CHAPTER 1

Overarching Statement

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The papers in this portfolio provide accounts of research into aspects of the reading and teaching of literature, especially the plays of Shakespeare. My research has mainly been aimed at directly influencing classroom practice. Consequently, it has tended to culminate in products which are directed to classroom teachers as much as to the academic world. The articles are based on the strong belief that influencing pedagogy is an appropriate focus of research and intellectual endeavour.

The research is underpinned by a broadly constructivist view of learning, which places the learner's constructive mental activity at the heart of true learning. Implicit in this is a student-centred, interactive approach to teaching. My research is also informed by a strong belief in reading as a creative process. As Walt Whitman put it over a century ago:

...reading is not a half-sleep, but, in the highest sense, an exercise, a gymnast's struggle; that the reader is to do something for himself, must be on the alert, must himself or herself construct indeed the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay — the text furnishing the hints, the clue, the start or framework. Not the book needs so much to be the complete thing, but the reader of the book does. (quoted in Rosenblatt, 1978, p.175)

The theory of Reader Response encapsulated in the Whitman quotation and developed over the last thirty or so years in the work of theorists such as Rosenblatt (1938/1978) and Iser (1978) has of course been highly influential in the teaching of secondary English, particularly in the work of Benton and Fox (1985), Probst (1984/1988) and Thomson (1987). As Michael Benton has written (Benton, 1999, p.98):
Iser’s theory of aesthetic response... and Rosenblatt’s transactional theory of the literary work...have helped change the culture of the classroom to one which operates on the principles that the text cannot be said to have a meaningful existence outside the relationship between itself and its reader(s). This transfer of power represents a sea-change in critical emphasis and in pedagogical practice from the assumptions most critics and teachers held even a generation ago.

I see the central tenet of Reader Response Theory¹ as the starting point for any consideration of how students can be helped to read and enjoy literature. This does not, however, mean that I have ignored or rejected other aspects of modern literary theory; indeed, part of my research has been the exploration of ways in which to make certain aspects of recent literary theory accessible to students, particularly at senior level.

In order that a rounded picture of my activities over the past decade be given, I would draw attention to the fact that I have sought to influence and improve the teaching of poetry by producing a teaching anthology, *Jigsaw* (1995), which illustrates a variety of approaches to poetry. Further, in accordance with my belief that school students in a multicultural society should have access to literature from the countries from which they or their forebears have come, I have put together a collection of contemporary writing from fifteen different countries. The anthology *Imagined Corners* (2000) contains contemporary poetry from China, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, India, Ireland, Poland, Romania, Vietnam and Yugoslavia, as well as from Australia, England,

¹ One should perhaps speak of Reader-Response Theories, as reader-response critics such as Bleich (1978) and Holland (1975), in contrast to Rosenblatt and Iser, deny that a literary work imposes objective constraints upon the reader. Since the theoretical position taken by Rosenblatt and Iser is the one that has had real impact in Australia, Reader-Response Theory, as used in this essay, refers to the Rosenblatt-Iser side of the reader-response debate. Stanley Fish, another major reader-response critic, is less easy to pin down, as he has changed position considerably over the years.
Scotland and Wales (See Appendix 1). This endeavour involved a great deal of a quite
different research from that covered in the papers included in the portfolio; regretfully,
many English translations of modern poetry from other parts of the world have very
small print runs and are thus often difficult to get hold of.

In the period under review, I have been fortunate in having had the opportunity to teach
not only at Sydney and Macquarie Universities, but also at Cambridge, British Columbia,
New York and Michigan State Universities. In late 2002 I was Visiting Fellow at the
University of Indiana. These international experiences have allowed me to draw upon the
expertise of some of the most distinguished figures in English education, to visit a great
variety of schools throughout the English-speaking world, and to have my research
endorsed by colleagues in other countries.

In addition to offering papers and workshops at various conferences in Australia, I have
throughout the past two decades presented at many international conferences, the more
recent ones including:

International Seminar on Language and Education: Norwich (UK), 1993;
Alberta English Teachers’ Conference: Banff (Canada), 1994;
Sixth Conference of the International Federation of Teachers of English: New York
University, 1995;

Global Conversations on Language and Literature: Heidelberg (Germany), 1996;
International Association for the Improvement of Mother Tongue Education: Amsterdam
(Netherlands), 1997;
Seminar on the Teaching of Literature: Singapore, 1997;
Seventh Conference of the International Federation of Teachers of English: Warwick
University (UK), 1999;
International Association for the Improvement of Mother Tongue Education: Amsterdam (Netherlands), 1999.

In addition, in April, 1994, I conducted a series of workshops on the teaching of literature for teachers in Singapore at the invitation of the Singapore Ministry of Education. This invitation came about as a result of my published work, as indeed did the invitations to present at the conferences at Norwich (1993), Banff (1994) and Heidelberg (1996). Again, the decision of the University of Indiana to invite me to be a Visiting Fellow in October, 2002, was, I believe, a recognition of my contribution to English pedagogy. While in North America last year I was also invited to give workshops at the University of Texas at Arlington, Michigan State University and the University of British Columbia. As far as the last two universities were concerned, it was my work in developing an appropriate pedagogy for the teaching of Shakespeare, one which helped students both to develop a theatrical imagination and to overcome the language barrier, that prompted the invitations; at the University of Texas at Arlington there was interest both in my approach to Shakespeare and in my use of picture books to help students come to an understanding of the more complex aspects of modern literary theory.

1.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

While my earlier research had been based on large-scale surveys and factor analysis of variance, followed by in-depth case studies (Watson, 1978, 1979, 1980), I found that the questions about literature teaching that I later wanted to investigate were often best pursued through small-scale action research. Action research has been generally understood as “small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close
examination of the effects of such intervention” (Cohen and Manion, 1986, p. 174); while a case study describes what is, action research diagnoses a particular problem and then attempts to solve it in that context. The pieces of action research that ultimately led to From Picture Book to Literary Theory (Stephens and Watson, 1994) are examples of such small-scale intervention.

Historical research and reflective inquiry form the basis of my investigation of the history of the teaching of Shakespeare in New South Wales, and the article ‘Mother Tongue Teaching in Australia: the Case of New South Wales’ (Sawyer and Watson, 2001). I strongly argue that the methods of reflective inquiry, involving argument, introspection and discussion, can be as productive as experimental procedures.

My various writings on aspects of the teaching of Shakespeare over the past decade have arisen out of a combination of the kinds of research so far mentioned, and the following:

- extensive reading in the area of performance criticism;

- observations of two exceptionally gifted and internationally acclaimed teachers (the late Brenda Pinder and the late Mike Hayhoe, published examples of whose work include Hayhoe and Parker, 1984, Hayhoe, 1988, and Pinder, 1991 and 1994);

- the collection of personal narratives from those who were still in secondary school in 1995-8 in order to compare with similar data collected some years earlier.

In addition, while working at the Cambridge University Department of Education in 1990 and again in 1995 I was able to introduce trainee English teachers to a range of activities and then observe these young teachers putting the ideas into practice with a group of sixth formers.
1.3 THE CONTEXT: an overview of literature teaching in New South Wales secondary schools in 1990

The late James Britton argued that ‘subject English’ had taken a wrong turning when it chose literary criticism, rather than literary production, as its model. The literary critical model, particularly in its New Critical period (see Glossary), inevitably elevated a literary canon which students were called upon to admire – an invitation to intellectual passivity. Ian Reid has called this the Gallery Model of English. (Reid, 1984, p.11). When New Criticism was dominant\(^2\), texts were seen as formal, self-contained objects, “verbal icons”, able to be discussed without reference to the conditions (social, material, political) of their production. As Gore Vidal has put it in a recent novel, *The Golden Age*, “all historical context...was to be sternly stripped away to reveal the text in its shy nakedness, weakly etherised upon a table, prepared for critical autopsy” (Vidal, 2001, p.353). The more sophisticated the critic, the more accurate and revealing the autopsy. This critical stance was profoundly disempowering, not only for the students in the classroom, but for most of their teachers, who tended to latch on to the interpretations authorised by the most prestigious critics and present them to the students, who were then expected to regurgitate these interpretations in examinations. Hence the enormous market for ‘cribs’.

\(^2\) Leigh Dale’s study of literature teaching in Australian universities (Dale, 1997, *passim*) makes it clear that the approaches to literature advocated by the New Critics and by F.R. Leavis were still dominant in Australian universities in the 1970s, and hence were a powerful influence in the schools for some time after that.
In opposition to the Gallery Model, Reid offered a Workshop Model, one which would be “integrative and interactive”:

Integration in the Workshop is of several kinds: of the world of play with the world of work; of literary utterances with ordinary uses of language; of verbal communication with other media of cultural expression; of reading with writing; and of cultural products with their means of production. (p.13)

This Workshop Model was essentially the same as the pedagogy advocated across all aspects of English in the Personal Growth Model (Dixon, 1975), which won widespread support in the 1970s and 1980s (see, for example, Watson, 1978, Nay-Brock, 1984, Sawyer 2002).

While by 1990 the Workshop Model was well established as a major mode of literature teaching in New South Wales classrooms, there was one area – the teaching of Shakespeare – which remained largely unchanged. Here the Gallery Model, with its ancient apparatus of read-around-the-class, character analyses, paraphrases and dictated notes, was alive and well. In 1989 and 1990, I asked over sixty Diploma in Education students at the University of Sydney whose secondary education had taken place in the period 1980-85/6 to describe the sort of teaching of Shakespeare they had experienced at school; only two had experienced what could be described as an active approach to Shakespeare (i.e., the Workshop Model, together with techniques borrowed from drama classes). In 1992 I posed the same question to that year’s Dip. Ed. Group, with similar results. Of course, such surveys have obvious limitations – their small-scale nature, their dependence on subjects’ recall of past events etc. – but the results are nevertheless highly suggestive.
Theoretical underpinning for the Workshop Model was provided by Reader-Response Theory. Though poets and novelists over the centuries have voiced opinions that endorse the central principle of Reader Response\(^3\), the theory itself was not given substantial form until 1938, when Louise Rosenblatt’s *Literature as Exploration* was published, and not taken much notice of until the late 1970s, when Rosenblatt returned to it in her *The Reader the Text the Poem: the Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (1978), and Wolfgang Iser’s *The Act of Reading* (1978) was also published. (It should be noted, however, that much of the classroom practice resulting from the increasingly widespread acceptance of a Personal Growth Model of English teaching (see Glossary) had led teachers in the same direction.)

Both Rosenblatt and Iser were concerned with the *experience* whereby the reader *realises* a work of literature. As Rosenblatt wrote:

> The poem, then, must be thought of as an event in time. It is not an object or an ideal entity. It happens during a coming-together, a compenetration, of a reader and a text. The reader brings to the text his[sic] past experience and present personality. Under the magnetism of the ordered symbols of the text, he marshals his resources and crystallises out from the stuff of memory, thought and feeling a

\(^3\) For example, Laurence Sterne, in *Tristram Shandy*, wrote:

> no author...would presume to think all: the truest respect which you can pay to the reader’s understanding is to halve the matter amicably, and leave him something to image, in his turn, as well as yourself. For my own part, I...do all that lies in my power to keep his imagination as busy as my own.

W. H. Auden has said:

> What a poem means is the outcome of a dialogue between the words on the page and the person who happens to be reading it; that is to say, its meaning varies from person to person. (Auden 1973)
new order, a new experience, which he sees as the poem. This becomes part of the ongoing stream of his life experience, to be reflected on from any angle important to him as a human being. (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 12)

In summary, then, the Reader-Response Theory of literature regards reading as a creative act. As developed by Rosenblatt and Iser, the theory asserts that:

i. no two people read a text in exactly the same way because no two people bring exactly the same background experience to the text;

ii. at the same time, it is possible to validate readings: a reader’s interpretation must not be contradicted by any element of the text, and nothing should be projected for which there is no verbal basis;

iii. writers leave “telling gaps” (Iser’s phrase) and ask the reader to be creative in filling them.

By 1990, while there were still, no doubt, many teachers whose own education in New Critical modes of thinking led them to impose interpretations upon their students, there was a widespread curricular recognition of the value of students’ initial responses, which could then be refined in group or class discussion. The Syllabuses in operation in NSW in 1990 (Board of Secondary Education, 1987) had included the following statements about the teaching of literature:

The objective is that students experience, enjoy and respond sensitively and perceptively to a wide range of literature, especially Australian literature and the literature created by the students themselves. (p.45)
Students should be encouraged to respond in personal and sensitive ways to
literature and to express their responses in a variety of forms. (p.49)

The Senior English Syllabuses included similar statements of principle:

... thoughtful individual response...Biographical, descriptive and critical
information is often, of course, illuminating and valuable...but such ‘information’
is not acceptable as a substitute for personal response...

A response to a poem, then, should be an honest and individual response, not
merely a second-hand restatement of what someone else has said. (Board of
Studies , 1983, p.10)

...The study of the drama needs to acknowledge that the text of a play is a script for
performance...[Students] need to visualise how a scene might appear on the stage,
and realise how the impact may be enhanced by gesture and tone of voice, once it is
lifted from the page. Adopting the standpoint of a director and actors, they might
consider how a particular role should be developed, and what features of a given
scene a good performance should bring out. (p.11)

(As earlier indicated, however, this last injunction was being largely ignored, at least as
far as the teaching of Shakespeare was concerned.)

1.4 RESEARCH ISSUES

Several questions arising out of current theory and practice concerned me:

1. Was it enough that teachers recognise the basic principles of Reader Response and act
on them in the classroom, or should the theory be made explicit to the students? If the
latter, at what age could the process of making explicit begin, and how could it best be achieved?

2. With the explosion of interest in literary theory in the context of school education in the 1980s and early 1990s, were there other insights worth making explicit to students?

3. Would students become better readers through being encouraged to reflect on their own reading behaviour?

4. Since it was clear from my observations of classrooms in a large number of schools during the 1980s, and from surveys of teacher trainees about their experiences of Shakespeare when at school, that the injunction in the Senior English Syllabus that "the study of the drama needs to acknowledge that the text of a play is a script for performance" was being neglected, particularly in the case of Shakespeare, what could be done to shift the teaching of Shakespeare's plays from a purely literary study to one that took account of the dramatic and theatrical qualities of the texts?

5. My work on Shakespearian pedagogy inevitably raised the puzzling question of why classroom practice and syllabus injunctions remained in opposition throughout almost all of the 20th century. This led to some historical research which is to be published in the journal English in Australia in mid-2003.

1.5 INVESTIGATING READER RESPONSE AND RELATED AREAS

For those teachers who cared to reflect upon its possibilities, Reader-Response Theory proved profoundly liberating. Since there was no one 'right' interpretation, their task no
longer became one of imparting a definitive reading of a text; instead, they were being invited to value their students' initial responses and to devise activities which would encourage the students to refine their interpretations thorough active exploration and discussion. It ought to have proved liberating, too, for those students who grasped the central tenet of the theory, but it often seemed to me, when observing literature classes, that most students – particularly the younger ones – still believed that there was a right interpretation to which the teacher alone held the key. In many apparently free-ranging class discussions it seemed that from the pupils' point of view it was still a game of 'guess what teacher's thinking'. It was one thing to tell them that a range of interpretations was possible; it was quite another to convince them that this was so.

The pieces of action research that ultimately led to From Picture Book to Literary Theory (Stephens and Watson, 1994; 2nd ed., 2003) began with the questions: 'Can Reader-Response Theory be made explicit to junior and middle secondary students? Will such explicit knowledge lead students to value their initial responses, and build upon them, rather than wait for the teacher's definitive interpretation?' (Watson, 1992)

In seeking a way of convincing younger students that a range of interpretations was not only possible but almost inevitable, even with a short text, I hypothesised that picture books could provide an economical and pleasurable way into an understanding, not only of Reader Response, but of other literary theories as well. The modern picture book, while ostensibly for audiences of young children from the ages of about three to about seven, has become increasingly sophisticated, readily providing teachers with examples of almost every textual feature or potential reading act identified as significant by Reader-Response theorists, Poststructuralists, New Historicism, Cultural Materialists, Feminists (see, e.g., Bonnycastle, 1996).
I chose the prize-winning *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat* (Wagner and Brooks, 1977) to use with classes in Years 8, 9 and 10; later some of my M.Ed. students replicated the experiment with children as young as ten. The written text consists of about 400 words; the illustrations are, however, no mere accompaniment, but in a very real way complement and form a dialogue with the words. After showing the illustrations as I read aloud, I asked the students, starting with a group of Year 9s and then replicating the procedure first with a group of younger students and with a group of older students, to write down briefly what they thought the story was about. The responses were blackboarded, and the students were asked whether they could see any patterns. In all groups, at least two clusters of responses, one centring on notions of jealousy and overpossessive love, the other on loneliness and the need for companionship, emerged (Watson, 1992). When the research was replicated by some of my M.Ed. students in their classes a third cluster of responses, based on the notion of manipulation of others to get one’s own way, emerged.

Even the Year 8 students readily recognised that if even so short a story could lead to a range of interpretations, one would expect longer works to generate an even greater range of responses. Hence the piece of action research gave support to the belief that at least one major literary theory, Reader Response, could be made explicit to junior secondary students, and that having that explicit knowledge was an encouragement to them to value their own initial responses, and build upon them, rather than wait for the teacher’s definitive interpretation.

Later, I was able to take the experiment a stage further with small groups of Year 10 students. My aim here was to make the students aware that their readings were to a degree culturally constructed. When the students were considering a different interpretation of the
story – one that saw it as being about death and the acceptance of death – the following discussion occurred:

KW: That’s an interesting idea: black and death. [In the story, the cat is black.] What links do we have in our culture between black and death?

Matthew: Funerals…mourning clothes.

KW: Yes…Now if you took the book to another country, would you necessarily get that sort of reading?

Stephen: No, because in some countries black is…might be happiness.

KW: And if you changed the colour of the cat to white no one would ever think of it here as about death.

Matthew: But they might in China, where white is the colour of mourning.

KW: Yes. So when we are reading there’s another factor that influences us: not only, as you said earlier, Matthew, our previous experiences – we read a story slightly differently in the light of our previous experiences – we can go a step further and say the meaning is determined, not only by the words on the page and not only by our previous experiences, but by the whole culture we live in. (p.93)
Looking back, I feel that what I thought was legitimate synthesising in my last intervention might have been better handled by encouraging the students to formulate the principle themselves, but the experiment both here and with subsequent Year 10 groups did show that yet another important insight provided by modern literary theory – that readers are to a degree constructed by the society and culture within which they live – could be grasped by fifteen-year-olds.

