positions within that process of class struggle. As such, ideologies form the lived and imaginary forms of representation through which the economic, social and political relations and contradictions are lived and fought out by men and women. As ensembles of past and present practices, and comprised of contradictory and differentiated elements, ideologies ideationally embody their conditions of existence in a partial but misrepresented way.

(O'Meara, 1983:14-15)

Closely related to this definition is the concept of hegemony, which is Gramsci's major contribution to Marxist theory, and which is concerned to establish how certain ideologies become dominant in the class struggle and how their dominance is maintained. In the words of Rachel Sharp (1980, 102-103)

Hegemony refers to a set of assumptions, theories, practical activities, a world view through which the ruling class exerts its dominance. Its function is to reproduce on the ideological plane the conditions for class rule and the continuation of the social relations of production. Hegemonic beliefs and practices thus shape practical ideologies and penetrate the level of common sense, mixing and mingling with ideological practices

more spontaneously generated. ... Hegemony has to be viewed ... as a dynamic movement continually responding to unresolved conflicts and new ideological tendencies. Hegemonic practice succeeds when it has produced an unquestioned, taken-for-granted attitude towards how things are, when subjects identify themselves within limits defined by the hegemonic meanings and operate unconsciously, via their ideological practice, within premises which both derive from and help to reproduce the status quo. But this is the ruling-class ideal. In practice, new ideological initiatives are continually emerging both within and without the dominant hegemony.

The third key concept which has to be understood in the theoretical framework I am adumbrating here is that of 'interpellation'. As I indicated in Chapter One, this refers to the 'hailing' or constituting of social agents within the ideological forms or semiotic systems of a social formation. In any given social agent or 'subject' there is a complex of communicative threads along which cultural codes travel. In a WESSA school a social agent may be interpellated as 'white', 'humanist', 'English-speaking South African', 'teacher', 'professional', 'free individual', 'petty-bourgeois', 'feminist', and so on. The way in which these and other interpellations interact will have a determining effect on the personal and political choices made by social agents, both individually and collectively.

If the theoretical framework suggested by these definitions is applied to the phenomenon of racism, to the rise of compulsory schooling in capitalist societies, and to the establishment of English as a subject in universities and schools, we can begin to see that all three, in various and often inter-related ways, ensure the continued exploitation and oppression of subordinate groups in the social formation.

Let us now examine the notion of 'race'. As the Russian linguist Volosinov (1973: 13) has noted, 'The word is the ideological phenomenon par excellence', and if we regard 'race' as ideologically constructed it becomes

obvious that it is not an objective category in any sense whatsoever. This is the case whether we apply the synchronic linguistics of Saussure or the diachronic approaches of Volosinov and Raymond Williams. At the same time, if we analyse racism in historical and sociological terms, using a Marxist problematic, it becomes clear that 'race' and its refined variants ('ethnic group', 'cultural group' and 'population group') are permeable ideological constructs and not fixed, monolithic categories. As O'Meara (1983), Bozzoli (1981) and others have shown in their studies of racial capitalism, these categories cannot be properly understood outside the dynamics of the class struggle and the ideological manoeuvring, grouping and classifying that it has necessitated in the South African social formation.

I suggest that it is within the radical problematic which I have outlined that the struggle for linguistic hegemony in South Africa should be understood. However much I may resent singing the 'national' anthem in Afrikaans at school assembly, this does not mean that I am a member of an 'ethnic group' called 'English-speaking South Africans', nor that I am being oppressed by another ethnic group called 'Afrikaners'. I am, however, being interpellated as an English-speaking South African in such a context and may or may not recognise that English speakers, in various ways, have been just as responsible as 'Afrikaners' for the creation of a racist nation-state. Again it is necessary to understand the relationship between economic, political and ideological factors. As several historical studies have shown, the stage of South African history is littered with the racist pronouncements, policies and practices of English- and Afrikaans-speaking social agents whether as capitalists, politicians, educationalists or individuals.⁴ As Rich (1984), O'Meara (1983) and Bozzoli (1981) have shown, the imperatives of capital accumulation and bourgeois hegemony after the mining revolution have been served by

racist and ethnic ideologies in a variety of ways. Since these authors have given superbly detailed accounts of the process, I shall turn instead to showing how the WESSA English syllabus is historically rooted in hegemonic educational practices established in Britain and consequently in South Africa.

SOME HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE WESSA ENGLISH SYLLABUS AS
A HEGEMONIC CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Schooling for WESSAs as we know it today is based in large measure on educational traditions established in England. The essential point to be grasped about these traditions is that they grew out of a struggle for hegemony between contending classes. For the purposes of my argument, the crucial decade is the 1830s (see Sharp, 1980: 119-123), when bourgeois hegemony in English education was secured. In this period a radical and a conservative system of education struggled for the allegiance of the working class. Sharp (1980:120) has characterised the radical tradition as follows:

... education was seen as strategic class instrument in the struggle to achieve emancipation from oppression and the transformation of society into a more humane and educative environment. In no sense was education regarded as a thing. Rather, it was thought of as a process for and on behalf of the class which should be combined with a progressive pedagogy emphasizing collective rather than competitive individual effort, and common rather than private goals. (It was) beginning to achieve a sense of class consciousness and a working-class counter-hegemony that posed a threat to public order and the operation of a free market economy.

In the struggle between the radicals and the hegemonic institutions of the bourgeoisie, the latter gained the ascendancy and

by the end of the century the effects of the way the class struggle had been resolved in this period had fundamentally altered the terms in which

debates concerning education were articulated. The overriding question was now not control, or content, but the widening of access to the state educational system for larger sections of the working class. Whereas in the earlier period education had been seen to be of crucial significance for the collective interests of the class, indissolubly bound to political ends, now there would be a more individualistic orientation. The debate had become depoliticised.

(Sharp, 1980:121)

It was this hegemonic, depoliticised kind of education, in its upper and middle class forms, that was to become the norm in schools for 'WESSAs' and incorporated into an already racist system of education. As Tillema (1970:40) points out, 'By 1910 each of the four political entities that were to become the Union of South Africa had developed their own secular educational system for Europeans.'

How, in this context, was the consciousness of 'WESSA' children to be shaped through the teaching of English? In order to answer this question, we first have to grasp some of the essential features of English as a school and university subject as it developed in England, 'the mother country'.

It must be stressed that despite ongoing debates about efficacy and relevance with regard to the teaching of English, there have, until recently, been few attempts to explore in depth the hegemonic function of English studies in Britain or elsewhere. Despite anxiety about the present state of affairs, such concern, as Doyle (1982:17-18) points out:

has failed to generate any extensive understanding of the ways in which the teaching of a 'national' language and literature operates as a key feature in reproducing the cultural relations within what is usually called 'our' society. English (as 'our' language and literature) within education is thus not normally recognised as a significant influence over commonly acquired senses of self, class, gender, family and nationality ...
... selective uses of English as a language and a literature have ... been of great importance in mediating power relations between classes and other groups in British society. The emphases within the

academic study of English, however, upon 'appreciation' and 'communication' have provided little understanding of this history. Thus they are of little help, either, in translating into articulated forms of knowledge ordinary senses of the present-day power relations of language and literature in education or elsewhere.

Doyle argues that it was during the Tudor period that the ruling nobility and gentry developed a uniform sense of their own culture, language and nation. Using Latin as a model, scholars attempted 'to construct an acceptably classical ensemble of linguistic and literary practices, that is to establish a 'ruled' language or classical vernacular' (Doyle, 1982:20). Left-wing puritans mounted a vigorous vernacular opposition to the 'classicists', but a more decisive alternative was fostered after the Restoration with a new emphasis on culture as a means of cultivating personal 'merit' in the ruling class. As Terry Eagleton (1983:17) has pointed out, this was part of a concerted attempt 'to incorporate the increasingly powerful but spiritually rather raw middle classes into unity with the ruling aristocracy'.

According to Doyle (1982:21-22), it was in the Dissenting Academies, influenced by academic attempts in Scotland to establish a cultural bond between the two countries, that university 'English' as we now know it began to take shape. Eagleton (1983:27) regards it as ideologically significant that English as an academic subject first emerged, 'not in the universities, but in the Mechanics Institutes, working men's colleges and extension lecturing circuits' where 'the emphasis was on solidarity between the social classes, the cultivation of 'larger sympathies', the instillation of national pride and the transmission of 'moral' values. 'English', according to a Royal Commission in 1877, was suitable, not only for women but also for 'the second- and third-rate men who became schoolmasters'. (Quoted in Eagleton, *ibid.*) At the same time literacy training in the charity schools was aimed at strictly curbing the revolutionary tendencies

of the working class (Doyle, 1982:20-22).

Doyle (1982:22-26) has also identified several important elements in the relationship between women, education and the growing sense of a whole national culture that was developing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The study and teaching of English was seen as an eminently 'feminine', nurturant activity. And when the ranks of unmarried women swelled in the nineteenth century 'English' provided a national task:

The dominant conception of woman as homemaker and the notion of women as potentially and acceptably employed in the professions were absorbed into a quasi-professional and at the same time quasi-maternal composite function whereby women educated the children of the national 'corporate body'.

(Doyle, 1982:23)

Women training at the new institutions were encouraged to foster their national fervour through the reading of vernacular literature. At a later stage, in secondary schools, English formed the nucleus of a set of subjects designed to promote the national culture.

It must be emphasised that the quasi-maternal role of women in the formation of a national culture was accorded its place within a patriarchal and capitalist order, and that even in educational institutions men found ways of securing a hegemonic order that served their interests and those of capital.

The ways in which this hegemony has been maintained are extremely complex and multi-faceted, and in a study of this scope I cannot do justice to them all. However, since my main concern is with the relationship between 'English' and racism as a bourgeois ideology, I shall focus on those aspects of the hegemonic order that seem most pertinent. The role of education in establishing this order has already been noted, but we need to look more closely at the relationship between literature, literary studies and hegemony, because the English literary critical tradition, particularly as developed in

the nineteenth and twentieth centuries under capitalism, is an essential part of the ideology informing the South African English First Language syllabus. It is the hegemonic, class character of this ideology that has to be related to racism.

Terry Eagleton (1983:1-53) has shown that 'literature' as we understand it today is not a universal, trans-historical concept, but like other words, subject to historical change. It was at the end of the eighteenth century in England that significant shifts in its meaning began to occur. After being a term to denote any writing, in a variety of disciplines, valued by the ruling class aristocracy and gentry, its meaning began to narrow in focus. It was in the period of revolutions, both bourgeois and industrial, that the modern sense of the word began to emerge. Romantic writers were at odds with the utilitarian, fragmented individualism of the new order and posited 'the imagination' as a potentially revolutionary force. As its revolutionary prospects dimmed, however, 'the imagination' moved further and further into the sphere of the imaginary where literature, in fact marginalised, and turned into a commodity and trivialised by capitalism, could be seen as above the hideous and shoddy realities of the time. According to the laws of capital accumulation, 'literature' became yet another instance of the fetishization of commodities (Marx, 1976: 165-166). In order to redeem the fetish it was invested with the qualities of a nostalgically evoked 'organic community'. To consume the literary object was to consume the humane values of the imagined past.

It was Matthew Arnold, heir of the Romantic tradition, who saw the hegemonic potential of literature. In his view it could serve as a means of civilizing a crass ruling class with 'sweetness and light' while assimilating the working class into these noble, hegemonic values. In doing this it was to give the nation the cultural cohesiveness that religion no longer seemed able to provide.

In Arnold's own words,

It is of itself a serious calamity for a nation that its tone of feeling and grandeur of spirit should be lowered or dulled. But the calamity appears far more serious still when we consider that the middle classes, remaining as they are now, with their narrow, harsh, unattractive spirit and culture, will almost certainly fail to mould or assimilate the masses below them, whose sympathies are at the present moment actually wider and more liberal than theirs. They arrive, these masses, eager to enter into possession of the world, to gain a more vivid sense of their own life and activity. In this their irrepressible development, their natural educators and initiators are those immediately above them, the middle classes. If these classes cannot win their sympathy or give them direction, society is in danger of falling into anarchy.

(Quoted in Eagleton, 1983:24)

In Arnold's view, as Eagleton points out, literature was well suited to fulfilling this hegemonic function:

Since literature, as we know, deals in universal human values rather than in such historical trivia as civil wars, the oppression of women or the dispossession of the English peasantry, it could serve to place in cosmic perspective the petty demands of working people for decent living conditions or greater control over their own lives, and might even with luck come to render them oblivious of such issues in their high-minded contemplation of eternal truths and beauties. English, as a Victorian handbook for English teachers put it, helps to 'promote sympathy and fellow-feeling among all classes ... Literature would rehearse the masses in the habits of pluralistic thought and feeling, persuading them to acknowledge that more than one viewpoint than theirs existed - namely, that of their masters. It would communicate to them the moral riches of bourgeois civilization, impress on them a reverence for middle class achievements, and, since reading is an essentially solitary, contemplative activity, curb in them any disruptive tendency to collective political action. It would give them a pride in their national language and literature: if scanty education and extensive hours of labour prevented them personally from producing a literary masterpiece, they could take pleasure in the thought that others of their own kind - English people - had done so.

(Eagleton, 1983:25)

Leaving aside such ethical issues as whether the private appropriation of surplus value is a form of stealing, and in the lethal poverty this engenders, a kind of murder, Arnold and some of his contemporaries fostered a new meaning of the word 'moral', particularly in relation to literature:

Morality is no longer to be grasped as a formulated code or explicit ethical system: it is rather a sensitive preoccupation with the whole quality of life itself, with the oblique, nuanced particulars of human experience.

(Eagleton, op. cit.:27)

What we have in Arnold and the heirs of his moral vision, is a typical liberal humanist severing of the cultural sphere from its economic base. It is assumed that a common culture can be created on an economic base which places private profit before the common interests of society as a whole. In a more radical view of culture, 'literature' and 'literary studies' would involve the making of culture through activities that give sustained attention to the relationship between culture and the economic base, so that both can be transformed in a concerted revolutionary endeavour.

How persistent Arnold's view of culture is can be seen in Jane Reid's study of English literature in South African Secondary Schools (1982) where, after noting the hegemonic aspects of schooling and the curriculum in South Africa, she writes

it may be true, in spite of all the drawbacks mentioned, that the personal goals and interests of those still at school in the last three standards do converge, even though their political goals and interests are likely to be in opposition, and that at this stage of their education a common curriculum is possibly desirable. These are the people who will have to come to terms with each other and communicate with each other, and some kind of common cultural experience could form a vital link. ... when it comes to general knowledge of ourselves and our environment, literature can explore more deeply, because less overtly, history, sociology, psychology, philosophy and morality than most lessons

devoted to these subjects. It can move the reader about in time and space; it can initiate him (sic) into societies and families other than his (sic) own; it can give him deeper understanding of himself (sic) and others, it can introduce him (sic) to death and the purpose of life; it can give moral guidance through vicarious experience in a way that tract and precept cannot.

(Reid, 1982:15-17)

Most of the echoes here should be fairly obvious, but two points need to be stressed. The first is that it is profoundly inaccurate and misleading to assume that 'some kind of common cultural experience' is necessarily in the common interest of school students. Disco music already provides such a 'common' experience and its liberatory capacities are questionable to say the least. Secondly, while working with appropriate and powerful literature using a counter-hegemonic pedagogy may move us towards harnessing some of the energies needed to put an end to alienation, it is a mistake to assume that Literature, like some genie in a magic lamp, can do this for us.

Matthew Arnold's idea of creating national solidarity through the study of English literature was extended at the end of the nineteenth century when the needs of imperial capital could be served by the notion of England's taking on a civilising mission, the so-called 'white man's burden'. There was nothing fortuitous about this racist, chauvinistic project:

Chris Baldick has pointed to the importance of the admission of English literature to the Civil Service examinations in the Victorian period: armed with this conveniently packaged version of their cultural treasures, the servants of British imperialism could sally forth overseas secure in a sense of their national identity, and able to display that cultural superiority to their envying colonial peoples.

(Eagleton, 1983:28-29)

English chauvinistic nationalism was both boosted and traumatized by the First World War and in the ensuing years was to take more subtle forms. Retaining Arnold's

sense of national and moral purpose as well as his faith in education as a social panacea, a new generation of critics set about defining the parameters and purposes of English literature in a way that has made a lasting impression on the teaching of English in England and other English-speaking countries, both in schools and universities.

Of these critics, by far the most influential have been F.A. Leavis and I.A. Richards. In the case of the former, it was the work of the journalistic project which Francis Mulhern (1979) calls 'The Moment of Scrutiny' that shaped the consciousness of at least two generations of English teachers. It was Denys Thompson who carried Scrutiny's mission into English secondary schools. Mulhern has given a carefully detailed and reasoned account of Scrutiny's achievement and influence and several other writers have analysed its failures. What we need to consider now are the main features of 'Leavisism' as a bourgeois, national ideology.

In its inception, Leavis's Scrutiny project was quite explicitly political. Its manifesto in 1932 averred that its programme was 'immediately practical and political':

its peculiar "political ambition" would be to "the play of free intelligence upon the underlying issues", for only in this way could the essential ends of political action be clarified.

(Mulhern, 1979:79)

What needs to be examined, then, is how Leavisism sees the 'underlying issues'.

Firstly, we may observe that Scrutiny saw itself as having two main adversaries: the effete upper class literary establishment which Leavis and his petty bourgeois associates sought to demolish, and industrial capitalism. But the Leavisites were never able to confront the full implications of their petty bourgeois status. As Eagleton (1983:36) has said:

... if the lower middle class has a deep animus against the effete aristocracy perched above it, it also works hard to discriminate itself from the working class set below it, a class into whose ranks it is always in danger of falling. Scrutiny arose out of this social ambivalence: radical in respect of the literary academic Establishment, coterie-minded with regard to the mass of the people.

The petty bourgeois tendencies also reveal themselves in the profoundly meritocratic, competitive ethos of Scrutiny, which, while avowedly opposed to examinations, was obsessed with the rating and berating of poets, novelists and other critics. Catherine Belsey (1982:129) has recognised some of the deeper implications of the Leavisite preoccupation with individual writers and critics:

Trained in the kind of discrimination demonstrated in the Great Tradition, the leaders of the community are to be properly equipped to recognise a hierarchy of subjectivity, mysteriously given to individuals, and judged on the basis of knowledge not open to rational argument. By this means, a ruling elite provides itself with a sensibility which is the source and guarantee of its right to control and administer experience.

To the extent that the social body concurs with the Leavisian position, it commits itself to the scrutiny of individual subjectivity, to the surveillance of personal experience, and to the identification of strengths and weaknesses according to a standard which is purely intuitive. This process is backed by the power of an educational apparatus with its system of assessment and examination which relegates deviancy and permits passage to the next level for finer intelligences. What is inscribed in the Leavisian model is the making of hierarchies through judgements of relative human value not just in literature but in life. The discourse of the Great Tradition helps to guarantee relations of inequality by the endless production of discrimination between subjectivities. Hierarchy is not seen to be produced by an external ordering of society which is subject to change. On the contrary, it is created through the affirmation of one identity at the expense of another and maintained by the rejection of any rational criticism of the system itself.

The contradiction in Scrutiny's position has to be

grasped. On the one hand authors and readers are graded by their capacity to grasp 'universal' values while every failure signals the absence of these values and hence the negation of universality. The Leavisite becomes the 'Ideal Reader' and when students are asked to write a critical appreciation of a poem, or to comment on 'the effectiveness' of a metaphor, they are faced with the task of superimposing their minds on the ghostly outlines of the Ideal Reader. This spectre is merely a set of assumptions about how a poem should be read, and these assumptions are paraded as 'universal truths'. This coercive, quasi-fascistic imposition of values is hardly the best way of encouraging people to share them, and it is hardly surprising that most students spit out the bitter pill and look elsewhere for their cultural values.

Apart from encouraging the competitive individualism that is at the heart of industrial capitalism, the Leavisites mystify their relationship with the system in several other ways. Firstly, they choose education as their main political weapon, not to overthrow capitalism, but to teach people how to survive in it. People have to learn to 'discriminate' between what is good and bad on the market while leaving the whole question of commodity fetishism and the profit motive untouched. Michael Rosen has bluntly stated the consequences of this stance:

Eng. Lit. faculties are the institutional forms that propose, maintain and express an ethic that runs throughout our society - art makes the whole beastly materialism of life and society bearable. In actual fact what makes the beastly world so bearable is precisely the chance to belong to an elite that expresses this ideology where it is economically bearable to live in the beastly world ... i.e. the ethic arises out of and reinforces the social situation.

(Quoted in Hoyles, 1982:12)

Instead of coming to grips with the historical and economic roots of the social malaise, the Leavisites obfuscate the underlying causes by positing the false

dualism of 'civilization' (negative) and 'culture' (positive). And for the Leavisites 'culture' was to be found in 'tradition', the true 'literary heritage'. This is, of course, another example of the way in which the liberal humanist divests culture of its historical and economic dimensions. Francis Mulhern (1978:75-76) articulates the implications of this very clearly:

Historical materialism views the social formation as a complex structure, riven at every level by contradictions whose existence alone creates the possibility of alternatives in history, and thus of purposive and effectual action, economic, political or cultural. In the terms of Scrutiny's schema, no comparable perspective was logically possible. There was no flaw in the constitution of the industrial economy, or in the social, political and cultural forms that it generated that could serve as a point of leverage for qualitative change, no social force which could emerge from inside the prevailing order as the bearer of a new one. However, these considerations led directly to the problem that eventually confronts all monist analyses. What, in that case, was Scrutiny? What was it that underwrote its opposition to this seamless social order, distinguishing it from the illusory opposition that Marxism represented? In order to evade this logical reprise, Scrutiny's unrelieved mechanical materialism was obliged to complete itself with an equal and opposite idealism. The principle of opposition to the course of modern history could only reside in an entity that was somehow not itself implicated in it. That trans-historical instance was 'tradition', a category that acknowledges historicity while denying its effects, the principle of constancy amidst unsparing change. The cumulative meaning of 'the tradition' was 'culture', the sum of those values that industrialism had uprooted but not annihilated, the residuum of 'essential life' that 'slips through the mesh' of Marxist theory, indefinable but recognisable by those who tended its last sanctuary, the tradition of English literature. The 'organic community' was both the 'memory of the ideal, lost unity of society' and 'culture' and a figure that reconciled the antimonies of this intellectual position.

From this position,

the objective of truly radical initiatives for reform was not to transform social relations through

political struggle but to alter the ethical posture of administration, to irradiate power with 'morality'.

(Mulhern, 1979:233)

Mulhern is helpful in showing how Leavis's stance affected his approaches to poetry and the novel as literary forms:

... as long as Scrutiny remained open, willingly or not, to the possibility of an external 'relationship' between 'the minority' and politics, poetry and its criticism were taken as the paradigmatic instance of 'culture'. It was only after this possibility had finally been discounted that Scrutiny turned to a literary form that embodied an 'internal' union of the two realms - the novel. At once literary and sociological, 'dramatic poem' and privileged mode of moral insight, the novel was a compensatory middle term, the symbolic attainment within literary criticism of a union of politics and 'culture' that had proved unattainable in history.

(Mulhern, 1979:218)

The Leavisite concern for tradition is also important to our consideration of how it relates to English nationalism. Because of the strong meritocratic element in Leavisite ideology it is not surprising to find writers not born in England admitted to its pantheon. Nevertheless, the 'organic community' which lies at the centre of its moral universe is decidedly English. Whereas for Eliot the 'impersonal' literary tradition was an accumulation of literary usages (Mulhern, 1979:131), for Leavis it was essentially 'the language of Shakespeare'. Formed in 'a genuinely national culture ... rooted in the soil', Shakespeare's mature art was not a model to be imitated but a measure of the capacities of his native language, and thus a standard by which to assay the literary achievements of his posterity' (ibid).

Even while deploring the enfeebling standardisation of what he called English 'civilization', Leavis still believed in the reality of the national spirit. Terry Eagleton has identified the continuity between Leavis's view and the upper class view that preceded it:

The Leavisian belief in 'essential Englishness' - its conviction that some kinds of English were more English than others - was a kind of petty-bourgeois version of the upper-class chauvinism which had helped to bring English to birth in the first place ... English as a subject was in part the offshoot of a gradual shift in class tone within English culture: 'Englishness' was less a matter of imperialist flag-waving than of country dancing; rural, populist and provincial rather than metropolitan and aristocratic ... It was chauvinism modulated by a new social class, who with a little straining could see themselves as rooted in the 'English people' of John Bunyan rather than a snobbish ruling caste.

(Eagleton, 1983:37)

And Scrutiny, as the elitist custodian of 'essential Englishness', could perceive itself 'as the vanguard of civilization while nostalgically lauding the organic wholeness of exploited seventeenth century farm labourers' (Eagleton, 1983:36).

It is worth relating the Leavisite sense of the link between morality and nation to the work of the First World War Poets. It was these poets, particularly Wilfred Owen in poems like 'Dulce et Decorum Est Pro Patria Mori', who articulated with unforgettable force the disenchantment with English jingoism. But they could not move beyond moral outrage and compassion because they were locked in the ideology of a 'unified' national culture. 'Anti-war' poems of this period (1914-1918) are regularly prescribed in WESSA secondary schools, and given the siege mentality of the State, this might seem surprising. In effect, the acceptance of these poems in the syllabus attests to their political ineffectiveness. A poem like the following by Edward Bond is less likely to be condoned by the State because it digs at the economic roots of war, and would probably be dismissed by Leavisite compilers of poetry anthologies because it lacks 'literary merit':

FIRST WORLD WAR POETS

You went to the front like sheep
 And bleated at the pity of it
 In academies that smell of abbatoirs
 Your poems are still studied

You turned the earth to mud
 You complain you drowned in it
 Your generals were dug in at the rear
 Degenerates drunk on brandy and prayer
 You saw the front - and only bleated
 The pity!

You survived
 Did you burn your generals' houses?
 Loot the new millionaires?
 No, you found new excuses
 You'd lost an arm or your legs
 You sat by the empty fire
 And hummed music hall songs

Why did your generals send you away to die?
 They saw a Great War coming
 Between masters and workers
 In their own land
 So they herded you over the cliffs to be rid of you
 How they hated you while you lived!
 How they wept over you once you were dead!

What did you fight for?
 A new world?
 No - an old world already in ruins!
 Your children?
 Millions of children died
 Because you fought for your enemies
 And not against them!

We will not forget!
 We will not forgive!

(Bond, 1978:136-137)

Bond's final outcry is perhaps too harsh and unforgiving in that the poets he castigates can be seen as victims of a hegemonic and mystifying educational system. But his reference to 'academies that smell of abbatoirs' is a chilling reminder that political ignorance parading as academic knowledge can play a part in the killing of millions of people. In a country as militarised as South Africa today, we cannot afford to feed WESSA students the pseudopatriotic lie that they are fighting for South Africa when only whites (as yet) have to do compulsory military service. Moreover, merely analysing poems about the beastliness of war is unlikely to enable WESSA students to make clear-sighted decisions about who the enemy is. While they remain ignorant of the economic and political reasons

for their conscription, reading anti-war poetry can do little more than deepen their anxieties. Is this the noble function of Literature? If we acknowledge that the need for a more rigorously politicised reading of war poetry exists, we need to reconsider the usefulness of the other major influence on the teaching of literature in WESSA schools, that of I.A. Richards and the American 'New Critics'.⁵ Richards and the New Critics shared Leavis's insistence on the virtues of 'close reading' which enables one to 'judge literary "greatness" and "centrality" by bringing a focussed attentiveness to bear on poems or pieces of prose isolated from their cultural and historical contents' (Eagleton, 1983:43), but Richards and the New Critics sought to decontextualise poems to an even greater extent. This entailed the fetishizing and reifying of the poem to an unprecedented degree.

Richards shared Arnold's faith in the redemptive capacities of poetry, claiming that it 'is capable of saving us; it is a perfectly possible means of overcoming chaos'. (Quoted in Eagleton, 1983:45.) But for Richards this could only happen if poetry was subjected to the rigours of experimental science so that the impulses of the 'affective realm' could be properly identified and organised. In setting about this task Richards mounted an elaborate experiment at Cambridge in which students in 'laboratory conditions' were asked to respond to 'unseen' decontextualised poems. These responses could then be analysed and 'corrected' with the critical instruments of Richards' literary theory. These instruments, presumably, would be available to any Ricardian 'Ideal Reader'. However, as George Watson (1964:200-201) points out:

there is only one practical difficulty; some readers are better informed than others, and Richards shared the modish prejudice of the years between the wars against historical information ... The failure of Richards' pupils might be thought implicit in the test he offers them, for there is no reason to think that any poetry was ever written for the reason to which Richards applies it here, as he comes near to

admitting with damaging force, in his introduction: 'The precise conditions of this test are not duplicated in our everyday commerce with literature' (p. 5). This is a sizeable understatement. It seems more natural to suppose ... that poems torn from their historical context tend to mean some other thing, or to descend into the merely meaningless. If this is so, then Practical Criticism (is) ... an impressive body of evidence to suggest that unhistorical reading is bad reading.

In addition to being ahistorical, Ricardian criticism is scientific in the worst sense:

Richards's quantifying, behaviourist model of the mind was in fact part of the social problem to which he was proposing a solution. Far from questioning the alienated view of science as a purely instrumental, neutrally 'referential' affair, he subscribes to this positivist fantasy and then lamely seeks to supplement it with something more cheering ... If historical contradictions cannot be resolved in reality, they can be harmoniously conciliated as discrete psychological 'impulses' within the contemplative mind ... Organizing the lawless lower impulses more effectively will ensure the survival of the higher, finer ones; it is not far from the Victorian belief that organizing the lower classes will ensure the survival of the upper ones, and indeed is significantly related to it.

(Eagleton, 1983:45-46)

It is important to note that Ricardian scientism is informed by the assumptions of bourgeois psychology, with its endorsement of the liberal humanist conception of the individual.⁶ One of the most striking features of liberal humanism under capitalism is its tendency to promote individual, personal growth while frustrating it at every turn through endorsement of competitiveness in an essentially alienating economic system. In the teaching of English 'personal growth' and 'originality' are encouraged while pupils are subjected to the assumptions of the Leavisite/Ricardian critical doctrine. This tendency reaches its climax in the matriculation examination, when most pupils understandably take their leave of reading poetry. This depersonalising approach to the teaching of poetry is implicit in the Leavisite/Ricardian approach, but

is also influenced by the even more 'impersonal' theories of T.S. Eliot and the New Critics.

Opposed to virtually every trend in capitalist society, and ignoring the roots of the social malaise, Eliot advocated

an extreme right-wing authoritarianism: men and women must sacrifice their petty 'personalities' and opinions to an impersonal order. In the sphere of literature, this impersonal order is the Tradition.

(Eagleton, 1983:39)

Even more ahistorical than Eliot, the New Critics reduced the poem into a completely discrete artefact or icon. It is important to grasp the ideological implications of this approach:

... the very order against which such poetry was a protest was rife with such 'reifications', transforming people, processes and institutions into 'things' ... Having begun life as a humanistic supplement or alternative to technocratic society, the movement thus found itself reproducing such technocracy in its own methods.

(Eagleton, 1983:49)

It should be clear by now that the literary theory which informs the teaching of English in WESSA schools is steeped in the bourgeois ideology of English nationalism and that as such it must tend to perpetuate rather than counter 'white' bourgeois hegemony in South Africa. The inability of most 'WESSAs' to let go the 'national heritage' of the mother country and set about creating the economic, political and cultural conditions for a vital indigenous literature is bound up with the distinction they make between culture and the economy. Economically most 'WESSAs' are settlers ready to reap the benefits derived from the dispossession, exploitation, oppression and racist classification of colonized people, while culturally they remain colonialists, tied to the apron strings of the mother country. This is the main reason why one doesn't hear references to 'English-speaking South African nationalism'. Albert Memmi (1965:67-68)

has made some observations which are relevant in this context:

(The) abasement of the colonized, which is supposed to explain his (sic) penury, serves at the same time as a contrast to the luxury of the colonialist. Those accusations, those irremediable negative judgements, are always stated with reference to the mother country, that is ... with reference to the colonialist himself (sic). Ethical or sociological, aesthetic or geographic comparisons, whether explicit and insulting or allusive and discreet, are always in favour of the mother country and the colonialist. The place, the people here, the customs of this country are always inferior - by virtue of an inevitable and pre-established order. This rejection of the colony and the colonized seriously affects the life and behaviour of the colonized. But it also produces a disastrous effect upon the colonialist's conduct. Having thus described the colony, conceding no merits to the colonial community, recognizing neither its traditions nor its laws, nor its ways, he (sic) cannot acknowledge belonging to it himself (sic). He (sic) refuses to consider himself a citizen with rights and responsibilities. On the other hand, while he (sic) may claim to be indissolubly tied to his (sic) native land, he (sic) does not live there, does not participate in or react to the collective consciousness of his (sic) fellow citizens. The result is that the colonialist is unsure of his (sic) true nationality. He (sic) navigates between a faraway society which he (sic) wants to make his (sic) own (but which becomes to a certain degree mythical), and present society which he (sic) rejects and thus keeps in abstract.

An important aspect of this national ambivalence is to be found in the development of Standard English. Raymond Williams (1961:237-253) has traced the development of a common language in England under the control of various ruling class groups. By the end of the nineteenth century Standard English was 'no longer merely the functional convenience of a metropolitan class, but the means and emphasis of social distinction' (Williams, 1961:243). He adds that the main agency for entrenching this aspect of Standard English was

the new cult of conformity in the public schools. It was a mixture of 'correctness', natural development, and affectation, but it became as it were

embalmed. It was no longer one kind of English, or even a useful common dialect, but 'correct English'. In its name, thousands of people have been capable of the vulgar insolence of telling other Englishmen (sic) that they do not know how to speak their own language. And as education was extended, under mainly middle-class direction, this attitude spread from being simply a class distinction to a point where it was possible to identify the making of these sounds with being educated, and thousands of teachers and learners, from poor homes, became ashamed of the speech of their fathers (sic).

(Williams, 1984:247)

This 'Standard English' ethos is pervasive in 'WESSA' secondary schools and points to the origins of the South African English syllabus in the ruling class public and grammar schools of England, and the Newbolt report of 1921. It is this ethos that sustains the idea of a 'First Language' which must remain uncontaminated by the speech habits of other 'ethnic groups'. Linguistic propriety merges with notions of cultural superiority derived from the literary tradition, although an emphasis on formal, prescriptive grammar has helped to perpetuate a damaging split between linguistics and literature in English syllabuses.

The existence of 'Standard English' is important in other ways for the cultural orientation of 'WESSAs'. It encourages an identification, through international market relations and the buying power of a ruling minority, with the diversified culture of the English-speaking world. Ironically, it is this, amongst other things, that prevents the Leavisite project from realising itself in the minds of young 'WESSAs'. An analytical account of the formation of WESSA youth subcultures is outside the scope of this chapter. Suffice it to say at this point that young WESSAs are not going to be interested in creating an emancipatory culture while they are fed a dubious 'cultural heritage' with one hand and a mass produced, consumerist culture with the other. We need to see 'Standard English' as something with both hegemonic and emancipatory potential in the context of class struggle.

Experience in Moçambique, where Portuguese has been used to forge a common national, working class identity, suggests that English can play a similar role in South Africa. English as the foremost international language, also has unique potential for linking up world-wide emancipatory thought and action.

I shall examine the structure of the syllabus in detail in Chapter 5, but a few points need to be made now. Firstly, the split between 'language' and 'literature', which is rooted in the educational traditions of England, makes the study of ideology very difficult. 'English' has hardly begun to assimilate the manifold insights of semiotics, which is based on Saussurean linguistics. Many semiologists are at present achieving a synthesis of Marxism, psychoanalysis and linguistics and producing work of great explanatory power.⁷ Language study in the new syllabus remains essentially a mixture of instrumental skills, and a distorted hybrid of traditional grammar and Chomskyian linguistics. Informed by a sound understanding of semiotics, English teachers could unravel the hegemonic ideological forms in their own discourse, in the 'realist' fiction in the syllabus (which is still the model for most cinematic and television drama), and in the prevailing literary critical tradition. This would have important effects on attitudes to students' own writing at school, which is still informed by an individualistic bourgeois psychology. This tradition's valuable insights about individuation could be brought into a fruitful dialectic with more collective approaches.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to show that the problem of racism in WESSA secondary schools cannot be solved while the ideology of ethnicity with some of its roots in British, colonial and bourgeois ideology persists. Ethnic groups,

such as WESSAs, have to be seen as ideological constructs which maintain the hegemony of the South African ruling class. I have argued that the English syllabus in its present form, because of the bourgeois ideology that informs it, cannot cut the umbilical cord that ties English speakers to the 'mother country'. As a result South African children are being prevented from creating a vital indigenous culture.

Having considered the broad ideological implications of the English syllabus for an anti-racist Azania, I now turn to an examination of the relationship between the syllabus and the WESSA school culture itself.

CHAPTER TWO: RACISM AND THE ENGLISH TEACHER

ENDNOTES

1. Having read Illich's Deschooling Society and After Deschooling, What? I wish he would write a book entitled Before Deschooling, What? Illich's own praxis would be far more revolutionary if he could match the brilliance of his critique of schooling with a plausible, co-ordinated strategy for institutional transformation of existing educational conditions.
2. At the time I would have been bewildered to learn that a 'liberal democracy' like the U.S.A. would support the fascists in their overthrow of Allende's government in Chile. I would also have been bewildered to learn that capitalists ('free enterprise') provided an economic base for the success of Hitler's Nazis and Mussolini's fascists.
3. Williams (1977:133-136) makes some important points about the 'keyword' 'individual':

Individual originally meant indivisible. That now sounds like a paradox. 'Individual' stresses a distinction from others; 'indivisible' a necessary connection. The development of the modern meaning from the original meaning is a record in language of an extraordinary social and political history ...

The emergence of notions of individuality, in the modern sense, can be related to the break-up of the medieval social, economic and religious order. In the general movement against feudalism there was a new stress on a man's (sic) personal existence over and above his (sic) place or function in a rigid hierarchical society. There was a related stress, in Protestantism, on a man's (sic) direct and individual relation to God, as opposed to this relation MEDIATED (q.v.) by the Church. But it was not until C17 and C18 that a new mode of analysis, in logic and mathematics, postulated the individual as the substantial entity (cf. Leibniz's 'monads'), from which other categories and especially collective categories were derived. The political thought of the Enlightenment mainly followed this model. Argument began from individuals, who had an initial and primary existence, and laws and forms of society were derived from them: by submission, as in Hobbes; by contract or consent, or by the new version of natural law, in liberal thought. In classical economics, trade was described in a model which postulated separate individuals who decided, at some starting point, to enter into economic or commercial relations. In utilitarian ethics, separate individuals calculated the consequences of this or that action which they might undertake. Liberal thought based on 'the individual' as starting point was criticized from conservative positions -

'the individual is foolish ... the species is wise' (Burke) - but also, in C19, from socialist positions, as most thoroughly by Marx, who attacked the opposition of the abstract categories 'individual' and 'society' and argued that the individual is a social creation, born into relationships and DETERMINED (q.v.) by them.

4. Cecil Rhodes, for example, a particularly memorialized capitalist and imperialist, is on record as having said (in English):

... if the whites maintain their position as the supreme race, the day may come when we shall all be thankful that we have the natives with us in their proper position. We shall be thankful that we have escaped those difficulties which are going on amongst the old nations of the world.

(Quoted in Rich, 1984:2)

5. I am not advocating the complete removal of 'practical criticism' from the English syllabus, nor am I suggesting that a politicised reading of war poetry would be politicised in the same way as a reading of nature poetry or love lyrics. What we need is a greater range of approaches to the study of poetry, with a historical materialist perspective as a necessary part of an ensemble of approaches.
6. I should add that Richards's psychology has a strong behaviourist streak and that behaviourism is as appealing to totalitarian ideologues as to liberal humanists.
7. See, for example, Coward and Ellis (1979).

CHAPTER 3: IDEOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM IN THE WHITE,
ENGLISH-SPEAKING SOUTH AFRICAN SECONDARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION: SOME PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE APPLICATION
OF CRITICAL METHOD

Central to the argument I have been advancing so far is the notion that racism cannot be uprooted by moral denunciation directed at individuals or groups. At the same time, it is not enough for any theory of ideology merely to provide an elaborate rationale for the denunciation. The great liberatory teleologies of Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis and religions such as Taoism all have a common goal - an end to domination and alienation. It is important, therefore, to see a theory of ideology as enabling us to unravel the tangled threads of a chaotic and oppressive system so that a new and harmonious fabric can be woven. Both Marx and Freud have shown that coming to terms with the past is an essential stage in freeing ourselves from its shackles. To understand the systemic nature of past and present can free one of guilt and shame and foster a new sense of responsibility for one's personal future and the future of humanity.

In this chapter I propose to show that the curriculum in WESSA schools is not a thing that can be objectified in Cartesian fashion, but part of a living, historical process and structure.¹ Conceptually it can be provisionally abstracted and seen as the terrain where human subjects are engaged in a complex effort to establish a sense of themselves as participants in a social process and structure. What is formally called the curriculum, the collection and sequencing of subjects and syllabuses,

is but one of the many factors that interpellate the social agents at work and play in the social body called 'the school community'. To understand what is happening in the curriculum in general and in the English syllabus in particular, we have to realise that education is much vaster than schooling. To say, for example, that I was educated at Pretoria Boys' High School is one of those common-sense assumptions which in one sense is necessary for interpersonal communication, but in another is damagingly mystifying about the nature of education.

As many of my own common sense assumptions have been demystified, I have come to a radically new awareness of my role in a WESSA school and the curriculum that constitutes it. This does not in any sense imply that I am in some intrinsically superior position to define the curriculum. Living with its contradictions both within and around me, is a source of personal distress to me and I welcome any effort on the part of friends, colleagues and fellow students to resolve these contradictions.

Before providing a macroscopic view of these contradictions, I wish to comment on the distress I feel in embarking on the writing of this chapter. I am acutely aware of how profoundly my consciousness has been shaped by the family-school couplet in bourgeois ideology, and in trying to demystify the WESSA curriculum and 'school community' I have a painful sense of uprooting myself from the values which my parents and teachers taught me. Since bourgeois ideology is intensely personalised in the nuclear family, this uprooting sometimes feels like an attack on my parents and myself. The emotional tensions and conflicts that this situation brings into play are compounded by my awareness of being what Memmi (1965:19-44) calls 'the colonizer who refuses'.

I have become acutely aware since 1980 of how virtually every organised activity in a WESSA high school serves to entrench the hegemony of the ruling class. It

has been difficult not to feel my complicity in this hegemony when turning from my hegemonic activities in school to the daily reality of forced removals, mass poverty and so on. My anger at the disparity between WESSA and black working class living conditions has threatened to estrange me from those colleagues and students who seem resigned to or content with what is happening. Given my very real affection for these people and my commitment to working with them towards a just society, I have found it extremely difficult to know how best to work with them without denouncing their 'apolitical' stance in the school. Such difficulties may be resolved in at least three ways. A deepening awareness of the historical and systemic nature of the problems, in both personal and social terms, will lift the guilt (but not the responsibility) from individual shoulders. Secondly, I am learning that the most sorely oppressed classes will, through their heroic and collective struggles, free me too. This makes me more humble about what I can achieve in a WESSA school. And thirdly, I will learn the true meaning of Christ's dictum, 'Love your enemy'. The importance of this injunction is well captured in the following two extracts, the first from 'The Way of All Ideology' by the feminist Susan Griffin (1982a:161-162) and the other from the Chinese oracle, the I Ching:

I began thinking about political theory by thinking about the way we think. I speculate about ideology. About form. And then about dialogue. The three phenomena occur to me at once. Forms: the forms of hierarchies, of institutions, of habits, the way things are done; the forms of language, gesture, art of thought, and equally, of emotion. What we say to one another being often what it is predictable that we will say; what I will say, if you say that: Dialogue. But a speculation about dialogue is also a speculation about ideology. For so often we speak as if my questions and your answers, my statements and your responses, were all written down somewhere in a great codicil of conversations. As if, in the same code, who 'I' believe myself to be, and who I believe 'you' to be, were also written; as if it were recorded that there must be an 'I' and a 'you', the you corresponding to the inevitable 'other': the

enemy. And now I sit up straighter and glare in the eye of an imaginary 'you' who forbids me to utter such thoughts as the one I am about to utter, and I ask this 'you': What if all our efforts toward liberation are determined by an ideology which despite our desire for a better world leads us inevitably back to the old paradigm of suffering?

This is not a question filled with dread, I tell this 'you'. For now this other half of a continual dialogue in my mind, has become the censor. She reduces, maligns, misinterprets my thoughts. She challenges, troubles and unsettles me. And I argue with her. I tell her, this is a question filled with hope. It is filled with the implication that our dialogues can be transformed into real speech, to a liberating conversation; it is a question imbued with the suggestion that we might free ourselves from the old paradigm of warfare, that I may not need an enemy.

When I consulted the I Ching about the spirit in which this chapter should be written, the answer I received contained the following advice:

In a resolute struggle of the good against evil, there are ... definite rules that must not be disregarded, if it is to succeed. First, resolution must be based on a union of strength and friendliness. Second, a compromise with evil is not possible; evil must under all circumstances be openly discredited. Nor must our own passions and shortcomings be glossed over. Third, the struggle must not be carried on directly by force. If evil is branded, it thinks of weapons, and if we do it the favour of fighting against it blow for blow, we lose in the end because this we ourselves get entangled in hatred and passion. Therefore it is important to begin at home, to be on guard in our own persons against the faults we have branded. In this way, finding no opponent, the sharp edges of the weapons of evil become dulled. For the same reasons we should not combat our own faults directly. As long as we wrestle with them, they continue victorious. Finally, the best way to fight evil is to make energetic progress in the good.

I freely admit that I haven't yet acquired the integrated wisdom and vision that these passages suggest. My sense of living in a transitional space called 'pre-Azania' still ties me to the adversarial mode of historical materialism, and it is with the hope that 'energetic

progress in the good' can be made by developing this mode that I proceed.

A FOCUS FOR A CRITIQUE OF THE WESSA CURRICULUM: THE MORNING ASSEMBLY AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

In Chapter 2 I used the theoretical framework of historical materialism to explore the ideological dimensions of a 'critical moment' in the teaching of the English syllabus, a moment at which a casual remark laden with historical and political significance collides with a discourse which is, in important ways, dehistoricised and depoliticised. It must be stressed that I do not see historical materialism as a static, mechanical apparatus that can be applied to an object of analysis in the manner of positivist science. More accurately it should be seen as a living structure in the process of becoming an unalienated apprehension of reality. As Perry Anderson (1983), amongst others, has shown, historical materialism seeks to assimilate new developments that seem essential for the understanding and transformation of the capitalist mode of production. Feminism, for example, as Stuart Hall points out, has 'displaced forever any exclusive reference to class contradictions as a stable point of reference for cultural analysis'. He adds that

neither school nor family can be seriously considered outside the sexual division of labour, the construction of gender roles, identities and relations and the principle of sexual difference. The institutions of state and civil society are both 'capitalist' and 'patriarchal' in character, in their very mode of operation. A theory of culture which cannot account for patriarchal structures of dominance and oppression is, in the wake of feminism, a non-starter.

(in Hall et al. (eds.): 1980:38-39)

In this chapter I propose to explore the nature of the WESSA school curriculum, of which the English syllabus is a part, by looking at one of its well established

rituals, the morning assembly. In doing this I hope to produce an effective synthesis of several approaches. Following Althusser, I shall see it as an instance of ideology as material practice. In the manner of King (1983) and Hunt (1979) I shall see it as the dramaturgical representation of hegemonic meanings. Following Marx I shall look at some of the historical and economic determinants that inform the process. I will use Levi-Strauss's concept of homology to show how the organisation of knowledge and information parallels such organisation in capitalist society and how the patriarchal, authoritarian structures of the bourgeois nuclear family exist, mutatis mutandis, in the WESSA school community. In very simplified form, I shall apply some of the principles of semiotics to show that ideological meanings are encoded in a cultural event such as the morning assembly. Feminism will inform my analysis of gender roles in this context. In looking at the assembly I shall attempt to identify some of the important elements in the subjectivity of the participants. This will entail further use of the concept of interpellation which I have already explained. Using this concept will enable me to look at how the subjectivity of the participants is constituted by factors within and outside the school culture.

In order to make my study of the school assembly as representative as possible I shall focus on those aspects that seem typical of co-educational WESSA schools and make qualifications where necessary so that single sex schools can also be included in the picture. In order to make the picture as comprehensive as possible, I shall deal with the following aspects of the situation. Firstly, I shall briefly relate the ideology of the 'school community' gathered at assembly to the political economy of South African education. I shall examine the role of the principal as 'leader' of the school community, and in so doing, the hegemonic order of society

as a whole.² I shall then examine the role of teachers in the hegemonic order of school and society, and finally the role of pupils in this context. In attempting to identify the main aspects of these roles, and the various interpellations involved in them, I shall stress the inter-relationship and interpenetration of these roles, showing how they contribute to hegemonic patterns in the South African social formation. It is, in my view, mystifying in the extreme to talk of 'personal development' in the English syllabus unless one is aware of the hegemonic character of the WESSA school community and its curriculum.

When I sit on the stage at assembly, alongside a row of fellow teachers, I am forcibly struck by the extraordinary staying power of this social ritual. As if in some timeless, unchanging drama, the pupils in uniform sit in obedient silence, the teachers, symbolically elevated on the stage, also wait in deference for the moment when the principal, in regal solitude, makes his/her entry. Already, in the opening scene, as it were, the theme of hierarchy has been clearly stated. However, our minds have to wander offstage to understand what kind of hierarchy is being affirmed and how this hierarchy relates to the world outside the school hall. It is, we shall find, a hierarchy that has been historically constituted, a hierarchy that has been established through a bourgeois and patriarchal subjection of children, women and the working class, first in England and then in South Africa. The ideology of the school community is particularly problematic in South Africa because it entrenches the racist interpellations already secured by the Group Areas Act and the racial capitalist division of labour. There is a 'whites only' sign nailed willy-nilly into the consciousness of every member of the 'school community' sitting at a WESSA school assembly. And the same sign marks the life chances of everyone present. The impressive hall, built by the hands of those

whose children are forbidden to use it, is another reminder of that.

Because the ritual of assembly which reasserts the identity of the school community seems so natural and everlasting, it is important to be aware that the ideology of the school community has historical origins. As Martin Hoyles (1979:3) points out in relating the rise of schooling to the rise of capitalism:

that the rising bourgeoisie wanted their sons educated in a particular way to prepare them for their adult jobs and to challenge the power of the aristocracy led to the development of schooling and the modern concept of childhood. As early as the fourteenth century one can see the beginnings of the English and Maths based curriculum. For a mercantile career a boy had to learn to read and do accounting before being apprenticed in a bank or shop.

