1. THE NATURE OF THE INQUIRY

1. BACKGROUND

The basis for this inquiry stems from a fundamental discomfort with the way in which text is understood to have educational value in the subject ‘English’ at junior and senior high school level in Australia today. The way in which text and the reader are defined is problematic because there are conflicting views. Both the role and nature of the reader and text are either misunderstood, have been poorly understood in terms of recent research, or are anchored in particular approaches which do not include current understandings. Added to these competing perceptions from within the profession of English teaching are public expectations and political pressures which are escalating and intensifying the debate about what should and what should not be the business of English teachers.

Nowhere is this more visible than in current attempts at curriculum reform. In New South Wales, this is illustrated in the K-6 English syllabus, which has been attended by competing views of the place of grammar and functional views of English, of genre and of text types. Added to these views there is a debate about ideologies: away from what are by some perceived as logo-centric and patriarchal views, away from a canonical view of text as a shrine to cultural heritage, and towards gender-based textual studies, to poststructuralist and deconstructive practices, towards a much sharpened understanding of literacy practices, and towards a postcolonial, multi-cultural view of ideology with a broader, more inclusive base.

The discomfort is not with these shifts in critical emphases. In a sense, these are at the edges of the discipline. The discomfort is more with the perceived changes of value which characterize literature education within the current theoretical framework within
which English is studied. The concern is with maintaining the educational role of literature knowing that theoretical frameworks and critical literary practices will always vary, shift, and redefine themselves. The perception is that liberal values, or what passes as liberal or humanities-based learning, must make way to a more line-managed form of education which is dominated by a particularly expressed utilitarian imperative.

Paradigmatic understandings of literature at any given time may have different emphases, but there are some human-forming values which an engagement with literature offers that are constant. These can be arguably best found in a liberal rationalist position, articulated by scholars such as Bailey (1984), Peters (1971, 1977), Hirst (1974), Bantock (1981) and Bullock (1985), and these will be further explored. Such values are at the core of what literature as a humanity contributes to the conversation of humankind. These are insights and intrinsic worth that characterize all that literature which engages the reader, and intellectually and emotionally challenges him or her. The search here is for those constants which characterize literature and which are personally and educationally meaningful irrespective of any paradigmatically measurement-dominated critical environment.

It follows that such a search should look to valuing reader response in ways which have not been accommodated in A Statement, but which have been understood in the relevant theory for some time. Also, the direction of this inquiry aims to separate the tertiary pursuit of the ideological placement of text from the treatment of modern criticism in secondary school learning environments, where the nature of what English teachers do with text differs in praxis from the kinds of critical theorizing enjoyed in universities devoted to textual studies.

There is no discomfort with the relationship between text and language in English curriculum. It is recognized that the study of language and text figure with equal prominence in a course of English as described by the curriculum of NSW or in A
Statement. It is also recognized that in the study of language research into literacy will bring with it new ways of conceptualizing language, and a functional view of language is an example of such a development within the critical discourse which builds on past learning and understandings of language and grammar. The fact that literacy is open to various such critical advances and interpretations can only add to the quality of the discussion, and the public understanding of its importance.

Similarly, this discomfort is not with the way literary criticism has changed in the working time of this teacher of English. As an example, I began studying Shakespeare at a time when Caesar was studied in German for its historical value (in Switzerland in 1964), came to Australia when A.C. Bradley’s Wheels of Fire (1904) was viewed as critically most relevant and insightful (1968), then proceeded along various psychological, historical, and phenomenological interpretations of Shakespeare only to now be standing in a critical discourse which suggests that Shakespeare is a Dead White Males (David Williamson, 1995) whose particular view of humankind is patriarchal and outdated in a postmodern perspective of literary criticism. While not agreeing with this current view of Shakespeare, the argument is not with the fact that there will always be altered and evolving critical models.

English education has traditionally been about two things, the study of language and the study of text. The argument here is not with how language is approached or framed in A Statement on English for Australian Schools. The focus of this study is specifically on how literature is treated within that strand known as ‘Text’.

An education in literature used to achieve a generalist, humanities-based understanding of the values and quality which characterize any society described in a particular book. The discomfort therefore focuses on two disquieting views which are seen as fundamentally distorting the traditional humanities base in the way text used to be valued.
The first disquiet is about different theoretical perceptions of text and the reader, and the second disquiet is about competing models of English. Regarding the first, the treatment of literature within the strand of text is a particular interpretation which emerges from a specific model of English teaching. It represents a view which is here regarded as distorting the traditional humanities base in the way literature used to be valued, and still very much is valued by English educators. Literature used to be valued for the quality by which it is able to mirror society. Such an understanding sees literature (and text) as cultural heritage or capital, not as canonically unique, but as a unique art form nevertheless. That such text can be of the past, present or set in imaginative future settings is quite acceptable. Such text used to be in the form of the novel, play or poetry. It is acknowledged that new forms of text such as media (film and video, computers, radio and audio) increasingly claim ownership of meaning within text in differing formats. The merging of literature with text is not in itself a source of discomfort. What is disquieting is the way literature in A Statement has been downvalued from its inherent and intrinsic educational values and transformed into a utilitarian instrument of an applied comprehension and deconstructive skills-based nature.

1.1.1 Competing Models of Reader and Text

The first discomfort is with how reader and text are viewed. This unease was initially intuitive, but the process of clarifying the issue has greatly helped an understanding of the nature of competing values, and as such forms a critical part of chapter three in which both are defined from within their respective theoretical fields.

The initial unease came from the broader perspective of the ways political and social perception sought to shape what literature ought to be taught in schools¹. That date is

¹ 1988 saw the election of a new Liberal government in NSW which was to last until 1995. Dr Metherell was its first Minister for Education, Mrs Chadwick the second. Dr Metherell saw the passage
significant in this narrative because it marked an attempt by the government at the time to introduce an economic rationalist view into educational management and, not stopping there, into curriculum via the publication of *Excellence and Equity*, 1989, and the subsequent legislation of the *Education Reform Act* in 1990. The economic rationalist comprehension of the economic and political world forced itself onto education with such force and in such a way as to significantly impact on the way English is being expected to be delivered. In the process, subtle and less subtle pressures were being applied to the paradigms by which literature is defined, commodified, evaluated and examined. The very nature of text and the reader and how they are educationally perceived stand at the center of this thesis. The discomfort is one which sees the current understanding of text in isolation from past understandings of how text figures in peoples’ lives, and Human Literacy is a particular reading which emerges in Chapter Three as a way of incorporating past valuable perceptions in a more meaningful educational curriculum structure for today and tomorrow than has been articulated by *A Statement*.

Chapter Three will aim to place the reader as meaningmaker and unique participant in human literacy by describing the discursive space between text and reader and will examine the transformative potential in the reader as spectator. The meaning of reader response and poststructural considerations will also be discussed together with the meaning of intertextual aspects of Human Literacy. The same chapter will examine the many pathways to literacy, cultural theory and the place of modern criticism as well as define literature as a unique form of text. The chapter concludes by advancing an interpretatively innovative literacy, namely Human Literacy, as a necessarily more meaningful way of engaging with text than has been stated in *A Statement*.

through Parliament of the 1990 Education Reform Act, and commissioned the Scott Management Review, the implementation of which lasted from 1990 to 1994. Federally, the Hobart meeting of Ministers of Education in 1989 began a similar revision of curriculum which culminated in *A Statement on English for Australian Schools* as one of 16 such statements which were to fundamentally revise, centralize and standardize the kind of Education which was to be delivered.
1.1.2 Competing Models Of English

The dissatisfaction with the current English curriculum then stems from a confusion over competing models. At one end, there is the Leavisite position (as described by Brock (1987) as being the prevalent Australian teaching approach in 1989). At another end, there is a poststructuralist understanding of textual studies (as practiced by beginning teachers who have recently graduated). Further colouring of models occurs when teachers are asked to position themselves in current debates concerning text, gender, canon, power, critical literacy. English teachers today are operating in a contested discourse of conflicting and competing models.

The discomfort of reader, text and differing perceptions of English as a discipline is one which sees the theoretically accepted understanding of text and reader outside the framework of a humanities base. The unease is with the way in which the human is marginalized. That concern will not be allayed until the central position of text is reconceptualized in a culturally meaningful way which is representative of a clearer continuation and expression of the place of literature in peoples’ educational histories, experiences, engagements. The argument therefore becomes one for a philosophic repositioning, without which English in Australia risks its educational significance in the structure of school curriculum. The term ‘Human Literacy’ will be introduced to convey those aspects of English which are currently at risk.

The literature acknowledges a range of reasons why people choose to engage with English as a way of learning about themselves and the world. Peel and Hargreaves (1994-1995) and Goodwyn and Fox (1993) are among those who identify five models of English teaching. That these models compete at any time for prominence (given the nature of teacher-training, institutional biases and political desire) is only to be expected. The discomfort therefore stems, firstly, from a perception in A Statement that people need not engage with text for reasons of personal enrichment. The idea of the
personal growth model of English is neglected for other important models towards which the curriculum framework has been constructed and written, as will be shown in Chapter Four. A Statement views text as predominantly instrumental, as a mechanistic and impersonal function by which human beings deposit and retrieve information. Text by this interpretation is treated in a depersonalized way, suggesting that the value of literature is no greater than the data it provides, no greater than the sum of its parts. Being data, it is not useful other than for its extrinsic application. Such a view, simply put, disregards the value of literature which is intrinsically useful for and of itself.

This perception is the result of an altering and altered definition of the educational value of text. Behind this shifting definition of text stands the question: of what value is literature to young people? A Statement, it will be argued, has downgraded the humanity of text by objectifying and dehumanizing its potential in educational terms. This shift of perception is taking place in the highly visible and politicized curriculum of the 1990s, and it is taking place in parallel to the shifting ways in which text is scholastically treated. The curriculum's visibility is due to the increased public accountability and the utilitarian context by which curriculum and teaching are increasingly defined (Halliday, 1990, Pusey, 1991, Graham and Tytler, 1993, Harris, 1994). In this context, textual studies and understandings of critical literacy are also being redefined in deconstructive terms of social practice which aim to identify underlying ideologies (Lankshear, 1994, see also Chapter Three). Because such a practice sees text in an industrial context of production, setting and technical composition, reader-response is viewed in mechanical and outcomes-emphasizing ways, rather than in terms of psychological gain (Rosenblatt, 1968, Iser, Holland, Harding, Lacan). Seemingly overlooked or down-played is that significance of literature by which the reader

- enriches individual understanding of his/her place in the world through a profoundly semantic understanding by which personal knowledge is furthered.
Gravitas and deep structures of understanding are seemingly replaced by surface analyses and skills of textual readings which are more syntactic in nature.

- comprehends the relationships that people find themselves in today,
- and makes sense of the ideas that shape human interaction within and understanding of the world they find themselves in.

So the discomfort stems partly from the way text has been down-valued in terms of the human insight and understanding it can offer. Such a diminished understanding is one which sees text as an ideological dialectic which disregards the emotive, spontaneous, human nature of reader response, and which examines text in terms of its visible composition, such as decoding linguistic or ideological structures and features. By focusing on, for instance,

the discriminatory treatment of people and use of language in texts (for example, sexist or racist terminology), understanding and appreciating the effects of such language use on people, and using language in their own speech and writing in ways which do not exclude or denigrate (A Statement: 27).

the wider narrative significance is missed for the sake of political correctness. It could be argued that the two kinds of reading text, for discriminatory practice and for human understanding, are not dissimilar kinds of readings, in that they both look for similar indicators, and are not in themselves necessarily antagonistic to each other. To so argue is to misinterpret literature as a humanity and to misinterpret reader motivation.

In the former, there is an active search for ways of reading critically that are currently en vogue (such as political or academic correctness). In Human Literacy there is a search for inner meaning, for making connections between characters so as to illuminate the human condition. This adds to personal understanding of how relationships work, how society functions, how culture is determined. The human dynamic, the dramatic, the enchanting, the consciousness-forming, the psychic, the cathartic elements are what drive the desire to engage with text, especially in a post-
modern understanding of it (Barthes, 1993). Contemporary curriculum in English as described by *A Statement* risks impoverishing the quality of engagement between reader and text, and Chapters Three and Four set out to identify the reasons by identifying theoretical absences or deficiencies and by advancing Human Literacy as a term which is more embracing of the *gravitas* that has inspired humanities-based learning over the centuries in the best tradition of a Western liberal education.

1.13 The Decline Of English

These discomforts are partly responsible for contributing to the public perception of the declining relevance of English to a young person’s education. Reasons for this trend can be found inside and outside the subject.

As the following discussion shows, the drive for marks towards a high Tertiary Entrance Rank (TER) in an increasingly competitive higher education entry race in NSW has shifted the focus on performance to subjects other than English. English in NSW (especially the more difficult Two and Three Unit Related courses) has attracted the reputation as being more difficult a subject to score highly in, than, for example, Mathematics. Underlying that perception (rightly or wrongly) is the view that accuracy in Mathematics can be more easily determined and achieved than a perfect score in English. English is the only compulsory subject in NSW which cannot be avoided in one’s candidature for the Higher School Certificate (HSC). No other subject has that status. In South Australia, for instance, English is not a compulsory subject for the purposes of completing the senior years of schooling. In NSW it is, but in the period under discussion, 1976-1995, the history of the subject has been one where until 1995 performance in the subject could be excluded in the calculation for a TER. The analogous situation has thus persisted where candidature in English was and remains compulsory, but the results in English did not have to be included in a TER calculation until 1995. Since then, only one half of the subject’s value, or 50 marks, must count
towards the TER which comprises the best ten units (or 500 marks). This is stated to highlight contradictory expectations and practices surrounding the administration of English as a subject for the HSC in NSW to illustrate competing interests, lobby groups, public and educational pressures.

The value of English has also suffered in the public eye because of the higher community value frequently placed on achievement in Mathematics or in vocationally oriented business, computing and legal studies subjects. Girls traditionally do well at English (MacCann, 1995, McGaw, 1996: 135) and their success at that subject was glossed over in the period 1985-1994 because Girls Education Strategies were to ensure success at the natural sciences, chemistry, physics and mathematics. The extract which is described below serves to highlight that there has been a difference in HSC Tertiary Entrance Scale (TES) between girls’ and boys’ performance since 1981, that the difference marginally increased in the period 1984-1991, but that since then, the difference has grown exponentially in both directions: better TES scores for girls, and boys markedly deteriorating:

TES Average Scores from 1981 to 1994 show how females led by 0.6 marks in 1981, 1.0 marks (1984), 3.9 marks (1988), 3.6 marks (1989) and 4.4 marks in 1991. However, from 1991 to 1992 females rapidly increased the gap to 12.2 marks and from 1992 to 1993 further increased it to 17.0 marks. In 1974 the rate of increase slowed, but females edged further ahead to lead by 17.6 marks (Robert Mac Cann, 1995: 2-2).

Reasons for this altering behaviour are complex, and all that the above table is used for here is to show that that the participation rates by boys in literacy is decreasing as part of a general rate of boys performing less well in TES scores than girls. This difference in gender participation success in English is identified in order to add to the argument which says that how English is seen, used and participated in is in a state of flux, that altering perceptions are competing for attention and predominance. The TER treatment of English has been the subject of many journalistic articles over especially the last two years. In 1996 the Board of Studies has increased the mean by which TER in English is
calculated, and such has acted in response to public and political pressure over what was perceived as a diminishing role of the value of English in calculating TER. This came on top of the inclusion of (minimum) one unit of English in the calculation of TER as of 1995 as mentioned above. These two Board initiated decisions, together with a current review of the English syllabus and, separately, the HSC as a whole\(^2\), clearly indicate that there is a political unease over what English, among other subjects, is meant to deliver.

Candidates also shied away from Two Unit Related English, and towards Two Unit Contemporary English, while figures for 2 Unit General remained relatively stable, as is shown by the three McGaw Report (1996: 134 - 136) tables and description of English candidature 1977-1995 which appear as Appendix Two to this thesis. Rightly or wrongly, the public believed that near perfect TER scores were more easily attained in Mathematics than humanities-based subjects (especially the more difficult English courses) where the perception is (rightly or wrongly) that it is harder to gain a 100% answer in terms of quality. Thus the ‘hardness’ of mathematically readily quantifiable responses contrasted with a perception of the ‘soft fuzziness’ of subjective qualitative marking in humanities subjects including especially English. From such a paradigmatic understanding the crafting of A Statement became one which aimed to redress some of these perceptions, and the best way to achieve that was to make the subject conform more to utilitarian ways of assessing English, as was the case in other subjects, rather than make the assessments more consistent with what the discipline within English was suggesting (Marsh, 1994).

The treatment of English can be described as a pendulum of fluctuating importance and value attributed by successive groups of candidates to subjects because of what the subject’s usefulness is seen to be for purposes of gaining tertiary entry, or vocational

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\(^2\) Professor Barry McGaw presented a Green Paper on the HSC in May, 1996, and Prof. Jillian Maling chaired a review of the HSC English syllabus in 1995, and a review of the K-6 English syllabus in 1996. To both a submission was made by this author as part of a Designated Research Group within the Faculty of Education at UWS-Nepean.
advantage. In the period under discussion, this pendulum syndrome of perceived
subject relevance has progressively moved away from English as a humanity and
towards Mathematics and more ‘TER-friendly’ subjects. This trend has done
cumulative and substantial damage to the reputation and perceived relevance of English,
in the public, in the teaching profession, and, most of all, caused confusion in the eyes
of the learner.

HSC English in New South Wales (1976-1995) is an example which shows the
pendular activity in this subject. The New South Wales State English curriculum
perspective demonstrates a changing candidature. Increasingly, students complete post-
compulsory, senior years of study, and the gender representation has also shifted, as is
shown in the following and abridged table:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>66.1</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>81.4</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(DEET, 1993: 42. This table is a summary extract which does not show the
participation rates of Government Schools, which is generally lower than Non-
Government, Catholic and Other Non-Government Schools. The Table begins
when records became available and moves to 1990 in five year intervals, but,
because the statistical trend then becomes erratic, is shown from then on year by
year. The data for years 1993 and 1994 were obtained from the DEET Statistician
via Fax)

Three observations emerge about this table about retention rates in general, about
gender participation and about the actual numerical trends since 1990. The pleasing
trend, only slightly marred since 1992, is that the retention percentage points have
steadily increased, and in fact have more than doubled since records have been kept.
Thus the number and range of HSC candidates has increased, and, given post-war
migration patterns, has been further heavily influenced by non-Australian and non-English speaking backgrounds of students.

The second comment which emerges is about gender: the participation rate by girls has outstripped that of boys by about ten per cent since 1990. By contrasting the 1995 Board of Studies figures (see Appendix Two of this thesis) with those from the above Table, it is clear that while there has been admirable progress in the retention rates and Tertiary Entrance Scale (TES) point average for girls (at least as far as NSW is concerned), the same can certainly not be said about boys. Indeed, the retention rate and TES point average for boys is casting an increasing shadow over the performance of boys. In that shadow stands the increasingly contested profile of English as a subject useful to young people today.

The candidature in the senior years of schooling has become culturally more diverse, and students are completing senior years of schooling who as little as five years ago would not have. The history of English for the Higher School Certificate in New South Wales has been such that the race for marks impacts on students’ choice of subjects. Although English in NSW is compulsory, as has been stated, the kind of English that can be studied varies: e.g. there are three two unit courses of varying levels of complexity and demand. Studying the more complex Two Unit Related course does not lead to real chances of a higher TER rank. This is further explained below, with supporting evidence.

In February 1995 Mark Scott wrote an article entitled Just Plain Dumb, Why 2-Unit English Results Are Unfair, in which he outlined the example of two students who gained the same score of 60 out of 100. One student studied (the more popular) 2 Unit Contemporary English course in which only two works plus a wide range of material related to contemporary issues were studied. This candidate gained the result with a placement of 8500th out of 17 000 candidates. Meanwhile, another student who
attempted the more difficult 2 Unit Related course in which seven texts were studied, and which was clearly the course for the more enthusiastic and conscientious student of English, reached the same score with a placement of 3750th of 7500 candidates. Scott makes the poignant point that “HSC marks are distributed in the same pattern for each 2-Unit English course”.

The conclusion, a view widely held in the NSW teaching and learning community, is that there is no extrinsic reward for the candidate attempting the more challenging course in English. This is further complicated by the wide-spread ignorance which exists in the community about the statistical method by which the TER is actually calculated. This ignorance in turn fuels the myth that English is not computed in the same way as are subjects in the natural sciences. One implication of such an understanding is that the subject’s position suffers in the public discourse in terms of quality, content, appeal and, most damagingly, in terms of relevance. As a result, there has been a marked decline in enrolments in the more rigorous courses on offer in English, as is numerically illustrated in the next two paragraphs.

New and popular courses such as Contemporary English (candidature requires the study of two texts with some supplementary material) has risen from 1,932 in its year of introduction (1989) to 18, 053 in 1994). This subject was originally designed for people from Non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) and for students who spoke English as a second language (ESL). It is a subject which concentrated on up-skilling the competency level of contemporary users of English. But because of the subject’s appeal in terms of a lesser workload, coupled with an understanding of TER determination which did not actively discriminate against someone taking ‘the easier option’, enrolments included not just the aforementioned, but also students who simply had little time for English, were only doing it because they had to, or who were more interested to concentrate on other subjects, subjects whose results were vital for the calculation of TER.
This contrasts with a holding of enrolments in 2 Unit General (the most subscribed and ‘basic’ of the English subjects) and a marked decline (by almost half) of enrolments in the traditional 2 Unit English course (which includes the study of Shakespeare and pre-twentieth century writing among the seven texts studied) from 14,970 in 1989 to 7,718 in 1994. (Lewis, 1994). This increase in candidature in easier English therefore contrasts sharply with decreased numbers in ‘harder English’. As indicated in a submission to the Board of Studies by Kindler, Pennell and Sawyer (1995), the reasons for this altering pattern of candidature are many and complex. The following additional factors critical to the lowering of public perception of English as relevant to peoples’ lives or working career paths are cited here from that submission to strengthen the dimension of the problem:-

- English can only be attempted at Three units, unlike Mathematics (Four units).  
- Three Unit English cannot be accessed from 2U General or 2U Contemporary  
- Until 1996, entry to Medicine at Sydney University was based on a TER which actively discriminated in favour of performance in the natural sciences, and disregarded performance in English altogether.  
- English until 1995 did not count towards TER

The decline of English, in its stature, image, content and numerical enrolments is thus well recorded, and is further illustrated by tables and descriptions of the English course histories which appear in Appendix Two of this thesis (McGaw, 1996: 134-136). This material shows

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3 the incoming Minister for Education, Mr Aquilina, announced in April 1995 that it is Labor Policy for 4 Units English to be introduced at the earliest opportunity.  
4 The Bachelor of Medicine at Sydney University traditionally required the highest entry TER. In 1993, that was 99.45%. It is in consequence of this unequal assessment, among other factors (which include the public perception that doctors knew the chemical composition of drugs, but had little bedside understanding of patient relations), that the degree has become subject to postgraduate entry.  
5 In 1995 only one of the two units, i e a mark out of 50, not 100 of the best 500 marks counts towards the determination of university entry.
• a confusion over how to measure HSC performance
• competing interests between subjects
• different values attached to different subjects
• a stress on English as a subject in terms of its identity and purpose.

Because the profession of English teachers tries to be all things to all people, and because the subject is so complex in its nature and because it can be taught in so many different ways, the struggle has been one of trying to keep up to the constantly changing demands placed upon the subject in order to satisfy the public. That is a natural and well documented form of public accountability by the profession. Unfortunately, the subject has become compromised simply because in this transformative process it is becoming something other than what attracted English teachers to the profession in the first place. In fact, the subject is suffering a credibility gap, one which has allowed some critics (including English professors) to pronounce the perceived irrelevance of English today, as measured in TER outcomes.

This thesis wishes to focus on the value of the reader and text in an attempt to re-balance the philosophical basis by which this subject can articulate itself back into the importance of peoples' lives. It will aim to do so by using the term ‘Human Literacy’.

Because successive candidatures see an engagement with literature as part of the subject of English as less and less relevant in completing secondary education, maximising TER scores or seeking employment, English for many has become a marginal subject in a contemporary educational view of itself. This marginalisation of the educationally formative significance of reading experiences and text represents a cultural impoverishment which calls for correction. Human Literacy aims to do just that.

The current perception of the curricular construction of English is not greatly valued by the public (and even by the private sector or universities) for vocational, tertiary or
career purposes. English teaching has frequently been practiced as ways of initiating students into the conventions of 'genre' (text types), grammar, spelling, cultural heritage, rather than using the language as a resource for creating meaning. This conflict is central to how English is used: is it a resource, or is it a subject of study in its own right? As Halliday would say, English is best understood in terms of its functional application, for a purpose, for an audience, in a cultural context.

There seems to be an understanding that English skills are necessary as defined by employers (as literacy skills of reading and writing, speaking and listening, and downplaying critical literacy). The notion that text might lend itself to critical reflection, self-referential learning, personal growth is a notion secondary to the currently predominant one (as reflected in A Statement) which sees English in a competency framework where the applied skills are all extrinsically and immediately visible.

This mechanistic, outcome-emphasising, functional view of English in A Statement is axiomatic to a view of text which discounts insight, meaning and reflection in favour of dexterity, skills and visible, quantifiable competencies. The two polar extremes are of course not mutually exclusive. But they are indicative of a contrastive understanding of English. Such an antithetical positioning or weighting of the reader and text in the meaning of English is problematic because it offers conflicting definitions of value in young peoples' lives. It needs to be resolved in the interests of a clearer and more meaningful perception of English than is currently the case in A Statement. Human Literacy aims to do just that.

The contention then is that the subject English is defined in a particular way in A Statement. The particularity of that definition is there to promote a broader public / political agenda which is really outside English in terms of the history of itself as a discipline. It is particularly outside the way in which the reader and text have been theorized. The purpose of this thesis then is to identify any biases and tensions in A
Statement, articulate its prejudiced components, voice the omissions, and redefine the curricular expectations of an English education in terms of a reappraisal of the reader and text in the context of current understandings. The reader and text will be discussed in Chapter Three, while the educational implications of both are discussed in Chapter Four.

1.2 FOCUS

This work seeks to refocus the educational value of the reader and literature (as text) in the English curriculum for Australian Schools. It does so by asking this focus question:

What changes ought to be made to A Statement on English for Australian Schools in order to allow it to define adequately the role of literature education for adolescent students of English?

It then asks these four contributing questions:-

1. How is literature education portrayed in A Statement on English for Australian Schools and from what values does it derive?

2. How does A Statement on English for Australian Schools position reader and text?

3. How are current understandings of reader and text reflected in A Statement on English for Australian Schools?

4. Should there be a shift in focus in A Statement on English for Australian Schools in order to more fully reflect current theory and educational purpose?
These four questions test assumptions made in *A Statement* by firstly identifying the theoretical bases of English today and secondly by positioning this recent understanding within the concept of Human Literacy. This approach should help to relocate English as a humanity and meet the wider educational needs of young people into the next century. Human Literacy is articulated as a way of creating greater relevance of the subject of English for young people than has been the case in *A Statement*.

### 1.2.1 The Limitations

This thesis is based on a view of language, text and reading which is grounded in a theoretical understanding which is informed by four groups of theorists: reader response theory, forms of literacy, cultural studies and literary criticism. Also defined will be literature as a unique form of text, and Human Literacy. Past and present forms of liberalism and utilitarianism in education inform theories of reader and text. By identifying irreconcilable philosophical elements which emerge as either omitted or contradictory influences on the perception of education and literature education, this thesis will critique *A Statement* in the light of a developing model of Human Literacy.

This study is not an historical or encyclopedic survey of liberal ideas in the evolution of European literature (akin to *The Humanist Tradition in The West* by Alan Bullock, 1985). It is a study of literature in terms of the effect on the adolescent reader. Nor is it meant to be an analysis or survey of the entire English curriculum framework contained in *A Statement*. It is a study of one aspect of English education in years 7-12, namely that of literature in order to gain an insight into the philosophical assumptions of the document. Specifically, it aims to discern the exact locus of value of key suppositions, assumptions, contradictions and omissions which emerge from a critical reading of that aspect of *A Statement* which concern the teaching of literature today. The focus of this critique is the philosophical basis of the document as it is informed by these
abovementioned theoretical positions, and as it relates to the perception of what makes teaching literature relevant today.

The context is further limited in that the thesis sets out to describe text and the reader as they are positioned today in Australia in relation to *A Statement*. Thus the study is geographically contained to Australia. *A Statement* is evaluated against the philosophical basis and praxis of teaching English in NSW. It aims to describe dominant current practices in NSW as a benchmark for critiquing the basis of value and worth of what it means to engage with literature in the context of a national English curriculum framework today.

1.2.2 The Importance Of The Study

It is necessary to critique the changes that have been occurring over recent years in English teaching so as to establish the integrity or otherwise of such a fundamental shift of emphasis as is identified in *A Statement*. Because of the nature of such curriculum reform, in terms of its authorship and assumed authority, there is a real danger that practicing English teachers or educational systems will set about implementing the document without prior critical engagement with its parameters. This study aims to meet that concern.

Secondly, the study questions the purpose of schooling. This thesis argues that schooling as proposed in the current work-oriented climate is too narrowly defined and without a broadening of its base will diminish rather than enhance our society. In the process, elements of what makes reading and text worthwhile and relevant forms of education today will be clarified, so that the question contained in the title of this thesis (why propose Human Literacy in a climate of liberal neglect as supposedly found in *A Statement*?) can be adequately dealt with.
Thirdly, this work challenges the motivations of teachers and students who are presently exam- and mark-focused to consider the wider educational values of what happens when young people engage with literature which are not directly, or immediately measurable, but are inherent and confined to the process, not the end result. Insight is not an outcome, but a realization of human potential. The connections which people make between the narrative of text and the purpose and circumstances and values of their own lives do not lend themselves as visibly or tangibly to placements within bands, levels or outcomes as are expected in A Statement.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

In the simplest sense, this thesis sets out to compare two things: the place of literature education as outlined in A Statement and the place it might / ought to have if the power of literature in education is to be more comprehensively recognized. In order to explore this focus, a method of investigation has been developed which integrates a form of comparative analysis which defines and contrasts the ‘is’ of A Statement (Chapter Two) with the ‘ought’ of Human Literacy (Chapter Three). The analysis takes two forms. The first is a discussion of recent theory concerning reader and text. That discussion yields a framework of Human Literacy within which are nested those understandings which are conceptually absent from A Statement. The conceptual basis of Human Literacy is further contextualised, defined and strengthened in education, in literature education and within broader themes of educational philosophy so as to highlight a particular form of liberal neglect which characterizes A Statement.

The ‘is’ and ‘ought’ contrast between what literature education is and what it ought to be is nested in three ways:-
• in Human Literacy through theoretical positioning (Chapter Three)
• in education and, more specifically, literature education (Chapter Four)
• in the broader paradigm that shapes the currently dominant educational curriculum (Chapter Five)

Chapter Six becomes the critique of *A Statement* in the light of the argument's construction through the previous chapters. That is, it will explicitly state how Human Literacy positions what *A Statement* does not. That Chapter will conclude by restating liberal constants in education as a neglected philosophical perspective of form in *A Statement*.

1.3.1 Preliminary Definitions Of Key Concepts

The remaining part of this chapter describes a number of critical concepts fundamental to the approach taken in this thesis. While these will bear a fuller discussion in those chapters where they occur, their later presence is anticipated here by a brief, summative insertion so that these approximations can serve to illuminate the subsequent nature of this inquiry.

1.3.1.1 Education

At work in Australia today two distinct and polarised understandings of education with separate characteristics and values can be postulated as being at work. These two understandings are not interchangeable, and have dissimilar meanings. In the melting pot of the public discourse currently beleaguering the government, administration and implementation of curriculum, nationally and at state levels, the contrasting characteristics of these two definitions have become indistinct and have lost the clarity of their original differences which are, fortunately, philosophically still quite
recognisable. The definition of education offered below is stated to un-muddy these waters in order to promote clarity of insight into the argument that develops from a clearer understanding of education as a premise in the construction of an education in literature.

'Education' is a complex term, open to a variety of interpretations depending on the particular stakeholder. On the one hand education is conceptualized as training, in the narrower sense, for vocational suitability, in a wider sense as training for life. In this sense education is equated with competencies and is seen as the accumulation of a number of skills. The principal gain of education in such a comprehension of the term is towards productivity, where humans are workers and are thus commodifiable:-

A competency comprises the specification of knowledge and skill within an occupation or industry level to the standard of performance required in employment. The concept of competency focuses on what is expected of an employee in the workplace rather than on the learning process, it embodies the ability to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations and environments (Prince, 1992: 22).

Skills can be assessed as being at particular levels and are distinctly quantifiable and explicitly utilitarian or vocational in assumption, design or implementation. This model also sees education not for its inherent value, but exclusively looks towards the extrinsic outcomes which in turn, it is believed, are visible, identifiable and most significantly, quantifiable (Dawkins 1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1991, Finn 1991, Mayer 1992, Carmichael, 1992, Jones, 1990 Lowe and Gale, 1991, Bibby, 1992, Brennan, 1992). This view is often seen as educare - as a leading towards particular proficiencies.

Contrasting with such a view of education as training, is 'education' as educere - a leading out of individual ability from within, in the broader sense of realising potentials, of eliciting, rather than instilling. Behind such a more liberal understanding of the term 'education' is the meaning that it is a means to identity in time. Education
here is the process by which a society develops and perpetuates itself by initiating immature members into the knowledge and values and ways of understanding that underpin it. Further, education in this instinctive sense is lived and experienced, not abstracted and objectified. This means that education is about value and meaning, not particular skill bandings. Such a definition suggests that education exists for its own sake, is non-instrumental, worthwhile, intrinsic, is about the journey and not the arrival, has a quality in and of itself (Peters, 1970, 1974a, 1974b, 1987, Peters in Haydon, 1987, Bullock, 1985, Barrow, 1981, 1982, 1991, Hirst, 1965, 1974.)

It will be argued that without this broader liberal understanding of education, a society will at best not develop as a mature and innovative force, and, at worst, self-destruct as a result of its loss of ‘heart’ or ‘soul’. These ideas will be more fully developed in Chapters Three and Four, where the form and content of an education in literature will be explored.

1.3.1.2 English Education and Literature Education

How education is conceptualized today, especially English education and an understanding of the role of literature, is more specifically the subject of Chapters Three and Four. But there is a need here for a brief and necessarily summative working declaration so that A Statement can be explored. Within this context it can be said that English education attempts to introduce the immature learner into the world of English, which is comfortably defined, as in A Statement, as an area of knowing that is equally attentive to meaning as it is to language as it is to text. Within A Statement, literature is defined as one form of text.

‘Literature’ stands alongside other forms of text such as film and non literary works. ‘Text’ in A Statement is a wider, more global term, of which literature is a particular...
type of textual production. \textit{A Statement} recognizes that literature is a narrative which takes different genres and different formats. Is a definition which values literature no more than a bus ticket adequate in the context of a curriculum framework? While the preliminary understanding of literature as a text type is accepted, it will be examined in Chapter Three to see if it has any distinguishing attributes. It is expected that there is an educational value to literature which is specific: Human Literacy aims to capture the uniqueness that pertains to the learning which is derived from literature by redefining literature as a particular form of text.

There is adequate precedent for redefining literature as a particular kind of text. The history of literature as a form of English is discussed by many, among whom are teachers of literature like Saxby and Hoogstaad (1988), Eagleton (1993) and Björk (1983). Probst (1988) sees English as a discipline in its own unique right, and a liberal rationalist view of literature as curriculum is espoused by Hirst in Chapter Four.

1.3.1.3 Literature as a Unique Form of Knowledge and Text

While the terms 'literature' and 'text' are more clearly juxtaposed and defined for their common ground in Chapter Three, a preliminary working definition is helpful as it guides the reader towards that later work. Classical, contemporary or popular literature is the exercise of consciousness (Barthes, 1979, 1993), a way for people to make sense of their world in a non-judgmental, vicarious way, "whilst walking in another's shoes". As a recorded secondary experience, literature is a form of reality which tends to be non-coercive because the reader has the choice to stop reading, or to remain unaffected by the text. In a person's primary life experience, such luxury of choice may

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This definition is also consistent with that of the NSW Board of Studies \textit{K-6 English syllabus}, published in its final form in late 1994 following on the heels of the National document, and which obviously aimed to show itself agreeable to the same definition by echoing it. While on this occasion the borrowing of terminology is relatively unimportant, the influential nature of \textit{A Statement} can nevertheless be already recognized.
not always exist. A person’s life circumstances can frequently be such as to enjoy the neutral ground of text for its universal potential, its cultural heritage, its guiding value base gleaned from older and other people (Rosenblatt, 1968). This can be most reassuring to an adolescent attempting to make meaning of existence. Such an adolescent might think that they are the only ones feeling a particular ‘angst’. Bloom describes literature as ‘an achieved anxiety’ (1994). Literature acts as a safety valve for its non compulsive stage, as illustrated by the spectator role that was identified by Harding (1967, 1972). Literature is therefore closely connected to enabling people to make meaning of their lives. Literature has a human voice, and as such is a unique art form.

A Statement categorizes developmental stages in 5-18 year olds through a series of four Bands: Band A (Lower Primary), Band B (Upper Primary), Band C (years 7-10, or lower secondary) and Band D (post-compulsory schooling, or senior secondary)\(^7\). This is done to distinguish between particular age cohorts. The confusion arises when it is thought that particular levels of learning achievement attach themselves to the bands in an hierarchical or chronological way. The notion that particular stages of learning can attach themselves to a hierarchy such as Bands has to be questioned. Obviously, phases of engagement differ from individual to individual, depending on how ‘touched’ a reader is by the literature he or she reads. Other ways in which readers react to text is by living vicariously through the experience of literature or to read in a manner resistant to or critical of text. Yet other readings occur in tertiary learning environments, where more specialised textual studies become possible as informed by particular schools of thought, preferences of certain scholars, faculties, cultural practices, ideologies, etc. The idea that such divergent ways of reacting to text can be reduced to four bands is brought into critical question, both here and in subsequent chapters.

\(^7\) These are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two.
Such a view of English coerces narrow perceptions, or exclusivist or monotheistic ways of looking at text, where learners about literature are frightened off the subject for fear that they may not proffer a particular ‘received’ or ‘authoritative’ interpretation. Such Leavisite habits have encouraged some teachers to assert a ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ way of reading Shakespeare, or have an elitist / canonical view of particular forms of literature. Because A Statement categorizes stages of learning into hierarchical schemata, it misunderstands what reader response is (Willinsky, Rosenblatt, Jackson, Thomson). Together with a discussion of reception theory in Chapter Three (Iser, Griffith, Protherough, Probst ) it is postulated that these different ways of interacting with text cannot be so labeled and grouped, if the educational worth of young people engaging with literature is to be meaningfully valued.

Literature can offer meaning in times of cultural thinness, or in times of ideological hardlines or extremes. Examples abound: evangelical fundamentalism, economic rationalism, Marxist ideologies, rampant materialism, or moments of personal doubt. Literature can provide a conversation in which the reader is an active participant rather than a critic of form (Harding, 1967, 1972). Literature can act as fictional allegory to express the subconscious, and dialogues with fiction can act as formative influences as in a Bildungsroman. Fiction can act as a psychoanalytic path to self-discovery, as a critical path by which readers are given a second chance to assess themselves, strengthen their self-knowledge (Lacan, 1972, Bloom, 1994). Literature acts as a conscience of society, provides a value base for what might otherwise be sterile, unaddressed needs especially in a society which ignores the human for the sake of utilitarian considerations.

Literature stands as an at times complicating cultural product which can be used in a variety of models of curriculum delivery, among which there is a personal growth model, a critical literacy perspective, a ‘reading against the grain’. In A Statement the critical discourse model stands out as dominant for the readiness with which it can be
described as skills-based. This is an inadequate understanding of the power of literature because it is selective, not comprehensive, as will be argued.

In a Human Literacy context, literature is perceived to be a fundamentally unique form of text because engagement with text emanates from 'a desire to make meaning of human existence' (Barthes, 1993: 206). By contrast, in A Statement literature is perceived to have a more applied, mechanistic and instrumentalist meaning. The opposing locus of value between these two inherently conflicting views of literature will be identified in the critique of Chapter Six.

Human Literacy will postulate a more demanding and challenging understanding of the purpose and power of literature (Hirst, 1974) than is the case in A Statement. Peoples' lives form the content of education in this understanding of literature's ability to cultivate Human Literacy (clarified by the discussion of Critical Literacy (Scribner and Cole (1981), Luke (1993,1986), de Castell (1989), Cairney (1995), Lankshear (1994), Welch and Freebody (1993), Bleich (1988). See Chapter Three). An 'unexamined life is not worth living' (Socrates), and literature is a unique form of text in being able to promote that intrinsic, introspective, reflexive and reflective insight. Deconstructing text, that is examining the power relationships of age, status, gender, feelings and themes is what elicits a response which, if done well, examines the human condition, and which, if done badly, merely examines forms of political or ideological correctness in any given period. Human Literacy views literature for its humanity in the first place, while a more critical or resistant approach to literature seeks to see the text's ideology ahead of its ability to depict human qualities. It will be postulated that Human Literacy must precede such a critical appraisal in a classroom of teenagers.

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8 Page 6 of A Statement recognizes that literature is 'fundamental to the English curriculum, although opinions differ on what distinguishes literature from other texts'. This is a superficial definition, one which goes on to embrace all forms of text, including newspaper journalism. The superficiality stems from a lack of recognising the dimensions of the encounter between reader and text because of a concentration on form rather than content. The definition worked out in Chapter Three will be shown to emanate from the narrative and imaginative impact on the reader.
To see Literature as a unique form of text is to read with a different view. Reading can become personally satisfying and intrinsically valuable. Peel et al. are working on the answer to what needs are met by the subject English. The tentative conclusion of Hargreaves and Peel's (1994/5) work is that personal growth is ahead as the primary need met by the subject English. That need is ahead of the desire to become steeped in cultural heritage, become acquainted with forms of cultural criticism, meet functional needs or even having an ability to use English to succeed in other areas. Thus literature offers a pathway to understanding the world which is unique (Rosenblatt, 1968). Literature offers the reader an engagement which is a unique form of literacy (Hirst, 1974). Whether the story is well written or not, whether it is high culture or low, its narrative is always about relationships of ideas and people in a recorded, vicarious presentation (Saxby and Hoogstad, 1988). Literature is a humanity, and the term Human Literacy is linked to that form of understanding.

1.3.2 Methodological Basis For The Present Work

Knowledge itself is a distinctive human virtue, and liberal education has a value for the person as the fulfillment of the mind, a value which has nothing to do with utilitarian or vocational considerations (Hirst, 1974: 31).

As outlined above, this work sets out to examine one aspect of the many changes befalling contemporary Australian education. It focuses on the secondary school years, and on the teaching of literature within the English syllabus in Australia in the nineties and beyond. Human Literacy positions itself not against the Bands identified in A Statement, but by focusing on reader response theories which are explicated in Chapter Three.

This thesis confronts the notion that learning can be 'commodified' into discrete outcomes. It is fundamentally flawed thinking to confuse an economic purpose for existence with a human-focused raison d'etre. Several attempts to objectify, quantify
and dissect emotional and personal response to text have been made, and A Statement is only one of the more recent examples of that political will.

How can conceptual analysis address the focus area of this thesis?

For what is fine literature if it is not an exploration, both imaginative and disciplined, of what it can be to be human - an exploration, that is, of possible human lives with attention to the circumstances that can shape them, the values and ideas that can inform them, and what individual agents can make of them. And is there not value in dealing with such matters in the concrete particularity of fiction which brings us closer to the rich, varied and unsystematic particularity of actual educational situations (Degenhardt in Cavanagh and Redwell, 1992: 20)?

Firstly, by recognizing literature as an unsystematic subject which cannot be subjected to a positivist / scientific / rationalist mode of inquiry. Secondly, literature is taken as an art form which postulates certain truths which cannot be communicated in any other way:-

We think of works [such as Guernica, Middlemarch, Fidelio, or a Haydn symphony] as symbolic expressions having meaning... which are put up for public assessment. What is expressed in works of art, as in more usual statement forms, can be original or second-hand, profound or trivial, subtle or crude, true or false. This is to suggest that in the fullest sense, art is a language (Hirst, 1974: 152-164).

Hirst says that there is a 'legitimacy of talking here about knowledge of a propositional or statement kind' (1974: 154) which is being pursued for its meaning as found in its use. Literature has 'meaning as an essentially human creation, and its meaning is dependent on the contexts in which works of art have point and significance' (1974: 158). So literature has a way of presenting us with truth, in Wittgenstein's phrase, 'the form of life', or as is discussed in introducing the next chapter, the 'noise of culture'. If one combines Hirst's understanding of literature as a unique field of knowledge with the search for meaning in a philosophical context, then there emerge concepts of reader and text, literature and reader response which are open to analysis. The legitimacy of the conceptual analysis as method is drawn from the perfectly valid intellectual skill of interpreting the world, making connective sense of the tradition of text in the light of the
direction this investigation will take. Such interpretation is a creative skill of re-articulating, of explaining the meaning in a new light, of constructing and understanding in a particular way. This way is one of making connections, but not necessarily in a sequential sense that is implied by consequentialist or outcome thinking. The approach eventually weighs the utilitarian period with a view to the validity by which literature is currently valued in an educational setting. Conceptual analysis allows for the meaning of a single word, such as 'value' to be explained in terms of a wider paradigm or paradigms in order to promote its perspicuousness, to make it lucid and more readily understood. To do that the close association of a word such as 'value' to allied and wider concepts (such as 'text') needs careful analysis, reference and interpretation.

The aim of conceptual analysis is to clarify understanding. By separating a concept into its various constituent parts, and placing its use historically, philosophically and linguistically, and then looking at the totality of the concept, an understanding is achieved of how the components function and, more significantly, an understanding of the whole, of how the larger concept was arrived at and works. The value of this conceptual analysis therefore lies in the fleshing out and reassembly of ideas within the term 'Human Literacy' so that a new understanding can evolve, an improved grasp of a thematically developed direction, of a significance which aids progress by making considered value statements regarding the future of education into the next century.

The basis of A Statement is analysed to explore just what the document says, does not say, or should say, about the value of literature in education. The underlying purpose is to articulate the need for a paradigmatic shift in the philosophical basis underlying such curriculum in English.

This approach grows out of both philosophy of education, as well as the lived, worked and experienced link between theory and practice. It thus draws on a comparative
analysis between "is" and "ought". (Hirst in Peters, 1974c: 152-164, Bullock, 1959, Meyerhoff, 1959, Bronowski, 1976). There is a tradition of relying on reasoning as a form of critically analysing and engaging with assumptions underlying curriculum statements which allows for the full implications of such statements to be exposed and analysed. Such an approach should promote a better understanding of educational direction (Barrow, 1982, Degenhardt, 1992). Identifying underlying assumptions will clarify the value position of A Statement, and such a path of inquiry has been chosen for this work.

1.3.2.1 Theory and Practice in Educational Research

The practising English teacher uses literature to achieve a broader, social and emotional understanding of the world by the student so that the learner can clarify their individual, cultural and contextual understanding of their identity in time and place. This amounts to nothing less than moral development through literature, whereby the existing world, new and other worlds are explored to bring about new insights, new perspectives, an appreciation of sensitive issues as well as a broader cultural education of the reader (Thomson, 1992). There is a range of reader responses which accompany reading, some of these are skills-based (literary conventions such as character, plot, theme, conflict and so on), and some are reader-response based, as Chapter Three will show. The discussion there will contrast critical with other, intrinsic and emotional responses into a value framework which will be more balanced than is the case in A Statement, where the former predominates.

Educational practice is the application of any postulative framework, no matter how tentative, abstract or concrete. What is the relationship to educational theory? 'Our logical consciences are made uneasy,' writes Hirst (1983: 4), 'by the gap between theory and practice in education'. Because of this relationship, educational researchers must be careful not to borrow any fashionable methods or dialectics of research from
other disciplines, but remain loyal to the reasons and causes which dominate the
educational domain.

Educational theory is primarily the domain which seeks to develop rational
principles for educational practice (Paul Hirst, 1983: 5).

Insights on educational practice are frequently philosophical, psychological or historical
in character and these in turn inform practice. This thesis espouses a contextual
reappraisal of ideas past and present with a view to redressing a perceived curriculum
imbalance. Hirst (1983), Barrow (1981) (Popper, 1945) all value the educational
practitioner who attempts research because the character of educational research is
determined

much more subtly by factors that can only be understood by the practitioner
from within this element of the life of the relevant society, with its institutions,
traditions, beliefs and values (Hirst, 1983: 8).

This research is the product of a particular lived and experienced dialectic, and that this
should naturally come to influence the inquiry is acknowledged as a further factor
which impacts on method. Hirst defines educational theory as concerned with
determining rationally defensible principles for educational practice (1983: 26). This
describes the nature of this inquiry in part as practical discourse, or as discourse which
affects practice by the conceptual considerations that are made through weighing a
series of assumptions about curriculum. Hirst (1983), Bantock (1981), Bullock (1985,
1990) and Peters (1970, 1971, 1974) have established a demonstrated and esteemed
tradition in this respect.

A further influence on the nature of this inquiry is the (Hirstian) thought that education
is primarily based on the nature and significance of knowledge itself, and only then on
the predilections of pupils, the demands of society, or the whims of politicians. Hirst
distinguishes four competencies:
• to think effectively
• to communicate thought
• to make relevant judgments
• to discriminate among values.

These competencies of 1974 reappear in the guise of the Mayer competencies\(^9\) of November 1992 in an attempt to get the student to bring to bear the whole range of ideas upon the area of experience:-

• collecting, analysing and organising information
• communicating ideas and information
• planning and organising activities
• working with others and in teams
• using mathematical ideas and techniques
• solving problems
• using technology.

The principal difficulty of reports (such as those of Finn\(^10\) and Mayer) is that 'reports blur essential distinctions and direct the attention of educational planners into unprofitable descriptions of what they are after' (Hirst in Peters, 1974c: 36). An important criticism of such initiatives in education in recent years is that they have confused what are perceived (in the currency of public discourse) to be deficiencies of a skills-based or vocationalist nature with the general development of the mind. Because the latter is crucial to the development of what has traditionally come to mean a liberal education\(^11\), the labeling of skills in the form of competencies places knowledge on a lesser level of educational significance than are more immediately instrumental outcomes.

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\(^{11}\) Professor Pennington, Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University, has challenged what he considers to be 'a focus on transferable skills [which] inevitably weakens the emphasis on knowledge - both theoretical and practical'. He goes on to suggest that 'once secondary students realise that employment prospects or even entry into a university depend upon performances in assessment of the Key Competencies, they will quickly relegate knowledge to a far lower status' (in Totaro, 1992: 5).
The mere listing of expediencies (such as the above) avoids an essential understanding of how literature works in people's learning. Intellectual competency involves central concepts that are peculiar to the human form, such as the Persian understanding of the semiotic of the car, gravitas, Aristotelian moral knowledge, Socratic dialogue among a host of other variants of understanding. Such concepts involve 'a network of possible relationships in which experience can be understood' (Hirst in Peters, 1974c: 44). The braiding of intellect with experience occurs in literature, and Human Literacy will be articulated as a concept which captures a perceived liberal neglect in educational value. The discourse of literature as a humanity has been identified by Hirst as a ‘field’ of practical knowledge (in Peters, 1974c:46).

The paradigm of Human Literacy developed in this work is a voice in a conversation in which several voices participate. Human Literacy is advanced as a locus of value which has been largely omitted from contemporary understandings of literature as reflected in

A Statement. This view is expressed by Michael Oakshott who writes that:

As civilised human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and extended and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves. Of course there is argument and inquiry and information, but wherever these are profitable they are to be recognised as passages in this conversation, and perhaps they are not the most captivating of the passages...

Conversation is not an enterprise designed to yield an extrinsic profit, a contest where a winner gets a prize, nor is it an activity of exegesis it is an unrehearsed intellectual adventure... Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognise the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation. And it is this conversation which, in the end, gives place and character to every human activity and utterance (Michael Oakshott, 1974: 53).

Thus Human Literacy aims to contribute to the significance of literature in education, by articulating a position alongside the importance of skills based training.
1.3.2.2 The Distinction between Literary Criticism and Literature Education

In the preliminary definition of literature, it was earlier pointed out that the content of literature was such that it represented a fundamental and unique form of text. In that description, it was shown how the kinds of meetings between reader and texts differ in critical capacity, depending on the learning expectation that is placed on literature. The point was made that literature offers a kind of interchange where ideas and people relate to each other across societies and time, a kind of ‘human literacy’ which draws on literature as a humanity. From such a conceptualization emerges an understanding of the value of an education in literature which is not only different from an education in text, but different from an education in literary criticism.

The way texts are portrayed in A Statement or in a ‘post-modern’ sense has more in common with a mechanical, functional view of language (Halliday, 1976, 1994) than with the human literacy which is afforded by grounded theory in reader response from literature. In an important sense, therefore, the Language Strand of A Statement, which examines socio-cultural and situational context to determine concepts such as field, tenor and mode has more in common with an understanding of text, than does the reading of literature in a human literacy context as the distinction will come to show more clearly later. ‘Literature education’ in a 12-18 year old person has a broader focus than is allowed by this narrower and instrumentalist view. That broader view is one of initiation into the human experience as a form of culture. The difficulty with describing this is not that the concept lacks a language or appropriate vocabulary, but that what is being described does not lend itself as easily to be commodified and quantified as does a more mechanical or diagnostic view of text. This is the single biggest omission in a Curriculum Framework on English for Australian Schools. The absence of that broader view of what happens when young people encounter literature is regarded as seriously limiting the ability of A Statement to fully meet the educational needs of young people.
in the subject of English. It is also why Human Literacy will be introduced as a term which is meant to capture those meanings which are absent from the more narrow conceptualisation as found in A Statement.
2. THE PLACE OF LITERATURE IN
A STATEMENT ON ENGLISH FOR AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS:
ASSUMPTIONS, INCONSISTENCIES,
CONTRADICTIONS, OMISSIONS

This chapter aims to describe A Statement by letting it speak for itself. An overview of
who wrote it, how A Statement came to be, the circumstances and political context in
which it arose, an outline of its structure and purpose is given so that there is a
demonstrated understanding of the document, its nature, purpose and context.

2.1 STRUCTURE OF A STATEMENT

A Statement contains six parts: an Introduction, Parts 1, 2 and 3, and two Appendices.
The two Appendices which appear after each of the eight KLA Statements and Profiles
are discussed later in this Chapter to show the background in which these documents
emanated.

The Introduction outlines the collaboration between States, Territories and the
Commonwealth since 1989 on statements and profiles in eight broad areas of learning,
of which English is one. The Introduction explains what A Statement is, how it fits
with the Key Learning Areas, and how the statements relate to the Subject Profiles. A
Statement has the following objectives:-

- to provide a framework for curriculum development
- to define the area, and outlines its essential elements, shows its distinctive
  features and describes a sequence for developing knowledge and skills.
- to provide an account of the strands and bands of each learning area.
• to show the link with profiles
• to promote a consistent approach to the development of English curricula throughout Australia and to achieve 'a better coordinated and integrated system of literacy provision' for all children (DEET, Australia's Language, The Australian Language and Literacy Policy, 1991: iv).

Part 1 of A Statement explains English as an area of learning, says what the six goals of the English curriculum are, defines Literacy, talks about Standard Australian English, and identifies what learning English means.