Another aspect of modern literary theory that it seemed important for adolescents to grasp was the fact that all texts embody an ideology: ‘no text is innocent’. Not surprisingly, students find ideology a difficult concept, the more so because it is a characteristic of the structure called ‘ideology’ that it conceals its own existence by producing a web of ‘evident truths’ (see, e.g., McCormick, 1994, pp.72-4). Initially, I tackled this problem through having students explore two novels, *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame and Jan Needle’s *Wild Wood*, as the latter neatly deconstructs the ideology of the former (Watson, 1992b); however, *Wild Wood* was soon out of print. Since the use of picture books was proving successful in the areas of Reader Response and the social construction of readers, I developed the notion of using picture books as a convenient and economical way of exploring with students a whole range of literary concepts. With groups of Year 9 students, I used Perrault’s *Cinderella*, Babette Cole’s *Prince Cinders* and *Princess Smartypants* to explore ideology, John Burningham’s *Granpa* to have them investigate the notion of ‘telling gaps’, and various versions of *Hansel and Gretel* to enable them to grasp the distinction between ‘story’ and ‘discourse’. These experiments eventually led to the book *From Picture Book to Literary Theory* (see 1.7; 2.4).
1.6 ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO REFLECT ON THEIR READING BEHAVIOUR

A more elaborate study than those involving the use of picture books was based on the questions: ‘Can young readers be encouraged to reflect on their processes of response? Is such an endeavour worthwhile?’ A research model based on the work of Thomson (1987) and Benton and Fox (1985) was developed for use with two groups of Year 9 students (see 2.2). The investigation, in which I was assisted by two postgraduate students, did seem to illustrate “the importance of ensuring that all students discover for themselves not only what they have learnt, but how they have learnt it” (Durrant, Goodwin and Watson, 1990,p.217). Further, the protocol materials (running commentary into a tape recorder, two pieces of writing, taped small-group discussion) showed that in the small group situation these young readers could make use of complex and diverse reading strategies: “questioning the text about motives, events, characters, settings; predicting outcomes;…adjusting theories in the light of new evidence; holding judgments in abeyance while awaiting more information;…empathising,…; analogising” (p.218)

1.7 OUTCOMES OF THE RESEARCH

The success of these pieces of action research led me to continue and expand my research, working with teachers in Australia, England and North America to help them develop in their students an understanding of Reader Response and other literary theories and encouraging them to have their students reflect on their own reading processes. With the help of a literary theorist, Professor John Stephens, and a group of teachers and teacher educators, I put together materials which would help school students grasp even more
complex notions derived from literary theory: the unreliable narrator, focalisation, deconstruction and the like. The result was the book *From Picture Book to Literary Theory* (Stephens and Watson, 1994, 2nd ed., 2003), which provides units which are being used not only at middle and upper secondary level but also, as far as the units on deconstruction, post-colonial literary theory, metafiction and the like are concerned, at tertiary level. This book has created interest amongst teachers throughout the English-speaking world – and beyond.

1.8 IMPROVING THE TEACHING OF SHAKESPEARE

It might be argued that the theoretical underpinning of the research outlined above, which is basically Reader-Response Theory as modified by a recognition that we are all to a degree culturally constructed as readers, would be inappropriate as a basis for Shakespeare, and for drama pedagogy in general. After all, plays make use of a greater range of semiotic systems – aural and visual signs as well as the set of signs called language – than do novels and poems. Any assessment of them must take account of the fact that while the scripts may provide armchair reading, they can only properly be judged by considering the context for which they were created, the theatre, and the means by which the transformation from blueprint to performance(s) occurs. Indeed, Gary Taylor (1990, pp.323-4) argues that Reader-Response Theory is invalid when applied to drama. According to Taylor, Reader-Response criticism presumes a set of social practices that rests on such notions as isolation and silence (the reader consumes the book in private and speech is superfluous), while the theatre presupposes community and sound. While it is
true that the fact that like-minded people are brought together in the theatre (Stanley Fish’s ‘interpretive community’\(^4\)) narrows the range of responses, as does the controlling hand of the director, it would be almost unimaginable that all members of the audience could leave a theatrical performance with identical views of the play. Indeed, I would argue that the active approach to Shakespeare that is advocated in my articles and books (e.g., Watson, 1991, 1993; Watson and Sawyer, 1999) is basically an extension of the workshop approach to literature. Many of the activities, such as imaginative re-creation (see Glossary), that have worked so well in helping students to make the imaginative leap into the world of the novel also work well for drama, but there need also to be activities which require them to think in dramatic and theatrical terms.

As noted above (1.3), while English teaching in general was much less formal, more workshop-oriented, at the beginning of the final decade of the twentieth century, this could not be said of the teaching of Shakespeare, which, despite the exhortations of the Syllabus, remained narrowly literary-critical, with little consideration given to developing in students the ability to read a playscript as a blueprint for a performance rather than as a novel without description. As John Russell Brown has pointed out in his _Discovering Shakespeare_ (1981),

> we should read and study the plays as if we were rehearsing them, and ...we should then attempt to imagine performances...Character-analysis and the search for an underlying theme must wait until after the play has begun to come alive in a reader’s imagination – with all the excitement and strength of theatrical performance, and with the sudden revelations and slow revaluations which are the ordinary signs of vitality in rehearsal. (Brown, 1981, p.1)

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\(^4\) Stanley Fish, a reader-response critic, argues (1976, pp.473-485) that interpretation depends on shared conventions or interpretative strategies.
From a pedagogical standpoint, two strands of Shakespearian criticism may be discerned:

1. that which focuses on the words on the page, viewing Shakespearian plays as *literary artifacts*;

2. that which is stage-centred, performance-based, seeing the works as *playscripts* whose potential can only be realised in performance(s).

John Russell Brown’s writing falls into the second category, but unfortunately, most teaching of Shakespeare, when it moved beyond reading round the class, was in 1991 still treating Shakespeare’s plays as literary artifacts. It became apparent to me, when I decided to make a determined effort to bring about a shift in the methods of teaching Shakespeare, that there would need to be a two-pronged attack: teacher thinking needed to be shifted away from the literary-critical towards performance-based criticism and they would need to be provided with an *active pedagogy*, one designed to develop in students the ability to “imagine performances”.

Of course, the basics of such a pedagogy had been around for a long time: the work of the Englishman, Caldwell Cook, whose *The Play Way* had been published in 1917, had been picked up in the 1920s by the New South Welshman George Mackaness in his *Inspirational Teaching* (1928). Both these teachers had based their pedagogy upon student performance of the plays rather than on literary study of the texts, but, perhaps because they were dealing with a generation well versed in the language of the King James Bible, they did not confront what today’s students see as the biggest hurdle: Shakespeare’s language. And, having much more time at their disposal than today’s English teachers (Cook was working with ten- to thirteen-year-olds in an examination- and syllabus-free environment, and Mackaness was teaching at the highly selective Fort Street Boys’ High
School when by today’s standards even the matriculation examination was relatively undemanding for the brightest students) they could take performance work to the point where the theatrical imagination was well developed.

It was not until the 1980s that the work of the performance critics and of the pioneers in forging an appropriate pedagogy was picked up in two books for teachers, both published in Australia. In 1984 David Mallick published How Tall Is this Ghost, John? (1984) In his introductory note to teachers, Mallick declared:

*Shakespeare is meant to be performed; practical performance work is the best way to encourage close scrutiny of the text...the answer to [the problem of how to teach Shakespeare] lies in making the classroom a workshop where we try to understand meaning through action.* (Introduction)

His book provided teachers with examples of ways in which the elements of the sub-text – pace, tone, silence, emphasis, stage business, movement, entrances and exits – could be actively explored in the classroom, in group discussion and performance.

In 1986 another Australian, Wendy Michaels, published When the Hurly Burly Is Done. In a personal communication, she has this to say about the genesis of the book (and her subsequent activities):

*[The resistance of some students to Shakespeare made me] look for innovative ways to introduce Shakespeare’s work in the classroom. In the mid-seventies the drama process/product debate was raging, with the educational drama camps opposing performance, production and canonical works. Although not a canonicist, I could not totally align myself with their ranks, but I did draw on much of the pedagogy and re-applied it to the work that I was doing with scripted drama – particularly Shakespeare. So while other drama teachers were off doing*
drama games and exercises and improvisations I was appropriating strategies such as “mantle of the expert”, “hot seat”, “alter ego” and “freeze frames” to the teaching of Shakespeare’s plays. And at this time also, I became involved in youth theatre and theatre in education and began to realize the potential of the playbuilding approaches that these groups used with young people. This firmed up my approach to teaching Shakespeare by giving it a performance framework that I eventually called Playbuilding Shakespeare. (Dr Wendy Michaels – personal communication)

Michaels’ work brings the story almost up to my own work, which in the case of Shakespeare was very much one of standing on the shoulders of the true pioneers. As noted in (1.2), a visit to the UK in 1988 brought me into contact with two internationally renowned teachers, Brenda Pinder and Mike Hayhoe. The latter’s very practical Creative Work Ideas for Macbeth (Hayhoe, 1988) inspired me to design a series, the Shakespeare Workshop Series, in which each volume would provide teachers with a range of activities, usually for small groups, designed to promote active exploration of a particular playtext. I also tried to develop, to a greater degree than my predecessors, a range of language activities which would help students to overcome their fear of Shakespeare’s language and move comfortably within it. To quote from the introduction to one of these volumes, The Food of Love: A Workshop Approach to Twelfth Night,

The activities stress the fact that this is a play, and thus must be constantly thought of in theatrical terms. To be able to read a play script and simultaneously visualise a performance going on inside the ‘skull theatre’ (to borrow J.B. Priestley’s phrase) is not a skill that comes easily, and it is therefore essential that classroom treatment of play scripts, whether they be by Shakespeare, Shaw or Miller, be undertaken in terms of the interplay of actors, play script and audience
that one finds in real performances and the rehearsals that precede them. (Watson, 1991; 2nd ed., 2003)

In its final form, the Series provides open-ended, theatrically-oriented activities on twenty-two plays. In these books there is a good deal of stress, following on Mallick, on exploring aspects of the sub-text: tone, pause, emphasis, gestures, movement. Each book also contains activities which play the students in various roles: director, stage designer, costume designer, writer of extra scenes. And, at least in the volumes that I myself have written or co-authored, the by now large body of performance criticism of Shakespeare has been drawn upon (e.g., Thomson and Thomson, 1989; Brown, 1993; Holland, 1997), and accounts provided of actual stage productions.

As well as providing a range of activities designed to help students think in dramatic, theatrical terms, I have given considerable attention to ways of overcoming the ‘language barrier’, something seen by most students as a greater problem than it really is. Further, as the series has progressed and undergone revision, some other aspects of modern literary theory have been included, inviting senior students to look at the texts from feminist and cultural materialist aspects. The excerpts from the series that are included in the portfolio (3.5) also illustrate my concern to encourage teachers to consider seriously the value of performance criticism (and by providing some criticism of performances I myself have witnessed seek to help students who have not ready access to theatres to grasp the ways in which different actors and directors can produce markedly different interpretations of the same text).
1.9 INVESTIGATING THE HISTORY OF THE TEACHING OF SHAKESPEARE IN NSW SCHOOLS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF CURRICULUM HISTORY

During the period of my Ed.D. candidature, I have pursued a piece of research that arose naturally from my work on Shakespearian pedagogy: the history of the teaching of Shakespeare in NSW secondary schools over the past century. This has involved:

- a survey of trainee English teachers at five universities to determine the sort of teaching they had experienced in school in the middle years of the last decade;

- an examination of syllabuses, examination papers and other data stored at the Public Library of NSW, Fisher Library, and the Library of the NSW Board of Studies.

The second part of this research has been made extremely difficult by the fact that successive Boards have apparently failed in their statutory duty to provide the Public Library with all public documents that they have issued, and also by the fact that over the past year a re-organisation of Fisher Library (the other library which, under the copyright laws, is supposed to house copies of everything published in New South Wales), involving the incorporation of material previously lodged in the Alexander Mackie Curriculum Resources Library, has being going on and is still incomplete. At the present moment, some of the material cannot be located. Nevertheless, I have been able to complete a paper outlining the history of this aspect of English teaching, and this will be published shortly in the Autumn, 2003, issue of the refereed journal English in Australia. In this paper I have been able to trace the struggle between two opposing views of how Shakespearian playtexts should be approached in the classroom, a battle which has only recently been resolved.
Of course, my interest in curriculum history predates that paper, and I was happy to collaborate with Wayne Sawyer in a review article, ‘Writing curriculum history: no single method’ (1997), and also, for an international readership, in the paper ‘Mother-Tongue Teaching in Australia: the Case of New South Wales’ (2001).

1.10 OUTCOMES OF SHAKESPEARE RESEARCH

As stated above, the final survey of trainee English teachers does show that a shift in the teaching of Shakespeare has occurred, though not as great a change as we (my predecessors Mallick and Michaels, and I) would have hoped. We can, however, be reasonably certain that the desired changes will continue to spread, especially since the new Cambridge School Shakespeare, which grew out of Rex Gibson’s Shakespeare and Schools Project in the UK, the basic beliefs of which mirrored our own, is now increasingly the preferred Shakespeare edition in junior and middle secondary schools in NSW. Teachers who choose the Cambridge editions and also have at their disposal the photocopiable volumes of the Shakespeare Workshop Series should have little difficulty in making their lessons exciting and relevant to the students, and in developing in those students the ability to read Shakespearian drama texts imaginatively.

The techniques developed for teaching Shakespeare’s playtexts – and by extension, other classical texts – in an active way have been demonstrated in workshops conducted not only in Australia but also in Britain, Canada, the USA and Singapore. At the Conference of the International Association for the Improvement of Mother-Tongue Education in Amsterdam in 1999 Wayne Sawyer and I conducted a workshop which was attended by teachers from several European countries.
1.11 CONCLUSION

All these research projects have involved the collection of primary source data, classroom testing of materials and continuous evaluation of results. These results have, though workshops, lectures and publications, reached a significant number of teachers, not only in Australia, but in Britain, Canada, the USA and Singapore. Through presentations at the 1997 and 1999 Conferences of the International Association for the Improvement of Mother Tongue Education they have also reached some teachers from non-English-speaking countries.
CHAPTER 2
INVESTIGATING READER RESPONSE
AND STUDENTS’ READING BEHAVIOUR

2.1 RESEARCH PURPOSES

The starting point for the research centred on one area of literary theory, Reader
Response, and the question of the value of making its central tenet explicit to secondary
school students. This aim soon broadened into an exploration of what other aspects of
modern literary theory might be of value to students, and of whether encouraging students
to reflect upon their own processes of response had value in itself.

2.2 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

As noted in (1.2), the method adopted in researching Reader Response was small-scale
intervention in classroom processes. When investigating whether Reader-Response
theory could be made explicit to junior and middle secondary school students, and
whether such explicit knowledge would lead students to value their initial responses and
build upon them, I started with a group of Year 9 students, using the picture book John
Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat (see 1.5); a similar approach was used when
investigating how to help students grasp the difficult concept of ideology. I began with
the idea of bringing two novels, The Wind in the Willows and Wild Wood, into the
classroom, reading excerpts and recording responses; later, in view of the success I had
had with picture books, I chose picture books as the material to which students were invited to respond. I found this a much easier and, in point of view of class time taken, a more economical method of getting across the concept to middle secondary students. This classroom research soon extended into exploring whether, through the use of picture books and short stories, students at various levels of the secondary schools could grasp, and find useful, such concepts as ‘telling gaps’, focalisation, intertextuality, binary oppositions, defamiliarisation, and approaches such as feminism and cultural materialism.

When, with the help of two of my M.Ed. students, Cal Durrant and Lynne Goodwin, I decided to investigate a more difficult question, ‘Can young readers be encouraged to reflect on their processes of response, and is such an endeavour worthwhile?’, a more elaborate research model, based on the work of Thomson (1987) and Benton and Fox (1985), was developed. This involved:

i. Individual reading of a short story, *The Place*, by John Gordon, with a running commentary into a cassette recorder.

ii. An individual piece of writing following the reading.

iii. Small-group discussion, without a teacher of the story (also taped).

iv. A further piece of writing in which the student had access to his/her earlier written and spoken responses.

v. A final small-group discussion with the teacher present – where students would be able to share the strategies they had used at each stage. (Durrant, Goodwin and Watson, 1990, p.211)
2.3 PUBLISHED PAPERS

The three key papers in this section of the Portfolio are:


3. Cal Durrant, Lynne Goodwin and Ken Watson (1990), ‘Encouraging Young Readers to Reflect on Their Processes of Response: Can It be Done, Is It Worth Doing?’ English Education (USA) Vol. 22, No. 4, December pp.211-219. (Also included: the short story on which this research was based. This story, by John Gordon, was taken from his collection, The Spitfire Grave and Other Stories London: Viking, 1979.)

(SEE OVERLEAF)
6

PERSONAL READINGS,
CULTURAL READINGS

*(John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat)*

Ken Watson

In 1987, influenced by Louise Rosenblatt’s *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*, I began to explore the idea of making reader response theory explicit to secondary school students. I felt that if young readers could be brought to a realisation that a range of responses is not only permissible, but indeed inevitable, when a group of people encounter the same text, they would be encouraged to value their own initial responses, and build upon them, rather than wait for the teacher’s definitive interpretation.

I decided to use Wagner and Brooks’ *John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat*, a prize-winning picture book, with groups of pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10. The written text consists of about 400 words; the illustrations are, however, no mere accompaniment, but in a very real way complement and form a dialogue with the words.

Showing the illustrations as I read aloud, I asked the pupils to write down briefly what they thought the story was about. These responses were then written on the blackboard and the students were asked whether they could see any patterns. They quickly identified two clusters of responses, one centring on notions of jealousy and over-possessive love, the other on loneliness and the need for
companionship. Subsequent discussion yielded (with a little prompting on occasions!) the recognition that all these responses fell within a framework created by the text (and thus could readily be justified), and that the range of responses arose from the fact that different readers gave different emphasis to particular elements in the story. The recognition that even so short a story could lead to a range of interpretations led naturally to the realisation that one would expect longer works to generate an even greater range of interpretations. The value of small-group discussion as a means of refining and deepening response was also made explicit.

Later, when I was describing this experiment to some of my M.Ed. students, one of them reported that some of the children in her class of ten-year-olds had taken the story to be about death and acceptance of death. This, indeed, was an interpretation that Ron Brooks had foregrounded in his original set of illustrations for the book (Brooks, 1978: 5-10), and I subsequently found, when using the book with a group of trainee teachers, that the same interpretation occasionally emerged, together with another - that of emotional blackmail and manipulation (Rose seen as manipulative in her refusal to get out of bed until she gets her own way). Thus one 400-word story had yielded four distinct clusters of meaning!

Recently I have been struggling to master post-structuralist theory, which in some of its manifestations lays particular emphasis upon the social/cultural construction of meaning. It occurred to me - as it doubtless has to many others - that this too is a concept which youngsters can grasp and which may well be of value to them. Accordingly, I again returned to the classroom to explore with small groups of Year 10 pupils the text of John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat.

Again I read the story, showing the illustrations as I read, and then asked the students to write down their initial ideas of what the story was about. Again the two clusters of loneliness and over-possessive love emerged:

*Didier:* John Brown felt threatened by the fact of this intruder disturbing the settled relationship he had with Rose. He was jealous.