As the new ruling class grew increasingly powerful, it invested in education as a means of expanding its power. It appears, however, that this entailed overcoming the resistance of ruling class boys. According to King (1983:80-82) and others

the English notion, or ideology of the school as community has its origins in the public schools of the nineteenth century. The ancient foundation schools had been strongly criticised during the Napoleonic wars and after for their poor teaching and narrow curriculum, but most concern was expressed about the delinquent behaviour of the pupils, leading on several occasions to 'rebellions'. One, at Winchester in 1808, was only ended by the intervention of the local militia with bayonets. ... The response of the governing bodies was to appoint trouble-shooting headmasters, such as Thomas Arnold of Rugby, to introduce structural reforms intended to assert control and establish order, and so check the dwindling support of rich parents. ... When new schools were established later in the century, to meet the demands of newly emergent middle classes for a gentleman's education for their sons, they were built in rural areas, not only for economic reasons but to isolate boys from the temptations of the town. These and other changes cohered around the idea of school as a community and of the headmaster as its powerful 'leader' ...

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AND THE WESSA SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Three essential points emerge from this kind of analysis. Firstly, we must note that schools of the WESSA type were originally established by a rising capitalist class. Secondly, these schools were intended to train males of that class in the skills and attitudes that would ensure the hegemony of this class. And thirdly, that the headmaster was the crucial figure in securing this hegemony. It is in this context that the WESSA curriculum and its accumulation of 'cultural capital' must be seen, for as Uldis Ozolins (1982:48) points out:

If we ask: what kind of curriculum is most suited to those who will be the controlling figures in society, the answer historically seems to be: a curriculum which first of all camouflages this power behind other attributes - being cultured, being knowledgeable, being educated itself - while equipping its recipients with the skill and perspectives of cultural arrogance and manifest destiny. Cultural superiority masks and stands in for economic and social superiority.

It is interesting to note that in South Africa today the researchers representing the state and monopoly capital are expressing their dissatisfaction with 'academic' hegemony because it does not meet the ideological and economic demands of the new order (Davies, 1984:361).

It is also significant that the rise of schooling, together with the removal of middle class children from paid work, the establishment of the bourgeois nuclear family and the depredations of imperialism, contributed to the identification of women, children, colonized people, and animals as oppressed groups. As Shulamith Firesone (1979:36) points out:

There is a strong relationship between the hierarchies of the family and economic class. Engels has observed that within the family the husband is the bourgeois and the wife and children are the proletariat. Striking similarities between children and working-class or other oppressed groups have been noted, and studies done to show that they share the same psychology.

This ideology of oppression is nowhere more evident than in language, where women are called 'chicks' and 'bitches', children are called 'kids' (I remember how I resented that as a child!), servants are called 'the girl', 'the maid' or 'the boy' and 'blacks' are called 'buck' or 'baboons'.

It is important to understand how this complex of ideological strands is woven into what Wilhelm Reich might have called the 'character structure' of the school principal and the typical member of the WESSA school community. What I have to say here is to a great extent informed by my being able to recognise the ideological pattern in myself. As I grew up I had a strong sense that nurturance in the home had to exist in the service of the patriarchal mode, which in my experience involved competitiveness and intellectual success. And if my father became to me a symbol of patriarchal hegemony, this was even more so in the case of the school principal, remoter and yet as powerful in his capacity to determine whether I was a success or failure. I do not think that it is unfair to say that school principals believe their educational mission is accomplished if 'their' pupils show that they have submitted to the hegemony of patriarchy and achieved success in its terms, usually defined as 'academic excellence' or 'sporting achievement' or 'leadership' (in the service of the patriarch). There is, however, an important aspect of patriarchy which is sometimes neglected. I refer to the ways in which the maternal or nurturant mode is incorporated into patriarchy and distorted in the process. This happens in at least two ways.

Firstly, the nurturing capacities of men and women are put in the service of 'character building', which means making the 'character armour' that will enable one to survive the most severely alienating and oppressive aspects of the dominant order. This, as I see it, involves splitting the masculine and feminine modes, both in the

self and in society, so that men distort and repress their femininity, violating themselves, one another (particularly in warfare, but also in cut-throat business) and women (in rape, wife-battering, pornography and domestic slavery). In order to survive many women are either driven to exploit their sexual power over men while submitting to male definitions of femininity, or to compete with the distorted masculine mode on its own terms, or to assert an 'essential' femininity in total opposition or contradistinction to masculinity. It is impossible to underestimate the terrible violence engendered by this psychological warfare with its deep historical roots. Susan Griffin and Andrea Dworkin have most eloquently shown how this warfare is related to racist and capitalist ideology. What I want to stress here is the importance of seeing how schooling contributes to the destructive modes I have mentioned and of finding ways in which a harmonious integration of masculinity and femininity can be achieved within individuals and in social institutions and practices.

'Character building' at school entails the development of two alienated gender modes for boys and girls, and the role of the principal is crucial in this development. To the extent that the school acts in loco parentis the principal is the head of the family. And although the roles of headmasters and headmistresses are not identical, they both represent the interests of capital, patriarchy and the state. As such they promote the ideology of the nuclear family which, as Althusser (1971:127-188) points out, is a key ideological state apparatus. This means that the school must provide some equivalent for the role of the mother in the home. In my view, this is why the principal encourages the ideology of the school community, so that the institution itself may appear nurturing and unalienated, just as the nuclear family itself is 'naturally' said to have these qualities. These ideologies serve to suppress the irreconcilable contradictions that are

sustained by these institutions under racist, patriarchal capitalism. The scant respect of the South African state for the 'black' nuclear family is well known. It must be remembered that the headteacher, inaugurated as a representative of capital, also carries the legacy of imperialism.

One of the reasons why the ideology of the principal as leader of a 'hierarchical community' (King, 1983:86) is mystifying is the way in which the WESSA school community is isolated from 'the greater community'. One effect of this is that teachers and students, mistaking a functionary of capital and the state as their 'leader', tend to use the principal as a scapegoat for the ills of the school community. And most headmasters are committed to those hegemonic practices that perpetuate the situation. This is nowhere more obvious than in the exploitation of religion at assembly.

In South Africa Christianity is used to legitimate the racist capitalist state. I don't see how apartheid can be reconciled with 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 19:19) or capitalism with 'You cannot serve God and Money' (Matthew 6:24). However, at the school assembly

There is a fusion between the religious, communal and authority presentation purposes of the assembly. The school community is the body of worshippers, worship sanctifies the community and the idea of the school as community is legitimized by these connections. The authority of the headteacher is fused with the authority of religion. Disrespectful behaviour in assembly is an offence to both the 'school' and to the faith, to the headteacher and to God. The assembly is not only a daily reminder to the pupils and teachers of prevailing authority relationships, but also an assurance to the head that he or she retains his or her power.

(King, 1983:87)

Part of the ideological effect of having the principal standing on stage with 'my teachers behind me' is the suggestion that technocratic, professional competence and status are part of the 'natural order of things'. I shall

return to the ideology of profession shortly. Here it needs to be noted that the principal's 'experience' and leadership qualities give him/her a superior position in this naturalised hierarchy, regardless of the technocratic superiority of individual teachers. Integral to this superior position is the sense that the principal is invested with his office because s/he possesses the 'personal merit' the job requires. Inability to manifest this 'merit' within the constraints of the 'community' also leads to the scapegoating of principals by teachers and pupils.

Morning assembly is often characterised by the principal's exhortation to the pupils with regard to their own 'personal merit', usually defined as loyalty to the school, good conduct (the same thing, really), striving for academic excellence, enthusiastic and (hopefully) successful participation in sport.

It is of crucial importance for those involved in education in South Africa to explore the ideology of 'merit' and meritocracy as it relates to the South African social formation. As I have already suggested WESSA schools are profoundly informed by the ideology of British ruling class schools and the shift in Britain to meritocracy has had complex repercussions here. King (1983:122) has the following comments to make about the changes in Britain:

In most nineteenth century schools, 'success' and 'failure' were explained in terms of pupils' hard work or laziness, and this legitimized the use of corporal punishment for poor work. In modern Britain the more common assumption is that children vary in their 'ability' to do school work. This is legitimated in the 1944 Act's reference to education fitted to 'age, aptitude and ability', frequently quoted or paraphrased by secondary school headteachers. It is also legitimized in the educational psychologists' attempts to give it precision through intelligence and standardized attainment tests, including those used for secondary selection. Intelligence is a social construct. ... The institutionalisation of what Esland ... calls the 'psychometric paradigm' is part of the social

history of the establishment of a divided system of secondary education in this country. ... The legitimacy of ... the psychometric paradigm is strengthened by its links, through the examination system, with the occupational structure.

Arguably the move to meritocracy in Britain comes from both middle and working class opposition to caste elements in British education. King (1983:124) quotes Marshall as saying that it involved the change from 'the education your status entitled you to', to 'the status your education entitles you to'. However as King (ibid.) points out the new ideology 'is basically a conservative one in that education leads to success in society in its existing form'.

In South Africa some WESSA schools have, to a certain extent, the class heterogeneity of British comprehensive schools, but a racially discriminatory caste system persists in both education and parliamentary politics. This has to be borne in mind when we consider the function of meritocratic ideology in WESSA schools. As I see it, competitive individualism is intrinsic to meritocracy and ultimate responsibility for 'success' in education shifts from 'the community' to the individual. The educational 'success' of the school is then measured by the number of individual pupils who get the highest number of marks. At this point in the psychometric paradigm, scientism and capitalism converge in the fetishisation of intelligence and knowledge as a thing that can be quantified and exchanged for the hegemonic powers the school bestows on its 'successes'. In WESSA schools this obscures the fact that access to bourgeois occupations does not come from the WESSA student's individual commitment to achievement and his or her 'natural' ability, nor from the 'cultural capital' the school and family may provide, but from the interaction of these factors with the material advantages of belonging to the ruling class or caste. For this reason it is mistaken to believe that equal access to WESSA-type

schools for all 'races' would solve the problems of a society riven by class and gender contradictions.

With these considerations in mind I find it very difficult to accept the typical WESSA principal's attempt to enshrine academic success with certificates, book prizes and 'colours'. Here fetishised marks are sanctified by exchange for another fetish, and applause sanctifies individual success; whatever envy and humiliation there may be for the 'unsuccessful' is drowned out by clapping, and ego-flattering 'appreciation' stands in for love. This is not a sentimental point. Those who believe in schooling as I know it have hardly begun to consider how its ideology undermines our capacities to love one another and mobilize the individual and collective energies that will heal our afflicted country and planet.

In WESSA schools the meritocratic ideology that informs academic work is complemented by its manifestation in sporting achievement.

The institution of sport (or games) in schools originated in the policies of the reformist headmasters of the early nineteenth century. According to King (1983:116)

The reformist headmasters propagated team games, so extending control over what were formerly mainly privately arranged activities. ... Games became part of the character-moulding process and loyalty to the school community was fostered through interschool competitions. The extensive provision and ritualization of games, through awards and emblematic ties and badges, is still a characteristic of these schools, where team positions and captaincies receive high status.

In WESSA secondary schools the ideology of competitive sport has important connections with the ideologies of nationalism and capitalism. In this area, as well as those discussed by Rudolf Bahro (1978), the values of the capitalist nation-state persist in so-called socialist and communist states. John Hargreaves (1982:55-69) has discussed some of the hegemonic aspects of sport ideology.

These include the idea that 'the national interest' takes precedence over class struggle; that hierarchical order is a natural part of society; that individuals are inherently unequal; that social position is a result of individuals taking advantage of their talents; that the competitive instinct is fundamental to human behaviour in society; that the very existence of social institutions is a justification for their necessity. To Hargreaves's observations I would add that sport is a powerful contributor to patriarchal ideology in its articulation with capitalism and nationalism. This is a relatively neglected area of social research but a few tentative points should be made. Firstly, the major national team games such as football, baseball, soccer, rugby and cricket, also the most prestigious games at co-ed WESSA schools, all emphasise male prowess. Moreover, the emphasis on physical competitiveness, which confers a kind of subordinate status on all sportswomen, seem to render male superiority natural. Competitiveness predates capitalism but for that very reason can legitimate the forms that competition takes in the capitalist, patriarchal nation-state and its institutions, including school. Sporting achievement in the school derives much of its status from that conferred on sporting personalities outside school and it is consequently a powerful instrument in the hands of the principal seeking to legitimate the ideology of the school community. In my view the conservative and patriarchal tendencies in sport (which include a fetishizing of the body as the object of 'scientific' training methods) constitute one of the major obstacles to revolutionary movements because they are embedded in the character-structures of most men and women in all social classes.

It is significant that recognition of sporting achievement is encoded in details of the school uniform because the latter is one of the strongest means available to the headmaster for securing identification with the school community. It is often said that uniforms

'reduce the visibility of social and economic inequalities' (King, 1983:113) but it is equally feasible to suggest that it reduces the visibility of what causes such inequalities. According to King (1983:114), while 'school assembly is a test of the allegiance of the collectivity of pupils, the school uniform (tests) that of the individual pupil'. When, for example, a principal tells a boy to straighten his tie, he is not offering trivial but helpful advice on sartorial elegance, but making the pupil subject himself to the principal's authority and all the hegemonic power this represents. I can't believe that any genuinely courteous or egalitarian person could seriously order another person to straighten his or her tie. I would argue that it is common in WESSA schools for hegemonic roles to take precedence over personal relationships, just as under capitalism profits take precedence over people.

The ritual of the school assembly, with the principal on stage as leading actor is perhaps the most obviously theatrical of school activities, but Albert Hunt (1976: 121) has pointed out that this dramaturgical mode is fundamental to power relations in the school:

The sense of other people, with mysterious knowledge, controlling your life is what our education system is structured to communicate. The form of that communication is theatrical, ritualistic. The lining-up in the playground when somebody blows a whistle; the morning assembly, where power is displayed, often decorated with theatrical emblems, such as gowns; the ritual of moving from room to room when the bell rings; all these are theatrical in their effect. That is to say, they work in the way that theatre works, making the abstract concrete, demonstrating in physical terms where the power lies. Even a lesson is theatrical, with the teacher playing a role in public. Until we begin to understand that the education system itself works in terms of theatre to communicate a particular experience of society, we won't get very far in saying what the role of theatre - our theatre, not the education system's - can be in contributing to the true aim of education, that of giving pupils understanding, control, and the power to make decisions about changing their environment.

Hunt's comments have far-reaching implications for the teaching of drama in the English syllabus. To the extent that school life is theatrical, with the people in it playing pre-determined roles, all prescribed drama has the status of a play within a play, and one cannot be understood without understanding the other.

THE STAFF, THE WESSA SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND THE CURRICULUM:
IDEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF PROFESSIONALISM AND CURRICULUM
DESIGN

I turn now to my second focus of interest in the school assembly, the staff. Here, as in the 'common' room, the impression of a unit is created, one which is defined in contradistinction to the principal and the pupils. They are dressed in a manner that signifies their having more individual choices than pupils; their submission to the code of formality; their professional status; and their submission to ruling class ideology. If I were to attend assembly dressed in the overalls of one of the cleaners, I would not simply transgress or disrupt the code of status, but threaten the system of power relations on which the WESSA school is based. The power of teachers at assembly is largely passive or latent, and it will again be necessary to venture off-stage in order to explore their function in relation to the ideology of the school community.

Both within the school community and in the community at large teachers are defined as professionals. This has very important and wide ranging effects on the curriculum in WESSA schools. In an essay called 'Monopolies of Competence and Bourgeois Ideology (in Dale et al (eds.):1981), Magali Larson seeks to identify the general components of the ideology of profession. Larson argues that 'the ideology of profession cannot be considered independently of the dominant bourgeois

ideology of which it is formed (op. cit.:334). In this ideology 'the possessive market model created by liberal theory is described by its contradictory foundations: individualism, property, egalitarianism and class' (ibid.). Larson is interested in the way in which the professional's vocational subjectivity is constructed. At the core of this subjectivity is the bourgeois ideology of the free individual:

The notion that the individual is essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, for which he owes nothing to society is a cornerstone of the bourgeois theory of democratic liberalism ... In the foundation of liberal theory, the force that binds atomised individuals to each other is the market itself. (ibid.)

Like that of other professionals, the teacher's work ethic is derived from 'ideals of craftsmanship' and 'calling' (Larson, op. cit.:337) and 'as such they appear to express an essential dimension of the self'. Noting that a profession is by definition 'organized' (op. cit.:336) Larson draws attention to the social organisation of the professional's career while showing that 'subjectively, career is a pattern of organization of the self' (op. cit.:335).

Larson argues that training performs an essential function in the reproduction of professional ideology. He makes several important points about the character of this training, the most important being its length and its institutional character:

For most recognized professions, an orderly career begins with training in professional schools or universities. The authoritative and authoritarian framework of relations between teachers and students is a fundamental element of institutionalised professional socialization (ibid.).

Along with the instilling of authoritarianism through particular modes of teacher-student relationships

the necessity to standardize training introduces into the model of profession a principle of equivalence between quality and quantity:

excellence, it is implied, can be measured by 'units' of training and by series of objective examinations ... The creation of professional exchange value ultimately depends upon ... the state's monopolistic appropriation and organization of a social system of education and credentialing. (op. cit.:337)

In WESSA schools salary scales are adjusted to the number of years of training, as if this number was in some way equivalent to quality of training. The merit award system, which Buckland (1984:376) rightly identifies as an 'accountability programme' informed by technocratic ideology, attempts to define the criteria to which the state believes teachers should conform.

Larson also draws attention to the ways in which professionals are isolated from other workers, arguing that the length of institutional training, with the expectation of a career, combines with other factors to form a basic conservatism. The status that professional training confers

not only prevents alliances with other workers or with clients. It also works as a preventive against the unity and the unionization of professional workers themselves. Unions are, in fact, an instrument of power of the working class, and as such are symbolic of a loss in general social status; for analogous reasons, even when there are unions, professionals are more reluctant than other workers to engage in militant tactics. (op. cit.:342)

Larson offers some interesting reasons for the ideological split between professionals and blue-collar workers. He suggests that

training ... connects the sale of professional labour power with the educational system - that is to say with the principal legitimator of social inequality in advanced industrial capitalism. The intimate connection disguises the stark characteristics of wage labour by covering it with all the structural and ideological advantages derived from status stratification and from the specific ideology of professionalism. (loc. cit.:326)

Several writers have shown how important it is to

understand how technocracy limits the power of all workers, alienating them from each other and preventing them from working towards social goals which they have defined together. The rise of capitalism necessitated a social division of labour which broke down personal ties of dependence and invested power for social control in the owners of capital, the state and those technocrats who could use scientific and other expert knowledge to maintain the ruling class's control over the forces and relations of production. As Andre Gorz (1977:134-136) has pointed out

Technical and scientific knowledge is not only to a large extent disconnected from the needs and life of the masses; it is also culturally and semantically disconnected from general comprehensive culture and common language ... technical and scientific culture remains fragmented and divorced from the life and overall culture of the people because the object to which it relates, that is, the means and processes of production, is itself alienated from the people. Technical and scientific culture and competence thus clearly bear the mark of a social division of labour which denies to all workers, including the intellectual ones, the insight into the system's functioning and overall purposes, so as to keep decision-making divorced from productive work, conception divorced from execution and responsibility for the uses knowledge will be put to.

Larson (op. cit.:342) reaches similar conclusions:

The ideological insistence on individual aspects, the neglect of the whole, merges with specialization to confine the professional in an ideological conception of his role: the importance of narrow responsibilities is consciously and unconsciously emphasised, exaggerating the 'dignity' of the function.

The narrowness to which Larson refers has been clearly evident in most WESSA teachers' comments on the educational crisis in South Africa. Most of their energy has gone into demands for higher salaries and a unitary education system for all 'population groups'. The latter demand has usually entailed asking for 'more of the same' for everyone. Caught in the ideology of their profession,

very few WESSA teachers are interested in the political economy of education. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is very little communication between them and working class organisations. This is unlikely to change in the near future but there is less justification for the gulf that exists between teachers and 'progressive' or 'reconstructive' university researchers. As the English Studies Group at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies has pointed out (in Hall et al (eds.): 1980:248)

University-based research can easily be disabled by the constraints of a division of labour which separates the 'criticism' of the university from the 'literacy' of the school or the 'practice' of cultural workers.

Many of the activities I described in Chapter One, such as my involvement in Koeberg Alert and the women's movement, and the writing of this dissertation itself, have been attempts to break free of the ideological myopia of professionalism. I have no doubt that this has improved the quality of my own teaching and subjectivity, but it has also heightened my sense of how isolated my colleagues and I are in our classrooms, and how deeply mystifying the ideology of the school community is. King (1983:91) observes that

The concept of the headteacher as sovereign of the school is matched by that of the teacher as sovereign of the classroom. Historically and architecturally, this was marked by the establishment of the norm of the one teacher to a classroom: the 'cellular' or 'egg-crate' model.

This provides an important perspective on the liberal bourgeois notion of individual freedom, for, as King (ibid.) says,

'Teachers' autonomy in the classroom' is often used to tell other people to mind their own business, but the postulate must be qualified in two ways: conceptually and empirically. It is not the case that teachers have, or probably could have, autonomy by virtue of their being individuals. ... If individual teachers have any autonomy it is because

they are teachers not particular individuals.

King argues that the constraints imposed by the time-table 'may not be subjectively defined as constraining' but I would argue that this involves an idealist view of ideology closely akin to the idea that 'where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise'. I would agree with Chanan and Gilchrist (1974:82) that

to fall for the illusion that he (sic) can have genuine control in his classroom for periods of three-quarters of an hour at a time arbitrarily sliced out of a complex and ever-shifting social situation is to lay up for himself endless frustration. Between individual autonomy and centralized, impersonal direction lies the underdeveloped territory of collective teacher responsibility.

They also point out that teachers need to be aware of the educational effects of the time-table as a whole:

The overriding criterion of time-table planning is to make sure that all classes are occupied in all contact hours. The effect of adjacent lessons on each other, the effect of the cumulative sequence of lessons, is not considered. The need for balance between different types of concentration, between listening and doing, between absorbing and creating, between accommodation and assimilation, is unconsidered. The overall effect is an imposed superficiality, a self-fulfilling prophecy of pupil passivity, uninvolvedness, restlessness and all that follows. And one of the things that follows is that there is no let-up in the sequence of demands made on teachers' energies.

Several writers, including Rudolf Bahro (1981) and Andre Gorz (1982) have stressed the organisation of time is crucial to the maintenance of hegemony. Children learn about the limits of personal power through their experience of the time perspectives of adults at home and at school. Bahro suggests that children internalise

the time perspective of the adults around them, whether they live their lives with a qualitative horizon of expectation, with the hope of change (improvement) and advance (in some more or less far-reaching sense), or whether they have come to

terms with a monotonous lapse of time which only brings repetition of the same tasks and enjoyments, and where time is measured only in minutes, hours and days devoid of meaning. In a time framework such as this, neither revolution nor hope are conceivable for the individual, hardly even curiosity; there is no "exploratory drive", no strategic thinking, i.e. no development, and in this way the chances of intelligent problem-solving behaviour and reflection being formed are reduced. In these contrasting 'time perspectives' ... what is reproduced above all is the form of labour: either monotonous and with a very sparse degree of freedom in the choice of organization of one's own pattern of labour, without the motivating hope of advance, development or change, dependent and disposed of by others, the object of strategic plans; or alternatively changing, mobilising, disposing, with (partial) strategies of organization or problems. The very degree of fragmentation of labour can be influential. As observation shows, society honours workers and junior employees for stability (the celebrated 'long service bonus') and gives even senior employees scarcely any rewards for curious enquiry. The sharpness with which the function of intelligence develops seems to be itself dependent on the kind of activity and pattern of work.

Gorz (1982:138) quotes the Echanges et Projets group as saying, in their work, The Revolution of Changing Your Time Schedule:

All the defects of the way we organize time are engraved in their purest form in school time ... It is uniform time, which does violence to the obvious heterogeneity of naturally unmoulded children, and still more to their development which, as all psychologists and biologists agree, is governed by different rhythms.

Such education works to prevent the control of time. Indeed, the whole system is antithetic to the self-management of time.

In his study of counter-school culture Willis (1979: 28) notes that for 'the lads' the 'self-direction and thwarting of formal organisational aims is also an assault on official notions of time'. What they oppose is the fact that

everything has to be ordered into a kind of massive

critical path of the school's purpose. Subjects become measured blocks of time in careful relation to each other. Quite as much as the school buildings the institution over time is the syllabus.

It should now be clear that conventional school timetable is alienating in numerous ways and hardly encourages teachers and pupils to develop a common or shared sense of the school as a community brimming with emancipatory energies.

In addition to the ideological effects of the timetable, the curriculum also functions hegemonically through the form and content of individual subjects, the relationship between subjects, and the relationship between teacher and taught. Basil Bernstein (1971:202-230) has suggested that a liberating curriculum entails a shift from collection codes to integrated codes. Reynolds and Skilbeck (1976:38), adapting an unpublished paper by Eric Hoyle, have provided a neat summary of Bernstein's conception of this shift:

<u>Dimension</u>	from <u>Collection Codes</u>	to <u>Integrated Codes</u>
Curriculum content	Separate subjects	Interdisciplinary
Pedagogy	Instruction	Enquiry activities
Organization of teacher/learning	Rigid time- tabling	Flexible time- tabling
Pupil grouping	Homogeneous	Heterogeneous
Pupil choice	Limited	Extensive
Assessment	Single mode	Multiple modes
Basis of pupil control	Position in hierarchy	Personal relations
Teacher roles	Independent	Interdependent

In considering the applicability of this model to WESSA schools it is immediately evident that they fall within the 'collection codes' paradigm and as such remain conservative. However, in my view, before a shift to integrated codes can occur there needs to be an examination of the role of ideology in the content of subjects as they now exist, and an analysis of the ideological effects

created by relationships between subjects.

In South Africa the ideological content of subjects has been exposed by students participating in the school boycotts of 1980. Edgar Maurice (1982:21-22) quotes a group of these students as saying:

THEY control our minds and thoughts in the classrooms. THEY decide what we are taught. Our history is written according to their ideas. Biology and Physics are subjects taught in our schools but they cannot apply to our everyday lives. We learn all about the squint-eyed caterpillar, but we are not told that most diseases of the workers stem from the fact that they are undernourished and overworked. We are taught Biology, but not in terms of the Biology of Liberation, where we can tackle the concept of 'race', to prove that there is no such thing as 'race'. We are taught Geography, but not the Geography of Liberation. We are not taught that 80% of South Africans are dumped on 13% of the land. We are not taught that, in spite of the wide open spaces of South Africa, people are crammed into council houses in Hanover Park, Parkwood and Mannenberg, or in tin shacks in Crossroads. We are taught accountancy merely to calculate the profits of the capitalist.

One could add to this by saying that the very subjects themselves are outdated: why Geography and not 'Ecology as Politics'? Why Woodwork or Science and not Alternative Technology? Why Domestic Science and not Feminist Studies? Why French and not Media Studies? It is truly extraordinary how unresponsive our system of schooling is to the most progressive contemporary social movements.

Feminists such as Michelle Stanworth (1983) have drawn attention to sexism in the content of all subjects and shown that sexist ideology functions in the relationships between subjects with, for example, different concepts of masculinity being associated with Science and Woodwork, and gender conflicts exacerbated by polarising Woodwork and Housecraft.

Researchers into the ideologies of racism, ethnicity and sexism in schooling call, in my view, for a radical rethinking of what we mean by 'language across the

curriculum'. There is an ideological dimension to what Bernstein calls the 'framing of educational knowledge' which he defines as follows (1971:205):

The concept 'frame' is used to determine the structure of the message system, pedagogy. Frame refers to the form of the context in which knowledge is transmitted and received. Frame refers to the specific pedagogical relationship of teacher and taught. In the same way as classification does not refer to contents, so frame does not refer to the contents of the pedagogy. ... Frame refers to the range of options available to teacher and taught in the control of what is transmitted and received in the context of the pedagogical relationship.

I doubt whether one can legitimately separate frame and content as Bernstein does here because a sense of options must to some extent derive from a sense of what needs to be controlled. What is important here is that the content will be determined by the extent to which control is ceded to teacher or pupil. In the present WESSA curriculum school students have minimal control over what is transmitted in classroom discourse. Nearly all activities are prescribed by syllabi, teachers and textbooks.

Bernstein's notions of classification and framing need to be supplemented by a careful study of the ideological content of all school subjects. I shall return to this issue later when I discuss the English syllabus in detail, but I must stress that the ideological function of language needs to be analysed in all subjects. Michelle Stanworth (1983:20-21) makes the point cogently with regard to sexist ideology:

Language provides perhaps the clearest example of how, at the deepest but least intentional level, our teaching often conveys to pupils the sense that men, and only men, are the initiators, the active agents, the subjects of human life. When we say, 'American colonists took their wives and children to the New World' - instead of 'American colonist families travelled to the New World' - what are we teaching pupils about the passivity of women and children, or about the impossibility

of women taking action except under the protection of a man? By such everyday statements as 'inventors and their wives', or 'a scientist must devote his every waking hour', or 'primitive men discovered fire', we fail to name women and thereby exclude them from vast areas of human culture and experience. Where we name women and only women (as in the statement 'a woman athlete' or 'a woman physicist') we convey the impression that athletes, or physicists, are normally, typically, (properly?) male.

For those who continue to believe that words like 'mankind' or 'he' are generic terms which everyone knows embrace females as well as males, it is worth pointing out that research with pupils from primary schools upwards has shown this not to be the case. Under experimental conditions, for example, children illustrate stories about primitive 'man' with drawings of men to whom they give unambiguously male names. Even among university students - who are surely aware of linguistic conventions - the word 'man' is usually taken to refer to adult males. This was demonstrated by a study in which American college students were asked to select appropriate illustrations for a forthcoming sociology textbook. Those who were given chapter headings such as 'Social Man', 'Industrial Man' and 'Political Man', overwhelmingly produced pictures of adult males engaged in social, industrial and political activity. Other students, whose chapter titles included 'Society', 'Industrial Life' and 'Political Behaviour', selected a far higher proportion of illustrations showing girls as well as boys, women as well as men. If phrases such as 'the ascent of man' have the effect, as Miller and Swift conclude, of 'filtering out the recognition of women's participation in these major areas of life', the significance for gender divisions of the way we employ language in our everyday teaching should be clear.

Although it is important to be aware of how sexist ideology is inscribed in what we might well call the surface structure of discourse in the curriculum, we must remember that this ideology is very deeply ingrained in the social and psychological dynamics of capitalist patriarchy. There is a growing tendency in psychoanalysis to see language acquisition and development as central to this process. I shall return to this issue in Chapter 5, when I discuss the 'parental' role of the

English teacher. At this point I wish to stress that each teacher, according to his or her socialisation into a gender identity, has to play this role. Space constraints do not permit me to examine in detail how each subject in the curriculum is likely to be ideologically conditioned by the teacher in relation to his or her subject and the pupils. I would, however, like to consider the pivotal role of the teacher-psychologist as a mediator between 'the school community' and the world of work.

As Willis (1977) and others have shown, school psychologists (sometimes called vocational guidance teachers or teacher-psychologists) have not been able, either individually or collectively, to move beyond an acceptance of the capitalist division of labour as the 'world of work' into which all aspirant job-seekers must fit. The emphasis has been on facilitating choice between available options rather than on mounting projects which suggest how the hierarchical and horizontal division of labour can be transformed. Bahro (1978) and Gorz (1982), among others, have called for acceleration of a trend towards the vertical division of labour, in which individuals do more than one job and are engaged in more productive and creative leisure activities. This, they argue, is crucial to the liberation of working class men and women confined to the most menial and dehumanising jobs. I believe that all teachers, including school psychologists, need to explore the relationship between psychology, language and ideology in 'the school community', in the family and in 'the world of work', so that pupils can learn to enter the world with a joyous sense of purpose and freedom. I remember as a school-leaver how unhappy I was at the range of job prospects available to me, and nearly all the school leavers I have spoken to have expressed a similar sense of powerlessness in having to adapt to a pre-determined range of options. However, as Willis (1977) shows, 'working class kids get

working class jobs', not simply because they have little choice, but because their counter-hegemonic strategies are undercut by reactionary interpellations, those of patriarchy in particular. Therefore an education that contributes to pupils' finding a liberating perspective on the future will have to confront and set about removing all the ideological limitations of schooling as it now exists.³ This will entail, among other things, an end to the notion that school students are the 'property' of their parents or the school. And this in turn will mean making clear how the capitalist mode of production has turned human relations into alienated property relations. Clearly ways will have to be found of exploring these issues so that they are felt to be part of the lived experience of pupils and those they know who inhabit 'the world of work'.

SCHOOL STUDENTS, THE CURRICULUM AND THE WESSA
SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Before turning to consider what the ideology of the school community means to school students themselves, I feel it necessary to clarify my own perspective on 'the school community' because I have experienced the dynamics between family, school and work in a peculiarly direct and intense way. When I entered a WESSA boys' high school I already hero-worshipped my father as an intellectual, teacher and psychologist. He, teaching at the same school, extolled its virtues as one of the finest and most prestigious of its kind in South Africa, so at a profound level my father and the school became symbolic of each other. The headmaster, in this context, being my father's boss, became an Olympian figure of awesome proportions. Believing in my father and the school, I could not see how I was being turned into an object of their hegemonic will. I was a perfect example of what

paul Willis's lads call an 'earhole' and sang the unqualified praises of the school when asked to deliver the farewell address on behalf of the matrics at the valedictory assembly. It was only later, particularly through my involvement with the 'hippie' counter culture and feminism, that I began to see the severe limitations of the school community I had idolised so much.

I can think of no better example of these limitations than the way in which my father approached my emotional difficulties as parent and school psychologist. In Standard Eight my schoolwork took a nosedive as a result of the traumatic breakdown of my parents' marriage. My father's response was to administer an I.Q. test, to assure me that I had superior intelligence, and to tell me that I would have to work harder in order to fulfil my potential. At the time I was so under the spell of the patriarchal school community that I did not question the validity of my father's response to my difficulties. When my marks improved all the headmaster had to say was how pleased he was to see me 'back in form'. As a result of coming to terms with that experience I have come to have the gravest doubts about the ideology of the WESSA school community as a means of providing a truly nurturant 'home' for young people as people rather than intellectual and sporting competitors. I have become increasingly sensitive to the ways in which schooling violates and distorts the emotional being of young people. As a result, in countless informal contexts, I have listened to what they have had to say. Most of them, I have discovered, are not 'earholes', many of them have seen the ideology of the school community as oppressive and absurd. Here, for example, are the views of Dinah Arnott (1984), a 'gifted' WESSA student, as expressed in a school newspaper article:

In a natural, unrestricted society, school would be considered a foreign enforcement of unnatural restrictions.

To keep people between certain ages apart from older and younger people is forcibly dividing natural intermingling of ages. Nowhere in nature does there occur the strict enclosure of beings of a certain age together. Dividing school into standards is a further division of people which results in a hierarchical system. People in 'higher' standards become arrogant and dismissive of the younger standards, and those who do not feel this way are forced by peer pressure to ridicule the younger members of this artificially created 'community'.

Arrangement by ages shows lack of perception into what is deemed very important, namely knowledge. People should be grouped according to ability and mutual group interests and not age. This generates a respect between ages where there had previously been scorn, and a habit for helping each other in areas where age might be a disadvantage, instead of widening the gap. For instance, a simple example, the 'class' (a word with many connotations) might be doing something where age and even physical size and strength are needed, but also the freshness and ingenuity of youth. This should not be limited to people between the ages of 13 and 18 but should extend to the formation of groups of all ages.

Another aspect of school, as a microcosm of society, which causes distortions of natural situations is the importance of IMAGE and REPUTATION. Once this tenuous impression of a person is established in the minds of teachers and fellows alike, it is difficult to shake off this prejudice-forming illusion of a character. Because someone is known as an expert in a certain field, they are relied upon to always know what is happening, and someone who is labelled 'ignorant' will be laughed at and feel uncomfortable when delivering potential words of wisdom.

It is these aspects of a school system which cause exaggeration of unnatural and detraction from natural occurrences to which I object.

It is interesting to note that WESSA school students, when they protest against the ideology of schooling, do so when the liberal space provided by 'freedom of speech' is made available. The notion of direct action being taken is usually extremely threatening to WESSA principals, teachers and pupils. Prefects, whether appointed or

elected, are essentially the principal's police force, and are generally seen as such by the pupils. They also tend to have more status than SRC members at those WESSA schools where SRCs are allowed to exist. I have been told of a WESSA principal who expressed disappointment at the half-hearted interest in the SRC when he himself had taken the trouble to draw up a constitution for the pupils!

It would appear that student power in WESSA schools is deeply threatening to bourgeois hegemony, something which principal, staff and pupils might sense in different ways. It is perhaps significant that pupil power in 'non-white' schools emerged in a period when working class power was beginning to assert itself to an unprecedented degree. The democratic rights of students in many of these schools have been recognised in a way undreamt of in virtually all WESSA schools. Several researchers have pointed to the courage, initiative, imagination and insight shown by many students involved in the boycotts and alternative educational programmes.⁴ As I see it, WESSA principals have a simple choice in this matter. In an increasingly oligarchic society they can continue to exclude students from democratic participation in the running of the school community and thereby perpetuate the liberal myth that democratic rights are exercised 'elsewhere', or they can begin to explore the possibilities of democratic participation by encouraging pupils to take political responsibility for their education. That most WESSA pupils are indifferent to their own democratic rights and those of all South Africans, especially the working class, is in my view a severe indictment of those who are content with the ideology of the school community and the curriculum in WESSA schools. I believe that teachers and students together should set about demystifying this ideology and creating emancipating alternatives. Because of the power structures that have been established it would seem that the initiative

in WESSA schools will have to come from teachers.

Such teachers will have to look at the ways in which pupils relate the culture of the school to other cultural forms. Chanan and Gilchrist (1974:23) argue that

The identity of the pupil is formed primarily out of school by some synthesis of his (sic) native creativity, the language habits and culture of his home background, and the influence of mass media, peer groups and so on. For the school to fail to recognize this cultural synthesis as the basis of any further learning is to fail to recognize the identity of the pupil.

While these authors tend to neglect the economic determinants of culture they are surely right in stressing that 'neither the culture of the working class nor the middle class is evenly spread' (1974:31-32) and that

where culture is living, that is to say where it is spontaneously drawn upon as a source of values and reference points for real behaviour and experience, it is in a negotiable, fluid state, continually revalued and remade. (ibid.)

In their present form, school culture and school knowledge are in Albert Hunt's words (1976:119), 'a whole world of mystification':

Subjects, with mysterious, learned sounding names, come at him (sic) in forty-minute slots. Algebra follows geography, chemistry gives way to French ... Nobody explains to the pupil why these areas of knowledge should be considered essential to his (sic) education - except that there are equally mysterious pieces of paper, called O- and A-levels, which are steps to a higher place in society - a place similar to that occupied by the people who control the pupil's life. The pupil may not understand quadratic equations: but one thing is clear - that it's the ability to do quadratic equations that gives the maths master his (sic) power in that particular environment. And so the right to make decisions, to control, to lead, is linked directly in the pupil's experience with the acquisition of what, to him (sic), is mumbo-jumbo. Conversely, the inability to acquire this mumbo-jumbo means that you are in no position to understand or control your environment - or to make the vital decisions that affect your own life. This is one of the most powerful single lessons that our education system teaches.

To this I would add the point that acquiring the 'mumbo-jumbo' gives a power that is in many ways illusory.

Many writers have explored the dimensions of 'the hidden curriculum', and the values it instills in school pupils. Marxist writers have pointed to the reification of knowledge as 'private property' ('no cribbing', 'do your own work', etc.); the alienation of the pupils' labour when it is seen in terms of exchange value ('Is this for marks, sir?') rather than use value. They have shown that teachers (as representatives and, in a sense, the property of capital and the state) own the means of production of knowledge ('It's not in the syllabus, my girl') and pupils are the objects of their will; that knowledge becomes a commodity rather than a liberating process; that the benefits of knowledge have to be competed for; that those who win the rewards the curriculum offers deserve the power it gives them over others; that these people should charitably serve those economically and educationally 'less fortunate' than themselves; that intelligence legitimates domination; that 'races', classes and ethnic groups, like individuals in WESSA schools, can be judged according to their 'intelligence' and technological know-how; that in South Africa, different 'races' belong in different schools; that, just as the first rugby team represents 'the school', the Springbok team represents 'South Africa'; that creative playfulness should be channeled into sport and 'officially approved' cultural activities; that the bourgeois nuclear family, as defined by the parents, the school, and SATV and other mass media, knows what is best for the pupil and South Africa; that the commodities of the mass media offer a real escape from school culture; and that peer group culture is an adequate counter to the hegemony of school.

Feminist writers have drawn attention to the sexist dimensions of the curriculum. Some of these aspects can be listed as follows: It is natural for men to hold

nearly all positions in power in society; knowledge is rational rather than emotional; it is natural for girls to do housecraft while boys do woodwork; it is natural for men to be dominant in the world of science and technology; it is natural for girls to be hostesses at sports meetings; it is natural for boys to carry desks when necessary; it is natural for boys to like James Hadley Chase while girls prefer Mills and Boon; it is natural for the names of boys and girls to appear on separate registers; it is natural to talk of 'boy prefects' and 'girl prefects'; it is natural to have segregated sport; it is, in sum, natural for patriarchal values to dominate the school and society as a whole.

CONCLUSION

Let us return now to the scene in the school hall, where the principal is briefly waiting for 'the school community' to rise before he makes his exit. As we rise and s/he leaves it seems that the hegemonic circle described by the ceremony is complete. But what is the dignity being celebrated here? Is it human dignity? Is it the dignity of people working in joyous companionship for the good of all people in our country and on our planet? To be honest, I find the deferential stillness brimming with stagnant illusions and the echoes of an oppressive past. For all the beauty of the human spirit that still shimmers softly here, I am more aware of the darkness in our hearts and minds, our immobility when the need to move freely is urgent. It is with the hegemonic WESSA 'school community' and its curriculum in mind that I turn, first to the process through which the English First Language syllabus was revised in the years 1980-1984, and then to the syllabus itself.

CHAPTER THREE: IDEOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM IN THE WESSA SECONDARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY

ENDNOTES

1. Since Cartesian dualism has had a profound influence on liberal humanist and scientific ideology in general and on bourgeois state curricula in particular, it is perhaps important to be aware of the strengths and dangers of the Cartesian method. Capra (1982:44) has provided a succinct identification of its salient features:

Descartes' method is analytic. It consists in breaking up thoughts and problems into pieces and in arranging these in their logical order. This analytic method of reasoning is probably Descartes' greatest contribution to science. It has become an essential characteristic of modern scientific thought and has proved extremely useful in the development of scientific theories and the realization of complex technological projects. It was Descartes' method that made it possible to put a man on the moon. On the other hand, over-emphasis on the Cartesian method has led to the fragmentation that is characteristic of both our general thinking and our academic disciplines, and to the widespread attitude of reductionism in science - the belief that all aspects of complex phenomena can be understood by reducing them to their constituent parts.

Descartes' cogito, as it has come to be called, made mind more certain for him than matter and led him to conclude that the two were separate and fundamentally different. Thus he asserted that 'there is nothing included in the concept of body that belongs to the mind; and nothing in that of mind that belongs to the body'. The Cartesian division between mind and matter has had a profound effect on Western thought. It has taught us to be aware of ourselves as isolated egos existing 'inside' our bodies; it has led us to set a higher value on mental and manual work; it has enabled huge industries to sell products - especially to women - that would make us owners of the 'ideal body'; it has kept doctors from seriously considering the psychological dimensions of illness and psychotherapists from dealing with their patients' bodies. In the life sciences, the Cartesian division has led to endless confusion about the relation between mind and brain, and in physics it made it extremely difficult for the founders of quantum theory to interpret their observations of atomic phenomena. According to Heisenberg, who struggled with the problem for many years, 'This partition has penetrated deeply into the human mind during the three centuries

following Descartes and it will take a long time for it to be replaced by a really different attitude to the problem of reality.'

It should, I think, be noted that when some Marxists call historical materialism 'scientific', their thinking is informed by the Cartesian paradigm.

2. 'Society' here refers to the British social formation viewed historically and to the South African social formation similarly viewed.
3. I am not suggesting that emancipatory energies can only be mobilised by a commitment to removing constraints. Rudolf Bahro (1982:136-137) makes it clear that a recognition and mobilisation of our divine Self is essential to the process of social transformation.

In formative periods - and this is true not just of archaic times, but also for new cultural movements in the modern age - deeper strata of the social mind are mobilised than just economic and political interests in the narrow sense. At these levels, people's actions are generally still determined from outside by the prevailing system, even in their alternatives. If the point is not only to rise within given models of culture, but to transform these very models - and this is the outstanding contemporary need, including a real change in needs themselves - then more non-determined individual energies must be released on a massive scale and brought together outside of all the existing institutions. These are energies which live in greater proximity to the core of the individual and exist in the tension between the ego - confined, yet conscious of its confinement - and the infinite claim that arises from the originally universal disposition of human nature. This is what Beethoven referred to in calling us "We finite creatures with the infinite spirit". This profound realm of our energy economy is the mental reality on which all religion is based. If we understand this, it doesn't matter what name we give it. But this is where the impulse comes from for any collective cultural-revolutionary revolt as well as for any conversion in the practice of individual life. Our indispensable economic analyses and political programmes live and die according to whether they are able to mobilize these energies or not.

4. See, for example, Flederman (1981) and Molteno (1983).

CHAPTER FOUR: A CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF THE REVISION OF THE JUNIOR SECONDARY AND SENIOR SECONDARY SYLLABUSES IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1980-1984: THE PROBLEM OF BUREAUCRACY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to expose and contextualise the political nature of current approaches to syllabus revision in the South African social formation. I hope to provide a basis from which educators can begin to explore the extent to which their professional activities have become bureaucratised to the detriment of a democratic, participatory approach to curriculum development. I shall attempt to characterise bureaucracy as a structure which reifies the roles of people within it in such a way that the political meaning of the role within the structure is severely distorted or lost, thereby limiting the capacity of individuals or groups to transform the structure for the benefit of everyone in it. I shall also attempt to characterise bureaucracy as a process, describing the process of syllabus revision to make this clear. Teachers, then, may see themselves as primarily functioning at one point in the process, namely the bureaucratic administering of the syllabus in the classroom. My description should make it evident who is being excluded from the process (e.g. elected representatives of the black working class) and that there are several points in the process where teachers could choose to intervene, individually or collectively, if they chose to do so.

Relying mainly on the work of André Gorz and Rudolf Bahro, I shall attempt to sketch the main features of bureaucracy in contemporary industrialised societies

in general, and in South Africa in particular. In addition to providing a context for what follows, I hope to show that bureaucracy presents a problem which needs to be faced by all those who are working towards a democratic Azania. Educators surely have a key role to play in tackling this problem. After outlining some features of bureaucracy I shall describe how the English First Language syllabus was revised in the years 1980-1984 so that readers can assess the extent to which this syllabus is a bureaucratically rather than democratically constructed discourse. My own assessment, in the form of critical comment on the process, will follow my description of the process of revision.

Before defining the bureaucratic aspect of teachers as political agents it is perhaps necessary to reaffirm my belief that all education is inherently political. I am in full agreement with Neil Postman (in Keddie, 1973: 86) when he writes:

My argument rests on a fundamental and, I think, unassailable assumption about education: namely, that all educational practices are profoundly political in the sense that they are designed to produce one sort of human being rather than another - which is to say, an education system always proceeds from some model of what a human being ought to be like. In the broadest sense, a political ideology is a conglomerate of systems for promoting certain modes of thinking and behaviour. And there is no system I can think of that more directly tries to do this than the schools. There is not one thing that is done to, for, with or against a student in school that is not rooted in a political bias, ideology or notion. This includes everything from the arrangement of seats in a classroom, to the rituals practised in the auditorium, to the textbooks used in lessons, to the dress required of both teachers and students, to the tests given, to the subjects that are taught and, most emphatically, to the intellectual skills that are promoted.

SOME FEATURES OF BUREAUCRACY IN CONTEMPORARY
INDUSTRIALISED SOCIETIES

What I now wish to examine is how these political activities are determined by a particular but, in modern social formations, very complex organisation of power - namely, bureaucracy. According to King (1983:60-61)

At its simplest it refers to a form of authority based on the claim for obedience on legal-rational grounds. The legitimation of the bureaucrat is, "the reason why you must obey me is that I am your lawfully appointed superior". The legitimacy of the "client" is, "the reason why I obey you is that you are my lawfully appointed superior".

King (ibid), following Weber, lists the following characteristics of this "legal-rational" bureaucracy of "officialdom":

1. Official tasks are specialized and organized on a continuous regulated basis.
2. The offices are arranged hierarchically.
3. The rules of work have a technical or legal basis and are administered by full-time, qualified, specialist staff.
4. The resources of the organization are not owned by the officials.
5. The official cannot appropriate his (or her) office.
6. Administrative acts, decision and rules are formulated and recorded in writing.

According to King (1983:126-127), Weber suggested that knowledge was particularly susceptible to bureaucratization:

The curriculum is extensively formalized ... in syllabuses, textbooks and other paper control like worksheets and job cards - all obviously more common for high-status subjects. Compulsory homework for all is common in grammar schools - the "able" are worked more, but its control through homework diaries is more often used in boys' modern schools, where it is defined that more noses need to be kept to the grindstone. It is also clear that these diaries are a way in which headteachers ensure that teachers set

homework - another example of the rule-bearers being ruled. The organization of the recording of pupils' work progress includes the regular collection of marks for tests and school work, with assessment for effort and rankings of scores within classes and age groups.

All WESSA schools in my experience regard themselves as educationally successful if the "rational-bureaucratic" machinery is functioning smoothly, and in nearly all staff meetings the main emphasis is laid on bureaucratic efficiency as the prerequisite for achieving the educational goals envisioned by the principal.

The faith of most WESSAs in "rational bureaucracy" needs, in my view, to be challenged on at least two grounds. Firstly, we need to question whether "rational bureaucracy" characterises the South African social formation as a whole, and secondly, we need to question whether "rational bureaucracy" is indeed "rational". According to King (1983:60), Weber drew an important distinction between rational bureaucracy and patrimonial bureaucracy:

in the former the bureaucrats or officials are contractually appointed, in the latter appointments are in the gift of the powerful - emperors and kings.