Part 2 of A Statement defines strands and describes the two strands of texts and language. The Texts strand discusses literature, classic literature, contemporary literature, popular literature, Mass media and everyday texts.

The language strand discusses the socio-cultural and situational contexts under the heading Contextual Understanding. Secondly, it mentions linguistic structures and features. Lastly, it describes Strategies for speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing.

The texts strand indicates the range of texts that students should study. The relationship of literature to other forms of text is discussed in greater detail in the section 'The Place of Literature Within A Statement' which appears below.

Part 3 identifies four bands which span the years of schooling from early primary to the senior years of schooling.
statements encourage innovation and experimentation so that students have a positive experience of each learning area.

The profiles are designed to assist in the improvement of teaching and learning and to provide a common language for reporting student achievement. They are divided into strands for each learning area. Within each strand, eight achievement levels have been developed. Overall, the eight levels reflect the full range of student achievement during the compulsory years of schooling (years 1-10). The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has validated the levels. The profiles have also been subject to intensive trialing in Australian schools (A Statement, 1994: iv).

Appendix 1 discusses the background to national collaboration in curriculum, and Appendix 2 mentions the Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia.

In the final three sections of this chapter, a section is allocated to a discussion of Authorship, Political Background and Overview, as well as how A Statement Restructures English. Inconsistencies, assumptions, contradictions and omissions are identified by positioning three questions which guide the ensuing examination of theory of reader and text.

In grappling with the ways that literature education is defined within A Statement it is necessary to see the ways the goals are translated into strands and bands, for whilst the goals may appear adequate, it is their translation into focus areas and outcome expectations that delineate the real understanding intended. It will be argued that while the goals are superficial and general as they must be, the detail of their application in the proposed curriculum framework suffers from a lack of theoretical understanding of the ways by which literature education works. In considering the Bands, incompatibilities emerge. The connections between goals and bands become apparent for their gaps, rather than their links. The belief is that literature education in this curriculum document
has undergone a change, the nature of which is a dilution from past and present practice. This dilution takes the shape of an omission in that some central educational tenets appear to have been neglected in an understanding of literature education as it now appears in this document.

The purpose of this part is twofold: to say what *A Statement* says, and to say what *A Statement* does not say. By describing its nature, the reader is acquainted with the main aspects of *A Statement*, and as the description becomes clear, so do the document’s deficiencies. The document under discussion speaks with its own authority. The first step in this process is therefore to grasp the document’s appearance, structure and content (this chapter), then to proceed to more theorised analysis and critique (ensuing chapters).

### 2.1.1 Goals, Strands, Bands And Outcomes Of *A Statement*

Part 1 of *A Statement* contains four elements:-

- the six goals of the English curriculum,
- A definition of Literacy,
- A definition of Standard Australian English, and it defines how children learn English.

These four declarations are made to circumscribe English as an area of learning. The purpose of part 1 is to define English as a Key Learning Area, and to establish what is meant by English, Literacy and Standard Australian English so that there are agreed common understandings.

There are six **Goals** of the English curriculum in *A Statement of English for Australian Schools* (1994). These overarch two strands (Language and Text) and four Bands (Band A = early primary, Band B = mid-upper primary, Band C = lower secondary, Band D senior years of schooling). Three of the goals concern language and three
literature\textsuperscript{1}. The focus in this thesis is on the place of literature education in high schools, and therefore the point of departure is the three goals which relate to literature:-

4. A broad knowledge of a range of literature, including Australian literature, and a capacity to relate this literature to aspects of contemporary society and personal experience.

5. The capacity to discuss and analyse texts and language critically and with appreciation.

6. A knowledge of the ways in which textual interpretation and understanding may vary according to cultural, social and personal differences, and the capacity to develop reasoned arguments about interpretation and meaning (\textit{A Statement}, 1994: 3).

These goals are fine and worthy statements by themselves. It is only when the Bands are examined (see later on in this chapter), that the question of how these goals are translated into particular Bands becomes unclear, because the how, that is, the way in which one goal is achieved in one band, but not necessarily in another, is not clarified in a satisfactory or meaningful way. The clear direction of this curriculum framework is that the teaching of literature should be directed towards the cumulative and staged gaining of particular kinds of knowledge and skills which can be banded. This is particularly the case when one is reminded of the link between this document and \textit{English - A Curriculum Profile for Australian Schools}, its accompanying publication. In such an outcome-emphasising environment, the relationship between goals and bands is one which immediately raises some serious questions:-

• Do these bands and outcomes reflect the purpose of literature and education?

• Does the teaching of literature impart any values? Does the teaching of literature impart anything which a bus ticket, parenthetically, does not?

• Have we lost sight of the power of literature in the deeper intrinsic education of adolescents?

Underlying all three questions is this central question: how does \textit{A Statement} define literature education? There are competing models here, and the work of Peel and

\textsuperscript{1}For the purposes of this thesis, the Texts Strands of the Statement concerning Bands C (adolescent 7-10) and D (post-compulsory years) are examined.
Hargreaves, (1994/5), Goodwyn and Fox, (1993) and others will serve in Chapter Four to show different expectations and models of how literature education is a contested site. In the received understanding of what literature education has come to be practiced and is, there is a belief that by engagement with the narrative, insights and universal truths can be derived the value of which lie beyond the merely instrumental and utilitarian. This is strengthened by an examination of liberal rationalist as well as Utilitarian educators/philosophers in the same Chapter. Such an understanding, one of form and content, suggests that literature provides a unique way of knowing which is insightful, enjoyable and worthwhile for its own sake (Bailey, 1984, Hirst, 1974, Peters and others).

The first question relates directly to A Statement and suggests that, if literature education is to be understood in terms of bands and outcomes, then this forces literature education into ways of valuing and assessing educational outcomes which are translated into specific skills and competencies.

The other two questions recognize that literature education is a process which focuses on values which are less tangible, but no less relevant in terms of educational quality by which literature education 'works'.

Answers to the first question cause a shift from how English is perceived into something else: to something where English is evaluated merely or predominantly in terms of its usefulness. Answers to the two remaining questions will yield the basis of English which, in respect of literature, constitutes personal relevance to people's lives today. The emerging discrepancy in translating the goals, bands and outcomes of A Statement with the extant understanding of literature education will highlight some inherent inconsistencies and problematic areas which the discipline of literature education has with how A Statement is predicated.
The whole climate (in which *A Statement* was produced) has attempted to redefine the place of English in the contemporary world by stressing its functional applicability to future needs. It has done so by defining English in a particular way, namely outcome-driven, emanating, as will be shown in Chapters Five and Six, from an undue emphasis on, firstly, a misunderstood form of utilitarianism (John Stuart Mill, 1861, Barrow, 1991), and, secondly, a perception of vocationalism, consumerism and educational management (J. Halliday, 1990). Of course an education in English text should include an appreciation of Halliday's functional view of English (M. A. K. Halliday, 1976, 1994). These theorists will yield an appreciation of how *A Statement* has become deficient by its incomplete view of the theories that shape the discipline of English. In the process *A Statement* forgets the value of the narrative in the first place by focusing on its parts and ignoring the message of the whole (poem, play, novel etc).

Where is the Life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
(T.S. Eliot, *Choruses from the Rock*, I)

Literature education can ask questions which are pertinent and which illuminate aspects of living which lie beyond skill, beyond knowledge, beyond information, beyond the quantifiable, which are at the core of its role as a central humanity. The question is not which one of the many competing models (explored in Chapter Four) is 'right'. Rather, is the presentation of the model in *A Statement* sufficiently adequate to accommodate all of the things which happen when young people engage with literature?

The position of this document in the public discourse, by its anonymous authority, commands closer scrutiny and this will yield three fundamental questions concerning reader, text and ideology that will guide the course of the inquiry in Chapter Three.

*A Statement* is causing a whole industry to publish materials which show how to go about implementing the principles of the bands, levels and outcomes. These meta-texts
are verbal, are used for Training and Development of teachers of English, are used to
test students, form the basis of textbooks written around it, and will, doubtlessly,
become the subject of endless professional material emanating from the English
Teachers Association (ETA). The value of this thesis is to identify the territories and
state the boundaries made by A Statement with a view to recognising some of the
assumptions, implications, inconsistencies, omissions and contradictions inherent in A
Statement so that its reception into Australian educational practice is critically
successful.

Secondly, the way literacy is defined is of pivotal importance. This Statement is keen
to address the "current and emerging economic and social needs of the nation". It looks
to a unity of purpose and commitment. It defines literacy in several ways:-

Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write
appropriately in a range of contexts. It also ‘involves the integration of speaking,
listening and critical thinking with reading and writing’ (DEET, 1991,
Australia’s Language: the Australian Language and Literacy Policy: 5), and
includes the cultural knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to
recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. In the area
of learning called English, literacy also involves viewing.
The International Year of Literacy end of year report (DEET 1992, Putting
Literacy on the Agenda, AGPS Canberra) notes that ‘what it means to be literate
will vary from one society to another and within societies’. It goes on:
Literacy is certainly not just a set of static, isolated skills through which people
can decode and encode printed words.
Literacy relates not only to different levels of skill but also to specific contexts.
A person who is literate in understanding a set of machine instructions may be
able to understand a legal document and vice versa. Similarly, a school leaver
who can compose an intelligent essay on a Shakespearean play may not be able
to write an effective report for the workplace of literacy which teachers in all
areas of learning share a responsibility for teaching (A Statement, 1994: 3-4).

This definition will be shown to have a correctness about it in terms of theoretical
underpinnings, but lacks what will be identified in Chapter Three in the context of some
critical examinations as ‘human literacy’. By discussing Meek (1991), Lankshear
(1994), Scribner and Cole (1981), a view of literacy will emerge which recognises
more particularly the constructionist manner by which literacy proficiency is
theoretically placed in a broader social and cultural context in which the function of
literacy as a means to our identity as a humanity is fundamental to cultural comprehension.

This is a functional and bare definition of literacy. Literacy is regarded as not static, but is shown to relate to specific contexts. The definition goes on to recognise different "types" of literacy by distinguishing the primary teaching of language and literacy and the specialist secondary teaching of English. Final to this section is the recognition that there is a strong link between language and thought. Conceptual development, illustrated through improved language use, is shown as successful in effective communication.

Thirdly, **Standard Australian English** is defined as the national variety of English in Australia. It is recognised that there may be a range of local varieties of this version, but it is made clear in *A Statement* that standard Australian English should be treated as an extension of, and addition to, a student's home language. The goal here is an ever widening language repertoire for personal and public use.

The final definition is **how children** are understood to **learn English**. Learning English is a process which is recognised as building on students' learning of language outside of school. Language is best learnt in use, with encouragement in an environment which fosters demonstration, explanation, correction and advice. Effective teaching builds on past success. Different linguistic knowledge and experience is not to be denigrated, but equality of educational access in this subject area is paramount.

The goals relating to literature are broad and ask for further interpretation which will be made when individual bands are discussed below. The definition of literacy does not encompass the full range of what occurs when people engage with texts, and this will be shown in the next four chapters. The explanation of how children learn English is one couched solely in terms of language acquisition, and the absence of a statement here
of the relevance of text to young people's lives is more fully explored in discussing reader response, reception theory and intertextuality in Chapter Three, where the need for a Human Literacy will also be made apparent as a means of articulating what A Statement does not, but what is professionally regarded as of importance in literature education.

2.1.2 The Place Of Literature Within A Statement

Text is defined as "any communication, written, spoken or visual, involving language" (1994: 6). Further, text is described as comprising the following broad categories of text types: literature, classic literature, contemporary literature, popular literature, Mass media, everyday texts (these latter are further broken down into texts associated with daily life, texts associated with the specialised demands of schooling, and texts associated with the world of work, including unpaid work). Examples of different formats of texts, genres and text types abound, though the only three specific examples of 'classic literature' cited are the Bible, Aboriginal Dreaming stories and legends of the Torres Strait. In the attempt to appear politically correct and non-discriminatory, the historic influence and socio-cultural context of the Bible is placed alongside a Torres Strait legend. While this is consistent with A Statement's definition of text, it reduces all forms of text to a common denominator in describing them as cultural artefacts or mere tools of communication. Such a definition of text is reductionist in that it sees literature equal to a bus ticket in its communicative or narrative function. As the next chapters will show, literature education in a liberal context has an understanding of literature as a unique form of knowing which, while not necessarily aligned with Hughes (1992) or Bloom (1994), nevertheless sees significant differences which are simply not acknowledged in A Statement (Barthes, 1993, Hirst, 1974 Bailey, 1984, Eagleton 1993).
There are two overarching problems with *A Statement*: it is insufficiently theorized and poorly contextualised. By its inadequately inclusive stance towards current theory and praxis in English teaching, it presents a diminished or narrow view of what teaching literature means. Pitted against a competing set of models by which English is taught, it also fails to reflect that discourse by pretending a context of its own, rather than one among others.

*A Statement* attempts to level the playing field of textual types and sees this as a practice consistent with postmodern approaches to textual studies. Post-structural critics acknowledge a plurality, incoherence and arbitrariness of meaning. The task of the post-modern reader is to deconstruct the myths and illusions of culture, and its signifying practices (Barthes, 1974, 1993, Foucault, 1990, Derrida, 1967). *A Statement* is conspicuous for some significant omissions.

Literature is fundamental to the English curriculum, although opinions differ on what distinguishes literature from other texts. Typically, literature involves the use of language and the imagination to represent, recreate, shape and explore human experience (*A Statement*, 1994: 6).

So *A Statement* asserts the fundamental place of literature, is uncommitted to what it is, and insists that it is equal to any everyday text, be it of daily life, schooling or work. If it is fundamental, how can it be equal? This is not only a grossly inadequate understanding of literature's nature and purpose in an educational context, but it also misreads how literature education works. It is nothing less than a diminished understanding of education.

Contemporary literature, popular literature, mass media and everyday texts are described in such terms that the distinction between them blurs, and text really becomes a blancmange, a potpourri of anything resembling the communicative mode. This definition of text includes communication of the most universal kinds: a pair of jeans, a telephone conversation, a film, are all text. The text can be Australian, non-Australian,
translated, by men or women, and represent a range of forms and styles, including the student's own.

The range of texts should in general increase in conceptual, linguistic and cognitive complexity as the student moves through the bands of schooling (A Statement, 1994: 6).

Such a view of literature as text disregards the unique art form which literature holds in the imaginative realm of the reader. In disregarding the uniqueness, the artistic, creative, humanities base of literature, A Statement represents a deficient understanding of literature education as a significant part of an education in English. These two problems, identified in Part Two of A Statement, which describes the Texts strand, compound themselves in Part Three, which describes the Bands.

2.1.2.1 Bands

Bands are the broad stages in a sequence for developing knowledge, understandings and skills in a learning area. Each statement has four bands. Generally Bands A and B will be covered in Primary Schooling, C in secondary school to year 10, and Band D in post-compulsory years (1994: 1).

The above statement defines text by promulgating the view that text is selected to fit the band. It is suggested that texts contain a level of difficulty which make them easily attributable to a particular band (1994: 6).

This is problematic in that it suggests form over content, in that it suggests a hierarchy which in turn smacks of prescription. Texts can be in more than one band, depending on their use, or level of textual analysis, and this is acknowledged by A Statement where it says that 'selecting a text depends as much on how it is used as on its nature or complexity' (1994: 6). This begs the question: why have the bands? An association with levels of competency cannot be avoided.
The Bands make it clear that one builds on the other, that there is an increasing level of hierarchical difficulty and complexity from one band to the next. Such a view of text is problematic, because Banding clearly suggests that texts present explicitly differing levels of engagement. Such a statement in the text strand says that the quality or Band of engagement with text has progressive levels of depth, insight, or sophistication of reader response. This, as will be further explained, is to misread how literature 'works', or is 'consumed' in significant ways. Firstly, it misunderstands the liberal effect of literature as enunciated by Bailey, Bullock, Hirst and Peters in the next Chapter. Secondly, it has a view which does not sufficiently pay tribute to what reader response, reception and intertextuality theorists are saying about the effect of literature on the reader. Interpretation can differ in quality, of course, but engagement with text is an essentially personal, and personally and intrinsically meaningful activity which cannot be yoked to the uniformity of differing textual Bands. How the private experience of text is juxtaposed against the ideologies of text which suggest a cultural, social or literary theory, is discussed in the relevant parts of the next two Chapters that deal, among others, with the work of Eagleton, Williams and critical literacy theorists.

Literature texts provide readers, viewers and listeners with rich meanings and significant imaginative experiences. Through writing, viewing, reading and critically responding to literature, students extend their understanding of the world and of themselves, and bring themselves to see how cultural beliefs and values have been formed and continue to be shaped (A Statement, 1994:6/7).

This is the purpose of the text strand, and as such agrees quite easily with practices of English teaching. The difficulty arises when attempts are made to quantify, measure or attribute value to concepts such as 'meaning', 'response', 'understanding'.

What then follows are six statements by which the English curriculum develops student's knowledge and appreciation of the following:-

- literature's potential to provide a source of enjoyment
• literature's potential to inform and educate through its imaginative representation of human experience
• the opportunity literature presents to discover a diverse range of socio-cultural values, attitudes and beliefs
• the opportunities literature provides to reflect on the ways writers use language, including its linguistic structures and features
• the ways in which literature can shape the reader or listener's perceptions, and the ways these can be discussed and challenged
• the different ways people can respond to texts, depending on their context (A Statement, 1994: 7).

These are worthy objectives of any English curriculum. They are also general and sufficient descriptions of what happens when people engage with text. The difficulty arises when these statements are translated into narrower outcomes, such as are indicated in A Statement

where profiles and statements are linked to show the typical progression in achieving learning outcomes, while statements are a framework of what might be taught to achieve these outcomes (1994: 1).

The argument will develop that the objectives of this Statement cannot be philosophically reconciled with its explicit focus areas, or outcomes. This chapter will conclude by highlighting some of the main irreconcilable aspects of A Statement by way of preparing for the argument proper.

The inclusion of mass media (1994: 9) is obviously essential to an understanding of text. It discusses the variety of media on offer, and encourages a discerning viewer or consumer of mass media. The emphasis is on developing the ability to tell various types of media genre apart. The purpose is recognition of difference. The emphasis is therefore on techniques of presentation. How messages are constructed is also included. What is absent here again is an engagement with content, because the recognition is one of form. This has already been mentioned, and will again be brought out more as this thesis progresses.

Everyday texts listed form the categories of texts associated with daily life, with the specialised demands of schooling, and with the world of work, including unpaid work.
It is appreciated that such a list is not meant to be exhaustive, as the omission of creative writing, or imaginative recreation, is rather conspicuous.

2.1.2.2 Band C

Band C refers to adolescent literature at high school, equivalent to years 7-10. Band D, literature of post-compulsory years, is discussed further on.

The earlier part of this *Statement* places the two strands of texts and language distinctly apart (1994: 6-10). In detailing the bands into text and language, the goals are made explicit, and the nature of the integrated activities can be guessed from the separation. *A Statement* begins by identifying and separating out skills into two distinctly detached strands (1994: Part 2). It then merges these again within bands (1994: Part 3). Part 3 then makes the intention of Part 2 less explicit. The individual descriptions of the different Bands have a lot of overlap, and this raises the question of how consistently *A Statement* follows through its declared intentions.

In Band C, there are eight areas of emphasis. These are on :-

- introducing students to the formal study of literature
- the developing of students' understanding of the constructed nature of all texts and helping them find ways to understand and interpret a range of texts, and
- alerting students to contextual factors involved in the construction and interpretation of texts, especially the role of audience in constructing meaning.
- teaching students how to write appropriately and correctly in a range of text types for school and other purposes
- teaching students to write expressively and in detail about their thoughts, feelings, opinions and ideas
- further developing students' skills in working in different kinds of groups, including unstructured, teacher selected or outcome oriented groups, where considerable autonomy is called for
- teaching students to speak appropriately and with confidence in formal situations, and with members of the wider community
- developing in students a critical understanding of the mass media and the differences between various media text types (*A Statement*, 1994: 28).
Of these eight emphases, only the first three relate directly to engagement with text, while the remaining criteria deal with writing, speaking, or reading forms of media. Listening does not rate an explicit mention.

Conspicuous by its absence is any explicitness about the value of engaging with text (such as is espoused by liberal rationalists or reader-response / reception theorists like Probst, Rosenblatt, Saxby, Jackson, Thomson, Iser in Chapters Three and Four), the personal growth aspects of what happens as a result of interacting personally and in groups with ideas and cultural concepts presented by literature: the notion of dialogue and Socratic engagement are not made explicit except for the reference to 'formal study of literature'. Again, these eight emphases imply a set of values in which text is only seen for its usefulness as providing a basis for textual studies.

There is no mention whatever of the humanity-aspect of literature, of an examination of human situations, moral dilemmas, dramatic tensions, mathesis, mimesis, semiosis, catharsis, or mythopoeic aspects of the power of the narrative. That is, notions of reality, art as imitation of life, the meaning of sign and symbol, purifying the emotions or the transformative potentials of literature are not mentioned. Currently fashionable discussion of meaning in a deconstructive sense as explored in a discussion of Derrida or Barthes in the next Chapter, is inventively apt, necessary and useful to students of modern forms of English today. It is, however, not the only way by which English can be described or delineated.

There is a strange overlap of the two strands (language and literature) in the descriptions of Band C (1994: 28-35) which were explicitly kept separate in the earlier detachment of the two strands (1994: 6-15). Such a blending at a later point (1994: 28) of what at an earlier point (1994: 6) was clearly separated suggests that the document is having
difficulty remaining internally consistent. The inability to sustain the distinction is a further indication of the problematic nature of A Statement.

The curriculum outline which is offered in Band C is organised according to the Texts strand of the document. Each section contains a summary of what students do with what kinds of texts, followed by an elaboration of what students learn about language, based on the categories of the language strand, in order to compose, comprehend and respond to texts.

Under Literature, the first sentence is

Students' increasing ability to reflect on their experiences and compare them with those of others is encouraged, enhancing their capacity to deal with complex texts that explore moral, psychological and philosophical issues (A Statement, 1994: 29).

The phrase 'deal with' is pregnant with a multitude of theoretical approaches to handling text. Just how such an 'increasing ability', or 'complex moral, psychological and philosophical issues' are placed in a taxonomy of value is discussed in ensuing chapters, where the incompatibility with the suggested eight levels of attainment in four different bands is fully demonstrated. Can a student achieving in this area at the eighth level of Band C be equated with a student achieving at the eighth level of Band D? If so, why have the different bands? If not why not? How can a greater awareness of the underlying attitudes, beliefs and values in texts' as expected by students in Band C, be taxonomied into levels? Chapters Three and Four will define literature education without the constrictive use of bands by articulating a base other than what has formed A Statement.

A further assumption made by the approach to literature as described in Band C is the notion that people are to engage with literature "to hypothesise about their purpose and audience" (1994: 30). This answers only one need for why students are attracted to
English and literature, and notable omissions of other reasons, such as, for example, the desire to be immersed in cultural heritage for its own sake, will be explored in the next chapter, where English is more clearly defined.

The focus area in Band C is on the study of linguistic structures and features of text. In order to encourage critical awareness by students of these aspects, "students are generally required to keep a journal as part of the management of their wider reading program". How does one assess a journal? How can one give it a numerical value, or a value according to eight levels? The idea of a journal is laudable. The practice of adjudicating its quality against that of a peer, however, runs counter the very principles of English education, namely to encourage free and personally meaningful, reflective expression.

The emphasis in this focus area in Band C is on critically skilling the student. Removed is the notion of enjoying the narrative for its inherent value, for its formative value, for its surprises, hopes, anxieties, compassion, insight into the human condition, altogether human qualities. While enjoyment of literature is mentioned elsewhere, there appear significant inconsistencies in the way *A Statement* is internally constructed.

In promoting the contextual understanding of the function of language in Band C, students are to

> become more observant and critical of the social and political world around them. For example, students study and discuss the way vocabulary and accent reflect - and are interpreted in terms of - power relationships in society (*A Statement*, 1994: 33).

This is important in promoting personal growth in the students in the sense of encouraging critical awareness. Where does this Band articulate the notion that students might engage in text to make meaning for themselves (mentioned earlier, in 1994: 3) in the sense of reading as an inherently and intrinsically worthwhile activity (Peters)? As
will be shown in the reference to liberal rationalist education and curriculum theorists, literature also has the purpose of being a non-judgmental presenter of whereby personal identification is actualised, where the student can align him or herself with prevailing viewpoints. Because of the emphasis on skilling, personal growth factors are simply not acknowledged. This omission is followed through in the next chapter.

Band C identifies in A Statement some eight broad outcomes (1994: 35). Six of these refer to skills of using written and spoken language and comparing media texts. Only two of the skills make reference to an understanding of literature, namely:-

- understanding the main themes, ideas and points of view expressed in a variety of texts and comparing them with other texts, and
- using some understanding and appreciation of the deliberately constructed nature of texts to interpret other texts within the same text type and across text types (A Statement, 1994: 35).

It is a preliminary conclusion to make the observation that there is no description in A Statement of specific reader response based outcomes as a result of engagement with literature, beyond a mechanical understanding of aspects of how texts work. The rather crucial omission of the reflective, empowering and role modelling functions of literature at an adolescent level will be more obviously explored in the next chapter, especially by explicit mention in this sense of the psychological engagement which occurs in the reader (Bloom (1994), Harding (1972) and Holland for his Dynamics of Literary Response (1968, 1975). Suffice it here to say that the glaring failure to incorporate several educational purposes of literature as will be explored in this thesis under the rubric of ‘human literacy’ for the early adolescent seriously diminishes the efficacy by which this document establishes credibility among teachers and learners. Four such qualities are: the mythopoeic nature of literature (Aristotle), the personally challenging potential of literature (Rosenblatt), the humanising aspect of literature, and not lastly, literature as an aesthetic and as a humanity (Bloom). One might expect mention of such qualities in Band D.
2.1.2.3 Band D

Band D designates the curriculum for years 11 and 12. The broad goal in these post-compulsory years of schooling is to

synthesize the knowledge, skills and understandings students have acquired in earlier Bands and on assisting them to build a broader framework of interpreting and using language and texts (A Statement, 1994: 36).

The focus of the English curriculum in Band D is the 'critical and aesthetic analysis of texts and language' (1994: 36). While the document has earlier gone to some lengths to broaden the definition of texts to include any variety, there emerges here a clear intellectual bias by explicit reference in this Band to the 'study of increasingly complex texts', and 'especially substantial literature texts' (36). The assumption is that literature, like a natural science, arranges itself by grades of difficulty similar to the way a reading scheme in Band A might be arranged by level of linguistic level of difficulty.

The eight emphases which appear in Band D differ from those eight listed in Band C only by the use of the words 'critically', 'synthesize' and 'formal'. It is postulated here that the emphases in Bands C and D are insufficiently clear to suggest an explicitly different (higher or lower) level of competency, insight or skill management. The implication that there are higher order thinking skills involved in Band D is one which begs a definition of such skills. None is forthcoming. Instead, there is much tautology from one Band to the other, which to a practicing teacher must appear repetitiously confounding.

The challenge in this Band is for students to come up with 'sophisticated interpretations' where 'personal responses continue to be valued' (1994: 37). Just how is one to differentiate a personal response from another on the basis of the level of sophistication? What happens to authenticity? The desire of the English Ministry of
Education to profile the outcomes in literature education (Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* was the example used) by describing what answers were wanted was resolutely rejected by English teachers (Homer, 1994) on the very grounds that such practice denied personally authentic responses by setting expectations of norms within which answers were 'acceptable'.

Australian literature remains an important focus. Texts are to be studied in depth. Students in this Band are encouraged to read texts from other times and cultures, this time with the objective of 'identifying and assessing the impact on a text of an author’s implied views and values'. At a time in the critical discourse of English where 'the author is dead' (Barthes, 1975, 1993) and the importance of the relationship between the reader and the text is overarching, it is interesting that the study of text in Band D asks for a closer examination of the social context of the writer. This suggests that there are competing models on how to engage with text.

Traditionally in New South Wales (as is evidenced by the 3 Unit English syllabus options), deeper engagement with text meant studying a number of, say, poems, plays or novels by the same author. In *A Statement*, opportunity is made for poststructuralist interpretations of text to examine the relationship between text and reader (see Barthes and Derrida in the next Chapter); and that is quite apart from innumerable other approaches which can be taken, such as psychological analysis, historical approaches, sociological examinations, etc.

'Emphasis on the deliberately constructed nature of literature texts is extended from Band C'. What does this mean? Neither band clarifies what that extension is, and such omission further weakens the hierarchical differences between the Bands.

It is pleasing to read that 'literature texts in Band D are often so demanding of interpretation and reflection' (1994: 38). Because of that, 'it is important that students
understand something of the nature and purpose of literature texts in general'. One would have hoped that the latter requirement would extend to any student of literature in any Band. Again, what does this mean, and how does membership of Band D differ from any other? The main argument of *A Statement* is to divide text into four Bands. But the division lacks the theoretical foundation and is insufficiently clear for teachers to work with it.

For example, a realisation that writers are struggling to flesh out often complex and nebulous abstractions may help students to understand why so much is expected of them in terms of such things as interpreting symbolic meanings and integrating disparate elements of texts (*A Statement*, 1994: 38).

This is suggested as an example of motivation which underscores the purpose of studying literature in secondary schools at post-compulsory level? As will be shown, there are many others which are omitted from the description of text in Band D.

Working within the acceptably wide definition of text (which includes mass media), students in Band D "bring mature social-cultural and linguistic awareness to their analysis of extended, complex and often subtle media texts" (1994: 38). In Band C, the corresponding skill requirement is to "honed their understanding of how context, audience and purpose affect the construction of texts" (1994: 31).

In the attempt to differentiate different bands, language is used to accentuate the differences between bands, to make more sophisticated a response in one Band than it really is. There is semantic difficulty in grasping the distinctions between Band C and Band D.

Band D, like Band C, is arbitrarily divided into three sub-headings: Literature, Mass Media and Everyday texts. Each category has three further and identical subheadings: Language: contextual understanding, Language: linguistic structures and features, and Language: strategies.
Under Mass Media: language: contextual understanding (1994: 38) students are asked to examine the way information is 'included, omitted, and ordered for particular effect'. This section then continues by suggesting that the desirable attribute of contextual understanding is to achieve "critical distance that enables them to analyse their own responses to media texts by identifying media elements within the text and in themselves that produce certain reactions". The explicit aim here, again is to cultivate critical distance, or the ability to dissect, take apart, analyse. While naturally this is an important aspect of competency in English, it is not the only one, as is narrowly presented by *A Statement*.

*A Statement* is riddled with many unclear assumptions, omissions and definitions lacking specificity or exhaustiveness. There are many worthy intentions, such as the casual use of phrases such as "Students examine the way advertising stereotypes influence our language, values and assumptions". Statements like this recognise that the nexus between language and message and culture and ideology contributes meaning to people's lives. But is it an expectation that secondary school students engage in linguistics, semiotics, cultural theory, ideologies of literary criticism, power, gender and so forth? *A Statement* lacks guidance, but being a framework, is precisely the kind of document which ought to be framing these kinds of contexts.

The words 'critical' and 'work' are both used no less than 36 times each in *A Statement*. The word 'reflective' was used only once (and that at level eight, presumably implying that such mental strain is not possible at any other level), and the words 'intrinsic', 'intuitive' were not used at all. Such a word search analysis clearly identifies a locus of value which is skewed. Is the emphasis in Band C on enjoyment of adolescent literature, and only in Band D on critical reading and working with text? It is only in advocating a more balanced literacy, namely a Human Literacy, that there can
begin to be a more inclusive framework than what this document has tried to be concerning literature education (Chapter Three).

Characteristic of Band D is the study of a wide range of texts relevant to the adult world. Students learn to be critical and independent users of these texts in their school and daily lives (A Statement, 1994: 40).

Does this suggest that students of Band C are not to be critical or independent users of adult texts prior to reaching Band D? This implies an artificial separation of the Bands, as there would be far more overlap between the two that is suggested by A Statement. Such a vision of English denies the learner a moral autonomy or independence which he or she has acquired long prior to the introduction of these National Curriculum documents (mentioned, inter alia, by Jean Jacques Rousseau, in Emile, written in 1762).

Finally, there are six broad outcomes in Band D. Again, only one of these refers to literature, and the other five talk about language and features of language. The one about literature says:-

At the completion of this Band of schooling, students will demonstrate growing achievement in:-

understanding the specific relationships between text and context, and particularly that the author's purpose and perspective, the structure, style, tone and content of the text, and the perspective of the audience will influence the interpretation of the text (A Statement: 42).

In summary, then, A Statement articulates the need for many important skills and competencies in English. A Statement articulates a set of skills, which by themselves place a locus of value on how literature is to be "worked". The principal educational value or emphasis which this document extracts from literature is the development of finer appreciation of how literature is constructed, and the cultivation in the reader of critical faculties. Skilling in such a context is seen as a 'tooling' mechanism by which students are meant to be empowered.
Such an approach, appropriate as it is in many ways, nevertheless has a very narrow focus. In fact, the focus will be shown to be inadequate to what engagement with literature offers. There are deficiencies in A Statement which this work wishes to delineate. There is no reference to personal growth and value clarification in this document, because the explicit emphasis is on outcomes, not so much processes, on external and explicit results rather than internal illumination, intrinsic learning as a recognisable and inherently valuable skill as equal to any utilitarian end.

Not what does literature say to you, what have you learned from exposure to literary heritage? How have you been affected by the power of culture as presented in your selected readings? What of the mythic? Heroic? What human values have demonstrated themselves? Compassion, greed, love, hunger for power? Themes are mentioned, but once found, are heaped into the direction of another literature based-outcome, rather than discussed for their value, their human significance within the pursuit of clarifying human relationships. How has the narrative affected, shaped, transformed you? How has participation in the conversation and representation of humankind altered the way you see yourself? Is reading not a (Petersian) worthwhile activity in itself? Is engagement with text not conducive to values which we traditionally associate with ‘culture’? A Statement asks teachers to consider what are worthwhile activities in education. Some of what they do are in the statement, and some aren’t. This is explored in the next chapter, where the reader and text are defined differently to the way these concepts appear here.

2.2 AUTHORSHIP

A Statement on English For Australian Schools was published in July 1994 by the Curriculum Corporation. The Curriculum Corporation had been purposely set up by the Commonwealth Government as the agency through which the wishes of the Australian
Education Council (AEC) could be implemented. Membership of the AEC was the
Minister of Education for every State or Territory, and the Federal Minister. In its final
published version, authorship is unclear, in that it is neither the Federal Government
nor any particular State or Territory which identifies itself either singularly or as part of
a group as authors. It can therefore be deconstructed that A Statement does not appear
to have an author, but appears with the collective will of both state and federal
government. The Federal government acted as host to the AEC, and the Curriculum
Corporation formed part of the Federal political agenda, as will be shown. All the
Statements and their accompanying Subject Profiles (16 documents in all plus several
support documents, such as ESL) were published by the Curriculum Corporation. This
was a company set up to publish and distribute all subject statements and profiles. In
the cataloguing-in-publication data, the Australian Education Council is cited as author,
as is the Curriculum Corporation, a body arguably constituted after the event to assume
responsibility for printing and dissemination of all curriculum material. David Francis
as Executive Director, signed a brief Foreword to A Statement. Of course, the
document did have authors, and some may be familiar within the profession; but they
cannot be identified, and this contributes at once to a collective anonymity, as well as
the public ownership, of A Statement.

If Gee’s notion (1994) of a text as an agent of colonisation is understood, then the
publication (with the imprimatur and funding of government) gives itself an anonymous
authority, which by its anonymity profoundly shapes the climate of teaching by
initiating and stipulating values and emphases where they hitherto had not been so
clearly identified. In an authorless document, no-one is responsible, and its power is
derived from its anonymity, in that it speaks with impersonal authority and suggests
that everyone must listen and read this. Such a statement emanates from a sociopolitical
understanding of what language is, and the arrival of these discussed documents is an
historic first, in that there are no previous versions of initiatives in national curriculum
in Australia.
The discourse by which they have come about is public and dominant, and accordingly states what is allegedly true and correct, what counts as desirable and important, relevant and as what is to be done. There is an Orwellian sense by which A Statement therefore can be said to have influence in aiming to alter the values by which curriculum in Australia takes its direction into the future. Ironically, this is even acknowledged (see 2.3 Structure of A Statement) where explicit reference is made to the fact that A Statement hopes to frame the way students relate to knowledge, and the way they learn.

Homer (1994) calls this 'curriculism', or the network of discourse which affects the academic and teaching community. He proposes that such discourse suggests the way students learn, suggests the sense by which teachers are given to understand the curriculum they should teach, suggests what is important, suggests what are the perceived rites of passage. Most of all, such discourse by stipulating stages and strands, determines success and failure within the framework.

In effect, however, the authority of A Statement bears the hallmark of officialdom in that it is clearly understood to be one of a series of documents which 'together represent the most significant collaborative curriculum development project in the history of Australian education' (1994: iii).

National collaboration has produced sixteen documents: a statement and a profile for each of eight areas of learning - English, mathematics, science, technology, languages other than English, health and physical education, studies of society and environment, and the arts. The sixteen documents are published in seventeen volumes, since the mathematics profile is published in two volumes.

In April 1989 the State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education endorsed ten common and agreed national goals for schooling in Australia. Over the following years, work proceeded on the development of statements and profiles. This work was undertaken at the direction of the Australian Education Council (AEC), the national council of Ministers of Education.

The project was managed by the AEC Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CURASS), chaired most recently by the New South Wales Director-General of School Education, Dr Ken Boston. CURASS included representation from the Commonwealth, States and Territories, New Zealand, Catholic and independent schools, parents, teachers, the AEC Secretariat, ACER and Curriculum Corporation. CURASS was supported by a secretariat with representation from
all States and Territories and the Commonwealth. Project teams were established to undertake the writing, while specialist staff from States and Territories and the Commonwealth assisted with development. In each learning area consultants were appointed with responsibility for ensuring that gender equity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives were reflected in the documents. Throughout the writing process, nationwide consultations occurred with groups such as parents, teachers (from both government and non-government sectors), teacher educators, professional associations, subject and discipline specialists, curriculum developers, community groups, employers and unions.

At its meeting in July 1993, the AEC agreed that the publication of statements and profiles shall be the prerogative of each State and territory. The Board of Curriculum Corporation in accordance with the wish of member systems is publishing, disseminating and marketing these materials developed through national collaborative processes. David Francis, Executive Director (in A Statement, 1994: iii-iv).

This description of the authorship needs comment by way of critical interpretation. The field of inquiry from which this interpretation is made is that of semiotic analysis (Chandler, 1995). In a real sense, there is no one author, but many who hide behind the public façade of the Curriculum Corporation as agent for the AEC. In deconstructing the anonymity of the authorship, A Statement came into being because it was empowered by the AEC. The AEC is the ultimate initiator and can therefore be identified as the commissioning body. To recognise this is important because the recognition places A Statement squarely within the arena of public policy, public discourse and the political context from which it took form. The nature of this needs to be discussed before the work itself is described.

Obviously a team of people worked on the construction of A Statement. Without wishing to discredit this document, it is worth noting that the tone of the above passage does suggest that it was possible to reach universal agreement, and that the authorship is vested in the public by virtue of the fact that many special interest groups were consulted. As the ensuing critique shows, neither is really the case, as agreement is presumed and is further assumed to be rooted in theoretical foundations pertaining to particular subjects². It could also be suggested that several participant stakeholders

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² Newspaper coverage in 1994 and 1995 repeatedly covered the contested nature of subject statements. Among them were especially the visual arts, mathematics and physics. Colin Marsh (1995) also chronicles this development.
have been omitted: universities and their understanding of English or their expectations of English high school graduands were not considered, nor were students consulted in the construction of this document. Parents and teachers were involved, according to David Francis, but the extent of that involvement is not known. All that can be suggested is that if consultation had occurred on a wide-spread a basis as stated, the document could simply not have taken the final shape that it did.

This critique does not suggest sinister intent. It simply suggests that the authorship really lay in a group of educational administrators and consultants who in turn were given a brief. It is quite likely that a number of English educators were co-opted at particular points, but the document in its final form takes on the hierarchical direction of a bureaucratic top-down model, rather than a bottom-up model which might have arisen from within the discipline of English teaching. This is said because such an approach has implications for the locus of values by which its shape emerged which are later explained.

2.3 POLITICAL BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

This investigation confines itself to the area of literature education, and purposefully does not set out to embrace the nature of English teaching as a whole, nor concern itself with any other of the many features of this language (such as language, linguistics, lexicography, etymology, grammar etc) which are all worthy curriculum components and worthy of study in their own right.

To understand the place literature is afforded within English education in A Statement it is necessary (firstly) to examine the key objectives proffered, since these set the 'text' of the document and locate it in the educational context of the drive for a National
Curriculum in Australia today and (secondly) to explore the background to this document, for therein lies the key to its real purposes

*A Statement* evolved out of a particular climate, dominated by the competencies movement which itself emerged from a particular economic and political focus. The discussion will therefore begin with the two appendices, because they provide insight into this background, and articulate the position of the AEC. This focuses the weight of the values by which the document expresses the principles of English teaching in the curriculum framework.

### 2.3.1 The Rocky Path Towards A Compromise Document: The Evolution Of Competency-Based Training

While the influence of economic rationalism (and the influence of a particular form of utilitarian thinking which is inherent in the former) on the educational paradigm operating at this time will be critiqued in Chapters Four and Five, this parenthetical interposition is necessary to allow a clear focus on the values which shaped educational policy in the evolution of this document.

There were several agencies, Departments and Committees which shaped educational policy formulation during the period under discussion. As stated previously, the AEC comprised itself of all State and Federal Ministers of Education. This body represented different political party views, and commissioned several key reforming reports in education and training in Australia, all relating to a perceived lack of preparation for employment in school leavers:

### 2.3.1.1 The Finn Report
The Finn Report (*Young People's Participation in Post-Compulsory Education*, 1991) suggests that schools should have increased concern with employability competencies, and, conversely, that vocational education should have increased concern with general competencies. The report specifically identifies six ranges of key competencies. Included are the key competencies of cultural understanding; personal and interpersonal skills such as initiative; negotiation and adaptability; problem solving, which includes analysis, critical thinking, decision making, creative thinking and skill transfer capability to new contexts.\(^3\)

This report clearly stresses competency in these areas and suggested strategies by which to increase post-compulsory education. This included the raising of the eligibility age for unemployment benefits from 16 to 18 years of age, widening of Technical and Further Education provisions, and further work on the determination of what constitutes competencies. Its focus was clearly aimed at the "post-compulsory years", but with obvious implication for secondary education in general.

### 2.3.1.2 The Mayer Committee

This Committee was set up later in 1991 by the A3C to explore the concepts of competency and to develop national profiles for the Finn key competencies. The Mayer committee developed profile statements in each competency together with suggested levels of competency. The Mayer Agenda, no doubt because it aimed to be more specific than the Finn Agenda, came under the scrutiny of individual states, and, as an example, the notion of cultural understanding as a competency was given to Queensland to finalise. That finalisation, it appears, never occurred, because of the proliferation of further reports, listed below. The example shows how precariously the notion of culture, or indeed literature as a product of culture, sits in a paradigm which aims to

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\(^3\) All six are: language and communication; mathematical skills; understanding science and technology, Cultural understanding, Problem solving abilities and personal and interpersonal skills.
identify, quantify and attribute values to levels of competencies in a dominantly instrumentalist or vocational context.

The gender debate was also used for political ends: before Finn and Mayer, girls education strategies were being advocated in schools (McKinnon Report, 1975, Boomer Report 1987, Australian Schools Commission, 1987) to encourage greater participation by girls in especially the natural sciences (physics, chemistry and mathematics), as these were seen to be instrumental to economic prosperity. A major contribution which Finn and Mayer made was to identify and label skills such as problem solving, critical and creative thinking, team work and the ability to articulate as English skills, thus placing the fact that English was undersubscribed by boys back onto the table of economic necessity. This is an example of how a link between economic profit and relevance of subjects has been used for political ends, and gender happened to be an expedient scapegoat to achieve that manipulation. What at first value were thought to be issues of gender really became a question of how subjects could be linked through gender to the economic profit motive.

2.3.1.3 The Carmichael Report

The Carmichael Report (1992) developed The Australian Vocational Certificate, proposed new entry levels of training and made recommendations which impact on post-compulsory training and education by increasing pathway options and portability of credentials. Again, the same agenda.

While these are arguably the three most significant reports which provided the backdrop for the formulation of A Statement, reference must also be made, if only in name, to a plethora of Boards and Committees, all of which answered to the AEC and played some part in implementing the agenda developed from the above reports:-

• The Working Party on Satellite Technology
• National Coordinating Committee
• National Schools Statistics Committee (NSSC)
• Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CURASS)
(and, within it, the Curriculum Corporation)
• Vocational Education Employment and Training Advisory Committee
(VEETAC)
• State and Federal Ministers for Vocational Education and Training (MOVEET)

Table 3.1 (See Appendix Three to this thesis) summarily lists the curriculum decision-makers and shows the interrelationships between the various agencies more clearly in terms of linear accountability (Marsh, 1994: 31-32). Concurrently and answerable to the Federal Education Minister were the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET), which oversaw further councils such as the Higher Education Council, The Employment Skills Formation Council (ESFC), the Australian Language and Literacy Council and School Councils.

At the heart of all this activity lay an attempt to redefine education so that Australia can be competitive in a global sense by not slipping into third world status\(^4\), but by harnessing 'a clever country', by transferring values of economic rationalism to educational contexts in such a way that new emphases on competencies will clarify educational requirements which are needed (in the eyes of these reports, committees and councils) for Australia to become more independent in the world of global trade. This is arguably a political agenda which articulated itself out of a particular set of circumstances, economic perceptions and the place of schooling in achieving our “clever country” status, our “place in the sun”. Conspicuous about this agenda was the fact that it was written not by educators, but by business people, government ministers and bureaucrats. The salient points which can be said to have come out of the three reports (Finn, Mayer and Carmichael), into the post 1992 educational climate are:-

• an appreciation of the necessity for the nature of education to change in Australia, so that the workforce can meet the altering nature of workplace demands in a

\(^4\) OECD figures for 1995 suggest that since the mid 1970s, Australia has slipped from among the top fifteen industrialised nations to be at the lower end of the top thirty by 1995.
competitive future. The prevalent belief was that the provision of Australian education in its current form was failing to meet future needs (Finn 1991, Mayer 1991, Carmichael 1992),

- an appreciation of the fundamentally altering nature of work as Australia moves from a traditionally primary industry and manufacturing base to a post-industrial age of technological change, information sharing and the “global village”, an environment in short where the nature of the skill base is forever changing (Jones 1990, McKay, 1993, Lowe and Gale, 1991),

- an awareness that educational success was less visible as knowledge, attitudes or values, but as competency-driven. That is, education is seen in these reports as quite explicitly skills-based and for utilitarian, vocational reasons (Dawkins, 1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1991),

- an altered base by which to report on student performance using profiles. This shift is one away from positions ranked in age cohorts towards recognising strengths and weaknesses in individuals in terms of skill bands which are assessed against ‘agreed’ levels of achievement, where descriptive ‘Performance Indicators’ are used to observe and record incremental gains. Such a shift is significant as it is a shift from inherent processes to visible processes, that is, an outcomes-emphasizing environment, and this shift is explicitly away from a focus on process and towards a focus on product (Curriculum Corporation 1994, Board of Studies, 1993),

- a belief that technology will provide answers, profits and improved outcomes. Accordingly, much emphasis is placed on (for example) the use of computers and information skills derivative from the enhanced use of technology (Baldwin, 1991, Lowe, 1992). The early 1990s saw a belief that technology was an end in itself, rather than a means to an end.
• by omission, there is a shift away from traditional liberal values of education for although “culture” is included, it poses the greatest problem in defining and measuring. ‘Reading for enjoyment’ figures less prominently in A Statement than does work related learning.

In the year prior to Finn (1990), the Senate Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training (1990) attempted to identify Priorities for Reform in Higher Education. The nature of the problem was then identified as being:

we are producing highly trained technicians who are under educated in the broader sense of the term. They do not have good critical capacities and they are not good communicators (Anderson, 1992: 1-2).

So there were occasional voices at the time issuing warnings about what was seen as an overemphasis on technological skill and a corresponding underemphasis of what will be described as the liberal form in a relevant education for the present and the future. The committee spoke of a narrowness of learning, of the need for higher level abilities and of the need for lifelong learning:

These technicians have clearly never been trained in the hand-to-hand fighting of intellectual competition (Anderson, 1992: 8).

This forces the conclusion that senators, politicians, government appointed members to committees were all bent on identifying apparent alleged deficiencies in the educational processes. The assumption was that by remedying these perceived educational deficiencies, the economy and the country’s well-being would automatically turn around and become successful because it would benefit from the considerations of this Platonic utilitarian ethos.
When in October 1991 the then Minister for Education (Mr Dawkins was asked\(^5\) about the role of the humanities, he answered favourably by recognising their value less as coming from one source or other, but as being couched in the Finn report as language skills, problem solving and thinking skills and team building, and he emphasised the need for Asiatic languages. He recognised the criticism made of him as pushing technological progress and study, but said that enrolments in the humanities had 'exploded' (sic) in the period 1980-1990, and that the future did belong to an information-based society which encouraged industrial participation in technology to support the former.

Given the history of this policy maker, this position (which preceded his portfolio change to Treasurer) is significant for the shift in climate from a position where he considered humanities-based learning as irrelevant to a more productive Australia to a position where the relationship of the humanities to 'a clever Australia' was at least being considered. However, the 1980's was a period in which both in Australia and in other Western countries teaching of the humanities was marginalised in a public discourse which valued technology and progress more highly (Jones, 1991). Also typical of that period are observations such as

We are being driven by decisions which are being made only on quantifiable data; these are the basis of the efficiency and effectiveness reviews, performance indicators, relative funding models. A statistically driven system allows for the power of the quantified to overtake the power of the qualified (Gale, 1991: 5).

What is not correct, unfortunately, is Mr Dawkins' statement regarding enrolment in the humanities at tertiary level in Australia. As can be seen from the table 'Higher education students by field of study, 1983-1990' (in Baldwin, 1991: 54) for other than veterinary science and education students, students of the humanities (arts) experienced the least growth over the seven-year period (27 per cent), where even agriculture, but especially

\(^5\) 'This by myself on the occasion of the question time which followed his address during the Conference for a Sustainable Society held by the Australian College of Education, Canberra, September 1991
health and business, law, engineering and architecture all outpaced growth in humanities enrolment by up to six times. It would appear that this was a period which viewed education less as an humanities-driven than a market and technology driven environment.

In summary: the character of educational emphases, policies and priorities from 1985 to 1995 in Australia was a background to the development of national curriculum initiatives in which technology and science were emphasized as the key to economic success. This climate saw an increased questioning of the relevance of a humanities-based education in Australia. The implication of this for English was clear: unless English could demonstrate its economic utility, it did not deserve the same level of policy or fiscal support.

The gauntlet was thrown: English had to ‘shape up, or ship out’. The question overriding most learning in this period became one of: how will this learning activity improve my skill levels, help me get a job, make me money, cause me the greatest of happiness, and the absence of pain. While that is a very important question, this thesis hopes to demonstrate it is not the only one, or even the most appropriate outcome to hope for from a secondary education in literature today. What is in contest are competing value bases, competing philosophies of learning, competing understandings of what education is and how it works.

The irony is that both of these ideologies, that of liberal educational orientation and that of utilitarianism, emerged from the same historical period and context. Just how they can or should co-exist, is the subject of this thesis.
2.3.2 Federal - State Relations

Historically, two pictures emerge from the way policy formulation and funding in education has occurred in Australia. The first is the question concerning the relationship between States and the Federal Government in determining curriculum. Traditionally, since Federation, the determination of curriculum has always been a State matter in Australia. In the 1960's, the Wyndham scheme was the last instance of significant reform at State level in New South Wales before the Education Reform Act of 1990. However, it would be wrong to disregard the role of the Commonwealth in Education. Ever since 1972, capital grants under Prime Ministers Whitlam and Fraser ensured the upgrading of capital buildings in schools by providing (inter alia) science laboratories and libraries for secondary schools, by putting in place a Schools Commission, a Disadvantaged Schools Program and the part-funding of private schools. Thus it could be argued that a “grants-led” influence has been exerted by the Federal Government, but until recently only in areas of general and capital concerns (e.g. school libraries and science laboratories) or on equity issues - but not on direct curriculum control.

The significance of this attempted shift in political control of curriculum from a State to a National framework has enormous implications, not just of power, but of form and content. It is appropriate therefore to comment that the provision of education, while a state responsibility in the first instance, has been supported by a range of Commonwealth initiatives over the years. With the economic development and improved communications technology accompanied by increased mobility of residents in Australia it was predictable that the time should come for a national collaborative effort in curriculum.

Notwithstanding the clear national character of the curriculum framework of A Statement, it is not entitled a ‘National’ Statement, because such a title would affirm a centralising role, rather than play that aspect down. Indeed, various Ministers have
gone to lengths to jealously guard their State's rights: the present Premier of Western Australia (Charles Court) insisted that the document have a State of WA cover on it, to safeguard the State's primacy of position in determining curriculum.

However, irrespective of the title, *A Statement* is one intended to provide a curriculum framework for the nation and its impact on syllabus revisions is clear, especially on form and content. This impact can perhaps best be seen by taking NSW as a case study.

### 2.3.3. Characteristics Of Educational Reform In New South Wales 1989-1994

The themes which characterise this period help explain the motivational drive for *A Statement* in the early years of this decade. The significant reforms at State level in NSW since 1989 are characterised by several themes:-

- curriculum development and reform, organisation and 'management'

- the enshrining of curriculum in legislation, indicating political owners of areas previously the domain of professional educators (an example of this in NSW is *The Education Reform Act*, 1990)

- a centralising of curriculum by the establishment of a separate Board of Studies which is independent from the Department of School Education (*The Education Reform Act*, 1990)

- a restructuring of subject areas, the deletion of some such as home economics and the introduction of new ones such as Aboriginal Studies, Business Studies, Technology and Design, Life Management, Contemporary English, Drama (*The Education Reform Act*, 1990)
• an altered emphasis on some subjects such as the introduction of compulsory Languages Other Than English (LOTE) and Technology and Applied Studies (TAS) hours in years 7-10

• "devolution to the self-managing school" (Bentley, 1994, Scott Report, 1990). This included the abandonment of the system of school Inspectors and the creation of Educational Resource Centres and Cluster Directors

• devolution of management (a decrease of the Department of School Education's central staff from over 2000 to about 700), and the local selection of school staff on merit interview (Metherill, 1990, Scott, 1990)

• an altered basis of funding whereby global cost accounting was to occur at school level, and salaries for casual teachers are further devolved

• an increased level of public accountability in education (recommended by the Carrick Report, 1989) through School Councils and provision of quality assurance mechanisms

• an altered staffing formula which saw the rationalisation of over 2000 teaching positions (and their promised re-introduction before the 1995 election!). It was the belief of teachers that the provision of computer education grants was meant to appease schools for their losses of teachers. The shift of value here is one from human instructors to machines as solvers of learning needs. This was how teachers perceived the implementation of the government's new policies working, as illustrated6. The causal link becomes explicit when three major policy speeches at the

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6Blaxland High School in the Blue Mountains, for example, received over the 1989-91 period some $26,000.- dollars for computers, but had to reduce its staffing by 2.6 teachers at the same time. The letters arrived in the same week!
time by (the Minister) Terry Metherell are examined: each about 10 pages long, they were delivered in July 1988, January 1989 and August 1989. The first does not mention computers, the second refers to the ‘Government will provide substantial additional funding for classroom computer education (page 4), and the third mentions a funding boost of $40 million over four years to bring total expenditure to $53 million (page 5). The fact that the same government began its term of office by reducing the number of teachers by 2000 is a matter for the record. In the aftermath of Terry Metherell’s replacement by Virginia Chadwick as Minister, one of her first publications was entitled Teacher Education, Directions and Strategies (September 1990), and ran to more than one hundred pages. It is obvious that the Government’s emphasis on technology as a solution in education had, politically expressed, badly backfired and some mending of relations occurred with the last-mentioned document before the election which the Liberal Government was to narrowly lose.