*Ben:* I wrote down jealousy, and the loneliness of old age.
Personal Readings, Cultural Readings

*Eden:* I said that Rose was lonely, and the dog was obviously jealous. I also thought that you need more than one person...thing...to make you secure.

*Hugo:* She’s very lonely, and it’s a lonely story, and the pictures portray a lonely woman.

I then told them about the ten-year-olds and the trainee teachers who had interpreted the story as being about death, and asked them to explore how such an interpretation could have arisen.

*James:* Maybe the cat’s colour - black - black and death - and maybe, maybe if it wasn’t a black cat - like the midnight cat, there must have been a reason for it being black - so death.

*KW:* That’s an interesting idea: black and death. What links do we have in our culture between black and death?

Matthew: Funerals...mourning clothes.

*KW:* Yes...Now if you took the book to another country, would you necessarily get that sort of reading?

*Stephen:* No, because in some countries black is...might be happiness.

*KW:* And if you changed the colour of the cat to white no one would ever think of it here as about death.

Matthew: But they might in China, where white is the mourning colour.

*KW:* Yes. So when we are reading there’s another factor that influences us: not only, as you said earlier, Matthew, our previous experiences - we read a story slightly differently in the light of our previous experiences - we can go a step further and say the meaning is determined, not only by the words on the page and not only by our previous experiences, but by the whole culture we live in.

(A legitimate synthesising, or is the teacher doing too much of the cognitive work here?)

With one group Rose’s actions were scrutinised, but the
notion that Rose was being unpleasantly manipulative was rejected:

Ben: There's the way that she goes about winning her argument with John Brown. She lies down in bed and she's kind of like saying, 'Well, I'm prepared to die unless you give me what I want'.

KW: Yes . . . what does that say about Rose . . . as a character?

Matthew: She's stubborn . . . gets her own way . . .

KW: When you think about Rose going to bed to get her own way, does this alter your view of the story at all?

Matthew: Not really . . . I still think she's a lonely woman; she needs that extra company.

KW: What about you, Ben? Does this picture of Rose that you have suggested alter your view of the story at all?

Ben: Oh, well, it's probably the only way she could have won the argument . . . it's her only alternative . . .

Robert: Also, John Brown and the cat would never get along unless John Brown made the first step and invited him in . . . Rose didn't suggest it, John Brown did. John Brown suggested that he go and let the cat in. He made the first step towards the friendship, but if Rose would have brought in the cat there would have been conflict.

When I played over the tapes, I was conscious that my own contributions could well have played a part in shaping the pupils' responses to the story. I therefore asked a friend to let a group of girls from his Year 10 class discuss the story without anyone else present. (The one teacher intervention, after about twenty minutes, was to come into the room and ask if the group had explored the notion that the story was about death.)

In the taped discussion the notion of jealousy and overpossessive love surfaced immediately the story had been read. In addition, the idea of resistance to change was suggested:

- The dog liked things as they were.
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- He was comfortable the way it was.
- Yes... he didn't want changing things.

Within the first few minutes, it seemed possible that the further interpretation of the story as being about acceptance of death would be considered:

- But why is it the midnight cat?
- Because it came in the night...
- But isn't midnight usually evil...?
- Yes, that's what I reckon. And because the evil came...
- Oh no. They were really happy and contented in their relationship, and it posed a threat to the dog.
- Why?
- Because the dog didn't...

{  
- It was at midnight... it was a threat...
- Yes, but I wonder if it would have happened if it was a brown cat and it came in the day...

{  
- It would have been a totally different story...
- It would have changed the message altogether...

Later:

- I know it's getting far off the story, but couldn't it be used to symbolise like... nations and stuff... like races and...
- That's deeper...
- Yes, that's taking the story much deeper...
- I don't think that black symbolises races... I don't think a dog would worry about what colour...

- But why did they make the cat black? Why not red, or green, or...?

Eventually the girl who twice tried to focus on the possible significance of the cat's colour was forced to bow to the others' insistence that this would make the story too 'deep':

- Jealousy is easier to pick up than racism because
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Young Readers, New Readings

he accepted him at the end and . . .
- I don’t think it’s anything to do with racism . . .
- Yes, that’s getting off the track . . .
- It’s about a lonely old woman . . .

It was at this point, when some sort of consensus had been reached that the story was about jealousy, that the teacher came in to ask whether they had thought that the story might be about death. He left immediately.

- We didn’t think of that.
- No, but we thought about the husband . . . the dog taking the place of the husband . . .
- The cat symbolises death . . .
- The death of a friendship?
- You know how black cats symbolise death anyway . . . well, it’s come in to get her and the dog doesn’t want to let her go . . . It doesn’t want to let her die . . . She wants to die and the dog doesn’t want to let her die . . .

The possibility of such an interpretation was explored at some length, though at least two of the girls remained unconvinced:

- I don’t think she dies at the end.
- I don’t either . . .
- It could be . . . the death of her relationship with the dog . . .
- But there was nothing wrong with her relationship with the dog; they had a perfect relationship . . .

[A little later]

- She wants to let him [death] in because she’s sick of living . . .
- But why is the cat symbolising death?
- Because, you know, black cats . . . death . . . midnight . . . black cats mean something bad is
Personal Readings, Cultural Readings

- going to happen.
- And because a cat and a dog are totally different
  . . . death and life are totally different . . .
  contrasting.
- There's still jealousy . . .

- There was a moment of reflection on the way in which the
discussion had developed, with one of the proponents of the idea of
death saying:

- On the line of getting to that [interpretation], now
  a couple of you said something about the
  midnight cat and we were nearly there . . .

Implicit in these words, and in the way the discussion was rounded
off, is the belief that the teacher's intervention (which amounted to no
more than the statement that 'some people' had interpreted the story
in that way) was a means of telling the girls what the story was really
about, and 'we're in Year 10 and we didn't get that'. This suggests
that there is a need for the teacher to make reader response theory
quite explicit; otherwise, pupils will go on believing that the teacher
holds the key to the 'true' interpretation.

The discussion skirted tantalisingly around the edges of
making a discovery about the ways in which readings are culturally
constructed. Here again, it would seem that the teacher has a direct
role to play in getting students to reflect on the ways in which their
interpretations are shaped, not only by their own life experiences, but
by the society in which they live.

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2

IDEOLOGY IN NOVELS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

(The Wind in the Willows, Wild Wood
and Walkabout)

Ken Watson

Not surprisingly, secondary school pupils find ideology in literature a slippery concept, the more so because, as Pecheux (1982: 104) points out, it is a characteristic of the structure called 'ideology' that it conceals its own existence by producing a web of 'evident truths'. A great children's classic like Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows is a case in point: it may well seem to its readers to be, as Grahame himself asserted, 'only an expression of the very simplest joys of life', with 'no second meaning' (quoted in Green, 1959: 274). But, as Grahame's biographer has pointed out, the book embodies a conservative, paternalistic ideology: Rat, Mole, Badger and their friends form a community of leisured landowners defending their inheritance against a 'stunted, malevolent proletariat... [with] "little evil wedge-shaped faces"... [whose] main delight is to crow over a member of the privileged classes who has infringed his own social code' (Green, 1959: 245-6). The description of the Wild Wooders' occupation of Toad Hall evokes 'that nervous mood, half-contemptuous, half-terrified, which ran through the English bourgeoisie with increasing insistence' (Green: 246) in Edwardian times, and when the Wild Wooders are routed and the social pattern of
ideology in Novels for Young People

a paternalistic squirearchy is restored, Grahame seems to be reassuring his readers (and himself) that the old order is not really doomed.

In *Wild Wood* (1981), Jan Needle brilliantly deconstructs the ideology of *The Wind in the Willows*. In doing so, he has provided teachers with the perfect means for illustrating what we mean when we talk about a text’s ideology, and also for showing how the text constructs that ideology.

*Wild Wood* retells the story of *The Wind in the Willows* from the point of view of the downtrodden classes - the stoats, weasels, ferrets. Baxter Ferret and his friends live a life of poverty, always haunted by the spectre of unemployment, in stark contrast to the life lived by those on the River Bank:

The River Bank was where the smart set lived. Not all of them were exactly rich, but it was hard for us not to notice that while we all worked our fingers to the bone to keep a roof over our heads and a bite of food in the larder, they did very little that wasn’t directly connected with pleasure and leisure. The group centred around a rich and indolent gentleman by the name of Toad, who lived in a vast, elegant and ancient house on the very edge of the river. He had everything that money could buy, and indulged his whims and fancies in a way that sometimes made a hard-working animal feel more than a little bitter. Even his special friend, a dreamy, poetical sort of water rat, got a little embarrassed by Toad’s excesses from time to time, although his own style of living was hardly what could be classed as austere. He had a very well-appointed and comfortable riverside hole, kept a couple of servants, ate and drank plainly but without stint, and did nothing from one day to the next but swim, boat, fish, go on picnics, or ramble over the surrounding countryside with his chums. (Needle: 47)

A passage such as this can be contrasted with the opening chapter of *The Wind in the Willows*, and particularly with the Rat’s description of the Wild Wooders:
Young Readers, New Readings

'Well, of course - there - are others,' explained the Rat in a hesitating sort of way. 'Weasels - and stoats - and foxes - and so on. They're all right in a way - I'm very good friends with them - pass the time of day when we meet, and all that - but they break out sometimes, there's no denying it, and then - well, you can't really trust them, and that's the fact.' (Grahame: 9)

Grahame's description of Mole's adventure in Wild Wood leaves the reader in no doubt about the Wood's inhabitants:

It was over his shoulder, and indistinctly, that he first thought he saw a face: a little evil wedge-shaped face, looking out at him from a hole . . .
He quickened his pace, telling himself cheerfully not to begin imagining things . . . He passed another hole, and another, and another; and then - yes! - no! - yes! certainly a little narrow face, with hard eyes, had flashed up for a second from a hole, and was gone . . .
Then suddenly, as if it had been so all the time, every hole, far and near, and there were hundreds of them, seemed to possess its face, coming and going rapidly, all fixing on him glances of malice and hatred: all hard-eyed and evil and sharp. (Grahame: 33)

Once Mole and Rat find sanctuary in Badger's house we have the incident of the little lost hedgehogs. As Grahame tells it, Badger is kindliness itself:

He gave them sixpence apiece and a pat on the head, and they went off with much respectful swinging of caps and touching of forelocks. (p.51)

As retold by Needle, the incident becomes one in which, in the eyes of at least some of the Wild Wooders, Badger's actions are viewed as insufferably patronising, and his giving the hedgehogs sixpence each an example of conscience money. (Needle: 73).

When Rat, Mole and Badger undertake to look after Toad
Ideology in Novels for Young People

Hall while Toad is in prison, Toad's servants are no longer around. Have they been dismissed by Badger in the same way as he dismisses the chauffeur delivering a new car? In *Wild Wood* we see that this has indeed happened:

...Badger and Mole reckoned they could save Toad a great deal of money by getting rid of the staff till he came back. They were planning to live in the Hall, and guard it, and keep it aired and repaired. They were sorry, they said, for the loss of the jobs, but it wasn't to be helped... 'You should have seen them a-weeping and a-crying,' said Dolly. 'All the servant girls. All the gardeners. Why, some of 'em had been there since I don't know when... (p.129)

(As Hollindale [1988: 21] has pointed out, one of the ways in which one can locate a text's ideology is to look at the figures in the story who are marginalised almost to the point of non-existence.)

Needle's book is not a straightforward left-wing version of Grahame's story. By the time *Wild Wood* ends we see that a change has come over the Wild Wooders' leader:

My friend O.B., the Chief Weasel, who'd been [Toad’s] arch enemy and the improver of our lot, gradually got closer and closer in with the squire - aye, and his chums as well. In fact it wasn't that long before I often found myself driving O.B. home to the Wild Wood after he'd been an honoured guest at a ball, or a banquet, or a feast or somesuch. Tell the truth, it wasn't all that much longer that O.B. bought himself a summer house by the river. (p.181)

Shades of Ramsay MacDonald - or R.J. Hawke!

Once the social symbolism of *The Wind in the Willows* has been made evident through comparison with *Wild Wood* - or simply with passages from it - pupils can then go on to see how the text constructs the ideology. An analysis of the tone of the Water-Rat's description of the Wild Wooders, an examination of the passages describing an idealised river landscape, a close look at the language
used to depict the stoats and weasels in the chapter 'The Wild Wood' - these are activities which make plain the ways in which the book's ideology comes to seem simply the embodiment of 'evident truths'.

Here is a fifteen-year-old boy talking about his reading of *Wild Wood*:

It's having a nice time of rewriting *Wind in the Willows* and anyone who knows *Wind in the Willows* can see 'Oh, that was in the book'. But it also has a message of history being rewritten from a different point of view. It's fun but it's sort of slipping the message under very successfully. You sort of get it without recognising it. It's subtle. No, but the epilogue isn't. It does say that O.B. betrayed them. I didn't like that.

But [Needle's] such an incredible connoisseur of *Wind in the Willows*. He knows every little detail and carries it over. *The Wind in the Willows* was very middle class. In *Wild Wood* you've got the socialist weasels who look at the snobbish Riverbankers with their smoking jackets rowing down the river. So you've got well-off animals and not-so-well off animals.

It is clear from these comments that Joshua has, through his reading of *Wild Wood*, been alerted to the ideology permeating *The Wind in the Willows*. What is particularly interesting, however, is the way in which he resists the implications of Needle's ending:

The epilogue is trying not to give a social reason but in a way it did. It gave a biased reason. He didn't betray the weazels. They learnt to make up with their enemies. *Wild Wood* explained why the weazels attacked Toad Hall. Not because they were all bad but because of the social conditions. Their lives were hard. They wanted a life like the Riverbankers. Both sides have to take some of the blame.

(later)
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The ending is disappointing. The epilogue, I know they couldn’t live happily ever after. I don’t mean that. The Chief Weazel was great friends with Toad. Perhaps the epilogue is saying he’s a traitor because he’s having a nice time on the riverbank. I didn’t like the way he went to live a reasonably middle-class life. I didn’t think it needed to be put in. The book was fine as it is...

Wild Wood provides a clear demonstration of the value of that increasingly popular technique amongst English teachers - the activity of getting pupils to rewrite an episode in a novel from the point of view of another character. Often this task is set without thought for its potential in illuminating a writer’s ideological stance. It might be interesting, for example, to invite some of the junior secondary pupils who have recently gone through an Enid Blyton phase to rewrite an incident from one of her books from the point of view of one of the figures held up to the reader’s contempt - usually members of the lower classes. Here is Julian, in Five Run Away Together, talking to the Sticks (admittedly the villains of the piece, though Julian does not yet know this):

'Now, now, look 'ere!' began Mr Stick, from his corner.
'I don’t want to look at you,' said Julian at once.
'Now, look 'ere,' said Mr Stick angrily, standing up.
'I've told you I don’t want to,' said Julian. 'You're not a pleasant sight.'

And later:

'Now, look 'ere!' began Mr Stick, angrily, furious at seeing his lovely supper walking away.
'You surely don’t want me to look at you again,' said Julian, in a tone of amazement. 'What for? You haven’t shaved yet - or washed? I’m afraid not. So, if you don’t mind I think I’d rather not look at you.'

Taking a well-known work of literature and retelling it from a
different point of view is a game that modern writers are increasingly
fond of playing. William Golding did this in Lord of the Flies, which
inverts Ballantyne's Coral Island, thereby exposing for scrutiny the
values underlying the Victorian boys' adventure story. A more recent
example, and one which would repay study by seniors, is Jean Rhys's
Wide Sargasso Sea. In Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre, Mr Rochester's
mad wife is seen simply as the chief impediment to Jane's happiness;
Wide Sargasso Sea imagines Mrs Rochester's sufferings to have been
much greater than Jane's. It thus makes a powerful criticism of at
least some of the values to be found in Jane Eyre.

In the course of such investigations it is important to keep in
the forefront of pupils' minds the fact that the same text can be read in
different ways by different readers. It is salutary to recall, for
example, that while most readers of C.S. Lewis's The Lion, the Witch
and the Wardrobe are likely to find in it clear evidence of an orthodox
Christian ideology, the book has been attacked in parts of the USA as
being anti-Christian.

James Vance Marshall's Walkabout is a book that provokes
quite contrary reactions from readers. I have heard British teachers
speak approvingly of it as an anti-racist text, yet the entry on the
novel in a respected Australian reference book reads:

This novel cannot be recommended on any grounds; it
is full of examples that can only breed racist values in
young, unquestioning minds... There are too many
examples of ethnocentrism, outdated concepts of
civilisation, and puritan inhibitions to list them all -
not to mention the sex role stereotyping. (Hill and
Barlow, 1978: 142)

There is no doubt that Marshall makes many errors in his
book - there are no platypuses, koalas or wombats in the Sturt Desert,
for example - and the picture he gives of Aboriginal life and culture is
grossly over-simplified. But racist? To this reader, most of the
allegedly racist comments are in fact ironic, though the reference to
the Aboriginal boy's 'long, prehensile toes' and the suggestion that
'he wasn't used to thinking' (Marshall, 1977: 38; 67) are open to
criticism. Certainly, if this novel is to remain in use in schools it
seems important to have pupils discuss why it is that passages which
some readers find ironic are read as racist slurs by others.
Once pupils have become confident enough to value, and give
expression to, their own responses as readers, it does seem important
to help them come to some understanding of how those responses
have, to a greater or lesser extent, been structured by the text. In
essence, this means becoming aware of the text's ideology, and of the
language in which it is conveyed. No text is ideologically innocent.

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Encouraging Young Readers to Reflect on Their Processes of Response: Can It Be Done, Is It Worth Doing?

Cal Durrant, Lynne Goodwin, and Ken Watson

You may recall Arthur Koestler's story of the centipede who was asked in what order he moved his hundred legs, and thereafter could walk no more. Clearly, his ability to reflect on his motor processes was a marked disadvantage! When we turn from centipedes to children, we find some evidence of the inhibiting effects of explicit grammatical knowledge upon fluency and confidence in writing (e.g. Harris, 1965), and of counter-productive literature teaching.

On the other hand, those working in the field of metacomprehension have found evidence that knowledge of one's own cognitive processes in reading can lead to the ability to regulate those processes in order to make them more effective (e.g. Winser, 1988). And Jack Thomson's major study (1987) suggests very powerfully that a reflexive awareness of their own processes of response can lead adolescents to achieve greater control over their own reading—and greater appreciation of the books they read.

We decided to undertake our own small investigation of the value of increasing adolescents' awareness of their own response strategies. Drawing both on Thomson and on Benton and Fox (1985) we developed a research model which was used with two groups of Year 9 pupils (fifteen-year-olds). The model involved:

1) Individual reading of a short story, with a running commentary into a cassette recorder.
2) An individual piece of writing following the reading.
3) Small-group discussion, without a teacher, of the story (also taped).
4) A further piece of writing in which the student had access to his/her earlier written and spoken responses.
5) A final small-group discussion with the teacher present—where students would be able to share the strategies they had used at each stage.