It is arguable whether Weber's distinction is entirely valid, since powerful members of a ruling class may make contractual appointments. However, even if we accept the hegemony of a liberal bourgeois class, as Weber did, we have to ask whether this hegemony is being maintained in a rational bureaucratic or patrimonial way. Several Marxist writers, including Cachalia (1983), who do not accept the hegemony of the bourgeois ruling class, have noted the increasing Bonapartist character of the South African state, in which the State President, like Napoleon, prevents the mounting or completion of a revolution that would meet the demands and needs of the working class.² In his analysis of the wedding of state and capitalist interests, Cachalia (1983:27-33) has noted:

Through the reorganization of the Executive and its relationship with the process of national (white) representation, Botha has acted to forestall intragovernmental opposition to explicit state support of monopoly capitalist interests, by reserving major portfolios of his own "verlig" faction, and more importantly, by directly incorporating a number of non-Nationalist businessmen and military officers into the government. Furthermore, the increased prominence of the military in "civilian" government has been further reinforced by the enhanced powers of the Department of Military Intelligence, and the revamped State Security Council formed in 1977 to spearhead the state's "total strategy" ... Government responsibility is now a restricted area embracing the summits of the Executive, various cabinet ministers and the upper echelons of the administration. Further, centres for the direct expression of big economic interests are being created within the administration. ...

The strengthening of the Executive is inextricably linked with the decline of Parliament. In terms of the new constitution the initiative in proposing legislation will be shifted almost entirely from the legislature to the Executive. The President and the Cabinet will decide on legislation to be introduced and whether a particular bill qualifies for presentation in all three chambers or only a particular one. Immediately on being introduced, Bills will be referred to the relevant Permanent Parliamentary Committee, which will hold meetings in camera. Thus, the principle of public knowledge, previously recognised as the right of the "white" nation will be completely discarded in favour of the institutionalized principle of secrecy. Bourgeois opposition parties will furthermore in all likelihood be excluded from these committees to prevent the possibility of Nationalists being outvoted.

The implications of these oligarchic tendencies should not be lost of educators in South Africa. Firstly, we need to ask whether monopoly capital should be entrusted with the political power bestowed on it by the upper echelons of the South African state. Secondly, we need to consider the extent to which the state bureaucracy in education is likely to be representative of the interests of the new oligarchy. There is now a massive body of evidence to suggest that monopoly

capital, an outcome of capitalist development, and as such entwined in the ideology of WESSA schools, is not only incapable of solving the global economic crisis (see, for example, Gorz (1980), Harrison (1982), Bahro (1982), and Amin (1980)), but is threatening the earth with ecological catastrophe and nuclear annihilation. If, as it seems, monopoly capital cannot solve the global crisis, it is equally unlikely to meet the needs and demands of the black working class in South Africa. Moreover, as the crisis deepens, South Africans of all classes will feel its effects.

A third question which educators in South Africa need to ask is whether they are happy with the new constitution's definition of parliamentary democracy as the framework in which to exercise their political rights. It seems to me that the new oligarchy provides an effective demystification of the liberal idea that economics and politics are separate spheres of activity. If we are to conclude, as I do, that the new parliament does not represent the will of the working class or "the people" in liberal terms, it becomes necessary to find points of leverage in the social formation where political power can be wielded to break the quasi-totalitarian grip of monopoly capital and the state.

However, before these points of leverage can be found, it is necessary to consider the "rationality" of bureaucracy as it relates to the new oligarchy. According to Cooper (1983:218) "rational" originally meant "an equitable sharing or 'rationing' of the goods and bads" and with this sense in mind it can hardly be claimed that "rational bureaucracy" has ever secured equitable sharing. In its more familiar sense, "rational" suggests a sane, reasoned approach to something, an approach which is logically coherent. Bearing in mind that logical coherence and integration is necessary to moral integration, I shall now consider the views of André Gorz on bureaucracy. If Gorz's analysis is sound, we shall have to

conclude that modern bureaucracy is, in its lack of a moral centre and its inability to integrate power and technology into a socially beneficial whole, not rational but powerless and pathological. Gorz (1982: 56-59) argues as follows:

As a society ages - and this is particularly true of capitalist society - positions of power and the modalities by which they are exercised tend to become increasingly (and in the last analysis, completely) predetermined. Every position, and all the personal qualities associated with it, come to be predefined. Hence no one, however audacious, will be allowed to succeed outside the customary channels or the established institutions. Power will never be exercised by individuals or depend exclusively upon their personal authority. It comes to be exercised through institutions, following predetermined procedures, and those responsible for its exercise are themselves no more than the servants of an apparatus of domination ... They impersonate an impersonal and transcendent power.

This institutional sclerosis is inseparable from the bureaucratisation of power. ... Success belongs to careerists, to those who have followed the paths and attended the schools that equip them with the personality, accent, manners and social skills fitting the functions that look for people to fill them.

Gorz goes on to suggest that bureaucracies in modern industrial societies derive much of their impersonal character from the processes set in motion by the laws of capital accumulation:

The whole machinery of economic and political decision making and management has come to be structured in a way that meets the requirements of the profitability and circulation of capital. The logic of capital must no longer be dependent on the personal skills and initiatives of its servants. It must prevail whatever the abilities and individual authority of its functionaries. They are called upon to exercise power over people without allowing anyone in particular to exercise it in any personal sense. The state may be defined as a mechanism of power to which every citizen is subordinated and which, at the same time, denies personal power to everyone.

This type of society finds its fullest expression

in the figure of the bureaucrat. Bureaucrats guarantee the power of the state without possessing any power themselves. As agents of power or fragments of power, they maintain the mechanisms of domination by enforcing rules for which they have no responsibility and by fulfilling functions with which they can have no personal identification. The power of bureaucrats varies inversely with their impotence; they uphold the integrity of the administrative machine by renouncing all power for themselves. They are the cogs of a well-defined machine, the instruments of power exercised without a subjective will behind it. In the state apparatus as in the giant firm, power is an organigramme.³

According to Gorz, the function of the organigramme is to secure the smooth functioning of a system through carefully controlled fragmentation and specialisation so that no-one has the power to challenge the purpose of the system as a whole. He continues:

The elimination of personal power to the benefit of the functional power inherent in any anonymous organigramme has profoundly changed the implications of class conflict. Power in both society and the firm is now exercised by people who do not hold it, who are not personally answerable for their actions and take refuge behind the functions which answer for them. Since they are executants or servants, bureaucrats are never responsible. The predefined obligations inherent in their function relieve them of all personal responsibility and decision and enable them to meet protest with the disarming replay: "We haven't chosen to do this. We're only carrying out orders." Whose orders? Whose regulations? One could go back indefinitely up the hierarchy and it would still be impossible to find anyone else say, "Mine".

However obvious the class character of the system of domination, it does not follow that the individuals making up the dominant class are exercising domination individually. They too are dominated by the very power they exercise. The subject of this power is untraceable, which is why the dominated masses tend implicitly to call for a sovereign whom they could hold responsible and to whom they could present their demands or appeals.

While I question the pertinence of Gorz's argument to the struggles of the black working class in South Africa, I do think that his analysis has important implications

for educators as bureaucrats. The crucial point as I see it is that teachers need to "debureaucratise" their activities in as many ways as possible. In my own case, I believe it is significant that when I stepped out of my bureaucratised role to teach and study at SACHED, I felt the need to explore the CED bureaucracy starting from my position as a member of the English study committee at the Mowbray Teachers' Centre. Until then I had accepted the bureaucratic channels and had dutifully submitted my suggestions for syllabus revision to the Inspector who had requested them. However, having been radicalised by the process described in Chapter One, I became increasingly frustrated with the level of participation allowed to me. I sensed my powerlessness in accepting a process in which my proposals were like a paper dart thrown into an ascending elevator. Or, to use another metaphor, I felt the absurdity of trying to have an intelligent, dialectical and dynamic conversation with a suggestion box. Before being awakened from my bureaucratic slumbers I had succumbed to the apathy most teachers evince when faced with their role in the bureaucratic hierarchy. These teachers are often denounced for their unwillingness to make suggestions or offer comments when they are asked to do so. Instead of moralising about the apathy of teachers, we need to consider why they are so passive when it comes to curriculum innovation. Douglas Barnes (1982:238) has stressed that it is important to consider

the extent to which schools show the characteristics of bureaucracies and the effects of these characteristics upon teachers' perceptions of their professional responsibilities, and particularly upon their participation in curriculum development activities.

To this I would add that the bureaucracy of the school needs to be considered in relation to the bureaucratic hierarchy concerned with curriculum development. I shall now consider briefly how I personally saw my role in the

state's bureaucracy before I decided to participate more actively.

When I started teaching I was conscious of entering pre-determined and long-established organisational structures into which I would have to fit. The ideology of professionalism, which I have already discussed, played an important part in convincing me that my specialised skills had to be integrated into the bureaucracy of the school. It is worth noting that as professional and bureaucrat at once I felt severe constraints on my own creative capacities as a person and teacher. Reynolds and Skilbeck (1976:107) have suggested that "teacher self-actualization and professionalisation become more of a possibility when freedom to develop curricula is increased" but I would argue that professionalisation itself makes teachers an easy prey to the bureaucratic controls.

A second factor in inhibiting my capacity to participate in curriculum innovation was my feeling that the school and the curriculum were the private property of the state and that as a consequence I had no right to use them to express my personal political concerns or to explore the deepest political concerns of my pupils. Rudolf Bahro (1978:217), in discussing Marx's views on bureaucracy, considers some of the implications of this phenomenon:

"The bureaucracy," Marx continues, "holds the state, the spiritual essence of society, in thrall, as its private property". Though the characteristic spirit of bureaucracy, according to Hegel himself is one of "mere business routine" and "the horizon of a restricted sphere", it sees itself as a "hierarchy of knowledge". "The apex entrusts insights into particulars to the lower echelons while the lower echelons credit the apex with insight into the universal, and so each deceives the other." Where state activities are not transformed into particular offices, on the other hand, so that the state is not separated from society, then "what is crucial ... is not the fact that every citizen has the chance to devote himself to the universal interest in the shape of a particular class, but the capacity of the

universal class to be really universal, i.e. to be the class of every citizen". The examination system, however, "is nothing but a Masonic initiation, the legal recognition of the knowledge of citizenship, the acknowledgement of a privilege ... (it is) nothing but the bureaucratic baptism of knowledge."

A further point needs to be made about the ideology of private ownership in this context. Having been through the processes of examination and certification myself, I had a sense of my own knowledge and the knowledge of pupils as being a kind of private property. This was strikingly evident in exams themselves, which neither I nor the pupils could share the knowledge required to answer the questions set. In accepting the notion of knowledge as private property in the sense defined by the examinations, the pupils and I were in fact accepting that we and the curriculum were the property of the state. I believe the ideological confusion created by this contradiction is crucially important to understanding why teachers and pupils submit passively to their roles in the bureaucratic organisation of knowledge. The pressures of certification as a means of ensuring good career prospects and the prospect of acquiring material benefits (private property) as a consequence of one's "own" knowledge and skills are exerted on teachers and students and virtually guarantee their compliance with the system as it is.

In addition to feeling that the school and the curriculum were the property of the state, I was rendered submissive by two other aspects of the state bureaucracy in relation to curriculum reform. These are centralisation and the lack of properly co-operative and dialectical decision-making. Since 1949 the revision of core curricula in South Africa has been centralised and this, together with the relative autonomy of provincial and other education departments, has led to a state educational bureaucracy of awesome complexity. Perhaps more than any other factors, the vastness and complexity of the bureaucracy paralyse any thought of effecting

significant innovations through its channels. This was exacerbated for me by the belief that the upper echelons were likely to contain the ideologues of Afrikaner nationalism and conservative representatives of "English-speaking South Africa". These inaccessible people, it seemed to me, were not interested in a genuine mediation of general, particular and individual interests, otherwise they would have made it possible to understand how the bureaucracy worked and how it was or wasn't in the common interest. Bahro's comments (1978:248) on the Communist Party in Eastern Germany seem apposite to my own experience of the South African state bureaucracy:

The party should be the social structure for the development of the social knowledge process, something like the cortex of the social nervous system, an organ in which all thinking elements of the people can participate (truly not a maximal demand). Instead of this, it shifts about like a tinted and distorting lens between social thought and reality, and moreover one with systematic blind spots. The working masses, who cannot be told how this lens is developed and constructed, how it is employed and adjusted, what it obscures, what systematic errors it gives rise to, can only abandon the attempt to use this instrument, and this is indeed what they do; they switch off before the official prayer wheel has rattled out its first sentence.

BUREAUCRACY AS POLITICAL PROCESS (1): A DESCRIPTION OF
THE ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE SECONDARY SYLLABUSES, 1980-1984

It seems to me that most teachers will continue to "switch off" in response to requests for suggestions regarding syllabus revision until they feel that full and genuine participation is being called for, and that such participation will have a strong and determining effect on what is taught in their classrooms and schools. Passivity is also likely to remain endemic while teachers are in the dark as to how the bureaucracy that affects them operates. In order to disperse some of the clouds surrounding this

bureaucracy, I shall attempt to describe how the English First Language Junior and Senior Secondary syllabuses were revised in the years 1980-1984. I want to stress that revision of the curriculum as a whole needs to be analysed and changed, but such an undertaking is beyond the scope of this study. However, some of my comments on the processes involved in English syllabus revision may be relevant to a consideration of other subjects in the curriculum, and to the curriculum as a whole. All my comments must be seen in the light of the fact that with the new constitutional dispensation in South Africa, many structural changes are being made in the educational bureaucracy. The Joint Matriculation Board, for example, may be replaced or complemented by a National Certification Board which will work in close collaboration with capitalists and industrialists. Because the educational bureaucracy is in a state of flux I have chosen to describe the process of syllabus revision in the past tense, although some features of the process may be retained in future.

Before 1980 syllabuses were revised on an ad hoc basis but in that year the Committee of Education Heads, a national interdepartmental body whose members are appointed by the state, drew up a plan to revise syllabuses on a regular cycle. This committee informed each provincial Director of Education about the school subjects for which their Departments would be responsible. The Directors then had meetings with the Deputy Directors and Planners. Later meetings were attended by the Chief Examinations Officers, administrative officials in each Provincial Department whose office included the clerical staff responsible for handling syllabuses.

It should be noted that in 1980 the Committee of Education Heads represented the four Provincial Departments and that Heads of other Departments, such as the head of the Department of Education and Training, could sit on the committee by invitation only. New legislation

under the new constitution will probably make it necessary to have a Committee of Education Heads for "General Affairs" as well as similar, subordinate committees for "Own Affairs".

In 1980, however, the Committee of Education Heads allocated responsibility for revising syllabuses to the Provincial Education Departments in a four-year cycle, after consultations with the Joint Matriculation Board. According to Rose (1970:31)

the J.M.B. (a statutory body established by Act of Parliament in 1916) includes representatives of the universities, provincial and central departments of education and private schools and lays down matriculation standards for admission to South African universities.

In compliance with the demands of the J.M.B. and the Committee of Education Heads, each Provincial Department (i.e. the Departmental Education Committee) had to establish research committees for each subject. As a rule, the existing Departmental Study Committee for each subject, a sub-committee of the Departmental Education Committee, became the Research Committee.

In the years 1980-1984 the CED's Departmental Study Committee for English covered all English courses in CED high schools. There was a separate committee for primary schools, although Standard 5 English was officially part of the Junior Secondary Course. During the period 1980-1984 the committee comprised:

1. a representative from the inspectorate, delegated by the Director of Education;
2. two representatives of the CED Head Office Staff (the Chief Inspector and another person associated with the subject);
3. one representative from the universities
4. one representative from the teachers' colleges
5. one representative of the SATA and one of

the SAOU. Each Association had to nominate two candidates, one of whom was chosen by the Department. (The Department turned down a request to accept one nomination and requires a three year cycle of tenure.)

6. six examiners and six co-examiners on an ad hoc basis;
7. the Chief Planner for the Humanities;
8. other ad hoc members.⁴

Tenure of office on the Study/Research Committee varied and was not constitutionally limited. The Subject Research Committee did not have to include all members of the Study Committee. In 1980 the Director of Education instructed the chairperson of the Study Committee and the Education Planners, headed by the Deputy Director (Education Planning Section), to discuss the composition of the Research Committee. In 1980 the Education Planners in the Cape Education Department were the Chief Planners and their assistants, called Principal Planners. A Planner had to have been a teacher, a principal and preferably an inspector. There were two planners for all science and technical subjects, two in charge of the humanities and two for primary school subjects. There were also planners for in-service training and computer affairs. These planners worked in conjunction with the study committees for the various subjects. They were generally required to liaise with the chairpersons of the study committees, the inspectors of education giving guidance in those subject fields, and other bodies concerned with the teaching of particular subjects. The extent of this liaising varied from subject to subject but the principle was that there should be liaising with as many bodies as possible.

After the chairperson of the Study Committee and the Planners had discussed the composition of the Research

Committee, the Chief Planner for the Humanities asked the chairperson of the Study Committee to recommend people to be co-opted onto the Research Committee. The chairperson was free to invite chairpersons of corresponding study committees in other provinces or liaise with them. Examiners were also invited to work on syllabus research. In 1980 the Chief Planner arranged for notices and invitations to be sent out, with the Chief Examinations Officer being given the task of handling all necessary correspondence through the syllabus section of the CED.

Because examinations play such a crucial role in the structure and content of the syllabus, it is worth pointing out some bureaucratic controls in the appointment of examiners. They have to apply for their posts when these are advertised and are appointed by a committee chaired by the Deputy Director. The Planners also serve on this committee. The appointment of examiners is finally confirmed at a meeting of the Departmental Examinations Committee, a very broad committee with the Deputy Director as chairperson, the chief inspector and regional chief inspectors, all Education Planners, the heads of the education bureau (responsible for general research), the Chief Examinations Officer, four representatives of SATA and four representative of SAOU. The teacher organisation representatives are nominated by the executives of SATA and SAOU. Observers at this meeting are a representative of J.M.B. and, in the CED, representatives of Internal Affairs (Coloured Education) and S.W.A. (which use the same syllabuses).

In addition to being responsible for the appointment of examiners, the Departmental Examinations Committee is the most senior body in the CED for taking final decisions about examination requirements. It informs the J.M.B. of modifications in the mode of examining. The J.M.B. can reject such modifications without having to give reasons for doing so, as when it rejected the suggestion that English Literature be made a Higher Grade

subject.⁵ At the level of this Examinations Committee there is fairly strong representation of the teachers' organisations, with eight members constituting a quarter of the committee. There are also SATA and SAOU representatives on the Examinations Statistics Committee, as well as on the committee dealing with irregularities and complaints.

Bearing in mind the powerful influence of the examination system, let us now return to the ambit of the provincial research committees for English. The Natal Research Committee in charge of English syllabus revisions had a free hand with regard to the consultation which it regarded as necessary with other bodies or persons involved in the teaching of the subject. Invitations were sent to serving teachers (via inspectors, teacher centres or individually) to promote some pooling of ideas on the syllabus. The other three Departmental Subject Study Committees were informed of the research and invited to submit proposals. In the CED four persons were delegated by the chairperson of the study committee to draw up proposals for English First Language, Standards 5 to 7; English First Language, Standards 8 to 10; English Second Language, Standards 5 to 7 and English Second Language, Standards 8 to 10. Schools were invited to submit proposals as well. The committee met to discuss the draft proposals of the four delegated members. The principle of consensus was used in reaching decisions on the proposals although, according to one member, senior members could apply pressure when they deemed it necessary. A sub-committee was then appointed to draw up the proposals which were subsequently sent to Head Office, where they were read by the Examination Section, the Principal Planner for the Humanities, the Chief Planner for the Humanities and the Deputy Director (Planning Section). After ratification the proposals were sent to the Natal Research Committee, the inter-departmental committee revising the core syllabus.

In its work on revising the syllabus, the Natal Research Committee did not use any particular research methodology. It appears to have pooled other research findings, opinions and insights seen in the light of the committee's own interests and concerns. The committee itself made its acknowledgements as follows:

In preparing the following proposals for syllabus revision the Natal Research Committee has endeavoured to take into account the numerous suggestions received from other Education Departments, universities, teachers' societies, and other interested bodies or persons. We are indeed grateful to all who have contributed to the work. We have been impressed with Australian and New Zealand syllabuses for English and would like to acknowledge, in particular, the influence of the Queensland Syllabus (1977) on the following proposals. Special acknowledgements must also be paid to the Bullock Report (1975), the Committee of Heads of English Departments in South African Universities (1978), Prof. M. Van Wyk Smith (J.M.B.), Report No. 18 of the HSRC Investigation into Education (1981), the Transvaal Education Department's Study Committee, the Department of Indian Education, National Education, O.F.S. Education Department, Department for Coloured Education, Department of Education and Training, NATE and TATE.

The Natal Research Committee condensed all the material it had gathered into a single working document. This document, representing the draft core syllabus, was then submitted to the Committee of Education Heads which has its own secretariat in Pretoria. Its chairperson is the Director-General of National Education, who is second in command to the Minister of Education. The secretariat submitted copies of this working document to all official bodies concerned with the teaching of English. Each Provincial Department was free to deal with the document as it saw fit, but it had to be discussed by the planning section and the Departmental Study Committee. The document was also submitted to the Department of Education and Internal Affairs, the Internal Affairs Department (Coloured Education), the Indian Affairs Department and to all universities.

When the Natal Research Committee had received all comments on the working document they had to be reconciled into the revised working syllabus. Rejections had to be motivated. The revised working syllabus was then submitted to the Committee of Education Heads and the Higher Grade working syllabus was sent to the J.M.B.

The J.M.B. organised an interdepartmental meeting. It chose its own chairperson for this meeting and appointed its own moderator for the subject. The persons invited to attend were members of all the examining bodies dealing with English; all provincial Departments of Education; the Department of National Education; the Department of Education and Training, and the Department of Coloured and Indian Education (Internal Affairs). Anyone else the J.M.B. regarded as useful could have been invited. The final Higher Grade syllabus was drawn up at that meeting. It was then submitted for ratification as a core syllabus to the Committee of Education Heads and the J.M.B.

Once the core syllabus had been ratified it was submitted to each Provincial Department for final adaptation as a provincial syllabus. The Provincial Departments were free to make additions to the core syllabus but could not omit anything. The examination stipulations were to be seen as guidelines for any additions made.

The CED Study Committee for English appointed two of its members to write guides for the Junior and Secondary First Language syllabuses respectively. These were submitted to the Study Committee and then the planning section of the CED. The Director had to decide whether these were to be submitted as official or unofficial guides. At the time of writing (September 1984) these are still in draft form.

As regards methodology in implementing the syllabus, there is considerable variation from province to province, from one inspectorial region to another, and from school

to school. Some inspectors, principals and subject heads demand absolute rigidity in terms of content, lesson sequence and methodology and the teacher in such cases is given virtually no discretionary power. However, with inspectors increasingly seen as advisers, teachers generally may have more freedom to develop their own methodology.

As the syllabus requires the prescription of literary works, it is necessary to describe the procedure for book selection. The Director of Education is the kingpin of the hierarchy in this case. He works through the Departmental Education Committee, of which the Prescribed Books Committee is a sub-committee. Selection for this committee is in the hands of its chairperson, who nominates members, and the Director, who approves them. The chairperson includes one representative from both the English and Afrikaans teachers' associations. On the committee at present (September 1984) are the Chief Circuit Inspector, a head office official, and teachers nominated by the chairperson. Examiners of the Prescribed Literature Examination (Paper 1) may also be nominated on an ad hoc basis.

The SATA book selection committees (one for Standards 5 to 7, one for Standards 8 to 10), which comprise a chairperson and members appointed by invitation, meet twice a year to discuss recommendations. Its recommendations are published in the SATA's "Education News", and if there is no significant opposition to the committee's recommendations, these are submitted to the Prescribed Books Committee in March. These recommendations are made within the prescribed limits of the syllabus. For example, a Shakespeare play must be studied in Standards 8 and 10, and the poetry studied must be anthologised.

The SATA committee's selections are dealt with by the Prescribed Books Committee. If an issue of censorship arises, it is referred to an ad hoc sub-committee called the Criteria Committee. Then the entire final recommen-

dations are forwarded to the Departmental Education Committee, which makes the final decision. The Director is empowered to act (within the regulations already laid down) as a censor on his own initiative. In any crisis situation the Director is empowered to act without resorting to the full procedural chain of consultation.

As regards course books, only publishers may submit these for recommendation to the Departmental Book Committee. For English there are four readers on this committee who assess the suitability of books submitted. The convenor of the Reading Committee collates these reports and submits recommendations to the Departmental Book Committee, which may accept or reject the recommendation.

Teachers are free to use any course books but schools receive grants only for approved books. It goes without saying that most schools cannot afford to buy "alternative" sets of course books out of their own pockets.

The "outcome" of the syllabus is examined by evaluating the pupils, internally from Standards 5 through the trial examination in Standard 10, and externally at the end of Standard 10. Alarm about extremely poor results in the matriculation examination in the CED has led to a Departmental investigation into the syllabus and its implementation. According to the Chief Planner for the Humanities (now known as the Chief Superintendent of Education (Planning)), some of the findings of this research will be made available to teachers, although what teachers will be expected to do with these "censored" findings is still unclear.

It remains to be seen whether the CED's research into poor matriculation results will have a significant effect on the syllabus revision carried out by State research committees in future. It does strike me as odd, however, that research into the reasons for low standards is at present not integral to research aimed at revising the English syllabus. This is perhaps a good example of

bureaucratic irrationality, in which there is a clock-work rotation of syllabus revision without a corresponding research programme designed to evaluate the efficacy of the syllabus and all the institutional organisations which give it form and content.

At present the methods of assessment in schools and universities, with particular emphasis on examination results, are having to act as the ultimate test of syllabus research and the pedagogical practices that flow from it. Both the J.M.B. and the Provincial Education Departments seem to see "standards" as the focus of concern, so that if "standards", seen as quantifiable within existing assessment paradigms, were high, there would be no educational problem to speak of. However, since standards are abysmally low, the CED (if not the J.M.B.) has had to consider, in the framework of its ideological perspective, why standards are so low, and this entails raising long-neglected questions about the syllabus and the role of the universities.

BUREAUCRACY AS POLITICAL PROCESS (2): SOME CRITICAL
COMMENTS ON ENGLISH SYLLABUS REVISION

In order to explore the role that the universities and other organisations play in syllabus revision I shall now comment more fully on the process of syllabus revision as it was carried out in the years 1980-1984.

I must at this point re-emphasise that the bureaucratic syllabus tends to move along predetermined paths and it is important to be aware of some of these predetermining factors before discussing the process of revision. Firstly, the bureaucratic structures that exist were established as part of the apparatus by which racial capitalism sought to maintain its hegemony in South Africa. It is therefore unsurprising to find that, in keeping with reformist policies current in South Africa, the

state bureaucracy promotes the idea of syllabus revision as an alternative to a radical reassessment of the curriculum as a whole. This reformism is also perpetuated by the universities in their failure to mount a concerted, radical critique of the relationship between university and school curricula. As Chanan and Gilchrist (1974:86) point out, "school subjects derive their names and are supposed to derive their value from academic disciplines - subjects cultivated in universities" and while these disciplines are seen as ideologically unrelated and academically "free", the impact of universities on syllabus revision is likely to remain conservative or reformist. Horton and Raggatt (1980:175) also point to the powerful influence of university policy on curriculum development:

The content of public examinations between the secondary and tertiary levels is controlled by the tertiary level directly or indirectly, through control over the various syllabuses. Thus, if there is to be any major shift in secondary schools' syllabuses and curricula, then this will require changes in the tertiary level's policy as this affects the acceptance of students.

In South Africa, however, the role of the university also has to be understood in relation to the state bureaucracy. Taking as given the current relationship between school and university curricula, the Committee of Education Heads instituted its idea of cyclical syllabus revision. An obvious point that must not be overlooked is that this Committee, like the new tricameral parliament, excludes participation by elected representatives of the black working class. This has important implications for the nature and status of English as a school subject. There are no linguistic grounds for excluding "blacks" from top-level decisions in English syllabus revision because Afrikaans-speaking people are present and even dominant at this level. As in the case of union in 1910, the fact that "white"

Afrikaans and English speakers can work together on language policy while excluding "blacks" should be seen in terms of their common class interests as well as their "racial", "ethnic" or "cultural" ideology. However, while the present ideology of English and Afrikaans as the only two official languages persists, an English syllabus designed in the interests of the black working class is an impossibility. If, under the new constitutional dispensation, syllabus revision is seen in terms of "Own Affairs" in relation to "General Affairs", this is likely to perpetuate racist mystifications of class conflict.

The exclusion of black working class participation in syllabus revision is not the only undemocratic aspect of the process as it now exists. It does, however, problematise the way in which we can discuss the marginalisation of WESSA teachers and students in the process, because if most WESSAs are permeated with racist and bourgeois ideology, their greater participation in syllabus revision will not necessarily benefit the black working class. Nevertheless, I do believe that greater participation by WESSA teachers and students holds out more promise for change than the present system which seems likely to perpetuate the essential features of the existing syllabus indefinitely and therefore prevent a confrontation with the ideological implications of the syllabus and the institutions that enshrine it.

Because I believe that participatory democracy is significantly different from consultative democracy, primarily because the latter overemphasises bureaucratic controls, I shall focus on those aspects of current syllabus revision which bring this contrast to light.

Firstly, it should be noted that the provincial research committees were in essence the same as already existing Departmental Study Committees. This means that most teachers and students of English were at the outset

excluded from decisions regarding the priorities of the Research Committee. Although in a very vague sense I am represented on the committee by the SATA member appointed by the CED, this member, through lack of communication with me and all other teachers of English, cannot carry our concerns into the research process, except in so far as they happen to coincide with his or hers.⁶ The same holds true for any other member of the committee. The sense in which the representatives from the universities and training colleges actually represent these institutions is equally problematic. Clearly there is no sense in which they have been democratically elected to this particular position by all members of these institutions. As I see it, they are welcome on the committee to the extent that they embody the ideological perspective which the state bureaucracy finds acceptable in universities and their respective Departments. Thus the English Professor as a university bureaucrat can become incorporated into the functioning of the state bureaucracy. Other members of the Study/Research Committee are equally subject to bureaucratic control and ideology. The Chief Planners are thoroughly schooled in educational bureaucracy and the hierarchical control of knowledge. The examiners are carefully screened to see that they meet the requirements of the state bureaucracy and other ad hoc members are chosen by bureaucratic rather than democratic methods. The fact that most teachers and students of English are unaware of the existence of the Study/Research Committee, let alone its composition, makes the absence of democratic participation glaringly obvious. That lack of democratic participation leads to poor communication can be seen in this response to a letter in which I asked the person responsible for writing the guide to the CED English First Language Higher Grade syllabus for his comments on the work of the Natal Research Committee. I assumed he would know about the Committee because he is an educator

living in Natal. In reply to my request for information he wrote:

... I don't know of any body known as the "Natal Research Committee". As an examiner, I am an ad hoc member of the Cape's Study Committee for English, but I can't claim a full knowledge of CED red tape.

Although it would have been interesting to hear how members of the Natal Research Committee saw their research activities, I have decided to focus on those aspects of the research that strike me as problematic. Firstly, I am ready to acknowledge, with Becher and MacLure (1980:76), that "the committee of inquiry approach, though usually weak on research, is strong on consultation and the collection of opinions within the system". There are, however, several problems connected with the consultative approach. Firstly, it is likely to perpetuate the blinkered vision of "specialists" in the field. Secondly, together with the standardisation imposed by centralised bureaucratic controls, it prevents those consulted from seeing through their contributions to the end of the research process. I have already mentioned how I as a teacher felt about being consulted instead of being invited to participate fully. A third problem with the consultative approach is that it has no purchase on the experiential basis of opinions collected. Reading my opinions, for example, is very different from sharing in the educational experience that gives rise to them. As a consequence I have to struggle within the constraints of a standardised syllabus which my students and I often experience as inappropriate and alienating.

The inadequacies of the consultative approach are exacerbated by a research method which does not have to justify itself to teachers like myself. I want to know, for example, what research findings of the committee justify the retention of examinations in the form decided upon. I want to know why the Queensland Syllabus or the Bullock Report were regarded as adequate models for English language policy in South Africa. I want to

know what the Committee felt the research of the HSRC had contributed to its own work. These and other questions simply cannot be confronted when the outcome of the research is a document called the syllabus presenting a choice of educational options as if these are eternal verities. As before, these options will be "tested" by the ability of teachers and students to fulfil the examination requirements and many of the fundamental assumptions in the syllabus will remain entrenched.

Having completed most of its research, the Natal Research Committee then had to seek the approval, not of the democratically elected representatives of teachers and students, but of the established bodies in the state bureaucracy and the universities. Teachers and students, as well as the black working class, were also excluded from the final deliberations of the Committee of Education Heads and the J.M.B.

According to the CED's Chief Planner for the Humanities it is the English specialists from the universities who are decisive in determining whether the proposed syllabus is acceptable or not. As in the case of university representatives on the study or research committees, it is surely unarguable that university representation on the J.M.B. is not the outcome of democratic participation by the university communities. Once again appointment is the result of professional bureaucracy articulating with state bureaucracy. This is a crucial point because it has a bearing on the kind of relationship that exists between schools and universities in general, and between school and university teachers of English in particular. As a teacher of English, I question the right of university professors to determine the "standards" that should pertain in a school syllabus. When only a tiny percentage of my students will ever go to university, let alone study literary criticism, I fail to see why my students and I should go through a mill defined by people who are

seriously out of touch with the cultural experience of my students. One of the most severe systematic distortions in the process of syllabus revision I have described is the absence of an ongoing, dialectical and dynamic relationship between pupils and students of English, teachers of English in schools, lecturers in university English Departments, and English specialists in teacher training.

One of the major problems arising from the scandalously poor communication in this regard concerns the prescription of literary works for examination purposes. What this entails can be glimpsed if we look at the recent furore about the prescription of Athol Fugard's Boesman and Lena.⁷ This is a complex matter and what needs to be understood is how official prescription affects teachers, students and principals. Firstly, if there were no standardised examinations and no official prescription of books, controversy concerning literature studied in classrooms would involve principals, teachers, parents and school students. However, since both university departments and the state require officially prescribed texts, these have to be officially approved in keeping with the pseudo-Christian state's injunction that works which might give offence to some members of the community may not be prescribed. As someone who has served on the SATA's book selection committee, I know how severely limiting the constraints imposed by the syllabus in relation to state regulations are. In a country where obscene racist discourse is inscribed in the constitution, the occasional four-letter word in a literary text is likely to disqualify it from prescription. Obviously a similar fate would befall any work, like Sembene Ousmane's God's Bits of Wood, which offered a class analysis of imperialist exploitation.

In the case of Boesman and Lena it was interesting to observe how the state bureaucracy was scapegoated by the English language press. While it is true that the

regulations concerning "objectionable literature" are the state's responsibility, it is nevertheless the case that Boesman and Lena was approved by the state bureaucracy and that it did not initiate the process leading to the book's withdrawal. According to the Chief Superintendent of Education (Planning), most of the people who objected to the book were English-speaking principals and parents. However, when university professors and Fugard himself expressed their outrage, they did not direct their anger and criticism at the moral hypocrisy or confusion of white principals and parents, nor did they consider the role of universities in the system of book prescription itself. As it was, a powerful weapon in the hands of parents was the threat to withdraw their children from examinations if the offending book was not removed as well as the threat to take legal action if the state did not comply with its own regulations.

If university professors are serious about freedom to study literature in classrooms they will have to consider their role in the bureaucratic control of literary study very carefully indeed. And if teachers of English are not to submit meekly to the tyranny of certain principals and parents, they will have to mount an organised campaign to establish whose interests are being served by bureaucratic constraints on book selection. While the approval of prescribed literature and course books rests with the state bureaucracy in its complex collaboration with the universities, radical approaches to the teaching of English will remain in limbo because school bureaucracy, with the imprint of state bureaucracy that it bears, does not allow teachers sufficient time to explore alternatives to the prescribed and approved texts.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have tried to show that systematic distortions affecting the process of syllabus revision are preventing the formulation of a research process that would result in English Studies capable of giving schools and universities a vital role to play in the building of a country free of class, racist and bureaucratic oppression and exploitation. In my view the highest priority at present is the need for students and teachers of English in schools, universities and colleges of education, to establish communicative channels so that a way out of the current impasse can be found. I shall return to this issue in my concluding chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: A CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF THE REVISION OF THE JUNIOR SECONDARY AND SENIOR SECONDARY ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE SYLLABUSES IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1980-1984: THE PROBLEM OF BUREAUCRACY

ENDNOTES

1. If we consider political activity as involving relationships of power, it is worth considering some of Foucault's propositions about power:

Relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships (economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter; they are the immediate effects of the divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums that occur in the latter, and conversely they are the internal conditions of these differentiations; relations of power are not in superstructural positions, with merely a role of prohibition or accompaniment; they have a directly productive role wherever they come into play.

(Foucault, 1978:94)

2. I must stress here that whereas Napoleon ensured that the bourgeois democratic revolution of 1789 would not become a working-class revolution, there has been no 'completion' of the bourgeois democratic revolution in South Africa. Many WESSAs in my experience seriously believe that South Africa is a liberal democracy comparable to countries like France and the United States of America, but this is of course absurd and is an indication of the extent to which the minority white ruling caste can identify itself with 'the South African nation'. This preposterous delusion need not concern us here. What is more worthy of serious consideration is the extent to which complex industrial societies, whether capitalist or 'communist' (retaining the capitalist division of labour and the technology produced by capitalism), can ensure democratic decision-making processes and institutions that are in the collective and individual interests of 'the people'. Some form of bureaucracy seems unavoidable in such large and complex social formations. Gorz (1982:105-119) has made the interesting suggestion that 'the sphere of necessity' should be centralised under state control and the sphere of autonomy decentralised. In contemporary South Africa, however, the state and monopoly capital prevent the majority of South Africans from defining the sphere of necessity and ensuring that the basic needs of the black working class are met.
3. Gorz does perhaps overstate his case somewhat. If no-one within the system he describes holds any personal power, it is hard to see how any transformation counter to the 'logic' of the system can be initiated within it. Gorz also does not do

justice to the complexity of contradictions within such a system. It seems unarguable, however, that technocracy, or rule by technological specialists or experts, cannot in itself bring logical or moral coherence to a social formation.

4. According to its constitution, this committee had to have three members from Head Office, one representative from the universities, one from the teachers' colleges, one from the South African Teachers' Association (SATA - a Cape and not national organisation) and one from the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwys Unie (SAOU). Ad hoc members could be co-opted to serve on the committee in addition to the core of seven members.
5. I refer here to English Literature (Standard Grade) which is a subject in its own right and not a component of the English First Language syllabus.
6. The SATA, which has existed since 1862 and therefore predates provincialism, is a Cape teachers' organisation which is now predominantly "white", largely as a result of the state's separatist educational policies and the Group Areas Act. It could, however, be argued that SATA's isolation in "white" education is partly due to its own lack of a radical educational programme. It is interesting to consider, for example, how SATA's policies and strategies would change if it identified with the principles of a radical organisation such as the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA) which is at present not very active in the Cape. There is little likelihood in the immediate future of a concerted effort to unite teachers' organisations and I do not at present see such unity as following from any analysis I could offer. It is necessary to point out, however, that the fragmentation of teachers' organisations is a major obstacle to curriculum development aimed at enabling educators and students to make sense of our crisis-ridden society.

While the chances of a single union of South African teachers are still remote, organisations such as the SATA need, in my view, to re-examine their own policies to see what systematic and ideological distortions these entail. In the SATA, for example, there is a General Committee elected by members after reading profiles of candidates in the SATA's Education News. This committee then elects a Nominations Sub-Committee which in turn nominates the SATA's representative on the Departmental Study Committee for English and the Chairperson of SATA's Prescribed Books Committee who invites people to serve on this committee. The General Committee appointed the convenor of SATA's Curriculum Development Committee and the Nominations Sub-committee appointed its other two members. SATA members on the Departmental Examinations Committee were nominated by the full general committee. According to the Secretary of SATA, these members are seen by the organisation as being a powerful influence on educational policy, particularly with regard to the rights of English-speakers. The SATA also has one representative on the J.M.B.

If the SATA sees itself as representing the interests of its members as well as English-speakers in general, it needs, as I see it, to consider whether its present policies really achieve their intended purposes. My own feeling is the SATA has not established a system of communication which allows for constructive participation by teachers and students. Nowhere is this inadequacy more evident than in the Curriculum Development Committee which, to my knowledge, has not been very productive. This committee needs to consider how it can encourage teachers and students to participate in collective curriculum research and development. If this committee were to familiarise itself with the work of the National English Language Project of the Educational Co-ordinating Council of South Africa and developments in Action Research, it could have an important role to play in formulating a more progressive policy for the SATA in its participation in the state bureaucracy. By familiarising itself with the work of organisations such as ZAKHE which aim to reach an understanding of how democratic organisations should work, SATA may be able to make changes in its own electoral procedures that would lead to more productive participation on the part of teachers and students.

7. Boesman and Lena was prescribed as a literary text for study in the Standard Nine English First Language syllabus but was summarily withdrawn by the CED after it had received complaints about allegedly obscene language in the text. One detail which made the withdrawal a 'media event' was the official instruction that all copies of the text in schools be destroyed, preferably burnt.

CHAPTER FIVE: A RESPONSE TO THE NEW SYLLABUS:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE CED ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE
SYLLABUS AS IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I shall try to articulate a response to a draft of the new syllabus for English First Language Higher Grade in the Cape Education Department. I think it is important for everyone concerned with the teaching of English to become aware of syllabuses in their form as official documents because these verbal encodings of state policy are ideological discourses and need to be seen as such. This is why I have decided to look closely at one such document rather than make general comments about all the English syllabuses in South Africa. I hope that my close reading of the particular syllabus under discussion will lead to comparative research into all the others. It must be stressed that the document I am about to analyse is a draft and not necessarily the syllabus which will be issued to teachers. There appears, for example, to be a missing section which should have given information on the evaluation of "language study". I think it is safe to assume, however, that there will be few if any major changes and that the syllabus I quote will be the one other teachers and I will have to use for the next decade or so.

In analysing the discourse of the syllabus document itself I have, then, four main aims. Firstly, I aim to relate the theoretical model inscribed in the official document to my own sense of what is involved in the teaching of English in WESSA schools. Secondly, I hope to show that the syllabus is a complex and often contra-

dictory ideological discourse. Thirdly, by showing that the syllabus as discourse is ideologically problematic, I hope to encourage a constructively critical attitude in other teachers.

In order to disclose the ideological nature of the syllabus I shall relate its stated aims to the examination which aims to test whether those aims have been realised. I shall begin by considering the global aims in relation to the examination system in general, and then consider the relationship between objectives and evaluation in each of the main sections of the syllabus, namely Oral Communication, Reading and Literature Study, Written Communication, and Language Study. In each of these sections I will draw attention to what I see as fundamental and problematic ideological assumptions. After my discussion of the contents of the document I shall raise some questions as to the feasibility of the syllabus in relation to the English teacher's economy of time.

A DRAFT OF THE NEW CED SENIOR SECONDARY ENGLISH
FIRST LANGUAGE SYLLABUS

I shall now quote the draft of the new syllabus in full so that those elements I quote or isolate for comment can be seen in relation to the whole. I would have liked to quote the Guide to the Syllabus in full as well but lack of space has made this impossible. It will be necessary, however, to quote from the Guide because it is at crucial points ideologically more explicit than the syllabus itself. Here, then, is the syllabus I shall discuss:

THE SYLLABUS

1. GLOBAL AIMS

- 1.1 To encourage the natural enthusiasm, vitality, spontaneity and originality of pupils through their active participation in meaningful language activities.
- 1.2 To enrich the pupils' ideas, to stimulate their thoughts and feelings and to develop their understanding of themselves and their own emotional and moral responses to life and the world around them, so that they may live more fully, more consciously and responsibly.
- 1.3 To develop the pupils' ability to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings effectively through language.
- 1.4 To develop the pupils' ability to communicate ideas, thoughts and feelings effectively through language.
- 1.5 To help the pupils develop the language skills which contribute to effective expression and communication.

2. ORAL COMMUNICATION2.1 GOALS

That pupils:

- 2.1.1 speak fluently, distinctly, with ease and enjoyment and acquire poise and confidence in communicating;
- 2.1.2 receive constructive advice on aspects such as articulation, breathing, posture, voice-projection and pitch;
- 2.1.3 develop the ability to think independently and speak logically, and to convey to others their observations, feelings and thoughts in an orderly, convincing and coherent manner;
- 2.1.4 see that some ways of speaking are more acceptable and appropriate than others according to circumstances;
- 2.1.5 realize that differences exist between speech and writing;
- 2.1.6 show understanding of the meaning, feeling and tone of a passage in reading it to an audience;
- 2.1.7 grow in ability to listen attentively, sensitively and critically;
- 2.1.8 experience oral activities as integral with other kinds of communication.

2.2 EVALUATION OF ORAL COMMUNICATION

- 2.2.1 One cannot always prescribe in matters of accent and word usage; but pupils should be led to see that

according to circumstances, some ways of speaking are more appropriate than others. For this reason the method of assessment is of great importance.

- 2.2.2 The evaluation of oral communication should not be a test of elocution. The use of dialect or accent must not affect assessment, provided that the pupil can communicate effectively and without ambiguity with the audience concerned. Correction of pronunciation and word usage should be judicious so as not to inhibit the pupil.
- 2.2.3 The speaker's sense of audience, situation and purpose as reflected in the style of language used should be considered.
- 2.2.4 Oral assessment should be continuous and school based, and arise from the teacher's knowledge of the pupil's development as revealed in normal classwork and speech situations such as (but not restricted to) prepared talks, conversation and reading aloud. The actual nature of speech situations, and how the pupils should be assessed, will depend on the individuals concerned. Evaluation should not involve an average of marks gained because the pupil is expected to show progress over the year.
- 2.2.5 Pupils should be evaluated on their performance as members of a group as well as on individual performance.

3. READING AND LITERATURE STUDY

3.1 GOALS

That pupils:

- 3.1.1 gain enjoyment from and skill in reading;
- 3.1.2 appreciate literature and read with discrimination;
- 3.1.3 develop the capacity for critical thinking and the ability to form and express their own views;
- 3.1.4 expand their experience of life, gain empathetic understanding of other people and develop moral awareness;
- 3.1.5 increase their self-knowledge and self-understanding;
- 3.1.6 gain some knowledge of common literary genres and the techniques appropriate to each;
- 3.1.7 develop some understanding and appreciation of their literary heritage;
- 3.1.8 study literary works from South Africa as well as the rest of the English speaking world.

3.2 PRESCRIBED WORK

The following works are prescribed as the minimum requirements in each year:

3.2.1 Standard 8

- A. Poetry (25 to 30 poems or approximately 800 lines of poetry)
In addition, at least two of the following (one of which must be a novel):
- B. a play by Shakespeare
- C. a novel
- D. a substantial work or body of work (see 3.2.4.2 below).

3.2.2 Standard 9

- A. Poetry (25 to 30 poems) or approximately 800 lines of poetry, not more than two thirds of which may be contemporary.
In addition, at least two of the following (one of which must be a novel):
- B. a play
- C. a novel
- D. a substantial work or body of work (see 3.2.4.2 below)

3.2.3 Standard 10

- A. Poetry (25 to 30 poems or 500 to 600 lines, which must reflect the development of English poetry. The poems prescribed for study in Standard 10 must be different from those prescribed for Standard 9 in the previous year.)
- B. a play by Shakespeare
- C. a major novel
- D. a substantial work or body of work (see 3.2.4.2 below)

3.2.4 NOTE

- 3.2.4.1 In at least one standard, work of South African origin (novels, short stories, plays, poems or films) must be studied.
- 3.2.4.2 Under section D, in addition to the traditional genres (novels, short stories, plays, etc.) work of a poet or poets, or films, for example, may be studied.
- 3.2.4.3 Work prescribed for Std 8 and Std 9 must be examined internally.

3.3 THE EXAMINATION OF PRESCRIBED WORK

(See Section 6.2)

- 3.3.1 Examiners should look for honest, personal responses, founded on a workmanlike knowledge of the text.
- 3.3.2 Style and content must not be assessed separately; the language competence of pupils inevitably influences the quality of their answers.
- 3.3.3 The textual or contextual question tests the candidates' ability to express in good, clear language their understanding of or response to a poem or an important passage. In the case of an extract, questioning should not only refer to the extract itself but should call for interpretation in relationship to the work as a whole.
- 3.3.4 The essay question tests the ability to select relevant information from a knowledge of the work, to adopt a particular viewpoint on it, and to sustain an argument at length, using language effectively.
- 3.3.5 All questions on prescribed work should be so phrased as to discourage re-telling of the story.
- 3.3.6 The length of the test or examination paper should be reasonable.
- 3.3.7 If integrated English examination papers are set, the literature content must be comparable with that of a separate literature examination paper (see 7).
- 3.3.8 Continuous assessment of prescribed work, voluntary reading and media studies may supplement or replace examinations.

4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

4.1 GOALS

That pupils:

- 4.1.1 write for their own satisfaction and enjoyment;
- 4.1.2 discover that fundamental differences exist between written and spoken communication;
- 4.1.3 gain insight into the demands, styles, conventions, technicalities and language of various kinds of writing;
- 4.1.4 learn to master the elements of style such as register, diction, tone, syntax, denotation and connotation and the use of literal and figurative language;

- 4.1.5 master some of the devices of cohesion and coherence appropriate to discourse (i.e. the grammar of the paragraph and longer composition);
- 4.1.6 learn to handle effectively the variety of writing tasks to be faced both in and out of school:
sketches, poems, paragraphs, stories, informal letters, essays, formal letters, reports, instructions, directions, notices, telegrams, summaries, essays in other subjects.

4.2 EVALUATION OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

- 4.2.1 In evaluation, teachers should take particular account of the pupil's sense of purpose and audience, and of the coherence and organization of the writing.
- 4.2.2 Writing should contain adequate relevant material, display some freshness of thought and be free of cant. There should be some evidence that the pupil is able to tackle the general and abstract as well as the specific and concrete, and be able to support opinion and to use illustrative material.

Form and content are inextricably connected: pupils must understand that what they write is affected by how they write it.
- 4.2.3 The content should be presented in a way that will engage the audience and fulfil the writer's purpose. Vocabulary should begin to approach mature standards and qualify or modify meaning appropriately. Style should suit the occasion and be clear.
- 4.2.4 The pupil's knowledge of the basic mechanics of writing must be taken into account, i.e. of spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, paragraphing and total structure.
- 4.2.5 Where possible, the examination mark at the end of the year should include an evaluation of some of the pupil's best work written during the course of the year.