Pertaining to these developments were shifts of understanding, shifts of value and differing models in education which included an increased customer focus known as ‘client-driven education’. Consequences to such thinking included de-zoning of schools, home education, provision for accelerated progression, a cultivation of excellence in education illustrated by Centres of Excellence, and emphasis on Talented and Gifted Children. An emphasis was also placed on technology and away from traditional forms of teaching as being anachronistic in terms of future requirements. Teachers and workers were being asked to ‘think smarter, not harder’. The Premier of NSW at the time, Mr Fahey, announced that Satellites would be available by 1996 to enable improved communication, shared resourcing and provision of quality education. This was symptomatic of the belief that new ways of delivering education had to be considered, largely because they were ‘better’.

Accompanying these shifts was the belief that what the community wanted was increased choice of specialised schooling, and accordingly Technology High Schools,
Language High Schools, Selective High Schools, Sports High Schools, Schools for the Performing Arts and Senior High Schools were established to provide for greater choice. Pathways were being opened and students could, for the first time, complete their HSC at TAFE, or in joint schools TAFE partnerships, and could, also for the first time in the history of secondary education in NSW, begin to accumulate their HSC from a minimum of two years to a maximum credit of five years or combine academic with practical subjects in hitherto unavailable ways. There were two implications of all these changes: firstly an increased level of choice of subjects and schools, and an increased emphasis on technological competence; secondly, with the emphasis on specialised schools, there was a further shift away from what used to be valued core subjects such as English and towards schools which cater for a particular areas of emphasis, such as technology, languages, the performing arts, sports etc.

The agenda in this market-driven environment was to appear to give parents more choice in sending their children to schools which were better able to cater for particular scholastic or sporting preferences as a result of identifying particular strengths of their programs, or funding interests for which there was a belief that a community demand existed. Such an approach altered the importance traditionally allocated to core or key learning areas such as English, Mathematics or Science, and places the importance of specialization in the foreground while continuing to expect basic skills in literacy and numeracy in the background. One could be excused for asking: is not every child entitled to a comprehensive curriculum?

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7 Into this period, 1990-1991, fell my unsuccessful attempt to introduce the International Baccalaureate to more than private schools in Australia as a way in which intellectual achievement could place Australian students on an international level. Despite thoroughly researching this concept overseas and soliciting substantial support from prospective students, schools and parents, the Minister replied that she felt the idea threatened the integrity of the existing HSC, and was too resource intensive. The proposal had been for $160000- dollars. The same year Mrs Chadwick approved of Westfield Sports High at a cost of in excess of $5 million for specialised facilities. These developments in education deeply coloured my understanding of where educational preferences were to be allocated. Eventually the Baccalaureate will come to government schools in NSW, and not before time.
The tensions which inevitably developed during this period of significant educational reform concerned shifting perceptions of education, and, more significantly, the locus of power. Dr Scott resigned in October 1994 in disgust at watching how his reforms were being reversed, and cited the return of the Department of School Education bureaucrats to the 'devolved' building in Bridge and Loftus Streets as "the Gilbertian farce of the Department's troops, having marched away to the top of the hill, coming marching home again" in (Sydney Morning Herald, October 22, 1994: 2). The Labor Minister of Education, Mr John Aquilina, resumed occupancy of the Bridge and Loftus Street building in April 1996, after a 16 million dollar refurbishment of the same building that was vacated in the interests of saving money some six years earlier. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!*

While some control has been devolved, such as staffing and budgets, other control has been centralised more than ever. A study of public policy formulation in education during this period clearly shows the increasing influence of the Ministers (Dr Metherell and Mrs Chadwick) and their ministerial advisers. ‘The staff of the central Department of School Education shrinks by two thirds, but the staff of the Ministry increases’ (Sharpe, 1990*).

It is against this background of Federal and State changes in education that the Australian Education Council (AEC) worked towards national collaboration in curriculum, as is now explained.

### 2.2.4 Appendix 1: National Collaboration In Curriculum

The first Appendix to *A Statement on English for Australian Schools*, entitled *National Collaboration in Curriculum*, provides useful contextual background on how this

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*Dr Fenton Sharpe, previous Director-General of Education, now Associate Professor of Educational Administration at the University of New South Wales, made this statement in June 1990 at the Education Centre at Toronga Park Zoo, where Departmentally sponsored Master of Education students were gathered to hear about paradigm shifts.*
document came to be. In Appendix 1, the push for a national curriculum is said to have begun in 1986. It was an initiative of the Australian Education Council and it was in order "to make the best use of scarce curriculum resources and to minimise unnecessary differences in curricula between States". By 1987, five priority areas had been identified by the Australian Education Council (AEC): science, numeracy, literacy, languages other than English (LOTE) and English as a second language (ESL).

National collaboration in curriculum is then described in eight respects: three initiatives (a working party, a statement of goals, and a pilot mapping in mathematics and general curriculum) were put in place, which then bore fruit when in 1989 the Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia were announced. The Appendix also describes how the mapping was extended to include the social sciences and environmental education. Further, it explains how profiles came to be an AEC initiative, and how these then were decided to be developed in 1991 by way of statements and profiles for each of eight learning areas. Sixth, the management of this task was brought together by the formation of CURASS (Curriculum and Assessment), the importance of career education was to be made more explicit in the work by CURASS. Lastly, the importance of inclusivity of ESL (English as a Second Language) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy concerns was stressed.

These mapping exercises were conducted by discipline reviews, which were managed by the respective Directors of Curriculum, comprising the senior officers responsible for curriculum in the States and Territories and senior officers in the Commonwealth and the non-government systems. These took place in a range of subject areas (and which have not been without conflict and disagreement, as was mentioned in an earlier footnote) and were completed in Mathematics by December 1989 (Appendix Three to this thesis tables the curriculum decision makers by way of an overview). It is as a result of the completion of that mapping exercise in mathematics that the AEC in 1990 decided to develop subject profiles in English, Science and Technology. These
statements would 'include the knowledge and skills to which all students are entitled', and 'the agreed areas of strength in curriculum development which might be shared and built upon'. The profiles would

provide a framework which can be used by teachers in classrooms to chart the progress of their students, by schools to report to their communities and by systems' reporting on student performance as well as being amenable to reporting student achievement at the national level (in A Statement, 1994: 44).

Two terms deserve to be clearly understood: the first is that A Statement is meant as a 'framework'. Such a term places the subject in an environment, gives it a setting, and provides a horizon by identifying outcomes. The use of the term suggests that 'framework' ought to be a guideline, and certainly, it would appear not to have as prescriptive an air about it as would a term such as 'curriculum'. However, the denotation of 'framework' still succeeds in locking A Statement into positions of value.

The second aspect of this Statement is that it stipulates ways of reporting student performance. It does so, as will be analysed further, from the context of focussing, quite explicitly, on outcomes, that is, it focuses on the product, the deliverables, the measurable. Both observations militate against the use of the term 'framework' as a mere guideline, as particular expectations are distinctly generated.

Such an explicit emphasis on achievement and outcomes has two problematic areas: one of teaching and one of value. Teaching within this framework alters the nature of learning by an emphasis on the response, rather than the process or engagement. This is because the emphasis is on results, outcomes, skills, competencies. The text selected is selected with such findings in mind. In such a situation, the value of the text is selected not for what it is, but for what it can deliver. Such an approach clearly contains bias. A Statement on English for Australian Schools challenges teachers to quantify learning. In a climate of increased public accountability, this is understandable. However, as will be shown in Chapters Three and Four, such learning is problematic when considering
what literature does. By considering the theoretical frames of the reader, text, literacy, cultural studies and modern criticism, as well as by evaluating competing models of English it will be shown that the approach from within A Statement is inadequately theorized and poorly contextualized. Is the quantifiable of greater value than that which is hard to measure in any exact way? Will words like “enjoy”, “appreciate” etc have to be eliminated, along with the learning they embody?

Appendix 1 also makes reference to a template of the knowledge and processes to be taught and learnt in Australian schools. As such, it aims to categorise, classify and shape the kinds of learning and teaching that the AEC believes ought to occur in classrooms. The importance of such an intention is clear: the purpose is to establish patterns of skills, to mould (which is the semantic meaning of a template) learning.

In concluding the discussion of Appendix 1, it is remarkable for the following reasons:

- it clearly states the AEC as driving force behind national collaboration in curriculum,
- it describes the period of 1988-1993 in a linear path by which goals were set, subjects were mapped, profiles were considered, and
- CURASS was given the task of consulting and progressively approving the draft statements and profiles.
- It included gender equity, career education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policies.

Appendix 1 therefore serves to factually illustrate the rocky path to compromise in curriculum formulation across all Australian states which was outlined above. It also validates some of the concepts and values which were charted earlier in backgrounder both Federal and State developments in education. What is now left to do prior to a
discussion of *A Statement* itself is to examine the second Appendix, *The Common and Agreed Goals For Schooling in Australia*.

### 2.2.5 Appendix 2: Common And Agreed Goals For Schooling In Australia

In 1989 in Hobart the Ministers of Education of all Australian States and Territories (known as the Australian Education Council) ratified a Document entitled *Common and Agreed Goals for Schooling in Australia*. That document, which forms the second appendix to *A Statement of English for Australian Schools* (1994), espoused ten principles. Eight of these ranged from encouraging people to reach their full potential, to achieve personal excellence, to promote equality of educational opportunity, to provide skills for employment and "other aspects of life", to encourage life-long learning, to encourage active and informed citizens, to provide for health and creative use of leisure time, and to provide, explicitly, "appropriate career education and knowledge of the world of work".

If one tried to summarise the main theme so far, one could form the view that such statements were aimed at maximising individual opportunity in a free society by ensuring equality of access.

The remaining principles are: "to develop in students skills of English literacy, including skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing". That statement appeared among all those which addressed a variety of competencies from skills, understanding, knowledge and appreciation. While this statement aimed to cover an emerging understanding of key learning areas, it also aimed at a range of generalised values, such as "skills of analysis", and "a capacity to exercise judgement in matters of morality, ethics, and social justice".
This raises issues of literacy as social practice (Lankshear, 1994, Cairney, 1990, 1996; Scribner & Cole, 1981), of distinguishing response to literature from criticism of literature (Graff, 1989, Eagleton, 1993), and these are taken up in Chapter Three in order to show how these are theoretically embedded terms which involve more than was touched on.

Together, literacy skills and a capacity for moral judgments synthesize the tension in the Hobart Declaration of 1989: on the one hand the Ministers of Education aimed to agree on common learning requirements in a skills and attitudinal context, on the other they tried to be explicit about the high quality of educational abstractions that they believed could be aimed at. Perhaps it was the nature of the expectations articulated in these ten principles which made them sufficiently general for all signatories to agree, yet also sufficiently unclear or non-specific so that no-one Minister could be held accountable for any one principle.

The statements are general and did, in their nature or in their announcement, not really cause much attention. The context in which they emerged was one where people began to see that it was in the country's interest to have agreed points of access to schooling. In practical terms, this meant that should children transfer schools across states or systems, they should find a ready way to do so. The statement was a first in that it was the first time that Ministers of Education across all States and Territories could agree to educational notions worthy of espousal in all parts of Australia.

It is also noteworthy, however, that while the document makes no less than six references to the vocational nature of education ('employment', 'training', 'career education', 'world of work', 'the place of work in our society', 'scientific and technological skills'), it avoids any mention of the place of literature in a young person's education by naming the area of learning, or identifying any of the thinking skills identifiable with an engagement with literature beyond the generalised 'skills of
analysis and problem solving'. This lack of clarity affects the Statements in all other humanities subjects and the scientific areas as well. The question forms as to whether traditional subject areas can achieve the goals set in the ten Principles as they are, or whether they require transformation to achieve these outcomes. It also clearly states a direct relationship between "education" and "work", which surely is contestable, if only because the history of education is less clear on the link that it is assumed in A Statement.

The tone of the Statement is a political one which aims to provide an environment in which the 'tooling' of young people to meet future challenges is best provided for. It is not difficult to see that education (as enunciated in the 10 Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia) is seen as having an agreed utilitarian function, in that education is seen as enabling people to cope with their lives, in which change and economic needs are presented as the most prominent challenges.

The significance of these Goals and their timing is that it:-

- showed, as an historic first, agreement among all Ministers of Education, State and Federal, across political parties, that there were common goals and values which united aspirations for what an Australian education should aim to be.
- articulated values of excellence, self-worth and life-long learning in a context where skills were recognised as vital to respond to current and emerging economic and social needs of the nation, and
- stressed knowledge, skills and attitudes which were required for effective participation in a democratic society within an international context, and
- emphasised (twice, in goals 4 and 10) the relevance of education to the world of work. This again is the application of an applied utilitarian value of education to society.
2.4 HOW A STATEMENT RESTRUCTURES ENGLISH

This last part describes the principal features of A Statement. By focussing on the overall properties, already mentioned inconsistencies, assumptions, implications, omissions and contradictions are reinforced. This segment also shows what A Statement wants English to be.

First, some implications which can be drawn from a reading of A Statement.

It is meant to provide a national framework, that is, it has a centralising intent: it is meant to provide a background environment in which the horizons, ceilings and boundaries are described. A Statement explicitly describes the kinds of competencies which are expected from students of English. These are not suggested or broad, but specific to each of four Bands. The unavoidable implication from such a document, a first for Australia, is that there is a centralisation of curriculum by explicit mention of specific expectations. The extent to which such a statement will determine practice is yet to be seen as teachers begin to implement its principles.

Being a national document, and the first in its kind, carrying the authority of Government, being implemented against the political background that was described, foremost among which is the competency movement, there can be little doubt that there is an attempt to standardise, control and centralise curriculum. At a time when schools are asked to be more self-managing, one area over which jurisdiction has never been left to schools is curriculum. Indeed, this document, by its existence, has an air of unavoidable (and also un-implementable) prescription about it.

Secondly, A Statement stipulates ways of reporting student performance by explicit focus on deliverable outcomes. This has implications for teaching, because the way in which these expectations are met affects the way teachers teach and students learn.
What teachers do with text will appear in the contrast between different models of English teaching that is explored in Chapter Four. At the centre of this is the locus of educational value. This curriculum framework articulates a set of values. How well do those values agree with current practice, or meet what are the needs of young people who engage with text?

Thirdly, A Statement defines literacy predominantly in terms of skill areas. These are those of being able to read, write, listen and speak. Literacy is not defined as critical insight. A Statement has a limiting authority because it stakes territories such as strands, bands, levels. This categorisation of ability immediately calls into question the criteria by which the process occurs. This is a reductionist and utilitarian view, which, it is argued below, is not meeting the literature education needs of adolescents.

The locus of value must lie on the experience, on the process, rather than having the desired outcomes so firmly in one's sights that we aim straight for them without bothering with the intermediary, yet educationally central values of process.

This debate surrounds the definition of utilitarianism: should education, as is explicitly stated in A Statement, be in immediate service of the economy, the place of work, and learning expressed in terms of skills alone? In this understanding, the stress is on technology, on vocational aptitude, and on ways of strengthening the central utility of education at the expense of the individual's experience of morality as a result of engagement with literature for its own sake.

The populist definition of utilitarianism (within which A Statement has been set) fails to acknowledge that the humanity of literature plays a leading role in the formation of the future: quality of life, experience and reflection do matter, and it is the intrinsic quality of our literature that stands Australia apart. The level of sanity and tolerance in the
Australian community towards race, war, drugs and the like is in no small measure directly attributable to the pervasive influence of a humanities-based education.

So the paradigm shift required here is to accept a definition of quality in education which includes, not excludes, the humanities base of what literature as text is and what individualised reader-response and intrinsic understanding of useful activities in literature-based learning are. There are internal inconsistencies in A Statement. These arise from the way in which the document is set out. What is said at one point does not necessarily link with other points, but appears disconnected. The problem comes back to how education is seen, and how an education in literature is defined.

In the crucible of this document are concepts of enjoyment of learning versus what constitutes progress; enjoyment versus critical appreciation. The pendulum is towards skilling students to critically relate to text. While enjoyment of text is mentioned, in the definition of schooling of A Statement, this is incidental to the learning experience, and certainly enjoyment is not measured in any of the broad outcomes indicated for either Band C or D.

A further inconsistency is that growth, which is spiral, is defined in terms of stages, indeed levels. Growth and maturity are individual qualities which are not easily placed within bands of competency: yet A Statement does not shy away from doing so. In so labelling performance, however, it misreads what happens when young people read literature. Why this is so will be shown in Chapter Three.

It is helpful when a curriculum framework (for the purposes of working definitions) develops strands such as text versus language. However, the danger of such practice lies in ignoring a whole language approach when teaching the subject, and such access can become fragmented, and fly in the face of professionally agreed values when teaching English.
The danger of attributing hierarchical levels of competency is further accentuated because it redefines quality in a progressive, linear way, rather than in terms of depth or quality in terms of individual growth. When personal growth and critical awareness are juxtaposed in an educational context of a curriculum framework such as A Statement, the former loses out, because it is less directly measurable than is the latter. Such an approach narrows and devalues the meaning of what happens when people engage with text. Similarly, what happens when reflection is juxtaposed with outcomes? What is at risk in such a structured banding of outcomes is originality of response, because standardised responses become the norm.

The English example (of Romeo and Juliet, mentioned earlier [Homer 1994]) of ranking possible responses into various bands of ability to assist teachers in grading student achievement was an attempt to nationally determine the formula by which students might succeed in their understanding of literature. This was rejected, at considerable printing costs to the Government, by State School teachers, and the attempt was abandoned. As reference to Duncan Graham and David Tyler (1993) will show, Australia can benefit from the bitter experiences of national curriculum reform which preceded ours in recent times.

There are omissions in A Statement. Absent from a definition of literacy (1994: 4) are explicit outcome definitions of cultural understanding, self-referential learning, intrinsic learning, reflection, recursive improvement, psychological development. In other words, insights which are not immediately apparent in learning. The definition of literacy concludes by suggesting a strong link between "language and thought". This is not only an understatement, but is really only scratching the surface in terms of what we now know about language acquisition (Chomsky, Piaget, Vygotsky, Halliday to name but a few). A Statement is inadequate in recognising some of the primary values by
which people come to see English in terms of literature education (see the next two chapters).

The need to examine the value base of literature education in English as a subject in the period 1989-1994 (when A Statement appeared) is central to a critical appraisal of what has been included, what has been left out, and what has been erroneously expressed or misrepresented in such a curriculum framework. By examining the context of A Statement, it is possible to highlight what connections have and have not been made with educational concerns in the profession of English teaching, and by bringing these forward, contribute to the debate surrounding best practice and quality in education from a perspective of conceptually re-weighing some notions concerning the value of literature for adolescent learners.

2.4.1 Questions Raised By Reading A Statement

In order to give this thesis direction of inquiry, and in order to tease out the central issues that this description of this document has yielded, the following topics are identified, not to be critical, but to place on the table the fact that a discussion of a number of competing and conflicting theories of English, of literary criticism, of literacy and of reader response becomes necessary before A Statement can be reconciled against dominant theory and praxis in such a way as to be able to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

The major three questions raised by reading this document are:-

1. How do the document's stated intentions coalesce with the theory and praxis of English teaching, especially concerning what we know about the reader?

As stated in the introduction to A Statement, territories are claimed and boundaries are stated. The "areas are stated", "essential elements are outlined", objectives are to "show
what is distinctive about it and describe a sequence for developing knowledge and skills". Profiles are divided into eight levels of achievement. How do these intentions follow through the forty two pages of A Statement, and how well do they agree with each other? For instance, does reaching a competency of, say, level eight in Band B equal reaching level eight in Band C? One area of confusion concerns the hierarchy of attributing skill achievement in any band, and A Statement is unclear about these kinds of correspondences.

2. How is text defined?

A further difficulty with A Statement is the apparent paradoxical use of the definition of text as accepted earlier (anything from everyday to classical), and the mention of 'increasing substantiality'. Does it suggest that, for example, an everyday text cannot feature in Band D because it is insufficiently substantial? Does this suggest, inversely, that a text in Band C is neither complex nor substantial? Can books like Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain, or A Fortunate Life by A.B. Facey, both of which are traditionally studied in Band D, not also appear in Bands B or C, which they quite easily can? What is suggested here is that the definition of text as offered in Band D (1994: 36) contradicts the definition of text given on page 6 and which was discussed earlier.

3. How does A Statement address the competing models of ideology which inform how text is studied and how English is taught?

What is suggested here (but is in need of further inquiry) is that A Statement and what is happening in particular States such as New South Wales in terms of currently operating syllabus statements, are not the same thing. In fact, there are different understandings of what English teachers do with text which are conflicting, and this needs to be resolved, especially in a document which aspires to being a national
framework. What a study of text in Band seems to signify is a rather unilinear approach. This, it is suggested, is a narrowing of the educational import of literature, and this is explored further. Students are also asked to 'use their knowledge of the context in which a text was constructed to interpret it'. Such a critical approach can be most useful in its own right, but in the process narrows the meaning of text and may, indeed, miss other important reasons for engaging in narrative discourses as will be explored in the next chapter.

The cultivation of the reader in Band D of an awareness that reader responses should 'examine the extent to which people's interpretations of texts differ and why' is a laudable goal (1994: 37). But, while acknowledging the role of 'ambiguity and complexity' in literature, how does *A Statement* suggest that such recognition be attributed a level of competence in the outcomes? There are some difficulties here which *A Statement* neither acknowledges or describes.

One of the unfortunate ways in which outcomes in reading continually appear to be measured, is by getting students to write. While writing is a perfectly valid instrument, it is not one of the primary responses for the reader who has engrossed him/herself in following narrative. Such a short cut avoids valuing some of the most important intellectual and emotional processes which occur in the reader's engagement with text, as will also be explored in the next chapter. To evaluate reading by asking the reader to write is to 'yoke together the most heterogeneous ideas by violence' (Samuel Johnson on metaphysical poetry). That is in itself a dubious practice, only compounded by ignoring, in Band D, the range of values which immersion in narrative offers young people. Some significant values by which people engage in literature are omitted.

Chapter Three will address questions one and two, while question three is discussed in Chapter Four. Those chapters will be followed by two further chapters which discuss, respectively, the utilitarian and liberal motive and the incommensurability of competing
models in education which are in tension between liberal rationalist and vocationalist instrumental positions.
3. THE LOCATION OF HUMAN LITERACY IN
THE READER AND THE TEXT

Education is the great engine of personal development.
(Mandela, 1995: 194)

To achieve a clearer understanding of literature education, this thesis will now explore
the place of the reader and the text. The theoretical base from which A Statement is
constructed can then be examined for what will be shown to be contestable premises.
The current debate in this thesis both draws on and redefines the theoretical basis of
literacy and will be developed in this chapter within the notion of ‘Human Literacy’.
‘Human Literacy’ will be shown to be grounded in a number of theories: those of
reader and text, competing views of literacy, cultural theory and modern as well as
poststructural criticism. Through an exploration of the various attributes of ‘Human
Literacy’ the critical nature of literature education will be clarified in Chapter Four.

The need to theoretically position this concept emerges from a curriculum which is
trying to accommodate many ideologies which often compete and conflict. As a result
English education is burdened with choices and tensions of what to emphasize in
literature education. This chapter focuses on the nature of the intersection between
reader and text so as to integrate theories which focus on the reader’s enlightenment
about and induction into human relationships as a civilizing force in a new theoretical
construct. The nature of literature education and its place in curriculum will be
discussed in the next chapter to show how competing liberal and utilitarian ideologies
vie for prominence in contemporary curriculum construction in English.

In many ways, ‘Human Literacy’ polarises the tension between socially and
individually constructed meanings by articulating an emphasis on the latter, especially in
an educational setting. At a time when wider critical, discursive and interpretative
practices are being advocated which relish the deconstruction of political, social, and other manifestations of ideological power, 'Human Literacy' restates the central significance of a particular form of liberal humanism which is espoused by those who see that reasons for doing English are primarily concerned with a personal growth model focused on the individual. Recognisable from various theoretical groundings, 'Human Literacy' emerges as a way of describing the personal advantages of reading literature in terms of outcomes which remain meaningful and relevant in contemporary education.

This chapter will pursue the reader at the locus of significance and value within the broader context of social and ideological positionings. Attention will be drawn to five major theoretical discussions which shape the definition of human literacy:-

3.1. The Reader as Meaning Maker and Participant in Human Literacy
3.2. Competing Literacies
3.3. Cultural Theory
3.4. Modern Criticism
3.5. The Unique Form Of Literature As Text

Within the first mentioned discussion, five aspects of human literacy are promulgated: the notion of discursive space, the transformative potential of the reader as spectator/participant, reader-response, and the reader in a post-structural world.

3.1 THE READER AS MEANING MAKER AND PARTICIPANT IN HUMAN LITERACY

What do readers do when they read? Traditional explanations (especially in educational environments) have focused on basic reading skills or strategies which are commonly categorized into the graphophonic, semantic and syntactic cuing systems (Goodman,
1976). Models of developing reading skills have been variously described as top-down / bottom-up, or inside-out / outside-in (Cairney, 1983: 6), where bottom-up models are those which perceive the reader as deriving meaning from a text by first decoding print. Others speak of surface versus deep meanings (Moss, 1981). A top-down approach to language development favours meaning preceding form, that is ahead of mechanical aspects, such as letter, syllable and word recognition. Theoretically contrasting philosophies accompany these variously informed positions.

By contrast, a whole-language or interactive approach to language recognizes that meaning is integral to becoming a successful reader, and that reading is contextually, culturally and situationally dependent, concerned more with meaning than skill, and thus embedded within human relationships.

Human Literacy is concerned with the relationship which is built up between a text and its reader both while and after the reading takes place. It emphasizes reading outcomes beyond the text. It attempts to move beyond definitions of literacy which lead to limited practices such as setting commonly agreed comprehension-type questions which search for data that are directly answered from the unchanging language and authority of the text (as instanced by the New Critics, F.R. Leavis and certain canonical advocates like Bloom).

According to Kristeva (1966: 12): “no literary text is an isolated phenomenon, but is constructed from a mosaic of quotations; and text is the absorption and transformation of another”. The writer is a reader of texts, and equally, a text is available only through some process of reading. In this way, Kristeva extends the discursive nature of literature from Bakhtin's dialogical understanding of the novel and thus defines intertextuality. In fact, she would say that a particular discourse of literature may be a monologue, in that all you see or hear is the voice of the author. This is a limited interpretation of what it means to read literature, and avoids the context in which it was
created. Intertextuality can be defined as the relationship of any work with other works past and present, with the reader and his or her reading of other works, and with the engagement between those two worlds (Kristeva, 1966). Intertextual readings aim to identify influences that bear on the writer and reader not as they are framed necessarily by the lives of either (as might be done by an approach in literary criticism, an historiographical approach, a biographical approach, a particular ideological or cultural approach), but as they are informed by the texts to which each reader has been exposed, directly and indirectly.

Intertextuality is a term used to describe the process by which readers and writers make connections between different texts. Thus intertextuality places greater emphasis on interpreting possible textual meanings, as the writer might have intended, or as the reader might choose to derive. Such interpretative speculations are less concerned with authorial intention, as might be found in a Leavisite approach to text. Intertextuality tends to align itself with ‘interpretative communities’ (Fish, 1980), such as secondary classrooms, and these are in turn culturally dependent. ‘Human Literacy’ suggests a shift away from univocity, essentialism or singularity of voice of the novel that was emphasised in other models, such as the Leavisite, which will not move from the canonical authority of the original text. While Fish advocates communal interpretations and meanings, in Human Literacy the locus of value is far more on the individual, not necessarily articulated, but felt response to text. Lacan and Kristeva both share an emphasis on explaining the symbolic in text, and this interpretation stresses the plural, the intertextual, rather than the poetic:-

Reading enables an act of interpretation which is also an activity of idiosyncratic creation in that the displacement inherent in imitation engenders a valorisation of the self as writer because one reads agonistically (Worton and Still, 1991:9).

According to Kristeva both axes of intertextuality, the writer and the reader, are emotionally and politically charged languages. This laden atmosphere can engage generations of readers in controversy over status or meaning. Kristeva argues for a
plurality of interpretative possibilities. Such views of reading cannot then be accommodated within a linear understanding of text where there is an agreement on the semiotic of particular textual constructions. It is on this basic position, that of the plurality of possible readings, that human literacy is conceptually erected. In wrestling with the text, the reader participates aggressively in the construction of meaning. The agonistic engagement is practically combative, where the reader may react against, or with, a particular textual construction. This space is a creative one, and Heidegger also affirms that every work of art says something other than the mere thing itself, positing the work first as an allegory and then as a symbol (Still and Worton, 1991: 12). That is further affected by the ways in which literature as a form of allegory mediates between language and reality, and occupies a virtual space which is dynamic and at an intersection of textual surfaces. Text is in fact a structuration (Kristeva), an apparatus which produces and transforms meaning. This perception of reading narrows the significance of text and plays up the significance of the act of constructing meaning from the textual record. Kristeva acknowledges the creative act of reading as a construct of meaning which is located within a web of further ideologies and discourses. Human Literacy recognises the distance and space between text and reader, opening up interpretative possibilities and recognizing the personal nature of how text affects readers. 'Human Literacy' accordingly positions itself as a personal way of seeing how particular texts affect the reader. Kristeva's famous phrase, the 'subject as a subject in process' (in Lechte, 1994: 142) alludes to the impossibility of ever completing an analysis, due to the absence of stasis. If reading is a subject in process, then its meaning can never be established with finality, as ambiguity and multiple choices must characterise a state of flux. This characteristic has implications for Human Literacy.
3.1.1 The Discursive Space Between Literature\(^1\) and Reader

Of critical importance to Human Literacy is the relationship between text and reader. This understanding has been marginalized of late, both in theories which actively move away from this understanding, as well as in disciplines which tend to narrow the kinds of ways in which texts are treated, read, interpreted, critiqued. Human Literacy is postulated as a concept which re-emphasizes the centrality of this understanding, ahead of wider social or critical constructions which are made (of the reader or of the text). The space between text and reader has been theorized in a number of ways, both in a narrower and a wider sense, including the reader as spectator, kinds of reader-responses, reception theory, intertextuality, gender and, modern and poststructural views. By recognizing that it is mainly in reading that meaning is created, authority shifts from literature as text to the reader as equal participant in a liberal orientation, and the construction of deeper belief structures.

The constant search for the interpretation and representation of the human is at the basis of (Barthesian) desire to engage with all literature (Roland Barthes, Le plaisir du texte, 1975). Human Literacy articulates that search and desire for interpretative engagement, as both are nourished by literature. Human Literacy is about how we define our humanity. The first aspect of the concept ‘Human Literacy’ has as its focus the human response in the reader as triggered by the depiction of the human in the text. This has implications for both which need to be further clarified.

Overriding any ideologised criticism of literature must be this Barthesian desire, that is, the notion that literature is there to be enjoyed, appreciated, savoured because of the way it presents the human condition. If no joy accompanies engagement with literature, any study of it becomes sterile, a chore, a duty, and is not led by natural curiosity to

\(^1\) Literature as a unique form of text is defined later in this chapter.
delve beneath the subcutaneous surfaces. Thus, in bringing young people to literature, their desire to know more about a text, because of curiosity, because they are intrigued by the storyline, attracted by the way an idea is presented, drawn by a theme, lured by a concept, is fundamental to developing any subsequent engagement with literature, and a necessary prerequisite to an appreciation of its value and contribution. This desire brings motivation with it, and arises in consequence of the desire. This prepares the ground and establishes a discourse. Only afterwards can a critical approach become possible.

The second aspect of the concept 'Human Literacy' is that its focus is the result of curiosity and desire about identity and relationships which are brought by the reader to his or her engagement with text. This has implications for how people are brought to text, and what the nature of their initial encounter should be, something which is explored later. By yoking the desire for text to be enjoyed to a curiosity about identity and relationships is in both instances to place the emphasis on the reader, in particular on the intertextual space in which meanings about texts and personal responses to those texts are constructed. This space is the ullage between text and reader, and is discursive in that meaning is constructed within it.

By 'discursive space' is meant that young people must be given the opportunity to engage (in a ludic sense) with literature before they are asked to do things with it. In the first instance, they must let the story affect their psyche, deal with it emotionally, cathartically, feel for, with or against characters, ideas and themes (Thomson, 1987, 1992). It is vital that enjoyment of literature for what it does is created first, before the more laborious and ponderous tasks, those of inquiry, cool detachment, criticism and scholarship enter the student activity. Only after the initial, unqualified and spontaneous reaction has been allowed to take place, is the student ready to critically engage, complete comprehension questions, responding critically in terms of authorial intention,
textual presentation, or critical of personal response. Thus initial reader-response is of an emotional nature, and this is the third aspect of Human Literacy.

Reading literature is a field through which adolescents are provided with vicarious exploration of human emotions. Adolescents, pre-occupied with making meaning in their own lives, benefit from exploring feelings. That is, it provides a non-judgmental space in which students can explore different emotional distances, relationships, and personal decisions about values and beliefs by which they can begin to valorise their own life, without having to feel the pressure of a sibling, parent, friend, school, church, society, culture bearing down on them. Literature then is an opportunity to be free, without feeling any environmental or ideological coercions. The reader has the ultimate choice of identifying, being neutral or rejecting the textual values, argument or ideology.

Iser (1974; 1976; 1978) suggests that the implied reader is the *Gestalt* placed by the author in a narratological tradition in which the addressee contributes to the production of meaning every time a book is read. The *Gestalt* of meaning is created in a discursive space between text and reader, partly by the text and partly by the reader. The *Gestalt* lies somewhere between the text and the reader. The author feeds cues or 'nuggets' to the reader which act as 'catalyzers', and has arguably little control over the direction the reader may wish to take his or her response in. These horizons of expectation are 'intrinsically Delphic' (Griffith, 1987: 27-30), in that blanks and indeterminacies are created that are the reader's task to fill. It is precisely during such creations that moments of greatest self-awareness occur, write both Iser and Griffith. The argument is that such activity occurs in this discursive space. This discursive *Gestalt* is a further characteristic of Human Literacy.

Human Literacy is therefore situated in this intertextual, discursive space in which the reader constructs his or her own *Gestalt* of meaning. The locus of Human Literacy is in
the space between text and reader. This means that initial encounters with text are based on a curiosity, a desire, that effective transactions between readers and texts are a source of enjoyment, and, if not during the reading, then ultimately, should be a source of pleasure. Such a recognition of the meaning of reading is inadequately accommodated in traditional theories, and hence the need to articulate the term ‘Human Literacy’ as a way of privileging the emotional dimensions of reading. Focus on these human aspects of reader-response precede the intellectualisation of responses, be those critical, cerebral, detached, deconstructive, etc.

3.1.2. The Transformative Potential in the Reader as Spectator

Text affects the reader in ways which are not necessarily immediately apparent and certainly not immediately quantifiable. Human Literacy is postulated neither as a theory of text nor as a theory of the reader, but as a way of recognising and validating valuable aspects about reading certain texts. By consolidating various ideas about the established field, ‘Human Literacy’ is an umbrella term under which is assembled a collection of ideas which are interpreted in new ways.

In this regard, how do the arguments of Holland, Harding and Lacan affect the notion of Human Literacy? They establish that the agency of text has a transformative potential for the reader, one in which s/he is caught up with both voluntarily and involuntarily. The aforementioned space acts as a dynamic which is open to multiple interpretations by the reader as onlooker (Harding, 1972). That dynamic can be defined as the masking and unmasking, the tension between life and death, achievement and failure, text as an achieved anxiety. In short, these aesthetic variants are controlled by the tension of the narrative (and identified by Bloom, 1994, and Holland, 1968, 1975) and contribute to the reader's ongoing interest:
Fiction can contribute to the search for identity or role definition that is a crucial task at the stage of adolescence. It allows you to try on various personalities, each of which selectively emphasises some fear or potentiality of your developing self (Harding, 1967: 9).

Harding is among those who identify the transaction which occurs in the reader during reading as psychological. Lacan and Holland identify sexual aspects of that transaction in their respective work. Suffice it here to recognise that readers' psyche can be affected by particular texts. In Harding's notion of the 'Role of the [reader as] Onlooker' (1972), the reader as spectator chooses when to engage with the narrative, and to what extent. This characterisation emphasises both the effect of literature on the reader as well as the control the spectator has. As with electronic media, the spectator chooses to tune out or in at will. Harding's understanding places more control in the hands of the reader than the text, as he recognises the importance of voluntariness, mood etc as affecting the quality of reader response. Holland says that literature is not just a static packaging of conscious or unconscious "content", but a process, an ego dynamically transforming conscious fantasy toward conscious significance (1975: vi).

His hypothesis is that literature has an effect on the reader which elicits a particular (and individually different psychological) response and that such a response has a transformative potential. Like Lacan, his work concentrates on the psychological effect of text on the reader. The significance of this kind of work is that it establishes a psychic dynamic as an acknowledged reader response. It is this psychic dynamic which is a human experience, is an experience in humanity. This psychic aspect is claimed as characteristic of Human Literacy. It is by 'defensive modifications of unconscious content' in the reader (Holland, 1975: 105) that fantasies exercise a transformative function as they are applied to social, moral or intellectual themes. The ordering quality of literature, the creation of structure and pattern in an otherwise chaotic world is a further feature of this transformative potential in the reader's mind. The psychic dynamic in the role of the spectator appears to meet a need in the writer and the reader,
and is, in fact, a source of pleasure for both, part of that aesthetic dimension to which Harold Bloom and Louise Rosenblatt and others also refer. Human Literacy wishes to privilege this psychic dynamic (which has transformative potential) with greater attention than has been the case in literature about the benefits of reading.

Significantly, Holland develops the notion that meaning derived from a literary experience does not have to be explicit: it can be mystifying, puzzling, unclear, and can cause reflective contemplation for considerable time to come. There can be thus an enigmatic role to text, one which hints at a problematic or ambiguous situation. He links this function to the aesthetic potential of text, and adds a further one, the text's appeal to our sexuality (Holland, 1975: 170).

The space in which initial reading takes place for its immediate response, then, is characterised as important in that it has a psychological, mystifying, intriguing, aesthetic and/or transformative potential before it is opened to any forms of critical engagement or deconstruction.

3.1.3 Reader Response in Human Literacy

As Tompkins concludes in her work on reader-response criticism (1980), a recognition of the shift of the focus from the text to the reader is a relatively recent phenomenon, though a concern with the activity of the reader has its roots in classical Greek philosophers, not just the last three centuries. Questions asked of reader response include:

- how is a reader affected by text?

- what happens when the reader converts the dry images of text to living mental images?

The reader makes implicit connections, fills in gaps, draws inferences and tests out hunches; and to do this is drawing on a tacit knowledge of the world in general and of literary conventions in particular. The text itself is really no more
than a series of cues to the reader, invitations to construct a piece of language into meaning. In the terminology of reception theory, the reader ‘concretizes’ the literary work which is no more than a series of black marks on a page. Without this continuous active participation on the reader’s part there would be no literary work at all (Engleton, 1993: 76).

Reacting against the emphasis placed by New Critics on the text as the site of all meaning, reader response theorists emphasize the reader’s role in making meaning. It is assumed that text does affect the reader and it is also assumed that the text works if the student connects.

Reading becomes the experience of discovery, of uncovering this range of meanings in the texts and relating of this meaning to others. The teacher can help the student expand the range of meanings by sharing and discussing the reading experiences with students and by opening new vistas in the variety of sources to which the student can turn. This approach represents a blending of a learning theory based on the integration of self and knowledge, and a policy on literacy which declares that reading should be a source of pleasure, insight and self-exploration (Willinsky, 1990: 72).

Readers talking about text is an intrinsically satisfying process. Willinsky acknowledges that ‘literature is no longer safely ensconced as the highest point of an education in the language’, but says that ‘reader-response theory gives it a second life as a means of learning more about the world and art both outside of and within the student’ (1990: 97). Together with Probst (1988), Willinsky and Rosenblatt (1938) argue that the reading process is a transaction, in which the reader is an equally important participant as is the textual rendition. Meaning and interpretation are indeterminate, though Fish (1980) says that some predictions can be made because of the ‘interpretative communities’ to which readers belong, and which would share particular ideological outlooks on text. Elsewhere it is stated that ‘we shape the reading, and in a direct way the reading shapes us’ (Corcoran and Evans, 1987: 48). Benton and Fox (1988) say that this imaginative recreation is filled with picturing, anticipating and retrospecting, interacting and evaluating, and this imaginative collaboration is a phenomenon fundamental to the desire for and satisfaction derived from text.
Rosenblatt (1978: 25) calls this process of reading, of 'lived through experience', an
'aesthetic reading, where the reader's attention is centred directly on what he or she is
living through during his relationship with that particular text'. An aesthetic read refers
'..... to those aspects of remembrance, speculation and association which are evoked in
the process of creating a story or poem' (Corcoran and Evans: 1987: 43). Contrasting
with this, 'efferent' reading refers to a type of reading, a role played by the text which a
reader is expected to take away from reading and usually considers after the reading has
occurred (Rosenblatt, 1978: 24). Rosenblatt's distinction is helpful because she reduces
the clinical nature of the transactional effect of literature by the recognition of the human
or aesthetic appreciation which can only be the result of a particular way of reading. Her
work, dating back to 1938, is also helpful because it diminishes what could be seen as
the exclusivity of de-constructive criticism as a purpose for engaging as a reader of text.

The meaning created by readers and writers who encounter texts is seen as 'greater
than' the written text or the reader's prior knowledge Cairney (1990: 14). Such
responses play a contributive role in the culturalization of people, and thus has
transforming possibilities which many would call aesthetic or civilizing. Literature
therefore can be said to be an intrinsically humanising and culturalising transaction
which is part of that Human Literacy by which a society makes meaning for itself.
Young people will read because they are interested in themselves, and because in the
reading they may become the focus of attention. At its best, then, text is an attempt to
see more clearly who one is and where one stands.

In considering reader-response theorists, one at times feels that in their idealism, they
are dealing with the totality of response. The emerging definition of Human Literacy
suggests that textual experience has never been captured exhaustively, simply because
we can at best sketch only some of the elements. Deconstructionists like Julia Kristeva
suggest that the essential response in each reader will greatly vary, as connections are
made between the personal and the public, the private and the political, or, as Gee
(1994) would have it, between private lifeworlds (discourses) and public Discourses.

Willinsky (1990) and Rosenblatt recognise the reader's experience of text as an agent
for personal development. This is echoed in Peel (1994), who reminds us that text can
be best moments, suspenseful and insightful. This is a primary way of experiencing
text, and the critical discrimination of textual nuance or technique becomes a secondary
concern. Human Literacy aligns itself to that primacy, and focuses on the eliciting of
personal reader response, transactional and transformative as such response has been
shown to have the potential.

Students find their voice and define their knowing on the page; they bring
themselves to the text integrating their own meaning and sense with the story
they find there. (Willinsky, 1990: 217)

Or, as Arnold said:-

Good poetry does undoubtedly tend to form the soul and character; it tends to
beget a love of beauty and of truth in alliance together, it suggests however
indirectly noble principles of action (Matthew Arnold, 1908: 142).

In a Human Literacy context, a reader's response contributes to the process of self-
definition. In reaction to the text, there comes about a heightened sense of self. Human
Literacy emphasizes inner qualities, qualities of character and personal growth, rather
than social or ideological concepts which may well flow from that inner recognition of
self in the wider world. In that emphasis, there is a greater tolerance of difference,
within a primary reading as defined above, than can reasonably be expected from a
more critically aloof approach to text.

If one were to take the classically Greek notion of knowing oneself and mixed that with
a more recent engagement with text (say with Petrarch, Shakespeare or Montaigne) to
further that personal and interpersonal illumination, then one gets close to defining the
meaning of what engaging with text means to the individual. Reading text is a personal
quest in a field of combat which is *mathesis*, which entails interactions everywhere, with characters, twists and turns, psychological depictions, emotional states, events which are, in short, life-forming.

> Where is the Life we have lost in living?
> Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
> Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
> (T.S. Eliot, *Choruses from the Rock*, I)

Like T.S. Eliot, Probst also argues that literature is experience, not information, and he asserts that the critical implications of Rosenblatt's theories have not been worked out as fully as they might be. Probst identifies literature as having a dual role: the giving of pleasure and the sharpening of understanding.

> Literature is our reservoir of insight into the human condition, the pool of perceptions and conceptions from which we draw our own visions of what it is to be human (Probst, 1984, 1988).

In talking about that fundamentally unmediated, private exchange between a text and a reader, Probst says that literature does not exist outside the individual reader in the same way as do physical phenomena studied by scientists:-

> all the student's knowledge about literary history, about authors and periods and literary types will be so much useless baggage if he has not been led primarily to seek in literature a vital personal experience (Rosenblatt, 1968: 59)

Probst develops the difference between the reader and the critic by comparing the two to a baseball statistician and a baseball player: while in the former there is a shared interest in text as there is in baseball in the other two, the fact is those interests have different origins, and thus approach the same topic differently. Moving the metaphor from American sport to the argument about Human Literacy, it can be suggested that by focusing on the particular nature of reader response, different aspects of the reader are emphasized. Such an understanding contrasts with (say) those which emanate from a more utilitarian or text-based paradigm.
The definition of Human Literacy so far identifies a range of possible effects that text can have on the reader which are variously described as emotional, psychological, transactional, transformative. These begin to determine the kind of meaning the reader is looking for in text. As the effect of text is enlarged if it is able to bring about any of these descriptors, this suggests that not all forms of text have this cathartic ability, and this narrows the type of texts which allow for a Human Literacy (as will be shown in 3.5).

What reader-response work establishes is this need for the reader to interact with text in a way which skills the reader as thinker. The connections made by readers with events and ideas in their own lives are recognised by those who value reader response as a beginning by which reflective and analytic work becomes possible. This breadth and depth, referred to later as a liberal attribute of form, is strengthened by such emphases. Because texts do not have single or authoritative meanings, responses can also differ (from that of the teacher, say, or from that of an anticipated outcome\(^2\)). When a learning community talks about what texts mean, a quality of reflection becomes possible which asks: because my reaction to text may differ from that of others, what does this say about me?

Rosenblatt's central question is: what is the reader's response? In reception theory, as advocated by Iser (1987), the question shifts to become: how is the reader shaped by the reading experience? In particular, how does the Gestalt transform the reader's consciousness? Iser recognizes that many Gestalts can have a collective effect on the reader's experience within a continuously altering state of extratextual framings. Reception theory extends reader-response theory by exploring the virtual dynamic of reader-text interaction as a phenomenon which shapes the reader's Gestalt. It is clear that Rosenblatt and Iser are informed by different ideologies. Rosenblatt merely assumes that text will have an effect on the reader, while Iser is more interested in the

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\(^2\)This is best illustrated by the quickly aborted attempt in England in 1993 to describe the outcomes which students ought to bring to bear in respect of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.
kind of affect on the reader. Yet both draw their full attention to the nature of the response of the reader.

So the shape of the text is the product of its phenomenon, is greater than its described parts. This is how Iser comes to describe an effect in the reader which triggers anticipation, retrospection, contemplation, as a *Gestalt*, a shape which is capable of several different realizations. This also explains how a second or subsequent reading can produce different impressions. The *Gestalt* of the text is not capable of being objectified, or exhaustively described, as it is open to virtual and changing interpretations. A common reaction explained by Iser is that many readers are disappointed upon seeing the cinematic rendition of a particular text, largely because they will say things like 'this is not how I imagined the character'. The imagination is that figurative interpretation that goes beyond the text, and assumes a *Gestalt* of its own, which is shattered the moment it is given a particular shape by a régisseur. The definition of Human Literacy grows by including Iser’s Gestalt concept in the reader because it enforces the work of Rosenblatt, Holland and others which all recognise a significant psychological arena at work in the reader’s mind.

'Configurative meaning' (Iser, 1987: 284) is individually constructed by the reader. The *Gestalt* in turn assumes the dimension of an illusion, which is an artistic effect.

[the reader] oscillate[s] between involvement in and observation of those illusions; he opens himself to the unfamiliar world without being imprisoned in it. Through this process the reader moves into the presence of the fictional world and so experiences the realities of the text as they happen. (Iser, 1987: 286).

This 'balancing operation' takes place before, during and after the reader processes the text. As the reader constructs the 'unformulated part of the text', indeterminacy drives the reader to work out a configurative meaning which is an hermeneutically active process. This process is driven by two structural components, says Iser: a repertoire of familiar literary patterns and the contrast of the familiar with unfamiliar. This
juxtaposition is the means by which tension is introduced and the reader’s curiosity entangled. Iser suggests that the generation of literary illusions by means of a Gestalt which contains oscillating elements is what causes various interpretations of reading. The development and puncturing of those illusions is an unfolding which can reasonably be described as an experience the reader makes as a result of his/her identification with characters, themes, moods, etc. Books have an existence, but 'only take on their full existence in the reader' (Iser, 1987: 292). The text-reader relationship is thus described by Iser (from a phenomenological point) as formulative, as constituting as much of the reader’s consciousness, preparedness to sustain an illusion as it is the text’s ability to contrast familiar with unfamiliar material. The illusory and configurative aspects of constructing meaning from reading make the task of explicitly stating reading outcomes that much harder.

Both reader-response and reception approaches have the following in common:-

- a recognition that meaning is continually being constructed in the act of reading.
- an emphasis on exploring the reciprocity between text and reader
- a focus on the configuration or pattern of experiences which shape the reader.
- an understanding of text as an experience influenced by the reader’s history and culture.

Human Literacy situates itself as a term which tries to capture the uncritical mental activity that occurs in readers, and which now has established itself as having these key dimensions:-

- it is transactional and explores the spontaneous, undeconstructed reader responses, both aesthetic and efferent,
- it affects the psyche. Human Literacy recognizes the phenomenological approach of reception theory, and appreciates that literature has a psychological affect on the reader,
but has no desire to place that affect into an immediate psychologically theorized perspective, preferring instead to value the emotive and psychic nature of the exchange between text and reader.

- It is recognised that provided that text has certain characteristics, yet to be identified, then there exists a transformative potential. Reading is a transformative activity in that the dynamic of constant self-correction (Barthes, 1993: 405), what Iser calls the interplay of expectation with memory (1987), calls for a reader's active reconstructive role in reading.

However, there remains a reluctance in Human Literacy to accept any particular theorized reader-response positions (Gestalt, aesthetic/efferent, etc.) simply because there is a recognition of the private and elusive nature of literature effects on readers, which in turn are culturally and historically dependent.

The contents of a piece of literature are mentally and emotionally constructed by the reader, are 'ideated':

But since this meaning is neither a given external reality nor a copy of the intended reader's own world, it is something that has to be ideated by the mind of the reader. A reality that has no existence of its own can only come into being by way of ideation, and so the structure of the text sets off a sequence of mental images which lead to the text translating itself into the reader's consciousness ... The concept of the implied reader offers a means of describing the process whereby textual structures are transmuted through ideational activities into personal experiences (Iser, 1978: 38).

Griffiths understands that the place of the reader is made significant by the fact that the reader's gain is self-knowledge through reading, that there exists an opportunity in the act of reading for therapy and social analysis which places reading literature 'as a unique form of cognition as well' (Griffith: 1987: 34). Thus Iser and Griffith manage to link what happens in the reader's response to text back to the liberal value of knowledge for its own sake, satisfying an inherent need:-
If pleasure is not an outcome, how justifiable is the curriculum, and on what grounds (Griffith, 1987: 39)?

In Human Literacy pleasure emerges as a strong motivating factor in the reader: indeed, while there may be an initial desire or curiosity towards a text, joy, satisfaction and pleasure may not necessarily accompany a reading, but should end with it. If the reader is not seduced by (the profane pleasure of) the text, then no Gestalt takes shape, and the reader-text relationship is left undeveloped. Indeed, Protherough writes that 'the emotional importance of the experience can sometimes outweigh all later critical judgements' (1986:3). Other work in reader response champions the importance of response while simultaneously recognizing its difficult nature (Protherough, 1986). Human Literacy aims to describe ways in which readers derive meaning which have been attempted by some, left for their difficulty by many others. Human Literacy aims to bring together a new theoretical understanding, a new dimension of literacy, by its particular emphases which contrast with divergent paradigmatic views, belief structures, or ways of understanding how readers construct comprehension.

[This is] perhaps the single greatest problem in the teaching of literature in schools. Briefly, there is an apparent gulf between the responses teachers say they value and wish to encourage and those which much of their work and most of the examining process actually elicit (1986: 8)

3.1.4 The Reader In a Poststructural Context of Human Literacy

... there is no such thing as the 'self' - that is to say, a finite, unique soul or essence that constitutes a person's identity; there is only a subject position in an infinite web of discourses - the discourses of power, sex, family, science, religion, poetry etc. And by the same token, there is no such thing as an author, that is to say, one who originates a work of fiction ab nililo. Every text is a product of intertextuality, a tissue of allusions to and citations of other texts (Lodge, 1988: 22)

How does poststructuralism and deconstruction affect the position of the reader in the framework of Human Literacy so far advanced?

Structuralists like de Saussure (1966) moved from an historical or diachronic view of language to a synchronic approach, where the meaning is determined in relation to other
elements within a structure. Saussure described a linguistic sign as a fusion between 'signified' and 'signifier'. Saussure encouraged structuralists to use such techniques as deconstruction and semiotics to examine not the meaning of a piece of writing, but the structures which produce meaning. Structuralism is concerned above all with the mechanisms by which meaning is put into a piece of writing. Structural criticism concerns itself with meaning as it emerges from the structures of text, and advocates of this school thus locate meaning not so much in the reader's construction of it, as in the text. Human Literacy situates itself against a structural view of language in that both acknowledge that meaning is not located in particular words, but that meaning resides more as a result of particular patternings, arrangements, associations. Thus the agreement is one which searches for meaning between the text and the reader, not in the text. Where structuralism differs with Human Literacy is in respect of the locus of value, which the former places in the text, and the latter in the reader. These are paradigmatically different ways of approaching meaning from text.

Post-structuralism examines the way the specificity of that text collaborates or resists the structures which produce meaning, in order to achieve the specific communication it exists to make (McLeish, 1993: 715).

The text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the message of an Author-God) but a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of the original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture (Barthes, 1974).