We sought an open-ended story that would both encourage specu-
lation and make the readers aware of the ways in which a second reading of a story differs from the first reading. Initially we considered using Ray Bradbury's "The Emissary," but finally settled on John Gordon's "The Place," from his collection *The Spitfire Grave and Other Stories* (1979). Not only has "The Place" a problematic ending, but throughout the narrative there are many gaps left for the reader to fill. It thus requires active rather than passive reading.¹

The first group (Group A) comprised five adolescents from a co-educational city comprehensive; in Group B were five students from a country comprehensive. Both groups represented a wide range of ability. Group A was given a modelling session in which teacher and group read another story together and discussed the processes of meaning-making (predicting; relating ideas to past experiences, etc.); Group B was given no such preparation. One of the things that we looked at was whether the omission of this modelling led to significant differences between the groups, but judging by the similarities between their responses, it does not appear that this step is a crucial one in the procedure.

Both groups were then given "The Place" and asked to record their responses into cassette recorders as they read. They were told that their reactions might include "predictions about the ending, impressions of characters, things you are reminded of from your own experiences..."

It is clear from these individual oral responses that all students were

¹ While a story as open-ended as "The Place" is not easily summarized, and indeed any summary will be partial in that it reflects only one of a number of possible readings, here is a brief synopsis for those who have not read it:

The story begins part way through a conversation between a man and his fiancee who are strolling among the tree-lined avenues that surround his house, in which a party is in progress. He is telling her about a mysterious sequence of events that led to the disappearance and subsequent death of his first wife, from whom he inherited the house. It would seem that he believes the place is haunted. Although somewhat disconcerted by this revelation, she reassures him of her love, and of her delight in the house.

On returning to the house, they discover that their guests have left without so much as a farewell. While the owner checks each avenue for signs of their departure, his fiancee steps into the light that shines through the doorway. About to go in, she suddenly realizes that this is the first step in the sequence of mysterious events that her lover has just told her about, a sequence which began with the slamming of the front door, leaving the wife outside. Determined that history should not repeat itself, she hangs on to the door to prevent its closing, hoping that he will quickly return. Almost at once the telephone rings, and instinctively she steps towards it. With a crash, the door shuts behind her. She tries to open it, but the lock will not budge. Turning to the phone, she sees an apparition mirroring her movements, and, terrified, she runs into a side room. Footsteps are heard in the hall, the telephone stops ringing, and then something begins to tap on the window...
able to make some headway toward making sense of the story. Brad, from Group B, considered by his teacher to be a weak English student, seized on the reference to Bluebeard, and, having seen the film of the Bluebeard story, concluded that "The ghost is probably Bluebeard." He was, however, initially baffled by the open-ended nature of the ending: "What a stupid ending that leaves you up in the air!" Other students also typically drew upon their past experiences:

This reminds me of when your parents leave you for a few hours and you're home on your own and you hear every imaginative sound that there is to be heard. (Karen, Group A)

This story reminds me a bit of Rebecca, a movie done by Alfred Hitchcock a couple of years ago. (Felicity, Group A)

Um... when I was little I used to think about monsters hiding under the bed so I wouldn't want to leave the room. I'd just stay in bed, I wouldn't move, and when he says he didn't want to go out into the hall and even though the lights were on I knew what it'd feel like. (Karen, Group A)

The initial oral responses of Melissa (Group B), who, in the view of her teacher, was a more accomplished reader than some of the others, are a series of statements and questions that gradually evolve into ever clearer perceptions of the events of the story:

... I'm wondering where they are... I don't really know why they've been talking about the lights... I'm not really sure whether he married the lady...

Later:

I think I've got a reasonable idea about what is happening now... I think I've worked out that the man has been married before and that there's a kind of suggestion that the woman who he married was really the one who belonged to this grand mansion... Well, I think I've finally got a little glimmer as to what is happening. I now know that it was him that thought...

And finally:

Right, I think I understand what happened at the beginning now.

The stages of Melissa's progress towards an understanding of the story support Wolfgang Iser's notion that the act of recreation "is not a smooth or continuous process... We look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations... we question, we muse" (1974, p. 288).

Typically, too, the students predicted outcomes:

I think he's going to murder his wife-to-be when they are married. (Andrew, Group A)
What the man told the lady is happening again and I reckon she's about to get killed by the ghost. (Nick, Group A)

The written responses that followed the oral running commentary (the students were simply asked to write down their reactions to the story once they had finished it) were, in general, less revealing: the students seemed to feel that they should present a summative response when they committed themselves to paper:

The story started very abruptly. You had to read at least a page to find out what was happening. (Karen, Group A)

Because the writer gave no background information into his characters many assumptions had to be made as to who they were. The story would have been made easier to understand and follow if the author had given information about his characters. (Andrew, Group B)

The group discussions which followed these written responses were, however, much more enlightening. The students, chosen from classes whose teachers did not favor small-group work, were simply asked to talk about the story. There was no teacher present during Group A's initial discussion; in the case of Group B, the researcher was present, but sat apart and took no part in the discussion. Without teacher guidance, the students' talk illustrated very powerfully the truth of Aidan Chambers' assertion: "Saying thoughts together creates new thoughts that lie beyond us all" (1985 p. 143). Interesting, too, was the obvious enjoyment of the students in this group sharing:

**Nick:** I reckon that was a good story and they could have finished it there . . .

**Felicity:** That's like there'll be a follow-up, "Place Two . . . The Second Story." (laughter)

**Andrew:** "Place Two . . . Beyond the Dark Alley."

**Nick:** "Woman's Revenge."

**Felicity:** "Bluebeard Comes Home."

**Nick:** "Revenge of Bluebeard." (Group A)

Here is Group A looking at the end of the story:

**Nick:** This is a useful story.

**Felicity:** Even if there are so many loose ends this is still a useful story?

**Nick:** Loose ends—what loose ends?

**Felicity:** Well, you don't know what happened to the guests, you don't know what . . . anything about the wife.

**Nick:** Because you haven't read the story.

**Karen:** I know but she's deliberately called it "The Place."
Nick: And left loose ends for discussion—that's the whole point—to get you to think about it...to get you thinking...that's why they've got loose ends.

Andrew: Because it's a short story that might actually be the end. There might not even be any more to it.

The very act of discussion here seems to help the group accept the equivocal ending of the story. In short, we see the students in this socially negotiated peer setting becoming more comfortable with tolerating ambiguity.

And here is Group B's exploration of a puzzling detail of the story:

Janelle: But how come when everything happened, how come the lights were on? So bright?

Andrew: Well, they just had a party; we usually leave the lights on during a party.

Janelle: Yeah, but if you've left, you'd turn them off, wouldn't you...Usually you imagine something spooky happening in the dark, don't you?

Melissa: Yeah!

Javette: No.

Janelle: And then this is all happening in bright light.

Melissa: Yeah, but it's dark outside, 'cos they said, you know, how it's sort of, but the owners, they'd go back and say goodbye to all of their guests.

Janelle: They went back, and they were all gone.

Melissa: Just like that. It's almost as if, yeah, guess it's repeating itself and he's got to get her to come and fill this role so that he can get away from the curse.

Janelle: They could have all been ghosts, you know...

In this segment of the transcript we see the group arriving at ideas that none had previously produced in the individual responses (e.g., the notion of "the curse"). Also, close attention is being given to the details of the story—the discussion is well-grounded as the students constantly refer back to the text (e.g., the reference to the lights being on in the house, the disappearance of the guests).

After sharing their reactions to the text, the students made a second written response. Again, the students were simply invited to write down their reactions now that they had had a chance to talk about the story. Most of this second set of written responses revealed that the students' original reactions to the story had been challenged and refined by the group discussion. Contrast the tentative statements of Melissa's first written response with the excerpt from her post-discussion piece:

...At first I found the dialogue somewhat bewildering... In a
way I think it was deeply frightening, but also there was the part that suggested that it was all quite normal and not at all to do with the supernatural. (First response)

... I now think it's to do with a curse that the house holds... There is this fascination by the characters with the house. Everything happens in and around the house and that's why I think it holds a curse—a strange attraction which makes people want it who are then trapped by it until they themselves trap another victim... Does the house trap the victim or its ghostly occupants? (Second response)

Further, the second set of written responses showed not only a growth in the students' understanding of what happens in the story, but also an increased confidence in expressing their views. Karen (Group A) now seems more confident in writing about the things that puzzle her in the story, and indeed can now see two possible interpretations of it: the ghost of the first wife or the husband's pretending it was a ghost in order to induce his fiancee to leave, with the guests at the party collaborating in his plan.

In the final discussion session with the teacher, both groups acknowledged the benefits of the first group discussion:

After you've discussed it you think of things you haven't thought of before—get other people's opinions on it, and it's probably much easier to understand, and you find things you hadn't noticed before. (Andrew, Group B)

... it highlighted some things which perhaps I hadn't thought about. So that gave me more ideas to make up a theory of what I reckon happened. (Melissa, Group B)

Group B discovered at the end of the discussion that no two interpretations were exactly the same, and so made a major discovery about personal response. They were critical of the fact that in their normal classroom there was very little opportunity for small-group discussion, and noted that one effect of whole-class discussion was to stifle alternative views:

_Janelle_: ... they're not game enough to put forward their ideas and be knocked back.

_Melissa_: Yeah, they stand up there and think, "I'm probably wrong, but..."

_Janelle_: "I'm probably wrong so I'm not going to say anything."

Felicity and Karen, in Group A, concluded that it sometimes takes time for a story to have its full impact ("I changed my mind actually when I got home," said Felicity), a discovery that recalls Virginia Woolf's comment:
Wait for the dust of reading to settle; for the conflict and questioning to die down;... Then suddenly without our willing it... the book will return, but differently. It will float to the top of the mind as a whole. (quoted in Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 133)

A clear pedagogical implication of this would seem to be that teachers need to give pupils adequate time for reflection. This means somehow overcoming the pressures of the classroom, including having to rush to "cover" the curriculum, which are all too often used by teachers as an excuse for demanding premature formulations of response.

Some of the members of this group discovered that they were more "visual" readers than others. Karen saw the male character as "tall and skinny, like really skinny... mousy hair, really thin all over," but Andrew "didn't make much of the characters—I don't like thinking up characters, I just like keeping up with the story."

Though several of the pupils recalled discovering new elements in the story on the second reading, no one in either group noted that knowing how the story ends means that it is read for the second time in a quite different way. This is the sort of insight that does not seem to come easily to inexperienced readers; it is often necessary for the teacher to draw such matters to the pupils' attention.

What did we learn from this small experiment? First of all, it did seem to illustrate the importance of ensuring that all students discover for themselves not only what they have learnt, but how they have learnt it. We all know the benefits that come from small-group discussion, but do we make sure that all our pupils know why they are encouraged to work in small groups? Some years ago, one of us interviewed a number of students who had extensive experience in small-group activity and found that a surprisingly high number of them were unaware of its value to them, simply because they had never been encouraged to reflect on their learning processes in the small-group situation. The particular procedure we adopted in this case proved a good one for helping students to make such discoveries.

Secondly, the fact that the members of both groups saw the first writing task in terms of a final, definitive response rather than in terms of a deeper exploration of their initial ideas suggests to us that the model ought to have an additional step in which teacher and students compare the two written responses and discuss the ways in which writing can be a deeper kind of thinking, of how it can take the students a stage further in the process of clarifying understanding. The preponderance of "one-shot" writing in the secondary school, despite the growth in popularity of the process-conference approach to writing, is clearly still militating against a view of writing as a means of learning.
Indeed, the "prompt" for the first writing task that we gave these students could have included a reminder that what is expected at this stage is not some "final" judgment, but rather a further exploration of initial reactions to the story. In their three years of secondary school, none of these pupils had come to see writing as anything more than a recording (or reporting to the teacher) of their understanding at a particular point in time; they did not see it as yet another way of exploring their own responses to literature.

Thirdly, an analysis of the protocol materials suggests that at different times all these young readers made use of complex and diverse reading strategies: questioning the text about motives, events, characters, settings; predicting outcomes; rereading parts of the text; adjusting theories in the light of new evidence; holding judgments in abeyance while awaiting more information; visualizing characters and setting; empathizing with characters; analogizing. They have at their disposal, in other words, most of the strategies that readers need in order to cope with complex texts, and the particular circumstances in which they were placed encouraged the use of such strategies. The question that remains is whether they were made sufficiently aware of those strategies to be able to make use of them when engaging in the usually solitary process of reading literature.

We did feel that the fact that these students were invited to observe themselves and their peers in the reading task, and so gain an explicit awareness of these strategies, did make a difference, and we can detect places in the transcripts where, for example, the members of Group B gained confidence by discovering that a range of interpretations of the story was acceptable. But one can readily envisage a further stage in which the teacher takes the pupils back over the transcript material, inviting them to identify explicitly those strategies which have helped them to come to terms with the text. Of course what is needed is for us to follow a group of readers over a longer period of time, as Donald Fry has done in *Children Talk about Books: Seeing Themselves as Readers*. At this stage, however, we can say with some confidence that the procedure we adopted is one that should prove useful both for cultivating such awareness and for investigating, over a period of time, its value.

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"You must have been very afraid," she said.
"Well I didn't like it much."
"I should have died."
"Yes." He fell silent, and when he resumed he spoke slowly. "I was too afraid to open the curtains. At least while the light was on in the room. Whatever it was out there could have looked in and seen me and I couldn't have seen it—whatever it was."
"You could have put the light out."
"Then I would have had to cross the room in the dark, go right up to the curtains, and ..."
"Stop. You make me shiver." She paused. "Why didn't you go to the phone?"
In spite of the darkness she could see his smile.
"Don't tell me you had forgotten the phone," she said.
"No, I hadn't forgotten."
"You are going to tell me the lines had been cut?"
"No. The phone was working."
"Thank goodness."
"I heard it ring."
"Well then." She let out her breath, relieved. "The phone is in the hall," he said.
"Oh, I see. In the dark."
"No. I told you I'd put on every light in the house. The hall was very bright." He thought for a moment. "It must have been bright."
"Must have been?" she asked. "Didn't you go out there?"
He shook as though he had not heard her.
"I'm sure it was bright, because the lights in the room hadn't failed. They didn't even flicker." He lifted his head and spoke to her again. "You know what it's like on a windless night in summer with the lights burning. It was all quite calm."
"Except you."
"Except me."
"Who was it ringing?" she said.
"I don't know. I didn't leave the room. Somebody else answered the phone." "What a relief!" She was laughing. "So there was somebody else in the house after all."
He remained silent and her laughter died.
"There was somebody else in the house, wasn't there?" she insisted.

"I don't know why I'm telling you this," he said. "Not now, just before we are married."
"Maybe it's a test." She came closer. "To see if I love you in spite of it all."
"Even if my house is Bluebeard's castle, and all my previous wives are lying there murdered?"
"Our castle. I fell in love with it before I even knew you."

He glanced away down the avenue of trees. "Yes," he said, "this place does have that effect. On most people. I was the same. That's why I have to tell you everything about it." He drew in his breath and let it out like a sigh. "Everything that I told you earlier is true. The house was empty except for me."
"But somebody answered the phone."
"There was a sound like footsteps. Then the phone stopped ringing."
"Don't go on," she said. "Not while we're out here in the dark."
"All right."
"All right? You mean you're not going to tell me what happened next?"
"Well you said ..."
"You've got to!"
He allowed himself to smile again. "There's not much more to tell. I sat there. There were no more phone calls, no more footsteps. And towards dawn the scratching and tapping at the window stopped altogether. Then I went to bed."
"To bed?"
He nodded.
"I don't know how you could. I should have fainted. They would have found me white-haired in the morning. Dead or gibbering or something."
"It's my own place," he said. "One learns not to be too afraid."
"And nothing since?"
"Nothing."
She fell silent, and after a while he said, "I don't care what happened. It's a beautiful house. I can't wait to live in it ... with you."

They were at the end of a long avenue of trees. He put his arm around her waist, and they looked back towards the house.
"Its windows are so small from here," she said. "It looks tiny, yet it's a big house. A very big house. And the grounds are huge."
"I sometimes don't know myself where they end and then I find myself on other people's property. I rather like that."

"You are odd," she said. "When I live here I won't ever want to go outside the boundary."

"I felt like that, and so did ..." He broke off.

"I'm sorry."

"There's no need to be sorry." She spoke gently. "I know it was her house. You've told me all that."

"I was like you," he said. "It was the place that attracted me. She may have been living here still if it wasn't for me."

"No," she shook her head. "It was she who ran away. She just left all this—and you. I know it wasn't your fault."

He said, "She changed so suddenly. Nothing had happened until that day, and then it was just the smallest of arguments. I can't even remember what it was about. I've tried. I've tried many times to bring it back but it eludes me."

"I know."

"She had heard him speak of it before, but made no effort to stop him. The more he spoke of it the quicker the memory would be, if not obliterated, at least softened."

"She let me go into the house first. She held back because she was angry. And the door closed behind me. I remember how I felt as it shut—it slammed. I hadn't touched it, but it slammed—and I remember suddenly feeling delighted, wanting her to feel that I had slammed it. But more than that. I suddenly felt in possession of the house—her house. But now she was outside, on the other side of the shut door, and the house was mine. It was as though the house wanted me and not her."

They walked on a few paces nearer the house before he resumed.

"I was, I suppose, slow in opening the door. Just too slow. Just a fragment of a second too slow. And when I did so she had turned and was running away along the avenue."

"This avenue?"

"I don't know. It may have been."

"And you never saw her again?"

"No. I waited. Then one day they wrote and told me she had died. They had had the funeral before I could get there. They had not wanted me. I don't know what she had told them."

They walked in silence.

"So you came back here," she said.

"I had to. I love the place."

"I can't blame you," she said. "I would feel the same."

He stopped and turned towards her. "So we have no secrets. I have told you everything."

"I know," she said.

"And you?" he asked. "You have no secrets?"

She shook her head. "And it was afterwards you thought the house was haunted?"

"Just that one night."

"You were under a great strain."

"It was after it happened that the place began to feel emptier and emptier, and then you came along."

"It was the house." She teased him. "The house came first." She looked away. "These avenues," she said, "they all lead straight to the house. How many are there?"

"I've never counted them. And you are mistaken. They are not all straight. Sometimes you lose sight of the house altogether."

"But not tonight. And the moon is directly over it so we couldn't lose it even if we tried. It really is lovely.""

"But haunted."

"That was your last secret. But now you've told me so it doesn't matter any more. It's all gone; vanished." She kissed him. "Let's get back to the others. We're so far away you can't even hear them."

"Perhaps everybody's gone. It's late."

"All the better. I'd like to have it all to myself, and I hate a party that goes on too long."

"But they're my friends," he said.

"There's always another day."

"I want to see them."

"You don't think they've been frightened away, do you?"

"What makes you say that?"

"Ghosts," she said.

He shook his head.

"I'm sorry. I shouldn't have made a joke of it. It must have been very frightening."

He made no response, and she said, "You must not blame yourself for being afraid. It was bad enough having a ghost outside the house, but to have one inside as well..."