5. LANGUAGE STUDY

5.1 GOALS

That pupils:

- 5.1.1 gain understanding about the way language works;
- 5.1.2 improve their comprehension in reading;
- 5.1.3 identify different registers used across the range of language;
- 5.1.4 judge the appropriateness or not of registers in given contexts and to convert discourse from one register into another for a changed purpose;

- 5.1.5 detect the use of emotive language and dishonesty;
- 5.1.6 distinguish between fact and opinion, objectivity and bias, emotion and sentimentality, and to assess the function of such elements in given contexts;
- 5.1.7 be able to extract the salient points from a text and summarize it for specific purposes;
- 5.1.8 acquire terminology to describe language and an ability to apply it in the analysis of language in a manner which reveals the communicative function of parts and the coherence of the whole;
- 5.1.9 acquire a vocabulary that will enable them to communicate easily, appropriately and fluently in diverse situations;
- 5.1.10 learn to spell well;
- 5.1.11 learn to punctuate accurately and effectively;
- 5.1.12 learn to produce and understand the structures of acceptable sentences and of their component parts within a coherent whole;
- 5.1.13 gain some understanding of the effect on English of historical, social and demographic developments.

6. THE STD 10 EXAMINATION OF ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE (HIGHER GRADE)

The examinations must be designed to assess how far the stated aims and goals of the syllabus have been attained.

6.1 ORAL COMMUNICATION

The oral examination is compulsory unless a pupil has been exempted by the Joint Matriculation Board.

The final oral mark must be based on the continuous assessment of the following during the course of the year:

Reading aloud
Short talks
Conversation/Interviews

6.2 PRESCRIBED WORK

Questions will be set in four sections, each carrying equal marks; however, Section D may be examined internally.

Candidates must answer at least one contextual question and at least one essay question, from the choices given in sections B and C and in D (if examined externally).

6.2.1 Section A: POETRY

Questions will be set on at least two of the following, and all questions will be textual or contextual:

- a passage or passages of unseen pre-contemporary verse

- a passage or passages of unseen contemporary verse
- the prescribed poems.

NOTE: On unseen passages, candidates may be offered a choice between writing a critical appreciation and answering detailed questions.

6.2.2 Section B: DRAMA - a play by Shakespeare

Candidates will be given a choice between at least one essay question and one contextual question.

6.2.3 Section C: NOVEL

Candidates will be given a choice between at least one essay question and one contextual question.

6.2.4 Section D: OTHER PRESCRIBED WORK

Candidates will be given a choice between at least one essay question and one contextual question.

6.3 ORIGINAL WRITING

6.3.1 A composition of not fewer than 500 words on one of at least six topics. Pictorial or other stimuli may be provided. Topics will provide for a range of stylistic possibilities.

6.3.2 One or more of the following (total 160-240 words):
letter, review, objective or subjective description, report, speech, dialogue, instructions, directions, memorandum, formal invitation and reply, agenda and minutes of a meeting.

NOTE: With appropriate advance information from the Department, continuous assessment of original writing (including the above assignments) may replace or supplement the final examination, i.e. the final mark may be derived entirely or in part from work done during the course of the year, provided that it meets with the requirements outlined above and that it includes an assessment of the various modes of writing.

6.4 LANGUAGE

6.4.1 A comprehension test or tests on a given passage or passage of prose - in contemporary, expository language - approximately 450 - 600 words in length. (30% - 40% of total marks for paper.)

6.4.2 A question or questions which require candidates to give the substance of a passage (i.e. to summarise). The text set in 6.4.1 must not be used. A variety of modes of summary may be tested. (15% - 20% of total marks for paper.)

- 6.4.3 Questions requiring candidates to respond to or to use language in a way that reveals their language competence and tests their language skills in terms of the Syllabus. (40% - 55% of total marks for paper.)

7. THE STD 10 EXAMINATION (HIGHER GRADE) - INTEGRATED PAPERS

With appropriate advance information from the Department, INTEGRATED PAPERS (totalling at least 6 hours of examining) may be set as an alternative to the papers outlined above.

SOME GENERAL FEATURES OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GLOBAL AIMS OF THE SYLLABUS AND EXAMINATIONS

In discussing some general features of the relationship between the global aims of the syllabus and examinations I think it is useful for us to return to the notion of interpellation in order to ascertain how the discourse of the syllabus is "hailing" or constituting the people involved in the teaching and learning process. There is recognition of an important relationship between aims and examinations in the statement that "the examinations must be designed to assess how far the stated aims and goals of the syllabus have been attained". There is also, I think, an implicit recognition of a tension in this relationship in that the supposed beneficiaries of the syllabus are interpellated as "pupils" in the global aims and as "candidates" in the information on the Standard 10 examination. I shall return to this tension shortly.

One of the first things to strike me as I read the global aims of the syllabus is that there is no subject (at least in the surface structure) of the infinitives "to encourage", "to enrich", "to develop" and "to help". It is, I believe, misleading to assume that the subject is "the syllabus" or "the teacher". I hope the analysis offered in this study so far has made it clear that the tacit subject involves processes and structures of great complexity and that these entail different conceptions of

human subjectivity and society. As I see it, the discourse of the syllabus assumes an equivalence between the syllabus and the individual teacher. For several reasons I do not consider this assumption justified. Firstly, if I may speak for myself and others with similar views, the teacher is a social being, not an atomised individual, and this sociality exists in tension with a sense of subjectivity. In my case, as I have argued in Chapter 3, the WESSA school community does not provide the sense of community that I regard as necessary for creating a society in which all South Africans can feel at home. Obviously WESSA teachers have different senses of the relationship between community and self, but these differences need to be made explicit or explored instead of being made invisible in the discourse of the syllabus.

Another problem arising from equating the syllabus with what the teacher should do ("encourage", "enrich", "develop", "help") is that there is no sense of the teacher as a learner or developing human being in the educational process. This I believe has several harmful effects. Firstly, it assumes that teachers have nothing to learn from students about the value of the syllabus. Ultimately it is the students' capacity to respond to tests defined by the teacher and other examiners which measures the success of the syllabus. Students are not free to explore, with teachers, whether examiners are asking the right questions or asking them in the right way. Secondly, if teachers learn, for example, that the syllabus fails to fulfil its aims because of the ideological assumptions embedded in it, they are not free to explore alternatives and act on them because of the bureaucratic machinery of examinations and official syllabus revision. This machinery makes it virtually impossible to explore the ways in which "poor results" relate to the pedagogy of teachers as social beings who are, in important ways, ideologically interpellated.

A brief recapitulation of some of these interpellations

should make the importance of ideology in this context clear. Firstly, let us consider the interpellation of the teacher as "member of the ruling class". How does this affect the teacher's sense of what pupils, as members of the dominant class need to know? Should they not be encouraged to explore the devastating and alienating effects of ruling class ideology in South Africa? Should they not be shown how to extend those positive values they hold so that they extend beyond the confines of their own Group Area? These questions and those related to "race", are unlikely to be confronted while they are made invisible by the discourse of the syllabus.

Secondly, we need to be aware of how gender identities affect the interpellation of teachers in the learning process. This has several aspects. There are the gender stereotypes which teachers can consciously or unconsciously entrench and thereby limit the capacities and potentialities of male and female students. There are, as Spender (1980) shows, gender-specific modes of discourse and the dominance of one, such as that of patriarchal scientific rationalism, can have very important educational consequences. Examination questions, for example, even in English, require predominantly "rational" responses and this, given the ideological power of exams themselves, can lead to the devaluation of unconscious, irrational or emotional modes of being. Stanworth (1983:22) argues that:

the important point is not that girls are being "discriminated against", in the sense of being graded more harshly or denied educational opportunities: but that the classroom is a venue in which girls and boys, dependent upon a man (or woman) who has a considerable degree of power over their immediate comfort and long-term future), can hardly avoid becoming enmeshed in a process whereby "normal" relationships between the sexes are being constantly defined.

Thirdly, let us see how the interpellation of the teacher as "adult" affects our reading of the syllabus. I do not wish to deny that there is an important sense in

which children, especially in a capitalist society, are dependent on adults. What concerns me is a deeper cultural and psychological alienation between adults and children in our society. On the one hand, as Hoyles (1979), Holt (1974) and others have argued, this entails an underestimation of children's capacities for responsible individual and collective action. On the other, it entails a suppression of those childlike capacities in adults, including creative fantasy and imaginative play, that are, as Winnicott (1971) and others have shown, crucial to an integrated and unalienated sense of self and community. In this context we have to ask what WESSA schooling and examinations do to "the natural enthusiasm, vitality, spontaneity and originality" of students and teachers.

Related to the form of the adult/child, teacher/pupil split in WESSA schools is the role of the teacher as a surrogate parent in the learning of the "mother tongue". I would tentatively suggest that the aims of the syllabus focus on the "mothering", "nurturing" aspect of the teacher whereas the examination system focuses on the patriarchal aspect, turning "the pupil" into a "candidate" for positions in society determined by a patriarchal, capitalist order. Hoyles (1979:259-276) has pointed out how the concept of teacher as parent has been shaped by the relationship between pedagogy and various branches of psychology. The psychotherapeutic model, for example,

is used to place emphasis on the home and parental care, and to see the teacher as a substitute mother. Denys Thompson says, "schools need the creative spirit of a good home", and Paul Wildlake: "Many researchers point to the mother as the key and it is on the quality of the mother child relationship that so much seems to depend". "Perhaps as teachers we encourage the language of love less because our contexts are limiting." "The ethic of the school or the classroom to be derived from the mother-tongue is the mother's ethic. It is an ethic of love."

The most forthright statement is by Holbrook again, who at the same time makes some concession

to developmental theory: "The woes have not been created by 'society' at all. They have been left by inadequate mothering, and a too poor environment in infancy, meeting perhaps inward weaknesses in the developmental processes. The limitations of this model are clear. Once the child has 'gone wrong' in early childhood there is little to be done except a rather desperate repair job ... It also assumes a normative psychological state independent of culture or society, and deviance or failure is seen as a fault of the home background.

In South Africa, it is likely that WESSA teachers and parents will inculcate the dominant ideology in several forms and perpetuate the alienating and exploitative aspects of the status quo. If English teachers are aware of the play of these factors they can begin to distinguish between those aspects of WESSA "parenting" in the home and school which are valuable and those which are destructive.

Another problematic interpellation of the English teacher in the discourse of the syllabus can be found in the Guide, where we are told that "the teacher should be perceived as a genuinely receptive audience who responds with enthusiasm and encouragement to what the pupil says or writes". Saunders (1976:92), however, cites research which suggests that only "a tiny proportion" of work produced by school students is done for teachers as "trusted adults".

The teacher as examiner, however, counted as an audience for 40 per cent of writing in the first year and 61 per cent of work produced by upper sixth formers. No pupils saw their peers as providing an audience for any of their writing, and only 5 per cent in year five and 6 per cent in year seven considered themselves to be writing for a wider public than that offered at school.

There is, I believe, a need for more research into the ways in which the roles syllabuses assign to teachers are actually experienced by the people working with the syllabus. This could lead to a common realisation that "those facets of English which are its peculiar contribution to the curriculum (creative writing, drama, exploratory talk, responding to literature) are not

accessible to comparative or competitive grading" (Saunders, 1976:36) and that examinations are inimical to the goals of the syllabus in these areas.

Having discussed some of the problematic ways in which teachers are interpellated by the discourse of the syllabus, let us look at some of the ways in which school students are interpellated in this discourse, bearing in mind that there is a dialectical relationship between the roles assigned to teachers and students. A good example of this is the difference between "students" and "pupils" in relation to "teachers", where "pupil" suggests a more dependent role for the learner.

As in the case of teachers, "the pupils" as defined in the syllabus are the atomised individuals of liberal theory in general and two particular versions of this in liberal educational theory. The first is derived from the tradition defined by Matthew Arnold, F.R. Leavis and Denys Thompson, and sees the individual as capable of detachment from social relations and from this position being able, in the words of the Guide, "to observe, to discriminate and to see relationships". The second is derived from the neo-Romantic "progressive" movement in English teaching which is associated with the 1960s but which has antecedents earlier in this century. There are, as I hope to show, important tensions and confusions that result from the co-existence of these sub-theories in the syllabus because the latter is in the process of establishing its dominance. Brett (1983:23-25) has identified James Britton as one of the key figures in this shift:

With Britton literature, which hitherto had been central to all progressive English practice, gets pushed into second place and it is every pupil's innate creativity that is foregrounded. The notion of innate "creativity" is founded upon the concept of the "individual". The concept of the individual upon which Britton draws is in the first place that of English literary humanism, but it is also the individual of bourgeois psychology in which the individual is a singular instance of

a general human being that can be studied in itself, abstracted from the rest of society which is seen as a kind of separate "environment".

Thus creativity is an "essential" of humanness; it is the function of the English teacher to develop the "individual" personality by means of that essential creativity. The classic exposition of this theory for English teaching methodology is John Dixon's highly influential 1967 book Growth Through English (OUP) - i.e. individual personality growth.

The problem with all this progressive theory is that the child, the subject of the process, strangely enough, actually gets lost. The emphasis is on the pedagogy, (and given the assumption that we are dealing with the "universal individual" it couldn't be anywhere else). The emphasis is on what the teacher must do. It is blithely assumed that the progressive teacher with his/her energy, his/her lively presentation of poems and pictures and music will unproblematically release that creativity, develop that personality: the kids are eager and waiting.

In fact, of course, the majority of working class (or WESSA! - T.V.) adolescents do not have an innate interest in our poems and pictures, in having their creativity released or their personality "growed", which is only waiting on the teacher's pedagogy to be developed. In reality, the main determinant of kids' interest or lack of it, lies outside school.

In the Guide to the new syllabus there is the recognition that skills "need to be developed in an integrated process involving the pupils' 'life experience'". But as Brett (1983:25) points out,

there are two interrelated problems with this. First, it is an individual relationship to experience; in Barnes's words "The teaching and learning problem is how to shift the knowledge that is 'out there' to 'in here'". The learning subject is again the individual of bourgeois psychology, which posits a fundamental dichotomy between the individual and society. The individual exists and then becomes social, but I would argue that individuals are always already social - there are only social subjects.

The second problem with the idea that knowledge is the individual's appropriation of immediate

experience is that it renders impossible the systematic misconceiving of the real and so rules out a concept that is fundamental to an understanding of our situation, the concept of ideology, the fact that subjectivities are partly formed by ideology, that teachers are not and do not work with "individuals" but all are social subjects.

It does seem fair to suggest that the discourse of the syllabus is interpellating the individual as defined by liberal humanism when it refers to "natural enthusiasm", "spontaneity" and "originality" and that it is the individual so defined who learns to "understand", "express" and "communicate".

Our sense of the child as defined by literary and "progressive" humanism within liberal theory also has important implication for our understanding of pupils as learning "through their active participation in meaningful language activities". How is the child as "active participant" really being interpellated by the discourse of the syllabus? We need to be aware of the limits imposed by the syllabus in order to determine whether its constraints facilitate or retard co-operative learning which the students, as social subjects, experience as beneficial. Hoyles (1979:275) suggests that the liberal model of the individual does not encourage collective political action by students. He adds that

this model of the individual allows the students to be and to become but not to act, and the form of being is in a sense predetermined by the teachers because they are controlling the process. Maxine Greene quotes Sartre as saying "that 'knowing is a moment of praxis' opening into 'what has not yet been'". But a perspective on school student praxis is missing in the new English orthodoxy.

Ken Worpole (1973:104-114 and 1976:24) has argued for an end to the barrier between commercially distributed "literary texts" and students' own writing so that students have a sense of their writing as part of "real world" and written for a "real audience" beyond the teacher:

The possibilities, and the implications, of taking children's writing seriously seem to be emerging as a major cultural issue. Hitherto, children's writing has been seen as another country, South Africa actually, where the principle obtains of "separate but equal development". The development leads nowhere; the promised land is non-existent. The most common perspective is to remark upon the cuteness and fetching naivety of children's constructs, often a successful way of smothering the Brechtian "crude thinking" of young people's perceptions. What is most clear, though, is the determined insistence upon different standards of responding to children's and adults' writing, and an equal determination that never the two shall meet - not in this society any-way, which has its own hidden apartheid.

(Worpole, 1976:24)

Worpole (1976:24) quotes Ted Hughes as saying that

we are talking about an unhappy, not to say disastrous, state of affairs, where this immense biological oversupply of precocious ability is almost totally annihilated, before it can mature. What is the future of a society, we wonder, that manages to lobotomise its talent in this way? ... The inability of creative talent, at present, to survive leaving school, is perhaps one visible aspect of what must be a destructive mood in society as a whole. A self-destructive mood, that shuts down imagination and energy. It is not the only visible aspect, but it is, properly considered, the most horrifying - a massacre of the innocents, with a vengeance.

The comments of Worpole and Hughes seem to me particularly pertinent to cultural production in South Africa, and I would suggest that educators here need to identify the factors that create the "self-destructive mood" Hughes mentions. If, for example, the dominant interpellation is "examination candidate" or "job-seeker" or "Leavis-clone", rather than "cultural producer", we must recognise the extent to which the "active participation" referred to in the syllabus is mere liberal cant.

COMMENTS ON 'ORAL COMMUNICATION'

The liberal humanist theory of the individual also informs the way in which the syllabus interpellates pupils in the context of oral communication. I do not wish to suggest that the syllabus gives no sense of individuals as social beings. The Guide does say that

as a consumer, a worker, a member of a community, each person has pressing reasons to listen with discrimination and equally pressing reasons to speak effectively. (my emphasis)

What is problematic here is the emphasis on each person as member of an undefined community (is it the 'white' community?), as well as the familiar tendency to see the individual as separate from the objects of consumption, work, communication and "discrimination". In the goals for oral communication we are told to "develop the ability to think independently" (my emphasis) without an explanation of how social beings immersed in language (a shared system of signs) can meaningfully be said to be independent.

The liberal humanist notion of independence becomes even more problematic when we consider how it works in the prescribed methods of evaluation. Firstly, the ability to "speak fluently, distinctly, with ease and enjoyment and acquire poise and confidence in communication" is not a mechanical, quantifiable skill, but part of a process in which social beings interact. The nature of this process will affect the kind of confidence that develops. We only have to compare the different kinds of confidence envisaged by Dale Carnegie and Rudolf Steiner to grasp the point at issue here. Having established what kind of communicative competence we have in mind, there is surely no harm in encouraging teachers and students to share mutually constructive advice on how communication can be improved. But I for one fail to see how awarding marks contributes to sound educational practice in this context. If categories are needed why go beyond a sense that speakers are competent or not in given contexts?

I believe we need to consider very carefully the effects of competitive grading on the confidence we are supposed to be fostering. Most school students in my experience are made very anxious by the thought that their speech, so intimately tied to their sense of self in society, is being subjected to the scrutiny of a marker.

The problems connected with giving marks to individuals for communicative competence are even clearer if we consider the implications of the syllabus's prescription (2.2.5) that pupils should be evaluated on their performance as members of a group as well as on individual performance. Here surely it is obvious that the quality of individual "performance" is in an important sense dependent on the nature of the social interaction or group dynamics involved. I can foresee the absurd prospect of trying to decide on a mark out of ten for how well pupil X seems to be listening to pupils a, b and c.

The syllabus repeatedly draws attention to the speaker's sense of audience in oral communication but consistently fails to take into account how the teacher as an audience that has the power to award or withhold marks affects performance. At the climax of the dubious procedure of cumulative marking we have the marks of pupils being moderated by an Inspector of Education who is a stranger to the pupil concerned and hardly likely to go beyond a trivial interchange in the limited time allotted for moderation. Here as elsewhere in the syllabus we need to understand the kinds of control being imposed on oral communication by grading and certification. These controls can be very subtle, as when we are told that "some ways of speaking are more acceptable and appropriate than others according to circumstances" (2.1.4). Here there is a hazy line between those conventions that facilitate communication and those that make counter-hegemonic discourse illegitimate in the classroom. Who decides, for example, whether sexually and politically explicit discourse is "acceptable" or "appropriate" in the context

of "oral communication" in the classroom?

COMMENTS ON 'READING AND LITERATURE STUDY'

Questions regarding what constitutes legitimate discourse are of course very important when we turn to consider what the syllabus has to say about reading and literature. I have already, in Chapter 2, discussed the antecedents of the ideology of literary criticism that informs the syllabus. I shall now point out some of the ways in which this ideology is encoded in the discourse of the new syllabus and consider some of the tensions created by the emergence of "progressive" English teaching.

The English Studies Group at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham has pointed out (in Hall et al (eds.), 1980:239) that in Marxist literary criticism "the recipient of the text too frequently remains, as in much bourgeois criticism, a cipher, assumed and untheorized" and suggests that "it is perhaps in the work of Manfred Naumann and other East German 'reception theorists' that a Marxist theory of reading may find a serviceable basis". Naumann distinguishes between the recipient - the actual historical reader; the addressee - the author's conception of whom s/he is addressing or will be read by; and the reader as a formal, textual defined entity. In the context of English teaching, these can be seen as three of several interpellations of "the pupil".¹

While I doubt that it is possible to "theorize" human subjects into true and complete existence, I believe it is necessary to see how the liberal humanist view of the reader (not, I would argue, "untheorized" as the English Studies Group suggests, but tacitly theorized) affects the way in which WESSA teachers and students approach literature.

There are, as I suggested earlier, two main aspects of the

liberal humanist approach that we need to consider. The first derives from the tradition of literary humanism and its values are encoded in the syllabus in all the goals (3.1.4 - 3.1.8) for reading and literature. The other aspect of liberal humanism is that derived from neo-Romantic "progressive" English teaching and is encoded in the syllabus in the emphasis on enjoyment (in goal 3.1.1) and on personal development (in goals 3.1.3, 3.1.4 and 3.1.5) and in the statement that "Examiners should look for honest, personal responses" (3.3.1).

If one of the aims of examinations is "to assess how far the stated aims and goals of the syllabus have been attained" we need to ask, firstly, how we are to award marks for those attributes which the liberal "progressive" tradition seeks to foster, and secondly, how the criteria for examining are established. This leads to several questions which are crucial to understanding of the educational process. Can we measure whether pupils have learned to enjoy reading? Does the capacity to "appreciate" literature entail intellectual skills, or emotional commitment, or both?² Again, can we measure pupils' commitment to literature in an examination? Is the belief that exams can do this not a fundamental delusion leading to ignorance about whether students believe what they are being told about their "literary heritage"?

Most literature examinations in my experience have not elicited "personal" responses and it is important to understand why. Examinations, by their very nature, imply "standards" derived from social practices and shared ideological assumptions, and as a result have their own forms of ideological discourse. Tony Davies (in Widdowson, 1982:39-40) has drawn attention to some features of this discourse and it is worth quoting his incisive comments at length. In discussing the essay question typical of most literature exam papers he writes:

The form, a quotation (generally invented by the examiner) followed by an invitation (actually an instruction) to "discuss", is widely current, and

encodes that conception of literature not as an authoritative knowledge but as an inexhaustible opportunity for the exchange of views. But the verbal form is revealingly at odds with the practical occasion. The author of the "quotation", with its affable bland neutrality ("What do you think?"), is also the author of the question, whose peremptory mode admits of no refusal. The required "discussion", seemingly no more than extension in writing of the friendly open-ended dialogue of the tutorial, is in fact a monologue in which the student, to "cover the question", is obliged both to reply "in his or her own words" and to assume the position ("we find ...") of the absent but watchful questioner. Given the complex intertextualities that have gone to produce a student's "own words", the writing of a simple examination essay becomes a feat of multiple and simultaneous impersonation beside which The Waste Land looks like the performance of an amateur impressionist. Few will truly succeed, across the whole range of papers. Those that do may go on, in time, to ask such questions themselves.

As for the substantive "question" (most examination questions are in fact assertions and commands), it only acquires meaning when it is decoded as the conjuncture of a number of specific discursive and practical contexts, none of which is itself open to discussion: a national-historical discourse of "periods", with their own transparent literary-historical unity ...; a literary-critical discourse of "writers" (not, evidently, of philosophy, advertising copy or lavatorial graffiti): an ethical-aesthetic discourse of the "good" and the "great", with their implicit antonyms; and a pedagogic discourse of "discussion". Not the least surprising thing about this conspiracy of assumptions is that few teachers of Literature would admit to an unreserved conviction about any one of them, except perhaps the last. The form, with its own substantive content, imposes itself as it were unconsciously. The parole of literature teaching changes with the seasons (I find it hard to believe that anyone actually still teaches contemporary literature in terms of "good" and "great" writers). But the langue endures like the rock beneath.

A crucial aspect of this langue, which arose in interaction with the economic, social and political conditions of capitalism and social democracy, is the way in which it encodes the human subject.³ In the work of Leavis, as was argued in Chapter 2, there is an intense focus on individual subjectivities. At the same time, however, as

John Ellis (1980: 228-229) points out,

Leavis has always maintained that the critical act of reading, interpretation and judgement is, fundamentally, a social act - while limiting the kinds of people, the sorts of mind, equipped to engage in this critical dialogue. His famous prescription for this dialogue - "This is so, is it not?" - is one to which only an embattled civilizing minority can subscribe. Perry Anderson has pointed out that his interrogative statement demands one crucial precondition: "a shared, stable system of values".

In keeping with the Leavisite emphasis on subjectivity, English examinations test individual responses to questions. And coalescing with the notion of examinations maintaining "objective" standards is the Leavisite notion of "universal values" by which individuals can be judged. The crucial point is that the Leavisite and Ricardian values institutionalised in the English classroom of WESSA schools are not universal but historically and ideologically specific.

Awareness of this specificity should lead us to question what is to be understood when we read in the syllabus (3.1.7) that pupils must develop "some understanding and appreciation of their literary heritage". Cultural linguists have alerted us to the fact that "literature" is not an absolute category. The English Studies Group (1980:238) working within an anthropological rather than literary model of culture, draw attention to the ideological relationship between education and literature:

Renée Balibar has argued that literature exists, not as an absolute, "out there", but as a constructed element within a specific ideological apparatus - education - where it both legitimates and disguises the reproduction of linguistic inequality. Thus "lit." is both an agent and an effect of ideological class struggle within the dominant institution of the bourgeois state.

Although I doubt whether what we call literature can be encompassed by a theory of ideology, it does seem true that ideological considerations are crucial to our sense of tradition. Michelle Stanworth (1983:19-20), for example,

has provided a feminist perspective on this issue:

The view that schools transmit our common cultural heritage has given way, in recent years, to a recognition that out of the enormous range of ideas, values and knowledge available in any culture, only a fraction is selected as suitable for transmission in schools. The question then becomes: what are the criteria behind this selection, and which social groups benefit from the exclusion of competing forms of thought? Bernstein, and Bourdieu and Passeron, for example, have in their different ways attempted to show that the intellectual styles espoused by schools, and the forms of expression which are valued and rewarded, correspond more closely to dominant groups' experience of the world than to others.

Nowhere is an understanding of the conditions governing the emergence of a partial curriculum, and of its effects, more urgent than in the area of gender divisions. Feminist analyses of literature, of art, of history, of the social sciences, or medicine and so on have revealed the remarkable extent to which those disciplines incorporate untenable sexist assumptions and biases ... social studies, literature and history syllabuses in particular fail to give full due to the range of activity of both sexes, and incorporate values and assumptions which downgrade and devalue women's experience and achievement.

It is clearly not teachers who are at fault here, but the patriarchal structure of knowledge itself, which tends to omit women, on the one hand, and to particularize their experience on the other. Teachers may, however, feel threatened by such critiques, both because they appear to weaken notions of academic objectivity (and thereby indirectly undermine one of a teacher's sources of authority), and because teachers may see the re-appraisal of their subject in the light of such critiques as a challenge to their own professional integrity and identity. The solution lies, it seems to me, in recognizing the exciting academic and pedagogical challenge posed by these critiques.

In addition to the patriarchal biases in our sense of literary tradition, there are those Anglo-centric, colonialist biases I discussed in Chapter 2. In prescribing and studying works "of South African origin" (3.2.4.1) we need to be aware of the relationship between the metropolitan and the "colonial" culture, both in its effect on literary form and content and in its influence on the

critical modes we adopt when we discuss "indigenous" work.

There are many Anglo-centric biases in the new syllabus. The poetry studied in Standard 10, for example, "must reflect the development of English poetry" (3.2.3). Apart from ensuring that most of the poetry studied will be written from a metropolitan perspective, the concept of "development" encoded here is highly problematic. Firstly, it implies that English poetry develops along a trans-historical trajectory rather than in relation to changing economic and social conditions. Secondly, it implies that there is a development that has been objectively identified rather than ideologically selected. Thirdly, it does not make clear how a chronological sequence of poems reflects development. Fourthly, it fails to take into account how the culture of WESSA school students will determine their sense of this "development". Fifthly, neither the syllabus nor the Guide makes a distinction between an inert and a dynamic sense of historical or poetic "periods". If we are serious about encouraging an awareness of development, we are, I believe likely to learn more from the work of E.P. Thompson and Raymond Williams than from the work of F.R. Leavis or T.S. Eliot. With the predominance of the static sense of period in WESSA schools, I challenge liberal humanist educators to do research into the ways in which those WESSAs who have passed Standard Ten perceive "the development of English poetry".

One of the reasons why the results of such research would be disappointing to liberal humanists is that poetry studies in WESSA schools, with their eye on examinations, focus on Ricardian "practical criticism". This is likely to continue with the Guide's emphasis on "poetry rather than poets" and the retention of "unseen" verse in the matric exam (6.2.1). In Chapter 2 I drew attention to the fact that Ricardian criticism is essentially ahistorical, and we can now add that in its pseudoscientific manner, it

is well suited to the "objective standards" of examinations.

Another Anglo-centric feature of the literary programme in the English syllabus is the grotesque overemphasis on the plays of Shakespeare. Surely even the most cursory research into the cultural mindset of WESSA students would reveal that Shakespeare is, and will remain, on the periphery of their cultural universe? An end to the fantasy that Shakespeare's genius is being imbibed by most WESSA students is long overdue. I am not arguing that teachers committed to the teaching of Shakespeare should not be given the opportunity to do. Nor am I ignoring the fact that imaginative teaching can make the study of Shakespeare a rewarding educational experience. What I am arguing is that the study of Shakespeare rarely makes WESSA students committed to the "literary" heritage of which Shakespeare is said to be a part. Most students that I have taught have not had the "cultural capital" necessary for a genuine involvement in Shakespeare's work, and in many instances a tedious process of translation has had to occur before pupils have been able to get to grips with the texts. I seriously question whether the prescription of Shakespeare for most WESSA school students meets the requirements of the Guide itself:

The work should meet the intellectual and emotional needs of the age group concerned.

Form, structure and technique should not be too difficult for the age group concerned.

The principle of progression should be taken into account to ensure continuity between year levels and adequate preparation for the following year.

While I would argue that there is no necessary relationship between age and the capacity to appreciate Shakespeare, it does seem highly doubtful whether the study of Shakespeare is of educational benefit to most WESSA school students.

The struggle to teach Shakespeare effectively has stretched to the limit my belief that how we study literature is more important than what literature we study. While

Shakespeare has remained entrenched, there has, however, been a considerable loosening of constraints regarding the prescription of fiction, and the new syllabus does offer openings for the study of previously neglected forms of writing. I believe, nevertheless, that a great educational opportunity will be lost if English teachers do not meet the challenge of new content with an exploration into different ways of reading and studying texts. This is not the place to embark on a long discussion of literary theory. All I want to say here is that those involved in English Studies, and examiners in particular, should explore alternatives to the traditional models of literary criticism in order to determine whether the latter (and the examination system) are educationally justifiable.

I find it disturbing that the potential benefits of studying film and television are likely to be vitiated by the decision to make this study an extension of the modes of traditional literary criticism. The Guide states that

Reading of novels, plays, poems and experience of the mass media should be seen within a continuum. The study of prescribed literature should give the pupils a frame of reference and a basis for judging their experience with other fiction and for responding to leisure reading and film viewing with greater insight and discrimination. Thus the gulf that so often separates the prescribed literature from voluntary reading and viewing may be bridged.

Virtually all media studies in recent years have shown that this kind of thinking, which is largely derived from the work of F.R. Leavis and Denys Thompson and their followers, entails a fundamental misunderstanding of the ways in which cultural value-systems are acquired, while endorsing the exploitative market economy that makes "discrimination" and "discernment" seem necessary. It also perpetuates the bourgeois notion of the "independent critic" capable of making ideologically pure choices. As Len Masterman (1982:50) has argued in an important essay:

What are too rarely raised in classroom discussions

of aesthetic value are the social basis of judgement, the assumptions which lie behind assertions of value and the crucial question of "value for what?". Posited instead is a transcendental notion of value assigned by an ideologically innocent reader to an ideologically pure text. In these circumstances it is unsurprising, perhaps even fortunate, that discriminatory teaching appears to have cut very little ice with large numbers of comprehensive school pupils who obstinately persist in asserting the validity of their own responses.

The crucial point to grasp is that cultural value-systems are not derived from the rational processes of literary "discrimination" but from the interplay of socio-economic factors and sub-cultural groupings. I have explored some of the possibilities of an investigatory rather than discriminatory or evaluative approach in my discussion of the teaching of popular song. (See Appendix 2.)

I wish to emphasise at this point that more genuinely exploratory approaches to the study of literature and the media will not gain a foothold while the examination in its present forms prevails. While teachers and students are anxious about "what is examinable", they will focus on a critical approach that ensures success in exams. As Saunders (1976:36) points out, this approach

militates against wide and sensitive reading in favouring a repetitive cram course on as short a series of texts as it is possible to choose from the list of the examining board. The nature of the timed exam, with its predictable essay topics, leads to question spotting, frantic memory work and cynical practice of "exam technique", all of which correspond in no way to the purposes of literary study in the curriculum. It has led to pretty fruitless debates amongst examiners.

"Do you give one or a half for 'Malcolm' and not 'Malcolm, son of Duncan'?" (Jackson, 1965:17).

What Saunders doesn't show is how the mentality that insists on examinable literary knowledge relates to the mentality that establishes the purposes of literary study. I hope to have shown that both "mentalities" are derived from the ideology of liberal humanism.

COMMENTS ON 'WRITTEN COMMUNICATION'

The failure to see that school itself is a complex sub-cultural system with its own determining effects on literary value systems also has important implications for the component of the syllabus called "written communication". I have already indicated that the question of "audience" is a crucial issue but would like to add a few comments here about the tension between the teacher as a responsive and nurturing reader (which I have likened to the "mothering" role) and his or her role as marker or examiner (which I have suggested is a reinforcer of patriarchy). How this tension manifests itself depends on the nature of the assigned writing task, with more instrumental forms of writing less likely to cause problems. It is when we are seeking to elicit "honest, personal" responses that serious problems arise. When writing is an expression of self it becomes difficult, in the educational context, to separate judgement of the writing from judgement of the self that produced it, and this, as I see it, puts the English teacher in a very questionable position of power. How, for example, are we to respond to this comment by A. Freer (quoted in Hoyles, 1979:267)?

In art as in life children are remarkably cagey about their experiences and can "put up the shutters" with astonishing celerity. Something has to be found by the teachers which will (if I can say this without being misunderstood) betray them into "opening up".

If a child has "opened up" but has written something ridden with grammatical and other errors, how is the teacher to respond appropriately? I have often written a lengthy "responsive" comment on this kind of work and then been forced, by the requirements of the Departmental memorandum of marking, to give a low mark. Working in a system where marks are the top priority, I have often found it painful to see the crestfallen faces of children as they look past the encouraging comments to the low mark. The child

that Worpole (1976:24) quotes may be more representative than most teachers realise:

When I get a piece of work back and I think its good and I get a bad mark I feel like frotling the teacher.

I believe that this kind of antagonism and alienation could be avoided if teachers gave forthright, considered responses and did away with competitive grading. Then, as Saunders (1976:39) suggests,

the sensitive teacher will record and assess his (sic) pupils' progress in terms not of who is winning the race but of what state of linguistic command has been reached. In this way assessment would be a means to inform planning for future work, not to provide fodder for the mark book.

One of the reasons few teachers have time to adopt this approach to the assessment of students' writing is the nature of language study as defined by the syllabus, where methods of evaluation again play a counter-productive role. It is to a consideration of Language Study in the new syllabus that I now turn.

COMMENTS ON 'LANGUAGE STUDY'

The first stated goal in this section is "that pupils should gain understanding of the way language works" but the prescriptions that follow never make it clear how teachers are to see the relationship between Chomsky's sense of competence and the conscious learning of grammatical terminology which, it is assumed, will improve performance. Chomsky himself has never seen linguistics as fulfilling such a purpose, and I have been unable to trace convincing evidence that the learning of such terminology has beneficial effects of students' writing. The Guide acknowledges the dangers of teaching formal grammar but retains the assumption that it can improve use:

Detached formal grammar exercises can be counter-productive: the emphasis must be on language in action, which implies an incidental approach based on error analysis of pupils' own work. Nevertheless, pupils need to be shown that the ability to identify, name and use concepts such as the following will be an aid to their understanding of style and the improvement of their own usage:

- syntactical concepts like parts of speech (word classes), e.g. nouns, verbs, modifiers, connectives
- the function of the verb in respect of tense, mood, aspect and voice; consideration, too, of concord and number
- matrix (compound and complex) sentences, loose and periodic sentences
- lexical terms like denotation, connotation, synonym, antonym; image; imagery; common figures of speech

Most of this will be familiar to teachers as "traditional formal grammar". Given the considerable time it takes to teach the prescribed concepts, it seems fair to ask how the learning of such concepts relates to "the way language works". Whitehead, one of many opponents of formal grammar teaching, argues (1973:152) that

we cannot fail to realize that the mother tongue is learnt largely by massive practice, intuitively and incidentally, and that the conscious learning of rules and their subsequent application play a minimal part in contributing to the competence which all pupils achieve in some variety at least of their native language. Finally, it is becoming increasingly clear that the acquisition of one's mother tongue is intimately linked with the development of thought processes, feelings and values, so that we are all increasingly aware that "practice" of language in school, if it is to accomplish anything, can never be a merely verbal procedure (of the kind once enshrined in exercises instructing the pupil to "put this word into a sentence"), but must actively involve at all stages the pupil's own thoughts, feelings and experiences, and motivations towards communication. Given this experiential emphasis in English lessons, it is understandable that fewer teachers than ever before should find a place in their crowded time-table for explicit study of linguistic rules should be seen as contributing little to the over-riding aim of developing effectiveness of language use.⁴

More recently Bill Mittens (1982:20) has asserted that

it is probably true to say that the old grammar, already undermined by its failure to produce measurable practical results in composition, has lost whatever theoretical status it had.

If most of the evidence provided by research and the practical experience of teachers invalidates the study of formal grammar at school level, why is it still in the new syllabus? Neil Postman (1971:222-223) has some vehement views on this:

Why, of all the relevant and perceptive enquiries into human problems that linguistics allows, have English teachers fixed on the abstractions of grammatical systems? In answering, one must try hard not to be libelous. But we must admit there are those in the teaching of English who are, quite simply, fearful of life. The stuffy and precious ones. The lovers of symmetry and categories and proper labels. For them, the language of real human activity is too sloppy, too emotional and uncertain, and altogether too dangerous to study in the classroom. Grammarians offer such teachers a respectable out. They give them a game to play, with rules and charts, with boxes and arrows to draw, and most of all, with right answers. Great big white Right Answers ...

Then, too, we have those among us who are fearful not so much of life as of children. These are the controllers and the syllabus-makers, who are afraid to go where the feelings, perceptions, and questions of children would take them. These are the sequence-lovers who can take you from form-classes to terminal strings in just the right amount of time because they consult the structure of their grammar books and not the structure of their students.

Postman's reference to "white Right Answers" has a special significance in South Africa where the examination system forms a part of racist hegemonic structures. But his comments seem a little harsh and misguided in that it is anxiety about examinations, rather than about "life" or "children" which narrows the focus of language study onto those areas that pertain to what is examinable. The comprehension test in its traditional form encourages convergent rather than divergent thinking and is more

useful as a test of comprehension than a means of extending comprehension. I have included an example of a more exploratory comprehension exercise in Appendix 2.

Passages for summarising test whether a useful skill has been acquired, but course books tend to provide randomly selected passages for summary similar to those found in examinations and the gleaning of essential information is shifted to a "micro" level of analysis. I would argue that in a social formation saturated with misinformation it is equally important for students to learn how to glean from the information field what will enable them to develop a coherent world-view. I would argue that through course books, with their often whimsically selected oral and composition topics, discrete prose extracts for comprehension and summary, and grammatical "exercises" usually trivial in content, students are deprived of the power to make sense of their fragmentary world. This state of affairs is exacerbated in a society where most media are controlled by the ruling class. I see a partly homologous relationship between the incoherence of content in most English courses, the structure of SATV programming and the organisation of "news" in the commercial press. William Irwin Thompson (1982:9) has warned of the dangers of an incoherent information system (at the macro level) in times of political or economic crisis:

if people feel that their lives are unmanageable and that there is nothing one person can do in the face of the global crisis, then they will surrender their civil liberties to increasingly authoritarian regimes that can explain the world to them anew.

When the individual's consciousness is made of a moving collage of televised fragments, one's state of anxiety makes one prey to the "recollectivisation through terror" of the fascist state.

If prevailing approaches to the teaching of comprehension and summary fail to integrate micro- and macro-levels of analysis of the linguistic "information field",

how can the study of linguistics made a positive contribution? Fundamental to the teaching of English as a first language is the idea that WESSAs should be able to master "Standard English". That this idea has political implications for WESSA students forming an understanding of their place in this country can be seen in the following comments by Malcolm Venter (1981:28), an influential teacher of English in the Cape Province:

The main point at stake is the reason for setting a standard. As mentioned above, the reason is not the attainment of some Platonic Ideal. The main reason is a social one. It is a fact that society does expect certain standards and that it bases these standards on the English used by a certain group in society. It is totally irrelevant that it happens to be the English used by the upper and middle social classes. It is quite irrelevant whether (as is claimed by certain sociolinguists of socialist persuasion) the lower-class child handicapped or even deliberately held back by his non-standard dialect. The fact remains that society judges people according to the way they speak and write and that the criterion used to judge people is Standard English (even if it is often a regional adaptation of British Standard English). There is nothing we can do about it. We might plead for greater tolerance and understanding, but that won't necessarily change anything. In the meantime it is our duty to prepare our pupils for the type of society into which they will be moving on leaving school. We cannot leave them to lose a job opportunity or to be mocked because they cannot cope with the demands of Standard English. It could, of course, be argued, that this is merely reinforcing the status quo. That may be true; but that is not the point. At any rate, do we have the right to use our pupils to alter the status quo, because we happen to believe that it ought to be altered?

But, even if we were to accept the argument that we should be prepared to send our pupils out as agents of social change and to ignore the consequences we need to take cognisance of the fact that there are other, practical, reasons for setting a standard. The point is that, if we do not take one dialect as a standard, intelligibility would most probably decline.

What is interesting about this passage is the way in which ideas about quality ("society does expect certain standards") merge with the notions of a linguistic norm ("Standard

English") and the political status quo. What is odd is the notion that pupils can become "agents of social change" if we give up trying to teach them Standard English. As I see it, the argument rests on a fundamental misunderstanding about the relationship between "Standard English" and the political status quo in South Africa. Firstly, the hegemonic use, power and status of Standard English derives from the economic and political power of the ruling class, not from the "dialect" in itself. Secondly, a commitment to standardised English as a lingua franca plays an important part in the revolutionary strategy of those concerned with building "One Azania, One Nation". Thirdly, Venter assumes that allegiance to the status quo is somehow less "political" than a commitment to alter the status quo. As King (1983:113) points out, those who condemn "political" teachers for "social engineering" should remember that "using education to keep things as they are is also social engineering - maintenance rather than construction engineering".

Venter's functionalist view of the relationship between language and society is evident in the new syllabus where the items on different "registers" (5.1.3 and 5.1.4) and the item concerning "the effect on English of historical, social and demographic developments" are listed separately. In the discourse of the syllabus registers and the contexts in which they are appropriate are seen as static linguistic and social categories respectively. However, as Stubbs (1983:46) points out

speech and situation are not entirely separable on this. For example, it is not simply that certain social situations demand that a teacher "gives a pupil a dressing down". By giving a pupil a dressing down the teacher may create a certain social situation.

Similarly, an awareness that language is not simply referential should alert us to the fact that labelling registers, following Joos, as "casual", "formal", "consultative" and so on does not simply label a reality "out there" but constructs a new taxonomy that is heavily laden with ideological assumptions. At the most basic

level, any conscious awareness that one is restricted or inhibited by the rules of the taxonomy (e.g. "Don't be 'casual' with a stranger") implies a domination of the speaker by the taxonomy.

Apart from the ideological problems connected with the naming of registers, there is some doubt about the educational value of making explicit rules about register. As in the case of formal grammar, the relationship between competence and conscious application of rules is not made clear by the syllabus. Fowler (1974:230) has stated that

At present the theory of "registers" is at a primitive and informal stage of development. It is not easy to pin down the exact meaning of the concept. Furthermore, very little exact descriptive work has yet been carried out, so the examples one offers are largely putative. Native speakers generally have confident intuitions about the kinds of variation assumed under "register", and these intuitions provide eminently researchable hypotheses. In advance of empirical study, nevertheless, the factors determining choice of register are of a fairly obvious kind.

Things may have changed since 1974, but my own intuition is that teachers of English can work quite effectively enough without the concept of register as defined by the syllabus.

The positivist and functionalist myths that underlie the concept of register are also present in items 5.1.5 and 5.1.6 of the syllabus. Leaving aside the astonishing coupling of "emotive language" and "dishonesty" we must ask what it is that "detects" these things. Is it Hemingway's "crap detector"? Is it the abstract rational intellect? Is it a well-informed mind? Is it feminist consciousness? Is it the "discriminating" liberal humanist? Perhaps this is where the positivist and the liberal humanist unite. At least we should remember that these ideologies are as prone to "dishonesty" and "emotive" language as any other. Positivist ideology also informs item 5.1.6, where it is naively assumed that the objective,

discriminating mind can distinguish between fact and opinion, objectivity and bias, emotion and sentimentality, and ... assess the function of such elements in given contexts. However, "the objective, discriminating mind" of the liberal humanist may arrive at different conclusions regarding these elements if s/he is exposed to the viewpoint of the Gnostic, the Platonist, the modern physicist, the Marxist, the Freudian or Jungian psychologist or the Zen Buddhist. Instead of discussing "the function of such elements in given contexts", we need to discuss the meaning of such concepts in relation to hegemonic structures of knowledge. This is my ideological position. I wish the people responsible for formulating the syllabus were less blind to their own ideological assumptions because this blindness is a powerful factor ensuring the political ignorance, impotence and irresponsibility of most WESSA school students.

CONCLUSION: THE ENGLISH TEACHER'S ECONOMY OF TIME

Were it not for the urgency of the social problems facing us all in the world today, I would have been content to wind my way through the loopholes in the syllabus and emphasise its good points. As I see it, however, a radical rethinking of the syllabus as a whole is necessary as part of a movement towards a more integrated curriculum. Unfortunately, the task of coping with the massive demands of the syllabus is likely to prevent most teachers of English from threading the loopholes, never mind unravelling the desperately inadequate tangle that now exists. I hope I will be proved wrong. Meanwhile I suggest that those researchers responsible for the next revision of the syllabus take a careful look at the English teacher's economy of time.

Here are a few comments that might set these researchers thinking. If I teach five English classes of

thirty pupils each I have 150 pupils. If, as the CED demands, I give each three pieces of writing a term and spend a minimum of fifteen minutes on reading each piece of work, writing carefully considered constructive comments, awarding a mark and entering it in my mark book, I will have done 450 hours of work. If for each pupil I mark two pieces concerning the prescribed work and one piece concerned with language study a term, and spend fifteen minutes on each, I will have done another 450 hours of work. If I set one research project for each pupil and spend half an hour marking each, I will have done another 75 hours of work. If I set two setwork tests and two language study tests a term and mark them at a rate of fifteen minutes each, I will have done another 150 hours of work. If I mark 600 exam scripts at a rate of fifteen minutes each I will have done another 150 hours of work. At this rate, marking will have occupied me for 1 275 hours a year.

Let us abandon figures and consider what a competent and reasonably diligent English teacher might be doing with the rest of her or his time: reading to keep abreast of developments in linguistics and the pedagogy related to it; reading to keep abreast of developments in literary theory and the pedagogy related to it; reading to keep abreast of developments in media studies; reading to keep abreast of developments in modern fiction, poetry, theatre, and drama teaching; reading the prescribed texts; reading in order to be informed about good fiction for younger students; writing the occasional poem, story, essay or play in order to remember what it feels like; taking groups of students to see plays and films; umpiring cricket or tennis matches; adding up column after column of marks in the mark book; filling in reports; preparing individual lessons; filling in the register; attending staff meetings; filling in Departmental circulars; reading to keep abreast of developments in national and world affairs; running an

extra-mural Club or Society; editing the school magazine; directing the school play; and last, but not least, nurturing those personal relationships that form the ground of one's emotional being.

Some teacher/researcher with an ability to find gaps in time should spend a year keeping a diary in which the time spent on these activities is noted. It might help to bring syllabus reformers into the real world.

CHAPTER 5: A RESPONSE TO THE NEW SYLLABUS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CED
ENGLISH FIRST LANGUAGE SYLLABUS AS IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

ENDNOTES

1. Many semiologists and formalists such as Jakobson give insufficient attention to the interpellation of the 'actual historical reader' in specific social and historical contexts.
2. Research into the motivational structure of WESSA school students would, I believe, provide a basis for assessing the effectiveness of the syllabus.
3. Davies is not, of course, using the terms 'langue' and 'parole' in a strict Saussurean sense.
4. Whitehead's account of language acquisition is outdated in that it neglects the interactive processes involved in 'massive practice'. However, his contention that the formal learning of grammatical rules contributes little to the learning of a native language seems to have been confirmed by recent linguistic research.

CHAPTER SIX: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED COUNTER-HEGEMONIC
WORK-SCHEME: A CASE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Those of us teaching English who agree that radical changes are necessary both in approaches to curriculum development and innovation on the one hand, and in the formulation of English syllabuses on the other, still have to contend with the problem of using the official syllabus in such a way that its demands are met while encouraging students to develop a more radical sense of themselves in relation to their environment. In this chapter I shall attempt to describe what I did with a 'mixed ability' Standard Seven class at Cape Town High School in 1982. Two fundamental ideas informed my approach. Firstly, I thought that there should be a radical change with regard to the content of the course, so that as much material as possible would enable pupils to develop a more informed, responsive and responsible awareness of major national and international issues. Secondly, I thought that there should be a radical change with regard to the component parts of the course, so that each was in some way connected to the others.