Like theories of intertextuality, post-structural critics acknowledge a plurality, incoherence and arbitrariness of meaning, and this acknowledges that meaning has certainly moved from the author, but also from the text, in that it is the community of readers which creates new text, new structures from old ones. Human Literacy recognises these textual and interpretative ambiguities, but stresses that because of the social nature of meaning construction, readers also shape meaning by what others believe texts to mean. Such a recognition has implications for how literature is taught.
Meaning is not inherent in signs, nor in what they refer to, but results purely from the relationships between them (McLeish, 1993: 715). Structures of meaning include and implicate any observers of them: this represents an additional reality. Thus realities are never completely knowable, and hence are illusory. The task of today’s reader is to deconstruct the myths and illusions of culture, and its signifying practices. To observe in a post-structuralist way, is to be searching for constructs of meaning. 'To observe is to interact' (Appignanesi and Garratt, 1995: 79). Human Literacy has in common with a poststructural view of language the notion that meanings implicate the reader, that they are constructed by examining the nature of the illusions created in particular texts, and that this process inevitably yields new realities, understandings, meanings. But Human Literacy differs from a poststructural view of text in this significant respect: while the latter denies final realities by the very terms of how poststructuralism defines itself, Human Literacy accepts that the reality which each reader creates for himself or herself is real for that reader, either at the time, or in his or her consciousness.

Deconstruction in fact is seen as an attempt to 'pass beyond man and humanism' (Hart in Beilharz, 1991: 56), and while Derrida is correct in showing that la différence is that no text is able to escape the subjectivity of its reception, he is at odds with much literary critical practice by wanting to disregard the human intention and response by author and reader.

To present 'deconstruction' as if it were a method, a system or a settled body would be to falsify its nature and lay oneself open to charges of reductive misunderstanding (Norris, 1991: 1).

Indeed, Derrida is hostile to the idea of this thesis, namely that author and reader intention and response is conjointly responsible for the understanding which is yielded by text. In its form deconstructionist and postmodern thinking has a nihilistic tendency.

The postmodern would be that which in the modern invokes the unrepresentable in presentation itself, which refuses the consolation of correct forms, refuses the consensus of taste permitting a common experience of nostalgia for the impossible, and inquires into new presentations - not to take pleasure in them
but to better produce the feeling that there is something unpresentable (Lytotard, 1992: 24).

This comes across as sterile, life-denying, human-avoiding. Human Literacy by contrast values personal insight and enlightenment, and believes that a reader’s engagement with particular texts will yield an improved understanding of self, relationships and wider culture. Deconstruction has been described by others as in fact ‘philosophical antihumanism’ (Harrison on ‘Foucault’, in Beilharz, 1991: 84, and Lattas on ‘French Feminisms’ in Beilharz, 1991: 100) at the very time that ‘the future looks more humanistic’ (Macken, 1992b). Derrida's challenge of philosophy as capable of accessing truths and understanding (Norris, 1991: 138) does suggest that his methods are elaborate, but ultimately mere tendentious sophistry. In his own words, there are strong and weak interpretations, and if this is so, then his are in the context of the importance of Human Literacy decidedly weak.

The first part of this chapter emphasized the significance of the reader’s construction of meaning as a unique form of literacy, a ‘Human Literacy’. In the next part, it is intended to position ‘Human Literacy’ within competing literacies.

3.2. FORMS OF READING: COMPETING LITERACIES

The place of the reader in Human Literacy has so far been established as an active meaning maker who is engaged in a constructive interpretation of text in a personal growth model of language. Configurative meanings are created by the reader-as-onlooker in a discursive and intertextual space which contains opportunities for ludic, enjoyable and vicarious experiences, both spontaneous, aesthetic and efferent. The reader’s Gestalt is further affected by inner qualities which are transactional, potentially transformative, emotional and psychological in nature. As the reader reflects on the text and engages in the notion of ‘reflexiveness’ (Thomson 1987), predominant attention
converges from these and other various aspects on individual response. Such a view of the reader contrasts with an older, more behaviourist view which sees teaching reading as a skills-based, more bottom-up model. The first definition of Human Literacy is one which identified the reader as active meaning-maker. The next feature of Human Literacy is to ask about the nature of the link between the reader and what meaning is actually constructed. In identifying the reader there is a pressure on the text to declare itself, and ask how text is to be read.

3.2.1 Multiple ‘Pathways to Literacy’

How is the reader to interpret meaning, how is sense made of the text? Scholes distinguishes among three reader interactions: ‘reading’, ‘interpretation’ and ‘criticism’ (1985: 63). By ‘reading’ he refers to the simple transfer of information, by ‘interpreting’ is meant the process of making meaning, and by criticism is meant the process of questioning the value base, assumptions and premises underlying the text.

This raises questions about how reading positions the reader. Among the many developments that have marked the relatively recent transition from ‘reading’ to the more multi-faceted concept of ‘literacy’ as the preferred term, there is an increasing number of theorists who advocate a socially constructed understanding of literacy (Cairney: 1990, de Castell: 1989, Lankshear: 1994, Luke: 1986, Meek: 1991, Scribner and Cole: 1981). Appreciating a socially constructed notion of literacy entails asking ideological questions of what to emphasize. One question in this regard concerns the locus of value. Is it on the development of the reader, on individual growth, or is it on the reader’s expanding critical understanding of themselves in the wider world. The question tends to polarise the debate: is the emphasis on the individual or the social context? Any answer does well to comment on a combination of influences which shape

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3 A title used by Trevor Cairney in his 1995 publication.
the successful reader. Many literacy theorists would agree that the term ‘literacy’ is able to better reflect the multi-dimensional nature of influences which operate between readers and text than has been the case with the narrower term ‘reader’. When deconstructing the reader’s place in a framework of social literacy, two steps become apparent: the reader’s improved understanding of themselves in respect of text (cogito te ipsum), and the reader’s growing awareness of themselves in regard to their world.

The distinction is important because there are implications that flow from it as to how texts are related to, especially in an educational context.

Rather than an end in itself, (functional) literacy should be regarded as a way of preparing man for a social, civic and economic role that goes far beyond the limits of rudimentary literacy training consisting merely in the teaching of reading and writing. The very process of learning to read and write should be made an opportunity for acquiring information that can immediately be used to improve living standards; reading and writing should lead not only to an elementary general knowledge but to training for work, increased productivity, a greater participation in civil life and a better understanding of the surrounding world, should ultimately open the way to basic human culture (my emphasis) (1976 UNESCO definition of literacy in Levine, 1986: 31).

This definition spans a competency spectrum which ranges from the traditional skills-base of reading to empowering the individual to best operate in the world. Underpinning this definition are economic, civil, democratic and cultural understandings. In definitions like the above, we see a perception of literacy going beyond the instrumental, as influenced by the introduction of the literate person to the term ‘human culture’. This view is also reflected in The Australian Council for Adult Literacy’s definition of literacy:-

[Literacy] includes the cultural knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognise and use language appropriate to different social situations. For an advanced technological society such as Australia, the goal is active literacy which allows people to use language to enhance their capacity to think, create and question, in order to participate effectively in society (Working Party on Literacy Teacher Education, 1994).

Family Literacy (Cairney, 1990) and Critical Literacy (Lankshear, 1994) are further types of literacies which emphasise particular aspects of this complex notion. Literacy is
also political (Meek, 1991) and functional (Halliday, 1976, 1994, Kress, 1976). This quite apart from all the reading research which is inspired by psychology majors and which studies reading under laboratory conditions (Harste, 1989: 3), or comprehension-based activities which occupy so many English classrooms. Computer Literacy emphasizes a particular skill, and Cultural Literacy emphasizes an awareness of the civil terms by which a society is constructed. Antecedent to these particular ways of reading was the work of Scribner and Cole (1981), who moved literacy out of the traditional field of confined understanding where it means the ability to read and write and into that larger field of literacy as a set of socially organised practices which make use of a symbol system:

> Literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use (1981: 236)

Contrary to the expectations of Scribner and Cole, literacy was not found to be a prime mover in social change. The conclusion of these researchers was that literacy is a far more complex and socially integrative process than it was originally assumed to be. Such a recognition places the understanding of what is gained from reading and writing into a much broader conceptualisation of literacy, one which allows for a number of variant emphases to be recognised and accommodated.

Taking the Scribner and Cole notion, as well as the more particular and recent literacy variations, Human Literacy articulates a much broader reading, because it encompasses above terms by articulating a way of relating to text, a value base of benefits generic to reading texts, from which more objective, specific inquiries can take place, such as reading against the grain (Thomson, 1987), reading for implications of power, etc.

Human Literacy thus emphasizes text as a personal means to accessing identity, as a humanity and this is fundamental to understanding culture. It is thus closer to cultural literacy than arguably any other, but is oriented to the reader as being encultured, rather
than depending on the text's 'culture' to educate the reader (see also 3.3). The ideological emphasis of Human Literacy is, significantly, located in the reader, not in the text's culture. While text is never value-free, it does have a culture and does inform the reader, as post-structuralists are fond of saying. The scrutiny in Human Literacy is not on the ideological transfer of particular belief structures from the text, as it is on the reader's capacity to be illuminated by the insights yielded by the text. Later, literature as a unique form of text (3.5) will explain how text can have enculturing effects on the reader.

For the purposes of clarifying the ways in which particular literacies can be seen, the 'literacy discourse' informs three theorized kinds of readings:

- a literacy aligned to the personal growth model in English (Peel, 1994, see also next chapter), emphasizing intrinsic individual gain in a liberal expressive context. Human Literacy is derivative of this position, because it accommodates itself against the young individual who is brought to literature as a form of text for personal gain. Human Literacy is advanced here as a means of reconciling two theoretical opposites, by saying that personal engagement must be the enabling precondition for critical discourse. It is the discovery of the self within a social context: a dynamic liberal orientation, which enables Human Literacy to position itself within the Personal Growth and the Critical Literacy models by stating that young readers especially need to be initiated into an understanding of human behaviour as related by particular forms of text, before they become critically active in respect of the material to which they are exposed.

- a literacy by which the reader is initiated into a particular culture, perhaps theirs, of the past or of a different culture. By such a reading, the individual is brought into the wider social context, and encultured in the text's belief structures. This is the
position commonly advocated by Leavisite or canonical advocates, who have a view of educating the reader into particular ways of seeing, relating, appreciating etc.

- a critical literacy which is about understanding privileging and disempowering features of society, that is reading with a defined critical outcome, a utilitarian consequence. This is commonly practiced by scholars who wish to deconstruct the ideological influence of (it is often alleged falsely exalted) texts. In this sense, critical literacy becomes an activity which is about learning to question the society which constructed the text:

[Critical literacy] responds to the cultural capital of a specific group or class and looks at the way in which it can be confirmed, and also at the ways in which the dominant society disconfirms students... The unit of analysis here is social, and the key concern is not individual interests but with the individual and collective empowerment (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985: 133).

Literacy should characterise a curious, inquisitive, critical orientation (Lankshear, 1994). Critical Literacy is "social", "radical", "problematising", "cultural" and, of course, "critical" (McCormick, 1994; Peim, 1993; Griffith, 1992; Patterson, 1992; Ball, Kenny and Gardiner, 1990; Boomer, 1989). According to Critical Literacy theorists, the opposition of the individual with the societally contextual constitutes the most fundamental distinction between the Growth school and the Critical Literacy school. Critical Literacy examines the social and argues that Growth Model curricula place too much emphasis on the notion of the individual, without recognising that language users are, in fact, individually constructed members of society.

Lankshear (1994) says that we need to tidy up our thinking about critical literacy, and in this regard observes two weaknesses of meaning of the term 'literacy'. The DEET (1991) definition says that 'effective literacy involves integrating speaking, listening, and critical thinking with reading and writing'. Lankshear notes that such a definition says nothing about what characterises a critical orientation, and no clues are offered in
this respect in the document. An absence of a critical orientation to anything is the first weakness in this critical literacy debate in that the reader is simply meant to have a critical attitude. In Human Literacy, there is a critical orientation to the self in the first instance, and to the world secondly. Human literacy emphasizes personal insight and understanding ahead of ideological societal critique as a preferred focus of attention when reading.

The second weakness is that literacy is 'everybody's baby', that is, it is so broad a term that it cries out for a closer meaning. In this absence of clearly defined terms of literacy, there is a competition between discourses (Gee 1990, 1994), and it is within this debate that this thesis wishes to put forward a particular way of being literate with text, namely by being open to the human narrative of plot, theme and additional literary devices by which the reader's desire is engaged in such a way that personal meaning and profit is made. While 'critical literacy' is an overarching and currently fashionable term in the literacy debate, there is a need for linking the skills enshrined in critical literacy more clearly with skills derived from reader responses.

Among other views of literacy, multiple social pathways are seen as leading to literacies that go beyond basic skills (Griffin & Forward, 1991: 22, Cairney, 1995) and towards an independent stage where people are empowered to make life choices because they are resourced with particular information relevant to their life circumstances. This view of literacy is an enabling one. By contrast, Christie (1990) examines school based shifts in literacy from rhetoric to a more modern understanding of literacy as a function of power and control. In her view, understanding is affected by situational as well as cultural contexts (Halliday, 1976, 1994, Kress, 1976). This model leans to a literacy which critically interprets the world. Human Literacy is not aligned with either understanding.
3.2.2. Human Literacy As A Unique Form Of Cultural Knowledge

Human Literacy signals a more open view of literacy as well as a more functional view of text because both position themselves more closely within a constructed understanding of what happens with text which emphasizes the reader in his or her social context. In a field of increasing complexity and specialised literacies, there is a need to more clearly identify what kinds of literatures we speak of as holding educationally meaningful outcomes. These are not necessarily better or worse than any other forms of text, but manage to portray particular human themes in such a way as to trigger particular reader responses. Such a discussion calls for a place for literature education in a more liberal, rather than the utilitarian / vocational context in which A Statement appears: that is, into an environment which celebrates the reader first, and examines reader responses, and only then focuses on the types of demands of the text as expected by critical literacy theorists. The significance of these competing views is that they place different literacy demands on the reader: the personal or the social. Human Literacy is postulated as a literacy within which human signification is first constructed from an examination of meaning from personal response, then cultural understanding, and only then the wider political context.

It is not the intention here to elevate Human Literacy as an elitist way of engaging with text, but to acknowledge that what happens when particular texts are read in particular ways has educational outcomes which are unique and important, but which are not recognised in the way curriculum is currently constructed. Human Literacy is a means to our identity as a humanity in this world, starting with the relationship of the ego to itself and to the world as triggered by the text. If literacy encompasses moving from individual illumination to a critical practice, then Human Literacy is concerned with the initial phase of that process. This in turn is fundamental to cultural comprehension. So Human Literacy as a reading practice becomes the grounding by which cultural literacy is achieved.
Readers can read for a variety of motives: enjoyment, enlightenment, information transfer are some. Theorists of literacy appreciate that the readings, the interpretations that can be made from texts can be various, as shown above. Meek (1991) reinforces this notion by remarking that 'no single neutral literacy' contrasts directly with illiteracy. There is an absence of ideological innocence which describes literacy in the British context:

... there are two models of literacy on offer in our schools: a utilitarian one aimed at giving people the ability to write little more than their name and address and to fill in forms, and a supercharged model which allows its possessors to choose and control all that they read and write (Meek 1991).

Meek places literacy in a power matrix, where the reader either has access to it or does not. In this matrix, Human Literacy is about the gradual spiral awakening and raising of consciousness from the narrative detail to the ideological deconstruction. Human Literacy positions itself at the start of that spiral, in that it provides a human understanding which in turn makes way for ideological recognitions. It is thus a bridge between contrasting theoretical positions.

By building on the notion of the reader as active meaning-maker, this discussion of variant forms of literacies helped to align Human Literacy within a socially integrative process which focuses on how the reader makes sense of the world, prior to any critical intellectualisation of that process. By building on the individual and personal nature of such a form of reading, Human Literacy composes itself from the personal growth model (which is discussed in the next chapter). So a key feature of Human Literacy is not the desire to make the reader into something that he or she was not before reading, that is, transform the reader according to the text's metamorphosing, Platonic, utilitarian intention, but to awaken a consciousness within the reader of recognitions that are triggered by the text in ways which arguably other art forms may not do. Human
Literacy is about a particular way of reading texts, in which personal responses are recognised ahead of critical or scholarly engagements.

The value of Human Literacy arises from approaching particular texts in such a way that the initial rewards are personal and intrinsic. This entails being open to certain interpretations, predictions, doubts, speculations, inferences and conclusions about text which are spontaneous. This in turn has huge implications for the way text is worked, and for how such work is assessed. Only then can reader reaction become considered, critical and ideologically deconstructed. The contribution of literacy theorists lies in the broadening of literacy into a term in which wider human significance is found in the context of a range of social practices by which insight and understanding of the reader's place in his or her culture is furthered. Readers as active meaning-makers interpret texts with a view to positioning themselves: Human Literacy establishes itself as a particular orientation to text.

Human Literacy orientates itself towards the reader's identity, is about personal awareness, is about raising consciousness, about making the reader making sense of the world. The discussion of variant socially constructed literacies has helped place Human literacy in a field of initial engagement between reader and text, where initial response dominates. How cultural theory is situated in Human Literacy is subject of the next part.

3.3. HUMAN LITERACY, CULTURAL STUDIES AND CULTURAL THEORY

How do cultural studies and cultural theory coalesce with Human Literacy?

Largely in reaction to what was perceived to be a somewhat narrow Leavisite view of literary studies and values, Williams developed as early as 1950 a broader view of
English. This opened English up to interdisciplinary approaches with text being approached from sociology and/or history, thus placing literary ideas in a wider cultural context. Infused by Marxist approaches, writers such as Gramsci pushed cultural studies further by placing them in a context of critical theory, in which he used the term 'hegemony' to speak of ideologies which shape texts.

Cultural theorists like Williams (1983, 1988, 1989), Benjamin, Gramsci (1971) and Lukács (1972) explored the relationship between literature and society by seeing cultural practices as forms of material production. Early cultural theorists have tended to assume a particularly Marxist outlook, with literature being seen, in both form and content, as profoundly influenced by historical, social and economic forces. The concept of critical realism, developed by Lukács, is interpreted by cultural theorists as transcending the writers' own ideological limitations and revealing the fundamental tensions of the time. These writers are among those who have therefore made an important contribution to the ideology of text by identifying and positioning texts according to various historical and political factors. In so approaching literature, cultural theorists bring a scepticism to the bourgeois production of text, which is readily translated into a critique of the ideology of the writer as well as of the text. The reaction is against a canonical understanding of text which sees itself as a transmitter of cultural heritage in unquestioned ways. As an example, Williams moved from a 'left Leavisite' concern with the social and cultural context of writers to an increasing engagement with problems in Marxist cultural theory (Drabble, 1985: 626).

The contribution made by cultural studies is, as far as Human Literacy is concerned, of twofold consequence. The first is that a cultural studies approach enabled a wider range of texts to be included in the study of English. Thus the notion of studying popular television documentaries or series, such as Country Practice, Neighbours or Flying Doctor in Australia, Melrose Place or Dynasty in America, has become an accepted practice in both high school and tertiary settings. As well, cultural studies also enabled
the study of 'cultural' contributions made by particular individuals, such as those of Elvis Presley, John Travolta or Madonna. A current exponent of such an approach is Paglia. Of course, these approaches do not prevent others, such as a more literary pursuit of a particular theme, (e.g. nature, romanticism, madness, etc) from being studied in a particular text.

The effect of relating the study of English to cultural studies has been that the English platform, or subject matter, has become a broadened study of popular culture, and this has been welcomed especially by those who do not wish to see English as a narrow confined cultural product. Such an approach sees less value in the limits that are offered by a study of English literature of a particular period, such as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or even earlier, such as the particular study of Shakespeare, Chaucer, Donne etc.

The first contribution of cultural studies to Human Literacy then lies in having widened what are 'acceptable' texts. The worthiness of these (often media-generated) materials became contextualised in the identification of underlying ideologies, and in this sense there is a significant link to what was earlier referred to as Critical approaches to Literacy. Both approaches tend to foster a doctrinaire approach, in that there is a tendency to apply critical practices which are enshrined in particular scholarly customs, values and belief structures. Both represent an ideologised shift away from the primacy of individual response towards 'intellectual straightjackets' (Peel, 1994: 81).

Human Literacy is further affected by the recognition of cultural studies in an English context in that a broader (than literary) examination of text allows for more interdisciplinary approaches, including history, sociology, psychology, political science, gender studies, even economics (the latter was especially popular in the Marxist sense). It is an even comment to say that the popularisation of texts for study has witnessed variable approaches which have commonly ranged from the low key
study of a product as a cultural phenomenon (cultural studies) to more ideologised approaches (cultural theory). Examples of the former include the study of Mickey Mouse, or different presentations of Robin Hood, while the latter aims to develop more ideological lines, as are instanced by Morgan’s *Ned Kelly* (1994). Within this range, the waxing and waning of Marxist theoretical positions by people such as Gramsci, Lukács and Marcuse have been of particular note.

Peel quotes from a recently proposed Cultural Studies syllabus for year 12 students in England in which it is explicitly stated that the ‘meaning of cultural products, their distribution within particular systems of ownership and organisation, their interpretation and adaptation to particular educational, artistic and commercial practices, [as well as] their reception’ are worthy of study (1994: 75).

The addition of a cultural studies approach to the study of English has not resulted in a scramble for secondary English faculties to rename themselves. What has been brought about by their inclusion is a move away from narrow literary concerns and towards wider social and political issues in which poststructural concerns, issues of gender and power have recently assumed a dominating position. The significant implication for the definition of Human Literacy here is that the described developments have tended to downplay the personal response, pleasure and enjoyment of text. Human Literacy wishes to reposition those three reader-reactions as central to how texts are primarily appreciated.

Human Literacy distinguishes itself from cultural studies by incorporating an individualised approach of reader-response, while cultural theorists begin by searching for ideological forces reflected in texts and explore how texts are reflections of cultural constructs (Williams). In simple terms, attention in Human Literacy is on the response of the reader in an understanding of reading as an intertextual and social construction of literacy, while in cultural studies, attention is on the text as a product of particular
ideological positions. Milner (1991) and Foucault (1990) are further examples of writers who recognise that readers constantly constitute and reconstitute themselves and the social world in which they live. Poststructuralist concepts of subject positioning and subjectivity are that the reader and the text are parts of a continuum. By contrast, cultural theorists see students as fashioned by texts and curriculum which in turn are subject to wider ideological forces of the state-politic.

Critical literacy was described as a deconstructive practice, against which Human Literacy provided a way of linking personal and intrinsic reader responses through vicarious experience before engaging in the espoused critical practices. Reading for the grain is a process which must occur before ‘reading against the grain’ (Thomson) becomes possible. The critical point about cultural theory is that an ideological construction of text cannot occur in the reader before that same reader has been initiated into the forms of culture articulated by literature. Culture is defined by cultural theorists as an ideology. Culture in human literacy is more reader centred than text centred, at a level where basic reader response ‘stuff’ has to be realized and processed, so that the narrative becomes the understood raw material from which ideological and subjective positionings are further enabled. Being humanly literate is then a way of responding to and understanding text. Only when that initial discourse has occurred, are more critical opportunities opened in terms of cultural theory and critical literacy.

The Promethean energy by which people are continually drawn to make vicarious experiences through text is a primary energy, is a spontaneous and emotional response which for many is the only need, the only gratification wanted from text. More cerebral or ideologised responses such as those of cultural theorists are a second, intellectual source of pleasure. The implication for which of these, or how much of both, should be built into an educational curriculum is a matter for later chapters in this thesis.
What texts are selected for study in no small way reflects what a society deems worthy of scrutiny and examination. Williams (in England), and more recently Hughes and Jones (in Australia) or Said (in America) are among those who have written from a polemical political position of the left with society in their sight. While not unsympathetic to such a perspective, Human Literacy does not wish to emulate such polemicism, nor take such a broadly didactical view. These positions, perhaps considered by some as doctrinaire, are helpful as temperature gauges of discursive practices which in turn do shape public opinion. But the place of rigorous cultural studies is secondary to an exploration of reader-response in a Human Literacy context of primary educational benefits derived from engagements with text. The development of the self must precede the awakening of critical faculties in order to enable a quality of learning, scholarship and a mature foundation of criticism. Since this work originates from an understanding of how the meaning of text works with people who engage with it, it does so with the eye firstly on the human value of text, and only then on ideological position. It is not easy to separate the two endeavours, and it is therefore necessary to show how especially the work of Williams does (and does not) relate to this study.

Significantly, Milner (1991) describes writers about culture like Matthew Arnold, T.S. Eliot or F. R. Leavis as commenting on how they see culture moving (generally speaking, declining). Brock (1987) comments on how a rather Leavisite approach to textual practices was still persisting in the senior curriculum of Australian schools at the time he was writing. Hughes (1993) is a polemic culturalist who attacks what he sees as 'McCarthyism' of current literature teaching positions in American campuses. At the heart of this debate is what constitutes 'traditional literature': is it predominantly by dead, male, European whites? In Human Literacy, the quality and price of open humanities-based inquiry, is derived from the separation of the fashionable from the universally true, the searching for those elements which unite us and those which separate us, and all that in a climate of individual humility, the lesson of all literature.
Hughes' position in cultural theory informs this thesis by forcing a clearer definition of canonical value, which is also taken up by Bloom (1994), discussed later in this chapter. Thus Human Literacy is not about the 'politically correct' in English, or the ideological, or about separating canonical from non-canonical texts. It is about those constants which drive curiosity and desire for, as well as ongoing interests in a range of texts. These are identified by examining reader response.

An exploration of literacy and text cannot avoid being defined in the context of how the subject English sees itself, because an understanding of English is derived from the notions of literacy and text, and is informed by those conceptualisations in terms of its practice. While the educational role of text is explored in subsequent chapters, reference is here made to how cultural studies coalesce with Human Literacy. Williams's emphasis (in his range of works which cover the period 1963-1986) on cultural materialism is discussed by Milner in his 1991 work. Williams' central belief, that the English literary tradition should be a vehicle for analysis of contemporary cultural form, is argued in the Politics of Modernism (1989). Williams champions Cultural Studies from a standpoint of being an informed critical commentator on what a society preoccupies itself with. In discussing the future of cultural studies, he makes the remark that cultural studies are as significant in their formation as in any intellectual project (1989: 151). A society thus forms itself creatively, and critically. Williams says that we have to recognise the value of this formative process and not just be concerned with producing culturally critical comment without also recognising the value of the engagement per se. In specifically describing the history of Literary Studies as part of that subject called 'English' in universities, he says that in the late nineteenth century people

wanted to discuss what they'd read... especially through the reading of 'imaginative literature' as the phrase usually has it. Both groups wanted to discuss what they'd read, and to discuss it in a context to which they brought their own situation- a demand which was not satisfied, it was soon very clear, by what the universities were prepared to offer, which would have been a certain kind of history or a set of dates, a certain description of periods and forms. The demand, then, was for a discussion of this literature in relation to these life-
situations which people were stressing outside the established educational systems. In consequence, the teaching of English turned in on itself by moving to higher standards of critical rigour and scholarship (Williams, 1989: 152).

So the basis for Human Literacy is the ‘desire to discuss literature in relation to life-situations’. Human Literacy differs from cultural studies in that the emphasis is on the relationship of the text to the reader and the reader to the text. In cultural studies, the third factor, the relationship of the reader and the text to wider social and historic issues is introduced, and by some theorists in a rather ideologised manner. While the two are not mutually exclusive, one does presuppose the other, and it is the wish to emphasize reader-response as of educational relevance in a modern context that must walk ahead of any ideologies that are then constructed. Williams then says that in time the subject English created a problem of belief and also a problem for defining what cultural studies were, as literary history became academicized as intellectual or idealist history by ascribing characteristics to particular groups or movements.

Williams' view strengthens the nexus between society and curriculum by encouraging the theme that identity is created and learnt through literature. Williams contributes to the notion of Human Literacy by separating the sociological nature of cultural materialism (more at home in cultural theory) from the humanities base of individual reader-response. Williams also raises two further ideas: how current tertiary courses in the study of text are affecting secondary English teaching practice, and how people see themselves in the 1990s.

Current tertiary studies of text in the fashion of particular ideological discourses, such as those of gender based studies, post-modernism or de-construction are of importance in an environment of study which extends the critical examination of power relationships in society and among people. Naturally such study does affect the form and content of English in secondary schools today, not least because of the graduates from such courses who are increasingly entering the teaching profession.
Fundamentally, Williams and other 'writers about culture' cause a distinction to be made between 'cultural studies' and the discipline of 'English'. 'Cultural studies' asks about the relationship of texts to each other and to society. Culturalists argue that the individual cannot be considered in isolation of wider cultural forces. In Human Literacy, it is postulated that an examination of those wider influences can only be undertaken once an inventory of the initial reader-responses has taken place. The relationship or meaning of text and its setting to the reader, as evidenced in reader response (Rosenblatt, 1978 or Peel, 1994) has to precede any ideological positionings that might occur.

Thus English, as study of text, in a Human Literacy conceptualisation, is primarily a more personal and reflective engagement than the study of societal meanings through the reading, and critical construction of discourse of an interrelational kind. The latter are a valid, albeit secondary engagement. While they are both important ways of making meaning, they originate in different readings of text. Human Literacy begins to circumscribe value which is derived from engaging with text by exploring personal meaning from within the reader. In such an understanding, cultural practices as forms of material production are not the interests of this thesis. Not because they are not of interest, but because they emerge from a basis of tertiary study, rather than secondary engagement. The potentially transformative effect of literature on young people forms the focus of this evaluation of the value of literature: it is the personal effect of text, not the ideological, which must come first.

Foucault argues that approved knowledge of a period is a leading device for the exercise of power over others, especially the oppressed, those it brands 'deviant'. His contribution, then, of seeing human relations in terms of power is a helpful new way of looking at old issues, but it remains bound to a particular ideological way of conceptualising human relationships. It is bringing a cerebral understanding to human
responses, and in Beilharz (1991) and Lechte (1994) it has been suggested that such post-structuralist thought is inimical to the exploration of the human in literature. It could be said that Foucault, like Shakespeare, merely explored perennial themes such as power, love, ambition etc. Similarly, Paglia's chronicling of the degeneration of art and culture as an expression of sexual personalities (1991) manages to pursue important questions about power, ideology, and human energy. As such her work may deserve critical engagement, but not until the reader has first clarified or recognised his or her own responses, emotional, psychological, intellectual. The relevance of Human Literacy is as a forum in which first responses are dealt with in such a manner that critical examinations and ideological explorations have a humanities-base from which it becomes possible to critique culture.

A particular form of cultural criticism is to approach the study of text from a psychological perspective. Because psychology is concerned with human nature, as is Human Literacy, it is appropriate here to align Human Literacy with psychology for the purpose of deciding what the two do and do not have in common. Human Literacy does not aim to develop a psychological construct of literature's effect on the reader. Human Literacy simply wishes to recognise a particular aspect of text as identified by the work of Lacan and Bloom in order to acknowledge a range of psychological effects of text. This further influences the way Human Literacy is conceptually formed.

Lacan's reinterpretation of Freud's notion of the unconscious and of the Other as fundamental in the articulation of human desire emphasises (as a variant on Barthes' notion of desire) how language has the capacity to say something other than what it says. This is why he comes to define sexuality as 'a play of masks and disguises' (Lechte, 1994: 69). In exploring this interpretation of language, the imaginary, and the real, Lacan advances the idea of the symbolic as a substitute for what is absent. Because Lacan sees the symbolic as giving the world its meaning, his interpretation, arguably best shown in the case of The Purloined Letter by Edgar Allen Poe (Lacan, 1972),
suggests that the text alone does not carry absolute or final meaning. When considering the phenomenological 'Gestalt' of the text (Iser, 1987, referred to in greater detail on pages 120-130 of this chapter), such a psychological approach suggests that much meaning indeed is hidden betwixt and between the text, and beyond the text. The significance of this is that the shape of the illusion created in the reader's mind by the text is not confined to the literal, but extends beyond the text and takes on dimensions which defy deconstructive or critical approaches, arguably because of the private, emotional and personal space in which these illusions and symbolic absences manifest themselves. This illusionary dimension is one which cannot be easily identified in the definition of text as described in *A Statement*, and is contained in the concept of Human Literacy as defined at the conclusion of this chapter.

A psychoanalytic approach to literary analysis has not furthered an interest to delve into that particular area, but has strengthened a willingness to declare and further understand the effect of literature on the reader in terms of his or her response. Reading modern criticism has been useful in coming to terms with the history of literature and the various approaches which have characterised particular periods. It has also yielded a clearer understanding of the nature of the appeal which literature holds.

So what is the legacy of cultural theory: how has it influenced Human Literacy? Writers about culture have broadened the view of what can be studied, and how it can be studied.

- The notion of text has been broadened by adherents of a cultural studies model of English to include cultural productions of diverse and popular natures, and this in turn has meant an inclusion of media conventionally not constituent of English, such as television and other forms of electronic transmission, including the internet. Human Literacy appreciates the widening definition of English which has occurred as a result of
cultural studies discourse, because the humanly significant is indeed found in a wide range of text types.

- Writers about culture have further explored ways of approaching texts which can come from a range of disciplines, such as history, sociology, psychology etc. Again, Human Literacy acknowledges the broadening of the ways in which literature as a form of text has been traditionally approached, because it enables the asking and responding of questions which come from a wide range of reader-response behaviours.

- Writers about culture are further positioned in that they often approach the study of text from a particular ideological persuasion, such as Marxism, postcolonialism, postmodernism, feminism etc. Human Literacy recognizes the importance of clarifying individual responses and coming to terms with the messages of the text in an environment which is, as much as can be possible, free of ideological overlays. Intertextual theorists give us to understand that neither the reader nor the text is ever free of context, and such 'contamination' is recognised. What Human Literacy emphasises is a human response which understands emotive, instinctive and private responses and which needs clarification and coming-to-terms-with ahead of critical practices which are also part of what should happen with intellectual engagements with text, but which come after reading texts 'humanly'.

There are four implications of these three observations for Human Literacy:-

- **Human Literacy is inclusive, global and about the humanly significant**

Cultural studies have helped broaden what is tackled in English by including popular texts. Cultural studies have thus helped move the study of literature as a narrow Leavisite pursuit in two ways. It has widened the study of English from a cultural heritage model to a study of a variety of discourses, including popular text types. This
provides an understanding of literature which goes beyond the canonical but retains an understanding of that force majeure which drives a reader's interest and desire to engage with text. This calls for literature to be more broadly defined away from a Leavisite and towards a more contemporary and compatible perception of text as canonical as well as more broadly discursive, multicultural, gender and minority interest-inclusive. Such a definition is also Barthesian in that literature is seen less a product of class than of a desire to make meaning, become conscious, engage in a discourse.

- **Human Literacy transcends culture, form and time**

Human Literacy recognises the value of a text irrespective of its temporal or cultural context: human literacy argues that a contemporary text can stand alongside a canonical one, though the effects on readers will vary. Human Literacy does not lament the bygone era of a classical halcyon past, unlike Hughes (1992, 1993), Hutchins (1951), Broudy (1972) or Bloom (1994), Human Literacy is not concerned with expressing a pessimism of those who worry about losing valuable aspects of schooling which might have been treasured in the past. Alongside postcolonial studies, Human Literacy does not discriminate by culture or imperial position, but simply searches for the human voice in text. Human Literacy looks to recognise reader response which emerges from a humanities base: this is independent of text forms and can be found in film, electronic media, picture or printed text. Human Literacy looks to value the human in both the reader and the text, and knows that those values are often intrinsic, vicarious and may emerge only after some time.

- **Human Literacy is a desire for individual liberal orientation**

Reader response favours leaving the individual initially as unrestricted as possible in the self-expression or self-fulfilment of their needs for text. Thus there pertains a liberal
dynamic to Human Literacy as it expresses an enamourment with the humanities base by which literature and other forms of text can be a mirror to the reader's own life. Such a conception sees texts as intrinsically valuable and satisfying. In fact, the reader, in wrestling with a particular presentation, tension, conflict or resolution, may well be elevated by a particular ennobling or aesthetic experience. Thus Human Literacy has liberal characteristics in the sense of enabling an enlightening, broadening, culturally tolerant view of the world. A sense of intrigue over the Promethean forces by which the narrative acts is another aspect by which Human literacy can be characterised as having an interest in the human ahead of the ideological. A useful example is the publication of The Hand That Signed the Paper (Darville, 1994), which won the Miles Franklin Award for Australian Literature for 1995. In teaching this text in the last year, much energy was devoted to clarifying reader responses. Only then could readers begin to discuss the wider controversies of historical accuracy, racial tensions, and authorial identity which have occupied scholars and the public in both academic and public circles. So Human Literacy, as an interest in the human dimensions of text is the first way to engage people in discourse: ideological constructions or deconstructions about texts can then follow.

- **Human literacy is about individual identity**

The psychological dimension to interpretative work that is carried out in regard to text frequently evaluates, explores and contextualizes the reader’s ego in relation to the text. Because text never carries final meaning, the locus of interpretation resides in the reader as active meaning maker. There are illusory dimensions which are generated by the text in the reader’s mind. Because final meanings are located in the site of the reader’s Gestalt, Human Literacy acknowledges the human or psychic as a theme in how readers come to derive satisfaction and meaning from text. The individual orientation which is

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4 I have taught this text to some 50 students from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, most of whom made some ethnic identification with the book’s characters.
supposed by such an understanding is personal and private, is an inner process, rather
than an externally visible and quantifiable outcome.

An examination of cultural studies and cultural theory has contributed to Human
Literacy four insights: that Human Literacy is inclusive, global, and about humanly
significant subject matter. As such it transcends time, culture and form, and encourages
an individual liberal orientation. Lastly, it encourages psychic growth through identity -
Gestalt- and self-realization as mirrored by text. Human Literacy emphasizes the
individual while cultural studies lean to an examination of the influences upon the
individual as shaped by wider insights from a range of other disciplines.

3.4 HUMAN LITERACY AND MODERN CRITICISM

How do modern schools of criticism coalesce with Human Literacy? So far the interest
in this inquiry has been demonstrated as being in the direction of the non-pragmatic,
aesthetic dimension of literature not as ideology, canon or high culture, but as a form of
inquiry which aims to elicit reader response and reader participation in making meaning,
as an orientation in liberal humanity. How is this understanding strengthened by
practitioners of literary theory? To ask this question is to take the so far established
parameters of Human Literacy and position them within a contemporary understanding
of literary criticism. Such an alignment will clarify the relationship of Human Literacy
to already practiced methods of inquiry by separating common from disparate elements
of both.

Arguably one of the most influential and reprinted works in the area of Literary Theory
is that by Eagleton (1983, 1993). His history of various critical discourses starts with
the question of what is literature and ends with a chapter on political criticism. He
begins to define literature as having elements of the creative and the imaginative, and
goes on to say that it uses language in peculiar ways. This is a significant definitional stage: one that says what literature contains, but not one which says what literature is. The significance is that it goes one step beyond the culturally conservative standpoint of claiming literature as a unique form of knowledge, without actually committing the act of conclusively labelling literature. This definitional standpoint is helpful in that it deals with the difficulty of the area, namely being clear about what it is by which literature distinguishes itself.

The definition arrived at here moves away from that Leavisite moral position of superiority by which it is frequently suggested that the secular form of literature fills an ideological vacuum caused by the historical decline of religion. While literature is not precluded from dealing with spiritual matters, it is inappropriate to ascribe it theological functions because that is no what its principal purpose is. Nor is literature a moral or cultural crusade, as Leavis made it with Scrutiny. Adherents of New Criticism refer to literary works as 'unchanging objects of special value' (in Sawyer, Watson, and Adams: 1989: 132). Literature can claim to include the canonical works to which communities may accord special places, such as literary awards, values of cultural heritage, universal resonance, etc, but the appeal of literature must rise and fall at given times depending on society's desires in reading interests. Accordingly, text cannot be defined as canonical literature on the basis of some set of permanent values, simply because what is, or is not deemed canonical shifts as the values do and as readers' responses do. The principal value of literature is to cast a light on the human condition, and sometimes the metaphysical. It is not, as Leavis thought, about the championing of essential Englishness as a form of cultural superiority as he attempted in his description of various literary merits of certain English works.

Provided text contains certain elements such as the narrative, the reflective, the creative, the imaginative, the pattern-generating, the thematic exploration, then the text can safely be described as containing literary components. This is a less canonical, and less elitist
view of literature as cultural heritage, and moves towards the liberal notion of Human Literacy. The significance of this explanation becomes evident when we deal with Eagleton's and Thompson's (1992) definition of literature as ideology.

The argument advanced by the Russian formalists (Shklovsky, Jakobson, Brik, Tynyanov, Eichenbaum and Tomashevsky) is that literature was not pseudo-religion or psychology or sociology, but a particular organisation of language. 'Literariness' was a function of differential relations between one sort of discourse and another: it was not an eternally assignated property (Eagleton, 1993: 3-6). In addition to the pragmatic uses of texts (as made use of in the Higher School Certificate), Eagleton ascribes literature the quality of being a 'non-pragmatic' discourse (as contrasted with the utilitarian position of science or the purpose of the bus ticket).

Literature is better described by the relationships which readers have to the writing, which is that understanding which emerges from Rosenblatt's work. The ability of Literature to evoke a reader-response is what matters. In this sense, literature is more a functional term. Not in the bus ticket sense which causes a largely non-emotional and non-intellectual reaction. The significance of literature is that it permits a certain kind of reading. Polemic writers about culture tend to jump to the defence of the canon from a particularly ideology. That may be a conservative (Hughes, 1993) or Marxist one (Williams, 1981, 1983, 1988, 1989). Eagleton's achievement is to discuss these ideologies with an overview and to place literary theory in the same philosophical values framework as Peters and Hirst, namely, in deeper structures of belief. While Eagleton accepts that reading brings about and cultivates a culture of literary theories which examines the connection between literature, power and control, he also asserts the freedom of interpretative possibilities, rather than see the reader constrained by particular ideological positions as is the case with cultural materialists.
It is here that Human Literacy situates itself as a mode of inquiry, at the basis of which lies human understanding. As such it distinguishes itself from a critical approach which might be searching for the ideology of the text. No text is ever free of ideology, but a first reading can either aim to uncover the ideology, or choose not to go looking for it. Reading with Human Literacy parameters means to explore human meanings in a realm of interpretative possibilities. The liberal response to literature lies, it is here suggested, outside the text and in the reader. Such a view de-emphasizes that understanding by which text is promulgated as a tool of ideological or class control. Instead, such a view places the value of literature back in a human context of the community of the readers. This is a significant paradigmatic shift in revaluing the human response to literature as a humanity. This stance takes issue with a post-modern view of text, such as the philosophical anti-humanism which prefers to examine discursive discontinuities or forms of power knowledge which is what Foucault prefers to deal with (in Beilharz, 1991: 84), and which suggests that ultimately all meaning is ambiguous. Human Literacy postulates the notion that the reader derives personal meaning from text, and in the case of literature, that this meaning is of a particular kind, as the human condition depicted by such a text resonates with aspects of the reader’s humanity as the latter constructs his or her understanding from the former.

Eagleton remarks on the relative recency of literature (as tied to the evolution of the novel from the nineteenth century), its position evolving from provincial petty bourgeoisie, and its moral centrality of English studies because it deals with the

most fundamental questions of human existence- what it meant to be a person , to engage in significant relationships with others, to live from the vital centre of the most essential values (Eagleton, 1993: 31)

Since then, Eagleton sees the history of modern literary theory as part of the political and ideological history of our epoch. He believes that literary theories reflect the particular interests of particular groups at particular times, and thus literary theories are
political constructions. Literature, according to Eagleton, rejects barren conceptual inquiry for the feel and taste of what it is to be alive.

Among the theoretical polarities that are possible in the reader's approach to text, one is to examine the text contextually, socially, ideologically, intertextually, and the other is to focus on personal response. One is hard, the other soft, one is relatively unemotive while the other is very much emotive. The distinction can be made between an individual consciousness and a collective consciousness that informs reader reaction. Eagleton establishes quite clearly that there are two ways to respond to text: critically, and non-critically. It is not that one is better or more valuable than the other, the two approaches are just fundamentally different in the way they work. When literary theorists place their agenda in the foreground, the interpretative space referred to earlier is diminished, and that diminishes a very valuable dimension of what literature does in a reader's uncritical but receptive mind. Human Literacy adopts the emotive reader response as having a validity which constitutes the very reasons of pleasure and jouissance which readers derive from literature.

One way forward through this dichotomy is to advocate a tolerance and advocacy of theoretical pluralism. Eagleton observes 'a liberal humanism dwindling to the impotent conscience of bourgeois society, gentle, sensitive and ineffectual'. Such a view misreads the value base of literature as a humanity. He sees literary theorists as custodians of a discourse.

What of those creative, imaginative minds (readers or writers) which generate the discourse in the first place? Is that not where human desire, colour and life resides much more comfortably, than in the objectivity of reconstructive criticism? The observation is not meant to deride the cerebrally useful exercise of critical Abbau, but to question how far such practice is wellplaced in a secondary school literature classroom.
The reason why literature needs to be defined more widely than merely canonical is so that it can be inclusive of the multi-cultural, indigenous, post-colonial, gender issues which are besetting contemporary consciousness. If literature can by its properties of exploring the human condition widen itself from the narrowness of a canonical understanding to a more inclusive understanding of itself by considering the humanity of its base, then it will not argue itself out of existence, as Eagleton claims (1993: 204).

The canon is not the central plank to the Human Literacy argument. Because of the particularly inclusive way that Human Literacy defines text (as shown in the next section), it is not the sanctity or nature of the canon that is at issue here. Rather than developing the anti-canon argument further, therefore, what is of greater interest is to explore ways in which literature has been scholarly approached, so that Human Literacy can be positioned against such practice.

Literature is about discursive and signifying practices which alter from time to time. But in that rhetoric there are some activities based on qualities of literature which reader-response is based on that remain constant, despite the recency of literature as a phenomenon. In defining literature as a humanity, which is a wide definition, it is possible to move beyond the suburban moral ideology that Eagleton perceives liberal humanism to be, because the definition is stretched. The relevance of literature in this context becomes immediate, and it for the sake of meaning, for the sake of deepening, enriching and vicariously extending their lives. Human literacy advocates pleasure, enjoyment and the potentially transformative effects of text as discourse as a legitimate and relevant way for young people to study texts:-

culture is so vitally bound up with one's common identity that there is no need to argue for its relation to political struggle (Eagleton, 1993: 215).
So Human Literacy’s interest is less in how the canon, however defined, is arranged in a young person’s hierarchy of educationally important priorities. Instead, the focus is on what the history has been of how texts have been read, studied, responded to. Graff (1987) describes in five chronologically arranged chapters the history of how scholars and critics have debated how readers should situate themselves in reference to texts from 1828-1987. If his work carries one theme, it is the ongoing struggle between competing ideologies, theories and interpretational possibilities.

What in Graff’s work is helpful to Human Literacy are his views on the relationship of theory to the study of literature, and his understanding of 'the humanist myth'. His description of what has occurred over the last 180 years in tertiary treatment of literature is less relevant to this inquiry than is the consideration of the implications such a history has on the practice of teaching literature to adolescents today.

He identifies, along with others, the tension that has historically characterised those who place the authority of the work, and the work’s affect on the reader, ahead of those who champion the cultural and ideological context from which any work of literature arises. While Eagleton says that literature is ideology, Graff suggests that

literary studies have not been an instrument of dominant ideology and social control, or, if so, have been a singularly inefficient one.

The story of academic literary studies in America is a tale not of triumphant humanism, nationalism, or any single professional model, but of a series of conflicts that have tended to be masked by their very failure to find visible institutional expression. This emphasis on conflict is seen in the successive oppositions that organise my narrative: classicists versus modern-language scholars; research investigators versus generalists, historical scholars versus critics, New Humanists versus New Critics; academic critics versus literary journalists and culture critics; critics and scholars versus theorists (1987: 14).

This overview is refreshing because of the way Graff contrasts the intrinsic domain of literature with the issue of whether literature should be historicised and assimilated to social and political contexts. Human Literacy is concerned with the intrinsic affects of texts on readers, not with the ideological tail wagging the dog. While Eagleton is at ease
in his work with the notion of literature as ideology, it is more appropriate, when considering parameters of Human Literacy, to think of literary theory as simply 'an inquiry into assumptions, premises, and legitimating principles and concepts' (Graff, 1987: 252). By taking Graff's view that teaching about literature is the business of asking questions which in turn may lead to particular ideological positions, the gap between those who value the spontaneous response to reading, and those who value a critical response to the read material, narrows. This is useful because as teachers of literature we should be open to both kinds of responses, and understand the relationship between the two, rather than conceive of literature in any particularly ideologically exclusivist or exclusionary way. Human Literacy simply advocates the need for the former and spontaneous forms of response to text to be the necessary precursor to text's more formal study. The ideological versus non-ideological debate in this discussion is at risk of being narrowed to a question of the nature of text. This in an educational setting can clearly not be the only factor: indeed, as will be shown in the next chapter, discussions of texts, teacher interpretations of text, curriculum choices, the impact of ideologies on the way texts are read all are further aspects which will need to be clarified in their relation to Human Literacy.

A significant issue raised by Graff in his introduction, is 'the Humanist Myth', where he alleges a 'disabilingly incoherent' humanities base that is the 'pretense that humanism and the cultural tradition preside over the various dispersed activities of literary studies' (1987: 5-6). Somewhat disappointing is his failure to define or identify what he means by the humanist tradition in the teaching of literature beyond labelling it. Indirectly, by reading all of his book, one gets a sense that he sees humanism as yet another ideology, and as such the reader can contextualise a humanist outlook in a literature studies faculty as simply another theoretical position. This is arguably the best way of treating the concept, and Human Literacy can be said to be supported by a broad humanist tradition in Western thought by way of an intellectual orientation which has human as the focus of the inquiry, be the text a film, play, poem, novel etc. Alan Bullock finds that
humanism, humanist, humanistic, and the humanities are words that no one has ever succeeded in defining to anyone else's satisfaction, protean words which mean very different things to different people and leave lexicographers and encyclopaedists with a feeling of exasperation and frustration. (Bullock, 1985: 8)

As a working hypothesis, this thesis does not aim to take humanism as a school of thought or doctrine as does Graff, but simply as a broad tendency, a dimension of thought and belief, an ongoing debate with differing viewpoints. While Bullock says that the best way to glue together this concept is by calling it the humanist tradition, this work suggests that the focus of this thought structure is more in terms of humanitas gravitas, that is, with the weight of literature as an humanity. It does so by defining humanity simply as an interest which places the human as a common assumption that drives desire for Barthesian narrative consciousness. The relevance of literature as a humanity is predicated in this understanding of literature as a preoccupation with the human, as it resonates in the reader. Graff and Bullock clarify the relationship of humanism to humanity, and of humanism to ideology, by simplifying what each is and isn't. The centrality of the human as characters and as people responding to text is the philosophic focus of this investigation. The perspective of Human Literacy sheds a clearer light on the relationship between literature and the educational locus of value which can be derived from an engagement with it for young people.

Human Literacy is couched within an understanding that respects process over outcome as of educational significance. The cultural conversation of humankind (offered by literature) is a tradition which is Promethean and central. While critical and deconstructive practices are one students ought to be schooled in that extend ways of seeing, Human Literacy is stronger than the critically ludic possibilities offered by deconstructionists because it cherishes a search for meaning and values above ideology, narratology above cerebral conceptions or ‘régimes of truth’ (Foucault), reader response above poststructural viewpoints. Human Literacy is about a way of reading which is potentially enlightening, transformative and ennobling of human insight or
understanding in a manner other than academic or scholarly. Human Literacy is a way of reading which is more of a conversation between reader and text. While critical practice is relevant to the thinking repertoire of secondary students in that it reinforces ways of questioning text, it is not as primary to what happens in secondary literature classrooms as is the transactive business of readers establishing a human response to text. Critical practices undergo constant revision, semantic and semiotic. They do so in an environment in which literature continues to be seen as a humanity, if not a canon. Human Literacy by its focus on the humanity of the text and the reader maintains a closer affinity with the consumption of literature than with the ideologisation of text.

In pursuing the theme of the human value in learning, deconstructionists step aside from such a way of looking at the reader and text. In the words of the contemporary writer Doris Lessing:-

That a work of the imagination has to be 'really' about some problem is an heir of socialist realism. To write a story for the sake of story-telling is frivolous, not to say reactionary. The demand that stories must be 'about' something is from communist thinking and, further back, from religious thinking with its desire for self-improvement books as simple-minded as the messages are samples. I am sure that millions of people, the rug of communism pulled out from under them, are frantically searching, and perhaps not even knowing it, for another dogma.

The human outlasts and outdistances the heritage of dead and empty language which these days is found in academia and particularly in some areas of sociology and psychology (Lessing, 1992: 11)

The quiet examination of our human responses, emotions and receptions of literature are the locus of value by which literature will maintain its Aristotelian relevance in an age of newly emerging changing theories of text and reader.

3. 5 LITERATURE AS UNIQUE TEXT IN HUMAN LITERACY

Literature, in the sense of a set of works of assured and unalterable value, distinguished by certain shared inherent properties, does not exist (Engleton, 1983: 11)

What then is Literature?
The definition here of literature is that it is a unique form of text which achieves much more than a bus ticket: more than just conveying information, misinformation or omissions, literature is a form of text which represents human relationships in ways in which the reader—be it in film, in book form, in a play, or as a poem—engages. As such, literature’s uniqueness draws from an Aristotelian and Arnoldian liberal foundation which attaches particular qualities to it by which it is distinguished from ‘mere’ text. This process is best summed up by the term ‘Human Literacy’ because it labels the process away from any number of other critical ways of engaging with text towards the desire for deeper meanings and belief structures which are catered for in literature. Literature has a humanising and civilising value which, apart from constituting a unique form of cultural heritage, also provides access to vicarious experience, enriches language and the imagination and identifies some constant values which contrast with trivial text, or text devoid of such deeper meanings.

The literature on ‘Literature’, ‘literature’ and ‘text’ is quite abundant. The ensuing discussion aims to clarify the relationship of these terms to each other with a view to establishing the uniqueness of a non-canonical ‘literature’ within the importance of Human Literacy as a particular form of engagement.

Literature is text, but not all text is literature. Literature is a unique form of text, a locus of desire, a springboard of meaning, a human voice, a narrative opportunity. By its construction, literature sets a pattern by which it distinguishes itself from non-literary texts, such as a bus ticket. The place of text in modern criticism needs to be defined because it is in crisis: there are competing theoretical underpinnings by which text can be viewed, approached, dissected. One can focus on the presence and absence of words on a page, one can study their arrangement, their structural or linguistic significance, their semiotic import or the relationships of culture, power and gender that they may, separately or collectively, signify. Within a broader critical framework the ideological, aesthetic, cultural or political meaning of text can also be critiqued. What follows is a discussion of text within a range of these theories before placing text within Human Literacy, showing an awareness of its theoretical origins as well as the unique way by which text articulates a particular aspect of Human Literacy. ‘Text’ in this section is defined in a particular way befitting ‘Human Literacy’. Within that umbrella term of ‘text’, ‘literature’ assumes a unique role.
One modern politically correct perception of text - including literature - is that it is a mere textual product, and in this view the semiotic of text (Chandler, 1995) can be reduced to an analysis of what is on the page, how it has been declared, framed, phrased, and, just as validly, what has been omitted. Textual studies in this sense examine the ideology of author and/or message, and reduce any textual rendition to an examination of the signals by which it operates. It is fashionable within such a view of text to seek out gender and power. In current Language and Discourse Studies, a telephone directory, a bus ticket and a Shakespearian play can be approached with linguistic, discourse or post-structuralist criteria by which neither of those texts need be treated differently from each other (Appignanesi, 1995).