"There was only one. The footsteps inside were only the sounds an old house makes. And telephones eventually have to stop ringing. They can't go on for ever. The only ghost was the one outside, trying to get in."
"But it didn't. And it went away and never came back."

He seemed not to have heard. "I should at least have opened the curtains."

"Why do you blame yourself?"

"I could have learned something. All I had to do was open the curtains. But I was too afraid."

"You missed nothing, my darling. It was only a tree tapping at the window."

"There are no trees that close," he said.

"A creeper?"

He shook his head.

"It was a moth, or something, attracted by the light."

But he was striding on now, and she had to run a pace or two to catch up. He was gazing ahead.

"They've gone," he said. "They've all gone!"

Lights burned in every window, laying patches of brightness on the paving of the terrace. There was no car. Not even the sound of a motor in the distance. At the heart of the avenues the house spread its own radiance like a silent star.

"I'm glad," she said. "We don't need anybody."

"They've deserted us."

"I don't care. We've got it all to ourselves."

She walked across the gravel to where the light from the open door folded itself down the steps and reached out like a carpet to greet her. The hall was beautiful, full of a dazzling light. Within it there were many doors leading to the intricacies of the house itself. The staircase curved away to the momentary darkness of a landing. There was so much to explore, and now she could do so because it was all hers. She paused on the steps. "Let's go in together," she said.

But he had crossed the gravel to gaze into the tunnel of trees into which the cars must have disappeared. He did not answer. A tiny spasm of annoyance at his neglect crossed her mind, and she stepped into the hall alone.

It was then that she saw that history was repeating itself—the quarrel, the drawing apart which put one inside the house and the other outside—and she acted to prevent it.

She held the door to stop it swinging to if a gust of wind should funnel through the house, and she turned to beg him to come with her. But already he was entering the blackness of the avenue. No matter. She was in control. She could decide what happened next. She opened her mouth to call out and bring him back.

At that instant, as though to obliterates any sound she could make, the telephone on the little table behind her began to ring. She started and swung round. The door, reacting to her sudden movement, slid away from her and slammed shut. She reached for the lock, but it was stiff and complicated and as she fumbled at it the phone dinned at her from its perch—like a black goblin, scolding and shrieking.

She left the door and went towards it to silence it. As she moved, a little more of the landing came into view. Matching her pace for pace, there seemed to be a figure moving towards the head of the stairs. Yet all their guests had gone.

She spun and ran into the nearest room. The second door slammed behind her and she was alone. She remained where she was, her back against the door. Thank god for all the light. She sat down. He was only just outside. He would soon be back. She heard, through the ringing of the phone, his steps in the hall. Then, mercifully, the phone fell silent.

She breathed deeply, twice, and let her head fall forward. In a moment, when her heart steadied, she would get up and go to him.

The hall was quiet now. It must have been the light shining up through the railings of the landing that had persuaded her there was a figure there. She smiled and let her mind explore the hall, and beyond it to the other rooms. They were all bright, empty, and calm. She breathed easier and raised her head. It was time to go to meet him.

She was still sitting when, beyond the closed curtains, something tapped on the glass.
A further paper, designed to make an international audience aware of the value of picture books as a valuable teaching tool, even in the most senior levels of the secondary school, is also included.

➢ Ken Watson, ‘Picture Books in the Secondary Classroom’ in Mary Kooy et al. (eds) Fiction, Literature and Media Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999, pp.5-10.

(See overleaf.)
Picture Books in the Secondary Classroom

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Once considered appropriate only for the youngest children, picture books are now, at least in Australia, being used even at the most senior levels of the secondary school. That this change has come about is a realisation not only of the increasing sophistication of the modern picture book, but also the recognition that words and pictures in combination are the most common form of communication today, and hence warrant close attention in the classroom.

Not only are picture books an economical way of exploring story structure and the features of written language, they are also an excellent means of helping students grasp some of the more useful concepts of modern literary theory: reader-response theory, intertextuality, the story/discourse distinction, to name but a few. The slippery concept of ideology – "no text is innocent" – is more easily understood through the examination of a range of picture books than through the consideration of a 400-page novel, and picture books are an appropriate vehicle for classroom exploration of the degree to which readers are culturally constructed. With the growing realisation that visual literacy should be a classroom concern, picture books are assuming an even greater prominence as teaching aids.

In teaching literature we want for our students both textual engagement, that is, a direct or participating response to the literary experience; equally, we want an awareness of as many as possible of the conditions of that experience. Reading literature is indeed "a socially and culturally constructed event, framed by the ideologies of the teacher and the text, with the classroom as the site in which preferred reading behaviours are authorised and endorsed." However, that's not the whole story.

Margaret Gill, former President of the International Federation for the Teaching of English, Address to AATE Conference, 1993

Although it has taken twenty years, the idea of using picture books as teaching aids in secondary school classes (year seven to year twelve) is now widely accepted, at least in Australia. The fear that adolescents would indignantly reject such materials has proven baseless; in the rare cases where there is an initially negative reaction, students are quickly won over because modern picture books are often very sophisticated. Some, indeed, clearly have an adult audience in mind: one thinks of Raymond Briggs's powerful anti-war books, When the Wind Blows and The Tinpot Foreign General and the Old Iron Woman. The latter is rumoured to have so enraged Mrs. Thatcher that she brought pressure on the publishers not to reprint it. Clearly, if a picture book can provoke such a reaction at an adult level, it is not something to be confined to the junior classes of the primary school.

Apart from the fact that many modern picture books offer challenges (of various sorts) even to the adult reader, there are at least two good reasons for using picture books in the secondary school. First, because the format is large and the text short, a single copy of a picture book is often all that is needed for a stimulating lesson.
Ideally, of course, each group of three or four students should have its own copy. Secondly, words and pictures in combination are the most common form of communication used today and, hence, warrant close attention in the classroom. Because the best modern picture books marry the two most skilfully, they are the ideal vehicle for exploring their use.

Perhaps the most common use of picture books in secondary classrooms in the late 1970s and early 1980s was in relation to the exploration of story structure and the linguistic features of stories for the young. Many teachers at this time discovered how highly motivated their year nine and ten students became when they studied the language and structure of picture books for young children, and then put their knowledge to work by creating, in groups, their own picture books, and trying them out with audiences of five- and six-year-olds. In the process, they were acquiring knowledge about such things as: parallel stories (John Burningham's *Come Away from the Water, Shirley*); circular story structure (Maurice Sendak's *Outside Over There* and, more recently, the Alhbergs' *It Was a Dark and Stormy Night*); the power of repetition and cumulation (Ruth Brown's *A Dark Dark Tale* and Pat Hutchins' *Don't Forget the Bacon*); and the conventions of fairy stories, and the variations that can be played upon them (Tony Ross's *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*).

Since the many awards for picture books (e.g., the 'Australian Picture Book of the Year', the 'Kate Greenaway Medal', and the 'Caldecott Medal') are judged by adults, some teachers saw the possibility of sharpening their students' critical judgment (and of having them write in a different register) by having students take on the role of judges. In groups, students would discuss the merits of shortlisted books, then write 'judges' reports. Lively discussion would follow when winners were announced and the actual judges' comments made public.

The appearance of the Alhbergs' *The Jolly Postman* (1986) gave teachers another valuable teaching aid: a witty set of examples of different linguistic registers. An interesting by-product of this book was the enthusiasm with which young readers aged about seven to ten took up the idea, deluging the Alhbergs with their own 'letters' to and from various nursery-rhyme characters. These letters showed that the formal teaching of such registers is hardly necessary if a child's natural curiosity and enthusiasm can be aroused by some lively examples. Here is one such offering, which neatly captures the register of the official letter:

5 Yoxall Buildings
Derwent
24.11.86

To The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe

Dear Madam,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Social Services Department of Housing. I have the pleasurable duty of informing you of our plans to re-house you into larger accommodation. We are all hoping that you are not too hungry, as we are informed by your husband that he has forgotten the code on his "Family Express" card and therefore can send you no maintenance. We are moving you to a large mansion house and hope you will be very happy there.

Yours sincerely,
Ben Palmer
Housing Director
However, picture books offer even wider possibilities, as Wendy Michaels and Maureen Walsh (1990) were to show. They tied their suggestions firmly to a reader-response framework, drawing attention to the usefulness of picture books in helping students to grasp irony and satire, and to the support given by such books to those learning English as a second or third language.

The explosion of literary theory in the 1980s forced teachers of senior and middle secondary classes to ponder the question of what literary concepts should be passed on to students, and of how such concepts could be explained clearly and economically. After conducting some classroom research (e.g., Watson, 1992; Stephens and Taylor, 1992), Stephens and Watson, with the aid of a team of experienced teachers, produced From Picture Book to Literary Theory (1994). This book had two purposes: to explain the newer theories to English teachers, and to suggest how to use particular picture books in the classroom so that students could grasp those concepts that the teachers felt worth passing on. In offering such a teaching resource, Stephens and Watson sought also to remind teachers that contemporary picture books, though they might break traditional boundaries, have the primary purpose of delighting, challenging, even mystifying, their readers. Taking their cue from the words of Margaret Gill, quoted above, the editors and contributors reminded teachers that 'a direct and participating response to the literary experience' is an essential starting-point.

It would be quite inappropriate for teachers to attempt to give even their most senior students a comprehensive guide to literature theory. Critical practices such as those derived from Lacanian or Kristevan psychoanalysis, for example, fall outside the concerns of the secondary school teacher and students. What, then, are the central concepts of newer literary thinking that the teacher might seek to introduce when appropriate? The answer to this question will vary according to what the teacher feels are the needs and level of maturity of the class. However, all students should, at some point, be made aware of the central tenet of reader response theory, and half a dozen other concepts are essential for all reasonably-able students if they are to achieve anything like a proper awareness of 'the conditions of [the literary] experience'.

Reader response theory can be a most liberating theory for students from year seven upwards, and the picture book is one way of demonstrating its central tenet. Once students have understood that the meaning of a text varies from person to person because the experiences that each reader brings to a text will vary, they are encouraged to voice their own interpretations, rather than passively wait to be told by the teacher what to think. Elsewhere (Watson, 1992), I have given an account of my experiments in making reader response theory explicit to students in years eight, nine and ten, using the most famous of modern Australian picture books, John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat, by Jennie Wagner and Ron Brooks. Since then, I have heard of teachers who have succeeded in this aim with even younger children, using the same picture book. (Incidentally, all the picture books referred to in this article are, with one possible exception, at the time of writing readily available throughout the English-speaking world; many have also been translated into, or are translations from, other languages.)

The weakness of reader response – its failure to acknowledge the degree to which we are socially and culturally constructed as readers – can be demonstrated to students through an appropriate choice of picture books. Through an exploration of picture books like Barrie Wade and David Parkins' Give a Dog a Name, students
will discover for themselves that factors like gender, race and social class help determine the way we read.

A vitally important concept for students to grasp is that of ideology. No text is innocent: every text, either overtly or covertly, rests on a set of values that the author accepts and wants the readers to accept. It seems essential that young readers recognise this fact. Although it is easy enough for them to grasp the ideology of one of the many picture books concerned with the preservation of the environment (e.g., Jeannie Baker’s *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*; Jorg Muller and Jorg Steiner’s *The Sea People*), or the folly of war (e.g., Junko Morimoto’s *My Hiroshima*; Raymond Briggs’ *The Tinpot Foreign General and the Old Iron Woman*), unmasking the ideology of the stories of Enid Blyton or of such classic children’s novels as Kenneth Graham’s *The Wind in the Willows* is much more difficult. A careful exploration of picture books like Babette Cole’s *Prince Cinders*, comparing it with Perrault’s classic *Cinderella*, or of more ambivalent examples like *Tusk Tusk* by David McKee or *Bear Goes to Town* by Anthony Browne will help students to pin down this slippery concept. That such an investigation is not beyond even children in years six and seven is shown in the account by John Stephens and Susan Taylor (1992) of groups of children exploring two picture book versions of the legend of the seal wife.

Gerald Graff (1987) has pointed out that ‘if there is any point of agreement among [the various literary theories] it is on the principle that texts are not, after all, autonomous and self-contained, that the meaning of any text in itself depends for its comprehension on other texts and textualised frames of reference’ (256). Hence, another concept that ought to be understood by all students, at least from year ten (age fifteen) upwards, is that of intertextuality. Many picture books, like the Albergs’ *Each Peach Pear Plum*, depend almost entirely upon the reader’s ability to make the necessary connections with other texts, and books like Fiona French’s *Snow White in New York* and Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith’s *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* simply provide the most obvious examples of something which is a feature of each and every text the students will encounter.

So used are we to ‘expressive realism’ in fiction that we tend to accept the method of narration as ‘natural’, and forget that the writer is relying on a range of conventions and codes. In short, we often regard texts as windows on reality, and fail to notice their essential constructedness. A great deal of postmodern fiction is concerned with exposing the constructedness of realist texts, and thus seeks to foreground the devices, which in the realist text we accept as natural and normal. The term ‘metafiction’ is used for such writing, and metafictive picture books are becoming increasingly common. A famous example is Anthony Browne’s *Bear Hunt*; another text, which engages in metafictive breaking of boundaries is John Agee’s *The Incredible Painting of Felix Clausseu*.

The picture book, then, can be a powerful aid in helping students to grasp some unfamiliar literary concepts and can also be used as a means of promoting visual literacy. Students need to develop skills both in interpreting visual images and in being able to analyse their effect on the reader/viewer. Almost any picture book will generate questions on aspects of visual literacy, as for example:

1. What is the effect, in Josephine Poole and Angela Barrett’s *Snow-White*, of the angle of vision in the double-page spread of Snow-White’s flight through the forest?
2. What ideas about viewing are conveyed in Istvan Banyai’s *Zoom* and *Re-Zoom*?
3. What is the effect of foregrounding the bleeding head of a dead fish in Gary
Crew and Peter Gouldthorpe's First Light?

4. What effect do the decorative borders have on our reception of Selina Hastings' retelling of Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady?

5. How does the use of dark and light in Chris Van Allsburg's illustrations for The Wretched Stone contribute to the narrative?

Could any mother tongue teacher aware of the riches offered by the modern picture book resist the idea of making use of it in the secondary classroom? I think not.

PICTURE BOOKS


REFERENCES


2.4 BOOKS

The foregoing research led to a number of books providing classroom materials through which teachers could explore with their students some of the more important aspects of modern literary theory and bring the students to some understanding of their own reading processes. Excerpts from these books follow.


WAYS OF TELLING
A Short Story Workshop

PHOTOCOPIABLE
Point of View

Point of view is perhaps the chief way in which a writer controls the way in which we read his/her story. In first-person narration we see the action through the eyes of the narrator, and are usually invited to interpret the action in the way the narrator sees it. Even in third-person narration — with an omniscient (all-knowing, all-seeing) narrator — there is usually some “focalising” which causes us to view the action through the eyes of certain characters. When you have read the first part of the following story, which is set in India, try to decide through whose eyes we are viewing the action. Is it Irwin, or the man, or the woman? Underline the words that lead you to make your decision. Then read the rest of the story. Is the “focalising agent” the same character at the end?

THE TEMPLE

David King

"Yes, do come," she said. "It will be so much more pleasant than travelling by train."

Irwin hesitated. He was, as always, unsure whether the invitation was issued out of pity for the elderly lone male or out of a genuine desire for his company.

"If you're sure it won't inconvenience you," he said at last.

"Well, that's settled, then," her husband said. "We'll leave in about a quarter of an hour."

Conversation in the car was difficult, for Irwin in the back seat found that the words spoken in the front were blown away. The car windows were all open; there was no air-conditioning. Despite the breeze generated by the car's progress, it soon became uncomfortably hot.

The emotional atmosphere also seemed to be changing. Irwin sensed a half-suppressed excitement in the pair in front of him, and thought he detected something conspiratorial in their sidelong glances at each other.

"It's the next turn," said the woman, consulting the map spread out in front of her.

Irwin was surprised as the car began to bump along a road that was little better than a track. He leaned forward and said loudly, "Are you sure this is right? It doesn't look like a major road."

The woman turned towards him. "Oh, we're taking a little detour. Bill heard about a small temple that's supposed to be worth visiting. It's only a short way, according to the map."

The road became worse. As the car slowed down, Irwin became more and more uncomfortable. The heat was now blanketing him, and a layer of red dust was coating everything. He began to wish he had never come.

"Ah, there it is!" the man said as they rounded a bend. In front of them, on a small knoll, was an even smaller temple. The car stopped and they all climbed out. The heat smote Irwin's exposed skin; his companions, however, seemed unworried by it. They stepped out with evident eagerness towards the temple.

Irwin felt irritation rising within him. It was clearly an ordinary Hindu temple, decorated on the outside with carved figures from which the paint had long since disappeared. Why were they so interested? They must have seen dozens of better examples in their travels through central India.

"It doesn't seem to be used any more," said Irwin as they paused in the doorway. He peered doubtfully inside: an abandoned temple seemed just the place for a cobra or two.
"You're wrong," said the man. "Look, there's a fresh flower on the floor. Someone has come to make an offering to the goddess." He stood close behind Irwin, forcing him to move forward into the dark.

The man had brought a small torch. A narrow beam of light illuminated first a small garland of flowers at the foot of the altar and then, above it, the statue of the goddess, black, many-armed, brandishing a sword and a bludgeon to which were attached strange lumps. The torch beam lingered on the bludgeon and Irwin was startled to see that the lumps were miniature skulls.

"Kali," breathed the woman behind him.
Again Irwin had the impression that she was excited, though what about he could not imagine.

"You know all about Kali, I suppose," said the man, still standing close behind him, and holding the torch aloft so that its beam angled down over Irwin's head onto the malevolent face of the statue.

"Wasn't she the one worshipped by the Thugs?" Irwin remembered reading of the thousands of ritual stranglings that used to occur in central India before the British stamped out the cult in the early nineteenth century.

"Yes," said the man, in a voice that sounded oddly tight. "She's the blood goddess, wife of Shiva the destroyer. Magnificent, isn't she?"

"Well, hardly," began Irwin, but his words were suddenly cut off. A noose of some kind encircled his throat, choking him, and at the same time a foot was thrust into the small of his back. His head was jerked back, his skull imploded, his body slumped to the floor.

After a minute or two the woman said, "You're sure he's dead?"

The man bent down and placed two fingers on Irwin's neck, near the curve of the jawbone. "Yes," he said, and they moved out into the light.

The man folded up the yellow silk scarf and pushed it deep into his pocket. "It was even quicker than I'd thought it would be. He can't have felt much." His voice shook slightly; his eyes glittered with excitement.

"The Thugs always hid the bodies."

"But we want people to know that Thuggee is alive, don't we?" He smiled at her.

"Of course." She made a mocking bow, gesturing towards the car. "Come, O servant of Kali. Your carriage awaits."
From Picture Book To Literary Theory
edited by John Stephens and Ken Watson
John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat

JENNY WAGNER and RON BROOKS (Puffin)

Reader Response/social construction of readers

Arguably the most famous of modern Australian picture books (it won the 1977 Picture Book of the Year Award and has been in print continuously since), John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat is an excellent vehicle for helping students from about Year 8 upwards grasp the basic tenets of reader response (reception) theory, and can also be used for demonstrating the way in which we are socially constructed as readers.