I was given the opportunity to embark on this experiment because at the end of 1981 the head of our English Department asked me to take responsibility for planning the work-schemes for Standards Six and Seven in 1982. Each of the other teachers in the Department was given a similar responsibility in the other Standards. We met shortly before the beginning of the first term in 1982 to compare, discuss and integrate our respective work-schemes with a view to fulfilling the demands of the

syllabus as comprehensively and economically as possible.

In preparing for the Departmental meeting I noticed that there was a thematic thread linking the prescribed plays and novel in Standard Seven: the relationship between poverty and wealth. This seemed to offer a good opportunity to experiment with introducing a radical perspective into all areas of the work-scheme. I realised at the outset that constructing an integrated course would be very demanding and so decided to confine the experiment to one Standard.

THE WORK-SCHEME

Before giving an account of the activities of the course as it developed I consider it necessary to quote the work-scheme in full so that readers may gain a sense of what was to be covered during the year. It would be impossible to give a full picture of what the Standard Seven course entailed. I shall, however, give examples of the kind of work that was done to give the course coherence. At the same time it should be clear from the work plan that course books were an inescapable part of the course. There were at least two reasons for this. Firstly, a common core of examinable knowledge would quell the anxieties of those pupils who fear that 'experimentation' will ruin their exam prospects. This is a real and oft-expressed fear and I felt it would have been unfair to ignore it. Secondly, the course books, despite the exasperating triviality of their content, did offer some useful skills training when lack of time or inspiration made the preparation of alternative materials impossible.

Here, then, is the work plan that was presented to teachers of Standard Seven English at the beginning of 1982:

STD 6 AND 7 PREFACE TO WORK PLANTeacher-in-Charge: T. Volbrecht1. General Policy

In Stds 6 and 7 teachers should make every effort to make the study of English enjoyable and stimulating so that pupils will be motivated to take an active and ongoing interest in their language and environment. At the same time teachers should always bear in mind that they are aiding in the development of skills that will have to meet the demands of the Senior Secondary course.

2. Oral Work

Pupils should not be expected to present oral work without preparatory guidance and discussion. The following points should be covered:

- 2.1 the importance of effective speech in communication;
- 2.2 the skills involved in effective speech;
- 2.3 the potential of the classroom context for developing these skills;
- 2.4 the importance of good listening;
- 2.5 how to choose a topic for individual oral;
- 2.6 advice on preparation and presentation;
- 2.7 advice on choosing scenarios for improvised drama;
- 2.8 advice on the presentation of improvised drama;
- 2.9 the skills involved in effective reading.

3. Writing

- 3.1 Std 6: In addition to writing full-length compositions, pupils should have regular practice in exercising the skills involved in effective writing.

The importance of providing adequate stimulation before assigning composition work cannot be over-emphasised. Note that five of the pieces in this section must be written in class.

(See under 4. Literature for comments on the Book Review)

- 3.2 Std 7: In principle one should approach the work as one did in Std 6, except that more sophisticated skills should be introduced. The introduction of the thematic approach suggested in the Work Plan means that composition work in Std 7 will have to be more thoughtfully integrated with the rest of the course.

NOTE: See Syllabus for correct mark allocations for all composition work in Stds 6 and 7.

4. Literature

- 4.1 Std 6: Although literature is not examinable in Std 6, some basic principles of literary criticism should be introduced. In this regard the Book Review should be approached as follows:

- (a) Pupils should first review the book which has been read and discussed in class, viz. the Dahl stories.
- (b) In their composition books pupils should first answer questions on ONE of the stories in the collection under the following headings:
1. What is the central problem or conflict in the story? (This should have been discussed in class.)
 2. What factors lead to the resolution (solving) of this problem?
 3. Mention three attributes of the main character or characters, referring to the text in support of your answer.
 4. Suggest an alternative ending to the story. Which ending do you prefer? Why?
 5. Are there other stories in the collection that are similar to this one? If so, in what way?

NOTE: Pupils must be introduced to the idea that the PLOT is only one aspect of a story/novel and that a plot summary is not a review.

Reviews must be written in the present tense. This will have to be stressed repeatedly.

The Book Reviews may be included in the twelve pieces which have to be marked by the end of the year.

Pupils should be constantly encouraged to read widely and regularly. The establishment of a paperback library in the classroom is useful in this regard.

The poetry anthology should be read at regular intervals throughout the year. A considerable variety of activities can be based on the poetry anthology.

Remind me to obtain supplementary films on the Diary of Anne Frank.

- 4.2 Std 7: It is hoped that the study of literature will be linked up with other aspects of the Std 7 syllabus so that all the work done will be relevant to the pupils' own lives and environment.

Pupils should be given homework assignments on the prescribed books, including exercises which will help to prepare them for the examinations.

Teachers are encouraged to share worksheets and other supplementary material.

5. Language

Wherever possible knowledge acquired in this section should be applied with a view to improving the pupils' own writing.

Pupils should be given a clear idea of how language work will be tested in the examination. For this reason, tests should include examination-type questions.

6. Project Work6.1 Std 6: 'My Scrapbook - some impressions of 1982'

The aim of the project in Std 6 is to stimulate a lively interest in the media and, through them, in the environment and contemporary events. With this end in view, the project may include all or some of the following:

- (a) the pupil's own poems, stories, song lyrics, etc. based on current events;
- (b) popular song lyrics which the pupil regards as important;
- (c) pictures, including photographs, drawings and cartoons;
- (d) thoughts on or reviews of films, TV programmes and books;
- (e) newspaper headlines;
- (f) advertisements, one of which is finally chosen as 'The Most Untruthful Advertisement of the Year.'
- (g) interesting quotations and phrases;
- (h) humorous incidents;
- (i) complaints;
- (j) discoveries (of various kinds):
- (k) predictions;
- (l) disasters;
- (m) changes in attitudes.

Pupils should be given the above list. Minimum length of project: 6 pages - there should be about 300 words which are the pupils's own work. An impression mark out of 50 should be given which will count as the Year Mark. The project should be started as soon as possible and be COMPLETED BY 1 September.

6.2 Std 7: The poetry anthology (See Appendix 3).

The poetry anthology offers pupils a further opportunity to explore the general theme 'Rich and Poor'. The anthology does not have to be related to the general theme but must be based on ONE of the following topics:

- (a) 'Rich Man, Poor Man'
- (b) Separation and Togetherness
- (c) 'See the city breaking'
- (d) 'The Land at my Door'
- (e) People at Work
- (f) Childhood and Growing Up
- (g) 'Babylon System'
- (h) Joy and Sorrow
- (i) Nature and Machines
- (j) True Love and False Love

The poetry anthology should be commenced as soon as possible and should be carefully supervised. It must be COMPLETED by 1 September.

STD 7 WORK PLAN

FIRST CYCLE (Terms 1 and 2)

CORE	CONTENT	DATE/COMMENT
A. <u>ORAL</u>	<p>1. Revision of general principles (see Preface) followed by Oral Communication (CEP pp. 189-95) Suggestion: Groups deal with aspects of general theme for term ('Rich and Poor') to link up with other sections of the syllabus - novel and plays on the same theme.</p> <p>2. Reading/Comprehension and Listening (CEP pp. 210-13) Supplement with additional material on the general theme, e.g. popular songs.</p>	
B. <u>WRITING</u>	<p>1. Narrative, expository</p> <p>2. Free verse (CEP pp. 129-46; Skills of Eng. 2 Lessons 25 & 27. Suggestion: at least one item on general theme.</p> <p>SIX pieces per Cycle must be marked. Marks are accumulative for exam purposes. Further ideas for written and oral work can be gleaned from <u>Conflict</u>. ONE item must be written under exam conditions. (see PROJECT - 2 pieces are counted)</p> <p><u>Nature of exercise:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 	

CORE	CONTENT	DATE/COMMENT
<p>C. <u>LITERATURE</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Skills of English 2:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Visualisation (Lesson 18) 1.2 Seeing Similarities and Differences (Lesson 19) 1.3 Comparisons (Lesson 20) 1.4 Close reading (Lesson 22) 1.5 Substitution (Diction) (Lesson 23) 1.6 Style and Purpose (Lesson 24) 1.7 Selecting (Lesson 25) 1.8 Reading Fiction (Lesson 26) 2. Rumboll and Horan (ed.): <u>Sunbursts</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1 A Christmas Carol 2.2 Michael 2.3 Cloud over the Morning These three plays will be examined. 3. Steinbeck: <u>The Pearl</u> (to be examined) 4. Harrison and Stuart-Clarke (ed.): <u>The New Dragon Book of Verse</u> Teacher chooses own selection of 25 poems - <u>NOT EXAMINABLE.</u> Poetry should be taught throughout the year. Supplementary poems related to the general theme will be provided. 	
<p>D. <u>LANGUAGE</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehension (any 5) - preferably related to general theme (see <u>Skills of Eng. 2 Lesson 22</u>) 2. Revision of punctuation and spelling rules. 3. Revision of subject and predicate. 4. The Predicate (CEP p. 250+) 5. The Simple Sentence - definition 6. Complex Sentences (CEP p. 264+) 	

CORE	CONTENT	DATE/COMMENT
D. <u>LANGUAGE</u> (cont.)	7. Active and Passive Voice (<u>CEP</u> p. 253+) 8. Sentence Types (<u>CEP</u> p. 263+) 9. Subjects and Objects (<u>CEP</u> p. 259+) 10. <u>Skills of English 2 Lessons 8-12</u> 11. <u>Revision</u>	
E. <u>PROJECT</u>	Poetry Anthology (refer Appendix 3 and Preface). Forms part of year mark. Counts as two pieces of writing. Begin and monitor progress. COMPLETE by 1 September. Prizes awarded.	
<u>SECOND CYCLE</u> (Terms 3 and 4)		
A. <u>ORAL</u>	1. Forum Discussion (<u>CEP</u> pp. 196-8) Relate some topics to general theme. 2. Group Activities (<u>CEP</u> pp. 204-7) 3. Individual Activities (<u>CEP</u> pp. 207-10) 4. Work on <u>Sunbursts</u> .	
B. <u>WRITING</u>	1. Descriptive, subjective 2. Argumentative (see <u>Skills of Eng. 2 Lessons 8-12</u>) 3. Letters (<u>CEP</u> pp. 207-10) <u>Nature of exercise:</u> 1. 2. 3.	

CORE	CONTENT	DATE/COMMENT
B. <u>WRITING</u> (cont.)	4. 5. 6. NOTE: Project requires discursive writing.	
C. <u>LITERATURE</u>	1. Arkley (ed.): <u>Tales of Mystery and Suspense</u> . At least 12 stories of own choice - NOT TO BE EXAMINED) 2. Poetry (see First Cycle)	
D. <u>LANGUAGE</u>	1. Comprehension (any 5) - preferably related to general theme. 2. Vocabulary study (<u>Skills of Eng. 2 Lesson 1</u>) 3. Tenses; sequence of tenses: lessons to be derived from common composn. errors. 4. Concord (refer to no. 9 in First Cycle) 5. Direct and Reported Speech 6. The objective and subjective use of language. Fact, opinion and bias (<u>CEP pp. 292-3</u>). 7. Summary and note-making (<u>CEP pp. 99-109</u> ; <u>Skills of Eng. 2 pp. 57-61</u>) 8. The Word (<u>CEP p. 269+</u>) 9. Features of words (<u>CEP p. 272+</u>) 10. Word Building (<u>CEP p. 277+</u>)	

APPENDIX 3: POETRY IN STANDARD SEVEN

Pupils should learn the following in the course of their poetry lessons:

- (a) How to come to grips with the meaning of a poem and answer comprehension questions on it.
- (b) To identify and explain the following imagery and figures of speech:
 - i. simile
 - ii. methaphor
 - iii. personification
 - iv. onomatopoeia
 - v. assonance
 - vi. alliteration
- (c) To identify run-on lines and to see that there is stress on the last work in any line, the more so on the last word in a run-on line.
(See how stress affects meaning.)
- (d) To identify stressed words in the middle of lines - use punctuation in poetry. (Say how it affects meaning.)
- (e) To comment on the effectiveness of words, lines, verses, imagery, figures of speech, etc.
- (f) To comment on the poet's intention in a line, verse or the whole poem.
- (g) To comment on tone.

Each anthology must contain the following:

1. 10 poems by the pupil on the chosen theme.
2. 15 poems by other poets (from various sources).
3. A critical introduction to be written after the anthology has been compiled. Here the pupil should comment on what was learnt in the process of compiling the anthology and writing the poems. The pupil should try to show that he or she has responded fully to the work of other poets. The introduction should be \pm 300 words.
4. A linking commentary which introduces or comments on individual poems or groups of poems. This gives the pupil an opportunity to expand on points made in the introduction.
5. Illustrations, preferably the pupil's own drawings or photographs. Other pictures may be used where appropriate. Photocopying and typing of poems are not allowed.
6. A contents page.
7. A bibliography.

Marking the anthology:

Individual teachers will mark their classes' anthologies but to achieve more uniformity of standard the following mark scheme should be adhered to:

The maximum mark obtainable is 50, with the following sub-divisions:

The pupil's own poems:	20
The quality of the introduction and linking commentary:	15
The appropriateness of the other poems:	5
The quality of the presentation in general (contents page, bibliography, layout, illustrations and neatness):	<u>10</u>
	50

Give an impression mark in each subsection.

Due date: 29 August 1982.

Note: Books cited in the work plan are:

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THE CONCEPT OF INTEGRATION IN THE SYLLABUS

Although this work plan was based on the old syllabus, it anticipates several aspects of the new one, the most important being the concept of integration. This is how the idea of integration is presented in the Guide to the syllabus for Standards Five, Six and Seven:

For convenience and clarity this syllabus is presented in four sections (Oral Communication, Reading and Literature Study, Written Communication and Language) but it must be stressed that in practice the work should, whenever possible, be integrated. Language competence grows through experience of listening, reading, talking and writing, and through direct study of the language itself in both literary and non-literary contexts. The outcome of such study should form an organic whole. How integration is implemented will depend upon the teacher's methods, approaches and emphases. It follows that the teacher should use the periods allocated to English in a flexible manner, provided that these four sections of the work receive regular attention. Moreover, teachers should explore the fruitful possibilities of language across the curriculum.¹

Whilst I am happy to share the impulse toward 'integration' and 'organic wholeness', I feel that the way these terms are used in the syllabus is vague and problematic. In what sense, for example, can 'the outcome of such study form an organic whole'? Is 'the outcome' envisaged to be identified in the consciousness of each individual pupil? Given the importance of unconscious factors in language development and the social nature of individuals, this seems an impossible goal. As I see it, we are dealing with integrative processes and outcomes, by nature provisional, which cannot be seen as organic wholes. To think of the work produced by the course as forming an organic whole is equally problematic. I suggest that if we identify integrative aspects of the work we are selecting elements that cohere and ignoring or disregarding dissonances. It is unclear to me what is meant when 'an organic whole' is seen as the outcome of study in one sentence and as something to be 'implemented'

in the next. There is also lack of clarity regarding the ways in which students and teachers participate as active agents in the processes in integration.

There is a fairly strong possibility that the syllabus is seeking an incarnation of Leavis's 'organic community' at the level of intersubjectivity in the classroom, and a reincarnation of functionalist, organicist ideology at the level of discourse. To my mind both conceptualisations promote a specious sense of order in a severely fragmented and alienating social formation.

Despite these reservations, I do believe that the idea of integration is useful in the sense that it can inspire teachers (here I speak for myself) and students to work with greater zest and commitment, while enabling them to make connections which seem to make more sense of the world. This movement towards a spirited, integrated vision was often felt as valuable by the pupils and by me, but such experience is not amenable to scientific verification. The impossibility of controlling outcomes in any definitive way, especially in the long term, is perhaps one of the most salient features of English teaching. I have often felt my intuitions and cultural preconceptions weaving together to give me a sense of whether a lesson has 'worked' or not, and I have sensed the tenuousness of even the most convincing successes.

EVALUATION OF THE INTEGRATED WORK-SCHEME

For me, as I imagine for most English teachers, my success as a teacher is measured by the quality of the work produced by the pupils and their open or tacit acknowledgment that it has been valuable to them. Although these are my touchstones, I do nevertheless hope that the torches lit in the imaginations of pupils will be carried into the future and into the lives of those who need light

and a healing vision of life. In fact, when I think of the Standard Sevens I taught in 1982, I have more than hope. I have that faith without which my work would become meaningless. It is a faith in the power of people to use language to transform the world by using it as a spur to understanding and action.

In discussing the work I did with my Standard Seven class in 1982 I cannot recreate the ambience that inspired me and many of the students, nor can I document the value of apparent failures. All I can do is describe some of the lesson material and allow the work of the students to speak for itself through the examples I have selected. Were it not for the fact that many colleagues, friends and students have commented on the high quality of the work, I would not have included it here. I have also included it because it provides some basis for assessing whether pupils benefited from the kind of integration I tried to achieve in designing the course. It must be remembered, however, that for all the 'successful' moments of integration there were many glimpses of our old friend entropy.

In giving examples of work done in each section of the syllabus I shall try to explain what my purposes were and speculate on the outcome of each activity, bearing in mind that I am dealing with fragments of what happened in about two hundred English lessons and the often invisible lives of thirty young people immersed in the collective unconscious of the human race.

INTRODUCING THE WORK-SCHEME TO STUDENTS

I began the course with an introductory talk in which I tried to be as explicit as possible about my objectives. In giving an overview of the global and national crises arising from the unequal distribution of wealth I cited figures and statistics in order to show that we would be dealing with an issue of major and urgent importance.

There was, unsurprisingly, unanimous agreement that this was an area worth exploring. I tried to make it clear to the students that I did not have definitive answers to the problems we would encounter, but that I nevertheless had strongly held views on certain matters. I said explicitly that I would not attempt to be 'neutral' in class discussions, but that my ideas, like those of anyone else in the class, were open to constructive criticism. The new syllabus does in fact encourage 'a readiness to consider new ideas and other points of view' and the Guide suggests that pupils 'learn to respond more critically and with deeper insight, not only to the world in general but to the rest of their school experience'. Presumably 'other points of view' include radical (including Marxist) approaches to ideology in 'the world in general' and in the curriculum as a whole. Elsewhere in the syllabus and Guide the impression is given that 'language across the curriculum' is primarily concerned with the linguistic skills appropriate to each subject. The Guide, for example, suggests that 'the pupils should reach a level of language competence that will enable them to meet the demands on their language skills made by English and by other subjects across the curriculum'. In my view this leads to a multidisciplinary rather than interdisciplinary view of language across the curriculum, to the maintenance of what Bernstein calls 'collection codes' rather than the creation of integrated codes. As I shall show shortly, my own approach is to explore the relationship between subjects and to show how the subjects interpenetrate each other. This, I believe, leads to a more critical awareness of ideological assumptions at work in the curriculum.

THE POETRY COURSE

In introducing the poetry course, for example, I explained that the literary critical approach they would be expected to master by the end of Standard Ten was historically specific. I suggested that poets could be seen as existing in different societies at different points in history and that they encoded their experience of nature, society and history in their poems. Similarly, readers (or listeners) decoded poems according to their experience (including their sense of themselves in society and history). I then mentioned the influence of Arnold, Leavis and Richards on the way we are expected to write about poetry in examinations, and pointed out that positivist science was a major influence on Richard's approach to poetry. This was the first reference to what was to become a leit motif during the course: the role of scientism in relation to the main theme ('rich and poor') and related issues. This lesson, then, explored certain relationships between English, History and Science.

After the introductory lesson on the 'practical criticism' of poetry, I took a leaf out of Chris Searle's book (1977: 245-253) and devised a work unit on Victor Jara. I had several reasons for choosing to begin with Jara and his work. Firstly, there was a good introduction to his life and work in a poem by Adrian Mitchell. Secondly, I knew of Arlo Guthrie's musical setting of Mitchell's poem and felt that I could sing it for the class, accompanying myself on guitar. This I hoped would give students an immediate sense of my identification with the socialist ideals of Jara and Mitchell. Thirdly, Jara's achievement was heroic enough to dispel any stereotypes about poets as effete intellectuals living in ivory towers. Fourthly, I could use Jara's 'Manifesto' as a basis for exploring the social functions of poets and songwriters. Fifthly, an understanding of Allende's Chile would provide important insights into the international distribution of power and wealth, particularly regarding Chile's

relationship with Britain and the U.S.A. Sixthly, all the poems in the work unit were simply written and would not be intellectually threatening to the students. I felt that this was important because the poems in the prescribed anthology struck me as quite demanding in their degree of difficulty and likely to discourage pupils if they were not psychologically prepared for it. Many of the students were visibly moved by the story of Victor Jara and I felt confident, after a lively discussion based on the questions set, that I had engaged the interest and commitment of the students at a fundamental level. Here are the songs and poems and the questions I posed for discussion:

VICTOR JARA OF CHILE

(Poem by Adrian Mitchell, music by Arlo Guthrie)

Victor Jara of Chile
 Lived like a shooting star
 He fought for the people of Chile
 With his songs and his guitar
 and his hands were gentle
 his hands were strong

Victor Jara was a peasant
 Worked from a few years old
 He sat upon his father's plough
 And watched the earth unfold
 and his hands were gentle
 his hands were strong

When the neighbours had a wedding
 Or one of their children died
 His mother sang all night for them
 With Victor by her side
 and his hands were gentle
 his hands were strong

He grew to be a fighter
 Against the people's wrongs
 He listened to their grief and joy
 And turned them into songs
 and his hands were gentle
 his hands were strong

He sang about the copper miners
 And those who work the land
 He sang about the factory workers
 And they knew he was their man
 and his hands were gentle
 his hands were strong

He campaigned for Allende
 Working night and day
 He sang: Take hold of your brother's hand
 The future begins today
 and his hands were gentle
 his hands were strong

The bloody generals seized Chile
 They arrested Victor then
 They caged him in a stadium
 With five thousand frightened men
 and his hands were gentle
 his hands were strong

Victor stood in the stadium
 His voice was brave and strong
 He sang for his fellow-prisoners
 Till the guards cut short his song
 and his hands were gentle
 his hands were strong

They broke the bones in both his hands
 They beat his lovely head
 They tore him with electric shocks
 And then they shot him dead
 and his hands were gentle
 his hands were strong

And now the Generals rule Chile
 And the British have their thanks
 For they rule with Hawker Hunters
 And they rule with Chieftain tanks
 and his hands were gentle
 his hands were strong

Victor Jara of Chile
 Lived like a shooting star
 He fought for the people of Chile
 With his songs and his guitar
 and his hands were gentle
 his hands were strong

MANIFESTO

(Song by Victor Jara. Sung in Spanish by Victor Jara.
 English translation by Joan Jara and Adrian Mitchell.
 English translation read by Joan Jara.)

I don't sing for love of singing
 Or to show off my voice
 But for the statements
 Made by my honest guitar
 For its heart is of earth
 And like the dove it goes flying ...
 Tenderly as holy water
 Blessing the brave and the dying

So my song has found a purpose
 As Violetta Parra would say.
 Yes, my guitar is a worker
 Shining and smelling of spring.
 My guitar is not for killers
 Greedy for money and power
 But for the people who labour
 So that the future may flower
 For a song takes on a meaning
 When its own heartbeat is strong
 Sung by a man who will die singing,
 Truthfully singing his song.

I don't sing for adulation
 Or so that strangers may weep.
 I sing for a far strip of country,
 Narrow but endlessly deep.

In the earth in which we begin,
 In the earth in which we end,
 Brave songs will give birth
 To a song which will always be new.

I REMEMBER YOU AMANDA

(Song by Victor Jara. Sung in Spanish by Victor Jara.
 English translation by Joan Jara and Adrian Mitchell.
 English translation read by Joan Jara.)

I remember you Amanda
 When the streets were wet
 Running to the factory
 Where Manuel was working,
 With your wide smile
 And the rain in your hair.
 Nothing else mattered.
 You were going to meet him.

Five minutes only,
 All of your life in five minutes.
 The siren is sounding.
 Time to go back to work.
 And, as you walk,
 You light up everything.
 Those five minutes
 Have made you flower.

I remember you Amanda
 When the streets were wet.
 Nothing else mattered,
 You were going to meet him,
 With your wide smile
 And the rain in your hair.
 Nothing else mattered,
 You were going to meet him.

And he took to the mountains to fight.
 He had never hurt a fly,
 But he took to the mountains.
 And in five minutes
 It was all wiped out.
 The siren is sounding
 Time to go back to work.
 Many will not go back.
 One of them is Manuel.

I remember you Amanda
 When the streets were wet.
 Nothing else mattered,
 You were going to meet him.

IN THE STADIUM

(Poem by Victor Jara. English translation by Adrian Mitchell and Joan Jara. English translation read by Adrian Mitchell.)

There are five thousand of us
 In this small part of the city,
 Five thousand of us here.
 I wonder how many of us altogether in the cities.
 In the whole country?
 In this place alone are ten thousand hands
 Which plant seeds and make the factories run.
 How much humanity
 Exposed to hunger, cold, panic, pain, moral pressure,
 terror & madness
 Six of us were lost
 As if among the stars of space
 One dead
 Another beaten as I never could have believed a human being
 Could be beaten.
 The other four wanted to end their terror:
 One, jumping into emptiness;
 Another, beating his head against a wall,
 But all of them with the fixed look of death.

What horror the face of fascism creates!
 They carry out their plans with the precision of knives.
 Nothing matters to them.
 To them blood equals medals,
 Slaughter is an act of heroism.
 Oh God, is this the world that you created?
 Was it for this your seven days of wonder and work?
 Trapped between these four walls we are just a number,
 A number which cannot grow,
 Its longing for death gradually increasing.

But suddenly my conscience wakes up
 And I see this tide of murder has no heartbeat,
 Only the pulse of machines
 And the military smiling sweetly; waiting.

Let Mexico, Cuba and the world cry out against this
atrocitiy.
We are ten thousand hands which produce nothing.
How many of us altogether in the whole country?
The blood of our president, our companero,
Will strike more powerfully than bombs and machine guns.
That is how our fist will strike again.

How hard it is to sing
When I must sing of horror,
Horror in which I am living,
Horror in which I am dying,
Seeing myself among so much horror
And so many endless moments.
Silence and screams are the end of my song.

What I see I have never seen before.
What I felt and what I feel now
Will give birth to the moment ...

QUESTIONS ON VICTOR JARA POEMS

1. What does Adrian Mitchell mean by saying that Victor Jara 'lived like a shooting star'?
In what ways was Victor Jara similar to a pop star like, say, Leo Sayer? In what ways was he different?
2. What kinds of strength are presented in Adrian Mitchell's poem? What is the poet's attitude to these different kinds of strength? How does he show that he has a different attitude to each?
3. What is Adrian Mitchell's attitude to his own country (Britain)? Why?
4. To what extent do you think Victor Jara lived up to the statements made in his Manifesto?
5. Would you say that the song, I Remember You Amanda is more concerned with Amanda than with Manuel? Give reasons for your answer.
6. 'The blood of our president, our companero,
Will strike more powerfully than bombs and machine guns.
That is how our fist will strike again.'

Explain what the above lines mean by relating them to their context.
7. What would you say is the basis of Victor Jara's faith in the future?

After the work on Victor Jara I devised a work unit based on four poems by William Blake which were relevant to the general theme. The poems were 'The Chimney Sweeper'

and 'Holy Thursday' from the Songs of Innocence and those poems with the same titles in the Songs of Experience. Once again my choice of poems was carefully considered. Firstly, by placing Blake in his historical context I could introduce many of the concepts which are necessary to an understanding of the relationship between capitalism, industrialism, childhood, wealth and poverty. Secondly, Blake's songs are accessible but subtle and therefore useful as a starting point for a discussion of poetic technique. Thirdly, I felt that many of the issues raised in these poems are relevant to an understanding of South Africa today. For example, highly exploitative child labour is still a common feature of our uniquely sanctimonious regime. Fourthly, I felt that fourteen-year-olds were well placed to feel the tensions between the visions of 'innocence' and of 'experience'. Here are the four poems and the questions I posed on them:

SONGS OF INNOCENCE

HOLY THURSDAY

Twas on a Holy Thursday their innocent faces clean
 The children walking two & two in red & blue & green
 Grey headed beadles walk before with wands as white
 as snow
 Till into the high dome of Pauls they like Thames
 waters flow

O what a multitude they seemd these flowers of
 London town
 Seated in companies they sit with radiance all their own
 The hum of multitudes was there but multitudes of
 lambs
 Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent
 hands

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice
 of song
 Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven
 among
 Beneath them sit the aged men wise guardians of the
 poor
 Then cherish pity, lest you drive an angel from your
 door

THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER

When my mother died I was very young,
 And my father sold me while yet my tongue,
 Could scarcely cry weep weep weep weep.
 So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.

Theres little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
 That curl'd like a lambs back, was shav'd, so I said.
 Hush Tom never mind it, for when your head's bare,
 You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.

And so he was quiet, & that very night,
 As Tom was a sleeping he had such a sight,
 That thousands of sweepers Dick, Joe Ned & Jack
 Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
 And he open'd the coffins & set them all free.
 Then down a green plain leaping laughing they run
 And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
 They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.
 And the Angel told Tom if he'd be a good boy,
 He'd have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke and we rose in the dark
 And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
 Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm,
 So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE

HOLY THURSDAY

Is this a holy thing to see,
 In a rich and fruitful land,
 Babes reduced to misery,
 Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
 Can it be a song of joy?
 And so many children poor?
 It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine.
 And their fields are bleak & bare.
 And their ways are fill'd with thorns.
 It is eternal winter there.

For where-e'er the sun does shine,
 And where-e'er the rain does fall:
 Babe can never hunger there,
 Nor poverty the mind appall.

THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER

A little black thing among the snow:
 Crying weep, weep. in notes of woe!
 Where are thy father & mother? say?
 They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath.
 And smil'd among the winters snow:
 They clothed me in the clothes of death.
 And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy. & dance & sing.
 They think they have done me no injury:
 And are gone to praise God & his Priest & King
 Who make up a heaven of our misery.

QUESTIONS**A.** The 'Chimney Sweeper' Poems

1. Why does Blake write the first poem as if the child is speaking? (i.e. 'When my mother died' instead of 'When his mother died')
2. What do the words 'weep weep weep weep' add to the meaning of 'cry' in line 3?
3. What is the speaker's attitude to Tom Dacre's suffering?
4. Why are the coffins described as black?
5. What makes Tom Dacre happy?
6. Do you find the ending of the first poem naive? If so, would you want the speaker and Tom to be less naive?
7. Is the child in the second poem less naive than those in the first poem? Give reasons for your answer.
8. What are 'the clothes of death'?
9. What does the last line of the second poem mean?

B. The 'Holy Thursday' Poems

1. Point out the metaphors in lines 5 and 7 of the first poem. What are the points of similarity in the metaphors?
2. Describe the gesture you are meant to visualize in line 8 of the first poem.
3. How would the meaning of the first poem be spoilt if

Blake had written 'gentle' instead of 'mighty' and 'pipings' instead of 'thunderings'?

4. What is the speaker's attitude to the beadies in the first poem? Give reasons for your answer. How does this attitude compare with the attitude to 'the guardians of the poor' in the second poem?
5. Are lines 13 and 14 of the second poem meant to be taken literally? Give reasons for your answer.

C. What would you say is the main difference between the two 'Songs of Innocence' and the two 'Songs of Experience'?

Once again I felt confident that the students had been engaged by the poems in a way that would inform their own writing. After our work on the poems by Mitchell, Jara and Blake we turned to the prescribed anthology. I must say that I would have preferred to do without the anthology and work with poems that the students or I found relevant to our concerns in the course. There were, however, some poems, such as Causley's 'Timothy Winters', that enabled us to develop the mandatory literary critical skills while preserving the 'organic unity' of our theme.

THE PRESCRIBED NOVEL

Running concurrently with our study of poetry was our work on the prescribed novel - The Pearl by John Steinbeck. This novel, which to my mind hovers unsatisfactorily between incisive social criticism and moralistic quietism, nevertheless enabled us to explore several issues related to our general theme, such as the relationship between education, health and power, and the different forms of solidarity in poor and rich communities. In order to explore these issues, to encourage a careful and sensitive reading of the text, and to facilitate the memorising required for the mandatory 'closed book' examination, I prepared a worksheet on each chapter and two revision worksheets. After the students had worked on the questions individually in writing, the answers

were shared and discussed in class. In retrospect I wish that I had placed Steinbeck and the novel in historical perspective and explored the parallels between the 'reality' in the novel and South African society in more depth and with a greater use of improved drama. I also feel that if 'open book' exams were permissible I could have afforded to spend less time on a detailed study of the text. This would have given us more time to read South African prose fiction on the general theme. Despite my reservations, it may be that the sustained attention to detail may have had beneficial effects which are not readily identifiable. Here is the first of eight worksheets based on The Pearl:

THE PEARL by John Steinbeck

WORKSHEET 1

1. The 'Song of the Family' has at least three meanings in Chapter 1. Explain in your own words what they are.
2. Why is it 'a most surprising thing' for Juana to seek the doctor's help?
3. 'The thing had become a neighbourhood affair.' (p. 8)
Why would such community feeling have been unlikely in 'the city of stone and plaster'?
4. Why do you think the beggars frequent the church in preference to any other place?
5. Why do they set Kino and Juana down as 'poverty people'?
6. Explain in your own words what the 'music of the enemy' means on each of the two occasions it appears in Chapter 1.
7. Why do you think the servant refuses to speak in 'the old language'? (p. 10)
8. What is Steinbeck's opinion of the doctor when the latter remembers 'civilized living'?
9. What is Steinbeck's purpose in his description of the doctor's physical appearance?
10. Explain why a wave of shame passes over the Indian procession.
11. Account for the look of wonder on Kino's face at the end of Chapter 1.

THE INTEGRATION OF LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE STUDY

In trying to integrate our work in poetry, fiction and drama with the prescribed activities in language study I spent considerable time locating and preparing material that would sustain interest in the thematic content of the course. The following comprehension exercise, for example, was intended to provide students with a radical perspective on the relationship between poverty and health:

ILL HEALTH IN SOUTH AFRICA - WHO GETS SICK AND WHY?

This year's Medical Students' Conference looks at health care organisation in S.A. and in particular focuses on the health services of the Western Cape. However, before concentrating on the health services, we need first to familiarise ourselves with the state of health (or ill-health) existing in S.A. today. What this talk aims to do is to provide some background to the next few days' discussion by addressing ourselves to the question 'Ill-Health in S.A. - Who Gets Sick and Why?'

It is not difficult to see who gets sick in S.A. as one need only look at the mortality and morbidity statistics. The infant mortality rate, generally regarded as the best reflection of the health status of a population, is up to 6 times higher for blacks than for whites. Malnutrition is widespread in the homelands where approximately 50% of the country's population - (almost entirely composed of blacks) - lives. Of 45 000 T.B. notifications per year, 98% are blacks. On the other hand, T.B. and malnutrition are virtually never seen in our white population who tend to suffer primarily from circulatory and degenerative disease. However while the pattern of disease might differ between blacks and whites, statistical evidence shows that it is blacks who bear the brunt of all disease in addition to the so-called diseases of poverty. This pattern is also clearly seen in Britain, where figures show that it is the lower classes who are suffering the bulk of ill-health.

How does one explain the cause of these disparities?

In order to do so, one needs to understand the origins of disease. Modern Medicine is based on and dominated by concepts, methods and principles generated by the biological sciences. This mechanistic approach sees human beings as individuals who develop illness as a result of some infective

agent or derangement of the body's physiology. This approach is the commonly accepted one, practised in hospitals and taught to us as students.

However, as far back as 1847, Rudolph Virchow, father of pathology, saw disease not purely as the product of biological causes, but as the product of social and political processes in which biological agents, such as germs and hormones, played a relatively passive role.

T.B., then, for instance, is not merely a disease caused by mycobacterium and common in the working class. Rather, it is a disease generated by those conditions suffered by the working classes and in which the mycobacterium thrives. This view of disease sees the sufferer of illness not in isolation, but as a member of a wider society where social, economic and political influences have a direct effect on health.

How then do we explain the difference in disease patterns in S.A.?

It is obviously inadequate to ignore the fact that those who suffer the brunt of ill health in S.A. are those who can least afford to. It is also unsatisfactory to attribute the health profile of S.A.'s blacks to poor housing, poor sanitation, overcrowding and general poverty, and to go no further. These social inequalities are themselves symptoms; they are consequences of a specific structural set of social and economic relations. So, to say that S.A.'s blacks suffer the bulk of disease because of poverty is also inadequate. We must ask WHY this specific pattern of poverty exists. The answer can be found in an analysis of the South African political economy. It will show that the skewed distribution of ill health as well as the skewed distribution of wealth in this country are not coincidental. They are the result of a common process whereby both the Health and Wealth of the land have been appropriated from the many by the few.

This process began with the colonisation of Southern Africa by the Dutch and English settlers. There is ample evidence to show that the agriculture of the indigenous population prior to colonisation was sufficient for subsistence. In fact, during the period 1879 - 1913, the historian Colin Bundy has conclusively demonstrated how African peasants in the reserves produced large surpluses for the market. One thing we know for certain; in contrast to the situation today, malnutrition was not a problem of any magnitude. Nor, for that matter, was T.B., venereal disease or smallpox. How then did the conditions arise whereby T.B. and malnutrition have become the two biggest health problems in S.A.?

Through the gradual expropriation of indigenous land by white settlers and the undermining of the traditional subsistence economy via measures such as the poll and hut taxes and later the 1913 Land Act which confined 87% of the population to 13% of the land, the ability of Black farmers to support their families was destroyed. Black males were forced to seek labour in the cities at low wages and a system of migrant labour was created to control the flow of work seekers, driven off the land to the mines and factories. The departure of males from the agricultural areas put an even greater strain on the productivity of the subsistence economy as only women and children were left behind to till the soil. So, while the growth of the mines and industries brought wealth to their owners, it also brought about the impoverishment of the homelands and unending hardship for the families of those workers on whose labour the mines had grown wealthy.

Overcrowding and overutilisation of the land together with widespread malnutrition were already evident in the reserves by the 1930's. Migrant labour also brought T.B. and venereal disease to the reserves as workers who contracted the disease in the cities were sent back to the reserves untreated. These diseases were spread rapidly among an undernourished and susceptible population. Another important consequence of migrancy was the stress on family life and the resultant psychological illness. Those who chose to escape the hardships of the reserves by moving to the urban areas were forced to live in shanty towns on the periphery of the cities, frequently lacking basic services, water and sanitation and therefore susceptible to numerous infections and parasitic diseases.

So, to answer the second part of the question posed earlier - why ill health in S.A.? It is clear that the ill health suffered by most South Africans is not simply a matter of bacterial invasion or immune deficiency. It is the product of the way in which the S.A. economy has developed and therefore cannot be viewed without being situated in its correct historical perspective. Any improvement in the health status of the majority of South Africans is by definition therefore intricately linked to the political and economic forces in South Africa today.

And hence, any intervention designed to improve the health of any particular community, must take full cognisance of the wider determinants of ill health.

If we are to make any real social progress at all, it is in this context that we must evaluate health services in South Africa today.

(Source unavailable)

STANDARD 7COMPREHENSION EXERCISEIll Health in South Africa - Who Gets Sick and Why?

1. What are 'mortality and morbidity statistics'? (3)
2. What is similar about the patterns of disease in South Africa and Britain? (See paragraph 2) (2)
3. The article presents us with two ways of looking at the causes of disease. Draw two contrasting diagrams which explain the basic differences between the two viewpoints. (5)
4. Why does the writer feel that it is not enough to blame the ill health of poor people in S.A. on poverty? (2)
5. Re-read the paragraph beginning with the words, 'This process began ...' What point is made by the historical evidence in this paragraph? (2)
6. Look up the word 'expropriate' in a dictionary. What, then, is meant by the expropriation of land? (2)
7. What is a 'subsistence economy'? (2)
8. Explain in your own words how the Africans' loss of land has led to malnutrition in South Africa. (2)
9. What is migrant labour? (2)
10. Mention TWO reasons why people living in shanty towns are susceptible to infections and parasitic diseases. (4)
11. If more hospital services were made available to poor people in South Africa, would this be the best possible way of dealing with the problem of ill health in our country? Give a reason for your answer. (4)

In addition to being informative and incisive, the article (or speech) enabled us to explore the relationship between science (medicine), history, geography, economics and politics. Here was a good example of how knowledge fragmented by the curriculum could be integrated to gain insight into a major social problem. Students could once again grasp the limitations of an apolitical, socially

irresponsible scientism, and see that technological know-how without humane social goals does not help to create a healthy society.

The insights gained from doing this comprehension exercise could be applied to a study of the prescribed texts. In The Pearl, for example, Steinbeck writes (1968:33)

The news of the baby's illness travelled quickly among the brush houses, for sickness is second only to hunger as the enemy of poor people. And some said softly: 'Luck, you see, brings bitter friends.'

In the worksheet on Chapter 3 I would then ask students whether they agreed with Steinbeck's identification of the two great enemies of poor people.

In teaching the skills of note-making and summary I again used material that would be thematically relevant. Although the Guide to the new syllabus says that 'pupils will be able to "read beyond the lines" by making judgments on the ideas and facts in the text' using a number of skills including 'evaluating the relevance of material', it never specifies criteria by which the relevance of texts themselves can be judged. I see a theme such as 'Rich and Poor' as an important cohesive device not merely because it is relevant, but because I believe that it is necessary for as many intelligent and able-bodied people as possible to address the problems created by an atrociously inequitable distribution of wealth.

Crucial to an understanding of poverty in South Africa is an awareness of the conflict of interest between the owners of capital and the workers employed by them. One of the ways in which I brought this issue to the notice of students was by giving them the following exercise in the use of logical connectors:

THE ASSEMBLY LINE: LOGICAL CONNECTORS

- A. 1. The job is boring enough to drive you crazy (therefore/because) you repeat the same action over and over again.
2. You repeat the same action over and over again (therefore/because) the job is boring enough to drive you crazy.

3. The worker spends his whole day in the factory (so/because) he has a right to say something about what he does and how he does it.
 4. Management tries to speed up the line (so that/if) the workers work at a faster pace.
 5. Management must impose a faster pace (because/but) it must maintain a competitive rate of profit.
 6. (If/Although) management is dependent on its workers, it must push them harder and harder.
 7. Management must push the workers harder and harder (whereas/and) the workers want to preserve their physical and mental health.
 8. The workers will have to resist (therefore/if) they wish to preserve their health.
 9. The workers resist by slowing down the line (so that/although) they have time to chat or take a break.
 10. Management have to push and workers have to resist (but/because) management and workers have different and opposing interests.
 11. The workers' main weapon is to withdraw their labour power (so/although) they sometimes go on strike.
 12. The workers sometimes go on strike (unless/because) the management listens to their complaints.
- B.
1. The workers spend their whole lives making cars (unless/but) they have no interest in the cars they make.
 2. They have no interest in the cars they make (because/therefore) they have no choice about how or what they produce.
 3. The manager has no interest in the cars made by his factory (although/therefore) his sole concern is to make more cars.
 4. (Although/Because) both manager and workers work all day in a car factory neither of them has any interest in the cars that are produced.
 5. (Although/If) it makes no difference whether the factory makes cars or toy guns it can be said that the main product of the factory is profit.
 6. The manager must force the workers to work as fast or faster than possible (so that/because) he can increase company profit.
 7. The manager must pay his workers as little as possible (so that/because) he can increase company profit.
 8. If the manager is to increase the rate of profit he must (also/either) pay his workers less (or/rather than) make them work faster, or both.

9. The conflict between workers and management can never be resolved (although/because) management and workers have different and opposing interests.
10. Production must necessarily come before people (although/if) the main product of the factory is profit.

This exercise, which two friends of mine adapted from an article in Studs Terkel's Working, facilitates integration in several ways. Before commenting on these, let me give a brief account of how the exercise was done. Students were divided into groups of two or three and asked to decide on one of the two connectors in brackets for each sentence. They were then asked to choose two sentences on which there was disagreement about the choice of connector (e.g. sentences 6 and 12). Individual pupils were then asked to defend their point of view by constructing a logically connected paragraph starting with the sentence containing their choice of connector. Back in their groups, the students read their paragraphs to each other and discussed their logicity.

This exercise obviously brought a number of skills into play: the ability to engage in rational debate; the ability to write a logical sequence of sentences in a coherent paragraph; the ability to read in order to make one's meaning clear; the ability to understand the dynamics of class struggle; and the ability to identify logical connectors. In addition to integrating a variety of skills, the exercise provided a conceptual framework by which to note the difference between collective and individualistic approaches to the problem of poverty. In this respect it may have exposed the ideological limitations of Steinbeck in The Pearl and Dickens and Hackett in A Christmas Carol (one of the prescribed plays).

In teaching the skills of note-making and summary I also looked for material that would focus on issues that related to the general theme. Here, for example, is an exercise based on a speech by Julius Nyerere:

PRESIDENT NYERERE'S ARGUMENT

The educational system of Tanzania was inherited from the colonial period and is based on the traditional English school model. This present education system is not suited to the needs of Tanzania.

The first reason is that the present system is an elitist system designed to meet the interests and needs of a very small proportion of those who enter school. The basis of our school education is the preparation of pupils for secondary schools but only 13% of primary school children enter secondary school - while the other 87% finish primary school with a sense of failure because there is no space for them to continue. The same process operates when university entrance is the question at issue. Education at the moment is designed for those who are intellectually stronger than their fellows; it induces a feeling of superiority in those who succeed and a feeling of inferiority in the majority. This cannot help build an egalitarian society - on the contrary it encourages the growth of class structure in our country.

Equally important is the second reason - that Tanzanian education separates students from the society it is supposed to be preparing them for. The school is always separate, it is not part of the society and from the age of seven children spend 7½ hours of the day there. Parents hope education will make it unnecessary for children to become farmers and continue living in the villages. Those who go to secondary school and university live away from both town and country in the school and university compound. The university graduates expect high salaries and a life of comfort in the towns.

The third reason is that our present system encourages school pupils in the idea that all knowledge that is worthwhile is acquired from books or 'educated people'. The knowledge and wisdom of other old people is despised and they themselves regarded as being ignorant and of no account. Everything we do stresses book learning and underestimates the value to our society of traditional knowledge and the wisdom which is often acquired by intelligent men and women as they experience life, even without being able to read at all. This does not mean any person can do any job simply because he is old and wise, nor that educational qualifications are not necessary. A man is not necessarily wise because he is old. It is as much a mistake to overvalue book learning as it is to undervalue it.

Finally, and in some ways most importantly, our young and poor nation is taking away from productive work some of its healthiest and strongest young men and women. Not only do they fail to contribute to that increase in productivity which is so urgent for our nation; they themselves consume the output of the older and often weaker people. The students do not learn as they work; they simply learn. What is more, they take it for granted this should be so. Even during holidays neither they nor the community expect them to spend their time on hard physical labour or jobs which are uncomfortable and unpleasant.

Because this system of education is unsuited to a young, poor country trying to build an egalitarian socialist society dedicated to the improvement of the majority of its people the system must be changed. We must develop a system of education that serves Tanzania's needs and those of her people.

(Source unavailable)

1. Skim read the whole passage for about TWO minutes to discover what Nyerere's argument is about.
2. Re-read the whole passage carefully and then UNDERLINE THE MAIN IDEA IN EACH PARAGRAPH.
3. Compare and discuss your choices with someone else.
4. Now write down ONE key word or phrase that can act as a reminder of the main idea in each paragraph.
5. Using your key words as guidelines write ONE or TWO sentences that summarise Nyerere's overall argument.
N.B. Try not to consult the passage while doing your summary.
6. In groups of four or five read your summaries to one another and discuss
 - (a) whether they are short enough
 - (b) whether any important points have been left out
 - (c) whether the sentences in each summary flow logically into each other and form a coherent whole.

That these exercises, seen in relation to the course as a whole, made an impact on pupils can perhaps be shown by the following poems which students wrote as part of their poetry projects. I shall discuss the poetry project in more detail shortly. Here I merely wish to point out that students chose the subject matter for their poems within the requirements of the given topic (e.g. 'Rich

Man, Poor Man'). Here are three of the students' poems which seem to have been influenced by the aforementioned exercises ('logical connectors' and 'note-making'):

STRIKE

The family's food is low
 And little Isaac has a bloated stomach.
 Sara, my wife, she can't work.
 We have children, you know.
 Look at us!
 We, the poorest group,
 Have to pay for our children's books.

So, my friends,
 We must hold our fists up high, higher,
 And not bow down low
 Like a slave to the master's boot.
 Don't kiss it.
 Spit! I tell you spit.
 And when you're for the beating,
 Don't say spit and polish
 Good for the shoes, boss.
 For that man is our weak link.
 Hold your link,
 Stand together,
 And maybe one day
 We will achieve our aims.

Laura Fraser

THE FACTORY

The workers are rushing up and down,
 Machine parts turning round and round.
 The bosses shout, "Faster, faster!"
 The workers say, "Okay, master."

The workers make the machines work faster,
 Machine parts getting hotter, hotter.
 The bosses shout, "Still faster, faster!"
 The workers say, "Okay, master."

Now machine parts are grinding, fuming,
 And now they stop turning, turning,
 The bosses shout, "What's wrong, what's wrong?!"
 The workers say, "The machine is burning."

Brent Krause

THE SCALE

Waiting,
 Waiting for a change,
 Something to turn the tables.
 The scale is going to tip.

The houses in Bishop's Court,
 The houses in Crossroads,
 1st class train,
 3rd class train,
 The scale is going to tip.

Education for the 'masses'
 Is not fair.
 Education for the minority
 Is not fair.
 The scale is going to tip.

Bubblings and uprisings
 Oppressed by the mighty power
 Of the scared rulers -
 The scale is going to tip.

The pound weights will be removed,
 Replaced and exchanged.
 There will be confusion
 But the tables will be turned
 And the scale will have EQUILIBRIUM.

Dinah Arnott

THE POETRY ANTHOLOGY

The anthologies from which these poems have been taken were begun early in the first term. At regular intervals students were asked to bring their project work to school so that I could give them editorial advice on their poems. In addition to encouraging revision of drafts, I also put a wide range of poetry books in the class library, including work by South African poets such as Perseus Adams, Pascal Gwala, Mongane Serote, Chris Van Wyk, Siphon Sepamla, Douglas Livingstone, Guy Butler, Essop Patel, Roy Campbell and Sydney Clouts. I told pupils that work done in other poetry-writing assignments could, if relevant, be included in the anthology.