Text can be differentiated from literature by several criteria, such as canonical or aesthetic value, narrative componentry, technique of presentation, textual convention, community approbation, or other qualitative or descriptive factors. In order to be consistent with definitions identified elsewhere in this study, an inclusive definition of literature is not a highbrow or high culture one, but simply an inclusive one (inclusive of gender, culture, race, languages, values and ranges of presentation). It is one which includes popular literature, or texts of mass circulation, be they so circulated electronically or in printed form. The unifying principle behind literature, though, is that it is about the human condition: it mirrors in its narratology, presentation or subject matter human affairs, relationships and ideas. By form, it can be film, novel, poem, play or a variation of these, as long as the first criteria is abided. Literature then illuminates human condition by exploring or portraying particular patterns or relationships to which the reader is attracted for a variety of reasons. This distinguishes the depiction of human relationships in text where they may be simply as a basis for information, recordkeeping, etc, such as in a list, data base, or other way in which non-relational information is presented.
In wading among differing definitions of text, the view of Barthes (1975, 1985, 1993) emerges as one which began in the mid 1970s and has assumed pre-eminence ever since. According to Barthes, text is defined as desire, that is as the locus of desire which attracts the reader, viewer, or meaning-maker. The reader in the act of following his/her desire to make meaning becomes conscious, engages in a discourse. Barthes arrives at this insight from a particular understanding of text. So the act of reading is the creation of text, and the original text is a mere stimulant to that process. The power of text is the effectiveness by which the human condition is portrayed. It is this interest, the human, which is the unifying basis of the desire that Barthes says we have for our own consciousness. The locus of power, according to Barthes, lies in the text (Barthes 1985). The suggestion then is that text is created by the reader in reaction to the text in the exploration of something human in meaning. Text is individually created; it may then be communally shared.

Barthes does privilege literature as a unique form of text. In so doing he goes further than the definition of literature which is printed in A Statement which says that literature

- "has the potential to provide a source of enjoyment",
- "potential to inform and educate",
- "an opportunity to discover a diverse range of socio-cultural values, attitudes and beliefs",
- "an opportunity to reflect on the ways writers use language, including its linguistic structures and features",
- "the way the reader's perceptions are shaped"

(A Statement, 1994: 7)

While such terms make beginning generalisations about the power of text, they however understate the power and the purpose of text, and thereby do not go far enough to demonstrate the rôle of text in people's lives. Barthes asserts that "the aim of literature is to put 'meaning' into the world but not 'a meaning'"(in Sontag, 1993: xi). Meaning is continually assessed, shaped and renegotiated (Bruner, 1986: 123) by the reader's interaction with text. Barthes is also interested in the relation of art to pleasure, and compares teaching to play, reading to eros, writing to seduction. In this respect, the
open-ended ludic and the leisurely enjoyment of text, he is in fact closer to classical Greek and Roman definitions.

The point for Barthes, as for Nietzsche, is not to teach us something particular. The point is to make us bold, agile, subtle, intelligent, detached. And to give pleasure (Sontag, 1993: xvii).

At the basis of such an understanding is that literature has the ability to satisfy our desire to make meaning of the world and of ourselves in it: it is an explorative and creative act to dialogue with literature. Literature, because it meets our human desire to make meaning, offers pleasure, bliss and enjoyment. This is at the heart of Barthes’ understanding of text as desire (Barthes, 1993: 405/9). Literature is seen here as continually offering opportunities for self-correction. The responsibility of literature is to perpetually renew the right of individual assertion, to satisfy consciousness, to provide a plurality of possibilities, to be morally useful, to offer ambivalence and private definitions of experience. This suggests a particular way of reading, of creating text, and this modality needs to be placed within Human Literacy because, as a concept, it accommodates such an understanding where other, more utilitarian and extrinsically applied conceptualisations of text fail to do so. Text is a world where meaning and pleasure are profuse. Literature has the capacity to redefine the utilitarian by saying that the non-utilitarian is of equal use in a person’s education. There is an integrity and purpose for why people choose to read which goes beyond the immediately relevant into the domain of intrinsically worthwhile activities, the immediate application of which does not have to be contiguously recognisable.

Because classical functions of text are central to the definition of literature as a unique form of text and to an understanding of Human Literacy in a Eurocentric tradition of literature as a humanity, reference needs to be made to Aristotelian understanding of the function of literature, as Barthes has reconceptualised these original terms for contemporary contexts. Human Literacy is postulated as a way of facilitating how text is read, and ultimately, offers an explanation of how literature works with people in
learning situations. These effects, commonly classical and dramatic, heighten the lucidity by which a text is received, understood, made meaning of. To literature pertain such universal classical notions of text, that they contribute to its unique role within the European tradition. 'If exercise of consciousness is life's highest aim, because only through becoming fully conscious may one be free' (Sontag, 1993: xxxiii), then literature has a role in the great drama of clarity, of explanation and demonstration (Aristotle). Thus text has the capacity for kenosis (emptying out), the unmasking of the 'T'. With that are associated five other classical functions of the muses, those of catharsis, mimesis, poiesis, mathesis, and semiosis. That kenosis occurs as a result of the description, the unravelling of the narrative, is not just a release of textual tension through the release of details of plot, but a denouement which is an emotional release by the textual participant of the tension which the narrative created. In its strongest form, that kenosis takes the form of a catharsis, an emotional release subsequent to the tension generated by the story. The mimic, or mimesis, is the imitative characteristic of art, its mirror quality, as it imitates life, or of life, as it imitates text. Mathesis is the sheer relish of reality which text can afford: the reason for the success of film this century, of realism as a genre, or of fantasy as an ability to recreate a variation of reality.

Poiesis refers to the ideal rendition, to an imaginary, transported expression of human possibility, to universal truths, to a suspension of disbelief. Poiesis has a strong emotional component, and is pure in its form. The reader must suspend his / her disbelief in order to enter the realm of plot and character and allow him / herself to be transported, affected. By being sensitive to the honest expression of emotion (in text, among other places), the student is given opportunity for intra- and interpersonal growth. Semiosis is the signification, the meaning of text in the receiver's perception.

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5 There could not be a better contemporary example of the need for this than in Salman Rushdie's story, Aoun or a Sea of Stories, 1990, in which he articulates his frustration over certain Islamic fundamentalist reactions to the publication of his Satanic Verses.
To take an example of how literature affects personal growth, one can look at D.H. Lawrence, whose capacity for self-knowledge 'mediated through a response out of his vital self' (Bantock, 197: 135) has yielded, in his literature, a terrifying honesty, of the kind which makes middle-aged women recognise themselves with horror as Paul's mother in *Sons and Lovers* (1913).

Thus a suitable text is able to put under the microscope, to call into crisis (to critique) an aspect which it set out to clarify or draw implications from. This, says Barthes (in Sonntag, 1993: 412) is the 'mystique of the text'. The argument here is simply that text materialises pleasure by satisfying desire through the presentation of *matheσis*. Art imitates life. Thus the engagement of the reader with text is personally satisfying, intrinsically valuable. To expect, as is done in *A Statement*, that the intimate gratification of textual messages in the reader finds extrinsic expression which in turn is measurable by stated criteria, is therefore to contradict the meaning and purpose of text.

The significance of poststructuralist views of text is that it opens paths of interpretation, ways of looking at text which are useful to people who wish to study text. However, there is a danger that such an ideological framework closes off liberal ways of reading text, by ignoring Aristotelian notions of how human experience is enlarged through literature. Currently dominant poststructuralist reading by definition forces a more critical reading than is afforded by a prima facie reader-response based approach which was shown when discussing the role of the reader. This in turn can lead to a reading 'against the Human Literacy grain', against the very humanities base which underscores the most valuable that has historically been gained from engaging in a study of literature.

Barthes achieves three remarkable things with his views on text. Firstly, he connects why people read within a modern context by emphasizing the pleasurable aspect of reading, and such a reminder serves us well at a time when the study of literature is
filled with its criticism, often over its appreciation. Secondly, he manages to re-interpret that desire in terms of classical, Aristotelian functions of literature in ways which renews our understanding in terms of psychological benefits which readers derive by extracting personal meanings and effects from texts. Thirdly, he broadens traditional views of text. Canonical status of text is less important a consideration in the way Barthes defines text than is what is made of it: the pleasure principle, the consciousness-raising has a sense of priority over the analytical, critical, ideological.

3.5.1 The Liberal Aspect to Literature in Human Literacy.

Integral to appreciating ‘Human Literacy’ is its liberal-rationalist dimension. As one of the most significant exponents of such a particular view, Paul Hirst’s (1965, 1974) contribution to the debate of what constitutes a liberal education is therefore pertinent and threefold: he identifies three constants, namely the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, the fulfilment of the mind and the determination by which a person should live. Secondly, he characterises what is valuable (along with R.S. Peters, 1971, 1977) as not immediately recognisable or discernible, but attributes qualities to liberal knowledge such as compassion, fair play, truth, taste and the aesthetic. His third achievement is to recognise that the transfer of these qualities is not obviously discernible, and he actually says that to translate such values into educational programs is not simply a matter of constructing information skills. The implication of these beliefs of text in A Statement is that they question the philosophical basis by which the latter is constructed.

3.5.2. The Unique Place Of Literature In Human Literacy

The remaining part of this section aims to explain the place of literature by showing its relationship to ‘Human Literacy’. In this way a stakeholding view of literature in Human Literacy will be established as a particular way of seeing text and the reader.
Jackson (1983: 6-14) contributes to the textual definition of human literacy in this thesis by listing three distinct functions of the value of fiction:

Fiction as a part of human meaning making,
Fiction as active confrontation,
Fiction as an alternative world.

Jackson says that good fiction can penetrate into the inner life of the child by speaking memorably, intensely and pleasurably to children's developing concerns and purposes. By echoing the ability of literature to establish pattern and seeming order that was also theorized by reader response theorists including Jackson, this can be satisfying for the reader because, especially in a chaotic world, a sense of control, mastery is conveyed. This unity, between beginnings, middles and ends is a form of signifying meaning and purpose.

We all make meaning out of experience by regularizing it into some kind of coherent order, and fiction can make a valuable contribution to these ordering and organising mental strategies (Jackson: 1983: 9).

The conflict which is portrayed as tension between competing values in literature helps adolescents challenge and call into question the conditioning processes that have shaped their customary opinions, attitudes and beliefs. Jackson sees this role of fiction as one which values independent choice in a world which may often not have that luxury. Thus literature affirms a form of freedom identical to that defined by John Stuart Mill (1859). Living vicariously, through literature, is a way by which we can enrich our lives, as it enables us to live more lives than one.

Literature has as its central humanity the theme of dialogue, conversation, undistorted communication, contextual judgment and the type of wooing that takes place when

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6When my daughter was 4, at a pre-reading stage, I once dared change the routine plot of Grimm’s *Hansel and Gretel* for the sake of engendering interest. Instead I incurred the wrath of the listener as she was being deprived of her sense of mastery, and the patterning was being disturbed.
individuals such as character(s), author(s) as well as reader(s) confront each other as equals and participants.

Such a vision is not antithetical to an appreciation of the depth and pervasiveness of conflict - of the agon - which characterises our theoretical and practical lives. This vision is a response to the irreducibility of conflict grounded in human plurality. ... What matters is not unanimity but discourse (Bernstein, 1983/1989: 223).

Literature tends to have a greater trust in the multitude and variety of its argument than the conclusiveness of any one. Very much en vogue is the process of eroding assumptions and presuppositions that support literary disciplines in their conventional form. Deconstructionists have it that modes and categories inherited from the past no longer seem to fit the reality experienced by a new generation (Hawkes in Norris, 1991: vii). This by itself demonstrates a healthy questioning, but also an intolerance of ways in which literature has been treated in the past, and of valuing reader response in a human literacy context.

Bloom (1994) develops three arguments which mould Human Literacy as defined in this thesis: what he calls canonical works (what is here described as literature) differ from other non-canonical works in that literature has an aesthetic dimension which is unique, and which differentiates a literary/canonical work from another by the opportunity to order a chaotic life through imaginative recreation. While he shares a liberal understanding of literature with reader-response theorists, he is not conscious of that work which enlarges on his use of the term ‘aesthetic’ in different ways, such as Rosenblatt (1938). Further, Bloom sees literature as canons which are euro-centric, as explained by all his lists7. Human Literacy eschews the term ‘canon’ and defines literature more globally, and less euro-critically.

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7 His listing of the Western Canon in the Appendix, pages 531-567, is rather arbitrary, does not clarify the criteria by which he has grouped the texts and appears selective rather than methodical.
The third way by which Bloom connects with Human Literacy is by the position he adopts on the canon. He never actually answers the question he asks: by what ideological method(s) should teachers of literature proceed? But indirectly, he does by venting his displeasure at what he terms 'the School of Resentment'. Bloom is antagonistic to poststructural views of text and literature, as well as poststructural forms of criticism because he sees them as a threat to the canon. He thus adopts an adversarial role towards a wider or more liberal (as in tolerant) definition of literature than a canonical understanding which he has. Human Literacy therefore articulates a more liberal orientation as benefiting both the nature of the read material as well as the education of the reader in order to meet a range of intellectual demands on young people who engage with literature today, so that their preparation for tomorrow can be assured as beginning from a knowledge base which is comprehensive, rather than selective, elitist, or biased towards any particular genre or type of text, or fashionable theory of textual interpretation.

Thus Bloom helped clarify that to adhere to a canonical understanding of literature's value in a contemporary classroom is to misplace the locus of value. The transformatively valuable lies more in the liberal shape which is formed by text as an effect in the reader. This means two things. Firstly that what distinguishes literature from a bus ticket is something which lies beyond the functional, that is, which in its construction is about the human, in its signification or its signified. Secondly, the essential difference lies less in the form, genre or type of text, canonical or non-canonical as it may be, but in the reader-response. That latter distinction will be developed in the next section.
3.6. Human Literacy: Definition And Context

What, then, is Human Literacy?

Human Literacy is a unique form of cognition in which there resides a virtual, dynamic liberal orientation in the way the reader constructs intertextual meaning from literature as a unique form of text. Literature education is more than textual study because it is inherently transactional, meets a desire and is broader than a canonical classification of itself, providing singular opportunities for personal growth from deeper structures of belief. The triangular relationship between text, reader and teacher can only be matured by enabling students to question the text in ways which identify the initial delight and celebrate the original response to text. As well as teachers questioning students’ understanding of text, students’ understanding and creation of themselves and their world is critically developed by reflecting and discussing a variety of reader-responses. Human Literacy is an inherently enjoyable, worthwhile activity which satisfies vicariously, realistically, imaginatively, aesthetic and effertent needs in the reader in ways which elude quantification.

This investigation has developed a keener appreciation of current theories from a need to reframe reader-response within modern understandings of educational gain from literature. This process has called for an identification and labelling of existing theoretical positions and the demonstration of links between those theories in order to reinterpret the meaning, relevance and enjoyment to text. The need to do so arose from a desire to locate the source of discomfort (mentioned in the beginning of the first Chapter of this thesis) with espoused practice as recorded in A Statement. The need for this reframing and re-interpretation has arisen principally because the teaching of text in A Statement has been inadequately theorised and contextualised. The need to articulate a clearer understanding of the value of teaching text has arisen from significant omissions from A Statement as well as from competing understandings of the role of the reader and text, of literacy, cultural theory and modern criticism.

This chapter has aimed to recognise the particular values and processes which take place from engaging with literature and which are not currently viewed for their importance in a curriculum framework which has a skewed understanding of competency in English as applied to the educational benefits of literature. What is emerging is that there are poles on a continua of how texts work:-
initial response ←→ considered
intrinsic ←→ extrinsic
Aristotelian ←→ Platonic
Arnoldian ←→ Fordian
interactive ←→ productive
in a personal growth model ←→ applied utilitarian
emotional ←→ rational
as insight / enlightenment ←→ as training
vicarious ←→ critical
civilising ←→ vocational
aesthetic ←→ ideological
humanising ←→ instrumental

Human literacy is positioned within the left side of this table in that it searches for a clearer understanding of the initial response to text, that is from a clarification of the original basis of why people enjoy literature to a position which allows for literature to be studied for its many further, critical and ideological implications.

The term 'Human Literacy' consists of two words which have been selected for their separate meaning and their joined intent: ‘Human’ and ‘literacy’. The word 'literacy' was discussed in 3.2 and was shown to emerge from different understandings of literacy as a personal growth model, literacy as a form of enculturation, or literacy as a way of approaching texts critically. From that recognition literacy as a unique form of cultural knowledge was promulgated, as a variation from the more commonly accepted notions of literacy as defined by the United Nations or the Australian Government. Literacy was seen as orienting itself to the reader as meaning-maker, rather than to the authority of the text. In this sense, ‘Human Literacy’ is not just a way of reading, but also a way of writing.
The joining of the term 'human' with 'literacy' is made in order to emphasize a particular reading of text. The principal features of this approach are:-

- The reader as **meaning maker** and participant in human literacy is central to Human Literacy in that it is concerned with the relationship which is built up between a text and its reader both while and after the reading takes place. Human Literacy is the process by which readers and writers make intertextual connections between different texts. So reading in this manner is about being a member of an interpretative community, in which the reader constructs his or her own *Gestalt* of meaning, in which certain psychological effects and response formations are recognised.

- Human Literacy is a context which allows for young people to engage with literature in a ludic sense. That arena is a **discursive space** which allows for the desire for literature to be balanced with its enjoyment. Human Literacy is about the emotional responses to particular texts.

- Human Literacy offers the opportunity for individual reader **transformations** where the reader is viewed as spectator. This is endorsed by a transactional view of reader-based responses which informs a view which emphasizes the vicarious nature of the reading experience.

- Human Literacy acknowledges a **multiplicity** of meanings and truths which can be derived from reading literature. Human Literacy is separate from deconstructionism in that the former emerges from the context of literature as a humanity, while the latter has a different base, one concerned with ‘régimes of truth’ which avowedly do not have human experience at its base, or of particular concern.
Human literacy is situated among a proliferating number of literacies and acknowledges the personal growth model, a model by which the reader is brought to a particular culture, and a critical literacy understanding among other approaches to literacy, but states that it is unique by defining itself in an educational context in such a way as to emphasise the first three above-mentioned readings. It is thus a unique form of cultural knowledge.

The outcomes in a Human Literacy context are process-related, are dialogical in nature, individualised, personal and intrinsic, and orient themselves to the reader's identity and making meaning of him/herself in relation to the rest of the world.

Human Literacy has a broadened understanding of text which goes beyond a Leavisite or canonical understanding of literature. It is informed by cultural studies so that a move away from narrow literary concerns and towards wider social and political issues in which poststructural concerns, issues of gender and power have recently assumed a dominating position can be considered. Cultural theorists have also made allowance for interdisciplinary approaches to text, or approaches from a range of other contexts than 'just' literary. Further Human Literacy places a lower emphasis on the ideology of the text not because it is not important, but because individual reader-responses must take precedence. Human Literacy was considered to be inclusive, global and about the humanly significant: Human Literacy was seen as transcending culture, form and time, as being about a desire for individual liberal orientation, as being about identity.

In respect of modern criticism, Human Literacy respects the breadth of literary criticism but does not regard itself as a variant of that. Instead, Human Literacy stands apart from modern criticism, because it looks beyond the text to the reader, and searches prima facie for a human understanding of, and response, to text.
- Significantly, Human Literacy defines literature as a unique form of text in that it is seen as derivative of an Aristotelian and Arnoldian understanding of the value which attaches to it. By its characteristics, in fact, Human Literacy has a liberal rationalist character in that it values reading (and knowledge) for its own sake, the fulfilment of the mind and the determination of values by which one can live and all that in an atmosphere of tolerance of difference.

'Human' is used to describe the natural aspect of that spontaneous, unsolicited and unprocessed, untheorized meaning of what happens when people respond to literature. It is an embracing term which is inclusive of gender, ethnicity and age. Although the context in which the word is used has mostly to do with what happens when adolescents engage with literature, the word has a generalised sense - like gravitas humanitatis, humanité or Menschlichkeit-, by which it is purposefully meant to include an array of reactions, spanning from the emotional to the rational, from the social, cultural, psychological and ideological to the philosophical dimensions of the word 'human'. It is also meant to include those unidentifiable aspects, such as the effect of literature on the unconscious and the effect of literature as art. The humanities base and its representation in art, music and literature has a long, complex and distinguished history in Western learning, and this thesis wishes to acknowledge this multidimensional aspect of the term 'human' without abandoning it in favour of either another established or simpler term. The word does have a eurocentric-specific history, as well as a more global meaning, and a description of these meanings is relevant to the explanation of the central argument. In this history two different ways of viewing literature have emerged in Plato’s time as well as at various points in history, such as the period of scholasticism, the Renaissance, and further transformations occurring during the industrialization periods and since. Plato viewed the use of poetry, unless it could be shown to be of benefit to the Greek city state, as irrelevant to an education. By
contrast, Aristotle valued literature as a particular art form and for its educational value. Today those two different ways of looking at the use of literature still persist, and Human Literacy is a way of identifying and aligning a unique position for the role of literature in the education of a secondary school student.

The term ‘human’ emanates from a context of usage which is recognised and deliberately implied. This includes the association of the word with nouns, such as 'humanness', 'humaneness', 'humanity' and 'humanism'. ‘Human’ commonly refers to characteristics of man (or woman), and by that is meant the nature of what it means to be human. There is also a secular aspect of the term (as distinct from divine). ‘Human’ represents a combination of qualities which are unique to *homo sapiens sapiens*, as opposed to any other species or imaginative creatures such as mythological creations. The anthropological origin of ‘human’ and its applied meanings have been explored by Jones (1990), where he regrets the metaphors that of *homo sapiens sapiens* as a result of industrialisation into what he speciously terms ‘*homo economicus*’. Jones draws the further distinction between inner and outer man, and a need to recognise this inner voice as of equal significance to human progress than the utilitarian commodified understanding of outer man. There is an additional distinction that can also be drawn between the rationalist positivist understanding of intellectual progress which is scientifically and quantifiably based and which contrasts with that second ‘culture’, as C.P. Snow (1959) has it, of the ‘literary intellectuals’ by which he meant the more emotive, qualitative, artistic side of human activities that are reflected in literature.

The broader origin of the term ‘human’ is reflected in literature as a humanity, with the process of literature education being intimately associated with an appreciation of what the tradition of the humanities has been and is in that grand liberal enlightened sense of the Western tradition of learning. This calls for an explanation of the relationship of Human Literacy to theories which relate to the role of the reader as spectator, as
expressed by advocates of intertextual interpretations, as well as associated conceptions.

'Human' is a term which is gender inclusive. Today this is particularly important because of the vastly increased recognition that male and female constructions of text ought to contain a balance, or an absence of particular gender biases, in order to reach a wider audience. This concealed ideology in linguistic structures which shape our consciousness is well illustrated by an examination of gender. In this regard, feminist theory has redefined the human within literary criticism and the canon by deconstructing forms of social power, status, inequality and domination, thus ranging beyond the focus of the opposition of male and female. The relationship between writing and gender adds to the body of Human Literacy by exploring the political place of gender. De Beauvoir (1949) and Woolf (1929) advanced the view that women have been socially constructed in relation to men, and not in their own right (Walder, 1990). By voicing a much overlooked and critical point of view on personal relationships, feminism has successfully challenged the canonical to include issues of gender as relevant to an exploration of an equitable and inclusive, common humanity. So Human Literacy is gender aware and inclusive.

Morris (1993) says that the purpose of bringing a feminist interrogation to bear on literature is to allow opportunities and space for readers to work out their own response to textual passages and issues. Questions she asks include:

What perception of reality do the great books of our language offer us?
Whose perception is offered?
Who evaluates and selects the texts that form the literary canon (Morris: 1993: 8)?

Thus questions of gender are well accommodated in Human Literacy, as they search for meaning of male and female role representations in literature. Further to such an
approach lies a feminist critical discourse which examines ideology and political constructions underlying texts.

Further, 'human' is a word which identifies the locus of interaction, that is, the focus is on the effect of literature on the individual, on the person-building, on the humanity of the reader as distinct from any other, more abstract reactions. It is a term which at once links the reader and the text: in the words of Nobel citations for Literature, for the capacity 'to illuminate the human condition' (Briggs, 1991). Such a view is necessarily more sympathetic to more generalised effects of narrative on the reader or viewer, pursuing the connection between the text and the work's ability to illuminate ways in which the reader sees a (particular setting, time, theme, culture, set of relationships, society) world in relation to him or herself. 'Human' is a term at once more available to qualitative description and insight than quantitative enumeration.

The word is used to include the nature of what is depicted in literature as much as how that is read. Thus the attention is to the interaction of literature with the reader. That is, the reader becomes the focus of the human both in terms of content as well as in terms of the effect on the reader. This includes perceptible educational outcomes as skills of analysis, layers of understanding, imaginative engagement. The term 'human' also includes those less immediately apparent 'efferent' (Rosenblatt, 1938) gains which occur when people have read a literary work, which may sit with them for a long time, and their knowledge may come to be applied in wholly indirect and unmeasurable ways. So the locus is on the human in a way which allows for a circumscription, but no further reduction. The associations of 'human' with ideological constructs such as reader response and literary theory require clarification and positioning.

'Human Literacy' then is a term used to build a bridge between textual meaning and reader-derived meaning, between content of literature and response to that literature. Thus Human Literacy is a way of responding to and interpreting text and reader in a
secondary schooling situation which is unique to that environment, to the learning possibilities generated by those situations and related to particular understandings which have been variously theorised, and which encompass all skill areas reading, listening, writing, speaking and viewing. Human Literacy extends from those theoretical positions in such a way as to articulate itself as a clearly separate means of appreciating the educational significance of literature in ways which are not derivative of the manner in which literature is predominantly studied in primary school or provided for by tertiary studies.

The kind of reading which is possible with a Human Literacy perspective which searches for deeper rather than surface meanings, is illustrated by the following examples. Readers (of Kafka or Dostoyevsky, for example) will be haunted by some of the dream worlds created in fiction which assume the dimension of a monster or haunting cloud over consciousness. It is interesting that Clark mentions Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* at least five times in his two volumes of biography (1989, 1990) as having articulated human situations for him, as having enlightened his human understanding, and as having affected him deeply. So a dialogue with fiction can lead to recognitions, the formation of *Gestalt*, therapy. The Germans have long recognised the value of a *Bildungsroman*. The educative quality of a *Bildungsroman* is a formative aspect of Human Literacy in that it recognizes that literature, as unique text, has transformative possibilities. The purpose of psychotherapy (Jung) is to arrive at an overriding idea about one's purpose in life *(methodos)*:-

Inasmuch as a goal is a guiding fiction showing a way, it is a healing fiction. *To be healed* is that goal which takes one into therapy, and we are healed of that goal when we recognize it as a fiction. Now the goal as fiction has become a psychic reality, become a psychic reality itself, so that indeed the way did become the goal. This deliteralized method of healing, so ironic, slippery, paradoxical, that seems to fulfill and defeat our striving at the same time...

So the best psychotherapy can do is attune the fictional sense. Then the goals toward which therapy strives - maturity, completion, wholeness, actualization - can be seen through as guiding fictions. Therapy is the job of deliteralizing the fictions in which purpose is fixed and where one is actually defending oneself against the soul's innate 'towardness' by means of one's goals. This is a therapy of 'perspectives' (Hillman, 1983: 105).
In the poetics of Adlerian therapy, Adler (in Hillman, 1983: 102-7) asks: 'What does the soul want?'. Adler believes the answer to be a sense of community, called a Gemeinschaftsgefühl. That is, a sense of community belonging, of cultural attachment, of personal and shared values. The soul wants to live with reason in a world that reflects cosmic meaning, then, now and forever. A sense of fiction then becomes the goal of psychotherapy. This suggests that the soul's principal need is the perfection of its fictional understanding, the realisation of itself in its images, itself a fiction among fictions. So the difference between madness and sanity depends not on society or politics, upbringing or chemistry, but wholly upon our sense of fiction, on our sense of ourselves. By combining the classic significance of imagination / Poiesis with the psychoanalytic paths to self-discovery, the catalytic need and effect of the story becomes clearer as a Human Literacy function of literature overlooked in A Statement.

A characteristic of civilisation is as much a state of mind as the external evidence of art and science. The novels of Dickens or Tolstoy helped to shape nineteenth-century England or Russia, and not only gave the people who lived with them images of themselves but led to a deeper understanding of what they were (Dutton, 1985: 8).

Such a viewpoint at once accords literature a particular value, conveys 'a complex mode of sensibility' (Bantock 1976 : 169). One of the characteristics distinguishing humans from other species, people from lentils, is a capacity for sensibility, the capacity to be moved, emotionally transported. It is such factors which can make up motive and govern our conduct as overtly human, as capable of compassion. Literature is unique in that it creates a context which calls for the reader to respond to in ways in which he or she develops a clearer understanding of their own relationship to the world.

3.8 Emphasise education as a means of achieving self-knowledge, personal development, the strengthening of self-image and creativity, and effectual time use (including leisure studies), and place less emphasis on education for vocational or specialist purposes which can be picked up relatively quickly (Jones 1990: 243).
Human Literacy is also a term which includes more than has been shown by the portrayal of literature as text in *A Statement*. Reflective of the method of inquiry used in this dissertation, the terms 'human' and 'literacy' need to be positioned in a broader ideological comprehension, one which is sympathetic to alternatively liberal and utilitarian ways of viewing textual significance for educational purposes. This brief overview of the term aimed to show its use, the relationship to a variety of theoretical terms which are examined more formally below. In *A Statement*, the human has been relegated to a lower priority than is accorded here, and such dislocation of its value has caused a marginalisation of a process which is central to what English teachers do.

The power of literature is the effectiveness by which the human condition is portrayed. It is this interest, the human, which is at the basis of the desire that Barthes says we have for our own consciousness. Before rushing into fields of literary criticism, adequate space and time needs to be afforded to people who wish to engage with text for the sake of it, because there is a natural desire for it, because it is as worthwhile an activity as listening to music. This ludic space, these opportunities to freely digest, discuss and respond, are an overlooked dimension in *A Statement*, simply because it is not mentioned, as the document's entire construction is towards critical engagement and outcomes oriented evaluation of text. Excluded from such an understanding is, similarly, Foucault's notion of *jouissance* (Foucault in Williamson, 1995: 39) by which the pleasurable effects of the text are removed and replaced by its critical deconstruction. If the student of literature cannot enjoy text, and radiate in its sacred and profane pleasures, then the basis for any further engagement with it has not really been met. *A Statement* most fundamentally tries to frame the responses of readers of literature when in fact the activity of what is gained from literature occupies a space that may bear no relation to the text, or may bear a value or insight which lies quite outside that which was expected by either learner, writer, teacher or reader.
The next chapter will explore the educational implications of Human Literacy by showing the relationship of the theoretical positions discussed in this chapter with practice, in order to better understand the conflicting expectations which underpin A Statement. By identifying what kind of learning and teaching occurs when literature is used, Human Literacy will be shown to be a partially inclusive of what was intended with A Statement. But it will also be shown to be more theoretically grounded, and extensive of meanings which have not been adequately addressed in A Statement. By examining educational models and showing how these are in turn based upon particular theoretical understandings of the position of the reader, and literature, the role of the teacher and the student becomes clearer, and then Chapter Five demonstrates the inherent incompatibility of these competing ideologies. This in turn will yield a critique of the curriculum framework of A Statement which will be the subject of chapter six.
4. HUMAN LITERACY AND EDUCATION

The previous chapter established a theoretical base for literature education through developing Human Literacy. This theoretical model established the relationship of reader to text as re-interpreted from a number of recent positions. In particular, Human Literacy conceptualizes the humanities-base as pertaining to a particular way in which meanings are constructed by participant readers of literature. It is now necessary to contextualise this within an educational framework.

‘Education’ is often dichotomised into the apparently competing purposes of general or liberal education on the one hand, and as a preparation for the utilitarian or vocational futures that face all students on the other. Is such a division this simple? ‘Education’ is a contestable concept and in this chapter educational value is examined so as to give ‘Human Literacy’ an institutional context. That context is twofold: within a philosophy of education in general, and within English literature teaching in particular.

The position in this thesis is not to suggest that the two concepts are antithetically opposed to each other, with the possibility of one triumphing over the other at any one time. Nor is it sufficient to suggest that there is an ongoing tension between the two which is in need of resolution. If the interaction could be seen on a continuum, such as is illustrated below, then human literacy conceptually occupies a middle ground:-

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{utilitarianism} & \text{middle} & \text{liberalism} \\
\hline
\text{ground} & \text{Human} & \text{Literacy} \\
\end{array}
\]

This representation is meant to illustrate the notion that Human Literacy stands alongside vocational utilitarianism not in a competitive or hostile way. Human Literacy
claims parity of esteem at a time when the pendulum has swung towards the left of the continuum. This and the subsequent chapters argue that the current educational context is skewed towards the utilitarian end of the continuum such that the middle ground needs to be re-articulated as a means by which Human Literacy can stand alongside the importance of work related skills, without neglecting significant aspects of the value base which attaches itself to a liberal view of education. Utilitarian dimensions are discussed in Chapter Five.

How does Human Literacy inform the educational approach to be taken with literature? Human Literacy works multi-dimensionally, and the educational implications of this recognition include the following three philosophical assumptions:-

• First, you need to persuade young people to read, and you must provide exploratory opportunities and space for people to be able to enjoyably and successfully do so (Thomson, 1992, Rosenblatt, 1938). Such a position must precede a critical engagement (though not replace or exclude one). The soul of the narrative must be able to resonate to the reader, causing multiple possible responses.

• Human Literacy should begin to develop an appetite for literary criticism in those who may simply enjoy that, or appreciate models of seeing text in particular ways. Others may just read literature for its own sake. Overriding the approach to literature education is the idea that people ought not to be forced to hate it because of the skills base which is insisted upon, but that there be choice about just how further study might be undertaken.

• Literature education must meet society's expectations of enculturation, the notion of bringing about a heightened, even enlightened understanding of human relationships, societal beliefs, cultural values, etc. which may be recognisable in ideological forms (Peters, 1977, Eagleton, 1993). This connects with a functional
view of language which postulates the tenor as the relational dimension of text alongside mode (text form) and field (subject matter) (Halliday, 1994).

In summary, Human Literacy seeks to engage the reader as a participating respondent. Human Literacy seeks to provide options about how the study of literature might be undertaken at a later stage, that is, provide differing pathways from the literary or academic study to the serial consumption of literature to those who may never choose to revisit such reading experiences again. Human Literacy is a space in which the soul of literature might be grasped; a space in which readers do not come to hate the text because of predetermined levels of interpretative skills which are to be expected of them.

Such views shape the way in which literature education influences curriculum, particularly in respect of the freedom by which the literature is ‘taught’ or ‘learnt’, so that shackles are not placed on ways in which literature ought to be engaged with for exclusively extrinsic benefit. It therefore follows that:-

- A curriculum in literature education must accommodate many students who may only ever have a passing acquaintance with literature.

- A curriculum in literature education must also provide space for the reader’s initial and often emotive as opposed to critical reaction to be found, identified, aired, be it by journal, by dialogue, by discourse, by discussion, by enactment, by alternative media representations, by imaginative recreations ('reading against the grain': Jack Thomson (1992: 20), allowing for the spectator role of the reader (Harding, 1972).

- In a most primary way, literature can assist the growth and development of the inner person, that is, by mirroring an experience portrayed in text, allowing the reader to identify with, to experience agon, to develop a taste for the aesthetic, to understand
themselves better, more clearly by engaging and responding to a particular textual experience (Bloom, 1994).

- A curriculum in literature must meet the here and now needs of young people, it must resonate the humanity of the community of readers from which it is a product, and manage to connect with its readers, that is, demonstrate its relevance as a meaningful and worthwhile activity (R.S. Peters, 1971, 1977), as well as liberate from the tyranny of the present and particular (Charles Bailey, 1984).

- At an elementary level, it must provide essential skills of literacy, of identifying literary conventions, ranging in complexity from author, title, characters and setting to theme, mood, effect, technique etc. (This is supported by A Statement as much as by a whole range of source books for the teaching of literature in secondary schools)

There is a considerable body of work which attests to this multi-dimensionality of how curriculum in literature education works, and how these considerations are accommodated. Keating (1980), Bantock (1979), Hillman's discussion of Jung (1983), Dutton (1985) are among those cited here to further advance the argument that there is a realm of achievements which literature enables which lie outside the framework of A Statement, but within an understanding of Human Literacy.

4. 1 Educational Characteristics of Human Literacy

Among other things, Education is about identity, life and value, which is the focus of years 7-12 literature: yet there is an ongoing tension about the locus and modus which is engendered by those three notions. In asking about the liberal nature of education, Human Literacy is able to position itself more clearly in a broader philosophical context than the ones of reader and text as identified in the last chapter. Such discussion in turn
will later distinguish itself from particular forms of utilitarian understandings which combine to populate the contested site of literature education today.

4.1.1 Education As A Means To Identity In Time

There are two major understandings of education competing for the base of educational practice today: one is anchored in the utilitarian model and leans towards a rationalist-positivist mechanistic and reductionist view of the world. This view is affected by current economic thinking. This view, says John Halliday (1990) is heavily impregnated by the work ethic. At the basis, education in this sense takes its value as is it is applied to a career in a vocationalist context. A career in turn is seen as a means to enhancing personal assets, these being regarded as providing happiness as defined by John Stuart Mill.

At the other extreme, there is a liberal-humanistic notion which celebrates human existence, respects individual freedom, enjoys life and has a tendency to reflect on intrinsic values which carry personal significance but not necessarily direct economic benefit. At the heart of this perspective lies that Western tradition of learning which recognizes a humanities base and which sees education linked more indirectly to an industrial or utilitarian context.

Education reflects this tension as reflected by the spectral diversity of the entire continuum, because both shape human growth and understanding. Education operates against these different but equally meaningful contexts, and thus constitutes a contested site in that various expectations are made of it, depending on the social, cultural, political and ideological circumstances of the times.

1 The definition of happiness being the absence of pain. The absence of pain is best brought about, in this view, by material circumstances which reduce the likelihood of personal suffering. Ergo, the greater the wealth, the lesser the pain. This is the essential conclusion to a linear utilitarian argument.
The value base of Human Literacy will be shown to be nested in the middle of this continuum by borrowing liberal elements as well as some overlooked aspects of utilitarianism which are here re-interpreted. Thus Human Literacy has an opportunity to restore a balance by positioning itself in an ideologically less contentious, or more comprehensive *locus*. Education in its broadest and most inclusive sense means the process by which any society perpetuates itself. Education in this sense works if it has a view to the future embedded in an understanding of the present which in turn has clear roots in past practice. Human Literacy views literature as a non-threatening vehicle for self-examination through vicarious experience which transcends time and which can guide a young person towards a greater understanding of themselves and their relationships with others. Such a definition of literature allows for the possibility of a more general understanding of education.

What then are some of the values which characterise Human Literacy in an educational context? What follows are seven distinguishing features which are shown to have specific links to the way Human Literacy operates liberally in respect of reader and text.

4.1.2 Education And The "Examined Life"

"An unexamined life is not worth living" (Socrates). Such a statement pitches two views of education against each other: the view of education as training, and the view of education as an introspectively analytical activity. The position advocated by Socrates is one of indirect benefit to the state: there is an assumption that people who have examined their lives for the values by which they decide to act are of potentially greater value than those who have bypassed such examination in order to become a trained functionary, or who come to see their worth in material terms. These two opposite viewpoints are not mutually exclusive, nor do they assume a value position where one is greater than the other. The contrast is made in order to show that Human Literacy accommodates a Socratic outlook within a broader view of education which
naturally also allows for people to be equipped with skills which allow them to complete tasks, achieve competency standards and have immediate and direct vocational appeal.

"The examined life" is a life-long aspect of people examining their lives in terms of values, skills, morals, etc. Human Literacy provides a window on those processes which allow people to engage in self-critical activity, and who wish to use literature as a means of achieving such insight. This perspective is an integral aspect of Human Literacy because it articulates self-examination as a value by which the reader is motivated to examine literature and indeed life. It is nothing less than a philosophical approach capable of delving behind reasons for specific training.

4.1.3 Education Is About Value And Meaning

Seminal to a young person's outlook on life are the decisions to live by certain values, (such as career ambitions, social justice, democratic participation, love, truth, beauty etc). So education can be seen as that process by which values are clarified, and positions taken which gradually have cumulative and far reaching effects on decisions on how lives are conducted. In this sense, education distinguishes itself from mere living by being sensitive to the consciousness by which readers mould their lives. Too often a person is described by the work they do - the result of a most obvious vocational or career-based view of education that perceives societal success in a particularly materialist, hierarchical or particular way. But it is also possible for a person to be described by their non-working life, by their personal interests, by the things they value as individuals. These are two different ways in which individuals can be viewed.

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2 In the late seventies at Riverstone High School students were being taught to type under a Disadvantaged Schools Program as this was seen as a desirable and instrumentalist way of preparing young people for the workforce. Little were we to know that word processing would fundamentally replace the typewriter in that particular mechanistic form. Perhaps time might have been better spent examining the nature of technological change...
The barbarian outside the gates of civilisation (Peters, 1963) is an image of a person who may be highly trained, yet lacks characteristics of 'civilised' conduct such as are described below. Thus to be 'civilised', or to be trained, can be different goals for education. Winston in George Orwell's 1984, or the Savage in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* are examples of characters who were trained in terms of what these respective societies expected of education: yet they were unfulfilled and sought to delve beneath the veneer of their respective societies to search for deeper meanings, and thus set expectations of their education which lay outside those of their immediate society.

Human Literacy liberates and provides a way in which meaning is sought from literature which lies beyond particular skills or competencies. Education in Human Literacy is about clarifying the values. Value here is defined in terms of relevance and meaning to the learner's life. The merit or importance of educationally valuable activity is not just visible in terms of usefulness, but also in terms of desirability.

### 4.1.4 Education As Worthwhile Activities

Is the purpose of education primarily about competency acquisition and skill cultivation? Such an instrumental view of education sees education as enabling people to do: to achieve, to gain. In its primary sense, then, to work towards a quality of life in which participants achieve their personal best in consequence of their skill level or competency having reached a zenith which is visible, translated and measured in terms of their wealth accumulation, their wage. Such a definition says that a person is only ever 'educated' if they have achieved their maximum skill level or competency ceiling. It ignores the value of unrealised personal reservoirs which may contain cultural capital, artistic potential, or understandings of literature as a form of humanity that enables personal growth. Such an exclusively mechanistic and economic understanding only partially understands the nature of 'human capital': it brings an economic appreciation,
while lacking a human or social dimension. Human Literacy restores such an equilibrium. The particularity of this utilitarian view, which has emerged in industrial times, is critiqued (in Chapter Six) because this view (now applied in a post-industrial context) addresses the full range of educational needs of young people inadequately. The assumption that the only form of desirable thinking is that which strengthens the relationship to personal productivity overlooks the notion that thinking might be desirable for its own sake.

Peters (1966, 1971) speaks of education as being about engaging in worthwhile activities in a way which does not immediately link the worth of the activity to its vocational utility. "Worthwhile activities" are defined in terms of learning experiences whose worth is intrinsic, based around ways of knowing and understanding that are discrete yet related and which give meaning to human experience (eg. scientific, philosophical, literary, aesthetic). Human Literacy concentrates on the ways of knowing and understanding which give meaning to literature as a form of English education. The following analogy of a car helps to enable a comparison with English literature as an epistemological way of acquiring knowledge:-

An educated person is one who has some kind of understanding. He (sic) does not, as it were, just suck up what he sees. He makes something of it in the light of the principles he brings to it. He fits things into a framework. And he does not interpret what is before him narrowly.

When confronted by a car, for instance, he not only has some understanding of how it works. He is sensitive to its aesthetic proportions, to its history, and to its potentiality for human good and human ill. He sees it as a problem for town planners as well as a fascinating machine. In brief, an educated person is one who has some depth and breadth of understanding.

He can appreciate what is there in many dimensions because of what he brings to it (R.S. Peters, 1971: 11-12).

To approach literature with the intention of deconstructing its parts is to only partly succeed with an appreciation of its elements, and fails to appreciate overall reader response-effects. The approach in A Statement is one which fosters critical skills. Though this is an important way of engaging with literature, it is situated in a particular
context which is limited. Literature as a worthwhile activity offers a great deal more than that, when one considers the way Human Literacy was defined in the previous Chapter.

In a vocationally oriented, utilitarian understanding of education, people are seen only as units of production, as agents which promote the corporate ethos of a community, business or nation. In this significant sense, Plato's distinction of people into bands such as gold, silver and bronze in terms of their relative asset value, potential intelligences or leadership usefulness to promote the interests of Athens, has not altered. Today, the language resonates with metallic categories in that frequently peoples' value is seen in such terms. The Aldous Huxley view of people, as portrayed in *Brave New World* (1932), into Alphas, Betas and Gammas echoes such a future in terms of a continuation from a Platonic past. This important leitmotiv of education has survived more than twenty centuries as an instrumentalist view of human capacity: what is the use of the individual to the state? Rationalist-positivist ways of viewing the world and industrialisation have been major influences to such a perception which sees education as a source of energy which, properly harnessed, will promote development and assets beyond the meeting of rudimentary Maslovian needs (De Tocqueville, Goethe in Bullock 1985: 89 ff, Comte in Urmson and Rée, 1989: 254).

Human Literacy adopts the view articulated by Peters (in Collits, 1994) who says that 'worthwhile activities' are often not immediately pleasurable. Because many people are conditioned to consumption, there is a tendency to interpret value in terms of immediate pleasure. Worthwhileness may not become apparent for some time, may be delayed and not become apparent until some deferred opportunity calls upon its value (Peters, 1966, 1971). Such a view defines growth not as an achievement of levels of competency, but as a maturing ability to make connections when the occasion calls for it, and not in direct consequence of completing a level of competency. Worthwhile activities further presume a disinterested attitude - their value is intrinsic, and they have their own built-
in standards of excellence. Worthwhile activities have a cognitive and oretical component, by which they do not die or become worn out, because 'truth' has no static quality and is not an object to be attained; it is an aegis under which there must always be progressive development (Peters, 1971). It is in the nature of worthwhile activities that they illuminate other facets of life and contribute much to the quality of living. A person who has an appreciation of worthwhile activities develops conceptual schemes and forms of appraisal which transform everything else that he or she does. A worthwhile activity extends beyond the duration of a course, or a level of achievement in that it continues to affect the person. Enthusiasm for the most worthwhile of human activities is caught rather than exclusively engendered by focused argument.

4.1.5 Education And The New Millennium

Education, to satisfy the needs of the next century, must be a positive agency in people's empowerment. It must therefore be, firstly, true to its past. This means that it must be able to reflect the tension that has existed and does exist in the breadth of the value base between competing theories and practices of education, rather than present a particular model as the only one.

Chapter Six critiques A Statement as being located within a particular empiricist framework which defines the success of the 'clever country' as being dependent on the education towards vocational success. The four characteristics of an education in Human Literacy propound a broader form of education inclusive of intrinsically meaningful, heuristic learning. The model of Human Literacy views education for its culturally enriching potential. This sits alongside the vocational drive in why people seek life-long learning. Between these two theories lie other hermeneutic possibilities, and a close reading of Mill reveals that his advocacy of utilitarianism was inclusive of broader individual freedoms (see next Chapter) than is contemporaneously understood.
He was not the champion of a particularly didactic interpretation, such as his father or Jeremy Bentham.

By developing the notion of the continuum between a utilitarian and a liberal view of education, and the positioning of Human Literacy as being in the middle of that continuum, it is here postulated that Human Literacy is more broadly reflective of past frameworks of understanding which are located in a humanities tradition, than is possible by the advocacy of either extreme. Accordingly, Human Literacy describes the value base of education as reflecting a greater balance because it is more carefully contextualised in theories of reader text and a liberal philosophy than (it will be critiqued in Chapter Six) A Statement.

4.1.6 Education As A Humanity

A fundamental antithesis contrasts education as training with education as a form of 'enlightenment' as a wider form of cognition. Human Literacy articulates a perception that education consists in the discovery of what it means to be human (Morris in Peters, 1974: 414). If this century is to progress meaningfully into the next, it will clearly not do so by legislation, parliament, judiciary, money, technology, 'economic rationalism' or capital profit alone. R.M. Hutchins (1968: 90) quoted Maritain as saying:

Education is not animal training. The education of man is a human awakening.

By this statement the view that exploring is what makes us what we are is helpful to the question of how we might want to shape the world. If, then, education is a process of seeking, then such exploration must have a value base. The purpose of education is 'to light the fire' (Yeats), to let people find their values, so that their passions can be unleashed. Every teacher is aware of the temptation in literature to teach history, in history to teach facts, in science to teach experiments, because these are easier to present than ideas, easier to communicate than critical standards, and easier to test.
However, it is in the liberating of the human potential that the future is shaped, and Human Literacy provides a framework of understanding which should enable such achievement.

As John Dewey (1916), says:

A truly liberal, and liberating, education would refuse today to isolate vocational training on any of its levels from a continuous education in the social, moral, and scientific contexts within which wisely administered callings and professions must function (Dewey in Hutchins, 1968: 93).

He goes on to claim that

Education has no aims outside itself: growth is an intrinsic aim (Dewey in White, J, 1982).

The body of knowledge of an educated person extends beyond the mere accumulation of facts or particular skills; Human Literacy suggests that there are forms of cognitive knowing which have attitudinal, rather than instrumental attributes, and this searching for the soul of literature is the search for the human resonances which underlie literature as a unique way of knowing. Human Literacy emphasizes that literature is consumed in order to deepen and broaden the reader’s understanding of humanity. While there are many other ways to achieve a knowledge of humanity, such as by living or experiencing, or through particular disciplines or sciences, literature offers an unprejudiced way by which a reader can go about the search for what it means to be human.

4.1.7 Education Is About Breadth And Depth

This does not mean that knowledge and skills are unimportant. If people are to be educated for a life beyond employment, they need a breadth and depth of knowledge, the capacity to relate ideas in complex and novel ways, the ability to see the whole as
well as the parts, and to recognise both the power and the insignificance of individuality
and the individual (Peters, 1966, Barrow, 1981). Human Literacy, then, extends
beyond the possessive collection of data and skills into developing understanding of the
world and the place of the individual within it. What makes up an educated person
includes the capacity to consider, know, interpret and weigh information.

A significant part of this process can be achieved through the study of literature,
through reading about people's lives in text. In literature, data are described as
experiences: 'one does not explain Shakespeare - one interprets Shakespeare' (John
Paul Bell, in Hamlet, Theatre Royal, Sydney, May 1992). Robert Probst also defines
'literature as experience, not information' (1988: iii). T.S. Eliot defines an educated
person as not only capable of sensibility and judgement, but as possessing the capacity
to 'preserve us from the error of pure contemporaneity' (in Bantock 1970: 103). G. H.
Bantock (1981) describes 'the parochialism of the present' as a time in which it is
necessary to 'recall a literature as a central energising force in the examination of our
social and moral problems'. In his work he encourages a widening of perspective,
actually encourages a conceptual philosophy as salutary in itself.

In Mill's Utilitarianism of 1861 the next Chapter will show that Human Literacy found
forms of utilitarianism which are human-focused, which emphasize individual growth
and self-knowledge as intrinsically worthwhile benefits of a liberal education in a
utilitarian context. Human Literacy thus repositions education conceptually along the
aforementioned continuum. In doing so, it is necessary to be more cognisant of both
the liberal and utilitarian value bases in education respectively.
4. 2 Human Literacy Within A Liberal 7-12 Literature Education

Everyone has the right to be initiated into a general liberal education, and political authorities principally have a basic moral obligation to promote this ideal as fully as they can (Critenden, 1973: 49).

This section contextualises Human Literacy within those aspects of a liberal education which are found to promote the way in which literature is studied. The remaining part of this chapter will discuss the competing models of teaching English, and identify the place of Human Literacy within and among those.

It could be supposed that Human Literacy lacks an educational history in terms of ideological alignment to educational philosophy in literature education. This is not so. What follows are some general educational principles that inform Human Literacy. They are, for the purposes of thematic grouping, named liberal (as informed by the history of educational philosophy), or liberal rationalist (as informed more recently, especially but not only in England since the 1960s).

In Bantock's essay *The Idea of a Liberal Education* (1981: 65-79) he explores the Aristotelian notion that a liberal education was for free men to make men free. Bantock discusses the purposes of education ranging from leisure, to virtuosity, to manner, to matter (knowledge). The notion of what application an education was to serve (in Greek times, statecraft, in Scholastic times, Christ, in later times, a democratic end) becomes in Bantock's hand a discussion of how the process of education should be effected: he concludes his essay with this definition of *sprezzatura*, or effortlessness:

For *sprezzatura* protests against both the mode and the manner of modern understanding. It protests against both the excessive faith in knowledge and understanding as the modern world seeks these, and against the intensity of the search for them. The solution is not an abandonment of what knowledge has brought with it but a balancing with other modes, so that both the strengths and the limitations of 'understanding' become apparent. And this is a way which is proper to an essentially limited creature like man in whom a calm assessment of his own limitations would seem to be the beginning of wisdom. Perhaps, too, this would promote a greater sense of balance; and surely this sense of balance
was one of the first virtues that a liberal education, in the dawn of history, set out to promote. And perhaps today, too, in our pragmatic age, with its undue emphasis on immediate utility, we need, more than ever, the sense of enlargement and freedom from immediate decision-making which a liberal education, infused with an element of 'play', would afford (Bantock, 1981: 79).

This sense of enlargement and use of an idea beyond the present and particular is part of Human Literacy. The roots of this can be found in England and Europe of the last century, where there emerged a tolerance (of difference, of minority rights), a rationality of intellect, a respect for privacy, and the right to property (John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, 1861). Human Literacy connects this significant liberal attitude to contemporary educational practice, it was thought that by leaving the individual as unrestricted as possible in the opportunities for self-expression or self-fulfilment, such an approach would favour breadth of mind, progress and reform. Liberty was seen as healthy and necessary for a society to advance, and freedom from tradition and authority was recognised as a form of tolerance which was free of bigotry or prejudice. Liberty and tolerance are primary values which are absolutes in any society which values its own culture and identity. Any curriculum must weigh its prescriptive intent against such a liberal philosophy.

Liberalism has as its goal the preservation, rather than the inhibition, of individual freedom. Liberalism sees social change as gradual, flexible, and adaptive, whereas radicalism conceives of social change as fundamental and based on new principles of authority such as economic rationalism, which by definition cannot be a liberal principle. A truly liberal Government aims to alleviate economic inequalities and protect the right of minorities. It is arguable that today Australia does not have such a form of government, as inequalities are fostered through an increasingly ruthless application of market forces. Human Literacy fits within a redefined view of liberal education by recognising the aforementioned criteria and by aligning these within the original nature of a liberal society.
Only after participating as active meaning maker, after clarifying reader-response, can the reader begin practices of interpretation which explore notions such as explanations, themes, characterisation etc. in a way approaching critical practice. As an example, the notion of 'character' (a concept out of favour in poststructuralist circles) might be one which an inexperienced reader might need the opportunity to identify with, reactively or empathically, in order to establish a relationship to the text. So the critical literacy practice of reflecting on textual, social and political ideologies can only be seen to have value in the context of a growing maturity, insight and understanding in the reader. The sequencing of these educationally critical insights has implications for the teaching of literature, yet space for initial reader engagement and response must precede critical literacy, and this can occur in the context of Human Literacy. The curriculum characteristics of literature as described above need to be compatible with a view of education that is based on a similar or sympathetic value structure. A shift in the philosophical base underpinning A Statement becomes evident as necessary in order to accommodate this broader view of literature.