Reader response theory

Just as no two actors give identical performances of the part of Hamlet, so no two readers create identical poems or stories out of the same text. As W.H. Auden pointed out:

*What a poem [or novel or short story] means is the outcome of a dialogue between the words on the page and the person who happens to be reading it; that is to say, its meaning varies from person to person.*

We would argue that this is a particularly important insight for students to grasp, since once they have understood it they are less likely to see the teacher as the repository of the one 'true' meaning of a text. Reader response theory does not suggest, however, that all responses are of equal validity; as Louise Rosenblatt argues,

*Two prime criteria of validity... are that the reader's interpretation not be contradicted by any element of the text, and that nothing be projected for which there is no verbal basis.*

Students are encouraged to give voice to their own initial responses, and to test these against the text and against the responses of others.

If the book is used as suggested, it is likely that several clusters of meaning will emerge, all of which can be justified as falling within the framework of the text. The two commonest readings are that the story concerns loneliness or over-possessive love; a less common, but equally valid, reading is that of the manipulation of others.

The social/cultural construction of readers

The meanings we take from a text are in part determined by the culture in which we have grown up (see also Activity 2). In some classes, a reading which sees the cat as symbolising death emerges, and indeed this was the reading on which Ron Brooks based his original set of drawings. Such a reading gives the teacher the opportunity to show students how they are culturally constructed as readers. Could the text be read in this way if the cat were white? If not, why not? It is highly likely, at this stage, that someone in the class will point out that in China, where white is (or was until quite recent times) the colour of mourning, such a reading would still be possible.

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(1) The Reader, the Text, the Poem by Louise Rosenblatt, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1978, p115 This is one of the most accessible expositions of reader response theory.

(2) For an account of using the book in Years 9 and 10, see Ken Watson, 'Personal Readings, Cultural Readings' in Emrys Evans (ed.), Young Readers, New Readings, Hull: Hull University Press, 1992


(4) Ken Watson, *op.cit.*
John Brown, Rose and the Midnight Cat is a picture book written by Jenny Wagner and illustrated by Ron Brooks. It won the Australian Picture Book of the Year Award in 1977, and has sold widely in Britain and America.

In your group, read the story, looking carefully at the pictures as you read. Then, without discussing the book with the other members of the group, write down, in two or three words, what you think the story is about. For example, if it were a slightly different sort of story, you might write down words such as 'hatred of outsiders'.

Now compare your idea of what the story is about (sometimes called the theme) with the ideas of the other members of the group. Are there any differences? If so, do all the different readings fit the words and the pictures?

Next, ask your teacher to blackboard the words and phrases from the other groups. How many different clusters of meaning can you identify? Are any of the suggested meanings not supported by the words and the pictures?

It is likely that you will conclude that this picture book can be read in two or three slightly different ways. This is true of almost all texts, whether they be picture books, poems, short stories or novels. It is important, however, to realise that whatever meaning you derive from the text must not be contradicted by any element of the text. The reading 'hatred of outsiders', for example, would very difficult to justify when the ending of the story is taken into account.
Granpa / Not Now Bernard

Granpa by JOHN BURNINGHAM (Jonathan Cape)
Not Now Bernard by DAVID McKEE (Andersen Press)

Reception Theory: Textual Gaps

Granpa is an extraordinarily complex picture book that repays careful study. Probably the wiser course for the teacher would be to let the students, in groups, ponder the book for some time before issuing them with the Students’ Page.

Burningham’s picture books have an unusual production process, in that his practice is to evolve verbal text and illustrations simultaneously. A consequence is that the interplay of words and pictures is sharply articulated as a series of gaps or moments of indeterminacy which are to be filled by reader inferencing or imagining. The construction of these gaps is foregrounded by the book’s unusual form. Two different typefaces carry the threads of conversation between the little girl and the old man, and colour is also used in two different ways: sepia line drawings on the left-hand pages suggest memories and imaginings; colour on the right-hand pages indicates present events. Occasionally there is a double-page spread of illustration.

Not Now, Bernard is much more straightforward. It is paired here with Granpa because both illustrate what, following Wolfgang Iser, are called ‘textual gaps’ or ‘filling gaps’.

To reach an understanding of a text it is essential that readers make inferences. These inferences are, broadly, of two kinds. First, there are bundles of facts (social, historical and geographical details, for example) and cultural knowledge which a text (especially a narrative) takes for granted, and readers make these inferences more or less unconsciously. The second kind is where readers use such facts or knowledge in conjunction with their knowledge of how texts work to fill in the gaps or indeterminacies in a particular text. In his Understanding Teenagers’ Reading (Croom Helm/ Methuen, 1987) Jack Thomson describes these ‘gaps’ as ‘spaces between sentences, chapters, events, details, characters, narrative viewpoints, textual perspectives and so on’ (p.123). According to Iser,

Whenever the reader bridges the gaps, communication begins... the blank leaves open the connections between perspectives in the text, and so guides the reader into coordinating these perspectives - in other words, they induce the reader to perform basic operations within the text. (Iser, The Act of Reading, London: Routledge, 1978, p.169)

Thus while Iser argued that all literary works have gaps to be filled in by readers, and that all readers and readings will fill these in differently, he also argued that readers were not free to do anything they fancied with a text: gaps would be filled within a range of possibilities indicated by the text itself, and actual realisations would tend to be reformed retrospectively as the text unfolded and readers applied expectations of significance and coherence to the whole. At the same time, the impact of a reader’s imagination on the text’s implications produces a significance which is greater than the represented situation might otherwise seem to possess. A simple example can be seen in Granpa on the double page captioned ‘That was not a nice thing to say to Granpa’. The positioning of the characters, turned away from each other, and the large white space between the pages, is a visually represented gap or blank expressing the sudden gulf between the characters.

The text is very elliptical, leaving it to the audience to infer, or rather imagine, what it was the child has said to her grandfather. But the exact utterance is unimportant: Granpa’s response and the framing of the scene indicate its hurtfulness and its social significance. Reader engagement with the incident is more powerful because a child reader, filling the gap from his or her own experience (and apt to supply a personal ‘worst case’), will tend to be more emotionally involved.

There is some evidence that weak readers have failed to grasp the active nature of reading: they expect the text to do everything for them and therefore fail to fill in the gaps. It therefore seems important for students to realise quite explicitly that gap-filling is something all good readers do.
Almost all stories leave gaps which the reader’s imagination must fill. These two picture books show the authors quite deliberately leaving large gaps on which the child readers must bring their imaginations to bear.

GRANPA

Here are some questions you might like to discuss in your group, once you have read and thought about the book.

1. What do you notice about the typeface?

2. What is the reader expected to deduce from the fact that some of the illustrations are sepia line drawings while others are in full colour? For example, look carefully at pages 4 and 5 (‘one man went to mow...’). What are Granpa and the little girl doing? What are we expected to surmise from the sepia drawing on the left-hand page?

3. In your group, take four or so pages and write the other side of the dialogue. Do you think anything is gained (or lost) when the whole of the dialogue is given? Compare your gap-filling with that of another group. Are there significant differences? If so, how do you explain such differences?

4. If you were reading this story to a young child, would you try to fill in the gaps for him/her?

NOT NOW, BERNARD

1. In your group, decide on the theme of the story.

2. Why, do you think, has David McKee chosen to leave the ending to the reader’s imagination?

3. In your group, take the story a stage or two further, and then round it off in some way. Do you think the story is improved by having a true ending?

GRANPA
Word & Image

Using Picture Books in Years 6 to 10

edited by
Ken Watson

St Clair Press
The Princess And The Perfect Dish

Libby Gleeson, ill. Armin Greder (Scholastic) ISBN 1 86388 229 4
Suggested Level: Years 6 to 10

As young children, most of the students will have absorbed a great deal of knowledge about the structure of fairy tales. This unit helps them to make this knowledge explicit and to bring it to bear on a text which subtly varies the traditional form.

Libby Gleeson's own account of the writing of The Princess and the Perfect Dish is particularly useful in suggesting possible directions for classroom exploration of the book. In the first draft, the opening sentence placed the time as the present, but as the story grew...the time in which the story was set seemed at odds with the tone set by the style of the writing and the fairy tale form. By draft three, I had adopted the more traditional voice...I was attempting the fairy tale simulation and the mode of designating people only by their rank or position or most basic description.

The first activity, then, focuses on these changes, and it is suggested that they be discussed before students proceed to read the full text. At this point, too, they could be asked to formulate what they know about fairy tale structure. As Libby Gleeson points out in her article, in the Household Stories of the Brothers Grimm (see also Activity 9), recurring motifs include those involving competition for the hand of a princess, those requiring the hero to perform a series of exceptional tasks, those where a riddle must be answered. Students might be asked to find examples of all three types from the stories of the Grimm Brothers.

In exploring the differences between this and other fairy stories, the students might be expected to discover that:

- the Princess rather than the author is at the centre of the story (as in Snow-White but not in most other Grimm stories);
- the Princess has more control over her own destiny than is usual in such stories. She will marry, but only on her own terms. There is thus a slight feminist element in the story, and students might also detect a departure from stereotype in the way in which the Princess is depicted – she is plump. Libby Gleeson acknowledges that one of the motivations for writing the story was her distress at "adolescent and pre-adolescent dieting and perception that the female body is beautiful only if it conforms to the size of a supermodel".

There is thus scope here for some work on visual literacy, and at this point it would help if the teacher can have handy some Disney illustrations of princesses. Stereotypes are to be found in illustrations as well as in writing, and the stereotypes of the 'princess' and the 'beautiful model' can be usefully explored at this point.

It should also be noted that while Greder's figure drawing may depart from what one normally expects of fairy tale illustrations, his illustrations do draw on another tradition - that of Pieter Brueghel, in paintings like The Wedding Banquet and The Harvester. Exploration of this link could be undertaken using What Makes a Brueghel a Brueghel? by Richard Moldberger (Metropolitan Museum of Art/Ashton Scholastic), ISBN 1 86388 244 8.

This unit could be the springboard for extended work on the structure of fairy tales. In this connection, the teacher is recommended to the English Centre/Chalkface Press publication, Changing Stories, which provides a number of excellent activities.

In From Picture Book to Literary Theory edited by John Stephens and Ken Watson (St Clair Press), there is a unit which examines the ideology concealed within many fairy stories, an ideology exposed by parodies such as Babette Cole's Princess Smartypants and Prince Cinder. In The Princess and the Perfect Dish this ideology is more subtly subverted.

References
The Princess And The Perfect Dish

Libby Gleeson, ill. Armin Greder

1. The opening of the story
Like most stories, The Princess and the Perfect Dish went through several drafts before it was published. In the first draft, Libby Gleeson's story began in this way:

Not long ago and not far from here there was a couple who had no children.

What would you expect about the story and the illustrations from such an opening?

In the third draft, Libby Gleeson settled upon the opening sentence as it appears in the book. What is the effect of the change?

2. Patterns in fairy tales
In your group, talk about some of the fairy tales you remember that begin in this way. What do you expect will happen when the Princess grows up? If there is a ceremony at the end of the story, what kind of ceremony will it be? What other patterns of fairy tale do you recall?

3. Now read the whole of The Princess and the Perfect Dish. In what ways does it resemble traditional fairy stories? Are there any differences?

4. In your group, look closely at the illustrations. If possible, compare the representation of the Princess with the way princesses are portrayed by Disney. What differences do you notice?

5. Look at the final double-page spread. In what way does it differ from the other illustrations? What is communicated by this change?

6. Now look at the language. How has Libby Gleeson's decision to set the story in a "Once upon a time" world and not in today's world affected her choice of language? Find examples of:
(a) words that one would not expect to find in a modern story;
(b) sentence constructions that belong only in stories of this kind.
Activity 9

Snow-White & Snow White in New York

Snow-White by Josephine Poole ill. Angela Barrett (Red Fox) ISBN 0 09 918561 X
Snow White In New York by Fiona French (Oxford) ISBN 0 19 272210 7
Suggested Level: Years 8 to 10

While the first of these two books is a traditional retelling of the story of Snow White, and hence accessible to the youngest children, Snow White in New York is much more sophisticated, and thus is probably best used in middle secondary.

Art deco is an important strand of 20th century art, influencing architecture, furnishing design and decoration as well as book illustration. Features of art deco are beginning to re-appear in some postmodern buildings. Hence a worthwhile preparation for the exploration of Snow White in New York could be some class investigation of art deco in its various manifestations.

Josephine Poole’s retelling of the Grimm Brothers’ Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs follows the original version closely, but changes (improves upon!) the ending. The first activity requires the students, in groups, to discuss the merits of the two endings – and of the openings, which also vary, but less dramatically. A close study of some of the illustrations will also make students more aware of some of the devices by which the artist communicates. For example, angle, colour and movement all play their part in communicating Snow-White’s terror in the forest. Note particularly the way in which the viewer is positioned in relation to the girl.

The final activity invites students to consider the differences between the illustrations of Angela Barrett and Fiona French and Walter Crane’s 19th-century illustration, from the 1882 edition of Household Stories by the Brothers Grimm.

Follow Up

Fiona French is a most accomplished artist, who can vary her style quite dramatically in order to suit the subject matter. Hence her books are very useful when one is seeking to develop visual literacy. If possible, one copy of each of the following should be obtained, so that groups can see the ways in which a particular art style can reinforce and add meaning to a story. All are published by Oxford University Press.

- *Little Inchkin* (Japanese legend)
- *Huni* (Ancient Egyptian myth)
- *Aio the Rain-Maker* (African legend)
- *Matteo* (a story of Renaissance Italy)
- *Jack of Hearts* (a story of a medieval feast and tournament, making clever use of the traditional playing card design)
- *The Blue Bird* (set in 17th century China – illustrations echo the willow pattern plate)

If not all can be obtained, we suggest *Huni* and *Aio the Rainmaker* as providing the greatest contrasts in style.
Activity 9

Snow-white & Snow White In New York

Snow-White by Josephine Poole and Angela Barrett
Snow White In New York by Fiona French

In 1812 two Germans, the Brothers Grimm, published Household Stories, a collection of stories passed down from generation to generation of illiterate peasants. The stories were first translated into English in 1823, and since then have been re-translated and improved upon countless times.

1. Here are the beginning and the ending of an early translation which is very close to the original. What differences do you notice between this version and Josephine Poole's retelling? What are the effects of the changes? Why do you think they have been made?

   "It was the middle of winter, and the snowflakes were falling like feathers from the sky, and a queen sat at her window working, and her embroidery-frame was of ebony. And as she worked, gazing at times out on the snow, she pricked her finger, and there fell from it three drops of blood on the snow. And when she saw how bright and red it looked, she said to herself, "Oh that I had a child as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of the embroidery frame!"

   Then she railed and cursed, and was beside herself with disappointment and anger. First she thought she would not go to the wedding; but then she felt she should have no peace until she went and saw the bride. And when she saw her she knew her for Snow-white, and could not sit from the place for anger and terror. For they had ready red-hot iron shoes, in which she had to dance until she fell down dead.

2. The wicked stepmother is a common stereotype in fairy tales. What reasons can you suggest for this?

3. There are big differences in the ways in which Snow-White and Snow White in New York communicate. In your group, make a list of the main differences. Remember that while the story in both cases is much the same in outline, there are differences in the discourse (the words and illustrations), and so the total impact is very different. Do you find any humour in Fiona French's version? If so, how does this change the story?

4. In the Fiona French version, we are not told what happens to the step-mother. Write a conclusion in which the step-mother meets a fate appropriate to the New York setting.

5. Snow White In New York is set in the 1930s. In your group, compose a "Snow White" set in the 1990s.

6. In your group, select one of the lesser known stories of the Brothers Grimm and prepare a readers theatre presentation for the class.

7. In Snow White, look carefully at the double page spread showing Snow-White fleeing through the forest. How has the artist communicated Snow-White's terror?

8. Here is an illustration by Walter Crane from an 1882 edition of Household Stories. In your group, compare it with the equivalent illustration by Angela Barrett. Do they communicate differently? If so, what different messages are conveyed?
2.5 RECOGNITION AND CONTRIBUTION

OF THE RESEARCH

As befits a publication from a university press, the manuscript for Young Readers, New Readings (Hull University Press, 1992) went through a process of academic review before being accepted for publication. An anonymous reviewer from the University of Manchester had this to say about my chapters:

[The chapter on] picture books [is] a most unusual way of alerting students and their teachers to the ideological assumptions of reading. I have not read anything similar elsewhere. (my emphasis)

The chapters by Watson on ideology and Bogdan et al on feminist approaches to literary study are some of the most interesting parts of the book. The bringing together of practical ideas and theory is well aimed to help a teacher reading them to proceed to guide his students beyond ‘the innocence of the text’. (This information was supplied by Emrys Evans, the editor of Young Readers, New Readings.)

From Picture Book to Literary Theory has received laudatory reviews, and has stimulated interest from places as far away as Finland. Here is an excerpt from a review of the book in English Quarterly, the journal of the Canadian Council of Teachers of English (Vol.29, noose 3 & 4, 1997). The reviewer is Professor Mary Kooy, of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education:
...the book succeeds in bringing life to complex literary theory for secondary English students, using children's [picture ] books as a vehicle... The text is based on the assumption that critical understanding develops through the active use of theories with appropriate texts. Such a process both demystifies theoretical work and develops awareness of a range of theories and visions of textually.

...this book offers a clear and forthright process for familiarizing secondary students with complex theories in the context of a genre that frequently challenges conventions and plays with visual and textual elements that startle readers of all ages.

Other reviews:

*English in Australia* No. 110, December, 1994:

...a terrific addition to any English teacher's professional library... A stimulating and innovative teacher resource.

*Fiction Focus* Vol. 8, No. 2, 1994 (Education Dept of Western Australia):

It is a guaranteed painless, even pleasurable, way to teach or to learn aspects of modern literary theory by way of analysing picture books. Sophisticated concepts such as focalisation, intertextuality, metafiction, are introduced through picture books. One can see the advantage of this: for once there can be a truly shared experience to build on and this is the understanding that 'begins in delight and ends in wisdom' – itself a necessary part of true learning.
The paper on encouraging students to reflect on their reading was published in *English Education*, arguably the most prestigious of the many journals published under the aegis of the National Council of Teachers of English (USA).

As well as giving workshops in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia based on this research, I received an invitation to present at the Global Conversations on Language and Literacy Conference at Heidelberg, Germany, in 1996, and I also presented at the International Association for the Improvement of Mother-Tongue Education (IAIMTE) in Amsterdam in 1997. While in the USA in 2002, I was invited to give seminars on the research at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, and at the University of Indiana, Indianapolis.
CHAPTER 3

SHAKESPEARE IN SCHOOLS – PEDAGOGICAL ISSUES

3.1 RESEARCH PURPOSES

The research on the teaching of Shakespeare had several aims, all based on the conviction that a radical shift in pedagogy was needed. There was the need to further publicise what had already been achieved by the pioneers, particularly Mallick and Michaels; then to develop techniques for helping students to overcome the language barrier and to develop what might be termed ‘a theatrical imagination’. Further, it was important to determine which aspects of modern literary theory were relevant to the exploration of Shakespeare’s playtexts in the classroom.