'WRITTEN COMMUNICATION'

In devising assignments for 'creative' and other writing I had several objectives. Firstly, I hoped to give students the opportunity to integrate various elements of the course at a fairly conscious level. Here, for example, is a composition assignment I set in the first term:

COMPOSITION ASSIGNMENT

DUE DATE: 19 FEBRUARY 1982

Write a composition of 350-400 words on ONE of the following:

1. Re-read Blake's 'Chimney Sweeper' poems.
Interview a young newspaper-seller about his life and work.
Write a composition from his point of view.
2. As Christ predicted, the souls of three millionaires have failed to pass through the eye of a needle and they are on their way to hell.
Write a composition about their journey in which they try to outdo each other in describing the excesses of their selfish, materialistic life-styles.
3. A proud but desperately poor and out-of-work person begs for the first time at the door of a home in a rich suburb. Many years later this person remembers the incident.
Tell the story from this person's point of view.
4. 'He listened to their grief and joy / And turned them into songs.'
If a person like Victor Jara lived in South Africa, what would his songs be about?
Write a composition in which you describe some of the ways in which a South African Victor Jara would find things to sing about.
5. Using the skill of visualisation, write a description of District Six as it is now in comparison with what it once was.
Visit the place and do some research before attempting this composition.
6. Describe the death of Victor Jara as you imagine it to have happened. Try to portray his gentleness and courage in your composition.
7. Write a composition called 'The Song of the Family'.
Write about a family you know, or an imaginary family living in a wealthy suburb, or a poor family separated by the laws regarding migrant labour in South Africa.

NOTE: If possible use photographs (preferably your own) or drawings to illustrate your composition.

Most of the connections being made in these topics should be fairly obvious. The second topic refers to a set of lessons on the comic treatment of the general theme, in which I played the students a recording of Monty Python's 'Four Yorkshiremen', in which the aforesaid gentlemen indulge in competitive and extravagant fantasies about the depths of poverty they have experienced. I thought it important for students to realise that the seriousness of the general theme did not preclude wit and humour.

My second objective regarding assignments in written communication was to assess whether the interest generated by the thematic approach would lead students to write with greater insight and vividness when they were not focusing on the theme under the guidance of explicitly relevant topics. I also hoped that this would enable students to integrate insights derived from the course into their own perceptions of things that captured their imaginations. Here, for example, is an assignment I set in the second term:

CREATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT: FREE VERSE with illustration

DUE DATE: Monday 26 April

Your main task in this assignment is to write TWO free verse poems (15 or more lines each). The poems must be written on a sheet of drawing paper (one poem on each side). In addition to the poems you must provide visual illustrations that are clearly related in meaning to the poems. Your illustrations may be sketches, photographs, watercolours or whatever you consider suitable.

An essential aspect of this assignment is that you must choose ONE of the titles listed below and Write TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT poems. For example, using the title Crown of Creation you could write a love poem and a poem about a nuclear explosion. Another example: Using the title Quiet Places, you could write a poem about the places where you find peace and quiet, and a poem in which you describe places where silence is desolate or evil.

Note: The titles below are all names of songs or record albums.

LIST OF TITLES:

The Road Goes On Forever
Death Walks Behind You
Gone to Earth

Endless Summer
Don't Look Back
Running on Empty

The Kick Inside
 What I was Arrested For
 What Colour is Love?
 Armed Forces
 Free Fall
 Blood on the Tracks
 Black and White
 The Gilded Palace of Sin
 Pieces of the Sky
 Crash Landing
 Distant Light
 Totally Out of Control
 All Mod Cons
 Crown of Creation
 I Am Your Flag
 The Stranger
 King Harvest
 Time Loves a Hero
 The Turning Point

The Hissing of Summer Lawns
 Police and Thieves
 Smile
 Tears of a Clown
 Road to Ruin
 Power in the Darkness
 Stranded
 Quiet Places
 Darkness at the Edge of Town
 Long May You Run
 Heart of Saturday Night
 Children of the Rainbow
 Too Much Pressure
 Accidents Will Happen
 Bed of Coals
 Coming in from the Cold
 Bloody Hands
 Fear of Music

I hoped that these evocative titles, and the promptings of pictorial image-making and lateral thinking, would mobilize unconscious integrative capacities. Several of the poems produced did have the desired results. Here, for example, is an imagist poem that William Carlos Williams (at the age of fourteen) might have envied:

BLOODY HANDS

There he was,
 Standing on the doorstep,
 His hands covered in blood
 And a knife in his right hand.
 I slammed the door
 And called the police.
 Then I looked out of the window
 And saw him staring at the knife.
 A police car came
 But this did not seem to bother him.
 He just sat there,
 Staring wide-eyed at his bloody hands.

Rolf Walther

Later in the year I devised a work unit on superheroes. This included a screening and discussion of Saul Bass's film Notes on the Popular Arts and a general sharing of views on comic book heroes. Two important points to emerge from the discussion were the emphasis on individualistic rather than collective heroism and the unreality of superheroes' achievements. I mentioned a Mad Magazine

parody in which Superman rescued a girl tied to a railway line while stopping a train with an upraised arm, thereby causing a major train accident, with broken carriages and bodies strewn about the landscape. After the discussion I suggested that students attempt their own parodies of superheroes and their exploits. Here are two of the most pleasing results of this work unit:

SOOPERMAN "NO. 1 ZERO"

"Look! up in the sk- ... I mean look down on the ground ...!"

"It's a nerd!"

"It's a rock."

"No, it's Sooperman. He's crashed again!"

"Let them laugh," Sooperman thought. "They don't know how hard it is to fly from a skyscraper without falling."

Sooperman walked past a news-stand and read the headlines: WAR IN MIDDLE EAST, NUCLEAR THREAT, etc. As he yawned, Sooperman thought, "Nothing for me to do. No superfoe, no alien, nothing. I wish there was something I could do to help mankind."

Sooperman found a telephone booth and began to change back into Stark Bent, a mild-mannered dustbin man.

Suddenly the phone began to ring and Sooperman answered it.

"Hello."

"Is that you, Sooperman?"

"Yep."

"Well, it's Chief Inspector Smith here. Somebody started something in Washington. I believe it concerns you.

Sooperman, you're under arrest."

"What? How"

"Tax evasion. Do you know you haven't paid any taxes in the last fifteen years? Well, somebody worked it out. You owe the government the sum of 15 million dollars."

"How can I pay that?" shouted Sooperman.

"Either pay or get locked up."

Sooperman slammed the phone down. He certainly was not going to pay any taxes after all that he had done for the USA.

"I'll show them," he thought. "I'll defect to Russia."

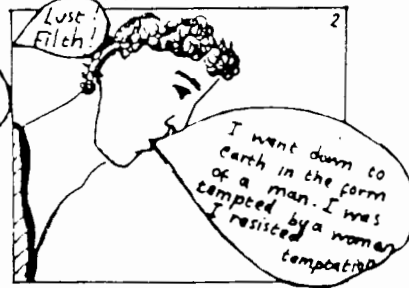
As he started to fly towards Russia, he suddenly became aware that there were not going to be any more superheroes. He then turned and left earth and headed towards space, leaving the mushroom behind him growing bigger and bigger.

Mark Slaughter

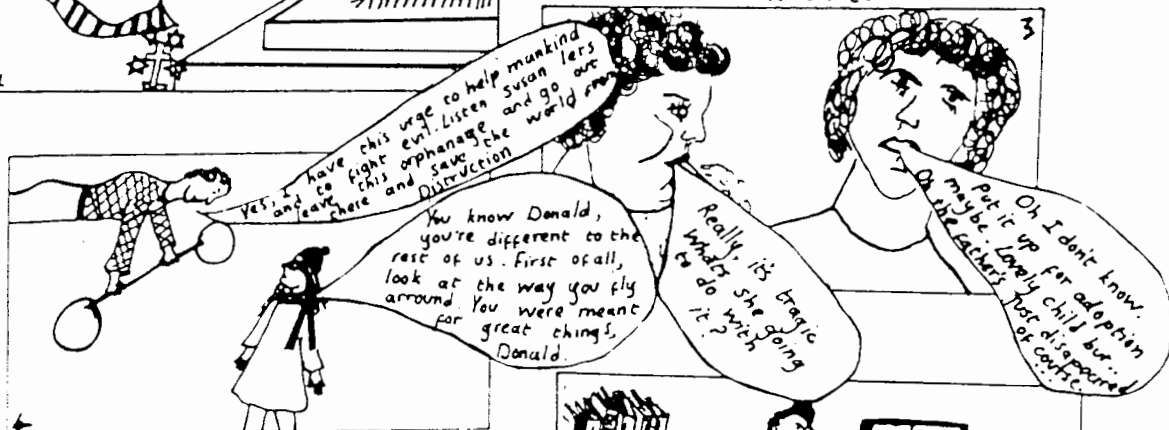
Angel Man

By Clementine Mudie
Scdy

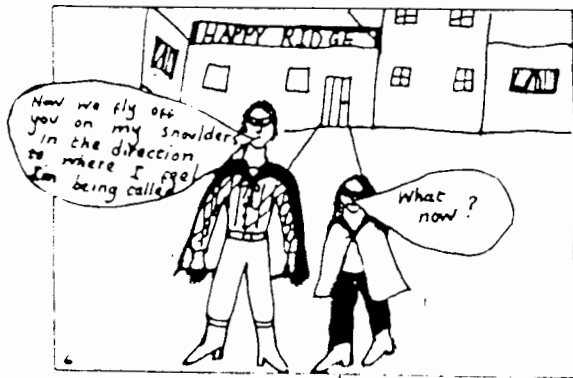
HEAVEN



Mean-while back on earth

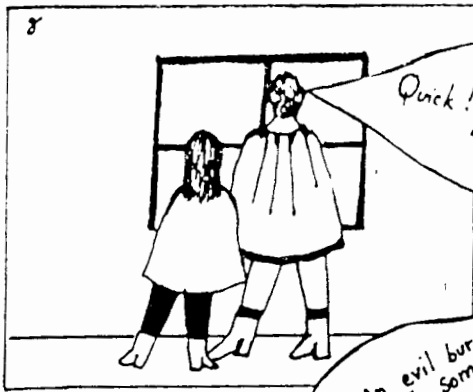


Sixteen years later at Happy Ridge Orphanage



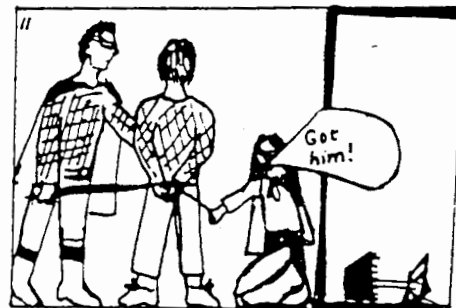
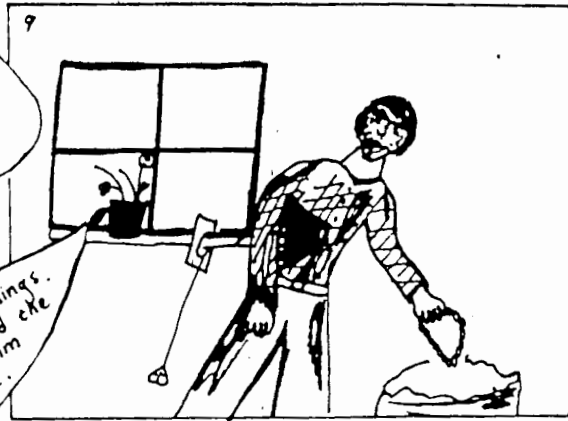
Two days later at the dead of night.





Quick! Duck!

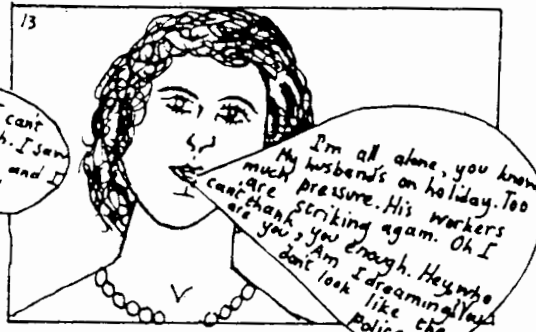
An evil burglar stealing someone's things. Quick, let's go round the frame and get him out as he comes out.



The thief is easily caught and tied up.



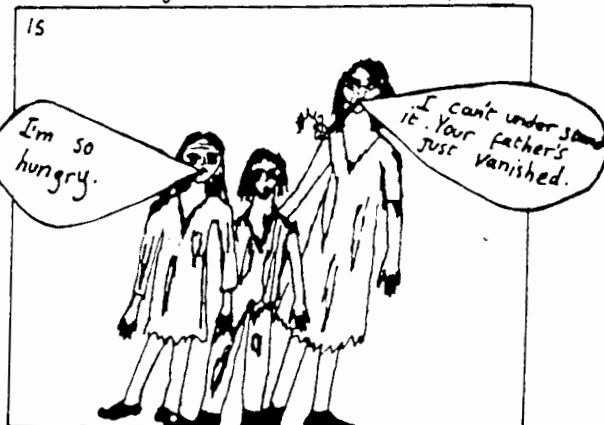
The grateful house owner comes out.



The Brave two grab the thief and fly off.



They drop him at the police station.



OFF TO HELP OTHERS IN NEED...

'Angel Man' in particular evinces a remarkably imaginative and subtle grasp of the issues we had discussed, as well as integrating ideas developed in 'the assembly line' exercise. It also seems to be poking gentle fun at the 'supernatural' solutions to the problem of poverty in A Christmas Carol and Michael, two of the prescribed plays. After the completion of this work unit I was fortunate in being able to take some of the students to a performance of Neil McCarthy's Superheroes at the Glass Theatre. To consolidate matters even further, one of the roadshow productions which the People's Space brought to the school related the theme of superheroes to the problem of gang violence amongst young people living on the Cape Flats.

I think that students benefited from a sense that their own interests were connected with those of professional writers and actors dealing with contemporary South African issues. I attempted to promote such links with the 'outside' world in other ways, as when, on the completion of a work unit on the relationship between profit-seeking, scientific research and cruelty to animals I asked students to write letters to organisations such as the South African Society Against Painful Experiments on Animals, Beauty Without Cruelty and companies which made or sold products that entailed cruelty to animals. Students were clearly stirred by receiving replies to their letters, and this direct contact with the world of scientific exploitation, irresponsibility and insensitivity must have made a deep impression on many of the students. Here, for example, is a piece produced after a colleague had suggested that we get students to experiment with a new genre called the mini-saga (a story about fifty words long):

ERASERHEAD RULES, O.K.?

A scientist saw a planet he disliked and wondered how to get rid of it.

Then he had a brainwave. He put two self-perpetuating beings he'd invented on it and programmed them to destroy it unconsciously.

They were rewarded when they did and got better and better at it.

His plan worked. One day the planet went boom and was gone for evermore.

Clementine Mudie

'ORAL COMMUNICATION'

I shall return to a consideration of the students' need for an audience when I discuss the role of the school newspaper and magazine in publicising students' writing. What I want to consider now, however, is the relationship between speakers and audience in oral work. There are, as I see it, at least two major problems. Firstly, the power of the teacher as professional adjudicator of pupils' oral performance tends to make students talk to the teacher instead of each other. This is a persistent problem which has been partly solved by arranging the desks in a semi-circle so that students face each other when they speak and by getting the students involved in small group discussions. I am still left with the impression, however, that students find it very difficult to talk openly and directly to each other when the whole class is discussing an issue. I suspect that this problem will not be solved until there is a radical shift from 'collection codes' to 'integrated codes' in what Bernstein calls 'the classification and framing of educational knowledge'.

A second major problem relates to the traditional English teachers' approach to 'doing an oral' individually or in groups. In addition to being a major cause of students' anxiety about talking to one another and to the teacher, this has often led to a fragmented sequencing of knowledge in the classroom, with individuals and groups hopping at random from one topic to another in the manner of TV or radio programming. What I tried to ensure with the Standard Seven class in 1982 was that all discussion

would be experienced as connected with the general theme. In addition to the informal discussion which formed the major part of oral communication in the course, I also gave students the opportunity to do prepared orals that related to the general theme. Here, for example, is an assignment I set in the first term:

ORAL ASSIGNMENT

DUE DATE: 15 MARCH 1982

PROCEDURE:

1. Divide yourselves into groups of 3 or 4.
2. Choose ONE of the topics listed below.
3. Tell your teacher which topic your group has chosen. (Topics will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis.)
4. Research your subject. This may involve going to libraries, conducting interviews and asking your teacher for guidance.
5. As a group, discuss interesting and imaginative ways of presenting your material to the class in a programme of about 15 minutes.
6. Organise your material into a smoothly functioning whole, so that one item flows logically into the next.
7. Each member of the group must do some reading and speaking.
8. Your programme may include any of the following:
 - performance of scripted drama
 - improvised drama
 - reading of poems or prose
 - tape-recorded interviews
 - simulated interviews
 - short informative speeches
 - recorded music or sound effects
 - costumes and props
 - pictures (take care that these do not become a distraction)
 - any item justified by the topic
9. Present your programme efficiently and enthusiastically. You should feel that you are offering something worthwhile to your audience.

TOPICS

1. Poverty, Crime and Violence in the Cape Peninsula.
2. Rich and Poor in the life and work of Charlie Chaplin.
3. Rich and poor in the story of reggae music.
4. Working conditions of the rich and poor in Cape Town.
5. What is consumerism and why do so many people say such nasty things about it?

6. 'Those people! They're just no good; they live off the hard-working people; they don't care about their families; they're drunk; they're always causing trouble - they're getting away with murder ...'
7. 'Ours is a good community for those who are willing to work hard and make good use of their God-given talents ...'
8. Christian approaches to the problem of poverty.
9. Punk rock and the poor in Britain and South Africa.
10. 'Crisis? What crisis?'
11. The Third World.
12. Rich and Poor in the world of advertising.
13. Utopia?
14. Poverty and Health.
15. Poverty and Education.
16. Living conditions of the rich and poor in the Cape Peninsula.
17. Rich and Poor in the world of Dallas.

Although there were clear thematic links between this kind of work and the prescribed drama, I did not feel that I had achieved a successful integration of dramatic skills developed in the two areas. One of the reasons for this was the fact that the class had a specialist drama teacher coming in once a week to teach them. Since the class's relationship with this teacher was not a happy one, I felt reluctant to intervene because this could easily have been counterproductive for everyone concerned. Instead I used the prescribed drama to develop skills in reading aloud, and to integrate writing and comprehension skills. Here is one of the worksheets I set on one of the prescribed plays:

SUNBURSTS

WORKSHEET 1: A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens (adapted by Walter Hackett)

1. (a) How should the audience feel about Scrooge in the opening scene? (pp. 3-6, prior to the arrival of Marley's ghost.)
(b) What does Scrooge do to provoke this reaction in the audience?
2. (a) How does Marley's ghost account for its arrival?
(b) Show how this explanation is a warning to Scrooge.

(c) Is the arrival of the other three ghosts consistent with Marley's explanation? Give a reason for your answer.

3. 'I will not shut out the lesson that all three spirits have taught me.'
Write an essay in which you explain fully what Scrooge is taught by each of the three spirits.

4. Do you find Scrooge's change of heart convincing? Comment briefly.

5. MARLEY

Business! Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance and benevolence were all my business. But I heeded none of these. Instead, I thought only of money.

To what extent does Marley's comment help us to understand why there is poverty in the world? Does it tell us a lot or very little?

Consider whether the greed and stinginess of some businessmen is the main cause of poverty.

Why, in your opinion, has charity failed to eliminate poverty?

6. (a) What, according to this play, is the spirit of Christmas? Answer in your own words (i.e. do not merely quote).
(b) Do you agree? If you disagree, try to justify your answer.

Despite the lively and productive discussions that such worksheets generated, I was left with the feeling that the students had dramaturgical talents that I had not developed sufficiently. I felt this despite the fact that the prepared oral presentations were of an exceptionally high standard. I am convinced that if we had had time to script and produce a play based on themes we were exploring on the course, something wonderful would have emerged. I am equally convinced that students will benefit when emphasis shifts from the literary study of plays (with the examination in view) to the writing and production of plays. This I believe will lead to more genuinely collective activity and a greater sense of working for a real audience beyond the confines of the classroom. Although the new syllabus does encourage the scripting of plays, I think it is unrealistic to expect

very much while the examinations based on prescribed texts persist.

THE PROBLEM OF 'AUDIENCE'

I don't want to dismiss the value of the classroom as a venue for the sharing of responses to students' work. I have seen pupils responding positively to writing and pictures pasted on classroom walls and to the reading of their classmates' poems and other compositions. However, if the social importance of pupils' work is to be taken more seriously, the reaching of a wider audience seems imperative.

It was with this in mind that I decided to make the work I did with the Standard Seven class in 1982 a focal point of the school magazine in that year. Regrettably, the school newspaper was not a thriving concern in that year so that a dynamic interchange of ideas between classes was not available to the school as a whole. It is, however, encouraging to note that members of that Standard Seven class have done much to revive the school newspaper in 1984.

My magazine editorial in 1982 urged a redefinition of the WESSA school community and an ongoing critical evaluation of the curriculum as a whole:

1982's Capetonian continues, with a few minor changes, the editorial policy pursued with considerable distinction by Anton Boonzaier, whose formidable efficiency set daunting standards for his successors. Apart from the difficulty of emulating Mr Boonzaier, there are certain aspects of his policy which need to be reconsidered.

It is questionable, for example, whether the lack of pupils' involvement in the editorial process is desirable. There is evidence that pupils would welcome greater involvement, but as in some other still-born ventures, initial enthusiasm is accompanied by an unwillingness to take hold of the reins. There are several possible reasons for this lack of confidence or interest in carrying through an initial commitment. One may be that

pupils do not believe that they will really be able to do anything their way, and this makes them wait hesitantly and half-heartedly for orders. Another equally disturbing possibility is that pupils have been taught by the overt and hidden curricula to be unimaginative and unenterprising. It is also possible that pupils are not given the kind of inspired guidance that would lead them into the realms of creative, committed activity. One hopes that greater pupil involvement will be forthcoming because the task of editing a school magazine has great educational potential.

This edition also adhered to a more deeply rooted tradition in the editing of school magazines. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this tradition is that, in spite of providing a comprehensive survey of school activities, there is little or no reflection on what is being striven for and achieved in the classroom. A school magazine has the potential to provide a composite picture of our severely fragmented academic life and to assess its value in meeting the real needs of the school community and the society it is meant to serve. Events in 1976 and 1980 have emphasized the need for such critical awareness. This year we have made a very tentative beginning with the writing of a few subject reports. In future these reports probably need to be the end-product of an open and ongoing debate in the school.

It should perhaps be emphasized that a compartmentalized school magazine format reveals aspects of the fragmentary nature of the school itself. This does not mean, of course, that there is no shared experience in the school, or that pupils and teachers never see and make the links that do or can bind people together. This magazine would not exist were it not for the co-operation of many people, and they must be sincerely thanked for their endeavours. In particular, the creative contributions of pupils to this magazine makes it clear that not everyone lives in a cocoon of complacency and self-absorption. However, in our grievously divided society, many more connections still need to be made.

The Chilean songwriter Victor Jara once said that he sang 'for those who labour so that the future may flower'.

May our eyes be lit by blossoms at the end of 1983.

In accordance with the ideas expressed in this editorial I worked with a photographer in Standard Nine and produced the following visual and verbal statement to introduce the section on the arts and give additional force to the pupils' statements:

BEYOND THESE WALLS

PUPILS' PERSPECTIVES IN THE ARTS



Photos: Jeffrey Levine

In addition to those students' works I have already cited I include some of their visions of the state of the nation and its history:

THE IGNORANT PEOPLE

People are living in a city enclosed by walls.
 They do not know any life beyond their own.
 They are totally ignorant
 Of everything and everybody
 Outside these walls.
 Their life here in the city seems one of joy,
 But for you and I who know better
 It is a misery.
 We try to tell people
 That there is a better life outside the wall.
 But it is of no concern to them.
 For telling the people of this better life
 We will forfeit our lives
 And just maybe these people will awake
 And find the better, happier life,
 Sometime.

David Abrahamse

THE EXTINCT PEOPLE

The copper rays run over the grass,
 A copper sun wrought of the
 Only metal they knew.
 Huts form a semi-circle of satisfaction,
 Smoke wanders around
 Going only where it chooses
 And resting there.
 It is early morning
 And the peaceful atmosphere
 Suffocates you quietly.
 In the museum
 The people are kept in glass cages
 And the electric lights interrogate them.
 Cardboard signs point at them.

Caitlin Lewis

FUTURE (SHOCK)

The mines rumble with an African noise
 Africa sweats and the rockface weeps
 The earth writhes and the skyscrapers
 Are sucked into a sinkhole
 The Prime Minister's tie
 Begins to strangle him
 So he goes to talk
 To the Defence Minister
 About mushroom growing

Caitlin Lewis

SOUTH AFRICA

A beautiful veil covers her face -
Thin and vulnerable.
Her lover sees only the veil
and falls blindly into her trap.

Who will dare to pierce the mask
To see what is underneath?
What is she hiding?

An explorer raised the veil:
A scabbed face met his view,
Thin and pimpled.
Her nose was crooked
And her lips were thin and cruel.

But when she looked at herself in the mirror
She saw past the scabs
And looked into her eyes -
Deep and beautiful ... and sad?

Dinah Arnott

As I have already mentioned, it was the encouragingly positive response to the pupils' work that made me feel that the thematic experiment had been worthwhile. This response, together with my own conviction that the pupils had produced work of unusual quality, augmented my faith in the English classroom as a vital if minor 'site of struggle' in the move towards social justice in South Africa.

CONCLUSIONS

I would like to end this chapter by drawing some conclusions about my experiment with an integrated work-scheme in relation to the aims and requirements of the new syllabus. Firstly, I think some comment is necessary on the relationship between personal and social development. The Guide suggests that

Pupils must be assisted and guided in their writing to move outwards, towards extending their knowledge of the world and other human beings, and inwards into a deeper understanding of themselves. The teacher needs to provide a wide variety and spectrum of stimuli, situations

and audiences which generate the urge to communicate. These should as far as possible be found in the pupils' personal experience and needs, and should also be drawn from the rest of the Syllabus and the total curriculum.

As I see it this is a recipe for cultural isolation within the confines of the Group Areas Act because it fails to relate the 'personal experience and needs' of WESSA school students to their position as members of an outrageously privileged ruling class or caste. What are the 'needs' of WESSA pupils in relation to the needs of starving people in resettlement camps? As in the case of the syllabus I discussed in Chapter 5, the liberal humanist conception of the WESSA pupil throws a number of important political issues out of focus. Judging by the work my Standard Seven pupils produced, the development of a sociological imagination need not make pupils insensitive to their more immediate experiences. I feel that the following poems evince a vivid perception of less obviously political matters:

THE BUBBLE

A wispy glistening globe
 Of coloured lights
 A sphere without blemish
 On its form
 Dreamily you drift
 Before my eyes
 On a silent journey
 Through eternal space
 A floating sleeper
 Crystal planet
 A tranquil ball of light
 Your splashing colours
 Soon will mix
 And sides meet sides
 And then you'll fall
 A drop of liquid
 To the earth

Clementine Mudie

AFTER SCHOOL

In the café at the corner
 There's a corner at the back,
 Dark and dingy,
 Filled with grey smoke.
 Piles of empty cartons lie around.
 After school we go there.
 It's a sort of meeting place.
 Two machines, 'both alike in dignity',
 Stand jammed against the wall.
 One is Puckman, which never ever works,
 And for the more adventurous
 There's Asteroids on the right.
 The fat Italian at the counter
 Changes Rands to twenties.
 Bad tempered and mean is he
 But he belongs.
 He simply adds more flavour
 To the seedy dark café.

All the heavies meet
 In that smelly blackened corner.
 They go there when the hooter rings
 And stay for simply ages,
 Knocking one's arm
 And messing up one's games,
 Then saying you're good,
 Then saying you're bad
 And laughing when you lose your man.

Never, if you suffer from claustrophobia,
 Go near that darkened corner at the back.
 The regulars, of course, are there,
 And many others too,
 And as you play they creep right up,
 Breathing down your neck.

The café's terrible,
 The owner's terrible,
 The machines never work
 And yet, somehow,
 The café's evil, blackened vibes
 Attract me like a moth to the light.

Clementine Mudie

THE LIE

The teacher knew he was lying.
 The boy stood before the cane.
 Why doesn't he tell the truth?
 Lying, as they say, only makes it worse.

Who is to be blamed for the lies,
 The boy or the way he was brought up?
 Or was it the fear of punishment?

The teacher never tried to find out -
Just caned him and sent him out.

Mark Slaughter

ON THE BEACH

He puts his arm around her.
They kiss for the first time.
For an hour they go on kissing.
They look into each other's eyes,
Sparkling with love.

Now he doesn't put his arm around her.
They kiss, but only once.
The novelty is wearing off.
They evade each other's eyes.

Now there is no-one on the beach,
No-one to kiss,
No-one to love,
No-one whose eyes she can look into.

They come back again,
He with another girl,
She with another boy.
They kiss for an hour,
And look into each other's eyes.

Rolf Walther

FREEDOM

When I dance my thoughts are free.
I hear and feel the music
And I move to it.
I let myself go.
I don't care what others think.
They frown, is that really her?
I don't care - I'm free.
I don't have a care in the world.
I don't care if people think
I dance funnily.
I don't care if people think
I look funny.
Who are they to judge me?
Can't I be myself sometimes,
Or does EVERYONE have to be
Artificial in this plastic world!

Linda Davies

AN UNKNOWN SAD FEELING

Sometimes I sit
 Not knowing how or why
 I seem to feel so depressed,
 Not belonging on the world of reality
 But somewhere in my own.

People carry on their business.
 Passing by they look at me,
 Shake their heads
 And do not attempt to ask why.

I see them, but cannot comprehend.
 An invisible lid has covered my eyes.
 I try to convince myself
 Of not being lonely, unimportant or unwise
 But a wistful voice from behind nowhere
 Haunts me with these images.
 How can I feel
 So utterly miserable and sad?
 Do you know why? Do you too sometimes feel the same?
 It is a new-fangled part of growing up?
 Or is it just my silly imagination?
 I cannot, still, seem to find the answers.

Robyn Diggery

GRAHAM THE RETARDED BOY

He walks through town
 Innocently minding his own business.
 Then he hears a voice say,
 "Look at him, he's retarded,
 He looks kind of weird, hey, Jim."
 Then a cold feeling goes through his body
 But he can't do a thing
 Because he knows something's wrong about himself.
 So he walks away,
 Downhearted,
 Thinking people don't like him.

Paul Rauch

NO SLEEP

I can hear the trees moving
 The cat purring
 The dogs barking
 No wonder I can't go to sleep.

I can hear my dad in a rage
 Tearing up a page
 While my mother sits,
 Crying.

No wonder I can't get any sleep.

Haidee Antezana

In addition to being encouraged to write vividly about their own experience WESSA students, in my view, need to explore the kinds of empathy required to understand their place in the South African social formation. Once again the syllabus, in its appeal to the power of Literature, is misleading:

Literature can arouse pupils to question and re-define for themselves their assumptions, attitudes and values, open their hearts and minds to new ideas and sensations.

I regard it as absurd to assume that a purely literary appreciation of Tales of Mystery and Suspense, or any poems in the New Dragon Book of Verse, or any of the plays in Sunbursts could have led to these examples of empathy:

MY BOYS ARE OUT THERE

Tear gas everywhere!
 My eyes are clogged.
 I wish my heart was,
 For my boys are going to die.
 They are in the front line.
 All I can hear is the shooting and shouting.
 They have stones,
 Jimmy has a petrol bomb.
 Oh God, let it save them!
 Danny is a good runner.
 Maybe he'll dodge the bullets and run home.
 ...
 No.
 He's no coward.
 I brought him up that way.
 My pride brought him up that way,
 And He'll hang in there till the last man,
 Till he is the last man,
 And he'll go down fighting.
 By nightfall I'll know where they are.
 They have a choice:
 Home or heaven.

Laura Fraser

PROMISES

Shacks balance
 Like houses of cards
 On the sandy ground
 Uncertain, waiting for
 A push to fall over.
 Here children play
 Soccer in the dirt

And skinny goats nibble
 At stripped bushes.
 Here children will hear
 Politicians' hollow promises
 And grow up to make solid ones.

Caitlin Lewis

MY SON HAS FEVER IN THE SLUMS

The air is cold inside and outside our shack.
 The wind is blowing a moist breeze
 And my son has the fever.
 The medicine man is far away,
 The streets are dark and dangerous at this time
 And my son has the fever.
 His body is hot, the only heat in the home.
 His sweat smells like the gutters he plays in.

He'll never survive.
 His funeral shall be in slums.

Laura Fraser

TOWNSHIP BLUES

The township blues catch you
 A surge of laughter washes out of a shebeen

The eye of the streetlamp swivels
 To keep an eye on you

A bus crawls past in the distance
 A halo of neon light
 Stares out of the windows

The dark has stolen the corners
 And the gravel moans as you walk on it

Caitlin Lewis

Instead of intoning platitudes about 'Literature' and 'Life' we need whose literature and whose life is being considered by our literary critical practices and the kinds of writing they foster.

My impatience with the dead hand of the literary critical tradition was intensified when I observed the responses of my Standard Seven students to the mandatory Cook's Tour of literary critical terminology and the techniques of 'practical criticism'. Even when pupils mastered these at an intellectual level it was clear that

their hearts were not in it, and there was a vast discrepancy, in the poetry project, between the insights in the poems and the insights in the introduction and linking commentary. Interestingly, their critical insights in oral discussion were vastly superior to their written comments, probably because they were not having to apply an alien and abstract model of literary criticism. I for one would rejoice at the demise of 'prac. crit.' in our schools. According to my experience of English teaching this parasitic mode often sucks the life-blood out of children's imaginations. With reservations I agree with Maxine Greene (1971:255) that the 'reader's objective is not to analyse or explicate or evaluate; it is to extract the experience made manifest by means of the work'. What interests me is the creative, politicized response that can flow from this extraction, not the predictable 'critical comment'. Meanwhile, however, I shall have to continue working in the irksome shadows of Richards and Leavis.

The ubiquitous mania for evaluation that bedevils the English syllabus also creates many other problems which I have already discussed in Chapter 5. Here I wish to relate my experience of teaching Standard Seven in 1982 to certain unrealistic expectations in the Guide to the new syllabus, where we find the following advice:

As far as possible, teachers need to take an overall view of the developing language competence explicit in their pupils' written work: progress made from one writing assignment to the next should be carefully noted.

Certainly the intentions here are good, but while I see the value of constructive comment on pupils' work, I am unconvinced that one can apply some equivalent of a slide rule to pupils' writing. There are simply too many variables, including different levels of motivation at different times and the different demands of various kinds of writing. In fact, the syllabus expects teachers to cover such a broad spectrum of 'registers' that it is impossible to see how teachers will be able to trace development in any of

these. Instead of this functionalist conception of language across the curriculum and 'language across the occupations' I think there should be an attempt to determine a minimum of kinds of writing that are most readily transferable to diverse situations. Furthermore, as I have already argued, there is a need to explore ideology across the curriculum, and the new syllabus does not allow enough time for this.

However, despite the drawbacks of the syllabus, I do believe that the resourceful teacher can work with some aspects of a radical perspective within it. The main problem with mounting a counter-hegemonic pedagogy of the kind I have described in this chapter is that it makes very exacting demands on the teacher's time. There is an urgent need for course books containing the kind of material I used in 1982. Regrettably there is also a need for the funds that would make such books available to schools, because the C.E.D. is unlikely to give them the official stamp of approval. Clearly a carefully orchestrated campaign will have to be mounted if English teachers in WESSA schools are to move beyond the limitations of counter-hegemonic pedagogy. The possibility of mounting such a campaign will be my main concern in the next chapter.

Before doing so, however, I wish to stress that although I see the work plan devised and acted upon in this chapter as an experiment, I do not see the English classroom as a laboratory. Although I believe that this was one of the most productive episodes in my teaching career, I do not claim to have proved that my approach should be implemented by other teachers. As Reynolds and Skilbeck (1976:125) point out,

there can be no such thing as conclusive 'proof' that a curriculum innovation will be for 'the better', any more than there can be 'proof' that existing practice is for the best.

Meanwhile, half the world still goes hungry.

CHAPTER SIX: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED COUNTER-HEGEMONIC WORK-
SCHEME: A CASE STUDY

ENDNOTE:

1. As was the case in Chapter 5, this is quoted from a draft of the Guide and there is therefore no point in giving page numbers.

CHAPTER SEVEN : CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study I have tried to show that teaching English as a First Language in WESSA secondary schools is a profoundly political activity and that the syllabus I have discussed does not acknowledge or defend its own ideological assumptions. As a large section of the 'black' working class and I see it, all English teachers in South Africa are at a crossroads.¹ Taking one direction involves insisting that the acquisition of linguistic skills and cultural values through the study of English can be achieved without considering whether they perpetuate exploitative, oppressive and alienating social relations. Taking the other direction involves an awareness of how, in complex ways, the English syllabuses administered in WESSA secondary schools, rooted in the bourgeois ideology of liberal humanism promote the ideology of a ruling class that has institutionalised racism within the framework of a capitalist, post-colonial and patriarchal social formation. The latter option also recognises that 'English' can play a vital role in enabling South Africans to understand and respond creatively to the political, economic and educational crises that are continually racking the nation. It should be obvious by now that I have chosen the latter alternative and that I hope to encourage other English teachers to give it serious consideration.

The ground for such consideration has already been well prepared by the studies in the political economy of education that have burgeoned in recent years. With the publication of Peter Kallaway's Apartheid and Education (1984), there is a good chance that the relevance of such

studies to educational development in South Africa will be widely recognised. There is also the likelihood that Marxist and feminist analyses of the South African political economy of education will be extended into studies of curricula. At present, however, apart from J.M. du Preez's Africana Afrikaner: Master Symbols in South African School textbooks (1983), studies of ideological factors in the WESSA curriculum have received very little publicity, and there is, to my knowledge, no sustained attempt to explore the ideological dimensions of a WESSA school subject. I have written this study under the assumption (possibly mistaken) that it is the first of its kind, and this has meant that I have worked with an often painful sense of isolation. As I indicated in the introductory chapter, I would have much preferred to have tackled this task through working with other teachers in a form of participatory or action research. One of my hopes is that such research will flow from my 'reconnaissance of underexplored terrain' (Molteno: 1984:102).

It should be clear that this reconnaissance is not intended to inspire 'progressive' English teachers with incontrovertible proof that the WESSA English syllabus strengthens the hand of the ruling class in its vicious exploitation and oppression of the 'black' working class and that it leaves WESSA school students gravely ignorant about their place in an iniquitous economic and political system. I don't apologise for this lack of 'proof' because mountains of research work bedecked with elegant 'proofs' have had no discernible effects on an English syllabus that has remained essentially unchanged for over sixty years. I don't believe in change for change's sake but I am skeptical about the capacity of the traditional English syllabus to meet the needs of a crisis-ridden social formation. This has led me to consider what theories, or combination of theories, are likely to promote the changes that are so sorely needed, both in curriculum development and in the South African social formation as a whole.

Reynolds and Skilbeck (1976:38) have identified at least three kinds of theory in curriculum development. Firstly, and probably still foremost in status, are positivist theories, 'modelled on those of the physical sciences, assuming that social or curriculum phenomena have constant meanings and can be predicted or controlled'. Secondly, there are 'interpretative theories, such as symbolic interactionism, in which the aim is simply to understand what is going on'. And thirdly, there are 'critical theories, in which the aim is to enable people not only to understand their situation but to understand its underlying social structures and power relations so as to influence them'.

Clearly the present study falls into the third of these categories, since I have tried to relate my own 'situation' as a teacher of English in a WESSA school to the social formation or process in which it exists. As I tried to show in the introductory chapter, it was not simply 'theory' that led me to question the relationship between my 'situation' and the intensifying national and global crises, but a complex set of historical and social factors brought together in the crucible of my own experience. It is my awareness of this kind of process that makes me realise the limitations of this study, which will be incorporated in a variety of ways into the individualistic consciousness of WESSA teachers. I nevertheless hope that some seeds will take root, and that teachers and students of English will take up the challenge with imaginative, practical visions extending beyond those represented in this study and leading to productive, collective efforts.

For the purposes of this conclusion I shall try to confine myself to what seem to be the most crucial aspects of the syllabus that require reappraisal by teachers of English and to those short-term strategies that seem most practicable. Although this is not the place to survey the growing literature on the global need for eco-socialism, I do want to stress that books in this field are essential reading for those English teachers who

believe that personal and linguistic development cannot be considered apart from ecological, economic, political and cultural considerations. Nor can South African teachers of English afford to ignore the growing debate on 'the national question' and the ideological role of English in the transformation of the South African social formation. Here again I do not want to oversimplify matters by giving a potted summary of contending viewpoints. In any event, given the current state of flux in South Africa, many of these viewpoints may soon be washed away by the tide of history.

In confining myself to syllabus revision and its ramifications, I may nevertheless be able to throw some light on the larger issues which should, I believe, concern us all. This is perhaps the point at which to insist that democratic participation by teachers and students in syllabus revision must entail a thorough exploration of the general issues I have referred to. Then, when we say, like the current syllabus, that people should 'live more fully, consciously and responsibly', we will have a sense of what living fully entails for all South Africans as well as a common understanding about what we should be more conscious of. This may give us a clearer sense than we now have of the people to whom teachers should be more responsible. In an eco-socialist perspective, genuine responsibility would entail a political commitment to ending those practices that threaten the well-being of our planet.

If the teaching of English is to play a dynamic role in society several aspects of the current WESSA syllabus will have to be reconsidered. At a very basic level, this involves a change in the way the syllabus defines the relationship between the individual and society. Adams and Hadley (1982:182) draw attention to this point when they quote Professor Simon as saying that

it is the acceptance of the existing social structure as the natural environment of the human animal, by some schools of psychology and sociology (behaviourist and functionalist respectively) that promotes determinist and

a-humanist ideas, directly at odds with the educationist's intention of equipping human beings to think and act in and upon society.

At several points in this study I have referred to the liberal humanist ideology of the individual and its damaging effects on our understanding of the social and class-determined nature of human beings. In the ideology of the English syllabus, the individual must be equipped to accommodate herself or himself to the demands of 'society', while developing certain 'natural' and expressive potentialities. This essentially static and determinist view of society militates against an understanding of culture in South Africa as a process in which there is a complex interaction of economic, political and linguistic factors. The syllabus's view of culture, as defined in the Guide to the Syllabus for English First Language, Higher Grade, is remarkably close to the ideology of the National Party:

Cultures differ in values, customs and world view and acquaintance with the writings of members of other cultures around them can facilitate understanding of such differences.

While there may be value in the 'understanding of such differences' the social and political purpose of such 'understanding' needs to be fully considered. In South Africa appreciation of 'cultural differences' has been used as a very effective smokescreen for a cynical and ruthless exploitation of the working class.

The functionalist ideology that permeates the syllabus also has a damaging effect on the self-concept of teachers. While pupils are to be 'enriched' and 'developed' teachers are seen as static entities administering the syllabus in accordance with their professional and bureaucratic functions. There is something rather astonishing about the extent to which the lives of teachers have been neglected in educational research. As Eric Hadley (in Adams: 1982: 165) points out:

The person we most consistently ignore when speaking of education is the teacher. We ignore, that is, the personal and intellectual development of the teacher both at the training stage and when he or she has become a full member of the profession.

Gerald Grace (1982:49) relates the neglected role of the teacher to the connection between social crisis and the crisis in the classification of knowledge. He argues that

while these issues are clearly constituted at the level of theory and also at the level of conflicting educational ideologies, their constitution at the level of the cultural transmitters in the situation of crisis (that is inner city teachers) has been relatively unexamined. What constructs of crisis exist at this level? What curricula and pedagogic forms are the underlying principles and intentionalities of such solutions? What is the reality of autonomy and constraint within present curricula and evaluation procedures?

It is my contention that a redefinition of the relationship between teachers and learners in the South African social formation should be at the centre of future research into English syllabus in this country. In considering possible strategies for constructive change I shall focus on the role of teachers although I believe that teachers' strategies should be subordinate to and informed by the strategies articulated by the black working class and its leaders. In outlining possible teachers' strategies I also want it to be borne in mind that far-reaching changes will only come from a combination of factors, some of which may be planned and co-ordinated strategies. Chanan and Gilchrist (1974:81) have drawn attention to the importance of considering the co-ordination of reforms:

While 101 independent experiments will show that this, that and the other individual reform does not essentially alter working class disadvantage in schools, this still tells us nothing about what combination of reforms would alter it, nor does it tell us that such a successful combination is impossible. It may well be that there is a

'take-off' point at which significant and dramatic changes in achievement become possible by means of a thoroughly orchestrated combination of twenty specific reforms, none of which on its own, nor any nineteen of which together, make a difference.

That the orchestration which Chanan and Gilchrist envisage is highly unlikely in South Africa's racist and fragmented system of education should not deter South African teachers and students from making the connections that will further the interests of the working class and those who identify with its strategies.

A good starting point for improved co-ordination of educational activities would, I believe, be a new system of communication between university English departments, faculties and colleges of education, and teachers and students in schools. This communication would entail a constant, democratic interchange of views about the direction of English studies in South Africa. A move towards such a new system could be initiated by individuals or groups working at any of the three levels I have mentioned. This could lead to the founding of a democratic organisation concerned with the development of English in South Africa. Such an organisation could establish links with other democratic organisations and produce a journal that reflected, with discretion, the activities of the organisation at various levels. If action research programmes or projects were established in schools and other educational institutions, reports on these could be published in the journal.

One area such an organisation could explore would be the development of alternative media. This could lead to a rethinking of theatre-in-education, with more emphasis on indigenous theatre, including plays produced by schools and a greater emphasis on community-based theatrical projects such as the People's Space roadshows of 1982 and 1983. Plays and independently produced video programmes could focus on important contemporary issues, including racism, sexism and the relationship between the nuclear family and capitalism.

This organisation could also establish links with teacher organisations such as the SATA so that such organisations could redefine their current roles in syllabus revision and curriculum innovation. Even without the establishment of the 'umbrella' organisation I have in mind, teacher organisations could redefine their criteria for book selection and give special consideration to the new 'open' category in the new syllabus which allows for the inclusion of 'a substantial work or body of work'. Teachers could argue for the inclusion of what Michael Chapman (1982) has called 'Soweto Poetry' or an anthology of feminist verse. If an anthology of school students' writing were compiled, this could also be prescribed within the present system. This could help to heal the damaging rift between students' and 'professional' writing. Teacher organisations could also advocate a reappraisal of Leavisite and Ricardian hegemony in the teaching of English.

I believe that a process of democratisation should be initiated in teacher organisations as well as in the universities and colleges where teachers are trained. If democratic, participatory learning is made an integral part in such organisations and institutions it may encourage teachers to take a more active role in curriculum development and to establish democratic practices within schools.

There are several reasons why the establishment of democratic practices within school are a necessary part of a co-ordinated strategy for social change in South Africa. Such practices are already a feature of many 'non-white' schools and although I am not very optimistic about WESSA principals supporting the idea of real democratic participation by WESSA school students, I do hope that a few of them will be persuaded to set inspiring precedents. If WESSA SRCs can be given real power they could foster a democratic spirit that would resist the dictatorial tendencies of the racist South African regime. Secondly, SRCs could establish student

bodies that would be responsible for articulating the response of students to the current curriculum. Such bodies could then act as democratically elected representatives of students to ensure that students' interests and concerns are taken into account during syllabus revision and the prescription of books. Thirdly, such bodies could participate in the building of bridges between teachers, parents, students and community organisations. The establishment of genuinely powerful SRCs at WESSA schools is unlikely under the present regime but in the meanwhile teachers can gather students' views on the curriculum in their own classrooms and make their findings available to researchers from universities and other institutions and organisations. They can also ensure that students become more informed about economic and political realities in South Africa by encouraging appropriate extra-mural activities such as the theatre-in-education experiment I have described in Appendix 1 of this study.

While democratic participation by students in WESSA schools is a remote possibility in WESSA schools, it may be possible for WESSA teachers, within the obvious constraints that do exist, to experiment with participatory democracy in the classroom itself. Ira Shor (1980: 208-209) has recorded the following unedited student manuscript which resulted from a 'By-Laws Project' which he and his students carried out:

BY-LAWS FOR RUNNING OUR CLASS

Our class has written, debated and accepted the following rules:

1. People in class will not speak only at the teacher when they talk, but will speak to everyone, or to the person they want to respond to.
2. The teacher is not always the only one responsible for filling up silences, and for keeping the conversation going.
3. When the teacher is absent, all students will still be responsible to remain in class and do the 15 minutes free writing. After the free

writing is finished any questions regarding the free writing should be directed to the tutor. After the assignment is done the class can pick someone to be chairperson of a discussion on any subject agreed upon by the students. The class meets twice a week and we can't afford to miss such a valuable lesson. And we should learn how to conduct the class when the teacher is absent because this shows us that we can conduct the class ourselves and we are intelligent and responsible enough to do our work.

4. Attendance will be voluntary and people will come if they feel the class is benefitting them. If the class is not benefitting the students, then the students will make the class into something which serves their needs.
5. The class being as informal as it is, has decided that it will be permissible for students or instructors to call each other on a first name basis. Calling each other by first names doesn't let one feel superior over someone else, as if Mr., Miss, Mrs., etc., were used.
6. No one is forced to say anything, except ta* should keep in mind ta duty as being part of the class to contribute to the class, by giving ta view, no matter how little it seems. Everyone should have an opportunity to talk at one time or another, not just letting the same person or persons talk and carry on discussion. But no one should be forced or called on to talk, if ta feels ta has nothing to say. Because forcing someone to talk might cause some differences between those persons trying to force ta to talk. This may cause ta to reject the class altogether.
7. Raising hands and interrupting people:
 - a. The chairperson will be rotated each class session for discussion.
 - b. A person who hasn't spoken yet has priority to speak over someone who has spoken already.
 - c. A person can use any symbol to interrupt the conversation, raising hand or politely interrupting.
 - d. Male and female should be recognised equally, equal respect to all. Anytime someone speaks, there should be a feeling of donation to each other.
8. We can relate better if we sit in a circle. Everyone should sit where ta wants to. You should sit where you feel most comfortable and not in an assigned seat. The only time you should assign a seat is when ta can't give lesson because of continuous disruptions of people sitting next

to each other or when ta doesn't trust someone taking an exam because ta thinks they are cheating. The decision of a chairperson to move a student has to be approved by the class.