Liberal thought from the 1960s onwards became known as liberal rationalism because of the particular way in which significant philosophers at the time, such as Peters, Hirst, Bailey, Bullock and others chose to articulate the central elements of their position. These also influence Human Literacy by recognising that the pursuit of knowledge for its own intrinsic sake is a legitimate form of intellectual curiosity, that the application of such gained knowledge may not be immediately apparent, and that such a mode of intellectual inquiry fundamentally differs from what Reid called 'Rationalism' as a mode of inquiry. Further, liberal rationalists championed the liberating value of education from the tyranny of the present and particular (Bailey, 1984; Peters, 1966).

A further distinction can be drawn between the public and private side of knowledge. The nature of what is worth knowing can be weighed qualitatively, rather than only
seen for its instrumental quantitative value. Enslin (1984) sees the liberal point of view as having its roots in Locke’s natural rights to life, liberty and property. Enslin sees ‘the potential tyranny of the majority posed by the development of popular government, and the growing powers of the bureaucracy’ as incursive onto the freedom of the liberal tradition in learning. Human Literacy adheres to the liberal rationalist position in so far as principles of long-term, life-forming educational values are enshrined as a view that goes beyond the instrumental interpretation of education.

Charles Bailey (1984), Paul Hirst (1974), William A. Reid (1978) and John Passmore (1980) further strengthen the ideas base of Human Literacy by identifying particular aspects. Because education involves doing things to persons with a view to influencing their behaviour and beliefs, such an action calls for justification. The most rudimentary aspect of education, according to Bailey (1984), involves doing something which is worthwhile. This involves value and moreover one which must be justified. Not that education as such needs justification, but the particular kind of education does. Bailey reinforces R.S. Peters’ notion of long term benefits which go beyond the immediate.

In 1974 Paul Hirst published a collection of philosophical papers under the title Knowledge and the Curriculum. The third of these papers, ‘Liberal education and the nature of knowledge’, begins by describing the Greek notion of liberal education:

The pursuit of knowledge is thus the pursuit of the good of the mind and, therefore, an essential element in the good life (Hirst, 1974: 30).

Such a definition differs from an understanding of an education where the pursuit of knowledge is to some end. Hirst’s second quality of a liberal education is that it provided “a fulfilment of the mind”, a value which has nothing to do with utilitarian or vocational considerations. Thirdly, Hirst says that

liberal education is essential to man’s understanding of how he ought to live, both individually and socially (Hirst, 1974: 31).
By acknowledging that education, to be a purposeful activity, must necessarily involve considerations of value, Hirst concludes that there exists a demand for an education whose definition and justification are based on the nature and significance of knowledge itself, and not on the predilections of pupils, the demands of society, or the whims of politicians. (Hirst, 1974: 32)

Hirst considers knowledge to be achieved when the mind attains its own satisfaction or good by corresponding to objective reality. It is evident that Hirst sees liberal values as concerning the characteristics of mind which enable people to think effectively, to make relevant judgements, and to discriminate among values. This last ability is to recognise values such as values of character like fair play and self-control, intellectual values like the love of truth and aesthetic values like good taste, and, in addition, a commitment to such values in the conduct of life (Hirst, 1974: 34).

These qualities are emphasised here for two reasons: they will be shown in Chapter Six to be absent from *A Statement*, and they are especially in relative poor esteem in the current dominant discourse of economic rationalism in Australia. Their absence has created a climate which, generally speaking and supportable by any number of instances, suppresses considerations of compassion and social justice, and fosters greed and the dictatorship of the dollar over more human and liberal considerations of value by which a society sustains itself. It is against such a skewed understanding that Human Literacy comes to reassert these liberal dimensions to learning.

Hirst’s collection of papers goes on to distinguish between forms and fields of knowledge: as far as text is concerned, he recognises the discipline of English as a form of knowledge, and the field the study of text can take, he says, can be either theoretical, practical, moral etc.

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3 This, Hirst says, lay behind the Greek notion of immersion in the seven liberal arts.
This means the acquisition by critical training and discipline not only of facts but also of complex conceptual schemes and of the arts and techniques of different types of reasoning and judgement. Syllabuses and curricula cannot therefore be constructed simply in terms of information and isolated skills (Hirst, 1974: 47).

Hirst’s contribution to the debate of what constitutes a liberal education is therefore threefold: firstly, he identifies three constants, namely the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, the fulfilment of the mind and the determination by which a person should live. Secondly, he characterises what is valuable as not immediately recognisable or discernible, but attributes qualities to liberal knowledge such as compassion, fair play, truth, taste and the aesthetic. His third achievement is to recognise that the transfer of these qualities is not obviously discernible, and he actually says that to translate such values into educational programs is not simply a matter of constructing information skills. Three elementary aspects of a liberal education are that:-

1. It liberates the person from the tyranny of the present and particular for the ideal of the autonomous, rational, moral agent,
2. A liberal education is likely to have intrinsic value, and
3. It is involved in a life of reason (Bailey, 1984: 20 ff).

Bailey contextualizes the first of these qualities against Hirst’s enumeration of what Hirst sees Aristotle’s liberal education to be by listing

the non-mechanical nature of such an education and the demand for the exercise of man’s higher intellectual abilities; the non-utilitarian significance; the breadth or absence of narrow specialisation; and the intrinsic motivation of the studies (Bailey, 1984: 21).

In a Human Literacy view, education can either entrap or confirm a young person in the limiting circumstances of his/her birth, it can widen horizons, increase awareness of choice, reveal a reader’s prejudices and superstitions and multiply his/her points of reference by comparison. All this releases

a kind of intellectual and moral autonomy, the capacity to become a free chooser of what is to be believed and what is to be done ... a free moral agent (Bailey, 1984: 21).
Human Literacy recognizes that a free moral agent’s ultimate goal is self-government, individual autonomy, and such an expectation is higher than to merely view education for the part it can play in the wealth-creating process’.

Liberal education, in the sense of its concern for the intrinsically worthwhile, can only become available for all in a relatively wealthy society, that is true, but if a society becomes solely concerned with wealth production and no longer sees education as concerned with ends, then all becomes caught up in a pointless and particularly vicious and alienating circle.... It will also embody a concern or activities, both mental and physical, that are valued ends, rather than, or at least as well as, valued instruments (Bailey, 1984: 24).

Human Literacy asserts the need for a general liberal education as it frees the individual from the immediate needs of society to universalizable values which have general utility or intrinsic worth. This argument provides a contemporary and firmly defined function of liberal education which substantially legitimates the moral basis behind the argument of this thesis. Bailey’s weight towards the need for a reconceptualization of the liberal locus of value in a dominantly instrumental society was made more than a decade ago: its relevance today in Australia to the formulation of curriculum frameworks is here emphasised. In the literature of liberal rationalism, ‘dead dogmas’ are distinguished from ‘living truths’ as being two different deliveries, two different ways to teach. ‘Dead dogmas’ are truths which the teacher simply says are inalienable and therefore factual. ‘Living truths’ are passed on to a generation by their participation in the excitement of the initial battle for acceptance. The understanding education seeks to bring about ‘must be fashioned in the minds of individual pupils’, not by purveying information. This suggests that the mainsprings of a liberal education are provided by deeper purposes of knowledge and understanding in their fuller senses by valuing pupil-developed understanding of relationships, linkages and non-arbitrariness. Bailey’s dissatisfaction with Hirst stems from a different understanding of fields of knowledge, in that Bailey is unhappy with Hirst’s ‘particularly strict categorisation of meaning and thus of the forms of knowledge’, as he sees this ‘leading to an unduly impoverished basis for a liberal education, especially in the area of the arts and
humanities (Bailey, 1984: 82). Hirst’s division of fields and forms of subjects is helpful to Human Literacy in that he recognizes distinctions in the kinds of knowledge that can be derived from literature.

In contrast to this Hirstian position, Phenix (1964) develops six realms of meaning (symbolics, empirics, aesthetics, synnoetics, ethics and synoptics). Phenix attempts to redefine rationality (as a characteristic of liberal knowledge) as denoting a richer conception of reason and mind than Hirst managed with the term ‘forms and content of knowledge’:

[Meaning is a matter of] perception, logical thinking, social organisation, speech, artistic creation, self-awareness, purposive decision, moral judgement in the consciousness of time, and in the activity of worship. All these comprise the life of meaning, which is the essence of the life of man.

If the essence of human nature is in the life of meaning, then the proper aim of education is to promote the growth of meaning (Phenix, 1964: 21 and 25).

Thus meaning is passed on from generation to generation by shared cultural enterprises into which the young are initiated⁴. Human Literacy situates itself within Hirst’s understanding of literature as a unique way of knowing and concerns itself with the ‘concept of human nature as rooted in meaning and of human life as directed towards the fulfilment of meaning’ (Phenix, 1964, Preface). Phenix contributes a phenomenological, or quasi-anthropological interpretation of fundamental meaning cultures. These underpin the defined characteristics of liberal educational value and thus validate the empirical value base from which Human Literacy works.

Bailey and White (1973 and 1982) recognize the complex interrelationships which come to be portrayed in text. They see that an engagement with literature contributes to a moral, liberal understanding of the individual within society. In particular, they understand that the direction a pupil may take may not only be affected by social, political and economic factors. The notion that people’s decision-making is often

⁴ Phenix says that ‘literature is one of the best sources of insight into personality and culture’ (Phenix, 1964: 178).
influenced by various motivational possibilities or psychological dispositions, is recognised by these liberal rationalists as meriting consideration and placement in any education. The notion that the ends do not exert some inescapable governance over rational decision-making, but that some human reactions are also at play, is central to this view. Such a definition of educational locus of value calls for a refocussing of emphasis in *A Statement*, because it philosophically differs from it, as described in Chapter Two.

Concerning the liberal value of an education in text, Bailey notes that in England there is a tendency for pupils to be asked to engage with text more like a specialist study of literature per se (developing an encyclopedic knowledge of literary terms), than to engage with text in order to contribute to the general understanding of the human condition (Bailey, 1984: 117). In *A Statement* there is a tendency to treat text as a technical battlefield where expertise in navigation is seen as the ability to use the terminology. Human Literacy provides a way of reading literature that lies beyond such a specialised view. The implication of these beliefs on *A Statement* is that they question the philosophical basis by which the latter is constructed.

Reid (1978) is also conscious of the problems besetting curriculum architects in terms of deciding what is a discipline, what is to be kept in and what is not. In his Table 2, (added here by way of Appendix One) he outlines the emphases of value which have beset Rationalism as a philosophic approach, as opposed to what Reid calls Humanism as a perspective in the construction of curriculum. Already in the 1970’s Reid recognised that long-standing metaphors and paradigms were collapsing, and that there was a need to reconceptualize ways by which we think about curriculum in education.

Eight years after Kuhn’s work on paradigms Reid recognised that educationists were also beset by different ways of perceiving curriculum:-
In education, the humanist is unimpressed by learning theories that regard knowledge as external to the knower, there to be discovered, mastered, learned (Reid, 1978: 98).

He recognised, as did Snow in 1959 with his essay *Two Cultures*, that there were incompatibly dichotomous ways of understanding intellectual activity. Whereas Snow distinguished between literary and scientific activity, Reid understood that the culture of feelings was understood differently, depending on whether the understanding was American, English or ‘Continental’. ‘Ways of knowing’ relate to the development of culture, and knowledge acquisition is defined as the act of creating personal meanings (Reid, 1978: 100-101). Reid claimed that there are contested concepts in how curriculum is to be constructed, and that the area of public policy making in curriculum should, in a humane way, interpret and evaluate a specific type of human activity and achievement in terms of the principles by which it is given meaning, significance and value (Reid, 1978: 108).

Reid recognised the spectrum of value from which curriculum is constructed, and his Table (shown in Appendix One) is important because it pays tribute to something that *A Statement* does not recognise: that there is a diversity of ways by which curriculum can be constructed, and to simply offer one view, namely that of the publicly dominant political discourse, is a sure way by which curriculum is narrowed, rather than become broadly representative of a society’s educational needs. Human Literacy positions itself across the two categories, between the ‘Rationalist’ and ‘Humanist’ columns, it occupies a place by combining valuable attributes of both.

Hirst considered liberal values of knowledge: Reid considered inclusive rather than exclusive curriculum and John Passmore (1980) in his work asks: what is teaching to be critical? These three writers readily agree that successful teaching is not merely the passing on of facts. The critical spirit is a frame of mind which searches the basis of
meaning not by asking children to follow instructions or by preparing them for examinations, but by engaging in discussion and dialogue about matters.

To be educated one must be able to participate in the great human traditions of imaginative thought - science, history, literature, philosophy, technology - and to participate in these traditions one must first be instructed, must learn a discipline, must be initiated, to use Richard Peters' language. The critical spirit which a teacher is interested in developing is a capacity to be a critical participant within a tradition, even if the effect of his criticism is to profoundly modify the operations of that tradition.

Being critical, it will be plain, has a good deal in common with imaginativeness (Passmore: 1980: 173).

Passmore, interested in what it means to be critical, goes on to make a distinction between two kinds of criticism. On the one hand, there is that criticism which simply engages with the proposer with a view to find fault, raise objections. On the other there is an imaginative kind of criticism which makes constructive links, builds on from, adds or derives meaning. Human Literacy differs from both Hirst and Passmore. It accepts Hirst's definitions of liberal educational value and of the educational value of text as art form. It also accepts Passmore's understanding of what teaching to be critical is about by concentrating on the second meaning of the term. But Human Literacy reinterprets the space between text and reader as one which must be unconstrained of expectations, so that the reader maintains a liberal freedom to interpret, and let his imagination play. Taking Passmore's second definition of being critical, that of making imaginative links, Human Literacy establishes the credibility of literature as being able to add meaning to liberal education as essential to humankind's understanding of how life ought to be lived, both individually and socially.

The fact remains that unless pupils leave school puzzled they are unlikely to leave it as critical persons (Passmore: 1980: 179).

Reading in the Human Literacy grain in this significant sense then is not about always having definite answers, in becoming critically skilled, or skilled in textual analysis, or simply skilled at reading. It is about developing a consciousness, about becoming aware of choice, it is about quality of living. Engagement with text can yield an
appreciation of some of life's complexities with a view to esteeming some of the richness and depth of situations. To this effect Human Literacy is conceptually larger, as is liberalism, of what it expects in education, in that it goes beyond an objectivist or instrumental view of knowledge by looking for ideational links, conceptual imaginings. The liberal values which can be acquired from an engagement with text are therefore such that they do not merely sharpen critical skill within a discipline. They can hint at the different ways of seeing text that can show differences in values such as the rationalist/humanist dichotomy which Reid outlines. Essentially, the field of text is personally meaningful in ways which do not lend themselves to external measurement such as are described in Part 3 of A Statement.

In summary, Human Literacy acknowledges the characteristics of a liberal curriculum which mean that an approach to literature education is called for which respects the reader's space, and is tolerant of the emotional as well as rational, critical and other kinds of responses in an environment which values interactive learning, and which is not coercive of particular levels, bands, or outcomes which are predestined in a curriculum framework, but which allow for exploratory play, of meaning, of value and of purpose. The operation of such a liberal framework, here accommodated within Human Literacy, acknowledges that the primary purpose of an education is to liberate the individual, to appreciate a variety of points of view, to promote intrinsic worth in a milieu of quality, play, enjoyment and reflection which are not immediately linked to an instrumental purpose. Tolerance of difference strengthens such society further, by cultivating self-expression, not only mere task fulfilment. An environment which enlarges, rather than narrows, educational outcomes is one more likely to benefit a society, one where creativity, art and emotion are valued equally alongside skill and outcome.

A narrow conception of training which emphasises mere skill in performance as against a real understanding of what one was doing and why (Bailey, 1984: 161).
Before moving to the position of Human Literacy within existing approaches to teaching literature, what is said about the educative role of literature needs examination so that the argument can be advanced. The next section focuses more explicitly on defining the liberal value of an engagement with text. It does so by defining literature education as a form of knowledge which more freely acknowledges liberal aspects than are espoused by the Curriculum Corporation.

4. 3 Human Literacy Among Competing Models of Literature Education: How English Teachers View And Work With Literature

English curriculum reform is caught up in the middle of the wider discourses that occupy people interested in education in Australia today. The ongoing debate is wide-ranging indeed, and covers many aspects of literacy, textual ideologies, standards, assessment, the place of grammar, spelling, etc. Throughout this thesis the writer has variously touched on the national dimensions of educational reform currently being undertaken. In New South Wales alone, The Board of Studies has at the time of completing this thesis three review processes in train:-

- A Review (April 1996) of the K-6 English Syllabus (1995), which was introduced by a previous government and is widely perceived to be not very user-friendly,
- The Draft English Stage 6 Syllabus, Preliminary Course, 2 units and 3 units and HSC Course 2 units, 3 units and 4 units, released in May 1996,

The currency and nature of these reports attest to the notion that what is learnt and taught is very much in the public eye and is being hotly contested. The K-6 English syllabus is less than one year old, while the current Higher School Certificate English
syllabus dates to 1974. The HSC structure as such, while undergoing growth in subjects and changes in forms of assessment, also dates back more than 20 years. Reasons for the review include the changing nature of the candidature and higher retention rates into post compulsory education already mentioned in Chapter One. Expectations of English are many and varied, and clearly Australian society is expecting improvement on current practices. Furthermore, there is a need to meet changing future challenges. Now is a time to form a View from the Past with a View to the Future (Barrie, 1991), a time to re-assess meaning in direction from this re-examination and re-definition of engagement with literature in an educational context. This is now proposed by clearly linking Human Literacy of text and reader to literature education by taking a closer look at the nature of the curriculum orientation in this respect.

This link is established by asking about the practices that guide literature education today. This is explored by looking for a unified idea of the study of literature current in Australian universities, and by asking about current practices in literature education. The former question is addressed by a recent Australian Vice Chancellor’s Committee (AVCC) on English publication (1994), the latter by a study of secondary teaching methods in English (Nay-Brock, 1987) as well as by a brief overview of writers in literature education whose ideas can be said to cluster around particular unifying themes. These identified themes in turn inform the nature of the remaining chapters by consolidating the educational position of Human Literacy. Naming the contesting sites in literature education, and showing the relationship of Human Literacy to them, clarifies the role of Human Literacy in literature education.

The discipline of English teaching has had an historic difficulty in formulating the subject as a body of knowledge to be imparted:

Part of the uneasiness which teachers have felt with attempts to define their subject matter as a body of knowledge results from an awareness, often unarticulated, that the goals which they seek through the teaching of literature are ultimately not defined by such knowledge, but rather are questions of values.
and perspective-the kinds of goals usually summed up as those of a 'liberal' or 'humanistic' education... Only rarely have they considered, however, the implications of such an emphasis for the way their subject should be taught, being for the most part content to assume that the humanistic benefits would follow naturally from exposure to the proper content...(Applebee, 1974: 246).

Value-clarification has historically accompanied successful teaching of literature, yet the 'fuzzy' nature of the activity has at times been as elusive as Alan Bullock says a definition of humanism is (1985: 8). Response is a soft area, and it is easier to fall back on hard critical material to demonstrate successful learning from text. As Roland Barthes (1993: 405) and Probst say, text is a process of self-creation. In the act of defining the self, a heightened sense of self is achieved through engaged reading. Probst asserts that the autonomy of the reader is equal to, and not subservient to, the autonomy of the critic. To ask about the nature of the investigations that inform tertiary courses in literature in Australia is to explore what shapes a significant aspect of curriculum orientation of literature education at secondary level. When tertiary approaches to literary criticism are added to secondary learning environments, there is an essential discomfort with the curriculum directions described in Chapter Two for reasons which include:-

- The notion that an exclusively theoretical approach stifles the initial, human literacy whereby students are brought to enjoy literature in the first place.

- The sheer plethora, range and diversity of what is on offer in tertiary literature courses can only confound and not clarify what ought to be the best form of secondary students to prepare for the likelihood that they might pursue literature at university.
• A predominantly critical approach prevents that liberal space in which students can vicariously experience other life values without being coerced into developing a critical position.

• The way young people engage with literature is, in the first instance, an arena where they seek to identify and clarify their responses as readers. This is an emotional process, a discussion, an intertextuality, and it is only once this initial work has been done that it becomes possible to identify particular ideological positions.

• The reason why an adolescent may come to choose to read a particular piece of literature has often more to do with natural curiosity to find out about relationships, conflicts and particular resolutions in a space which allows for the reader’s reception to develop transformative insight and subsequent personal growth. Criticality of that work may follow, but cannot precede that initial engagement.

• Thus the driving force behind engagement with literature is personal growth. This is at the basis of literature as a humanity, and is at the basis of Human Literacy. As part of that growth journey, other, secondary values emerge, such as the desire to be steeped in cultural heritage, or develop critical faculties.

Competing models, values and emphases characterise the ways in which literature is studied as the works of Eagleton (1993) and Lodge (1993) have already described. The Australian Vice Chancellors’ Committee, concerned with ‘Academic Standards in Higher Education’, published in 1994 a Report of the Academic Standards Panel, English. The Report notes that ‘the teaching of English is a contentious matter’, and emphasizes a dual role:-
English necessarily provides good training in two things: reading with analytical precision, and writing... These are the major vocational skills imparted by the subject (AVCC, 1994: 1).

As well as

[Literature] is a means of discovering communal - and personal - identity, and empowering that identity, once discovered, is a hard one to shift, and informs much of the most committed teaching on our campuses (AVCC, 1994: 8).

In acknowledging that literary studies have undergone considerable change, raising literary and non-literary questions, the AVCC includes drama, communication studies (including psychology), studies of the media, feminist studies, postmodern studies, and cultural studies and literary criticism in their working definition of English. The Report is of the view that English has ‘tended to be promiscuous’, ‘a loose collocation of disciplines and areas’, and that ‘the study of reading and writing resists all containment’. Noting the shift which occurred in the 1970s and which dissipated the disciplinary identity of English, the subject is now described as characterised by ‘pluralism as an ideological program in its own right’ (AVCC: 1994: 11-12). In trying to forecast what will happen to the form of English, the authors express the possibility of a dying discipline and the emergence of a new one. Because literature has never been ‘the sole possession of those who study it professionally’, the report notes that the subject may develop despite or outside of academic environments.

A few students feel that recent trends have robbed them of access to what they consider a much-valued heritage of ethical and spiritual values communicated through literary texts (AVCC, 1994: 13).

Human Literacy can achieve the retention of literature’s heritage and value base by aligning itself along the continuum in such a way that it does not become subject to the winds of extreme ideological fervour which characterise some of these pluralist positions. Literature education is undergoing transition, and Human Literacy offers one opportunity to redefine the subject’s central value. According to the AVCC, students
are expressing some fears about loss of meaning. The need for such a reconceptualisation is therefore quite clearly appropriate and timely.

The debate about the canonical values of particular texts also has a history of its own (Bloom, 1994 and others). Human Literacy proposed that literature is not a 'compendium of excellence' but a unique way of knowing which is linked to 'cultural history'. What is to be included or excluded from any canon has become the arena of much academic debate. Because Human Literacy in Chapter Three defined literature the way it did, it has no need to enter the debate over membership of any catechismal lists of canonical virtue along any criteria such as aesthetics, gender, timelessness, universalizabilities or so forth. Human Literacy is open to broader understandings of literary heritage by recognising the uniqueness by which literature affects readers. 'Literature occupies a very problematic role in the cultures in which our students live' (Culler in AVCC, 1994: 17). Human literacy postulates a middle position by preparing secondary readers of literature at a time when there are extreme expectations of the subject in a generalist way which promotes knowledge of self and culture as well as vocational preparations.

Situated in the middle of the continuum which began this Chapter, Human Literacy is unique because it has a sequence which begins with the reader as active meaning maker. In particular, Human Literacy in educational contexts

- recognizes a discursive and transactional space between reader and text,
- offers opportunities for transformation of the reader as spectator
- is of multiple meanings without adhering to particular textual ideologies,
- initiates readers into critical practices by valuing dialogical practices
- distinguishes a range of liberal and instrumentalist utilitarian practices
- demonstrates aesthetic and cultural knowledge in unique ways
- accepts the inherent value of literature as an enjoyable and vicarious experience.

Such a view of what literature offers has not always been apparent. The New Critics' approach to teaching literature in Australia from the 1950's to the 1980s (Nay-Brock,
1987) was that critical reception is an ideology in which the game is one of emulating ways in which the text had been received by critics, rather than articulating an original response. In Foucault’s terms, to do so is to articulate particular ‘regimes of truth’ (1972), in which the value on individual response was subsidiary to conforming to the language of the dominant critical discourse. Brock says that the dominant discourse of 1987 in the teaching of senior secondary English around Australia was a rather Leavisite approach to textual practices [which was] still persisting in the senior curriculum of Australian schools at the time.

The [New South Wales] syllabus is highly suspicious of the reader ‘imposing’ his or her own world-view upon his or her response to the text. (Brock, 1987: 18)

He notes divergences in the delivery of English across Australia as well as diversity. His work notes the differences and congruencies which existed between states in the mid to late 1980’s. He compared his task at the time of one akin to ‘standing still in a moving stream’ (1987: 5), because so much was changing so quickly. This stream has since widened and picked up speed. Human Literacy articulates a timely consolidation and restatement of constants attributed to literature education which have not been subject to temporal chic. Brock’s is the most recent comprehensive survey of what English practitioners are doing in Australia at the exit point to high school. The remaining discussion collates four key notions that literature educators are writing about in the profession in order to strengthen the connection between Human Literacy and literature education. They are the theme of outcome based education contrasting with intrinsic learning, the significance of focussing on process, the objection to the commodification of the human, and lastly the notion of a life endured rather than enjoyed.

The first of these topics is recognised in the work of Peel and Hargreaves (1994, which draws on the Cox Report in England of 1988), Goodwyn and Fox (1993) and others
such as Dixon as early as 1975 as well as contributors in Australia such as Saxby and Hoogstad (1988). To find out what English is, especially at secondary level, it is relevant to ask why people choose English. That question helps to explain what it is that people expect from English. The first of these identifies five models of English teaching. The precise origins which the Peel and Hargreaves study took is from a paper (Goodwyn and Fox, 1993) which used five models of English as described by the 1988 British Government report into English teaching called the Cox Report. The five models are:-

The 1988 Cox Report Five Models of English

1. Cultural Heritage - the literature of the past
2. Cultural Criticism - the ability to think critically
3. Adult Needs - the ability to function in life and organise oneself
4. Cross Curricular - the ability to read and articulate in other subjects
5. Personal Growth - the ability to find out more about yourself and relationships

Peel reported in July 1994 on this work in progress, and the questionnaire (administered to hundreds of people in Canada, the U.S., England and Australia) showed that the overwhelming majority felt that the three most important uses of English were:-

1. Personal Growth - to find out more about yourself and relationships
2. Cultural Heritage - the literature of the past
3. Cultural Criticism - the ability to think critically

This was particularly so in NSW, as shown by the work of Hargreaves as reported by Peel, (1994). These rankings show a desire for meaning, to find out about the past, about culturally valued texts. Human Literacy recognizes the value base of readers who pick up literature with a view to finding out about themselves. A personal growth model of English reflects an inward looking, and reflective learning practice, rather than searching for immediate extrinsic applications. The instrumental flows from a better knowledge of the self within society and culture, and that is why Human Literacy is situated between the extremes of the continuum which began this Chapter.
Others interested in literature curriculum include Peter Moss. He uses a different language to distinguish what he sees as two different perspectives: he labels a functional model of English as an American perception, and a personal growth model as an English phenomenon. Moss describes the American view of English as rhetoric-centred, training in exposition, the know-how of writing (reports), a belief that correcting formal errors is basic to improving writing standards. Moss sees this kind of English as being product and result-focused (1981: 4-25). By contrast, Moss sees the English model of teaching [writing], as more process-focused, as more personal, reflective, introspective. Flow of expression is crucial, personal experience is valued as a means of stimulating good written work. This can be seen as a whole language view of English where meaning is paramount, while the former model takes a segmental view of English where the elements are important. In the ‘English’ model, there is a ‘shift from teachers interrogating pupils to pupils interrogating texts’ (Moy and Raleigh in Miller, 1984: 155). Moy and Raleigh identify responding to statements about the text, question-setting by students, prediction activities, sequencing exercises, drawings and diagrams, and paraphrasing and summarising as literature based activities in a reader-response context. This view of writing emphasises experience and response, while the American emphasises effectiveness of output. The distinction has somewhat blurred in recent years given the increasing nature of international and cross-cultural curriculum orientation. This highlights the kind of ‘double perspectives’ (Bleich, 1988) which run as a theme through both competing sets of models so far: is literature education a commodifiable product which is output oriented, or does it include enjoyment of literature and a savouring of process? In developing an English curriculum for the next century, Australia is caught between these two significant economic, historic and cultural models. Human Literacy combines both of these expectations within a more pragmatic, human-centred orientation to literature education. The view of literature is one which is culturally determined, and which is contextualised better in a personal growth model which combines intrinsic with extrinsic purposes.
Jack Thomson (1987) places the work of Rosenblatt, Iser and others mentioned in Chapter Three within the following six stages of reader-response for the Australian classroom:

- Unreflective interest in action
- Empathising
- Analysing
- Reflecting on the significance of events and behaviour
- Reviewing the whole work as a construct
- Consciously considered relationship with the author, recognition of textual ideology, and understanding of self (identity theme) and one's own reading processes

Thomson (1994: 190) counts a structural view of language among the political, psychoanalytic and reception theory based understandings that are relevant to teaching literature so that the why, what and how of text can be answered, as the meaning of a story changes according to who is telling it to whom, when and where. 'Reading against the grain' is a deconstructive practice which allows repressed voices to speak (Thomson, 1992: 20). Such a reading is also linked to forms of critical literacy.

Books are a means of getting outside the particular limited cultural group into which the individual was born (Rosenblatt, 1968: 228).

Thomson further discusses several variables of why we teach literature. In advocating an understanding of multiple theoretical ways by which to approach text, Thomson stresses that teachers should not do so in order to convey moral truths (‘exercises in docility’), but in order not to be silent about ideology, in order to be eloquent about free individuals transcending social identities, eternal values uncontaminated by history, and aesthetic considerations such as symbolism and artistic structure:

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
themselves oblivious of such issues in the high-minded contemplation of eternal truths and beauties (Eagleton, 1983: 25).

Thomson stresses a reciprocity between text and reader which renders neither the text nor the reader as neutral. He sees the act of reading as creative in that it offers opportunities not for inert acceptance of values, but for recognition of ways in which reading and writing are constructions of particular realities and illusions. Thomson, Willinsky and Probst are among those writers who contribute to the articulation of Human Literacy by enlarging the notion that learning which is derivative of literature is not easily commodifiable, is complex and is very much connected to individual response modulated by psychological and other multi-dimensional factors which make the reduction of this process to identifiable competencies indeed very hard.

Willinsky has contributed to the conceptual formulation of Human Literacy by his work in literacy in that he helped identify the depth of learning that can easily be overlooked by teachers concerned in preference to mechanical aspects of literature education. His contribution to the debate has allowed for broader understandings of meaning that occur during reading than have historically been allowed for by teachers concerned with particular reading skills. There is an openness about questions such as the ones below which make it difficult to band responses by their quality.

- What caught the interest the most?
- What pleased, frightened, surprised?
- What troubled?
- What seemed wrong?
- Have you ever experienced anything like this?
  (Willinsky, 1990: 103).

For young people, who are uncertain about their own identity, to relate to literature in such ways is essential for their own growth and their own character development. Human literacy recognizes that

Storying is important in the growth of the mind (Saxby, 1988: 7).
Probst adds to the significance of reader response. He identifies particular and distinctive response based characteristics which belong to the autonomous reader's repertoire. In profiling the secondary school student of literature, Probst believes that not every one of them will become professional literary scholars. It is fallacious therefore to assume that all want to aspire to the same critical level of sophistication of a Northrop Frye.

But students do bring with them experiences, interests, and a lengthy agenda of ideas, problems, worries, attitudes, all of which concern and preoccupy them. They will read because they are interested in themselves, and because in the reading they may become the focus of attention.

In other words, their reason for reading is the same as that of an independent adult or a younger child—self-indulgence. That self-indulgence may take many forms. Its most common form is a harmless pursuit of diversion and simple pleasure, the escape into a good story that entertains and distracts us from our worries. At its worst, the self-indulgence is a search for confirmation of distorted visions, a vicious exercise of hatreds and biases that cannot be safely indulged elsewhere in a civilised society. But at its best, it is an attempt to see more clearly who one is and where one stands. Great literature demands reflection upon and re-examination of one's own attitudes and beliefs. The unique claim of imaginative literature is that it is about me, and, of course, about you. (Probst, 1988: 3-4)

Probst (1988) outlines four conditions for response based teaching: first, there must be a learning community in which comments are solicited and valued, not channelled to some predetermined outcome. Secondly, students must be willing to be tentative, that is, to express thoughts and feelings they are unsure of, as a draft, and be allowed to modify those views in the light of reflection or further information. Thirdly, students must be prepared to think. This rigour, as Probst (1988) calls it, connects back to the previous chapter in which education was viewed as 'the examined life'. The last quality is that the learning community must be able to work well, that is, have the trust in each other and know that group discussion will be variably valued. Probst contributes to the human-focused, human-centred basis of what is gained from a literature education, and this aspect is strengthened in the concept of Human Literacy. The way texts are approached are often reflective of the kind of training in literary theory that the English
teacher in question has or has not received. Given the average age of teachers in Australia being 45, the likelihood of Leavisite literary observations being more common than deconstructive questionings of textual authority is high. Human Literacy sees value in both, but does so from a standpoint centred on individual response rather than one of critical practice.

People who write English curriculum, and people who teach literature within it, are surrounded by double perspectives, by opposite approaches, by a range of ways by which they can go about establishing educational gains. Competency in literacy does have a skills base, and is defined in terms of the ability to manipulate the ideas in English through the proficient application of those listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. There is no debate that without these skills there can be little meaningful development of an English student. The difference arises over how proficiency in these areas is perceived. An approach which is less outcome-oriented begins by inciting interest in literature. English teachers deal with those who may continue their studies at tertiary level as well as those many people who may only have a fleeting, passing, or momentary experience of text which might only be experienced occasionally, not at all, or with an interest in non-academic pursuit of literature in the years following secondary schooling.

This Chapter has established that the practice of literature education is populated by different possible approaches. The field of literature education is strewn with a range of educational expectations and differing practices. The consequent tension surrounding this field can be resolved through an acknowledgment of the range of motives which populate praxis. Accordingly, Human Literacy is seen as an equilising notion by which a balance can be struck between an understanding of education as commodifiable as in the utilitarian leanings of A Statement on the one hand, and a humanities-based approach focusing on intrinsically worthwhile and enjoyable processes on the other. It has done so by claiming a need to enjoy literature as a discursive practice, and
suggesting that inadequate space is allocated in A Statement to this. The previous
Chapter has shown how reader response and receptivity theories demonstrate
significant ways in which A Statement has overlooked the emotive and psychic aspects
of reading. Further, intertextuality tends to complexify reading outcomes, and gender-
based and poststructuralist views of text have both helped and hindered a broadened
understanding of human literacy. From this the position was developed that the path to
the future of teaching literature is strewn with competing views.

Literature is the history of an on-going conversation with such questions as justice and
honour, civil government, moral idealism, the duality of God and man, body and soul.
By engaging in this conversation actively, the learner arms him / herself intelligently for
a confrontation with universal questions. Literature, says Bantock (1979: 75), is an
organ of reality:

In a fragmented and divided culture, the role of the greatest writers, where
intellect is suffused with emotion and emotion controlled by intelligence, points
a way to 'unity of being'... In such a fusion, intuitive insight and moral control
coalesce (1979, 50-51).

By developing the habits of looking twice, of asking why, of seeing not only facts but
fundamental principles there develops the conviction that, if one is to understand what
one thinks, one must bring to the surface the half-conscious assumptions which shape
one's thoughts and distinguish what is valid and significant from what is merely old
and / or merely contemporary. What is excellent in the past must constantly be
rediscovered and made new by its relation of thought and experience to the present.
This process requires the capacity for an independent, free (liberal) mind open to the
idea.

A characteristic of civilisation is as much a state of mind as the external evidence
of art and science. The novels of Dickens or Tolstoy helped to shape nineteenth-
century England or Russia, and not only gave the people who lived with them
images of themselves but led to a deeper understanding of what they were
(Dutton, 1985: 8).
Such a viewpoint accords literature a complex mode of sensibility. One of the characteristics distinguishing people from lentils is a capacity for sensibility, the capacity to be moved, emotionally transported. It is such factors which can make up motive and govern our conduct as overtly human, as capable of emotions such as compassion or grace. Human Literacy is the process of making the reader question, react to and grow as a result of exposure to text. Human Literacy is a road of self-evaluation triggered by the ability to open oneself to the vulnerability of another's reality. This pathway is one which includes self-evaluation and the self as critic:-

The audience is always myself (Dr Victor Kelleher, popular contemporary Australian children's author and ex English lecturer, University of New England).

Such a perspective redefines educational gain as

... a means of achieving self-knowledge, personal development, the strengthening of self-image and creativity, and effectual time use (including leisure studies), and place less emphasis on education for vocational or specialist purposes which can be picked up relatively quickly (Barry Jones 1990: 243).

The challenge of the future lies in how best to prepare a curriculum framework which is inclusive of the best that teaching literature can offer. The challenge very much lies in a re-articulation of liberal values of an education in literature which are in turn nested within an appreciation of the skills base of an instrumentalist conceptualisation of curriculum in literature. The model of Human Literacy provides such potential for qualitative and transformative understanding and growth. The value of poststructuralist philosophers is that, in their largely cerebral, often arcane interpretative way, they have extended ways of approaching age-old notions of analytical philosophy in new ways. For instance, Foucault's contribution to this debate is his definition of freedom 'as a practice which can never be made safe by institutional guarantees'. Rather ironic in the context of a discussion of a curriculum document.
Our task is to invent modes of living which avert the risk of domination, the one-sided rigidification of power relations. Enlightenment, the modern pursuit of rationality, is a fortunate fact but also a source of intrinsic dangers. The search for truth, especially perhaps for the truth about ourselves, is not a sure path to freedom. (Foucault in Urmson, 1991: 113)

At the basis of all of these inquiry modes lies meaning, language and patterns of discourse. For the purposes of a literature curriculum, particular narrative ideology is sustained by the more general motive of portraying humanity, rather than accommodating any particular given literally critical ideology. Human Literacy has that recognition and realises that individuals must clarify what roles they wish to play by conceptually and individually developing an image of themselves, an image which cannot be predetermined. Jones believes that no curriculum framework can achieve this, but that individuals must go about raising their consciousness in a number of ways. Among the many he lists, eight of these are shown here because of the way they highlight understandings omitted from A Statement:-

- We should remember that all knowledge is inexact, and forecasting is difficult.
- We should promote scepticism and reduce credulity.
- We should oppose excessive reliance on reductionism, which poses grave dangers to democracy and personal autonomy.
- We should reject technological determinism.
- We should recognize that over-emphasis on 'economic man' has led to the eclipse of ethics in policy-making. Human beings need psychic income too.
- We should concede that the values implicit in the feminist and environment movements contribute significantly to quality of life in the long term.
- We should adopt different measurements for social and economic well-being to those currently in use.
- We should recognize the central role of education...as an instrument of personal development (Jones, 1990: 251-254).

The critical theme which emerges is that A Statement is locked in a particular paradigm which is theoretically incomplete and which has been driven by political rather than a clear understanding of educational value positions. Now is the time to re-interpret meaning and direction in literature education proposing a philosophically shifted value base.
Works of art are artistic statements which state truths that cannot be communicated any other way... Works of art are about something that exists quite independently of the works of art themselves (Hirst, 1974: 153-5).

Hirst is quite adamant about the way he understands literature to work in this way. He discusses Langer's and Reid's works which refer to the symbolic quality, the import, meaning and referent quality of text in such a way that he remains convinced that the educational value of literature is contained in something beyond itself, that is, in the use of language and the public use of symbols reflecting another reality. The discursive space of Human Literacy provides an interpretative discretion for the reader. The educative role of literature does not have to be enslaved to any particular schools of scholarly criticism to be meaningful: it already is as a portrait of humanity.

Literature is a form of cognitive learning divorced from cold scientific truths. Therefore literature can reveal truths which are beyond mere cold cognition: in emotionally dealing with a story, plot or idea there is a process of learning through feeling, of discovering, of having some human issue presented in a clearer light, and such experiences are accommodated within the notion of Human Literacy, just as Human Literacy also recognizes ways of learning sharpened by critical awarenesses. There is then a tension between the opposites of the continuum. It is the subject of the next Chapter to see how compatible, or reconcilable, this tension is.
5. HUMAN LITERACY WITHIN
RECONSIDERED UTILITARIAN CONTEXTS

The language of the debate is almost exclusively that of the market (in particular, a pristine perception of the 'market' found in Harvard Business Administration Studies, and local 'New Right' think tanks), where education is framed in the language of 'cost benefits', productivity outcomes, stock offerings and economic rationales.

Within this conception, education responds in terms of marketing, product development, needs of industry and clients. There has been a dangerously uncritical adoption of the business agenda. Thus, in the education and training debate generally...educationists are being intimidated to the extent that the more substantive educational concerns and principles are losing out to industrial and political interests being asserted through a number of direct as well as subtle mediums (O’Connor in Welch and Freebody, 1993: 192).

The previous chapter has placed Human Literacy within an educational context, has explained Human Literacy within a liberal perspective of 7-12 literature education, and has identified the competition between contrasting models of literature education by placing Human Literacy among them. In particular, the discussion acknowledged two broad influences, the liberal and the utilitarian, as bearing on how literature education is conceptualised in Australia today. Chapter Four named liberal characteristics that affect literature education and nested Human Literacy within that theme. What that chapter did not do, and what was left to this chapter, is to identify utilitarian attributes.

Much of the educational climate of the last ten to fifteen years grows out of a particular view of utilitarianism which sees education harnessed to explicitly instrumentalist goals. Broadly, 'economic rationalism' as a way of perceiving social development from a particular context of economic understanding has championed a distinctively vocationalist purpose of general education. Indeed, with the competency movement as described in the second chapter of this thesis, A Statement is one of several current curriculum documents which attempt to

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1 Economic rationalism was described by Ian Lowe, at the Australian Conference for Education for a Sustainable Society in October 1991 in Canberra, as 'the ultimate oxymoron'!
strengthen the skills base of the nation through a specifically consequentialist view of education.

Is this an adequate view of education, or indeed, utilitarianism? This chapter establishes two notions. Firstly, it examines a notion of utilitarianism which is historical and which does not deny significant benefits of literature to people as human beings rather than as agents of the economy. Reconsidering utilitarianism allows Human Literacy to be nested within an overlooked yet significant liberal utilitarian orientation. Such a view broadens the notion of happiness by giving it a new liberal dimension. The second notion is that the dominantly utilitarian framework of 'economic rationalism' is of such a linear nature that it is incompatible with Human Literacy for several identified reasons. Aspects of 'economic rationalist' wants replacing learning needs from literature are seen as paradoxical educational expectations.

Together, the two notions place Human Literacy in a reinterpreted utilitarian space which is not one of currently common understanding. In this way Human Literacy brings a fresh re-interpretation to the utilitarian framework which developed within the philosophy of democratic education last century in England. That illumination is one in which Human Literacy coalesces with a more human-centred form of utilitarianism. Diverse forms of 'utility' can be found in various ideological developments which accompanied both 'liberal', 'democratic' and 'utilitarian' understandings of the relationships of individuals to society in the last century. The tension is well illustrated by the discourse of the time, which included contributors such as Alexis de Tocqueville, Auguste Comte, William Wordsworth, Matthew Arnold, James and John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller.
In the closing years of this century post-industrial, post-Fordian factors concerning
the information age have narrowed the space in which the ludic and free can stand
alongside the commodification of the human. In terms of education, especially
literature education, this tension has been identified as being one between the
utilitarian and the liberal. Human Literacy is being postulated as a way of
reclaiming that space which contributed to the social, economic, human and
intellectual successes of the last century.

5.1 Utilitarianism Reconsidered In A Human Literacy Context

Utilitarianism, as defined by James Mill and Jeremy Bentham, is not as
comprehensive a definition as that discussed by John Stuart Mill in his essay
Utilitarianism (1861). It is the earlier and narrower understanding of utilitarianism
that is influencing public, economic and educational policy in Australia today, and
three particular liberal features which John Stuart Mill saw need stating as critical
attributes to Human Literacy. This opportunity amends what is at best an inadequate
understanding, at worst a misinterpretation, and provides for a broader, more
complete and therefore also more successful kind of literature education than has
been presumed in A Statement.

How can a more liberal conceptualisation of a literature education be accommodated in
a cultural understanding of curriculum which is inclusive of fashionable ideology while
also remaining loyal to those interests which suggest reading text as a human literacy?
Such a balancing act requires the identification and separation of two issues: the social
utility of text, and, if there are competing conceptualisations of that, how can such
contrasting views be reconciled, if at all?

- How does English provide cultural understanding?
- What liberalising elements does contemporary ideology of education contain?
• How is it that English empowers people?
• What is it beyond the obviously utilitarian which English enables people to do?
• What are intrinsic values of English?

The current dominant perception of the social utility of text reduces its educational value to politically expedient and commodifiable outcomes. An engagement with text can be useful in terms of Human Literacy in ways which are couched in less objectivist and more liberal values.

It is impossible to quantify by a rationalist-positivist method the outcomes of engaging in the humanities, because the 'product' is of another kind. In developing an immunity to anything other than what can be directly seen to relate to the economic machinery of quantifiable physical profit, the danger is that we lose sight of the languages of reflection and insight which characterise a human way of reading text.

Utilitarian principles came to substantially influence the declared value position of the Anglo-Saxon work ethic as well as help prepare the ground for Keynesian economic understanding which in turn was to so fundamentally affect the nature of capitalistic development this century. Re-assessing the locus of value of literature education in an historical liberal context yields a clearer conceptualisation of Human Literacy. Such an improved understanding of Mill's intent enables a clearer and more meaningful critical contextualisation of A Statement (Chapter Six).

The notion of finding the relevance of teaching literature focuses this discussion on the consequentialist view which arises from the consideration of utilitarianism as a valid process of value in education. Are public and private understandings of utilitarianism synonymous, or are they differently characterised? What were utilitarians in their time saying about the concept, and how has that been interpreted? Is the relevance of utilitarianism self-evident, inherent, or explicit? Is it possible to know all the
consequences of an act? The argument is critically explored in respect of three particular dimensions: hedonistic utilitarianism, human-focused utilitarianism, and intrinsic utilitarianism.

The roots of a liberal view of utilitarianism are backdropped by David Hume, Jeremy Bentham and James Mill. Their view was that it was humankind’s instinctive aim to increase pleasure or happiness and avoid pain or misery. The intellectual shift that these men recognised is one from a more rigid, divine and fixed cosmology towards a preparedness to increasingly make space for the human, by way of valuing the emotional and the passionate. In advocating this emotional space, Hume’s scepticism was directed as much against the pretensions and constraints of abstract rationalising systems of philosophy as against religion - a tradition as old as Socrates, and one where tradition centralises human experience: some say in a humanist framework, others prefer the term humanities-based (Thomas, 1985, Ryan, 1987). To simplify the understanding of the focus, Human Literacy is the preferred term, in that it recognises the make-up of the human as being inner and outer, emotional and rational. Hume says that there is no source for any belief or value - philosophical, religious, moral, scientific, aesthetic - other than human experience and no amount of playing with words will give it an authority independent of that experience (Bullock, 1985: 65). Human Literacy re-emphasises Hume’s contribution for its increased human-based relevance in our times. Jeremy Bentham is the first person who used the term ‘public utility’, by which he recognised actions as useful if they served the advantage of the national collective. His point of departure was simply the view that what people desired was pleasure and the absence of pain. So he offered that happiness is the preponderance of pleasure over pain, and from that follows the view that ‘an act is good if it produces or tends to produce more pleasure than pain.’ (Bentham in Thomas, 1985: 6). In such an understanding, political acts which augment the greatest good for the greatest number are hereby sanctioned and justified. Bentham reduced this famous argument by saying that: 'The only objects which have any real existence are those which are corporeal'
(Bentham in Thomas, 1985: 7). Such a simplified view allowed materialism to find a dominant utilitarian value in Bentham's time, and it is no wonder that the rights of private property came to take up so much space in John Stuart Mill's two essays *On Liberty* (1859) and *Utilitarianism* (1861). Further, Bentham was more interested in the public good than private ethics (Thomas, 1985: 8), and he saw the self-interest of people as secondary to the interests of the state. He did not recognise inner or psychological needs of people. David Hume and Jeremy Bentham articulated contrasting views of utilitarianism; ones of private and of public forms of 'utility'. The usefulness of an action can therefore be variously interpreted, depending on motive.

Jeremy Bentham and James Mill offered a moral justification for the passing of laws on the basis that they were 'in the public interest'. Benthamite utilitarianism has become known as puritanical (Thomas, 1985: 26), or anti-romantic (Russell, 1991: 743). Russell describes Bentham's utilitarian form as an inflexible determination to submit everything to the arbitrament of reason as Bentham understood it. James Mill worked this term into utilitarianism, but did so in the narrow way of seeing the work ethic as geared to profit the national interest. James Mill held a puritan perspective of the utilitarian argument, in that he avoided engaging in moral considerations which implied a connection between individual ethic and public good. In particular, he subordinated the private interests of individuals to the achievement of positive public outcomes, without allowing for a more associationist view, that is, one in which the former coalesces in the accommodation of the latter (Blackburn, 1994: 243).

It is against this background that John Stuart Mill was anxious to explore the argument more fully. While his father and Jeremy Bentham espoused utilitarianism as a rational, interventionist and consequentialist doctrine, John Stuart Mill became aware of individualist considerations of utilitarianism which had not been entertained by his mentors. It is from 'the poverty of Bentham's emotional nature' (Russell, 1991: 743)

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2 In fairness, psychology as a discipline did not develop until later.
that John Stuart Mill was to go on to recognise that the ethic of utilitarianism can be both democratic and anti-democratic.

*On Liberty* contextualizes the ideas of relevance to the public good against a background of individual freedom and rights. In contrast to his elders, John Stuart Mill defends the sovereignty of the individual in affirming liberty of conscience, thought and feeling, absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral or theological. Sometimes described as radical because he questioned the right of a government, elected by a majority, to impose its will on individuals, he said such power was 'coercive' or 'illegitimate' (Mill, 1859). 'The worth of a state is, in the long run, the worth of the individuals composing it.' In his time, radicalism lay in injecting a healthy note of egalitarianism into a society brimming with inequality. Liberalism of the nineteenth century meant the civil freedom of the individual, freedom of religion and of economic opportunity which historically had never before been so clearly affirmed. In respect of Human Literacy, Mill’s most singular achievement is in being able to articulate the philosophic foundations for individual liberty within a liberal understanding of utilitarianism. His view of freedom as a liberal principle was wider than the contemporary meaning of liberalism as emphasizing conscience, justice and civil liberties. Aesthetic individualism underlying liberal educational nineteenth century principles also emphasised spontaneity, character and originality in human beings (Barkstead, 1978: 28). Mill said that 'the prospect of the human race is dependent upon the power of original thought, upon the individual rediscovery of old truths and upon the invention of new' (1859). This discussion of Mill’s essay confines itself to the application of utilitarianism to education and avoids the moral, social, economic and political aspects of the essay, as well as aspects of justice.

The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure.
The theory of life on which this theory of morality is grounded - namely, that pleasure and freedom from pain, are the only things desirable as ends; and that all desirable things are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves, or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain. (Mill in Ryan (Ed), 1987: 278)

The populist application of this moral philosophy has been the general interpretation which says that the object [of utilitarianism] is to improve the lot of people by advancing their utility to the public good by gaining useful employment which greases the wheels of an economy which in turn benefits all participants by improving their standard of living, and, ergo, their happiness. Such a vocational perception sets out to measure the success of utilitarianism by GNP, income or wealth on the assumption that the mere accumulation of the latter determines pleasure. In this understanding utilitarianism is expediency which values all action for what is politic or advantageous, rather than what is right or just. In this view, the commodification of the human is placed in a context which equates self-interest with the common good (*summum bonum*), without pausing to recognise that human motivation might be more complex than to be satisfied with such a bare and linear argument. This instrumentalist interpretation is so ingrained and so widely understood, that no further purpose is served by critiquing this approach any more.

The reason for conceptually examining utilitarianism here is to gain a finer appreciation especially of three overlooked, underrated and marginalised aspects of the utilitarian discourse. Three such forms of Millsean utilitarianism are now explored, so that a reinterpretation which is commensurate with Human Literacy becomes possible.

The first of these is **hedonistic utilitarianism**. Utilitarians who equate happiness with pleasure are termed hedonistic utilitarians. Literature has the capacity to show critical paths, to be a reality trainer, and insight which accompanies this growth can be laced by the identification of unpleasant aspects of the self, or the realisation of circumstances the recognition of which is certainly not pleasant. While Mill discusses
the psychology of learning, his work really falls short of recognising the psychological
dimensions of learning and insight which were described after him by architects of that
discipline including James, Freud and Jung. Literature is hedonistically motivated, that
is, designed to induce reactions ranging from the pleasurable to the painful.
Individualised reader response theory as contained in the understanding of Human
Literacy acknowledges this form of hedonistic utilitarianism. Hedonistic utilitarianism
stresses enjoyment without purpose, supposing that enjoyment for its own sake is
sufficient, and indeed in its epicurean or indulgent form its highest goal. This and the
subsequent two kinds of utilitarianism connect with that part of Human Literacy which
argues for enjoying literature as a discursive practice in its own right, as an
interpretative space in which human meaning is constructed.

In indirect reference to his father's understanding of utilitarianism, Mill writes that

But there is no known Epicurean theory of life which does not assign to the
pleasures of the intellect, of the feelings and imagination, and of the moral
sentiments, a much higher value as pleasures than to those of mere sensation. It
must be admitted, however, that utilitarian writers in general have placed the
superiority of mental over bodily pleasures chiefly in the greater permanency,
safety, uncostliness etc of the former - that is, in their circumstantial advantages
rather than in their intrinsic nature (Mill in Ryan (Ed), 1987: 279).

This acknowledges a differential locus of value, of intellect over intuitive pleasure, of
some pleasures being more desirable than others. Mill's essay specifies that some forms
of utility are more readily recognised and applied than others, and he recognises that
some forms of utilitarianism may be more popular, due to their recognisable nature,
than others.

It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be
Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. (Mill in Ryan (Ed), 1987: 281)

Mill acknowledges that many prefer to adopt the easier explanation of the meaning of
utilitarianism, rather than confront a more complex or indirect way of assessing this
happiness by recognising that pleasure cannot be sustained, but that
The happiness which [the philosophers] meant was not a life of rapture; but moments of such, in an existence made up of few and transitory pains, many and various pleasures, with a decided predominance of the active over the passive, and having as the foundation of the whole, not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing. A life thus composed, to those who have been fortunate enough to obtain it, has always appeared worthy of the name of happiness. And such an existence is even now the lot of many, during some considerable portion of their lives. the present wretched education, and wretched social arrangements, are the only real hindrance to its being attainable by almost all. (Mill in Ryan (Ed), 1987: 284)

Here Mill acknowledges a variable understanding of happiness, and the allocation beyond choice of various forms of greater or lesser happiness to individuals. He demonstrates a sensitivity to the individual which goes beyond the coarse consideration of the public benefit, in the way Jeremy Bentham or James Mill did. Indeed, John Stuart Mill recognises that tranquillity may spell a satisfied life for some, while others may wish for one of excitement. Contained in that egoism is a need for mental cultivation which goes beyond the gratification of curiosity and reaches levels of moral or human interests. A clear bias towards the end of his essay is that he values individual happiness over martyrical or heroic devotion to the public benefit. Mill articulated hedonistic utilitarianism as fundamentally characteristic of a liberal England in that it provided individuals with the right to pursue a non-instrumentalist form pursuing an education, that is, for its own sake, not only towards some extrinsic benefit.