3.2 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

First, it was necessary to determine whether, in fact, the pedagogy had not changed, despite syllabus exhortations. Secondly, it was necessary to try out in the classroom certain aspects of the active pedagogy being advocated, particularly techniques for breaking down the language barrier. Finally, it was necessary to design and test materials which would help teachers who wished to change their methods of teaching.
In an attempt to get pictures of what was happening in schools at three points in time, the mid to late 1980s, the early 1990s and the late 1990s, three investigations were carried out of trainee English teachers' memories of the teaching methods employed when they were at school. (Those whose school experience was not recent were excluded from the surveys.) The first asked Dip.Ed. students at the University of Sydney in 1989, 1990 and 1992 to write accounts of the kinds of teaching they had experienced. While such surveys are open to the criticism that they rely too heavily on the subjects' fallible memories of the past, it does seem that most of those aiming to be English teachers have vivid memories of their school experiences, since those experiences, both positive and negative, have played a major part in their choice of career. This first set of investigations seemed to confirm that, despite the injunctions of the English Syllabuses, the main teaching methods were reading round the class, scene-by-scene summaries, dictated notes about plot and character development and the like. Only one or two of the large number surveyed (in all, about 60 would-be English teachers in each of the first two years, and another 30 in 1992) had experienced anything approaching the active exploration of the texts.

A second survey, undertaken in 1997 with Macquarie University students who had been at school in the early 1990s, confirmed that there had been no real shift between the two investigations.

The final investigation, undertaken in 2002 with the assistance of teacher educators in five NSW universities, was designed to determine whether the many in-service workshops conducted by people like Wendy Michaels and myself, together with the
range of teaching materials now available, both in the St Clair Shakespeare Workshop
Series and the materials coming from Cambridge University Press, had brought about a
change in teaching methods. This survey,
described in detail in my paper on the history of the teaching of Shakespeare in New
South Wales (see below, 4.3), indicated that there had indeed been a shift, though not
as great as had been hoped.

In order to determine what strategies worked, particularly in overcoming the language
barrier, and to decide whether the materials I was designing, following on Mallick and
Michaels, were such as could be readily put into effect by inexperienced teachers, I
introduced the strategies to teacher trainees in Cambridge University in 1990, and again
in 1995. I then observed them engaging school students in Cambridgeshire in these
activities. The trainee teachers found, as I had hypothesised, that a valuable starting
point in overcoming students’ fear of the language was an activity that provoked
laughter, such as the following, based on a collection of insults from the plays:

     Here the students are each given a card containing one of Shakespeare’s insults [e.g.,
     ‘The devil damn thee black, thou cream’fac’d loon!’; ‘Out, you green-sickness carrion!’], and, after they had memorised the line, to walk around the room using the
language differently with each person they met. The first time the insult should be
spoken using a friendly tone; the second time as though the insult were really meant,
and so on. (Watson and Sawyer, 1999, pp.118-119)
The Cambridge trainee teachers agreed that the activities they used were not only enjoyable in themselves, thus making the school students take a more positive approach to the plays, but that by, for example, being placed in the role of directors, they came to the realisation that performance means interpretation, with the inevitable recognition that meaning can change with each unique production, indeed with each performance.

The changes which the *Shakespeare Workshop Series* and its accompanying handbook were helping to bring about in Australian schools were the subject of a presentation at the Seminar of the Teaching of Shakespeare, held in Singapore in 1997. The title of the paper was, appropriately, ‘The Revolution in the Teaching of Shakespeare’ (Watson, with Sawyer, 1999). (Some Singaporean teachers had already been introduced to an active exploration of the plays through workshops that I conducted there in 1994 as a result of an invitation from the Singapore Ministry of Education; hence the invitation to speak at the Seminar.)

3.3 THE PAPER

‘The Revolution in the Teaching of Shakespeare’, which was presented at a Seminar on the Teaching of Literature in Singapore in 1997 and subsequently published with other selected papers in *Localising Pedagogy: Teaching Literature in Singapore* (1999), gives an account of the activities that proved most successful.
The Revolution in the Teaching of Shakespeare

Ken Watson and Wayne Sawyer

A visitor enquired of me recently, "What do you do with a play of Shakespeare?" "Act it," I replied. "What else can you do with a play?"

The time is 1917 and the writer is Caldwell Cook in The Play Way. Cook goes on to describe, however, what was obviously the more typical approach to the teaching of Shakespeare in his time:

the Master reads aloud himself...When he has read twenty or thirty lines the work begins. The meaning is examined: dug out of the words, torn out of the idioms, enticed out of the allusions. Every bush is beaten, and hares that start up, whether historical, mythological, moral, geographical, political, etymological, architectural, or ecclesiastical, are pursued, and, if possible, caught. All this must be done by the Form, and the Master should play the part of huntsman while they are hounds (Cook, 1920: 195).

Between Cook's call to "Act it" and the relentless chasing of allusions and historical content, as well as identifying minute aspects of Shakespeare's use of verse, there is, of course, a huge gulf. Anecdotal accounts of teaching practice would seem to suggest that much of the twentieth-century teaching of Shakespeare has probably been marked by the "huntsman and hounds" approach. Reading around the class, stumbling over the verse, awkward and frustrating attempts at "translation", painful explanations of every word, "projects" on the Globe theatre and Elizabethan life - these are the practices no doubt responsible for the reputation Shakespeare has "enjoyed" in the public mind.

In the mid-80s, however, particularly in Australia and the UK, Cook's call to "Act it" was taken up with great energy. In Australia people like David Mallick (1984) and Wendy Michaels (1986), and, in the UK, Dr Rex Gibson's "Shakespeare
and Schools' project helped bring about a revolution which has transformed the teaching of Shakespeare. What is being popularised is an approach which investigates the plays as scripts to be acted — and hence sees them as open to a multitude of interpretations in the hands of classroom "directors".

**Shakespeare in today's classroom**

The teacher of Shakespeare today has two main problems with which to deal before taking up the fundamental issues of how the plays are to be taught, viz.:

(i) convincing high school students in the 1990s that texts written in the late 16th and early 17th centuries have anything to say to them, and — related to this — setting a context for the plays.

(ii) Dealing with the unfamiliarity of the language

**Parallel Improvisations**

The first problem is easily overcome by means of presenting the students, in groups, with the challenge of developing improvisations which open up the issues of play in modern settings. When studying *Twelfth Night*, for example, students could develop one of the following parallel improvisations and then present it to the class:

- Toby, Andy and Mal decide to go off together to a popular holiday resort. Toby and Andy are intent upon having a good time, but Mal turns out to be something of a killjoy, who disapproves of almost everything they do, and seems to consider himself superior to them. Toby and Mal decide to take Mal down a peg or two, but cannot decide how to achieve their aim.

- Some of Viola’s friends dare her to go to a party disguised as a boy. To her alarm and embarrassment, one of the girls at the party is greatly attracted to the "boy".

(Watson, 1991)

Similarly, *Romeo and Juliet* has great potential for such improvisations using almost any contemporary situation of civil conflict:

- In modern Belfast, a theatre company is about to put on *Romeo and Juliet*. The cast discuss the pros and cons of setting the play in modern Belfast, and making the feud between the Montagues and Capulets one of religion.

- In Australia, a Serb boy falls in love with a Croatian girl. How do their parents react?

(Shrub and Watson, 1991)
Simply placing the play in a modern setting and improvising a "missing scene" also helps create such a context. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, for example, the play opens with Antony's captains discussing his wasted life in Egypt ("Nay but this dotage of our general's o'erflows the measure"). Clearly this is an opening in mid-conversation. As yet, we don't know what has led up to this comment. A teacher could ask students to imagine any situation in which some leader has let down his/her followers by being distracted elsewhere (high school football/Netball team; major corporation; political party etc.) Have them play the scene that leads up to a statement something like "Nay but this dotage of our general's o'erflows the measure" and give it a specific setting. (One group of university students developed this before-scene, at the time of a power struggle between two prominent Australian Labour politician, in a men's urinal after a Labour Party caucus meeting.) In addition to giving the play's issues a contemporary relevance, such an activity opens up such questions as how the tone of the opening lines might be decided upon.

**Shakespeare's language**

When teaching Shakespeare to a junior class, is it actually necessary to read the whole play, especially if it is the students' first experience with Shakespeare? Why not take a (very) few selected scenes and concentrate on scripting, producing and playing them? (The teacher can "fill in the gaps" with a good narrative.) If for some reason it is necessary to read the whole play, it is useful to have the teacher simply reading and paraphrasing between those scenes which are going to be read closely and acted/directed.

Most students see Shakespeare's language as a bigger hurdle than it is. Hence it is usually necessary to spend some time getting them comfortable with the language so that eventually, in Brenda Pinder's phrase, "they can walk around inside it". We have found that Pinder's 'kaleidoscope' idea (Pinder, 1991) is a good one for familiarising students with the language. She suggests that before a play is introduced, students are each given a card on which a different line from the play is written. (The line chosen should be one that will fit a variety of circumstances.) The students silently practise saying the line in different ways (lovingly, angrily, sarcastically, timidly etc.). Then they are invited to stand up and walk around the room, saying the line to other students in different ways, as directed by the teacher. This activity generates a great deal of laughter, thus helping to break down the fear of the language, and also familiarises students with the rhythm of Shakespeare's iambic pentameters. Pinder then suggests that the students, in large groups, pool their lines and try to create a short scene (set in a courtroom, or a café, or a classroom, or...) in which those lines, and no others, are used. The results can be quite surprising.

With older students encountering Shakespeare for the first time, we have found a variant of this activity, one based on Shakespeare's insults, very effective. Here the students are each given a card containing one of Shakespeare's insults (a convenient source is *Shakespeare's Insults* by Wayne Hill and Cynthia Otten, 1991) and, after they have memorised the line, to walk around the room using the insult differently with each person they meet. The first time the insult should be
spoken using a friendly tone; the second time as though the insult were really meant, and so on. Here are a few that are useful (for teachers as well as students!):

- The devil damn three black, thou cream-fac’d loon! (Macbeth, V.iii.11)
- Thou clay-brain’d guts, thou knotty-pated fool! (Henry IV, part 1, II.iv. 221)
- Out, you green-sickness carrion! (Romeo and Juliet, III.v.157)
- You baggage! You tallow-face! (Romeo and Juliet, III.v.158)
- How foul and loathsome is thine image! (Taming of the Shrew, I.i.33)
- Where got’st thou that goose look? (Macbeth, V.iii.11)
- How now, you secret, black, and midnight hag(s)! (Macbeth, IV.i.48)
- [You] beetle-headed, fiap-ear’d knave! (Taming of the Shrew, IV.i.144)

_Group soliloquy_ is another good way of helping students become accustomed to the language of Shakespeare. From the play that is going to be studied, select a soliloquy (or any long speech) and divide it into sense units of roughly the same number as there are students in the class. Allocate one sense unit to each. After each has had the opportunity to try out his/her line in a number of different ways, arrange the class in a circle (in the correct order) and have them read the speech through. By the second time through, the feeling in the speech will become evident. (At this point we must stress that students should never be asked to read Shakespeare – or anything else for that matter – to an audience without having had the chance to prepare beforehand.)

_Cloze passages_ and _sequencing_ activities can play their part in familiarising students with Shakespeare’s language, and another important pre-acting activity is for students, perhaps in pairs, to explore how tone, pause and emphasis can change the meaning of a line. David Mallick’s _How Tall Is This Ghost, John?_ (1984) provides some challenging work along these lines, as do most of the volumes in the St Clair Shakespeare Workshop Series. For example, students could try playing Hamlet’s “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy” with a strong emphasis on “your” and then with a strong, dismissive emphasis on “philosophy”. What differences come across? Or, in Act 1.i of _Hamlet_, they could look at the lines:

Gertrude: ……Thou know’st ‘tis common; all that live must die
Passing through nature to eternity

Hamlet: Ay, madam, it is common

Gertrude: If it be so
Why seems it so particular with thee?

They could explore the effect, first, of having Hamlet speak his line in passive agreement, and then, with a pause after “is” and then a strong emphasis on “common”. They are then likely to decide that the line becomes an insult, with a correspondingly sharp tone in Gertrude’s reply.
The story beforehand?

Opinions differ on whether the story of the play should be told to the class before the text is explored. Our view is that, whatever may have been the case in Shakespeare's day, the desire of the modern reader to find out 'what happens next' is a strongly motivating force that should not be discounted. But for teachers who do feel the need to make students familiar with the story line first, then either the videos or the booklets in the series Shakespeare: the Animated Tales (1992) could be used. In these, Leon Garfield has produced a carefully edited text in which Shakespeare's words are used but are printed as though in prose. Alternatively, one might use Garfield's excellent prose retellings (better, in general, for this purpose than those of Charles and Mary Lamb) in the two volumes of his Shakespeare Stories (1985, 1994). Again, our view is that film versions should be used after students have considered how the plays might be performed.

A workshop approach

At the outset, the students need to realise that what they have in front of them is not the play, but a playscript or blueprint that has to be turned into a play, and that the play that is created by one set of actors from the same script. Indeed, one might not think of there being a play Macbeth so much as a sense of "Macbethness" from which a number of different plays could be generated. Hence the activities undertaken in class should, in general, be designed to encourage students to think theatrically, think dramatically.

The booklets in the Shakespeare Workshop Series (1988-) and the accompanying Shakespeare: A Teacher's Handbook (1994) offer many suggestions for active exploration of the dramatic possibilities of each play. Students, working in groups of three or four (or if the script demands it, in larger groups), should be encouraged to draw blocking plans of characters' movements on stage (using, we suggest, sheets of butcher's paper on which is drawn an apron stage in proportion to the stage of the Globe, which was about 30 feet deep and 40 feet wide). They should be encouraged to design sets and costumes, and to prepare prompt copies for key scenes (making decisions on how lines should be said, what movements are needed, what lighting should be used, etc.). They should be invited to fill in gaps in the text with scenes of their own, and to imagine themselves, in major scenes like Hamlet (L.i.), as courtiers or other bystanders who then comment on what they have just heard and seen (an idea taken up by Tom Stoppard in his Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead). A key scene like the courtroom scene in The Merchant of Venice, should be developed to early rehearsal stage.

A particularly valuable activity is that of storyboarding, which consists of the picture frame account of the action in a particular scene. A storyboard is used by film directors to plan the filming of a scene; unlike a simple cartoon, it indicates by the size and shape of the picture within each frame how the action could be shot with a camera. It would be possible to divide the play up among the groups so that the result would be an 'instant play' in cartoon form. This activity emphasises the visual elements of the play, and is an excellent precursor to the viewing of the film.
version, in whole or in part. Here we would reiterate that in our view film versions are best screened after the students have actually confronted the problem of transferring a play into a film. After groups have struggled to create a storyboard of particular scenes, they will watch with great interest what the professionals have done with those scenes, and much more perceptive discussion will follow.

Some of the BBC TV versions are, unhappily, not worth viewing in their entirety, but even the dreariest have scenes that can provide productive viewing and discussion. Some, of course, like the BBC Richard II, with Derek Jacobi, and Othello, with Anthony Hopkins, are excellent, as are many of the cinema versions, like Polanski’s Macbeth, the two versions of Henry V (Olivier’s and Branagh’s), Branagh’s Othello, the Zeffirelli and Baz Luhrman versions of Romeo and Juliet, and McKellen’s Richard III. All these have altered the text in various ways, and this again can lead to fruitful discussion. Shakespeare into Film (Béchervaise, forthcoming) provides illuminating essays on filmed versions of Shakespeare.

Already there is an impressive array of materials on Shakespeare available on the World Wide Web. Many, of course, are of doubtful value, but the following are worth a look:

Shakespeare and the Globe Theatre: http://www.rdg.ac.uk/globe
Virtual Globe Tour: http://www.delphi.co.uk/delphi/interactive/16_Globe/walk_intro.html
Shakespeare Magazine: http://shakespearemag.com
Surfing with the Bard: http://www.ivygh.com/amy/
Shakespeare’s Stratford-upon-the-Web: http://members.tripod.com/%7BjeanneAnn/yardintro.html
Mr Truitt’s Literary Lessons: http://www.ruf.nec.edu/~dstruitt/Lessons/index.html
Rivendell’s Shakespeare Page: http://www.watson.org/rivendell/shakespeare.html
Shakespeare Globe USA: http://www.shakespeare.uiuc.edu/
The Shakespeare Performance Recipe Book: http://tumut.edu/english/fotherhp/Recipes/recintro.html

With so many teaching resources – books, illustrated materials, films and videos, and now Web sites – there is now really no excuse to be made for teachers who fail to make their Shakespeare lessons lively and exciting. But the revolution in the teaching of Shakespeare goes much further than that, for its main thrust is to develop in students the capacity to visualise a playscript in theatrical terms, enabling a performance staged, as it were, in “the skull theatre”.  

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1 We are indebted to Sheila Black, Nicola Krause and Jenny Meyer for providing this information.
2 The phrase comes from J.B. Priestley.
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Béchervaise, Neil (ed.) (forthcoming) Shakespeare into Film. Sydney: St Clair
Cook, Caldwell (1920 edn.) The Play Way. London, Heineman
Shakespeare: The Animated Tales. London: Heinemann
Garfield, Leon (1992) Hamlet
Garfield, Leon (1994) Julius Caesar (and other titles)
Shakespeare Workshop Series: Sydney: St Clair Press Various titles, including:
Sawyer, Wayne (1995) Some by Virtue Fail: Measure for Measure

Of the various editions of Shakespeare designed for school use, the best is the Cambridge School Shakespeare.
3.4 CO-AUTHORSHIP

The paper presented at Singapore bears the name of Wayne Sawyer as co-author. Unlike our other collaborations, the work was largely mine – about 90%. (See Appendix C.)

3.5 BOOKS

The St Clair Shakespeare Workshop Series (the first few titles of which were co-edited with Peter Jones) now provides teaching materials on twenty-two of Shakespeare's plays (see Appendix B). With the exception of the highly individual Creative Work Ideas for Macbeth by the late Mike Hayhoe, which was originally published in the UK, the series was designed by me and I authored or co-authored several of the titles. In order to give a sense of how the series seeks to fulfil the aims of developing in students the ability to think dramatically, think theatrically as they read, and become increasingly comfortable with Shakespeare's language, I include here a sample of my units from two volumes where I was either sole author or the author of 90% of the book (The Food of Love: a workshop approach to Twelfth Night and Such a Mad Marriage: The Taming of the Shrew, a workshop approach), and from a third where my contribution was 50% (Love's Keen Arrows: a workshop approach to As You Like It). I also include a unit from my 2003 revision of the late Brenda Pinder's Full Fathom Five: a workshop approach to The Tempest. Some of these excerpts illustrate another aspect of the series: the desire to make teachers and their students aware of the some of the insights offered by modern literary theories.
A workshop approach to

Twelfth Night

The Food of Love

Ken Watson

with additional material by

John Hughes

PHOTOCOPIABLE
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### ADDENDUM

Shakespeare on Stage: Drama Techniques
by John Hughes, Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Sydney 34
Curtain Up!