- * Note on ta: In this day and age of women trying to become equal to men, we think it necessary to invent a word that refers to both men and women. The reason such a word is needed is because there are instances when it can be used. For lack of a better word we shall adopt the word ta which in the Chinese language means , he, she, him, her.

Students and teachers in WESSA schools are likely to be working within different sets of constraints, but I believe that activities such as the By-Laws Project would provide an excellent starting point for a course such as the one I described in Chapter 6. One of my main reservations about that course was that I as a teacher exerted a too dominant control over the activities of the class. While students are experiencing an environment that negates democratic values, it is not enough for them to be told about this and possible alternatives. This can lead to despair or a passing acquaintance with democratic values. I believe that whenever possible students should be allowed to experience the benefits of democratic participation with sufficient intensity and regularity to ensure that they will stand up for democratic values in all walks of life.

All the strategies I have suggested so far would counter the functionalist view of the individual in relation to society which is central to the English syllabus I have discussed in this study. If teachers are unable to counter this hegemonic ideology in the ways I have suggested so far, they can do so by teaching the current syllabuses in a critical way. In doing this the relationship between WESSA individuals and the South African social formation can be posed as problematic. Students can be led to explore the tensions between individuality and community in a wide range of contexts. Instead of the liberal humanist ideology of the individual silently dominating all English Studies, it can be unmasked as an ideology and contrasted with other viewpoints.

Linguistics can play an important role in exploding certain myths about the 'free' or 'independent' individual capable of 'objective discriminations'. The fact that language is a shared system of signs with rules that ensure intelligibility and communication should surely be an essential reference point in any ideology that espouses individual freedom. The liberal humanist ideology of individualism could also be related to conceptions of the self in the great religions of the world.

While exploring various ideologies concerning the relationship between the 'self' and 'society', teachers can begin to lead their classroom activities away from the hegemonic ideology by making the group rather than the individual the focus of learning. We need to be aware, however, of the ways in which group work can mystify power relations in the classroom. Joel Spring (1975: 25) points out that this is not a new issue:

In the United States the great debate at the beginning of the twentieth century centered around the type of social and economic characteristics produced within the classroom environment. Liberal educators rejected competition and individual work as promoting laissez-faire individualism. They sought a greater emphasis on group activity and group projects. This method of teaching, it was argued, would mold the type of character required by the new corporate State. Radicals in the United States rejected not only the traditional classroom but also the liberal quest. Both sought to mold the student in accordance with the needs and authority of state and industry.

Spring's comments accord with my own view that students need to be aware of the ideological directions implied by various kinds of group work. There is no necessary relationship between a spirit of community and humane values. Fascism also appeals to a sense of community.

Examinations are of course one of the most powerful ideological weapons in the hands of those who wish to promote competitive individualism, and English teachers who wish to foster an eco-socialist use of knowledge will have to be very ingenious and resourceful in mounting counter-hegemonic strategies. There may be room for

teachers and researchers to experiment with collective forms of assessment including peer assessment and self-evaluation. This could entail experimentation with verbal rather than numerical assessment. Those who feel insecure without numbers could experiment with a five- or three-point scale. The latter could assess instances of linguistic proficiency as highly competent, competent or incompetent. Teachers may be threatened by the thought of having to motivate students without the extrinsic reward of marks, but I for one would welcome the opportunity of discovering whether I could motivate students by providing an intrinsically interesting learning environment.

It should be clear from my approach in this study that explorations into the relationship between self, society and language would have to include extensive coverage of the relationship between class struggle, racism, sexism and 'English' in South Africa. There is nothing in the syllabus that precludes some exploration of these issues. As I pointed out in Chapter 6, it is possible to contextualise the hegemonic approaches to literary studies which I discussed in Chapter 2, and show students that while certain skills have to be mastered for examination purposes, this need not blind them to other possibilities in the study of various forms of writing and other media.

Counter-hegemonic strategies in reading and literature can be thoroughly explored whenever internal assessment is permissible and such strategies can be extended into language study. As I argued in Chapter 5, the syllabus's approach to language study and 'language across the curriculum' is largely functionalist and needs to be supplemented or countered by other approaches. Teachers should insist that examiners in the matriculation language (Third Paper) be far more explicit about their requirements in this area. Teachers will then be able to waste as little time as possible on the study of formal grammar.

Teachers producing counter-hegemonic lesson materials should try to circulate these in their own departments and make them available to resource centres and appropriate community organisations. Where possible class sets (of 30-40 units) should be made available as photocopying can prove very expensive if inadequate coursebooks are to be abandoned altogether. Teachers could also encourage Ravan Press and other progressive publishers to publish coursebooks that would be more suitable for WESSA students than the dismal variety currently available.

If such coursebooks are published, I hope that they will avoid, before all else, the trivial, whimsical and fragmented approach which makes those coursebooks still in use so antithetical to the 'integrated' approach advocated by the new syllabus. In Chapter 6 I suggested one way of achieving a measure of integration, but prescribers of literature should consider how the books they choose relate to each other as part of an integrated workscheme. Teachers whose approaches to oral and written work have been shaped by Anglo-centric and liberal humanist coursebooks need, in my view, to make these less 'academic' and more clearly informed by a sense of educational priorities. If encouraged to do so, WESSA students are capable of identifying many crucial contemporary issues. As I indicated in Chapter 6, this need not entail a sacrifice of 'fun' or personal concerns.

While the current syllabus does offer considerable scope for counter-hegemonic experimentation, teachers should also consider initiating alternatives to the present syllabus. One of my own major objections to the English syllabus in WESSA secondary schools is its unrealistically broad sweep and its chronologically tiered system of examination which entails a great deal of unnecessary repetition. As I indicated at the end of Chapter 5, a teacher fully competent in every aspect of the syllabus has to do an absurd amount of reading and preparation, and if s/he succeeds in doing this, s/he is likely to be frustrated by the impossibility of covering any single

aspect of the syllabus in a satisfying way. Consider, for example, the syllabus's suggestion that pupils script their own plays. In my experience this, if done properly, is very time-consuming and tends to discourage students if not followed up with an accomplished production. The repetition to which I refer is particularly annoying in the teaching of formal grammar because students repeatedly forget the things they are expected to remember. Extremely detailed textual study of poem after poem, play after play, and novel after novel is also, in my opinion, a waste of time and counter-productive. It needs to be recognised that close textual analysis usually fails to achieve its main purpose, which is to foster the habit of reading good books. I would welcome research that provided a definitive confirmation of this fact.

As an alternative to the present syllabus I would tentatively propose a modular approach with a wide set of options. In addition to the options there could be a compulsory core which might include the following: Basic Skills in Reading and Writing; Basic Skills in Oral Communication (Speaking, Listening and Reading); and Basic Skills in Research. The options might include: Drama and Society in the Age of Shakespeare; Linguistics and Literature: Journalism and Propaganda; Practical Film-making; Practical Play-making; Media Studies; The Study and Writing of Poetry; The Study and Writing of Fiction. Each of these courses could be graded into levels of difficulty, with credit being given for each grade attained. Students could aim for as many credits as they felt they could manage in five years of high school. Each credit need not necessarily take a year to complete. In addition to the 'credit' subjects, all pupils would be involved in activities such as the following: a two-day workshop in which a local theatre company presents a Shakespeare play (including a performance of the play); a two-day workshop on the control of mass media in South Africa; a one-day workshop on popular song

in South Africa; a two-day workshop on contemporary South African theatre. The modular approach I have outlined here would facilitate vertical grouping of students for the 'credit' courses and much larger groupings for the 'core' cultural experiences which would aim at creating a genuine interest in the diverse forms of cultural activity and which would be presented in such a way as to develop an historical and sociological awareness of cultural forms. The modular approach would also make it feasible to eliminate the idea of a distinction between 'English First Language' and 'English Second Language'. The 1,5% of matriculants currently proceeding to the study of English at university would be more thoroughly prepared for the elitist rigours of literary criticism. Of course, if a widespread interest in English studies were stimulated by the modular system, University English Departments might be faced with a 'storming of the Bastille'.

The modular system would, in certain respects, be more open to interdisciplinary studies. Schools could set aside three weeks a term (instead of exams) for an interdisciplinary project such as 'The French Revolution'. In such a case each school subject and module could be studied in terms of its connections with the French Revolution.

A major advantage of the modular approach would be its time-saving potential. While remaining in touch with the broad spectrum of the syllabus, teachers could focus their interests and energies in particular areas. It would also allow room for teachers skilled in more traditional approaches to work side by side with more innovative and 'non-academic' colleagues. Teachers with talents for cultural production could also put them to greater use in the modular system, in which certain modules would allow teachers and students to work as colleagues in group projects.

Having considered some of the more distant prospects of syllabus revision, I want to conclude by stressing that

one of the major stumbling blocks to the development of an English syllabus more in tune with the needs of the majority in South Africa is the lack of time available to English teachers to explore alternatives. Given my commitment to using the current syllabus as effectively as possible, I would have found it quite impossible to write a study of this kind in the little spare time I have. Nor would I have been able to write or co-write a book covering the main issues I have dealt with here. In many ways I would have preferred to write a book, especially because I could have made better use of the psychic energy I have expended walking on a tightrope between contending research paradigms. The precariousness of my undertaking has probably resulted in a good deal of unconscious self-censorship. However, had I written a book in more unrestrained fashion it would probably have been banned. As it is, the more publicity this study receives, the more likely I am to be visited by politely sinister gentlemen in smart business suits. I hope I shall have the freedom and the time to continue the liberatory process of which this study forms a part. One of my prime objectives will be to find those points of leverage in the system which will enable us to lift time off the shoulders of English teachers and place it in their hands, so that they can reshape it to meet the deepest needs of our beloved country and planet.

Having taken time to write this study, I am confident that my own teaching will benefit enormously. I am convinced that more critical self-reflection on the part of English teachers will lead to a more authentic fusion of personal and social goals. As Eric Hadley (1982:166) puts it in a different context:

They (teachers) may be able to "help their pupils develop their language for life", by taking into the classroom with them a more rigorously articulated expression of the processes of their own learning and response. The teacher only begins to teach when he or she is capable of laying bare these processes

within the classroom just as a "language for life" (if that phrase means anything) begins to find expression when we dwell in the presence of someone who can give us their "living expression".

When our gifts extend from such living expression, nothing can be lost and a whole, new world may be found.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ENDNOTE

1. I do not want to give the impression that I see myself as a self-appointed representative of the black working class in South Africa. My sense of 'black' working class attitudes to the teaching of English is derived from my personal contact with members and representatives of this class.

APPENDIX ONE: COUNTER-HEGEMONIC THEATRE: A CASE STUDY

At several points in this study I have suggested that the English syllabus currently in use in WESSA schools over-emphasizes the critical consumption of literature and does not allow sufficient scope for teachers and students to explore their potential as cultural producers. This tendency is also present in the production of the annual school play which is usually by Shakespeare and rarely if ever about contemporary South Africa. In this appendix I hope to show that it is worth exploring alternatives to traditional approaches to the production of school plays and that a space for full-scale play-making should be created in the school curriculum as soon as possible.

As I indicated in Chapter One, the play which is the subject of this appendix would never have been written had I not decided to attend the Culture and Resistance Symposium in 1982. It was as a result of that decision that I met Arona Dison, then a Standard Eight pupil at Westerford High School in Cape Town. I have also mentioned that as a result of the challenges presented at the symposium, Arona, a few other teachers and school students and I formed a study group which would engage in participatory research into educational alternatives in WESSA schools. It was in this context that the idea of writing a counter-hegemonic school play was born.

During the first term of 1982 it was decided to have an inter-standard one-act plays festival, and I was asked to supervise the production of the Standard Ten play. After looking in vain for something that seemed remotely suitable, I hit on the idea of co-writing a play that would explore the cultural experience of WESSA matriculants. I discussed the idea with Karen Press, co-ordinator

of English Studies at SACHED and formerly a teacher of mathematics and English at Cape Town High School, and Arona Dison and Paul Whelan, both students at Westerford High School and members of the informal study group I mentioned earlier. I put the idea to a gathering of all the Cape Town High matrics and immediately had enough volunteers to make the venture worthwhile. Paul and Arona received an equally enthusiastic response at Westerford. I was confident that my headmaster would support the idea, but because the play was not part of the official drama programme at Westerford, Arona had to write the following 'motivation':

The idea of doing a pupil play came out of a need that is felt amongst many pupils, to be involved in a play. This need is not answered by the school this term as there are no house plays; nor does Antigone answer it because of the limitations on the people that can be involved in it, and the nature of the play.

Many people were inspired by the way that Kate Hodge managed to organise the Welfare Play at the end of last year. The value of the experience for everybody involved would be heightened due to the responsibility of each member of the group, because it will be pupil-organized.

The play has been written by two people, Paul and myself together with two people from outside of the school. It deals with people of around matric age (middle-class, white South Africans) and the effect that school has on them, as well as the choices of culture and life-style that they are faced with. Our choice to write a play was largely based on the fact that there are no South African plays written for people of our age.

The writing to which Arona refers was done on three successive Saturdays, the 12th, 19th and 26th February, working from about 9 in the morning till 11 at night. The play was performed at Cape Town High School in front of the whole school on the morning of 29th March 1983 and at Westerford High School on the evening of April 14th 1983 to an audience of about 250.

Lack of rehearsal time was a major problem in the Cape Town High production because four other plays were in rehearsal at the same time. To some extent this

defeated a purpose of the play, which was intended to allow performers to explore the issues in the script and improvise according to their own experiences and perceptions. As a result some members of the cast did not get to grips with the issues being explored in the play and did not act with as much conviction as the writers would have liked. Most of them, however, acquitted themselves extremely well in the circumstances. The Westerford cast had a ten-day vacation in which to 'work-shop' their production and the result, though not as polished as the Cape Town High production in some respects, definitely had the actors 'living in' their parts with greater conviction.

About thirty-six school students were involved in each production, as can be gathered from the programme notes for the two productions, called Matric Dancing at Cape Town High School and Transparencies at Westerford:

Credits for Matric Dancing:

Writers:	Terry Volbrecht; Arona Dison; Karen Press; Paul Whelan; Susan Isaacson
Director:	Trudie Hailwood
Co-director:	André Russell
Stage manager:	Massimo Muratori
Sound director:	Siegfried Walther
Slides:	Andrew Stevens; Nikolai Romanov; Wieke Meuldijk; Nicola Kieser
Lighting:	Emmanuel Bollinger; Quinton Bosman; Nikolai Romanov
Backstage:	Fernando Fernandez; Theodore Liebenberg; Ralf Arnt; Paul Fiskaaen; Dieter Behm; Jim Diggery
Masks:	Janeen Van Leeuwen; Andrew Steyn
Programme:	Fiona Gentry
General assistance and costumes:	Gill Blom
Technical assistance:	Karen Press

Singing of
final song:

Christina Texeria

Cast:

Lisa	Cheryl Gardner
Mother	Helen Parsley
Father	Leon Buirski
Headmaster	Stephen Stockdale
Trevor	André Russell
Cindy	Anthea Johnstone
Michelle	Susan Isaacson
Man in Shadows	Faul Fiskaaen
People in Reggae Club	Matric pupils
Steve	Sebastian Mieke
Pupil in first desk	Theodore Liebenberg
Pupil in second desk	Michael Wilson
Pupils in third desk	Thalia Honeyman; Gillian Campbell
Poor man	Dieter Behm
Poor woman	Karen Potgieter
Policeman	Ralf Arndt
Businessman	Jim Diggery
Well-dressed woman in white mask	Terri-Anne Jonker
Two soldiers	Zane Bell; Shane Latty
Pupil who re- occupies first desk	Fernando Fernandez
Assembly line workers	Alfie Rodrigues; Stephen Stockdale
Domestic servant	Helen Green
Four Rastas	Janeen (Jah-neen) Van Leeuwen; Leon Buirski; Massimo Muratori; Shane Latty

Credits for Transparencies

Script: Terry Volbrecht; Arona Dison;
Paul Whelan; Karen Press

Directors: Sean Bussey; Arona Dison;
Jo Worthington-Smith

Stage Manager: Susan Peacock

Sound: Paul Whelan; Andrew Brown

Song at end: Mr Sharp

Lighting: Matthew Cooke; Robert Gottlieb;
Steven Metrovich; Marice de Roubaix

Slides: Andrew Stevens; Jean Brundritt

Artwork: Janet Forrest; Jo Worthington-Smith;
Janina

Thanks to: Ms Johnson, Victor Legwale, Mr Kramer,
M.A.D. Society, James Eckert,
Mrs Cockerell, Shawn Shelley, Cape
Town High matric play, Mr Hewson, our
parents and all who gave us support.

Cast:

Lisa	Sabine Möller
Mother	Mari-anne van der Valk
Father	Steven J. Cohen
Headmistress	Nicky Robins
Trevor	Jonathan Handler
Cheryl	Sally Andrews
Man in Shadows	Steven Tourell
Steve	Justin Cooke
1st wealthy pupil	Beth Whelan
1st authority figure	Stephen Tourell
Poor pupils in 2nd desk	Sally Andrews; Emma Lees
Secretary	Sally Field
2nd authority figure (military)	Hugo Van der Merwe
2nd wealthy pupil	Nicky Robins
Workers	Steven Cohen; Michele Richardson
Rastas	Charles Rohland; Jo Worthington-Smith

In both sets of programme notes it was pointed out that 'All characters in this play are fictitious and resemblance with actual persons is purely sociological'. The Cape Town High programme notes contained several quotes from Martin Hoyles's Changing Childhood (1979) as well as this comment by Elizabeth Perloff, a matriculant not involved in the production:

Teenagers are not given enough freedom. They are not free to express their viewpoints to the world. Have you ever seen teenage representation?

The Westerford programme notes provided the following information about the play, ending with a comment which may be taken as representative of the students' feelings about the production:

Transparencies is a multi-media production experimenting with acting, music, slides and movement. All of these media have been equally important in expressing the ideas and themes which we've been working through. The basic script was written by a group of four, and was improvised on and added to by the cast. Lisa is a girl, in matric, who feels restricted by her environment at home and school, and by her relationships. On weekends she goes to discos with her boyfriend, Trevor, although she feels that they are meaningless and, in being just an escape from her dull routine, they form an extension of it. To top this is the approaching matric dance which combines and glorifies school and disco.

Once again waiting for the "manne" who are late in picking up the "chicks" to take to the disco, Lisa realizes that she cannot stand it anymore and leaves on her own, to the disbelief of her friend Cheryl.

She goes to a reggae club in town, where she meets Steve. She goes home with him, not as a pick-up but as a person, with whom she makes friends. At his flat they discuss her attitude towards school and he ties it up with his feelings about his work. He has been writing a song which says that each of their problems are not just specific to them individually but part of society's assembly line where people are streamlined into the roles of their class, to make up its efficient machinery. 'Race' determines class, that is whether one is part of an educated class, having "power", or whether one is powerless. But being of the "privileged" class does not necessarily mean that you have freedom or power because you are still part of the same machinery.

Steve also explains how subcultures like disco and reggae are to many separate means of escape and that South Africa needs a common music and identity drawing on all the different influences that we have.

Lisa returns home to face her parents, Trevor and school, but in her is the beginning of an awakening to see through the barriers which separate her from how she really feels, and to face it in a positive way.

In general, people are scared to try anything new, in case they do it badly, or it be rejected.

We are not a group of Talented Young Writers, Actors, etc. We are a group of people working together, saying there is no such thing as, "I can't ..."

Here, then, is a version of the 'basic script' that was used for these productions. I want to add that it is not to be read as a piece of Literature, but as a starting point for those who share the view that participatory, experimental work of this kind is worth further exploration.

MATRIC DANCING/TRANSPARENCIES

Scene 1

When the curtains open the stage is in almost complete darkness. There is a motionless heap lying in bed, stage right. There is the sound of loud alarm clocks, as at the beginning of Pink Floyd's 'Time'. There is no reaction from the heap. Slide with words 'Somewhere in Africa' appears briefly on screen. Slides with words setting the scene can be used at the beginning of each scene, e.g. 'Lisa's bedroom. Friday morning'; 'Kitchen at Lisa's home'; 'A School hall'; 'Breaktime in school grounds'; 'Cheryl's room'; 'The Street Outside Roots Reggae Club'; 'Inside Roots Reggae Club'; 'Steve's flat and Society's Assembly Line in Steve's imagination'; 'Kitchen at Lisa's home' and 'Lisa's bedroom'.

Downstage left the light brightens as sounds filter in: gargling, saucepans, Springbok radio, cars revving, and intermittent calls of 'Lisa!' from Lisa's mother.

Lisa presses a button on the sound system next to her bed to drown out these sounds. The song that we hear should be thematically appropriate and have clearly audible lyrics - possibilities are 'So Much Trouble' by Bob Marley, 'Friday's Girl' by Joe Jackson, 'I Don't Like Mondays' by The Boomtown Rats or 'Mondays' by Black Uhuru. The lights dim as Lisa gets out of bed and starts picking up her uniform. While she is doing this slides are projected onto a screen at the back of the stage. One of these should be a photograph of Lisa's weekly school timetable. Others may be typical shots of life in the classroom. The use of slides and music at times like this should act as bridge passages between the rapidly shifting scenes. This means that they must be interesting in their own right, well integrated into the sequence of scenes and without a sense of 'playing for time'.

Scene 2

Spotlight on downstage left. Lisa's father is at the breakfast table, reading the paper. Lisa's mother is wrapping sandwiches. Lisa walks in. She doesn't greet her parents.

MOTHER (Pointedly): Good morning, Lisa!

LISA: Morning.

MOTHER: What are you going to have?

LISA grunts and shrugs.

Something strange happens to MOTHER here. She turns into the mother in an SATV breakfast cereal commercial, recommending the ideal breakfast in an exceptionally cheerful way. While she is doing this FATHER and LISA freeze, while slides of ideal nuclear families eating breakfast (preferably taken from actual breakfast food commercials) alternate with slides of starving families in various parts of South Africa. The point being made here is that 'the contrast between publicity's inter-

pretation of the world and the world's actual condition is a very stark one' (Berger: 1981:151). As soon as MOTHER has finished her performance, Lisa speaks.

LISA (looking at the food on the table): Yech!

FATHER: Never say 'Yech!' to food, my girl!

LISA (summoning up all her self-control): I'll have some toast, thanks.

MOTHER: Have you brushed your hair this morning?

LISA: Ja.

MOTHER (touching Lisa's hair): It doesn't look like it! And look at your shoes. You wouldn't believe we bought them a month ago. When last did you brush them?

LISA: It's O.K. Ma, we're having inspection at school today.

MOTHER: Well, that's all the more reason to look more presentable.

LISA (walking out with a slice of toast): Okay.

MOTHER: And make sure that you come straight home from school today so that we can get to town early to look at dresses for the dance. I saw one at Truworths that I think would suit you. (While MOTHER is speaking a few slides of models posing are projected, interspersed with pictures of Lisa in her school uniform.)

LISA sighs, nods her head and walks out while the light dims and the sound of a radio comes up very loud. Play a recording of a disc jockey celebrating the day and at the same time project slides of members of the black working class beginning their 'wonderful day': in mining compounds, on construction sites, in the resettlement camps, etc. Sound fades out.

Scene 3

Spotlight falls on the headmaster upstage centre giving a speech to the matrics on how to behave at the matric dance. While the headmaster speaks slides of couples posing for photographs at the matric dance are shown.

HEADMASTER: ... because we want tomorrow's dance to be a memorable evening for all concerned. In the past certain groups of people have taken advantage of the festive nature of the occasion to go beyond the bounds of acceptable behaviour. In order to avoid any recurrence of this unpleasantness I want to draw your attention to certain rules which should govern your behaviour on the night. Firstly, there is to be no drinking of alcohol and no smoking of any kind on the school premises. Secondly, all men must wear ties and jackets and keep them on throughout the evening. Thirdly, I would like to remind the ladies that this is a formal occasion and that their apparel should be modest and dignified. Fourthly, there are to be no before or after parties except for the formal one arranged for staff and prefects. Finally, it goes without saying that all partners are to be of appropriate age, sex and colour. I have the full support of the staff and prefects (aside by ONE OF THE MATRICS: and the police!) in this ... and they will be helping me to ensure that these rules are strictly observed. However we know that we can count on your full co-operation in helping to make this a memorable and deeply meaningful experience for us all.

Fadeout as slides of 1976 Soweto uprising are projected onto the screen (some of Peter Magubane's photographs are very good for this purpose) and the distant sound of police sirens is heard. There is also the sound of matrics dispersing with a general muted muttering.

Scene 4

Spotlight on Lisa and Trevor sitting on some steps downstage right.

LISA: Gosh, now we really have something to look forward to.

TREVOR: Ah, come on, that's how it always is, but everyone still manages to have a jol.

LISA: Ja, a deeply meaningful jol.

TREVOR: What's wrong with you, man? You're being so negative about everything these days.

LISA shrugs.

TREVOR: I mean, every time we go to a disco now you just don't seem into it at all. It's getting really difficult to talk to you about anything. Like now: if there's something wrong, then say so.

LISA sighs, then: Ja, there is something wrong, but I can't put it into words. I just feel stuck here at school and then we go on these plastic jols to forget it. And I mean, this matric dance, it's all part of the same thing. (The bell for the next period rings.) When I think back on my school life I feel angry, and when I think about discos I feel angry. What am I supposed to celebrate?

TREVOR: I don't know what you're talking about. Anyway, I've got to go to maths now. We're having a test. I'll pick you up at Cheryl's tonight. I might be a bit late because of cricket. Ciao.

EXEUNT

Fadeout as slides of nightlife, with particular emphasis on disco dancing appear intercut with menacing images of 'mean streets' at night. Disco music with appropriate 'rapping' appears on soundtrack. Slides and music continue for as long as it takes to prepare for the next scene.

Scene 5

Lights come up on Cheryl's room as the music fades. LISA is paging disconsolately through a copy of FAIR LADY while CHERYL is busy in front of the mirror. This scene leaves considerable scope for improvisation. It is important that CHERYL, like TREVOR, not come across as an easy target for ridicule. They have their own zest for life and a warm naiveté that should be felt and appreciated by the audience. LISA, on the other hand, should not come across as a downtrodden, sulking misery, but as fluctuating between exasperation and a steadily mounting, assertive anger. The dynamics of her own rising energy should also be appreciated by the audience.

LISA (sighing impatiently): What's the time?

CHERYL: Twenty-five past nine. Which of these two colours goes best with my dress? (She goes across to Lisa with two sticks of lipstick as two close-up slides of brightly coloured lips flash on to the screen.)

LISA: I don't know. I can't remember what your dress looks like. Where the hell are they? Probably getting drunk at the Royal again.

CHERYL: Ag, it doesn't matter. The disco will go on till late. Here (holding up her dress against her body), what do you think?

LISA: What gives them the right to keep us waiting like this?

CHERYL: You haven't answered my question!

LISA: I don't know who Trevor thinks he is. I didn't even want to go to this disco. And now I have to waste half the night waiting for him. I think I'm going to go.

CHERYL: What's the matter? Don't you like my dress?

LISA: I'm going. (She picks up her crash helmet and leaves.)

CHERYL: Hey, where are you going? You can't go off on your own like that!

Fadeout and return to intercutting of 'highlife' and 'mean streets' slides and the last lines of Bunny Wailer's version of Bob Marley's 'Time Will Tell' are heard on the soundtrack: 'You think you're in heaven but you're living in hell' (repeated). During all this we hear the sound of Lisa's motorbike starting up, revving and dying away.

Scene 6

The revving becomes louder again to suggest that Lisa is approaching. Lights come up on a night street. Lisa wheels her bike in and parks it. (There are sounds of reggae in the distance.) A MAN standing in the shadows calls to her: Hey sweetie, can I come home with you tonight? She ignores him. He follows her and says: Hey, don't you answer when a person speaks to you?

LISA: Just leave me alone, you -- cockroach!

She goes into the club. The sound of reggae becomes much louder. In the Westerford performance effective use was made of a gauze curtain against which slides of reggae performers could be projected while silhouettes of the dancers could be seen through the images and the curtain.

Scene 7

People are dancing in the club. LISA puts her things down, watches, and then joins in the dancing. Slides of reggae performers are interspersed with slides of the oppression and resistance of the black working class. Linton Kwesi Johnson's Reggae Sounds is a suitable song. Music and dancing continue as LISA goes to sit at a table where STEVE is sitting. Mime of them trying to talk. It must be clear that they have not met each other before. Lisa asks to see the flute in Steve's rucksack. They engage in mimed conversation. (Suggest the passing of time.) They leave. Music fades. Fadeout of light on dance-floor. Follow spot on Steve and Lisa walking towards her bike.

LISA: Thanks for seeing me to my bike. I was just worried that that guy might still be hanging around.

STEVE: Would you like to come back to my place to play some music?

LISA: Well, I don't have any instruments with me.

STEVE: That's okay. I've got a guitar and a few other instruments.

LISA: Okay. Where do you live?

STEVE: My car is parked around the corner. You can follow me. I live at the top of Long Street.

He goes off. She starts her bike and follows him.

Fadeout as slides depicting various work situations alternate with images of living rooms, with emphasis on lounge furniture, TV sets and hi-fi equipment. These slides should be accompanied by appropriate music, e.g. Laurie Anderson's 'Let x=x'.

Scene 8

Lights up. Steve and Lisa are sitting in Steve's flat, drinking coffee. Recorded music fades.

STEVE: ... and after a really bad day at work one of my mates suggested that we check out a disco at our old school. I was feeling really down, ag, it's a long story, but in the end I decided to go. I remember always enjoying my school discos and thought that being with a lot of happy people would make me feel better ... but no, it just freaked me out totally. I began to realise how we were being conned ... Like how disco is one of the reasons why we don't enjoy our work.

LISA: Hm. I've wondered about that. What do you mean?

STEVE: Whew! It's difficult to say. I've spent hours in the last few days ... I've been trying to write a song about it.

LISA: Can I see what you've written so far?

STEVE: Hmm. I don't know. Maybe it'll be a bit embarrassing.

LISA: Oh, come on!

STEVE (sighs): Oh, all right. Here it is. (He fetches the lyric sheet and gives it to her.)

LISA (Peering at it confusedly, begins reading): 'Last night I had the ...' What's this word?

STEVE: Sorry, it's a bit of a mess. Perhaps I'd better read it. (After he had read two lines Lisa interrupts)

LISA: Can't you sing it, Steve?

At this point the MIME SEQUENCE begins. If the actors can perform mime well enough, a change in lighting can move attention away from Steve's song which fades out as Steve and Lisa become a still tableau and the mime continues. Alternatively, Steve can perform the following song while the lighting focuses on the mime, in which case the song and the mime (including other music and sound effects) have to be very carefully synchronized.

These are the lyrics of the song ('The Prisoner's Dream'):

Last night I had the strangest dream
I was writing my final exam
I had to use a number
To tell them who I am

Sitting at a desk for years and years
Pushing my life through a ballpoint pen
I traded my knowledge for the teachers' marks
Again and again and again

Policeman, teacher kept watch over me
As I sweated it out with the rest
A gentle reminder not to steal
As we all failed the honesty test

And further on down the line in my dream
The poor sought their freedom in pages
Believing that knowledge brings power
To send up their low wages

A poor man was asked for his number and pass
And bled of his very last cent
When I saw his son working out on the street
I knew what poverty meant

When at last my exam came to an end
My school life closed like a book
I was ordered to fight for freedom
I was told how much courage that took

I began to learn who the enemy was
But we fired the guns all the same
Until I returned a hero
Weary and broken and lame

And down the line in the factory
The poor were standing in line
The human machine locked into my dream
And a band played 'Everything's fine'

A maid made a meal for her madam
She worked for twelve hours a day
And ten cents an hour and a uniform
Was all that the madam would pay

Deep in my dream the weariness fell
The people bent down to pray
And out of the wings came the disco king
To blow all our troubles away

But fingers were clicking in time in time
The disco king gave up his crown
And the Rastamen looking for peace in their dreams
Could not wake the sleeping town

When I awoke my dream came around
I awoke and my dream came around

Dim lights on Lisa and Steve as the music ('Get-a-Job' by The Beat or 'The Prisoner's Dream') begins and lights come up on the stage.

There is a row of desks on the stage. In the first desk there is a pupil writing. Behind him, standing at attention, are a man in a business suit and a policeman. The businessman is wearing a chilling white mask and the policeman is wearing a pig's-face mask. Both men should be tall with commanding presence. When a buzzer goes the pupil gets out of his desk; another buzzer goes - he is thrust back into his desk by the two authority figures behind him. The spotlight falls on the next desk, where three people are working in one desk. Behind them are a MAN and a WOMAN, both of them obviously very poor. These people are wearing black masks. The poor man moves forward, pats one of the pupils encouragingly on the shoulder. The policeman walks across and asks to see his pass. The man does not have it on him. The policeman demands all the money the poor man has, then goes back to standing at attention. The poor man stands dejectedly for a few moments, then pushes his son out of the desk. His son moves to fetch a pile of newspapers and stands between the two desks selling papers. The newspaper seller moves over to the first desk, looks at what the pupil is doing and is chased away by the two authority figures. A well-dressed woman in a white mask walks on from the far side with a gigantic matric certificate trailing a blue ribbon. She stops between the two desks. The newspaper seller peers at the certificate with interest, touches it, and is again chased away by the authority figures who then take the certificate and march briskly to the other side of the first desk. A buzzer goes, the pupil looks anxiously at his watch, scribbles frantically for a few seconds, then gathers his papers, rises from his desk and hands his papers to one of the authority figures in exchange for the certificate. Two army figures walk on and lead him off. There is a black-out, the song cuts out, and then lights flash on and off. Sounds of marching, orders, gunfire and wailing shells.

Images of war may flash on to the screen at the back. War sounds fade and the music comes up again as the boy appears in civilian clothes, wearing a bloody mask and carrying his gigantic certificate. He limps across to the businessman and policeman standing as a gateway to the third desk. He hands over his certificate to the businessman. This man glances at it very briefly and then hands it back to him. He folds it up and stuffs it into his briefcase. Meanwhile the first desk has been reoccupied. The applicant is then shown to his desk where he begins to rubber-stamp pieces of paper (there are two piles on the desk). A pupil from the second desk joins the assembly line desks. Lights come up on the whole process/machinery to the sound of 'Money' by Pink Floyd. The assembly line workers are packing food which is passed on to a domestic servant putting food into a pot. The music grows louder and then cuts out. Everyone on stage slumps forward, heads down. There is a blackout immediately followed by a follow spot on Trevor doing a Travolta walk across the stage to the sound of disco music. He is wearing a walkman. In the midst of his oblivious ecstasy the businessman behind the third desk relentlessly reels him in by raising his right arm above his head and slowly clicking his fingers. Trevor walks disjointedly backwards until he is standing meekly, head down, beside the businessman. Lights come up gradually, and as everybody struggles to rise up from the slumped position Bob Marley's 'Get up, Stand up' fades in and two figures in Rasta masks enter dancing from both sides of the stage. One should be in 'with it' clothes and the other in tatters. They wander dancing unseeingly past each other, then stop and turn their backs on the audience. When they begin to touch and shake the people in the desks the music fades, the sound of a helicopter is heard, then sirens, and the police storm in, hitting the Rastas with sjamboks and forcing them off-stage. Then there is silence.

A spotlight then falls on Steve and Lisa as the other lighting dims.

LISA: Yes, but if you're so anti-everything, how is it possible to be happy?

STEVE (laughs briefly): It all depends on what you think being happy means. Happiness isn't going through life in a daze being ripped off. We have to wake up and do something about it. We have to find something that will make us face the world of problems with hope. That's why people turn to disco and reggae.

LISA: Yes, but they don't seem to make us feel we belong here. You know, too many imported solutions.

At this point the actors should improvise a conversation about local music and what can be done through music and schooling to create a common Azanian culture. They could discuss Juluka and David Kramer as important figures in such a cultural movement. At a highpoint in the conversation, Lisa leans over and looks at Steve's watch.

LISA: Shoo! Look at the time! I really must go. It's been good talking to you. (Pause.) I'll give you a ring sometime.

STEVE: Sure. Here's my number. (Writes it down and gives it to her. Laughing, she gives him her number too. He writes it down.) 'Bye then.

LISA: 'Bye.

Fadeout. Slide of suburban house at night, with one light on. A few other houses also in picture, in darkness. Sound of chirpy announcer on late, late radio show.

Scene 9

Lights come up on parents at table. 'Nightbeat' - late night radio music is playing. Lisa's parents sit fuming. (A slide of the end of the assembly line scene is projected onto the screen - briefly.) The parents in this scene should be sympathetically, not mockingly, played.

MOTHER: I'm going to give her another five minutes and then I'm calling the police.

FATHER: This just isn't a safe place to live anymore. Anything could have happened.

MOTHER: Ag, don't say that. She's probably just forgotten the time. (Sighs.) She's such a selfish child. Never thinks about us and that we might be worried about her.

LISA walks in quietly from behind them.

LISA: Hello.

MOTHER: Caw! Where've you been? Do you know that the time is? We've been worrying ourselves sick about you.

LISA: I'm sorry. I just lost track of the time.

MOTHER: What did I tell you? What did I tell you?

FATHER: You haven't answered the question, Lisa. Where were you? Trevor's been phoning all night.

LISA: Shame. Poor Trevor. It's because he was so late that I had to find something to do. I met someone at a night club and spent the evening with him.

FATHER (his heart leaping in alarm): What do you mean, 'Spent the evening with him'?

LISA: I went to his flat and we were talking.

FATHER (furious): Till three in the morning?! Do you expect me to believe that?

LISA: Yes I do.

MOTHER: Who is this person, anyway?

LISA: What do you mean? He's just a person. His name is Steve.

FATHER: Look, Lisa, are you going to tell us what we want to know?

LISA: But I have ...

FATHER (suspended between anger and weariness): Look, I've got to go to work tomorrow. (His voice falters.) But I'm telling you ... I'll get to the bottom of this when I get back. You better be home in the morning. Trevor's coming to see you. (He turns to his wife.) I think it's time we got some sleep. (He points at Lisa.) You, got to bed too.

Dim lights. Play transitional music. Alternate slides showing Lisa with Steve and Lisa with Trevor.

Scene 10

Lights up on whole stage. Lisa is lying in her room on her bed reading. There is a knock at the door.

LISA: Come in.

TREVOR (stares in silence at Lisa for a few moments):
I knew something like this was going to happen. What's up?

LISA: Look Trevor, I'm not prepared to go through another interrogation session.

TREVOR: What? You mean you're too guilty to tell me about what happened last night?

LISA: No, I've got nothing to feel guilty about. Why are you accusing me? You were late in the first place.

TREVOR: It's not the same. I told you I might be late. And anyway, how could you go off on your own? Anything could have happened to you. It looks like I'm not even going to find out what did happen to you. Why can't you just tell me the truth?

LISA: You mean you're going to believe what I tell you?

TREVOR: Well, I don't know. That depends on what you tell me.

LISA: I see. Well, if that's how much you trust me, I don't see the point of talking to you.

TREVOR: Thanks. Thanks a stack. You're being bloody ridiculous. Honestly, I've had you up to here. You can find someone else to take you to the matric dance. (He strides off in a huff and slams the door shut.)

The lights dim slightly. Lisa rests her head as her thoughts are presented in the form of a recorded song which she would write at this stage in her life. Key slides screened during the play can be shown again as a kind of recapitulation.

The following song lyric was written for Transparencies:

Discos and pipes
Curtains on my brain
High-powered business and war
Parents and friends
Like school and the law
I'm alienated from it all,
And I'm scared I'll go under
And all you can do is criticize -
Is that where life's at?

Now I can lie in a daze for a day
I can stay in there till night
I can live in a daze for a year
And hope it all turns out right

Or I can fight that negative self
Rise above the decay
Get out of bed with all your might
Thank God you're alive
And face the day.

At the end of this song the cast may stream onto the stage and dance with joyous energy to Juluka's 'Woza Friday'.

APPENDIX TWO: TOWARDS COUNTER-HEGEMONIC MEDIA STUDIES:
APPROACHES TO POPULAR SONG IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5 I expressed concern about the fact that the approach to media studies advocated in the new English First Language syllabus is an extension of the hegemonic modes of traditional literary criticism. In this appendix I would, as promised, like to suggest some counter-hegemonic and investigatory approaches to the teaching of popular song. Because this dissertation has primarily been a critique of existing practices in the teaching of English I have not tried to lay the theoretical and practical foundation of counter-hegemonic pedagogy in great depth. My critique should in itself have given some pointers as to the values and practices that would inform such a pedagogy, and chapters six and seven should have given some indications of what is possible for English teachers both inside and outside the classroom. My discussion of popular song in this appendix is intended to provide a brief theoretical basis for counter-hegemonic media studies as well as some concrete examples of how such studies can be introduced into the present syllabus.

My research into the uses of popular song in the teaching of English spans a very wide range of activities and the constraints of space prevent me from giving a full account of them. It is, however, important to mention the more salient features of my research, if only to give readers an indication of how I arrived at my present theoretical position. I have already, in the introduction to this dissertation, pointed to the important influence of the counter culture that emerged in the 1960s, my

research for my English Honours dissertation in 1976, and the research I did in preparing over five hundred pages of teaching resources which I called 'Songsources: Approaches to the Popular Song in the Teaching of English'. The latter research included the testing of some of the lesson material in my English classes and those of some of my colleagues; discussions with Muff Anderson, author of the indispensable book on South African popular music called Music in the Mix; discussions with the well-known song-writer and performer David Kramer; and extensive reading in the sociology of popular culture in general and popular song in particular. It would be misleading for me to isolate any books or periodicals as key influences, but to readers interested in extending their knowledge of this field I would recommend Simon Frith's The Sociology of Rock, Dick Hebdige's Subculture: The Meaning of Style, Dave Harker's One for the Money: The Politics of Popular Song and Christopher Small's Music. Education. Society. The most critically astute and informative periodical is the weekly New Musical Express.

TOWARDS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR COUNTER-HEGEMONIC MEDIA STUDIES

I shall now attempt to relate some of the issues I have explored in this dissertation to the study of popular song in South Africa. It should by now be clear that interpellations of cultural identity play a crucial role in the subjective and social construction of reality in South Africa. There can be no doubt, either, that language, literature and song play a vital part in the formation of cultural identities. But any person in South Africa using English as a means of cultural expression is faced with great difficulties when trying to make sense of his or her cultural identity, especially when faced with the complexity of 'the national question' in this part of the world.

English-speaking South Africans who are being fed a Eurocentric culture in our schools and universities are hardly likely to view the cultural products of the mass media, including popular song, in a 'national spirit'. The majority of school students almost certainly experience the culture of the English curriculum as peripheral to their own culture, but this of course does not mean that their own culture is national in character. The complex interconnectedness of the world economy and its media makes this virtually impossible. What aspects of South African popular culture can be intelligibly separated from the European, African, American and other influences that have seeped into or been inflicted on our society over several hundred years? Have country and western music, reggae, disco, punk and classical music become an intrinsic part of South African culture? If we concede that they have, the lines demarcating or separating South African cultural identities become very hazy. Allegedly distinct groups often accept the same popular music as part of their cultural experience, and it should be obvious that this is but one of many points that these 'groups' have in common. If we are sincere about regarding South Africa's 'population groups' as culturally discrete, we should be able to offer sound evidence in support of our view.

It should be clear, then, that neither our educational institutions nor our media are promoting an identifiably national culture. This is disturbing because vaguely defined and bogus cultural identities are being used to justify the separation of people geographically and politically as a subterfuge for the most brutal economic exploitation.

The study of popular song provides an important way of demystifying many hegemonic cultural practices in South Africa. Most pupils and many teachers have a lively interest in popular music. If they were to look critically at the ways in which they relate to music and literature, they might learn a great deal about what is wrong with their classroom practice and the cultural reality that enmeshes it.

Why is it, for instance, that most pupils take an active interest in popular music and usually maintain this once they have left school, whereas they seldom pursue the literary interests so assiduously cultivated by their English teachers. One obvious way of approaching this is to consider the kind of split that industrial capitalism has created between work, school and leisure. For most people 'literature' is work in the relatively drab school setting, and they turn to the mass media, including popular music, for leisure and excitement. Often their leisure activities are used to define their dislike of school. On leaving school, literature is usually replaced by other work and listening to music remains a form of leisure. The division of labour under industrial capitalism is one of the factors ensuring that most school-leavers, particularly those belonging to the bourgeoisie, will be consumers rather than producers of music and literature.

This leads us to another approach to the same question, which is to see culture as involving production as well as consumption. With some justification, the kind of literary analysis currently taught in schools has been called 'consumerist criticism'. According to its detractors, this kind of criticism teaches pupils how 'best' to consume preordained masterpieces and there is no properly dynamic relationship with their own literary creativity and initiative. I have marked thousands upon thousands of compositions in the external matriculation examination which have borne no trace of the style or insights of the prescribed literary works. And yet when I have asked pupils to relate their own writing to the issues raised by a set of popular songs, the maturity of the work produced has often been astonishing. It is of course not impossible to make the prescribed literature work in this way, but in practice one finds very few pupils writing creatively in response to the works they have to subject to 'practical criticism'. When the pupil turns from the 'work' of practical criticism and listens to popular music

outside school s/he is turning from one kind of consumerism to another. The capitalist media overwhelmingly urge people to consume songs rather than produce them, while so-called 'high culture' is left to the universities and a few token gestures on the part of the publicity industry.

Most pupils, then, are persuaded to see culture as something which is consumed. Hence the association of culture with 'taste'. Highbrow people are said to have a more sophisticated way of consuming culture than low-brow people. But most of this culture is produced by the same market economy and consumed for the economic profit of the same class of people. Highbrow people may sincerely believe that one form of consumption is preferable to another, but they cannot honestly deplore the fact that Louis L'Amour outsells Nadine Gordimer in the marketplace if they accept the system that makes such a victory possible. To say cynically that most people have bad taste begs many questions.

Transforming a consumerist culture into one in which people are more creative and productive will be a long and complex process. To start with, present cultural forms will have to be demystified. Devising some schematic models may help us to understand the shortcomings of the more familiar critical approaches. The models I am using here are adaptations of those I found in Raymond Williams's Communications (1962). The problem may be posed most simply as follows:

Who?	Control
Says what?	Content
In what channel?	Media
To whom?	Audience
With what effects?	Effects

This model, though useful in its simplicity, is inadequate and may be elaborated as follows:

Who? How many?	Control and mode of Affiliation
Say or says what?	Form and Content - the system of signs
How often?	The degree of exposure
Via which Process?	All the productive labour involved
In which channel or channels?	Institutions, media and their interaction with affective capacities developed in the family and other gender relationships.
To whom? To how many?	Audience (The matrix of interpellations in cultural groupings)
In whose interests?	Response, profit and use
At whose expense?	Exploitation and alienation
With what effects?	The effects on individuals, families, social classes, subcultures and the social formation as a whole.

It must be stressed that the relationship between producers and consumers is a dialectical one and that the audience is never a set of completely passive receivers. It may in several ways determine the meaning of the message before it is sent, and it always 'makes something of' the message.

If we look at each step in the above model we should become aware of how much we usually omit when we consider the meaning of a song, novel, play or poem.

Firstly, it is customary and convenient to think of works as produced by individual authors, but this can be misleading in several ways. No author uses a purely 'private' discourse - all discourses are historically and socially constituted. Instead of merely envisaging an individual expressing ideas and feelings, we can also consider how history, society and the discourse being used give shape and meaning to the work produced. In a society which is not as creative as it could be, it is disastrous

to believe that works of art pop magically out of 'creative' individuals because it leads to ignore material and ideological conditions that are inimical to creative cultural production. Equally misleading is the idea that African children have 'natural rhythm' while white South African children in general are 'naturally' incapable of singing. It is far more likely that these people have learnt, in specific conditions, how to sing or not to sing.

Artists (or cultural producers) often work in media owned by others and their affiliation with this controlling group may also determine the meaning of what is being said. What, for example, would be the meaning of a freedom song sung for profit at Sun City? Individual artists usually align themselves with the interests or perspectives of particular social classes or political groups and this kind of affiliation is often unconscious and implicit. As Pierre Macherey (1978) has shown, what is absent from an artists's work is sometimes as significant as what is present, and the author is never the sole person responsible for the silences in his or her work.

A broader conception of what produces a work of art should lead to a reappraisal of those works which have come to be called works of art. These can no longer be seen as objects replete with their own meanings. If they are systems of signs, these signs point to the history, the society and the discourses that give them meaning. One cannot, for example, explain what a novel by Wilbur Smith means unless one understands what an adventure thriller is, in historical, social and economic terms. Similarly, individual love songs derive their meanings from the discourse of love songs, which is historically, socially and economically constituted.

An aspect of educational and media studies which is often neglected is the relationship between meaning and the degree of exposure to cultural products. As John Downing (1980:33) points out, 'it is the very daily

operation of media which is that is at the core of their role'. If we bear this in mind, as well as the work/leisure split I have mentioned, we can see why pupils often see the culture of the English and music classrooms as alien.

As I have already indicated, the interaction of media and other institutions has a determining effect on the meaning of cultural products and processes. This has a number of implications for the notion of the Ideal Reader which I discussed in Chapter 2. It is worth repeating here that educators a greater interest in how literature and criticism are actually perceived by their students and how these responses are informed by the factors I have been discussing. To ignore this is in fact to do a disservice to the 'cultural heritage' that is allegedly being preserved.

At whose expense, moreover, is this minority culture being preserved? This question cannot be addressed without considering all the labour involved in making cultural products and creating the affluence of the minority group. Again, if we think of culture as that which individuals which separate cultural groups produce, we lose crucial perspectives. Firstly, the affluence of a social group will affect the nature of its culture, but the affluence itself derives from the exploitation of people regarded as outside the affluent group. Secondly, the cultural products which are consumed by the 'privileged' group would often not exist in material form were it not for the labour of 'culturally' excluded groups. It is in this sense that poor working people are alienated as well as exploited by the culture that they help to produce. What is more, as Gramsci and Freire would point out, the alienated ideology of the affluent group is then interiorized by the oppressed to compound their alienation. If we consider all the materials required to sustain so-called Afrikaner culture, such as bricks for theatres, shops and cinemas; paper and ink for literature; vinyl and cardboard for records - can we say that 'Afrikaner'

culture would remain the same (or have become what it is) if Afrikaners were entirely responsible for the production of all these materials? At the same time poor working people in South Africa, when they have shown signs of producing cultural forms that articulate their needs and aspirations, have been frequently suffocated, exploited and manipulated by the media and largely ignored by educational institutions.