His above qualification of happiness not as a life of sustained rapture, but moments of pain and many pleasures acknowledges that education is not in itself always pleasurable: indeed, personal growth frequently occurs by taking risks, by being intellectually challenged, by entering new and personally challenging arenas of debate, such as currently those of gender or post-modernism. Indeed, some of the greatest leaps in education occur when pain of shedding a past prejudice or gaining a new insight results as a consequence of some jolt, rather than as a pleasure-inducing, gradually developing insight. However, A Statement, in promoting critical insight, avoids hedonistic utilitarianism in preference for specific outcomes.
the great majority of good actions are intended, not for the benefit of the world, but for that of individuals, of which the good of the world is made up. (Mill in Ryan, (Ed), 1987: 290)

The second overlooked characteristic of utilitarianism emerges from the view that all knowledge arises from experience. By avoiding cultural values of tradition, authority, or any supernatural basis for morality, utilitarianism makes human welfare the ultimate standard of right and wrong. This aspect of the doctrine has a secular flavour, a **human-centred utilitarianism** which is overlooked by those who champion utilitarianism as (the Benthamite) link to vocational competency. Utilitarianism has often been associated with reform movements and causes, and it is here argued that such interventionism can be misconstrued as a moral basis of justifying an outcomes-emphasising curriculum framework. A human-focused form of utilitarianism does not consider people as units of production, but sees people as being centrally motivated by their curiosity to understand human experience: literature provides a unique medium by which that curiosity can be fostered. Experiences, hopes and anxieties inform readers’ intellectual curiosity. Literature as a humanity meets this unique need.

There is an emphasis in this interpretation of utilitarianism which values the utility to the human, to the intrinsic notion of worth, rather than the extrinsically applicable. Some utilitarians believe that the principle of utility should be applied to the evaluation of each individual act. Such a view is termed ‘act utilitarianism’ (Blackburn, 1994: 388). Human-centred utilitarianism does not set out to examine the utility of any action to the public good, benefit of a community or national interest. This form of utilitarianism is personal and non-quantifiable, yet nevertheless distinctly perceptible, and capable of being valued. ‘Good’ is here defined as meeting human interests and needs and as being personally beneficial, rather than of profit to the group. The ethic of the personally profitable is upheld by John Stuart Mill as equal (in importance and as moral imperative) to the ethic of that which is of profit to the group. This is where Human Literacy is centred in the middle of the continuum that began Chapter Three. Mill in fact
goes so far as to recognise that his mentors stigmatised utility as expediency (in Ryan, 1987: 294). Such Machiavellian overtones were odious to Mill, and this was why his essay sets out the doctrine in a more satisfying way than his mentors managed by balancing expediency with the worthiness and integrity of an individual morality driving the utilitarian. Thus relevance is redefined here not as the strength of the tissue connecting utilitarianism with its public application, but rather as weighing the value of the activity in itself, along moral and philosophic considerations which hold human interest at the centre.

It was not until *Utilitarianism* was published that this argument was rounded out more fully, and became the subject of an ongoing debate among philosophers. In the first chapter of *Utilitarianism* Mill introduces the notion of *summum bonum*, or what can be defined as the morally best, but what he also sees as the best in terms of the public interest (Mill in Ryan (Ed), 1987: 272). He recognises that an abstract understanding of *summum bonum* may differ from the concrete, and he asserts that a congruency between public or national interest and personal desire is achievable by rational reasoning. In *A Statement*, *summum bonum* has not really found explicit definition or public agreement. “A clever country’ can be interpreted as *summum bonum*, though what either term might mean today is open to considerable interpretation. Mill asks, metaphorically, that if we might agree that medical skills are good because they are conducive to health, how is it possible to prove that health as such is good? He answers this question by saying that while health is elusive of proof, considerations are possible where health as a means to an end, eg. longevity, are tantamount to such proof (Mill in Ryan (Ed), 1987: 275). Similarly, education can be said to be subject to considerations which allow for the view that education is a valuable thing for life, as acknowledged in *A Statement* (1994: 46). The greatest happiness principle does not always prove itself beyond reasonable doubt. How is it possible to prove that education as such is good? Health and education are intrinsically beneficial.
The utilitarian argument assumes that everyone has the interest of public advantage of entire groups/populations closely at heart. Mill quite readily says that there are many disinterested in the public utility of an action, in that not all people act from the inducement of promoting the general interests of society. This perspective focuses on the worth of the agent. Mill goes on to say that utilitarianism renders men cold and unsympathising; that it chills their moral feelings towards individuals; that it makes them regard only the dry and hard consideration of the consequences of actions, again not taking into consideration the quality from which those actions emanate. This prompted Bertrand Russell to call utilitarianism anti-romantic (1991: 746). Mill says that objectors to utilitarianism have argued that individuals are disinterested in the usefulness of actions which result in the promotion of the public good. If that argument has any currency, it only serves to emphasise the importance of developing individual utility as a worthy pursuit, in the belief that the cultivation of the growth of the agent will collectively result in improved good for the whole (in Ryan, 1987: 292). Mill considers that utilitarianism is not achieved by reaching some stage of development; rather, it is in the nature of the concept that it serves a perpetual and indefinite improvement, more as an attitude than as the pursuit of a finite outcome.

Mill further argues that utilitarianism is not justified by end results alone; individual agreement must be forthcoming if commitment to the concept of utility is to be at all successful. The distinction between external and internal sanctions of utilitarianism is important here, in that the sanction of an action does not necessarily lie in its efficacy: an assumption driving the outcomes mechanism of A Statement. Mill states that it is the duty of educators to ensure that an indissoluble association between individual happiness and the good of the whole be continually affirmed in such a way that a direct impulse to promote social welfare is the result. While recognising the overarching influence of public utilitarianism, Mill nevertheless was cautious in aligning private forms of utilitarianism to it. His caution was couched within a liberal affirmation of principle which here guides the construction of Human Literacy. Consideration of
individual forms of utilitarianism suggest that there must be a space for individuals to explore their own happiness without immediate reference to external applications to public utility or benefit.

The third form of overlooked utilitarianism is its **intrinsic utilitarianism.** Mill defines the moral desirability of virtue as being

> to the individual, a good in itself, without looking to any end beyond it; and hold that the mind is not in a right state, not in a state conformable to Utility, not in the state conducive to the general happiness, unless it does love virtue in this manner- as a thing desirable in itself, even although, in the individual instance, it should not produce those other desirable consequences which it tends to produce, and on account of which it is held to be virtue. This opinion is not, in the smallest degree, a departure from the happiness principle. The ingredients of happiness are very various, and each of them is desirable in itself, and not merely when considered as swelling an aggregate. The principle of utility does not mean that any given pleasure, as music, for instance, or any given exemption from pain, as for example health, are to be looked upon as means to a collective something termed happiness, and to be desired on that account. They are desired and desirable in and for themselves; besides being means, they are part of the end (Mill in Ryan (Ed), 1987: 308/309).

Advocates of ‘economic rationalism’ do not remember Mill for this part of his argument. It is indeed a useful part of utilitarianism to argue that something is worth doing for its own sake. He accommodates this purpose for doing anything with the general argument of public utility by saying that of course things like money, fame and power are not desired for their own sake, but as part of an end. So he develops the view that the association of the intrinsic value exists within an extrinsic understanding of the utilitarian argument, and uses that to strengthen the latter.

Mill was under enormous pressure to extend every opportunity to justify utilitarianism as a moral ethic binding on the emerging democratic form of government in England. In educational terms today much learning occurs which is intrinsically satisfying, and which does not have any direct apparent value to extrinsic outcomes in an immediate sense, but nested within an extrinsic context nevertheless. Human progress is a human-based concept which is individual and hedonistic, constituting of intrinsic benefits to the learner and thereby reaffirming its liberal premise. Human Literacy is located here and
is nested within the overarching idea that happiness is a criteria for morality and that therefore the pursuit of virtue results in public utilitarian benefit which accrues to a group as a whole.

Given the three above aspects of utilitarianism which are rare in the sense that they are not factors of the current paradigm which is driven by the force majeure of utilitarianism as public utility, there is reason to pause and consider the contesting nature of this ideology for its implications for Human Literacy.

The ultimate appeal of Utilitarianism, on all ethical questions, is grounded on the permanent interests of humankind as progressive beings. How that progress is conceptualised is the crucible of the locus of value by which advancement occurs. The consequentialist aspect of utilitarianism directly articulates the connection that the goodness or badness of an action lies in its consequences in pleasure and pain. This is the earlier understanding of utilitarianism brought by James Mill and Jeremy Bentham. This philosophy is well articulated in *A Statement*. Contrasting with this understanding of utilitarianism is the one by John Stuart Mill which says that morality is learnt, at least in part, from the experience of consequences, and denial of that experience results in moral immaturity. This says that the locus of value must lie on the experience, on the process, rather than having the desired outcomes so firmly in one's sights that we aim straight for them without bothering with the intermediary, yet educationally central values of process. Mill valued individuality for its own sake: 'It is really of importance not only what men do, but also what manner of men they are that do it' (Mill, in Ryan (Ed): 273). Thus there is a value of learning that benefits the individual which stands alongside the narrow utilitarianism that aspires to vocational or outcome-based ends.

This reconsideration of Mill is further qualified by Barrow's 1991 *Utilitarianism*, which contends that we have to judge the worth of an ethical theory by reference to the clarity and fullness with which it is explicated. Both philosophers clearly show that the internal
coherence and consistency of utilitarianism is complicated by a range of issues, including various forms of utilitarianism (hedonistic, individualistic and intrinsic), as well as by major and minor ethical considerations which refocus utilitarianism as a philosophy in which the private individual satisfied is more liberal a premise than is the public achievement of sumnum bonum. Barrow explores the ethical and moral philosophical dimensions of the utilitarian position by acknowledging three problems with utilitarianism: that people may not always know what is right and for the good, that it flies in the face of cultural variation in moral value, and that it presupposes that the right is derivative of the good (Barrow, 1991: 13). Thus there is a discourse which separates the linear understanding of utilitarianism which is articulated in A Statement from other, no less valid forms.

The distinction between liberal utilitarianism and instrumentalist or consequentialist utilitarianism is recognised in the way that Human Literacy positions itself: Human Literacy acknowledges the importance of vocationalist applications of a consequentialist form of utilitarianism, but simultaneously argues for the inclusion of liberal utilitarian considerations in an English literature curriculum. Instrumentalism views educational outcomes as being towards something external, and purpose-driven in a way as to suggest that instrumentalism, metaphorically viewed, is a linearly progressive portrayal, while reflection, it is suggested here, has an alternative imagery by which it is conceptualized. The former is seen as getting you somewhere specific, namely to a particular skill level on the ladder of a career path. The latter is seen as personally enriching, and is not seen in direct, linear, or hierarchical terms of progression, but as an internal wealth which translates into difficult-to-measure gains such as insight, maturity, understanding, judgement, wisdom, etc.

The link between curriculum outcomes and economic success was never drawn as directly in the business of schooling in liberal 19th Century England as the Curriculum
Corporation would like to today in economic rationalist Australia. If consequentialist utilitarianism did not dominate the formation of curriculum in England last century, why apply it now in different times, in a far richer and more complex public context in such a way as to neglect liberal utilitarian form?

Happiness is a pursuit, not an attainment (Hodgson in Quennell, 1990: 184)

Words like ‘happiness’ and ‘good’ are elementary in an educational context because, as general terms, they are relative and have multiple meanings. Problematic in such a simplistic understanding is the notion that continuous happiness, like serial materialism, should remain the consequentialist goal of human achievement.

A particularly precious kind of happiness is achieved not so much through a purposeful ‘chasse au bonheur’ as through quietly observing and enjoying. Thus absent from the utilitarian conception of happiness is the intrinsically rewarding quality of it (Quennell, 1990: 188).

Happiness in individual, local, regional and national terms is a relativistic and culturally dependent term open to considerable difference of interpretation and weighting. To articulate happiness as a universally desirable (and therefore predominant) end is to counter the idea of a diversity and plurality of values (which literature offers) by suggesting a particular emphasis. Such an emphasis counters the idea of tolerating difference.

The impact of broad or mainstream utilitarianism on education is well recognised, as in the recent Australian Commonwealth Green and White Paper.

The eighteenth century Utilitarian mission was generated by the Enlightenment and was in its day a deeply progressive social movement with, as its goal, the removal of unearned privilege and the liberation of people’s essential humanity in work and relaxation. Utilitarianism had, and should have, a humanist dynamic, one that is immobilised by mechanistic interpreters of the concept (Knight, 1990: 5-7).

Again, this debate surrounds the definition of utilitarianism: should it, as is explicitly stated in A Statement, be yoked to immediate outcomes? In this understanding, the stress is on economic benefit, on skilling, on ways of strengthening the vocational
utility of education at the expense of the individual's experience of morality as a result of engagement with literature for its own sake.

Such a definition of utilitarianism fails to acknowledge that literature as a humanity plays a leading role in the formation of the future: quality of life, experience and reflection do matter. The level of sanity and tolerance in the Australian community towards race, war, drugs and the like is in no small measure directly attributable to the pervasive influence of a human literacy which is contextualised in a broader utilitarian and liberal understanding of social progress rather than in a narrower, consequentialist vocational context. So the paradigm shift required here is to accept a definition of quality in education which includes, not excludes, a hedonistic, individually human and intrinsic understanding of useful activity in learning. If education is to be a matter of ongoing debate, sensitive to the market and subject to moral growth, then it is indeed dangerous for simplistic understandings of utilitarianism to dominate educational practice. The construction of A Statement occurred in a politically motivated context, and thus its failure on educational grounds became the predictable outcome of attempting to transfer the rhetoric from one specific utilitarian context without accommodating all aspects of this important liberal philosophy.

This section has tried to show that the general attainability of happiness as understood in an econometric sense is a linear perception of utilitarianism that needs to be reconsidered in the light of readings of Mill and Barrow. These have shown that there are aspects of this important philosophy which are grounded in contrasting views of private and public forms of utilitarianism. The dominant public consequentialist view of utilitarianism in materialist Australia today has assumed the role of a force majeure. A Statement is but one documented example of this. What has been postulated is the argument that private considerations of utilitarianism have been largely ignored in the haste for the public success of this curriculum document. This argument has gone largely unnoticed because the equation of
utilitarian happiness = economic wealth accumulation, and
economic wealth accumulation = utilitarian happiness

is an assumed axiom in the construction of the framework of A Statement which has been challenged here to show that utilitarian philosophy (Mill, Barrow, Quennell) is multi-dimensional, and not confined to the linear value base portrayed in the curriculum document under discussion.

5.2 CONTRASTING THE DOMINANT PARADIGM WITH THAT OF HUMAN LITERACY: IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES

The years 1985-1995 have witnessed conflicting, opposed and even inherently irreconcilable pressures on school curriculum as a result of a combination of factors including, in literature education,

• an inadequately theorised understanding of the subject discipline of English,
• an insufficiently contextualised understanding of curriculum and policy factors.
• an inability to reconcile political with educational paradigms / discourses.
• competing models of English.
• an omission of Human Literacy from the framework.
• competing liberal and utilitarian demands on literature education.

There are too many expectations on what literature education can be expected to deliver. The process has been dominated by tertiary [and fashionable] expectations of critical discourse, without allowing the necessary space for enjoyment by young people of literature within a climate which prepares young people for reader-
response in a constructive way which prepares for a Human Literacy. At issue are a set of value positions within the public and academic discourse which are at odds with what English teachers have in Chapter Four been described as doing with literature education curriculum.

The history of curriculum is also the history of a debate about control. The number and range of stakeholders in that debate has increased dramatically, and among those the influence of teachers in recent years has markedly decreased, while political control by forces outside of education over curriculum has correspondingly increased (Harris, 1991). Thus there has been a shift in the control over curriculum away from professional educators and towards the political arena which in turn is subject to the vagaries of shifting public perceptions and ‘market forces’ (Harris, 1994, Horne, 1992). In addition to reasons cited earlier, there is the desire to connect literacy to economic well-being. The increasing ‘complexification of teachers’ work’ (Walker, 1995: 17) has contributed to curriculum becoming a field increasingly contested in form, content, nature and direction. As shown in Chapter Two, A Statement has been subject to a myriad of competing political influences, and has yielded to a particular and dominant set. By identifying the wider political discourse of the late 1980s and early 1990s in Australia the description of this dominant set of paradigm values becomes possible. The value base of stakeholders and their particular political interest in framing text curriculum becomes clear.

A paradigm is defined as a set of concepts shared by a community (Kuhn, 1970, 1977, Capra, 1982, Barker, 1991). That is, membership of a particular paradigm is characterised by a particular, shared outlook, philosophy, belief structure, or set of values. A dominant paradigm is that community which holds a dominant stake in the public discourse, either because of their power base or because of ideological assertion, and therefore constitutes the political will. Zeitgeist also characteristics dominant ideology. The dominant paradigm influencing the construction of A
Statement is here referred to as ‘economic rationalism’ (Pusey) or ‘Harvard managerialism’ (O’Connor). The attributes of the dominant paradigm influence contemporary education: in an economic rationalist-technicist\(^3\) dominated society which is industrialised and profit-oriented and which believes in market-driven resourcing, public definitions are situated in particular biased or skewed discourses. Paradigm paralysis occurs where a society is blinkered by its dominant paradigm from seeing in alternative ways (Barker, 1991). A positive paradigm culture can only be fostered in an atmosphere of free and unfettered debate in public discourse. The human equation in the current dominant paradigm is reduced by the failure to give it the very Lebensraum necessary to establish or validate itself.

Freedom of thought, experiment and intellectual development and creative thought requires a great deal of tolerance of difference. It cannot be driven by economic goals or even social objects. It can only be driven by intellectual freedom, by the scholarship of independent thinkers which has the freedom to criticise, to analyse, the opportunities for individuals to be different, to react and to reject.

Much of the rhetoric for change has been in the environment of an industry model, and this denies an environment which is for diversity, disagreement, individuality, criticism, conflict and self-doubt, all concepts not known as the hallmark of industry (Gale, 1991: 1).

Economic rationalist thinking has been described as ‘the New Right’, because it emanates from a value base which is conservative, capital-intensive and oriented, and which espouses 'traditional ideology and practices' (Butler, 1990: 256). Even knowledge is expressed as an industry. Indeed, such thinking, when applied to education produces the uncomfortable terminology of 'education is an industry', 'schooling like a race', the notion of 'schools as small businesses' (Sharpe, 1991). Children are referred to as 'clients' or 'human capital', teachers are 'human resource development material', and educational outcomes are described as 'attainment targets' and 'performance indicators' (Dwyer, 1991). Dwyer describes this as the competitive utilitarian ethos.

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3 Technicism is from the argot of Ian Lowe from his time with the Australian Commission for the Future. From its context, and as it is a neologism, it is interpreted as being the pursuit of technology for its own sake.
The term 'client' can have a positive connotation, because it helps define the relationship as empowering the learner. In this sense the use of the term 'client' helps to equalize the relationship between learner and teacher in that it shows the client as deserving respect and acknowledgment. But because such language introduces what are economic terms into the environment of education, there is the quite public and deliberate assumption that education is a process which is synonymous with business. This is fraught with difficulty, because such an understanding removes the non-economic humanities-based values of human capital from the educational process equation. This is at cost to the quality by which educational outcomes can be assured. This current paradigm of contemporary Australia is so described because of the prevailing neo-classical economic theorists who hold the opinion that economic rationalism is the only way to go. This view happens to be the dominant view, certainly since 1987 in Australia (already stated in the introduction), earlier in the United States under Presidents Reagan and Bush and in the United Kingdom under Prime Ministers Thatcher and Major. Such economic-rationalist contrasts with the status of the humanities as found in the work of Gibbs (1990) and Hunter (1991).

Economic rationalists of the New Right believe in the supremacy of market forces (removed from their ethical context), the constant need to cut public spending, the level of wages and salaries, the need to redistribute the nation's income upwards and the idea that welfare spending engenders dependency. Such thinking believes that it is good to move the burden of taxation from business to consumers, to deregulate the private sector and remove public controls over business, and that we must always accept ever higher levels of unemployment (Pusey, 1991: passim). Economists, in summary, are controlling the agenda in a manner which represents a break with the past (Schott 1991: 30). This public discourse is described by Pusey as a frozen neo-classical economic orthodoxy. It expresses itself in predictable budgetary prescriptions, without ever addressing human capital resources etc.
arrogant ideology which is a formula-driven destruction of our social institutions, our domestic industrial capacity, our public sector, our universities and our economy (Pusey, 1991: 208 ff.).

Pusey's view of how market forces dictate the operational climate in an economic rationalist Australia polarises that paradigm. By balancing the 'internal goods' with the 'external goods' (Halliday, 1990), it is here contested that the future need not be single-paradigm dependent. Human Literacy has paradigmatic attributes which can be more commensurate with a widening range of contemporary demands in education. As Pusey (in Macken, 1992: 28) says: 'We need a new generation of economists who are philosophically and socially educated. We need to rehabilitate economics into the liberal arts curriculum.'

A Statement is the product of an attempt to transpose particular political and economic values onto the learning by which readers respond to literature. The result is a conflict. Any resolution must include a re-articulation of how literature ought to be approached and to what ends literature ought to be studied. The sum of these paradigmatic forces have brought about a paradigm paralysis (Barker, 1991) which is threatening a coherent or complete development of literature education in English curriculum in Australia today. That coherence can be assured with the philosophical reappraisal that Human Literacy offers.

What is the source of this conflict? The following table summarises the contrasting attributes:-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes of the Dominant Paradigm</th>
<th>Attributes of the Human Literacy Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectivism (Halliday, 1990)</td>
<td>Literature as a humanity (Bullock, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market-driven (Dwyer, 1991: 2)</td>
<td>Quality of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic needs (Pusey, 1991)</td>
<td>Liberal forms of utilitarianism (J.S. Mill)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Homo economicus</em> Tool using, consuming human being (Jones, 1990)</td>
<td><em>Homo sapiens sapiens</em> Human being as a thinker and language using inner man (Jones, 1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocationalist, manageralist, functionalist education (John Halliday, 1990)</td>
<td>General education (Bailey, Bantock, Peters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental, consequentialist utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham, James Mill)</td>
<td>Literature is valued for unique aesthetic and cultural forms of knowledge (P. Hirst).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on societal <em>sumnum bonum</em> (James Mill, Jeremy Bentham)</td>
<td>Focus on individual <em>sumnum bonum</em> within a context of societal progress (John Stuart Mill)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education provides a skills base which makes Australia internationally competitive: ‘A clever country’ (Dawkins, 1990)</td>
<td>Liberal education liberates from the immediate and particular (C. Bailey, 1984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human capital is the ability, skill and knowledge of individuals used to produce goods and services (Bullock, 1990: 106).</td>
<td>Non-economic consequences to human existence also matter, such as the relationship with moral philosophy and intuitionism (Barrow, 1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The human is quantified in orthodox terms of development which suggest that more is better, that life is an economy of scale, that a sense that education can be measured like a fuel gauge in a car, full measuring skilled.</td>
<td>The human which derives inherent pleasure, and personal value from interacting, reflecting on interpersonal relationships and individual growth as illustrated by literature: a sense of culture (Peters, 1987).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When examining paradigm shifts during historical periods which have significantly augmented the non-quantifiable cultural capital (such as the Renaissance as example), there grows the recognition that the human equation has been enriched by individual shifts, by intellectual stands, by realizations and insights into the human
condition which have significantly developed, extended and empowered people in their own times beyond limitations which are there because of economic or ideological restraints. There are aspects of human dignity and freedom which are universal and philosophical capital\textsuperscript{4}. Beyond utilitarian action there are matters of belief and judgement which ascribe intrinsic and non-instrumental value to life such as truth telling, storying, loyalty, compassion, etc. It is here that Human Literacy situates itself in Literature education.

The liberal orientation of three particular forms of utilitarianism which began this Chapter established the concept that instrumental utilitarianism is not the only way by which education can be valued. While there are limitations to paradigm modelling, the listing of particular attributes pertaining to two contrasting communities of value has brought into sharper relief not just the contrasting nature by which such values can be placed, understood and applied, but has shown the opposite nature of such competing values. That opposite nature, when applied to literature education, and considered in terms of three main themes (vocationalism, consumerism and managerialism) is next shown to be paradoxical. Human Literacy is a way by which these paradoxical attributes can be reconciled in a more comprehensive model than by remaining ensconced in a particular paradigm polarity.

5.3 THE PARADOX OF VOCATIONALISM, MANAGERIALISM AND CONSUMERISM IN LITERATURE EDUCATION

The attributes of two different paradigms that have been tabled so far establish different loci of value. Halliday (1990) explores the logic of the relationship between educational theory and practice in his work \textit{Markets, managers and theory

\textsuperscript{4} The Nobel Foundation awards for peace and literature examine the human condition, focus on the way human relationships are described, and recognizes the very humanity of a text or person (Briggs, 1991).
in education. In particular, he discusses the application of vocationalism, managerialism and consumerism to contemporary educational practice and critiques the political application of those terms to the construction of curriculum and teaching. Current educational philosophy is inhabited by contradictory and paradoxical expectations: just what are they?

The objectivism which adheres to a competency framework is so relativist that it does not cohere with the philosophical history of education. Halliday argues for a ‘Coherence within a Network of Theory’ (Halliday, 1990: 58-76). His discussion is useful because it explains the theoretical contextual origins of a market-driven imperative in education and shows up its deficiencies and inadequacies when applied to non-monetary learning environments such as schools. In particular, his work is supportive of the need for a process which validates the learning which occurs in a non-outcome based context (here of engaging with literature).

It is possible therefore to challenge the philosophic basis by which the curriculum area of literature in A Statement is in need of revision in order to more adequately address the kind of learning which occurs within a Human Literacy context and which is coherent and comprehensive, rather than selective or narrow. The challenge is based on the way knowledge is perceived. Halliday’s contribution is to observe the ‘paradox’ (1990: 39) by which knowledge is downgraded to skills in isolation from the community which constitutes the discipline. In this respect it is asserted that the curriculum construction of A Statement has occurred in a context where wants have replaced needs. The paradox is between these seemingly self-contradictory value positions: each explicable as expressing a truth, yet in the implementation phase colliding with received understandings of how literature works with young people. The result is a paradoxical curriculum document. Three explicit ways in which this can be demonstrated is to examine the notions of vocationalism, managerialism and consumerism and to show how these ideologies
are ill accommodated within a literature curriculum. A wonderful parable of how a
humanity and economic rationalism philosophically collide, is demonstrated in the
fourth Appendix, where Schubert's Unfinished is evaluated by New Right line
managerialism with paradoxical consequence.

The nexus between vocationalism and education is well established. Employers,
parents, communities expect that education prepares young people for useful
membership of society. Within that context, there is an equally strong expectation
that schooling should equip young people with the requisite skills for work. Chapter
Two detailed the pressure groups and stakeholders and, specifically, the kind of
educational outcomes (competencies) which are anticipated results of such work
preparation. The link between vocational education, the economy and the 'public
interest' or government will has accordingly been described and documented.

Managerialism is the idea that the preparation (of people for work) can be managed,
and moreover by people not intimately connected with the practice of teaching.

in the last thirty years or so, many attempts to elucidate the logic of educational
teaching and its relation to practice have been informed by the idea that educational
teaching should guide rational practice by providing knowledge whose 'objectivity' is
founded on the notion of 'experience' (Halliday, 1990: Preface).

The notion of experience informing knowledge has an empiricist epistemological
basis which can be criticised. The notion that people can be prepared for work by
people who have a managerialist work background themselves is located in an
economic-political context which holds the belief that a new epistemological
framework can be imposed from outside an historical appreciation of the history of
literature education. The paradox occurs at the intersection of these two separate
belief structures: that work preparation can be managed from the way in which
literature is taught. The collision is damaging because there is a failure to appreciate
the kind of learning which literature conveys: instead, the search for links between
textual uses and industrial applications commodify a humanity in ways which demonstrate an ignorance of what literature is, or how it works on the reader. The narrowing of literature to text is a prime instance of such an incomplete understanding.

Vocationalist and managerialist education is located in a particularly objectivist framework. While that in itself is fine, it does not represent a complete or balanced education, in that we need

a more historically situated, nonalgorithmic, flexible understanding of human rationality... 'objectivism' as the basic conviction that there is or must be some permanent, ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality is illusory (Bernstein, 1985: ix).

Bernstein and Halliday contend that objectivism is the dominant unitary theoretical approach which is taken to the construction of contemporary educational theory. Objectivism is seen as embedded in an empiricism by logical association.

Empiricist foundationalist epistemology underpins objectivism through the idea that beliefs can be justified by a chain of reasons that end in a foundation of certainty and the further idea that researchers may elucidate this chain of reasons in order to substantiate claims to knowledge. (Halliday, 1990: 35)

Objectivism is not the only way by which educational theory is informed. Vocationalism, managerialism and consumerism have a degree of overlap. This indicates a mutual coherence within a positivist objectivist framework. Wherein lies this link or overlap? Managerialism, or a managerial management style, is a term which has its history in business, that is, in a world which is framed by the business ethic which says that management exists for a particular purpose, and that purpose is the generation of a particular kind of profit. This can only occur if the marketplace is understood, and to that effect the consumer's wants must be known. The circularity or linearity of this argument says that the marketplace dictates the terms by its consumption behaviour; that is, the consumer determines the wants,
and those must be managed so that those wants are met. Such a monotheistic view ignores other stakeholders, such as learners, or other values, such as learning needs, or ways of seeing which are not predicated on a commercial perception of profit. In such a paradigm, the determination of desirable ends is left either to the vagaries of the marketplace, public interest, political, social or moral norms. It is impossible to quantify just how such an empiricist view informs curriculum (Halliday, 1990: 42). It is in the nature of the marketplace that it cannot be a neutral arbiter in determining educational value:-

Plainly the idea of a 'market' is the dominant model for such a distribution in the 1980s. As Cellar notes, the idea of a market appears to offer then final foundation for empiricism in that this idea places the burden of decision to something empirical, testable, observable - namely observable preferences, demand and supply (Halliday, 1990: 43).

The liberal-rationalist position taken in the previous Chapter provides a broader base, one not subject to the here and now, where literature remains a value-laden arena of conflict between different and competing values so that the learner can clarify his or her identity and position within society, rather than be subject to the exegesis of consumerist dictates which leave teachers uncomfortable, students unwilling and the 'dominance of objectivism working against the promotion of a more open and democratic education system' (Halliday, 1990: 47).

Managerialism and consumerism are two notions which are both predicated on the same objectivistic presuppositions. Only those who can easily subscribe to the values of the dominant economic rationalist paradigm are likely to be able to work comfortably within the current curriculum document. That fewer teachers are comfortable within such an environment has been the expressed opinion of the professional body of English teachers. That such a dominance of objectivism

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5 English Teachers Association Newsletters and journals of 1994 and 1995 passim. The principal difficulty is in identifying the levels of outcomes, which are not as skill level dependent or chronologically similar in students as the document supposes, or wishes students to display proficiency in.
works against the promotion of a more open and democratic education system is a
feature of the dominant paradigm which informs a Statement.

The consumer and the manager are assumed to have identical aspirations, and these
are expressed by the marketplace. Consumerism then is the notion that the
marketplace dictates the nature and extent of demand. It is in such a spirit that, in
New South Wales, the Education Reform Act of 1990 resulted in giving parents
greater choice concerning which school to send their child to (dezoning), what kind
of school to send their child to (technology high, centre for excellence, performing
arts high, selective high, sports high, opportunity classes, home education,
language high, etc). This consumerist concept is extended by the idea that if the
employer is seen as a consumer of educated, ideally work-prepared school leavers,
then surely the employer has the consumerist right on his/her side to say what kind
of an education should be provided. This linear kind of logic ignores any values
which lie outside such a mercantile perception of demand and supply. In particular,
such a paradigm is paralysed by the inability to accept liberal notions which are
beyond the present and particular, which are aesthetic, cultural or are imbued with
some other intellectual but not necessarily monetarist value.

It is suggested in that document⁶ that education is something that can be managed,
in the sense that the overall aims of education can be determined by appeals to
'market demands' and that these aims can be broken down into objectives that
specify target outputs in relation to inputs and for which managers can be
responsible (Halliday, 1990: 48).

Just what the inputs and outputs are remains a centrally problematic aspect of the
system. It is possible to identify finance among the inputs, and generalised
economic prosperity as an outcome. But by downplaying the wealth of other inputs,
such as people, or by failing to arrive at any acceptable way of quantifying the
nature or variety of inputs and outputs by common denomination, there is in effect

⁶ Report into the Pay and Conditions of Service of School Teachers in Scotland, chaired by Sir Peter
Maine, October 1986, OHMS Edinburgh, page 9
no model, formula or benchmark by which these can be positioned or measured. The arbitrary nature of these in- and outputs is not relativised, objectified or categorised other than by their obvious instrumental appearance. The difference between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ goods is further distinguished by saying that while it may be possible to place performance indicators on some external appearances of competence, the attempt to do so with internal goods, as Jones also remarked earlier, destroys the process.

The process by which education is being managerialized is not simply a methodological one to improve the basis on which educational decisions might be made. The effect of such curricular managerialism is likely to corrupt the sense of mutual support that many teachers develop as an essential aid to their professional practice (Halliday, 1990: 49). In such a context, teachers are reduced to mere ‘technicians’ whose task is to teach to identified outcomes. The sumnum bonum or ‘common good’ cannot be arrived at without also considering intrinsic motivation for teachers and students. The application of such instrumental utilitarianism narrows what education is.

The formulation of educational aims is informed by the notion of a market and managers are supposed to ensure that market demand is ascertained, described and shown to be satisfied at minimum cost. Within this formulation teachers increasingly work as technicians using ‘student centred’ materials prepared for them and promoted by ‘theorists’ (Halliday, 1990: 153).

Notwithstanding the above named values framework, A Statement simultaneously advocates concepts such as lifelong learning. The paradox between lifelong learning and the staging of levels of outcomes along a mastery matrix of levels which are hierarchical is apparent to all who look. Heuristic learning and outcomes-based instruction are mutually exclusive. Thus levels are simply incommensurable within a

7 In Australia, performance indicators have been renamed as benchmarking at a Conference on the subject held in Sydney in March 1995, chaired by the Director-General of School Education. While the name may change, the process by which intrinsic educational gains remain unacknowledged or unidentified or measured remains an unresolved issue.
Human Literacy paradigm because outcomes from engaging with literature do not work in the pre-determined ways in which A Statement is framed. The view that such a belief of educational management practice is no longer an acceptable experience to many people, if it ever truly was, is one held by an increasing number of writers, including Halliday (1990) and Graham and Tytler (1993).

What is questioned here is the ability of the common good to be satisfied by the institution of a consumer-related view of education administered by a system of line managers. Indeed, ‘such a management structure is manipulative because the idea of objectivity assumed within the structure is bogus’ (Halliday, 1990: 51)

The argument then is that consumerism, managerialism and vocationalism appear in a specific utilitarian context which is framed by a linear objectivism that is in turn embedded in a particular empiricist understanding. Such a paradigm expresses itself in particular values, namely a 'pseudo-scientific' model by which outcomes can be quantified (levels) and hierarchically placed into bands (A Statement). Human Literacy accepts the notion that reader responses will differ, but cannot predict the nature of predisposed outcomes in such terms. Instead, understanding from literature is the process of a multitude of ways of understanding, of gaining insight, of raising consciousness, of eliciting reader response that defy immediate classification, measurement or hierarchical placement, and which were identified in Chapter Three. Literature is surrounded by moments of interpretation, of heuristic inquiry in the context of Human Literacy, and to suppose that the reader as active meaning maker can be assessed in a demand-supply framework is paradoxical.

Educational theory develops as a response to the practical problems that arise in educational contexts (Halliday, 1990: 70). The implication of this assertion is that literature is a field of heuristics which does not have theories thrust upon it; rather, have theories grow out of it. Studying literature is not necessarily about establishing
the truth of one theory and the falsity of another. This is to be denounced as a form of 'materialist pragmatism', and is a limited way of working in the field of education. Applied to literature, materialist pragmatism is indeed a reductionist view of appreciating, for instance the aesthetic dimension, psychological insight, mood or thematic development of a literary work. Human Literacy calls for an interpretative coherence by expressing a need for

an account of the way in which terms from a variety of discourses can come to function as inter-discursive touchstones of rationality (Halliday, 1990: 74).

Human Literacy is a model by which such coherence is enabled, as was described in Chapter Three. Different paradigms are educational forcefields by which personal growth is effected. Education is best advantaged by a theoretical endeavour that 'attempts to reinterpret what was going on across a range of other endeavours, in the hope that such a reinterpretation might make for a greater perspicuity in the choices that face us' (Halliday, 1990: 131). The paradoxical aspects of A Statement's value framework can be resolved by tolerating liberal orientations of utilitarianism as well as by allowing reader-response theories to stand in a literature classroom, instead of imposing a demand supply model that coerces a vocationalist, managerialist and consumerist orientation onto an unwilling, and unconvinced, reader. Human Literacy is placed to resolve such paradox.

Applied to A Statement, it is here suggested that more extensive consultation with the profession, a greater awareness of where working with literature is successful for young people, together with a more attuned appreciation of theoretical positionings in the understanding of the educational gains that can be derived from engagement with literature would indubitably be less paradigm paralysing than A Statement is being (Marsh, 1995).
This consultational process should be able to coalesce more theoretical positions than those that have been given space in *A Statement*, and thereby should address rather than avoid that essential tension between innovation and tradition in contemporary understandings of the value of literature. It is that enriched awareness of different ways of comprehending literature that makes multiple and substantially different outcomes possible. Such a recognition of the function of Human Literacy in turn enhances the liberal learning climate in which culture is transmitted. Education is not some sort of technology that can be instituted to solve particular social problems. Education is one factor in the development of a society and is a facilitator of just one conversation among many that people engage in. Education is not an applied science.

Boundaries between curriculum components such as levels of outcomes can never be sharply drawn nor can they be justified in logic. Objectifying the curriculum does not work. Instead it should be recognised that at any one time there may be a range of people competent at various levels for whom we should offer opportunities for extension as they wish. Teachers who encourage students to have confidence to extend their horizons, extend learning parameters, facilitate new discoveries, the breaking of new ground, the taking of risks, are ultimately the ones who create an environment of new insights. The objectivist knowledge that a particular level of competency has been attained does not operate at the same level of aspiration. Education is continuous (lifelong learning was goal No 5 of Appendix 2 in *A Statement*) and cannot be prescribed by routes through a curriculum framework for set ages or bands of people. Continuous learning and a road map by which that is to occur are contradictory paradigms, and *A Statement* represents such a contradiction of positions. In Human Literacy education is an ongoing human conversation, there is narrative and a dialogue about which competency distinctions are irrelevant, and individual reader response matters.
Oakeshott draws attention to the way in which tension between 'present condition' and 'future possibilities' is never finally resolved but serves as an impetus for a continuing conversation between a variety of forms of discourse, all of which are concerned, in one form or another, critically to reappraise various features of the human predicament (1990: 139).

Human Literacy can resolve the impasse between contradictory expectations of literature education as enunciated in *A Statement*. Teachers are bearers of a humanities tradition for the purpose of encouraging and enabling others to join that tradition, as compliant or resistant readers.

The objectivist's attempt to elevate a set of ideas and practices, preferred levels and outcomes above others only heightens the tension between individual and societal networks. In an objectivist's world, human relationships are treated as a means rather than as ends in themselves. This contradicts what reader-response is. It also echoes the earlier notion of 'wants' replacing 'needs' in the construction of *A Statement*.

In learning, teachers continually hope to form a horizon of expectation which intrigues the learner to pose new questions, to interrogate the text. The idea of the dominant paradigm preparing young people for pre-dominantly vocational outcomes contradicts that horizon of expectation to a reality that is virtually defined for them. Such a curriculum is paradoxical in intent and limits readers' potential to be critical of their reality, all the very things a liberal education in literature tries to bring about.

It is the narrowness of *A Statement*'s scope which is critiqued in the next Chapter for its failure to provide a regulative ideal. Not aiming at consensus, the document adopts a paradoxical position which reflects a paradigm that is characterised by a traditional economic orthodoxy and disregards liberal orientations of utilitarianism. In this gulf between 'objectivist and hermeneuticist notions' (Halliday, 1990: 144) of understanding, curriculum is incommensurable within the value base of teaching
literature, as understood by practicing English teachers. The current paradigmatic bias towards objectivist curriculum construction can be corrected by including a more balanced appreciation of a wider range of educational theory than was managed in a positivist paradigm. Human Literacy provides that paradigm and can overcome the paradox by innovatively challenging objectivism. Accountability in such a context is by quality of thought, by relating the response to the reader and to particular circumstances of learning, rather than by establishing arbitrary standards of literary response to which a reader's answer is matched. It is in such a liberal orientation of Human Literacy that there is no permanent set of criteria to which a reader appeals in order to determine what kind of response to give or how to think.

A vocationally developed curriculum direction is not undesirable in itself, as learning how business operates is a valuable curricular component. As long as such objectivism complements, rather than sets out to replace, settled forms of discourse in the area of teaching literature. Market-demand is never value neutral. Ultimately, a business view of education would see business and education merge, yet the two enterprises define profit in paradigmatically incommensurable ways. These irreconcilable aspects are locked in a paradox between paradigms, and Human Literacy is able, by having a clearer view of text and reader, by its situation between competing models, to advocate a coalescence between theory and praxis, between wants and needs, between means and ends.

A Statement sustains a form of discourse within which 'external goods' dominate. Instead of this dominant and objectivist paradigm in A Statement, Human Literacy yields a more reconcilable form of conversational partnership when it comes to deriving value from literature. The first part of this Chapter showed that there is a range of utilitarian forms, and identified three particular kinds which have a liberal orientation and which coalesce within Human Literacy. The middle part of this Chapter identified two paradigms at work, in which different value positions
compete for educational prominence or emphasis. The third part of this Chapter demonstrated the paradoxical nature of these conflicting sets of values, and proposed Human Literacy as a means by which literature education needs can be satisfied into the next millennium.

These two separate notions, the irreconcilability of linear utilitarianism with Human Literacy and the incomplete and misunderstood grasp of certain liberal forms of utilitarianism together inform the critique of A Statement which appears in the final Chapter. Human Literacy is needed as a concept which can assure the future of literature education in Australia. It does so for three reasons: it bears a closer resemblance to the consistencies in the history of literature as a humanity and literature education as defined in Chapters Three and Four. Secondly, it achieves a greater equilibrium with contesting pressures in literature education than has been achieved in A Statement. Lastly, only Human Literacy articulates a continuity from the past to the future in a way which balances the discipline of what English teachers consider literature education to be, by being more finely honed to particular forms of liberal utilitarianism which are couched in broader forms of its public understanding.

The final chapter critiques A Statement by drawing together two arguments. Firstly, incomplete views of reader and text are identified. Then, the broader context of education and literature education are viewed for their inclusion and exclusion from the document. The irreconcilability and incommensurability of this narrow utilitarian scaffold within a liberal rationalist view of literature education finally leads to the articulation of the position by which Human Literacy can restore the liberal neglect which is required if curriculum in literature education is to have coherence and balance.
6. A CRITIQUE OF A STATEMENT

After discussing the various theoretical and philosophic issues which are attached to the significant aspects of a Statement, it is now possible to highlight the difficulties which are contained in this curriculum document. This enterprise could have been undertaken in a number of ways: one could list flawed assumptions, identify contradictions, refer to omissions, note incomplete definitions, mention inadequate theories or express concern over poorly contextualised ideas. While all, any one or a combination of these approaches would have been able to yield a rigorous critique in its own right, the structure of this chapter instead was shaped by two different considerations.

The first of these is the nature of the thesis. It has argued that Human Literacy redefines the relationship between reader and text. It next considered the educational implications of Human Literacy for literature education, and education more generally. Finally, Human Literacy is placed within broader liberal and utilitarian contexts and highlights certain tensions in that respect. So the first decision was to divide the concerns by those three groupings to allow the reader to see a consistency of approach coupled to arguments which are contained within original discussions.

The second decision was made in the light of the fact that this thesis has introduced an alternative framework which has attempted to be an agent for the collection of omissions, assumptions, deletions, inadequate definitions, contradictions, poor contextualisations etc that characterize a Statement. For that reason, each of the three sections below will first table the principle concern by way of short summary and will subsequently discuss the major points as they arise.
The following critique is argued on two levels: the first relates to the language and structure of the statement itself, which is challenged for its limited view of literature education from a Human Literacy perspective. The second places A Statement in the education paradigm in which it is based, and argues that this too is both limited and flawed when placed beside a more liberal position. Ultimately high school graduates need to be both educated and skilled; they need to be set on a path of lifelong learning and human development, and to be ready to enter either further learning / training or to join the workforce. The real question facing A Statement is: does it demonstrate a capacity to achieve both these objectives in the area of literature?

6.1. THE READER AND TEXT: INCOMPLETE VIEWS

All of the tables in this chapter are designed to contrast the Statement in terms of what it is with what it is not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Concept from A Statement</th>
<th>Key Concept in Human Literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What A Statement does say</td>
<td>What A Statement ought to say</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three tables below reflect the three parts of the Statement: namely English as an Area of Learning, Strands and Bands. Below each table there appears a brief statement designed to summarise each individual issue.
English as an Area of Learning In A Statement and In Human Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Concept from A Statement What A Statement does say</th>
<th>Key Concept in Human Literacy What A Statement ought to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authorship was bureaucratically driven Top-down model (Appendix Three to this thesis)</td>
<td>Authorship should have emerged from practitioners in the discipline Bottom-up model (Chapter Three)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4: A broad knowledge of a range of literature and a capacity to relate this literature to aspects of contemporary society and personal experience (1994: 3)</td>
<td>Goal 4: A broad knowledge of a range of literature and a capacity to vicariously experience alternate human responses through that literature by identifying personal response (Chapter Three)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5: The capacity to discuss and analyse texts and language critically and with appreciation (1994: 3)</td>
<td>Goal 5: To recognize the reader as individual meaning maker and spectator, the multiple ways of reading texts and the transformative potential of the transactional process (Chapter Three)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6: The capacity to develop reasoned arguments about interpretation and meaning (1994: 3)</td>
<td>Goal 6: To explore intertextual meanings and liberal values of literature followed by reasoned arguments (Chapters 3, 4 and 5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One form of literacy: critical (1994: 3)</td>
<td>Multidimensional literacies including critical literacy, family literacy, cultural literacy, literary criticism but with Human Literacy as a starting basis for interaction with literature (Chapter Three)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section, the five areas of concern in terms of the reader and text are:-

1. The authorship was constructed with a dominant political agenda which per se required a speed of curriculum construction which militated against broad consultation. Accordingly, practitioners in the field were the last to have input on the direction of A Statement.

2. The second concern establishes the point that A Statement draws an instrumentalist connection between literature and the place of the individual in society as its third goal of English. While such is an undisputedly desirable value, such a position overlooks what
happens when vicarious reading experiences are made, and it also overlooks the primacy of
the personal and private response in the haste to establish the social usefulness of text.

3. A Statement has the fifth goal of English as being 'to discuss and analyse texts and
language critically and with appreciation'. Such is the bias to a particular form of
engagement with literature that some very significant and theoretically identified
occurrences have not been accommodated; these are contextualised within Human Literacy.
They include the role of the reader as individual meaning maker and spectator, the multiple
ways of reading texts and the transformative potential of the transactional processes. These
were expanded upon more fully in Chapter Three.

4. The sixth and last goal of English rests on an exclusively logocentric view of what is
'done' with literature. This precludes a less easily defined, though no less significant value
base which is termed 'liberal' in the context of Human Literacy as enunciated in earlier
chapters. Connected to this is the particular view of text, which is discussed in greater
detail below.

5. Lastly, A Statement appears unaware of the academic debate about definitions of
literacies. That debate has been described as quite active and involved and which defines
multiple literacies, rather than any particular form of critical literacy which is interpreted in
A Statement as being derivative of forms of tertiary textual criticisms. Indeed, in Human
Literacy it is possible to read literature in a number of ways, such as personally, culturally,
morally, philosophically, etc. A Statement rather narrows literacy in terms of a particular
scholastic tradition, namely that of literary criticism. It is postulated here that the place for
such study of the ideologies of text is more correctly placed in tertiary, elective, non-
compulsory courses for those with such an interest, because secondary English is more
about articulating reader responses and clarifying individual value positions.
The concerns of the next section are in terms of the reader and text in relation to Strands:- A preliminary difficulty encountered with the use of the term ‘strand’ is its definition in *A Statement*: The English curriculum is defined as having ‘two strands: texts and language’. What is meant are two ways of conceptualizing the subject English: to examine English in the form of a critical examination of its textual products, or to study the English language for its socio-cultural and situational contexts, its linguistic structures and features, and strategies for developing competencies in speaking, listening, writing and reading. The preliminary concern here is that the two strands, the textual and the linguistic, are hardly exclusive of each other. It is understood that they represent different ways of viewing ‘English’, but they certainly do not emerge from a clear view of English as is described in Chapter Four of this thesis where the link to different models of English is made more clearly than has been the case in *A Statement*. This is mentioned because the theoretical basis of an English curriculum in terms of discipline models has gone unacknowledged in *A Statement*.

The focus is now on the concerns of literature as a strand:-
### Strands in *A Statement* and in Human Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Concept from <em>A Statement</em> What <em>A Statement</em> does say</th>
<th>Key Concept in Human Literacy What <em>A Statement</em> ought to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature is categorised as one of three text strands alongside Everyday Texts and Mass media (1994: 6-9)</td>
<td>Literature is a unique form of knowledge which calls for different ways of viewing this type of text (Human Literacy defined: pages 181-182 of this thesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Literature strand is further hierarchically subdivided by three strands: Classic Literature, Contemporary Literature and Popular Literature (1994: 6-9)</td>
<td>Literature is a form of texts which represents human relationships. Such a view has implications for how it is conceptualised and viewed in educational contexts (sections 3.5.2 and 3.6 of this thesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text as an object, a commodity, as authority, as product with finite interpretations, or interpretations which fit particular readings (note: this view of strands (1994: 6-15) is not enunciated but underlies the creation of the bands (1994: 16-42)</td>
<td>Text as desire, text as a humanity, text as basis for multiple intertextual ambiguities and meanings which allow for a range of responses (Section 3.5 of this thesis).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature is text (1994: 6)</td>
<td>Literature is a unique form of art and knowledge which is different from text (page 171 of thesis).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concerns here are, respectively, of literature and text. The first two issues concern literature and the other two text, including the relationship of text to literature.

The first concern notes the way literature has been defined. *A Statement* contextualizes literature by placing it alongside two other 'types' of text: everyday and media texts. Thus the preliminary form that is given to 'literature' in *A Statement* is one by which it is defined in terms of something else, rather than as containing particular characteristics by which it stands apart. So the relationship between literature, everyday texts and media is never explained. In contrast to this, Human Literacy recognizes the humanities base from which literature is constructed, and because that form is unique, places particular ways of viewing
literature which are at variance to the mundane and objectivist ways in which text are viewed in *A Statement*. Literature is a unique form of text, and this is not recognised.

Secondly, *A Statement* defines literature in two ways: as involving the use of language and the imagination to represent, recreate, shape and explore human experience, and as providing readers, viewers and listeners with rich meanings and significant imaginative experiences. Human Literacy emphasizes the idea that literature is more than human experience, it is about the representation of human relationships, a theme which has underpinned the study of the humanities in the tradition of Western learning. The difference is not semantic: the former views human experience in a detached manner, one which objectifies, analyses and critically contextualizes the experience. The latter, however, explores the relationship of the reader to the literary rendition of human relationships with a view to establishing how the reader feels, reacts, responds to these vicariously lived experience. These conceptualisations are significantly at variance, having different perspectival origins. The educational ramifications of these perceptual differences are followed through in section 6.2. below.

The third and fourth issues concern text. In *A Statement*, text has a functionalist objectivist form, while in Human Literacy the examined meanings are recognised as lying somewhere between the text and the reader, created in a discursive space. Such a view sees text less literally, and allows for recognition of psychological and interactional dimensions which occur in the reader, to which text is a mere handmaiden, or stimulus. Thus text in *A Statement* distorts the way the discipline of English understands text to work on the reader, and this fundamentally flaws its impact on the kind of inclusive or representative curriculum framework it aims to be.
This is compounded by the last mentioned concern, namely the notion that *A Statement* fails to recognize the unique nature of literature. That uniqueness of literature as an art form onto itself is embedded in the tradition of the humanities and is articulated in the nineteenth century through a liberal foundation. This definition creates possibilities for deeper meanings and belief structures, and these are explored in greater detail in the next section. There is a value base to this liberal foundation which attaches humanising and civilising characteristics to literature, and this value base sits ahead of a functionalist instrumentalist view of text as espoused in *A Statement*.

The concerns of the next section in terms of the reader and text are in relation to Bands:-

**Bands in *A Statement* and in Human Literacy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Concept from <em>A Statement</em> What <em>A Statement</em> does say</th>
<th>Key Concept in Human Literacy What <em>A Statement</em> ought to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bands A, B, C and D: an hierarchical arrangement (1994: 16-42)</td>
<td>The appreciation that literature cannot be broken down into bands of difficulty, rather developmentally appropriate contexts of adolescence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature as a competency: vocational instrumentalism of literature (1994: 46-7, points 1, 4, 5 &amp; 10)</td>
<td>Intrinsic worth of literature, usefulness of literature to identity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hierarchical view of competencies in literature engagement suggests that there are differing levels of quality which attach themselves to the way literature is used in educational settings. The detail of that is specified in the accompanying document, *English - A Curriculum Profile For Australian Schools*. Suffice it to say that the nature of individual responses to literature are of such a nature that they do not necessarily invite comparison with other responses. Thus to suggest such a competency model for literature education is to misunderstand how literature works. When in England in 1993 English teachers were
asked to band written outcomes responses to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet questions according to particular categories of expected responses, there was a complete refusal, and the attempt had to be abandoned (David Homer, 1994).

Indeed, Persian conceptualisations of worthwhile educational activities suggest that worthwhile quality can be in and of itself, does not have to be immediate, and is often intrinsic. Others (Charles Bailey, 1984) have added liberal dimensions, such as applications beyond the present and particular, as characteristics of successful learning which cannot be reduced to a utilitarian denominator: this concern is further detailed when considering the educational contrasts between A Statement and Human Literacy below.

6.2 EDUCATION AND LITERATURE EDUCATION: COMPETING DEFINITIONS

This part of the concern examines the value base of the education paradigm underpinning both A Statement and Human Literacy. Thus, references are called for which identify factors in the respective contexts which support the particular paradigm from which either pronouncements are made. In the process, however, this critique identifies a different value base from which each concept emerges, and those differences are shown as opposite, conflicting and as finally irreconcilable.