It should be clear that the effects of cultural products and media messages cannot be considered apart from the complex conditions under which they are produced and consumed. We constantly have to re-examine our cultural practices and ask whether they are dynamic and liberating for the national culture as a whole.

We may find that our success or failure depends on whether we adopt an open or closed use of the media. These two approaches may be summed up and contrasted as follows:

Closed use of media:	Open use of media:
1. Centrally controlled.	1. Decentralised.
2. One transmitter, many receivers.	2. Each receiver a potential or actual transmitter.
3. Relatively passive consumer behaviour.	3. Interaction: constructive feedback.
4. Control by bureaucracy.	4. Social control by self-organised action.

The crucial advantage of the open model is that it allows people to define and meet their real material and cultural needs, but the transition from a closed to an open model cannot happen overnight, and educators need to define the strategies required to make oppressed people take control of their own culture.

In approaching popular song, educators and their students are faced with several difficulties. Firstly, neither group has the interdisciplinary knowledge to make sense of this vast and complex field of study. However,

beginnings are often humble, and the English classroom may be the best place to start. I shall now indicate briefly some ways in which a study of popular song can be integrated into the current English syllabus.

METHODS OF INTRODUCING POPULAR SONG INTO THE CURRENT SYLLABUS, WITH EXAMPLES FOR A COUNTER-HEGEMONIC PEDAGOGY

Firstly, the concerns of songwriters, musicians and their critics can be related to those of poets, novelists and dramatists, and much can be gained from seeing what these forms of artistic practice have or do not have in common. During a year in which Antony and Cleopatra was the prescribed play in Standard Ten, I discussed Richard Thompson's song The Egypt Room and then asked the class (as one of several options) to write a short story linking the thematic concerns of the play and song to the pupils' own perceptions of a modern industrial setting. Here is the lyric, followed by the story which one of the students produced. (The story, incidentally, predates and is interestingly similar to the Ingmar Bergman film 'From the Life of the Marionettes'.):

THE EGYPT ROOM

Hobnail Kelly and the Beefcake Kid
 Just rolled in to town from the
 Land of sown-up faces
 Looking for a woman who can
 Punch and kick and bite
 Slide on down to the Egypt Room
 Find the only woman who's
 Holding all the aces
 The Princess is dancing
 At the Egypt Room tonight

Don't be late
 Don't be late
 Don't be late

She's a nightclub floosie, nothing but a tramp
 But she moves like a snake
 And she shimmies like a fish in the ocean
 She can fool with a man 'till
 He doesn't know wrong from right

She's got diamond bracelets, ruby rings
 She sparkles like the Nile when
 She does her original motion
 The Princess is dancing
 At the Egypt Room tonight

The man with the cane and Italian shoes
 Creeps like a lion looking
 For a lonely Christian
 He sees the Princess and
 His bloodshot eyes open wide
 He says, Meet me, Princess, after the show
 I'm a gambling man and I think
 I like your system
 I'll see you at the back of
 The Egypt Room tonight.

Richard Thompson

THE EGYPT ROOM

He stumbled into the dim, smoky room. The deep, rhythmical music seemed to throb in his head and the room with its dull, red lights swayed before his haggard eyes. Richard Kane made his way to the bar. As he sipped the burning brandy and the pain gradually dulled, the tomblike room faded and his mind wandered.

The phone-call from Tony's wife, Jill. The endless drive to the hospital. The white corridors. The iron bed. Tony lying there ... too still. Jill's pale face, her dry eyes, their joined hands. He was too late. He and Jill walked out with their arms around each other, tightly, comforting, trying to share their grief.

When he arrived home that night, Susan was there with a drink in her hand, her shimmering dress, flashing smile, fashionable friends. He walked through to his study, blankly. When he came back to get a drink, Susan had emptied the house of strangers and she stood draped against the mantelpiece with an annoyed, irritated expression on her beautiful face. "What's happened now, Richard? I do wish you wouldn't be so rude in front of my friends. Anyway, we never have time to discuss anything nowadays. You're always busy at the office. Oh, by the way, Alan Faulkner phoned, said something about your forgetting the contract. Asked if you were well. Sit down, Richard. What's wrong?"

"Nothing, Susan, nothing. My best friend has just died of a heart attack." Susan, consoling and crooning, made him feel nauseated and claustrophobic. Richard felt ill. He grabbed his coat and shrank wearily from his home. His face was wet as he climbed into his car and drove off.

He drove around aimlessly, through the evening fairyland of neon buildings and kaleidoscope streets. He came to a standstill outside a seedy building, the Egypt Room.

That was last week Tuesday or Wednesday, he couldn't remember. As he turned from the bar to face the raised dais, he saw the Princess with her evil, pre-historic looking snake wound around her neck as usual. Her white dress revealed her perfectly proportioned body, functional, her painted face, pouting lips and false smile, her mocking eyes.

As he made his way to her dressing-room, he noticed the imitation hieroglyphics carved into the walls. She lay sprawled on her divan, resting. He leaned against the doorpost, tired, sad, drunk. She laughed silkenly, beckoning with her painted nails, very sure. Suddenly Richard felt very sick and very old. What had attracted him to her in the first place? Was he trying to find an outlet for his emotions through her sexuality? He had not been to the office for a week and he barely showed his face at home. Home. He laughed. Through his hazy eyes he saw the Princess and Susan merging and separating, laughing, mocking, playing with him, sure, confident, knowing. Their laughter rang in his head and suddenly his inner tension and frustration, his bitter grief and confusion, forced a rising emotion like something boiling over which cannot be stopped, and his anger and repulsion of these two women, and the world, erupted and his eyes blazed.

Everything seemed to happen at once. He could feel nothing, but he saw his hands grabbing the Princess and bashing her head against the wall again and again. He heard screaming, but didn't know where it came from. He thought he saw Susan. He hit out and thrashed at her. His eyes were swimming, blurred, and he couldn't see. He felt his body sinking, slowly sinking and shuddering in great racking sobs. He felt himself screaming. Sound crashed in his ears. His eyes seemed dark and the world turned black.

When Richard regained consciousness, he was in an armchair. There were strangers all around him, some in uniform. He was confused and dazed. As he was shuffled through the Egypt Room to the main entrance, he looked up and saw above the door a great, big painted eye, watching, watching. He stumbled on, out of the building to the waiting police cars, cameras flashing and clicking. Richard Kane of Kane Enterprises was lost, bewildered. He wondered if he was insane. He had never

felt so old and alone in his life, so utterly alone.
 He could still feel the eye boring into him, as if
 into his very soul; the eye of the world, watching,
 the universal bystander.

Juliette Kieser

Secondly, we can study the nature of language by looking at popular songs. Reggae is particularly useful in this respect. I have, for example, used Dick Hebdige's article, 'Reggae, Rastas and Rudies' (in Hall and Jefferson (eds.) 1975:135-155) to inform pupils about the social history of reggae language and then provided the following exercise which is faithful to the syllabus in several respects:

Listen to and read the following lyric and then, working in groups of two or three, answer the questions that follow:

CRAZY BALDHEAD

Them crazy, them crazy
 We gonna chase those crazy baldheads out of town
 Chase those crazy baldheads out of town
 I and I build the cabin
 I and I plant the corn
 Didn't my people before me
 Slave for this country?
 Now you look me with a scorn
 Then you eat up all my corn
 We gonna chase those crazy baldheads
 Chase them crazy
 Chase those crazy baldheads out of town
 (Scatting ...)

Build you penitentiaries
 We build you schools
 Brainwash education
 To make us the fools
 Hatred is your reward for our love
 Telling us of your God above
 We gonna chase those crazy
 Chase those crazy bunkheads
 Chase those crazy baldheads out of town

Here comes the con-man
 Coming with his con-plan
 We won't take no bribe
 We got to stay alive

We gonna chase those crazy
 Chase those crazy baldheads
 Chase those crazy baldheads out of town

BOB MARLEY
 from the album Rastaman Vibration

QUESTIONS

1. Write this lyric as a paragraph of prose in formal, standard English. Begin as follows: In his song Crazy Baldhead Bob Marley says that ...
2. Judging by the lyric as a whole, what adjectives, apart from 'crazy', could be used to qualify 'baldhead'?
3. Rewrite the rhetorical question in lines 6 - 7 as a statement. Which do you prefer, the statement or the question? Why?
4. 'Now you look me with the scorn
Then you eat up all my corn'
How would the meaning be affected if 'then' were replaced by the logical connector 'but'?
5. What logical connector or connectors have you used to link
 - (a) lines 13-14 with lines 15-16, and
 - (b) lines 17 and 18?
6. What common nouns could be substituted for 'baldheads' in the song? Which of these strikes you as the best substitute? Why?
7. Explain the ways in which the song differs from Standard English in its use of pronouns.
8. Show how the use of pronouns reveals that the song is directed at two different audiences. To which of these audiences do you feel you belong? Why?
9. Why, do you think, does Marley write in a language much closer to Standard English than the creole patios to be found in the ghettos of Jamaica?
10. List the verbs used in the song. What emotions do these verbs express?

Pupils may then be asked to devise similar questions based on lyrics of their own choice.

In my opinion and experience, this kind of exercise achieves several educational objectives, not the least of which is finding a way of healing the damaging rift between popular and classroom culture. Also in language study, we can use songs to break away from stereotypical comprehension exercises. The latter usually involve

text-centred questions on randomly selected prose extracts and usually encourage convergent rather than divergent thinking. Here is an exercise which I have used (in slightly different forms) with school and university students to break away from this conventional model:

The students are asked to listen to and read the lyric and then, in pairs or threes, to work out two searching questions based on the song and then to do a drawing or design which relates the song to the social context of the Cape Peninsula. The students, still in groups, are then asked to answer questions 3, 5, 8 and 9 on the worksheet provided after reading and considering all the questions carefully. The students, still in their groups, then discuss any interesting differences between their questions and drawings and those handed out. There is then an open discussion by the class as a whole. The drawing reproduced here was in fact done by a Standard Nine student after we had discussed the meaning of the song. This student was in the so-called 'bottom set' and seldom obtained more than 40% for English. Here is one example of the lyrics I have used in this kind of exercise, followed by the questions I prepared and the pupil's drawing which I shall use in future lessons based on 'Message in a Bottle':

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Just a castaway, I am lost at sea oh
 Another lonely day, no-one here but me oh
 More loneliness any man could bear
 Question me before I fall into despair oh

Refrain I'll send an S.O.S. to the world (x2)
 I hope that someone gets my (x3)
 Message in a bottle yeah (x2)

A year has passed since I wrote my note
 I should have known this right from the start
 Only hope can keep me together
 Love can mend you life
 But love can break your heart

Refrain

Walked out this morning, don't believe what I saw
 A hundred billion bottles washed up on the shore
 Seems I'm not alone in being alone
 A hundred billion castaways looking for a home

Refrain I'll send an S.O.S. to the world (x2)
 I hope that someone gets my (x3)
 Message in a bottle yeah (x4)
 I'm sending out an S.O.S. (x25)

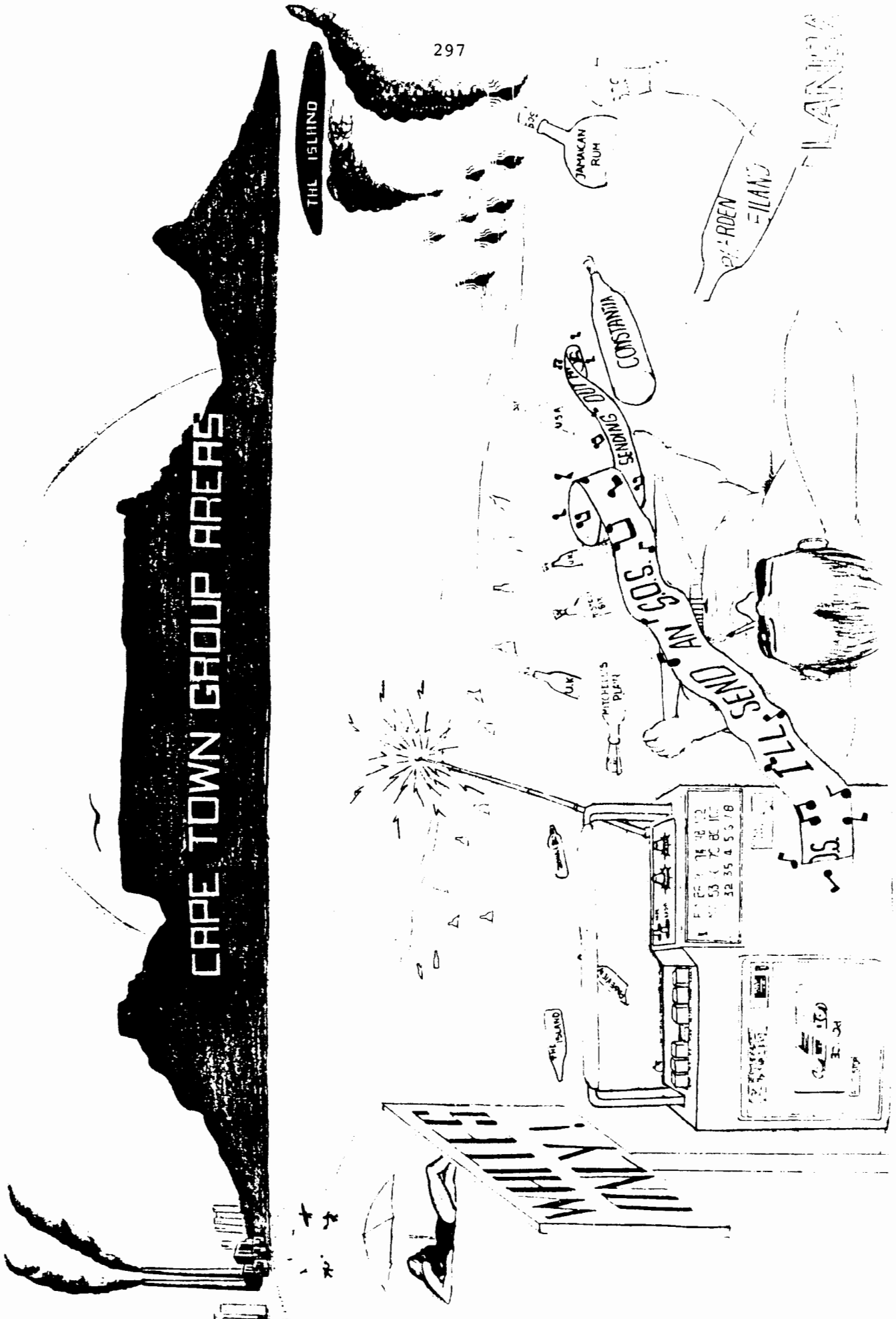
STING for The Police

from the album Regatta de Blanc

QUESTIONS

1. 'This song is about what one might call the loss of community or, in other words, a total breakdown in communication.' Do you agree with this interpretation? Comment briefly.
2. What is the central metaphor on which the song is based? What sort of cultural background does one need in order to be familiar with this metaphor?
3. Is it true to say that Sting doesn't seem to mind who in the world receives his 'S.O.S.'? Does it matter who receives it? Comment.
4. Many songs make use of make believe. Do you think this entitles Sting to sing 'No-one here but me' when he is performing with a band, aided by studio technicians, and financed by a record company? Comment.
5. Assuming that Sting is about to 'fall into despair', what questions do you think could avert this? (See line 4)
6. How do you respond to the final refrain? Is it a ridiculous gesture after the billions of bottles have been 'seen' in the previous verse? Is it hopeful? Comment.
7. Would you say that Sting's approach to the problem posed in the song is an active one or a passive one? Comment.
8. Do you think the fact that this is dance music affects the meaning of the lyrics? Have you 'got' Sting's 'message' if you dance to the song while listening to it? How do the dancing styles related to this kind of music relate to the meaning of this song?
9. What do you think the accompanying drawing is saying about the meaning of the song?

CAPE TOWN GROUP AREAS



In my view, this kind of exercise makes an important break from the traditional notion that only works of 'literary merit' are worthy of careful study. It does so by refusing to see the work studied as a closed system of meaning and encouraging pupils to develop a genuinely responsive and responsible social imagination.

As regards oral work, we can suggest group orals around centres of interest such as musical subcultures, the United Nations cultural boycott and local music. Drama has possibilities for relating song to other media. Students could, for example, satirize the way in which television presents popular song and musicians. Some songs have potential for dramatic improvisation in which students expand on situations depicted in songs. I once devised the structure for an improvised trial scene based on 'Sonny's Lettah' by Linton Kwesi Johnson.

Another practical suggestion I would like to make concerns project work. Pupils can do individual research on any aspect of popular song. In my experience it is better for teachers and/or students to set topics which pose problems and have a clear direction. If this is not done, pupils laden with the ideology of dependency merely regurgitate biographies and paraphrase lyrics. An example of a challenging topic would be: 'Examine the oft-repeated claim that pop music corrupts South African Youth'.

At this point I would like to return to Freire's notion of the 'generative theme' which I focused on in Chapter 6. I showed there that, despite all the constraints, it is worth trying to devise work schemes that allow for the sustained study of related issues. In collecting and devising lesson materials for the study of popular song I have used the generative themes of domination (as suggested by Freire) and alienation to inform four broad areas of crucial importance to the study of popular song.

The first of these areas I have called 'Music and Community'. Here I pose the problem of definition. What is 'community'? What are communities? How many kinds of

community are there? How do systems of communication affect our sense of community? In the following exercise I was seeking to explore the relationship between communication, the school community, subcultures and the social formation as a whole. The material here has proved sufficient for a whole week of very lively controversy. Five or six of the questions provided are enough for a lesson if the students discuss them in small groups and then share their conclusions with the class as a whole. Here is the exercise (see pages 301-305 for the text and drawings on which the questions are based):

QUESTIONS

1. Imagine that you are Mr Van Gradgrind. Explain why a member of your class is standing in the corner. The explanation should try to make it clear why what has been done is in the interests of 'good communication'.

In reply to Mr Van Gradgrind, try to formulate an argument which shows that exclusion from a group cannot be in the interests of 'good communication'.

2. Imagine again that you are Mr Van Gradgrind. Try to explain why you feel justified in interrupting the hesitant boy.

In reply to Mr Van Gradgrind, try to formulate an argument which shows that such interruption cannot be justified.

3. To what extent does the presence of Mr Van Gradgrind's cane define the kind of communication going on in his classroom? How would Mr Van Gradgrind justify his use of a cane? Is the cane simply an instrument that Mr Van Gradgrind uses, or does it point to a larger system of authority? Comment.

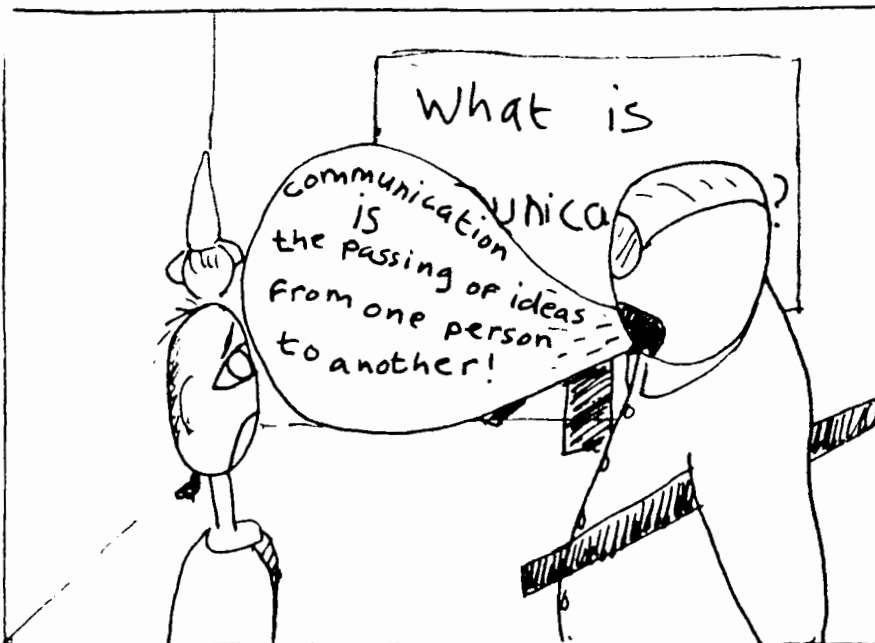
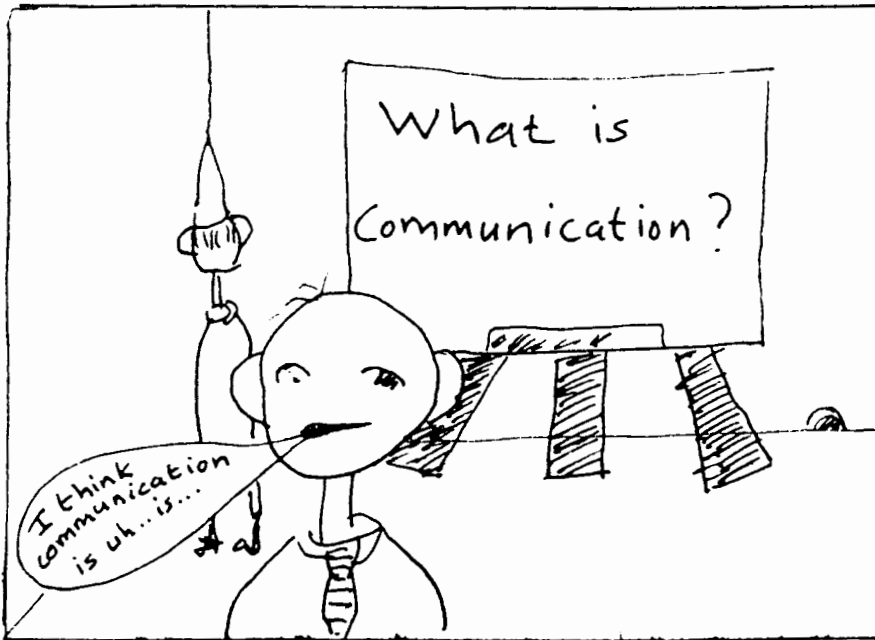
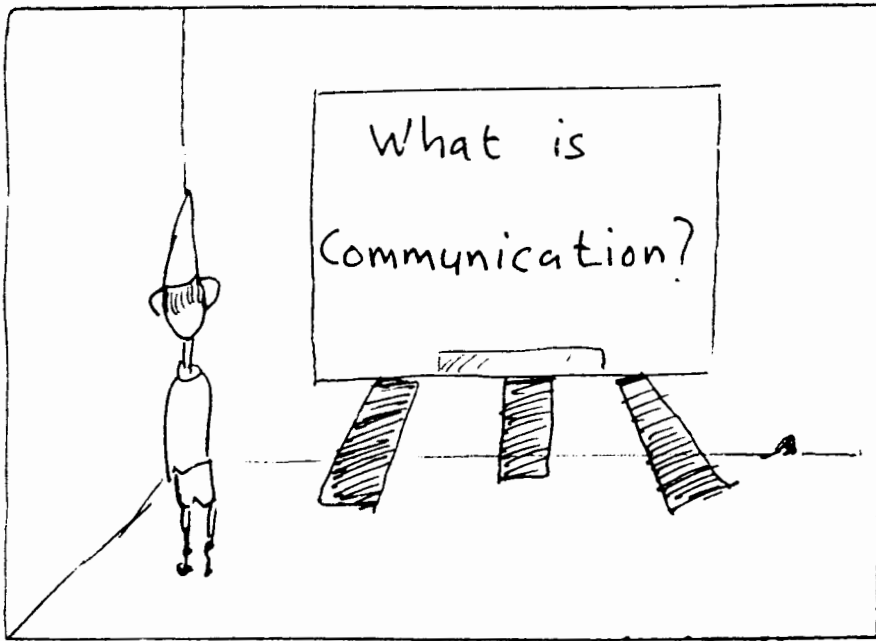
4. In what circumstances would Mr Van Gradgrind be justified in saying, 'Stop talking!'? In what circumstances would he not be justified?

5. Assume that we are looking at a South African classroom. Try to show how the 'strings attached' have a bearing on what is happening in the classroom. What important 'strings' have not been named in the picture? Make suggestions.

6. 'The nature of communication is also affected by the immediate environment.' How does the accompanying picture show this? Refer to as many details in the picture as possible.

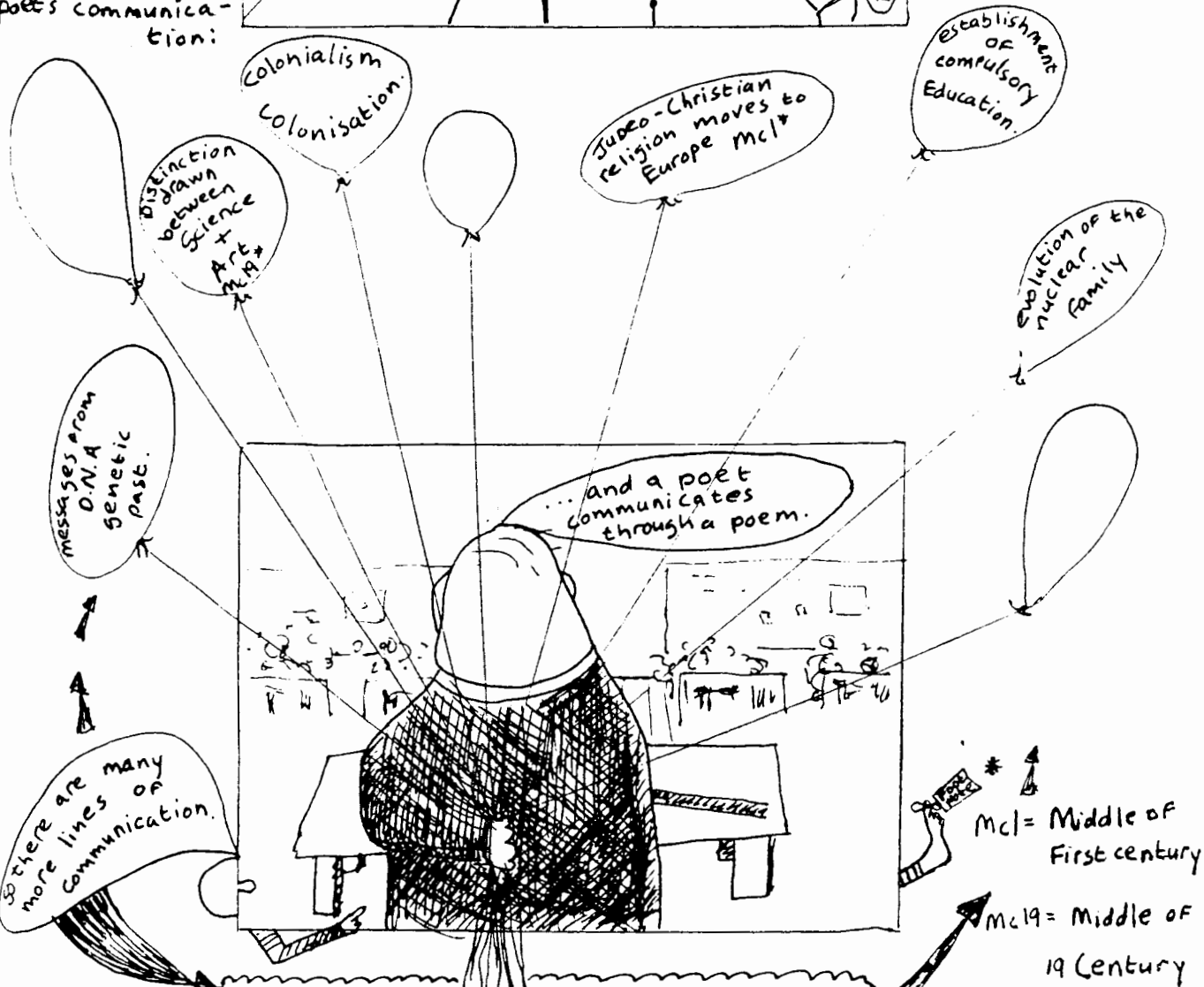
7. How does the presence of the starving people affect the meaning of Stanley Kunitz's metaphor?

8. Do you agree that 'Only Love Can Break Your Heart'? Comment.
9. What does Polly on his perch symbolize?
10. Can a useful distinction be made between the transmission of knowledge and the sharing of knowledge? Discuss.
11. Why do you think Shakespeare's work is prescribed for study at school? Would you say that his work improves or breaks down communication in the classroom? Discuss.
12. What reasons can be advanced in favour of compulsory schooling? What reasons can be advanced against it?
13. Which languages, if any, should be part of the school curriculum? Discuss.
14. What arguments could be raised in defence of compulsory religious instruction at school? What arguments could be raised against it?
15. Why is 'youth preparedness' considered a necessary part of schooling in South Africa? What are your views on this matter?
16. Do you think pupils at school should be taught to be obedient? Discuss. (If you have read 'Lord of the Flies' you could relate your discussion to it.)
17. Do you think there is a significant connection between competitive sports and I.Q. tests? Discuss. What do these activities communicate to pupils?
18. It is in any sense true to say that some pupils are taught to 'kill your neighbour'? Discuss.
19. Is it true that rich people are more likely to be thought of as 'clever' than poor people? Give reasons for your answer.
20. Why do you think some people get 'good' jobs while others don't? How did you come to believe this?
21. Do you think a pupil would be justified in asking his teachers, 'What about John Travolta? That's who I like.'? Give reasons for your answer.
22. According to the pictures, what do William Shakespeare and Sonja Herholdt have in common?
23. Do you agree that American and European music is 'an offer you can't refuse'? Discuss.
24. Do Mr Van Gradgrind's teaching methods and the SATV news have anything in common? Comment.



Here we take the liberty of questioning Mr. van Gradgrind's definition of Communication.

Communication is a larger process than Mr. van Gradgrind's 'one person to another' suggests. For instance, see the strings attached to what he says about the poet's communication:

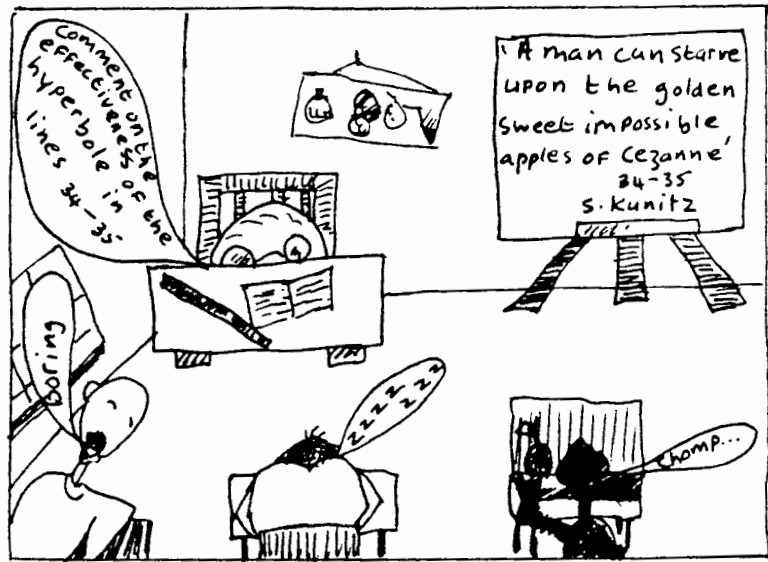


these include the 'natural' and 'historical' or 'social'

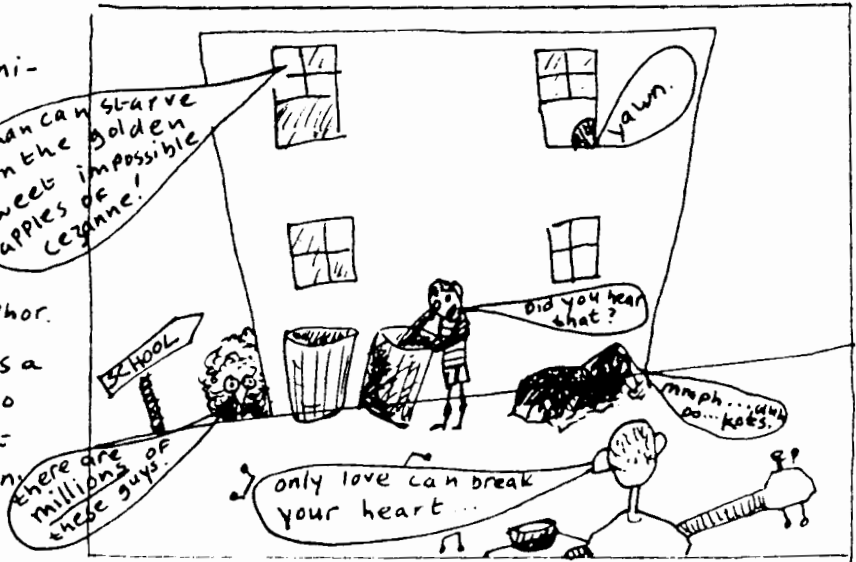
We can see that communication is more than the passing of ideas: it is also the channelling of historical processes.

The quality of communication also depends on the groups to which people believe they belong. In the case of teachers and pupils, for example, the division into 'us' and 'them' may prevent communication.

the nature of communication is also affected by the immediate environment.



We can see that the lack of communication between Mr. van Gradgrind, his pupils and the starving men affects the meaning of S. Kunitz's metaphor. To see the poem as a closed system is to block an important line of communication.



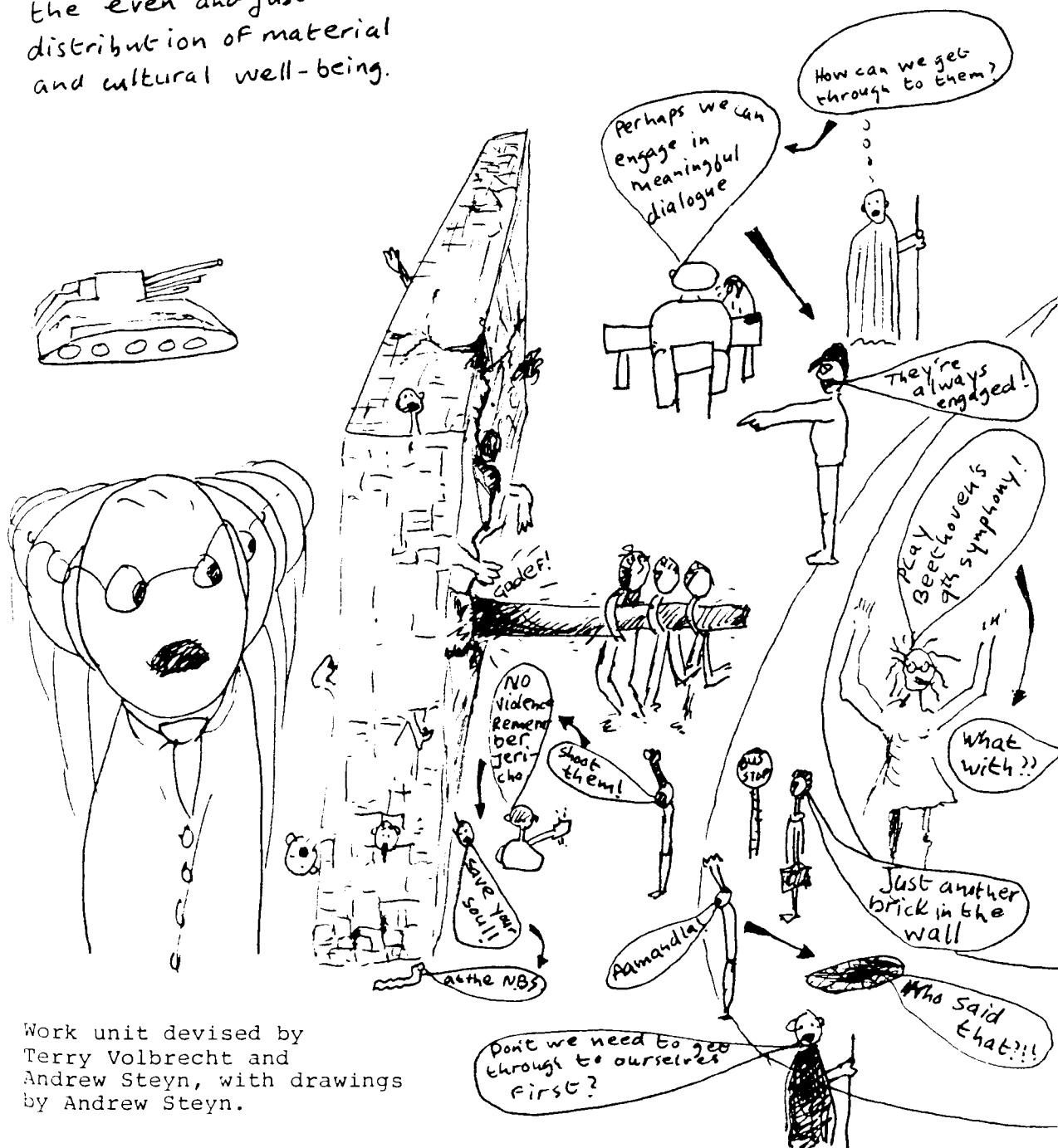
Polly on his perch...
good Polly...

These illustrations also enable us to see what Mr. van Gradgrind assumes about the control of communication. He and the system that supports him assume the authority to control the direction in which communication flows. His main aim is to transmit knowledge, not to share it.

Mr. van Gradgrind's standpoint is often evident in other media and institutions.

His standpoint creates an imaginary relationship of equivalence + individualism to the "real non-equivalent collective conditions of existence."
(S. Hall et al in 'On Ideology')

Mr. van Gradgrind's standpoint accepts structures that prevent the even and just distribution of material and cultural well-being.



Work unit devised by Terry Volbrecht and Andrew Steyn, with drawings by Andrew Steyn.

25. Do you think the creation of various radio and TV channels under centralized control is in the interests of good communication? Discuss.
26. Do you agree that the Top 20 can lure people away from 'real issues'? Give reasons for your answer.
27. What, according to the picture, is broken during the '1st commercial break'?
28. What sort of things are censored at school and in the media? Would you say that this censorship is in the interests of good communication? Discuss.
29. Do you think it is possible to 'develop along your own lines'? Discuss.
30. Imagine that you are on the left-hand side of the wall in the final picture. What would you do?
31. Imagine that you are on the right-hand side of the wall. What would you do?
32. Would you change the picture to give a truer picture of our society as you see it? If so, how? Does either picture depict a state of good communication? If not, what is wrong?

This framework also enables us to explore the relationship between music, literature and nationalism. In 1983 I built a work unit around the prescribed anti-nationalist poem by e.e. cummings, 'next to of course god america' and 'The Stare's Next by my Window' by W.B. Yeats. I devised a range of activities around the topics of nationalism, imperialism and civil war. Material I used included, as a comprehension exercise, a two-page historical overview of nationalism from the New Internationalist magazine and Buffy Sainte-Marie's song 'My Country 'Tis of Thy People you're Dying'. There are several fine songs on this issue including Victor Jara's 'Manifesto', Juluka's 'Universal Man' and 'Unkosibomvu (The Red King)', the Beat's 'I Am Your Flag' and Bob Marley's 'Zimbabwe'.

There is, I believe a limitless range of possibilities to explore under the heading of 'music and community'. I do not intend trying to suggest what they are, but would like to stress the importance of analysing

the subcultural styles, such as reggae, punk and disco, with which most pupils so readily identify. Pupils in my experience are fascinated by attempts to 'decode' these styles, as in these comments by Dick Hebdige in discussing punk style:

How can we discern any positive values in objects which were chosen only to be discarded? For instance, we can say that the early punk ensembles gestured towards the signified's 'Modernity' and 'working-classness'. The safety pins and bin liners signified a relative material poverty which was either directly experienced and exaggerated or sympathetically assumed, and which in turn was made to stand for the spiritual paucity of everyday life. In other words, the safety pins, etc. 'enacted' that transition from real to symbolic scarcity which Paul Piccone (1969) has described as the movement from 'empty stomachs' to 'empty spirits' - and therefore an empty life notwithstanding (the) chrome and the plastic ... of the life style of bourgeois society'.

We could go further and say that even if the poverty was being parodied, the wit was undeniably barbed; that beneath the clownish make-up there lurked the unaccepted and disfigured face of capitalism; that beyond the horror circus antics a divided and unequal society was being eloquently condemned.

(1979: 115)

The relationship between the spectacular subculture and the various industries which service and exploit it is notoriously ambiguous. After all, such a subculture is concerned first and foremost with consumption. It operated exclusively in the leisure sphere ('I wouldn't wear my punk outfit for work - there's a time and a place for everything'.) It communicates through commodities even if the meanings attached to those commodities are purposefully distorted or overthrown. It is therefore difficult in this case to maintain any absolute distinction between commercial exploitation on the one hand and creativity/originality on the other, even though these categories are emphatically opposed in the value systems of

most subcultures. Indeed, the creation and diffusion of new styles is inextricably bound up with the process of production, publicity and packaging which must inevitably lead to the defusion of the subculture's subversive power - both mod and punk innovations fed back directly into high fashion and mainstream fashion. Each new subculture establishes new trends, generates new looks and sounds which feed back into the appropriate industries.

(1979: 95)

The second thematic framework I have used is 'The Country and the City' (after the important book of that title by Raymond Williams). Traditionally the country and the city have been seen as embodying conflicting value systems, and in this framework I encourage exploration of the ways in which this polarity affects the cultural forms in which people live out their social experience. An important aim is to consider what aspects of the rural and urban environment are most worthy of attention by everyone in our society. The media, including songs, can easily engender distorted images of rural and urban life, so that, for example, a contemplation or romanticising of nature can supplant a concern for the living or working conditions of people in the urban or rural environment while concealing the devastating effects of industrial capitalism on the natural resources being celebrated by literature and the publicity industry. Media, in the hands of hegemonic ideologues, also make it possible to appropriate and exploit aspects of rural cultures by detaching them from their historical or social contexts. The musical 'Ipi Tombi' is a notorious example of this. This whole issue is well covered in Muff Andersson's Music in the Mix.

Most of the concerns about the relationship between the country and the city that are to be found in the work of Romantic and modern poets and novelists are present in the various forms of popular song that have emerged since

the 1950s, as well as in older forms such as the country blues, the folk songs of Woody Guthrie and the latter stages of the British ballad tradition. In recent years a few important songwriters have emerged in South Africa, including Jonathan Clegg of Juluka and David Kramer. Both of these artists have explored the character of and the relationship between urban and rural life in South Africa in very different and valuable ways. Their songs should form an essential part of any South African English teacher's repertoire.

Another important thematic framework is the one I discussed in Chapter 6, namely the euphemistic reference to class struggle under the heading 'rich and poor'. I do not propose to give an account of lesson materials in this area as the work unit on Victor Jara discussed in Chapter 6 and the exercise on Bob Marley's 'Crazy Bald-head' should have given a sense of the possibilities in this area. I would, however, like to re-emphasise the urgency of the issue. There is surely no greater crisis in the world today than the death and suffering caused by the grotesquely unequal distribution of wealth. Faced with the full enormity of the situation, one must wonder at the ridiculous inadequacy of most educational systems. When White English-speaking South African ('WESSA') pupils should be digging at the roots of poverty and learning how to eradicate it, as their fellow pupils in poorer areas are doing, they are fed an 'education' that is manifestly inadequate for dealing with the problem. Not only are their skills inadequate, but the attitudes instilled into WESSA pupils are no more or less than lethal mystification. There can be no doubt the commercial popular music, and the glamorous images that accompany it, is one of the prime agents of mystification. What should be explored in these areas are the various proposed solutions to the problem of poverty, particularly as expressed in reggae, punk and disco songs. The work of South African songwriters, and the constraints imposed by the owners of the means of communication, should be

examined closely and challenged in as many ways as possible. In our study of popular song, literature and language the American Dream must be demystified as thoroughly as possible in all its forms. What should become clear is that intelligently organised action must follow theory and reflection if we are seriously committed to eradicating poverty. Our value judgements about literature and popular song will then be largely based on how we see their alignment with the struggle for effective theory and practice.

At several points in this dissertation I have stressed the importance of studying gender relations in our schools. Popular song clearly provides a golden opportunity for doing this since the overwhelming majority of pop songs are about heterosexual love. And yet, despite the vast quantity of material available, what most love songs actually have to say about love is very limited. There is, of course, a place for love songs that are as simply and profoundly enjoyable as kisses, but whether love songs should dominate popular music in the way they do is another matter. Since most love songs are about 'the battle of the sexes', the struggle to win and keep a mate, and the torment involved in losing a lover, it is easy to conclude that the evenness of the battle is proof that men do not really oppress women. Their lives may be different, so such reasoning goes, but when it comes to romance, where we are supposed to find our greatest fulfilment and disappointment, men and women are equal. It is only when we look at what lies beyond romance for most women (the role of the housewife, worker and mother), at the inequalities in places of work, at the horrific extent of rape and wife-beating, and at the commercial pressures that sustain the ideology of romance, that we can begin to see the realities of love and the sexes in clearer perspective. As in the other issues I have considered, we need to provide pupils with a wide variety of material to deepen their understanding of songs in relation to setworks such as Romeo and Juliet,

Antony and Cleopatra, Othello, Sons and Lovers and The Go-between. As I have already shown, the feminist perspective is almost entirely absent from teaching in WESSA schools and it is in this perspective that we must study the work of such songwriters as Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Randy Newman, Bruce Springsteen, Joni Mitchell, Laurie Anderson, Bruce Cockburn, David Kramer, Elvis Costello and The Gang of Four. Needless to say, our interest in these 'artists' must not preclude careful study of more commercially successful writers and performers. In my view the study of love songs must be accompanied by critical work on the presentation of gender relations in other media. Here is an example of the kind of approach I have in mind. A feminist friend and colleague and I devised the following exercise based on 'She's Always a Woman' by Billy Joel:

SHE'S ALWAYS A WOMAN

She can kill with a smile
 She can wound with her eyes
 She can ruin your faith
 With her casual lies
 And she only reveals
 What she wants you to see
 She hides like a child
 But she's always a woman to me

She can lead you to live
 She can take you or leave you
 She can ask for the truth
 But she'll never believe you
 And she'll take what you give her
 As long as it's free
 She steals like a thief
 But she's always a woman to me

Oh - she takes care of herself
 She can wait if she wants
 She's ahead of her time
 Oh - and she never gives out
 And she never gives in
 She just changes her mind
 She will promise you more
 Than the Garden of Eden
 Then she'll carelessly cut you
 And laugh while you're bleedin'
 But she'll bring out the best
 And the worst you can be
 Blame it all on yourself
 Cause she's always a woman to me

Oh - she takes care of herself
 She can wait if she wants
 She's ahead of her time
 Oh - and she never gives out
 And she never gives in
 She just changes her mind
 She is frequently kind
 And she's suddenly cruel
 She can do as she pleases
 She's nobody's fool
 But she can't be convicted
 She's earned her degree
 And the most she will do
 Is throw shadows at you
 But she's always a woman to me

Billy Joel

QUESTIONS

1. Does the song only make sense if a man sings it? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Does the singer seem to have any audience in mind? Comment.
3. Despite all the things the woman described is capable of, she is 'always a woman'. This seems to be the ultimate compliment the speaker can pay her. Do you agree?
4. Why would a man see it as a way of praising a woman to say 'she's always a woman'?
5. Would all women feel it a compliment to be told 'You're always a woman'? Give reasons for your answer.
6. Would one woman praise another woman by saying 'You're always a woman'? Comment.
7. The song lists a number of qualities of the woman.
 - 7.1 Look through the latest issue of 'Fair Lady' or any fashion-oriented magazine and try to find one advertisement or article that emphasizes each quality mentioned.
 - 7.2 Try to think of a film/television/cartoon character who embodies one or more of these qualities.
 - 7.3 In your own words, describe the woman's character as seen by the speaker.
 - 7.4 Do you think the speaker is talking about one woman, or about women in general? Give reasons for your answer.

8. Would you agree that the speaker is referring to 'typically female' characteristics? Explain your answer.
9. Would you say the woman in the song is strong? Independent? Explain your answer.
10. Take each statement about her and apply it to a man instead. What sort of character emerges?
If it's different from that of the woman, why is that so?
11. Back to magazines of the 'Fair Lady' type. If you read any of their interviews with top women in business, politics, the arts, etc., there is a similar emphasis on the way the successful woman is still 'always a woman'. In what way is this emphasis meant to reassure the female readers? In what way is it likely to make them anxious? In what way does it reassure male readers?
12. Would you say this song reassures male listeners about anything? If so, what? What about female listeners?
13. Who or what, according to the song, is responsible for making this woman the way she is?
Consider lines 27 - 30, for example. Do you agree?
Comment.
14. Do you find any of the woman's attributes impossible to believe in? If you do, quote from the song in support of your answer.

In trying to break the stranglehold of patriarchy and capitalism on musical creativity we need to bear two fundamental points in mind when using popular song in English teaching. The first of these I have already discussed, which is the necessity of demystifying the hegemonic structures and processes through which most pop music is produced. The second point pertains to the affective dimensions of this music. It would be very easy to mount an academic, intellectual assault on the ideologies as they appear in school itself. When I have played songs in classrooms and university lecture theatres I have immediately become aware of the dissonance between the emotional sexual energy in the music and the repressive ambience of educational institutions. Schoolchildren are in a precarious space where they are in overt or silent rebellion against the ideology of schooling while at the same time struggling to adapt to and survive in

the hegemonic order. My own tendency is to make their rebellion as creative and constructive as possible, and in order to achieve this I have tried to show the emotional and intellectual dimensions of my own rebelliousness as openly as possible. I have tried to make pupils feel the living, emotional strength of counter-hegemonic cultural practice. By this kind of example, as well as working with them and their cultural interests in dialogic pedagogy, I have tried to find ways in which we can create liberated zones of consciousness in the ivory citadel of the ruling class.

It may be argued that with some justification that the approaches to popular song which I have outlined neglect the musical aspect of songs and does not show students how to produce their own songs. However, until we have a more flexible curriculum, with more interdisciplinary activities, it does not seem feasible to attempt a synthesis of music and language in the English classroom. It is possible and necessary to alert students to the musical mediation of verbal meanings but I have not encountered much published work of this nature. Impressionistic and sociological approaches still dominate most criticism of popular music. In any event, the economic, social and political factors that will transform the role of songs in our culture are not centred in the school, which is probably just as well. However, there is, as I have tried to show in this short introduction to an important field of study, much to be gained from an imaginative exploration of song lyrics. As part of what Joel Spring calls 'a total revolutionary endeavour', the study of popular song can help to bring important issues into focus.

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