Philosophically, A Statement holds a particular emphasis on the work ethic as a means to a wealthy and therefore happy society. Education is the training which achieves this quality of life which is expressed in terms of economic indicators where productivity matters, and social issues come second.
In contrast to this, Human Literacy holds that the basis of a free and democratic society is one which is brought about by educated, that is liberated judgements which are made in the context of an informed, learned rather than skilled society which holds justice and equality as fundamental principles.

Is there room for both philosophies to co-exist, or should one incorporate the other? As it stands, A Statement has been shown to be deficient. Human Literacy has been introduced as a way of reinterpreting literature education in order to redress the imbalance: if curriculum in English, specifically in literature education, is to be meaningful and coherent, then the two philosophies must find the opportunity to coalesce.

### Models of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Concept from A Statement (What A Statement does say)</th>
<th>Key Concept in Human Literacy (What A Statement ought to say)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objectives designed to promote consistent approach to English curricula development by describing a sequence for developing knowledge and skills</td>
<td>Objectives designed to achieve agreement on English curricula by describing agreed content and leaving method and sequence to practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education as a key to improved living which is determined in financial terms</td>
<td>Education as a Means to Identity In Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education is training</td>
<td>Education and the “Examined Life”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education is a means to materialist ends</td>
<td>Education is about value and meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education is about immediate outcomes</td>
<td>Education as worthwhile activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Education in a context of finite resources</td>
<td>Liberal Education and the New Millennium: a sustainable future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education as a skills base</td>
<td>Education as a humanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education is about increased productivity</td>
<td>Education is about breadth and depth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table is a summary of the first part of Chapter Four, and is listed here to bear out the issues concerning general education. What follows is more specifically in respect of models of teaching English.

## Models Of Literature Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Concept from <em>A Statement</em> What <em>A Statement</em> does say</th>
<th>Key Concept in Human Literacy What <em>A Statement</em> ought to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature education is about outcomes</td>
<td>Literature education is about process, designed to promote the autonomous, rational, moral agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature education is about usefulness in specialised contexts</td>
<td>Literature education is about intrinsic value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature education can be educationally managed, is about the present and particular</td>
<td>Literature education is liberal, general and universalizable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature education is about skill, at the whim of a government</td>
<td>Literature education is about knowledge, culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy is about critical reading and writing</td>
<td>Literacy is about recognising imagination and articulating personal responses: then about critical skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature education is of economic/vocational benefit</td>
<td>Literature education is a personal growth model of English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above table the contrasts are drawn in a deliberately crass way, to emphasize the differences, even if at times there might be room for some overlap or commonality. The reason this was done is to enable the following table, which abstracts the contrasting models of teaching English.
The Contested Site of Literature Education:
Contrasting Models of English Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utilitarian / Vocationalist Context</th>
<th>Human Literacy / Liberal Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Functional Model</td>
<td>Personal Growth Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose driven English</td>
<td>Cultural Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhetorical Model and Extroverted</td>
<td>Personal and Introspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Response</td>
<td>Reader Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text: a critical tool</td>
<td>Text: a process of self-creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes emphasizing</td>
<td>Input and process emphasizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural criticism</td>
<td>Cultural heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross curricular skills meeting adult needs</td>
<td>The enjoyment and aesthetic appreciation of literature as a unique art form</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ‘Know thy use to the economy’:
  *homo economicus* (Jones)
  technical rationalist positivist base | ‘Know thyself’:
  *homo sapiens sapiens gravitas* |

In the background to this dichotomous display of competing models operates a further range of expectations and practices which do not easily coalesce with either of the above: among them are the Leavisite model, models of postmodern criticism more properly at home in tertiary studies of literature, models of gender, psychoanalytic and/or textual studies which are relatively specialized, or adherents of a particularly canonical view of literature.

6.3. HUMAN LITERACY: AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESTORE LIBERAL NEGLECT

This critique has deliberately contrasted opposing, at times somewhat overlapping ideological conceptualisations of the teaching of literature in educational settings. These can
now be outlined in the form of concerns which encompass the previous tables in a summative way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What A Statement implies</th>
<th>What Human Literacy implies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Reader: An Instrumentalist Model</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Reader: A Personal Growth Model</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reader: a person to be skilled according to particular competencies</td>
<td>The reader: a person in whom response is to be identified, elicited, independently valued and discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Text as Means to an End</strong></td>
<td><strong>Literature’s Uniqueness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The text: a medium of instruction, a cultural product that is used, and from which literature is not aberrant in form</td>
<td>Literature is a unique form of art and knowledge which is different from text in unique ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literature Education in a Vocational Context</strong></td>
<td><strong>Literature Education and Personal Identity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature education fits into a national curriculum the purpose of which is the generation of a more competitively able society</td>
<td>Literature education is seen in a context where the individuals learns to understand him/herself in a personal-growth model of English in which identity is clarified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education = happiness</strong></td>
<td><strong>Education = knowing yourself and others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education is seen predominantly for its economic usefulness</td>
<td>Education is seen predominantly for its quality of life, insight and cultural understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education = work = happiness</strong></td>
<td><strong>Education = social justice = happiness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarian framework articulates a direct relationship between education and the State and sees people as units of production.</td>
<td>Liberal framework articulates an indirect benefit of the aware individual to society where individuality, liberty and freedom are cherished as preconditions for a strongly democratic society. This includes the forms of hedonistic, human-focused and intrinsic utilitarianism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table then says what is inside and what is outside of A Statement by abstracting the arguments that have pervaded this thesis in order to establish the absence of values which

* ‘happiness’ as used by Jeremy Bentham and James Mill (see Chapter Five) as meaning absence of pain, and absence of pain as being seen as the greatest good of the greatest number (public form of utilitarianism).
have been collected under the innovative term Human Literacy in the hope that the imbalance against utilitarianism can be restored.

A Statement, by aiming to please everyone, pleases no-one, and manages to reach a new lowest common denominator, rather than being what it aims to be, a new direction in English teaching. For it to become the latter, it needs to have a stronger theoretical basis, link literature, criticism and reader response approaches within a broader understanding of human literacy. That is, it must be multi-dimensional, rather than confine itself to a somewhat narrow view of curriculum direction. To this effect, the remaining part of this section defines education more comprehensively and postulates four cardinal values which characterise the educational context of Human Literacy.

6.3.1 Is Education Adequately Defined In A Statement?

'Education' cannot be as narrowly defined as in the eight levels of outcomes in English- a curriculum profile for Australian schools, the document which details the broad outcomes which flow from those listed in A Statement (1994: 21, 27, 35). That understanding is competency driven and thus by definition limits itself to skills and knowledge that is measured, in this case against an employability model. What is omitted from such a brief is the understanding that education is about the qualities and values by which we live. That quality of education lies beyond the quantitative measuring of children's achieved levels of reading and comprehension skills as in A Statement.

This has implications for how competencies with text are perceived. Are they skills? Skills prepare for quality, but are not really an adequate or sufficient definition of education in

* Happiness as being individual and intrinsic fulfilment as described by John Stuart Mill (private form of utilitarianism)(see Chapter Five).
terms of describing someone as ‘being educated’. What is that quality which lies beyond the skills?

Education has no end beyond itself. Its value derives from principles and standards implicit in it. To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel with a different view. What is required is not feverish preparation for something that lies ahead, but to work with precision, passion and taste at worthwhile things that lie to hand. These worthwhile things cannot be forced on reluctant minds, neither are they flowers towards which the seeds of mentality develop in the sun of the teacher’s smile. They are acquired by contact with those who have already acquired them and who have patience, zeal, and competence enough to initiate others into them.

There is a quality of life which lies beyond the mere fact of life. The great teacher is he who can convey this sense of quality to another, so that it haunts his every endeavour and makes him sweat and yearn to fix what he thinks and feels in a fitting form. For life has no one purpose; man imprints his purpose on it. It presents a few tidy problems; mainly predicaments that have to be endured or enjoyed. It is education that provides that touch of eternity under the aspect of which endurance can pass into dignified, wry acceptance, and minimal enjoyment into a quality of living (R.S. Peters in Archambault, 1972: 110).

Such a definition challenges the assumed values underlying A Statement and focuses instead on the relevance of intrinsic learning. This in turn is furthered by an appreciation of the humanities-base of text. Being 'skilled' is qualitatively different from being 'educated':-

An educated person is also one who is capable, to a certain extent, of a non-instrumental attitude, of doing things for their own sake. He is a person capable of what Passmore calls 'care'. He can delight in what he is doing without always asking the question ‘And where is this going to get me?’ This applies as much to cooking as it does to chemistry. He can enjoy the company of a friend as well as a concert. And his work is not just a chore to be carried out for the cash. He has a sense of standards as well as a sense of the setting of what he is doing between the past and the future. There is a continuity in his life which is contributed by his concerns and commitments.

Processes of education are processes by means of which people are initiated into this form of life. They are not to be regarded as the means to the end of being educated; for in learning to think or act in a certain kind of way a person begins to exhibit, perhaps only embryonically, the qualities which characterise the end. We learn to cook by cooking, to think by thinking, to paint by painting. Learning, by definition, involves coming up to some standard, getting something right. So the standards are immanent in the process of learning; they are not some distant end to which the learning is instrumental.
There are, of course, sequences in learning and often a hierarchical structure of standards to be achieved. But there is always something to get right, to do well here and now. It is seldom a matter of grinding through things just to reach some distant end. In education, as in life generally, it is the quality of what it is we are doing here and now that matters. But what we are doing now is meaningful only because of what we have already mastered and leads on logically to what we have still to master. We live to learn- and we learn to live (Peters, 1971, Bulmershe Lecture: 12).

'Education', then, must be defined in a broader context than competency acquisition. It must also address the non-instrumentalist value position of education, one that is couched in the truly liberal notion of what learning (through text) really means. A Statement, because it attempts to refocus educational processes towards outcomes, tilts dangerously towards dead dogmas, because of the way knowledge is seen as a commodification or skilling of people.

Now A Statement asks readers to examine the constructional features of text, and in so doing to recognise these functions without drawing any consequences for themselves beyond the recognition of textual feature. This is where the broad "goal of the ability to relate literature to society and personal experience" (A Statement: 3) fails to translate into the bands as described.

A Statement constitutes a narrowing of a liberal understanding, and this narrowing is at the expense of the quality of education on offer, although the advocates of A Statement would be adamant that the reverse was the original intention. To categorise people into levels of skill does not accord with a liberal view as understood by an utilitarian like J.S. Mill or an educator like Matthew Arnold. Where liberty is seen as a primary social good, liberalism champions freedom of conscience: the freedom of intellectual, religious, political and artistic expression. The right to challenge orthodoxy in whatever form; the right therefore to challenge the practice of economic rationalism or the prescriptive nature of a curriculum.
Arising from A Statement as described in Chapter Two, there are three incomplete understandings of what education is or does that are at work in this document:

- the document is outcomes and assessment, rather than epistemologically driven,
- education is commodified as a product seen in an obsolete industrial way, and
- the values of the process, or journey, of education are ignored.

6.3.2 Must Education Be Outcome - Focused?

The first is the notion that education is, by definition, exclusively or predominantly outcome-focussed. Bantock, Peters, Suzuki and Jones are among contemporaries who in their work have separately arrived at the view that such a conceptualisation is inadequate. The values and belief systems inherent in the contributions by these people have influenced their contemporaries, and have contributed to fuel a humanist debate by examining the value context of progress.

Jones (1990) differentiates the 'inner' from the 'outer man' in an attempt to make this distinction clearer. By separating (anthropologically) the tool-using and consuming human being (homo economicus) from the thinking and language-using inner man (homo sapiens) (1990: 210-238), Jones in fact argues that we too readily accept the idea that a person is primarily a tool-making animal. Archaeology reveals stone hammers, axes and split skulls. It also reveals art, and hints at language, myth, religion, music, ritual or magic:

We assume, all too readily, that the utilitarian and tangible are central to human experience, and that emotion, communication, learning and understanding are peripheral. There is a fundamental dichotomy between inner man (the thinker and language user) and outer man (the consumer and tool-user) (Jones: 211-212).
The whole argument of Human Literacy is that without the development of human understanding the toolmaker will not experience the depth of being human, without which education would be mere training.

The value of education is reduced to economic utility. Skills that are not seen to be of economic significance are devalued... The role of education is not and should not be to respond to the short term demands of industry (Sachs, 1991: 127-9).

6.3.3 Does The Commodification Of The Human Advance Education?

The second is the notion that people are objects to advance an agenda outside the arena of the human. This instrumentalist or utilitarian view of people suggests that there is really no place in a society to recognise or value personal, private, intrinsic, non-extrinsic aspects of what happens when a person is engaging in education. By contrast, the human nourishes. The human is required to regain cultural potency. If a society in its haste to progress focuses on technicist and developmental considerations without allowing for the 'noise of culture', any such progress is by definition skewed.

Such a view begs the question: is there anything worth doing beyond the instrumental reason for doing it? Is it worthwhile to listen to music, to read without having to produce anything about what you have read, to paint, to eat something when you are not hungry? What is worthwhile in an education? Is it the exclusive purpose of education to produce outcomes? Does our society only value education by measurable, quantifiable outcomes which can be aggregated? Or is there some deeper purpose to life which may add meaning to an otherwise mundane existence?
6.3.4 Life "Endured" Versus Life "Enjoyed"

What do classical (pre-liberal) times tell us about the value of education? Interestingly, scholé is Greek for leisure, and it is from the leisurely pursuit of knowledge for its own sake that the first schools of speculative inquiry emerged (Bowen, 1972: 67). This view defines the enjoyable aspect of learning, as a process and an outcome, as a pleasuring, pleasure-based delight. In contrast, only six references to 'enjoy' occur in A Statement. No less than thirty seven references to 'work' appear in the same document. 'Enjoyment' appears as less significant than work-related concepts in the curriculum framework.

The Romans developed scholé to their term of ludus. This is play. A relaxing game among peers is not about winning, but about playing. Ludus magister accordingly is the person who organises the play or structured activity. Here the teacher (magister = instigator) is seen as the initiator, the organiser of play as an enjoyable and intrinsic way of learning (Bowen, 1972). This is an oft forgotten or overlooked notion of what the term teacher has come to mean in modern times, where teaching today is perceived as the agent by which students are prepared for exit exams.

Both words (scholé and ludus) in their own time assumed the meaning of places of instruction, and from them we have our etymological school. The ludic, or the notion of education as play, is insufficiently acknowledged in A Statement which explicitly drives outcomes. That education is open-ended play, that students of literature might enjoy a non-outcomes emphasising environment of literature to play with characters, and consider the actions and reflections in terms of themselves, is an intrinsic value that characterises Human Literacy but not A Statement.
The significance of these word origins lies in that people who engage in such learning are in the first instance given to enjoy learning, are provided with ample space and opportunity to reflect upon themselves and are not doing so from the need to achieve a skill level, credential or vocational need. The notion that learning can be rewarding for its own sake, in enriching the learner, is one that is enunciated in the course of this inquiry¹, and is one which helps form part of what is so often loosely termed 'culture'. Thus the enjoyment-emphasising leisurely open-endedly ludic is conspicuous for its absence in an outcome-driven curriculum document such as is under discussion.

So if one understands education to be a combination of the leisurely, the ludic, the enjoyment on the one hand and the rewarding nature of engaging with text in a reader-response way which allows for personal growth in a non-applied outcome way, an intrinsic way, a Human Literacy way, then such an approach begs the earlier question of what is a worthwhile activity. Non-economic concerns also form part of any equation in which human considerations are to be recognized. If the avoidance of waste was an overriding concern of those who brought in linear managerialism, then the logical extension of such an argument brings us to the paradox of the parable referred to in Appendix 3 (Schubert's Unfinished Symphony) in which the production of music is subject to a rationalisation by which the original becomes distorted beyond recognition. A re-conceptualisation begins with the recognition of the significance of education not only as a skills-promoting activity, but as a life-enlarging process, as a self-enriching occurrence. For such a development to take place, an appreciation of a liberal rationalist view of literature must be braided with the more dominant utilitarian view.

¹ In drafting a course proposal for Continuing Education West in 1991, the planners wanted to know from me what skills my proposed course in contemporary literature had which were of value to the work force. Whoever designed the form was obviously overcome with the need to justify a course in discussing books purely in terms of instrumental usefulness.
Phillip Adams (discussing the role of the humanities with Stephen Knight and Rosemary Threadgold) on Late Night Live ABC Radio (August 12, 1991), mentioned an interview he had had with the chief of IBM when in the US, in which he asked which of the two he would prefer to employ: a computer whiz person, or one with an honours degree in English. The latter, replied the IBM manager, because anyone can learn computer skills. This anecdote strengthens the idea that there are people who increasingly recognise and value a liberal education as having vocationalist implications which have hitherto gone unnoticed. Such a point of view goes some way towards legitimising the notion of Human Literacy as an inherently valuable form of educational discourse.

The Phillip Adams argument cited above can be illustrated with copious examples.

The new managerialism is not simply a step forward, and future steps will not necessarily be along the same path. It is likely to result in a new set of distortions to the efficiency principle, and in structures and procedures that will, in turn, need to be overturned. Values that are not emphasised in the current wave of reform will be re-asserted at a later date... this opens the way for a further round of debate and conflict over a diverse set of values, rather than simply being a tool for the pursuit of efficiency (Painter, 1988: 4-18).

Meredith and Painter articulate the need for a clearer understanding of the role of the humanities in education in Australia today. By examining the role of literature in a secondary curriculum, Human Literacy manages to articulate such a value base which is at once liberal, and thus in tune with the humanities, as well as theoretically appropriate.

The locus of value in a definition of education which aims to be more coherent or inclusive therefore sees the iterative process (of people engaging with literature) as based in leisured enjoyment, in playful mastery, in reflective engagement, in worthwhile activities which are not instantly rewarding, not simply consumption oriented, and which hold an intrinsic
value of their own. Such a definition articulates education as quality, not consequence, process, not solution.

6.3.5 The Value Of Process In Education

Learning which is derived from an immersion in the humanities is far more process oriented and depth-related than expedient and outcome-focussed. As such it contrasts in an elementary and confrontational way with the industrialised notion of markets dictating demand:

> It is good to have an end to journey towards, but it is the journey that matters, in the end. (Ursula Le Guin, The Left Hand of Darkness, 1969: 12)

Or, differently termed: just because there is a problem, that does not mean that there is a solution (Karl Jung, quoted by Blackman, in Jones, 1989: 21). Complicating this notion is the further concept that in literature, authors use writing to reflect upon experience and engage with themselves. An elemental purpose of literature as a humanity therefore is 'to always test characters morally, spiritually, ethically, ideationally, intellectually, culturally - to determine identity and find out just who they are' (Kelleher, 1992). Such searching is not undertaken with any causal intention of wanting to apply the gained insight to some advantage, but with the intrinsic desire to reach a deeper and reflexive understanding, better self-knowledge: to know thyself; nosce te ipsum (Plutarch's reference to the Greek oracle at Delphi).

A third understanding of education emanating from A Statement is that, because the emphasis is so much on output, there is a corresponding proportionate disregard of what happens when people are being educated. That is, the process is regarded as less valuable than the product. Outcomes-driven learning, by definition, narrows the process to the terms
of the desired outcomes. Such a definition of education misunderstands what occurs in people as their enlightenment grows. Underscoring such a paradigmatically different view of education is a fundamental difference in perspective: William Reid (1978: 95) contrasts these differences of value well in a table which appears in Appendix One.

Since the middle of this century, there has been a growing recognition that cognitive understanding plays a significant part in education. Over this time, there has been a paradigm shift, no doubt due to the exponential explosion of information, that the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake is not as relevant to a person's success in education today as it might have been conceptualised at an earlier (classical, renaissance, pre-industrialisation) time. That is, knowledge for its own sake is seen as less integral an aspect of a person's education today than equipping people with the skills of (preferably instantaneous) information retrieval. This narrowing perception of education is not to the long term advantage of the learner, for it is based on what Barrow terms the "generic fallacy" (1990), where it is believed that all knowledge is a commodity which can be applied to problem solving in a generic, non-specific way. The generic fallacy supposes that dealing with scientific information involves the same thinking processes as dealing with poetry, even though recent advances in cognitive science clearly take a domain specific stance (Sternberg, 1996, Perkins, 1995, Bruer, 1993).

A second shift in the curriculum industry in the last thirty years in Australia has arguably been the gradual down-playing of the affective role of education, that is, a diminishing recognition of the notion of attitude or value (in the sense of moral enlightenment) which colours the participants' approach to education. As an example, although the notion of attitude and value exists in the NSW 1995 K-6 English syllabus alongside knowledge and skills, attitude and value are absent from A Statement. The most we have today is a political correctness about terms and concepts, and a fierce
recognition of the plurality of cultural beliefs. Gone from curriculum statements are such value notions as 'compassion', 'human understanding', and in its place are such terms as ‘critical’ and ‘comparative studies of form’. This suggests a precedence of form over content, and a down playing of the 'human' in humanities education. The shift to Human Literacy aims to rebalance the education equation.

6.4 Conclusion

The title of this thesis is *Human Literacy: Liberal Neglect in A Statement on English for Australian Schools*. It has been the intention of this critique to contrast the many divergent themes that have characterised *A Statement*, the teaching and learning of English and most of all, the relationship between reader and text. This has been founded on those theoretical positions which articulate a value base which had in the eyes of this author not been adequately reflected in *A Statement*. In the process it became necessary to ideologically reposition a neglected perspective, and this was achieved under the rubric of liberal neglect. In the interests of a sustainable Australian society that is able to tackle the future positively, it has been contested that *A Statement* needs to be repositioned by accepting the omissions that Human Literacy articulates, in order to more properly reflect the professional expectations of English teachers and the lifelong needs of English students.
7. CONCLUSION

The initial motivation for this dissertation stemmed from a curiosity to find out just what it is that is so valuable and precious about working with young people with literature in high schools. A lifetime spent teaching and learning with and about literature, witnessed many marvellous moments in many institutional and social settings, wherever people came together to talk about books, where insights happened, experiences were shared, characters and themes explored, ideas discussed. Our humanity was explored. The discussions were driven by interest, and it only occasionally dawned on this teacher to question the basis of that interest. Those occasions usually were ones where there was a challenge to the selection, study or discussion of a book. The challenge came from outside the school, from parents. What was being questioned varied: at times the openness with which any topic might be discussed in a secular government school by teenagers, or the appropriateness of particular texts which had been set for Higher School Certificate study in New South Wales by the Board of Studies, or the quality of thinking or the ideology of particular texts. Mostly the challenges could be talked through with satisfactory resolutions all round. That usually meant that if the parent insisted on a particular text not being taught, the particular student was given an alternate title. Though at times it became apparent that parental expectations of schooling could sometimes be unusually narrow, over the years the experience was that this teacher was told:-

- schools are not here to teach students to think
- secular schools have a duty to uphold certain values, and refute the existence of others\(^1\)

\(^1\) This context was also referred to in an introductory footnote. Particular works were challenged (such as Equus by Peter Schaffer, Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller, or Forever by Judy Blume). The challenges
In each case the content and philosophy of education for teenagers using literature became the focus, the contested site. What this teacher began to be curious about is while he took the bread and butter of English teaching for granted, others increasingly came to question this. Why? The publication in 1994 of *A Statement* gave the perfect opportunity to articulate a general unease by a more focused critique and clarification of what it means to engage in literature for educational yield.

This thesis took the form of an inquiry into the basis of what happens when young people engage with literature. As the initial curiosity deepened, the search began for a theoretical basis to reader responses to literature. It was suspected that there must exist a body of understanding (like the Loch Ness Monster at the bottom of the lake) which would be able to answer questions about the relevance of literature to contemporary learning.

While the journey has enlightened, it has also has been accompanied by unintentional outcomes: the richness of the problem became more apparent, with links to belief structures and value systems appearing as more and more connected. Philosophically, the journey became one of being able to see more clearly, and that has been a skill the learning of which was enjoyable. The curiosity also hardened as Australian society continues to question the value of working with literature. What seemed at stake during the period that this thesis took shape was the relevance of literature as a humanity in Australia today. ‘Competencies’, ‘skills’ and ‘outcomes’ were terms more regularly discussed in education than were ‘liberal’, ‘intrinsic’ or ‘vicarious’ learning. Particular forms of utilitarianism had seemingly been forgotten.

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*always came from outside the school. In the case of Forever it was the then Director-General of School Education. The other two challenges were made by parents of particularly strong religious persuasions (who were backed by the Reverend Fred Nile, MLA NSW Parliament)*
It is now possible to combine a recognition made when defining Human Literacy with a recognition made about a liberal and utilitarian tension in education (Chapter Four) in the light of a reconsideration of utilitarian meaning that was undertaken in Chapter Five in order to show that the subtlety of multiple meanings appertaining to utilitarianism as a multi-dimensional concept were missed by the architects of A Statement. In this way the link between Human Literacy and a reconsidered educational paradigm is carried through in respect of freshly and more clearly interpreted utilitarian considerations. The omission in A Statement of more tolerant aspects of utilitarianism amounts to a neglect in respect of liberal opportunity for curriculum reform. It is this ‘liberal neglect’ (as contained in the title of this thesis) which is recaptured in the notion of Human Literacy in order to provide a more viable and sustained understanding of reader response in literature education.

Defining and contextualising Human Literacy in Chapter Three 3.6 showed a range of poles on a continua of how texts work on the reader. That recognition is one which appreciates a range of reader-responses which vary from the active to the passive, from the intrinsic to the extrinsic.

At the beginning of Chapter 4 it was shown how utilitarianism thematically strives with liberal influences in education. These contrasting forces are perceived as competing for the attention of educators when they devise curriculum in respect of reader-education in literature.

A closer examination in Chapter Five of utilitarianism has shown that it is possible to attach differential values to utilitarianism, depending on which interpretation is made. The model of Human Literacy that was developed in the continuum (3.6) was revisited in an educational context at the beginning of Chapter Four. Together with the benefit of the analysis of differing forms of utilitarianism in Chapter Five, it became possible to
distinguish between several nuances of utilitarian application to reader education. These
range from:-

| Hedonistic utilitarianism          | to          | ‘Puritan’ Utilitarianism   |
| Human-Centred utilitarianism      | to          | of profit to the group     |
| Intrinsic utilitarianism          | to          | Extrinsic utilitarianism   |

In respect of literature education, the recognition that there are variant forms of utilitarian
meanings that can be attached to the benefits of engaging with literature invites the
conclusion that an outcomes-based approach to literature education is a limited (and indeed
inadequate) way of accommodating the complexities that attach themselves to the multiple
utilitarian interpretations that can be made to how literature education potentially benefits the
reader. The polar continuum that can be developed from this antithesis is one which
contains the following shades of difference within a utilitarian understanding that redefines
the term ‘outcome’ in ways which are less simplistic than in *A Statement*.

**Shades of Utilitarianism in Literature Education**

| Use of literature to develop critical skills and extrinsically tangible outcomes, a perception of happiness as the absence of pain, and the linear mastery of literature in terms of social utility. | ↔ Literature of intrinsic benefit to people as human beings: enjoyment without immediate purpose but containing the potential of personal growth, and an appreciation of life drawn from moments of pain and pleasure: multi-dimensional outcomes. |
Implied in the above contrast are the following characteristics of utilitarian outcomes which show an abundance of possibilities in a polar continuum that broadens the term ‘outcome’ from that used in *A Statement* in respect of literature education. It is through an appreciation of the diverse scope and semantic richness of the term ‘utilitarian’ that the multidimensional nature of literature education becomes apparent. Chapter Five’s analysis shows that the use of a linear functional form of utilitarianism in *A Statement* by contrast is stark and fails to reflect the richness of the history and meaning of this term in respect of what literature education has professionally come to be.

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<td>applied uses</td>
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<td>skills-based knowledge or</td>
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The conclusion from these variant understandings of social and individual utility of young people engaging with literature is that the economic rationalist context of the meaning attached to ‘outcomes’ as defined in *A Statement* is too narrow, as it is anchored at one polar end of the above continuum. Such a perception is incomplete because it is one
dimensional and therefore not available to broader shades of meaning which are contained in the term, and which reside in the space from the instrumentalist to the liberal in ways which are neither hierarchical nor necessarily immediately tangible. The nuances of these values are equally important, and cannot be reduced to terms such as mere ‘competencies’, ‘outcomes’, ‘bands’ or ‘levels’, because in such a process they fail to represent the breadth or depth of the spectrum of utilitarian potential.

The usefulness of literature education lies not only in the possibilities of immediate outcome oriented skill proficiencies, but includes also significant inherent values which are not recognised in A Statement, yet which were well understood by the theorists who coined, used and developed the term in a climate at once more liberal in the sense that it was more tolerant of nuances, subtleties and multiple meanings. It is necessary, therefore to reposition the meaning of utilitarianism to include a humanist dynamic (Knight, 1990: 5-7). In respect of literature education, this is here achieved through Human Literacy.

In the background to this thesis stood two developments which must here be mentioned because the thesis was aware of both. One was the development of a national curriculum in England, the other was the discourse over the relevance of the humanities in Australia, which in turn also affected the development of a national curriculum here.

In England, Duncan Graham and David Tytler in 1993 wrote A Lesson For Us All, the Making of the National Curriculum. This work chronicles the ‘growing gulf between practical reality and political imperatives’. The work describes how teachers were caught between the new methods and the old ones in a feeling of unease.

The dialogue between educationalists, the public, industry, commerce and the politicians went disastrously wrong (Graham and Tytler, 1993: 2).
In the last decade the drive for efficiency and relevance was a battle which was being fought in England in different social circumstances than was the case in Australia: sometimes the debate was slightly ahead of that occurring in Australia, sometimes it was at the same time. In England the key was the 1988 Education Reform Act driven by the then Prime Minister Mrs Margaret Thatcher together with her Education Secretary Kenneth Baker. There is no doubt left in the work of Tytler and Graham that the biggest issue was a gulf between perception and reality, tradition and progress:-

> What happened in effect was that a government which passionately believed in market forces prescribed a curriculum for state schools in unparalleled detail (Graham and Tytler, 1993: 117)

The debated terms of the day concerned what was 'rigour' and what was 'a standard' in education. The pace of change between the government's wishes and the profession's ability to maintain pace with those wishes in that country is continuing. The lessons of change include the argument that the 1988 Act together with the National Curriculum that flowed from it provided a unique opportunity to lift standards and expectations, to question what a national curriculum could do and ought to achieve.

Unresolved issues include the following ongoing concerns (Graham and Tytler, 1993: Chapter 11):-

- **Cost**: while more was made available for staff development, less money was left with which to resource schools.

- **Class sizes**: in England this included a vigorous debate concerning specialised class sizes and just how large class sizes ought to be. It appears research, for whatever reason, failed to inform this debate.
• Underprivilege still corresponds with underachievement. Equality of access by gender, by multicultural background, by ability to pay remains an issue in the national curriculum as much as it did before.

• Testing: the debate over outcomes is not over, and just as in England there is a question mark over the A-level examination to bridge the academic and vocational divide, so too in Australia the nature of how to assess, profile and identify ability is one which no doubt will continue, especially concerning instrumentalist versus inherent learning.

In Australia during this time, Colin Marsh describes the urge towards a national Curriculum in his late 1994 appearing title Producing A National Curriculum, Plans and Paranoia. This title appeared while this present work was in progress. Where the two touch, is in the acknowledgment that the bureaucratic compulsion of governments to standardise practices in order to gain control over outcomes does not translate well to the Arts, and is particularly troublesome for arts education (McTaggart in Marsh, 1994: 3).

Marsh chronicles in some detail the journey towards the National Statements, and that journey was described in Chapter Two in which reference to Marsh’s work was made. The remaining part of the book identifies similar issues to those listed as ongoing concerns in England, and lists the progress made by each State or Territory towards integrating the statements with state curricula. It is indeed a postscript that with a change of Federal Government in March 1996, the heat of the drive towards a national curriculum has been replaced by a two paragraph statement from the Coalition Government: they see a national curriculum as desirable to provide for increased population mobility between states, but it leaves the details much to the states. Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!
Finally, what work was going on in Australia during this time which bears on the value of institutionally studying the humanities? That debate has been one not confined to the teaching of literature, or one geographically confined to Australia. The relevance of the humanities to the way we choose to live our lives is an important theme, and it has been discussed by several writers in this country in recent years.

These publications have been read, but deemed for a variety of reasons to have had little bearing on the particular nature of this inquiry. They are mentioned here to demonstrate that the reading behind this thesis was indeed broadly investigative before it became critically focussed to the final form it took. There is a relative dearth of publications which describes the humanities base which is contemporary and Australian and against which one could contextualise the need to articulate a Human Literacy.

As John Dawkins described Australia as needing to become the 'clever country' (1991), Donald Horne had anticipated such a remark by sarcastically referring to Australia as 'the lucky country'. Horne said already in 1964 that:-

There is a lack of general class of educated persons who are familiar with the history of human thought (at least in outline), and see their connection with it, who are familiar with analytical, categorizing and generalizing approaches, who work in many different fields in which the only common characteristic is a 'relatively high degree of abstraction or of ordering of some common experience', who can apply knowledge and curiosity to the things they are interested in and who, despite their occupational differences, can communicate with each other, as equals, in a sustained and rigorous discourse on the affairs of the day (Horne, 1964: 214).

The criteria by which Australia ought to progress can thus be variously addressed. Although Horne acknowledges a naive faith in the meaning of economic indicators, he is among those who questioned the ability of the marketplace to dictate terms for a complex modern society. Horne identifies the two most grievous errors of economic fundamentalism as being its utopian and reductionist aspects. Economic rationalism,
says Horne (1992: 9), fails to allow for the fact that knowledge can now be seen as one of the principal factors of production. Horne’s use of the terms ‘The Secular Faith of Development’ (1976: 133), and the ‘trinity of men, money and markets’ (Horne, 1976: 139) illustrate that in Australia he was conscious of materialism and a particular view of growth informing public values. When Horne revisited The Lucky Country, he noticed some new language (like ‘community relevance’, 1987: 78). He saw that: ‘The myth of progress at all costs is slowly being cracked’ (146). Patrick White also talks of ‘money, muscle and machinery’ (White, 1988: 195).

Two more recent works stand out in Australia for showing how Human Literacy is derivative of a humanities value base from different perspectives. Gibbs edited The Relevance of the Humanities in 1990, an Hunter, Meredyth, Smith and Stokes published Accounting for the Humanities, the Language of Culture and the Logic of Government in 1991. The Gibbs edition aims to redress a perceived political/public irrelevance of the humanities in tertiary learning when it was published, and the Hunter edition discusses the relationship between funding the humanities as part of public education. Such themes have been teased out in developing the concept of Human Literacy as a base for Secondary School Literature Education.

Horne, Gibbs and Hunter contextualise the humanities as a backdrop to the argument by which Human Literacy is articulated as a specific kind of literature education which has been omitted from A Statement. Similarly, Halliday’s notion of incommensurability impacted on the argument that the status of a liberal education needs to be reconceptualised due to some inherent contradictions which emerge in vocationalist, consumerist and managerialist themes competing against inherent liberal philosophical principles in education. The argument has been that literature as an expression of humanity needs to be reconsidered for its intrinsic value base, and because that base is
of inestimable philosophic permanence, quite equal to the paradigms of 'mercantilism' (Knight 1990) and 'technicism' (Lowe 1991). Without this inclusion, society risks, as Patrick White (1989) and others have noted, an impoverishment of spirit and a cultural atavism which is not only damaging in itself, but does not augur well for a coherent value base with which to brace future educational requirements.

A *Statement* is still positioned in the examination of the text, and textual meanings, and pays inadequate attention to theoretical work on the reader which focuses on the response of the reader and the text's reception, and away from the author and the text's original intention. A *Statement* is therefore a limited and inappropriate framework as a curriculum guideline for the teaching of literature in Australian schools because reader response is undervalued and neglected. By shifting the paradigm to a Human Literacy perspective, a literate public will still be achieved, but as well a public more capable of self reflection leading to a society with a questioning consciousness, even conscience.

This broken-backed curriculum needs to be seen for this double perspective (Bleich): for its conflicting content and delivery, between what happens in a literature classroom and the way literature learning is assessed. There is an essential discontinuity in the teaching of literature at secondary level: on the one hand we say we value enjoyment and personal opinion, yet on the other we expect certain types of critical responses which fit into certain Bands. This double perspective becomes even clearer when what is said by teachers about responses to literature conflicts with what is expected. What we do in exams is not what we do when we talk about books. Essentially, the liberal collides with the utilitarian, and it is for these reasons that, having explored the liberal rationalist curriculum perspective in the last chapter, it behoves this inquiry to examine the utilitarian position in the next.
In *A Statement*, the Goals of English (not just the three critiqued here, but all six of them) manage to lend respectability and some hope to the future education of young Australians, even though their translation within *A Statement* have not reflected that pressure. If they are taken as expressions of that hope, and if the freedom to decide how to teach is left as the professional right of the teacher, if content can be distinguished from teaching methods, and assessment and outcomes removed from the driver’s seat, then *A Statement* may yet come to be seen retrospectively as an opportunity for teachers to clarify what it is they do.

The subject of this thesis has been that *A Statement* must be considered within the knowledge and expertise of existing understandings that have characterised learning about literature as a humanity. Human Literacy is a way for that synthesis to happen, so that future students are both literate and educated in the sense that they have begun the journey through life capable of ‘travelling’ with a different view.
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note:-
A large part of the bibliography appearing at the end of this thesis pertained to the first submitted thesis. Rather than leave it out, it was merged with those titles read since 1993 in order to acknowledge all the readings that were undertaken.


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APPENDIX ONE


### Table 2 Contrasting features of rationalism and humanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationalism</th>
<th>Humanism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREMISES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reductionist</td>
<td>Holistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materialist</td>
<td>Value oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'End of Ideology/Cult of the fact'</td>
<td>Idealistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on 'givens'</td>
<td>Relevance of experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahistorical</td>
<td>Historical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROCEDURES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convergent</td>
<td>Divergent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>Impressionistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Observational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
<td>Interpretative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrative</td>
<td>Judgmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRUTH TESTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prediction</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replicability</td>
<td>Plausibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Significance'</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit with theory</td>
<td>Fit with argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMPHASES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Means</td>
<td>Ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Intentions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Nurturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mass phenomena</td>
<td>The individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHARACTERISTICS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific</td>
<td>Artistic/creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarian</td>
<td>Romantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tough-minded</td>
<td>Tender-minded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Permissive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalistic</td>
<td>Imaginative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puritanical</td>
<td>Hedonistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient</td>
<td>Ethical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directive</td>
<td>Interactive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX TWO


In English, the broad pattern of course offerings over the period from 1977 to 1995 is shown in Figure A.7. In 1976, the earlier Level 1, 2 and 3 courses were replaced respectively with a 3 unit course, a 2 unit course and a 2 unit 'general' course (initially referred to as 2 unit A and later 2 Unit General). Over the period since then, the 3 unit course and the two original 2 unit courses have been maintained. Contemporary English, as an additional 2 unit course, was introduced in 1988 and first completed at the Higher School Certificate in 1989. At this time there had been some consideration of offering a separate course in English as a Second Language, as a course with a lesser demand for literature, was expected to provide for students whose progress in other subjects was impeded by a lack of proficiency in English, including students for whom English was a second language.

As the retention rate to year 12 rose, it might have been expected that the numbers of students enrolled in the more demanding English 3 Unit and English 2 Unit courses might have held constant, with those in English 2 unit General and then Contemporary English rising to accommodate the broader intake of students. In fact, enrolments in English 3 unit dropped from 2000 in 1977 to 1200 by 1981 before rising to a peak of 4100 in 1989 and then falling away again to 2200 in 1995. (These enrolment figures need to be multiplied by three to produce the units on enrolment shown in Figure A.7 to reflect the fact that it is a 3 unit course). The movement in level of demand for English 3 unit was influenced more by the impact of assessment and scaling practices than curriculum content, as will become clear in the discussion of assessment reporting. The same can be said, to some extent, of the shifts in enrolments between the various 2 unit courses.

English 2 unit enrolments held constant in the early years around 23000 students but then dropped away gradually to 19000 in 1983, followed by a dramatic decline to 13000 the following year. There was slight resurgence to 15000 in 1989 after which there was a steady decline to 7000 in 1995. English 2 unit lost some ground to the more demanding English 3 unit courses. Enrolments in 2 unit General rose from 10000 in 1977 to a peak of 33000 in 1989 but then, as Contemporary English enrolments grew, dropped back to 30000. Contemporary English enrolments grew from 2000 in 1989 to 18000 in 1995.

This pattern of changing enrolments in English courses is clearly not what would have been expected in terms of curriculum content. Contemporary English has been taken by a much broader group of students than that for which it was originally designed. English 2 unit General has similarly attracted students who might have been expected to take one of the two more demanding courses. One reason is that there can be a benefit for students’ tertiary entrance scores from opting down. Students who obtain a mark of 100 from the Board of Studies are allocated a mark of 100 by the universities towards their tertiary entrance score, regardless of the course involved. Some students, therefore, opt down in the hope of obtaining a perfect, or at least very high, score and winning the benefit conferred by the scaling procedure. If many students move in this way, of course, only the few who do not come at the very top will win the full benefit they hope for.

Concerns about the enrolment pattern in English courses and the impact of the marking and scaling procedures, led to a 1995 review of the pattern of English courses by a Board Committee chaired by Professor Jillan Maling. In line with the
recommendations of that review a new English syllabus for years 11-12 has been
drafted with a core, equivalent to one unit, to be taken by all students and sets of
electives from which students are to choose in building 2, 3 or 4 units of study.

The relative enrolments in the English course is shown in Figure A.8 where the
enrolment index expresses enrolments as a proportion of total enrolments in all units in
the Higher School certificate in the relevant year. English courses account for about
18% of all unit enrolments throughout the period shown. This reflects the requirement
that students take at least two units of English among the minimum total of eleven.

The relative decline of enrolments in the more demanding English courses is clear in
Figure A.8. The absolute decline in numbers in English 2 unit, shown in Figure A.7,
produces a marked decline in relative enrolments as overall enrolments have grown.

All students are required to study English but there are marked gender differences in
the courses studied as shown in Figure A.9. Females predominate in the more difficult
English courses, the 3 unit and the 2 unit course, by around 70:30. Even in the 2 unit
General course, there are slightly more female students overall but it is clear from these
figures that males avoid the more difficult English courses to a much greater extent
than do females.

The following three tables A.7, A.8 and A.9 are the ones cited in this subject
description

![Graph showing numbers of units studied in English courses](image)

*Fig. A.7: Numbers of units studied in English courses*
Fig. A.8: Units of English as proportion of all units studied.

Fig. A.9: Females as percentage of total number in English courses
### APPENDIX THREE


#### TABLE 3.1 CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of decision makers</th>
<th>Examples of specific individuals/groups</th>
<th>Perceived influence on policy decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Federal Ministers of Education | • John Dawkins  
• Kim Beasley | High  
Medium |
| State Ministers of Education | • Bob Pearce  
• Terry Metherell | High  
High |
| Federal Agencies | • Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET)  
• Australian National Training Authority (ANTA)  
• Curriculum Corporation | Medium  
Low  
High |
| National Committees | • Australian Education Council (AEC)  
• AEC Curriculum and Assessment (CURASS) Committee  
• Ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training (MOVEET)  
• AEC Standing Committees (Schools)  
• Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)  
• Australasian Cooperative Assessment Program (ACAP) | High  
High  
Medium  
Medium  
Low |
| National commissions/ councils | • National Catholic Education Commission  
• National Council of Independent Schools  
• Business Council of Australia  
• Trade Development Council  
• National Industry Education Forum  
• Australian Council of State Schools Organisation  
• The Office of the Economic Planning and Advisory Council | Medium  
Medium  
Medium  
Low  
Medium  
Medium  
Low |
| National professional associations | • Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA)  
• English Teachers Association of Australia (ETA)  
• Australian Mathematical Sciences Council | Low  
Low  
Low |
| Academics | • University professors of subject areas  
• University professors of education | Low  
Low  
Low |
| Unions | • Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)  
• Independent Teachers Federation of Australia | Low  
Low  
Low |
| State heads of education systems | • Directors-General / CEOs of government and non-government schools systems  
• Directors of Curriculum of government school systems | Medium  
High |
| State accreditation and assessment agencies | • Directors / CEOs | Medium  
High |
| State professional associations | • Science Teachers’ Association of Western Australia  
• Commerce Teachers Association of Victoria | Low  
Low |
| State teachers’ unions | • Queensland Teachers’ Union  
• Victorian Secondary Teachers’ Federation  
• New South Wales Teachers’ federation | Low  
Low  
Low |
APPENDIX FOUR

AN ECONOMIC PARABLE FOR ALL THOSE CONCERNED WITH THE EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES IN TIMES OF EDUCATIONAL RESTRUCTURING AND FINANCIAL STRINGENCY

SCHUBERT'S UNFINISHED SYMPHONY NO 8, D\'E UNVOLLENDETE

A Management Review Task Force in a new cluster visited an outer Western Sydney high school to conduct an educational audit. The visit coincided with one of the concerts of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, to which the Principal was in the habit of going.

On this occasion, because he had to attend a global budget meeting followed by a staff selection committee, he could not go. With his usual generosity, however, he gave his ticket to the leader of the Management Review Task Force, who had never been to a symphony concert before. The main work that night was Schubert's Unfinished Symphony.

When he asked his visitor the following morning how he had enjoyed the concert, the Principal was surprised to be handed a typewritten report:

"1. For considerable periods the four oboe players had nothing to do. The number should be reduced and their work be more conveniently spread over the whole concert, thus eliminating peaks of activity.

2. All the 12 violins were playing identical notes. This seems unnecessary duplication. The staff of this section should be drastically cut, and if a large volume of sound is really required, this could be obtained by means of an electronic amplifier.

3. Much effort was absorbed in the playing of demi-semiquavers. This seems to us an excessive refinement and it is recommended that all notes be rounded up to the nearest semiquaver. If this were done it should be possible to use trainees and lower-grade operators.

4. There seems to be too much repetition of some musical passages. No useful purpose is served by repeating with horns the passage already handled by the strings. If all such redundant passages were eliminated, the whole concert time of two hours would have been reduced to twenty minutes and there would have been no need for an interval.

If the composer had attended to these matters he would probably have been able to finish his symphony."
HUMAN LITERACY:
LIBERAL NEGLECT
IN
A Statement On English
For Australian Schools

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
At the University of Western Sydney - Nepean

MICHAEL KINDLER
BA, Dip Ed, Sydney  MA Macquarie
M Litt UNE  GDTL UTS
Dip CH NSWSHS
© 1996
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
To

Claudia, without whose patient support this would not have come to be; I am indebted to the personal sacrifices she has made, and to the quality of her advice: to Sabina and to Roland; both of whom resented much of the time I spent on the computer, but who realized it was something I just had to do.
ATTESTATIONS

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degrees at this or any other University.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge and ability any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

I further certify that the authorship resides principally within myself, and I take full responsibility for everything which is said within this thesis. The work is entirely my own except where the words or ideas of other writers are specifically acknowledged.

I give permission for my thesis to be copied, stored and referenced electronically and/or by hard copy by the Library of the University of Western Sydney - Nepean, CLANN and associated electronic data bases in the humanities for purposes of preservation and collection-building and agree that the thesis may be freely available both for research purposes and inspection.

I grant and assign to the University of Western Sydney - Nepean a licence to publish my thesis (in whole or part) should it not otherwise have been published after a period of ten years from the award of the degree.

Signature

Date
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7. Conclusion

8. Bibliography

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

(W.B. Yeats, _He Wishes For The Cloths of Heaven_, 1916)

I would like to thank several people at the University of Western Sydney - Nepean for their consistent support and encouragement.

Dr. Mavourna Collits, Senior Lecturer and Head of the Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education, has worked with me with patience and endurance. As principal supervisor, Mavourna developed a supportive manner which maintained a consistently constructive and critical rigour throughout the time this thesis took to develop into its current form. In particular, the clarity of thought and philosophical aspect of this thesis have been influenced by Mavourna's intellectual background. I have gained much invaluable experience from Mavourna as scholar and teacher, and consequently have the highest respect for the standard she sets and for her example. I am grateful for the years during which we have collaborated.

Professor Trevor Cairney, Pro-Vice Chancellor - Research, taught me the importance and place of educational theory, especially concerning literacy. The way Trevor forced me to take issue with concepts such as reader or text has taught me much concerning definitions and theoretical positions. This influence translated into a clearer understanding of how an argument is embedded, and my writing has accordingly matured into a more careful consideration of language and analysis.

Together, both gave of their expertise, one in literacy, the other in educational philosophy, in a way that might appear at first glance an unlikely combination: yet the work has a strength that draws equally from the two disciplines. Both supervisors have assisted the transition from the first to this, a different second thesis, and that has at times been a difficult passage; I would like to thank both for the way in which I could rely on their support throughout the years of this candidacy.

Finally, I wish to thank colleagues in my Department of Curriculum Studies who have helped with references, the odd remark or point of view. This includes English lecturers, especially Wayne Sawyer. Post-graduate and undergraduate students have also contributed conversations, ideas and experiences which have at times been helpful.

Final responsibility for the views expressed in this thesis is, of course, mine alone.
This thesis critiques *A Statement on English for Australian Schools* (1994) for what it does, and what it does not, say in respect of literature education. It argues the need to reconceptualise the way literature education is thought to benefit adolescent readers.

The initial discussion identifies the issues which are raised in that document. This yields the need to redefine literature education as Human Literacy. It does so on the basis of a theoretical exploration of reader and text. Human Literacy is able to define reader response to show certain orientations which have either been left out, misunderstood or inadequately portrayed in *A Statement*. By recognising the privileged position of the reader as active meaning maker, literature is able to elicit a variety of responses from the reader. Human Literacy assists the reader in clarifying identity, human and cultural values as well as beginning to encourage resistant reading. A discursive space between reader and text characterizes literature as having a unique transformative potential as well as intrinsic attributes which defy placement in a competency framework.

The thesis places Human Literacy within real world educational aims of *homo economicus* as well as *homo sapiens sapiens*. Such a context recognizes liberal and utilitarian value positions, and is able to balance these in a manner which *A Statement* does not. In placing Human Literacy within educational philosophies of competing models of practice, literature education becomes nested within a more comprehensive understanding of education.

Human Literacy provides a way by which educational value of literature is maximized. However, this projects a paradigm shift for *A Statement*, by identifying a liberal neglect through flawed assumptions, omissions, and contradictions. The presence of these in *A Statement* inhibit literature from working to best advantage. Human Literacy provides a more comprehensive way by which current theory is accommodated within an English curriculum.
INTRODUCTION

In 1993 *A National Statement On English For Australian Schools* (Curriculum Corporation) was published under direction of the Australian Education Council (AEC)

*English - The National Profile* was released (marked "as a draft for trialling") by the Curriculum Corporation in July of the same year as a more detailed document supporting the philosophy of the original umbrella document. As well as identifying the aims of the English curriculum in schools, the national statement describes the content of English in terms of two interrelated strands, Texts and Language. In the statement, these content strands apply to all language modes in English (speaking, listening, reading, viewing, and writing). The publication, in 1994, of *A Statement On English For Australian Schools, A Joint Project Of The States, Territories, And The Commonwealth Of Australia Initiated By The Australian Education Council*, attempted to consolidate these earlier drafts and construct a curriculum framework for English on a national basis, reflecting current national direction.

This is the document which is the final form of the earlier draft, and which accordingly forms the basis of this study. (Henceforth, any references to *A Statement On English For Australian Schools* (1994) are shortened to *A Statement*).

This *Statement* attempted to define the English curriculum within Australian schools for the next decade and into the Twenty-First Century. Such a redefining of a subject's focus and purpose is not unusual as educators continually attempt to resolve the ongoing dilemma of matching educational practice with personal, social, economic and national needs. As Australia attempts to define its mature identity (best characterised by the Republican debate, but reflected in all aspects of national life at present) such a *Statement* takes on an even more significant status.

---

1 The AEC was the name given at the time to the collective of Ministers of Australian States and Territories with the portfolio of Education which met during that year under the chairpersonship of the Federal Minister for Schools, Vocational Education and Training.

2 The word 'National' was deleted because of a States' rights wrangle where several Premiers would not accept a document which appeared to be a Canberra directive.
The purpose of this thesis is to examine the place of literature education in *A Statement*, and, having located that within a theoretical understanding of a range of reader-responses, to postulate an educational model which is more inclusive of what is known about the benefits of literature to adolescents than what is contained in *A Statement*. This thesis does not critique the entire *Statement*. It is limited to exploring the place that is given to literature within the curriculum framework. It is argued that education through and in literature provides the new generation with its cultural heritage, with the struggle for identity, with opportunities for recursive self-correction, reflection and growth, with the human face of society in ways that other more direct instruction in the Social Sciences cannot: it allows the heart of a people to be explored.

There is an increasing sense of urgency befalling Australia in government, in business, education and life. The urgency is about the locus of value by which we progress or develop as we attempt to define ourselves as a mature nation in a shrinking world. As we approach the Twentyfirst Century, much is expected of education in shaping the future. Education today is more political than ever, as three questions of critical significance are regularly asked of the schooling process :-

- What should be taught?
- What should not be taught?
- How should subject matter be taught?

Currently, there is a broad perception that self-referential learning in the humanities is not relevant in a skills and competencies oriented world of today and of the future (Finn, 1991). The Mayer Report (Mayer, 1992) wrestles with, but does not give any adequate answers to the notion of how to quantify cultural understanding. These two reports illustrate the tension in contemporary Australia between the intrinsic value as contrasted with the extrinsic utility of education. How outcome-focused can self-referential learning or cultural understanding really be? This tension is further contested in the ongoing debate of how Australia is to become ‘a clever country’ (Dawkins, 1990). This adds a topical
sharpness, a piquancy and focus to the educational objectives that are meant to shape contemporary and prospective curriculum.

This dissertation is an opportunity to re-articulate the place of literature in a humanities context by shifting the philosophical position in education towards the inclusion, rather than the current marginalisation of, intrinsically useful considerations of engaging with literature. In A Statement, the use of the term ‘text’ broadens the canonical understanding of literature away from a narrow or predominantly Leavisite or Anglo-Celtic understanding. The assumptions of value underlying the use of all of these terms will need to be teased out. It will be suggested that the way reading text is represented in A Statement represents a narrowing down of an important intrinsic emotional dynamic in preference to the identification of extrinsic skills which are more visible and measurable by way of outcome. In simple terms, it is nothing less than the avoiding of the human for the sake of the intellectually technical, as first broached in C.P. Snow’s 1956 essay The Two Cultures.

Human Literacy is a theoretical position which will be shown to emerge from an appreciation of the place of modern criticism, liberal rationalist curriculum philosophy and reader response theory. It contextualises these three in such a way that broadens the meaning of literature, recognises liberal values in learning, and explicitly acknowledges the various effects of text on the reader. Human Literacy is further informed by a philosophic re-appraisal of utilitarianism, and an awareness of incommensurable elements which compound A Statement’s effectiveness to address the professional needs of English teachers dealing with literature. Human Literacy re-imagines the teaching of literature using traditional hierarchies of value, and places these in a modern understanding of text and reader education. Such an understanding more clearly reflects the personal growth model of English which contains explicitly valued liberal and utilitarian elements. Human Literacy calls for a shift in the philosophical base which
moves from a linear, outcome-based, vocationalist, consumerist view to a more inclusive belief more broadly representative of Western educational tradition.

The first chapter outlines the problem and explains by what method it is intended to resolve it. It identifies and delineates the study by describing the background to the problem and proposing the means by which a resolution is possible. Limitations of the study, the importance of the study and some preliminary definitions conclude this section.