The first two scenes of the play are very short, but are vital for an understanding of later events. Form two groups to prepare these scenes for performance.

Many modern performances of Shakespeare's plays do not immediately begin with the opening lines: often directors like to take a minute or two (or even longer) to create the mood of the scene. In each group, think of ways in which this might be done; for example, the scene might begin with a few minutes of music, with the Duke and the Lords listening, while servants move around serving food and drink. A famous modern production of the play began with Orsino having his portrait sketched.

After such possibilities have been explored, allocate the parts for the two scenes and send the Duke, Valentine, Viola and the Captain off to go over their lines a few times.

The remainder of each group should plot the movement of the characters on a sketch plan of the stage (this is called blocking), making sure to exploit the possibilities of a thrust stage. (If you like, Group A could prepare a performance for a thrust stage and Group B could prepare one for a stage with a proscenium arch.) If you have a big room, you could mark out the stage area in chalk so that you know its dimensions; if not, you could plan an open air performance. Remember that if you are using a thrust stage the audience will be on three sides of the stage.

By now the actors should have rejoined your group and you can continue the planning with their help. Here are some of the kinds of decisions that have to be made:

- Is Orsino sitting, or standing?
- Is his first line an indication that the music has just stopped?
- Is it possible to so arrange the others on stage (everyone in the group will be involved) to convey the power relationships?
- If there is a thrust stage (ie, no curtain), how will the change of scene be indicated?

The two groups then perform the scenes and discuss the results, both in terms of theatrical effectiveness and ways in which the plot is developing. You could also discuss whether anything would be gained by transposing the two scenes so that the play opens with the aftermath of the shipwreck. This was commonly done in 19th century productions of the play, and is occasionally found in modern productions.
Getting Used to the Language: 2
Tone, Emphasis, Sequencing

– Tone and Emphasis –

In pairs, try different ways of saying some of the following lines (angrily, longingly, dismissively, lovingly ...):

Olivia: O! you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste but with a distempered appetite. I v 96-7

Olivia: By mine honour, half drunk. I v 123

Viola: I’ll do my best To woo your lady. I iv 40-1

Olivia: Tell me your mind. I v 220

Maria: My lady will hang thee for thy absence. I v 4

Sir Andrew: I’ll stay a month longer. I iii 121

(If you don’t like working with these lines, find some others in Act I.)

Each pair could present one or two versions to the class, which has to put a label on the tone.

– Sequencing –

In pairs, arrange the following jumbled speeches in their correct order:

A. Olivia: Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth; And, in dimension and the shape of nature Your lord does know my mind; I cannot love him; In voices well divulg’d, free, learn’d and valiant; Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble, He might have took his answer long ago A gracious person; but yet I cannot love him:
B. Olivia:  Why, what would you?

Viola:  And call upon my soul within the house;
And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
But you would pity me.
Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
Write loyal cantons of contemned love,
Cry out, "Olivia!" O! you should not rest
Holla your name to the reverberate hills,
Between the elements of air and earth,
And make the babbling gossip of the air

Check your versions against the text – I v 278-297.
Their Innermost Thoughts

Occasionally modern playwrights use a device in which there are two actors on stage playing the same character. One actor speaks the lines which are heard by the other characters on stage, and the second actor then speaks the thoughts that are going on in that character’s mind at the time.

You may find this a useful device for exploring what Shakespeare wants us to infer about a character’s real thoughts and feelings. For example, work in groups of four on the meeting between Olivia and Viola in Act i, scene v, lines 236-309. One pair in each group takes the part of Olivia, the first person delivering her lines and the second speaking her innermost thoughts; the second pair does the same for Viola. Through discussion, a script can be developed which is then presented to the class.

What this activity does is to make explicit what is called the subtext, the unspoken or underlying intention in the character that normally must be realised by the actor in other ways (tone, pause, emphasis, gesture, facial expression, etc).
The Nature Of Women  
– And Of Men

There is no woman's sides  
Can bid the beating of so strong a passion  
As love doth give my heart; no woman's heart  
So big, to hold so much; they lack retention.

(II iv 95-8)

In your group, consider the two words “feminine” and “masculine”. What characteristics of behaviour do you consider feminine, and what do you consider masculine? Compile two lists, and then compare your lists with those of other groups.

Much is said in the play about the nature of women, and much also is implied in the actions of the main female characters. Often, too, generalisations are made by the various characters about the nature of men.

In groups, one person could undertake to list what Orlando has to say on this subject. Someone could do the same for Viola and a third could look at the words and actions of Olivia. A fourth member of the group could look at what other characters, such as Feste, have to say about the behaviour of men and women.

Once you have done this, you should ask yourselves whether any of these views of women and men are privileged over the others (ie, whether the author seems to be asking us to accept them as true) and if so how this is conveyed.

How do your original lists of masculine and feminine characteristics compare with the evidence you have gathered from the play? Are there significant differences?

Although ruled by a woman, Queen Elizabeth I, England in Shakespeare’s time was very much a patriarchal society. Examine the following quotations from contemporary sources about the appropriate role of women in Elizabethan society. To what extent to the two main females in the play, Viola and Olivia, fit this pattern? Can you make out a case that the traditional female roles are subverted in the play?

Homily of the State of Matrimony (1563):

St Paul expresseth it in this form of words: Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord; for the husband is the head of the woman, as Christ is the head of the Church (Ephesians 5:22-23). Here you understand that God hath commanded that ye should acknowledge the authority of the husband and refer to him the honour of obedience.

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John Taylor (1580-1653):

Ill fares the hapless family that shows
A cock that's silent, and a Hen that crows.
I know not which live more unnatural lives,
Obedient husbands, or commanding wives.

The King James Bible:

First Epistle to Timothy 2. 11-12
Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection...
But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man,
but to be in silence.

Epistle to Titus 2.9
Exhort servants to be obedient to their masters, and to please them well
in all things...

— Follow Up —

Group discussion:

Would the male and female roles differ markedly if this were a play by a
modern dramatist? Would the outcome necessarily be different?
Film Versions: Storyboards

Films are normally shorter than plays, and hence some cutting and rearranging must take place. There are four film versions of Twelfth Night readily available on video: the BBC television version (1980), Neil Armfield's Australian version (1986, see Activity 23), The Renaissance Theatre Company's 1988 production and Trevor Nunn's 1996 film (see Activity 25). The St Clair publication, Shakespeare on Celluloid (edited Neil Béchervaise, 1999) contains a detailed discussion of all four. Before viewing one or more of these, however, you should explore the play for yourselves.

It is suggested that the class divides into five groups, one for each Act. The group should then look closely at its Act, deciding which elements are essential and what cuts can be made.

Once these decisions have been made, subgroups can prepare storyboards of the key scenes. Storyboarding is a device used by film directors to plan how a scene will be filmed; it is, in effect, a picture frame account of the scene, showing not only the progress of the action but also the type of camera shot involved. For example, a storyboard of Act I scene ii might have five frames:

- A long shot of survivors clambering up a cliff with a stormy sea with wreckage floating on it in the foreground.
- A medium close shot of an exhausted Viola resting at the top of the cliff.
- A medium shot of Viola and the Captain in conversation.
- A long shot of the survivors making their way towards the city.
- A medium shot of Viola and the Captain talking about the Duke and Olivia.

Key words from the text usually appear in each frame. In this way, a picture frame account of the entire play can be built up. The following diagram of the commonest types of film shot may prove useful to you.
Gender, Hierarchy and Power

In feminist criticism, a distinction is usually made between sex/sexuality (i.e., biological difference) and gender, which is “used to refer to social and cultural differences that are built upon sexual difference” (Brian Moon, *Literary Terms: a practical glossary*, 2nd edition, 2001). One can say, then, that the cross-dressing element of *Twelfth Night* focuses attention on the construction of a gendered identity in a social context, and indeed, if the twins are so alike that one will do just as well for Olivia as the other, the idea of gender ambiguity is also an element.

In this unit, the questions of gender that were first raised in Activity 13 and further explored in Activity 20 are now linked, as they must inevitably be in the context of the play, with questions of power and hierarchy.

Marxist critics and cultural materialists are interested not only in the social and economic context of the text’s original production, but also in the degree to which the characters in the text are constructed by the society in which they live, in how that society is constituted, and the power relations at play therein.

The two households in the play (Orsino’s court and Olivia’s household) are clearly organised on an hierarchical model. In your group, diagram a social pyramid for each household. Once you have done this, discuss how, if you were directing the play, you would convey to an audience the differences in social status.

Now take a close look at some particular scenes:

- **Look at Act 1, sc.ii** What linguistic signals are there that Viola is of a higher social status than the Captain? How will her decision to disguise herself and take service with Orsino affect her social standing?
- **Look at Act 1, sc.iv** What shows us that Olivia is very conscious of rank?
- **Look at Act 3, sc.ii** Can you find evidence that Olivia feels that she is going beyond what is right and proper for a lady? (You’ll find further evidence in Act 3, sc.iv.)
- **Look at Malvolio’s rebuking of Sir Toby in Act 2, sc.iii**. Is it surprising? How does Sir Toby react?

Is Malvolio’s desire to improve his social status his main motive for wanting to marry Olivia? Find evidence in the play. Is there anything in the play to suggest that Sir Toby’s hostility to Malvolio arises in part from his hostility to the idea of upward social mobility?

To what extent do power relations shift during the play?

---

*Shakespeare’s concern ... to dissolve artificial distinctions between the sexes.* – Juliet Dusinberre, *Shakespeare and the Nature of Women* (London: Macmillan, 1975)

Some feminists argue that Shakespeare in this play directly supports feminist ideas; others, however, see the ideology of the play as basically patriarchal. What do you think?
Such A Mad Marriage
A workshop approach to
The Taming of the Shrew

Ken Watson
with additional material by John Hughes

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**ADDENDUM**

Dramatic Techniques in Shakespeare's Plays
by John Hughes, Senior Lecturer, University of Sydney 32
Getting Used To
The Language: 3

- Tone and Emphasis -

In Shakespeare's plays there are almost no instructions to the actors on how lines should be spoken. The actors and the director must make these decisions for themselves. What are some of the factors which might help them to decide on such matters as the tone to be adopted and the words to be emphasised?

In pairs, select one of the following sets of lines and try saying them in different ways (e.g., angrily, lovingly, jokingly, impatiently, ironically) and with the emphasis on different words. When you have determined on an interpretation that you particularly like, one of the pair can present it to the class, the members of which have to guess what tone you are trying to convey.

1. Katherina: The door is open, sir, there lies your way (III.i.208)
2. Gremio: Thinkest thou, Hortensio, though her father be very rich, any man is so very a fool to be married to hell? (I.i.123-5)
3. Tranio: I pray, awake, sir. If you love the maid, Bend thoughts and wits to achieve her. (I.i.178-9)
4. Hortensio: Here is a gentleman whom by chance I met, Upon agreement from us to his liking, Will undertake to woo curst Katherine...(I.i.180-2)
5. Petruchio: Think you a little din can daunt mine ears? (I.ii.198)
6. Katherina: Nay, now I see She is your treasure, she must have a husband, I must dance barefoot on her wedding-day.... (II.i.31-3)
7. Baptista: Well mayst thou woo, and happy be thy speed. But be thou arm'd for some unhappy words. (II.i.138-9)
Marriage Market

or

Romantic Love?

Traditional attitudes to marriage were being challenged at the time that The Taming of the Shrew was written. Should a marriage be a business arrangement, or should people marry for love? Should marriage be a partnership of equals, or should the husband be the master? Should a father select a bridegroom, or should a daughter be allowed to choose for herself? These were questions that concerned the Elizabethans, and which still concern sections of society today. In many cultural groups, arranged marriages are still common, and dowries are an important factor. And the idea that a wife should be subservient to the husband is certainly not unknown today. Consider this extract from the newsletter of a group in England calling itself Concern for Family and Womanhood (reported in the Sydney Morning Herald, 12/11/92):

It is the duty of a loving husband, as head of his wife and family, to see that his wife is duly submissive and obedient to him, since the stability of a happy, good, and proper relationship and family depends on compliance with the natural sex roles. It may, therefore, be necessary for him to take appropriate action to make his wife obedient, such as to give her a good spanking. ... It will satisfy the husband, be an effective corrective and punishment, and the feminine woman will respect her husband and accept his right to treat her so. (The Herald's comment: 'Sounds fine to us - assuming you are married to a two-year-old. ')

-Marriage Market-

- In your group, look at II.i. 114-131. Here we have Baptista and Petruchio sealing the bargain. How genuine is Baptista when he says:

  Ay, when the special thing is well obtain'd,
  That is, her love; for that is all in all.

- Now look at II.i.319-392. Here we have Gremio, Hortensio and Tranio (the last disguised as Lucentio) bidding for Bianca's hand in marriage. What are Baptista's motives here?
- Romantic Love -

In contrast to the bargaining that precedes Petruchio’s marriage to Kate, we have Lucentio’s wooing of Bianca and the secret marriage. Your group might like to consider the following questions:

• Do you think of Lucentio as older, younger, or of the same age as Petruchio. Why?

• Is Bianca really the submissive daughter she seems? Consider her comment to her ‘tutors’:

  I am no breeching scholar in the schools,
  I’ll not be tied to hours nor ‘pointed times,
  But learn my lessons as I please myself. (III.i.18-20)

- Garrick’s Aside -

(see Activity 7)

A plague upon his impudence! I’m vexed-
I’ll marry my revenge, but I will tame him.

• What words here would be given greatest emphasis?

• At about the same time as Shakespeare’s play was first staged, another play, A Pleasant Conceited Historie called the Taming of A Shrew was published. Critics are divided on whether A Shrew is a play stolen from Shakespeare’s text, or whether it is the text on which Shakespeare based his play. (Shakespeare often took other people’s writings as the raw material for his plays.) Interestingly, A Shrew also gives an aside in which Kate is provided with a motive for marrying Petruchio:

  But yet I will consent and marry him
  For I methinks have lived too long a maid.

• Which aside do you think is the most convincing: Garrick’s, the one in A Shrew, or your own?
Love's Keen Arrows

d a workshop approach to
As You Like It

Dennis Robinson • Ken Watson

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Rosalind and Celia

For the actress playing Celia – at least in our experience – the major challenge of the second half of the play emerges: that of Celia’s silence. As Rosalind becomes increasingly in possession of her powers, Celia is left powerless, drawn into a game which is not of her making, and dazzled by a friend who is now barely recognisable. Rosalind, discovering as Ganymede the ecstatic freedom of invention and fantasy, creates a world in which she can engage with Orlando in the utmost intimacy, without actually yielding herself up to him – but is this a world which includes Celia? Celia is obliged to listen impassively. She finds herself cast in the role of the shepherdess sister, her father transformed into ‘an old religious uncle . . . who was in his youth an inland man’. She hears her own gender spectacularly slandered and finally witnesses the establishment of Orlando’s prospective ‘lovecure’, which clearly implies that she may find herself obliged to sit through such ordeals daily. The options available to us both, in the scene that starts all this, were numerous.

Fiona Shaw and Juliet Stevenson wrote this after they had played the two roles in Adrian Noble’s production at Stratford in 1985. They emphasise that the interpretation of both roles is deeply dependent on the relationship that exists between the two characters. Hence, changes in the circumstances of one of them have a significant impact on the other.

In small groups, write director’s notes for the playing of the two characters. Pay particular attention to the following questions:

- What physical traits would you prefer in the actor playing each? What contrasts would you like to emphasise?
- What differences would you want in the playing of the characters early in the play and later on?
- How will the advent of Orlando affect Rosalind’s relationship with Celia? How will Celia’s betrothal to Oliver complicate this?
- Orlando and Oliver are usually felt to be less forceful than Rosalind and Celia. Will your casting reflect this perception?

Perform a short extract from the play such as I ii, 139-203 and IV iii, 75-182. Does your performance illuminate the issues you want to embody in your direction of the play? Does it reveal issues or problems you had not anticipated?
— Follow Up —

1. As a whole group discuss the relationship of Rosalind and Celia in the play as a whole, how it develops and how it is influenced by other characters. In what ways does it reveal central themes with which the play is concerned?

2. Take a consciously feminist perspective on the relationship between Rosalind and Celia. What do they reveal about gender as an issue in the play?
Aspects of Love – and Other Themes

Much of the comic effect of *As You Like It* comes . . . from a swift interplay of perspectives.

--- Different Kinds of Love ---

*As You Like It* explores, and comments upon, different kinds of love. Jaques is the cynical spectator of love’s follies; Touchstone the parodist of courtly love; Rosalind the deflater of the overly romantic Petrarchan tradition of love. In your group, gather evidence from the play of:

a. the stereotypes of pastoral love;
b. a more realistic view of love;
c. a love debased into lust.

As Alexander Leggatt points out, much of the fun of the play comes from the rapid juxtaposition of these different kinds of love.

The idea of love as an education in itself is also explored in the play. In your group, see if you can find evidence of this idea.

--- Other Juxtapositions ---

The swift changes of perspective that Leggatt comments upon may be found in other contexts as well. For example, just after Jaques has painted his picture of the seventh age of man - “Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything” - Orlando staggers in, bearing old Adam, who is described as “venerable”. What other examples of this rapid changing of viewpoint can you find?
— Nature Versus Civilisation —

Another idea explored in the play is to be found in the distinction between the court and the forest. The longing to escape from ‘civilisation’ and return to ‘nature’ is not a new feeling, and Shakespeare shows us that the contrast between the two states is often romanticised. (As the world becomes more and more urbanised, this aspect of the play assumes greater significance.) But Arden is no Eden, as Shakespeare points out, and, with one exception, all the fugitives from the court are glad to return there at the end.

Charles: They say he is already in the Forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England. They say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world.

(I. i. 114-119)

In your group, look carefully at the attitudes to Arden shown by Duke Senior and his followers early in the play. How would you characterise them? What is Jaques’ role here? Is Arden really a ‘golden world’?

— Order/Disorder —

One of the concerns of the play is problems of order and disorder.

♦ In what way is Oliver’s treatment of his younger brother disruptive of Elizabethan ideas of order? (The advantages and obligations of primogeniture need to be teased out here.)

♦ The actions of Duke Frederick are clearly disruptive of established order.

♦ Elizabethan England, despite its being ruled by a woman, was a strongly patriarchal society. Is there any evidence within the play of a questioning of patriarchal authority?
Set and Costume Design

— Elizabethan Dress, Modern Dress, or Something in Between? —

This decision is usually made by the director rather than the set designer, and in recent decades directors have often opted for modern dress. What might lead a director to make such a decision? What does your group favour?

What differences in costuming do you envisage between Frederick's courtiers and the denizens of the forest? If Hymen is to be retained, how is he to be dressed, and how will he make his appearance? (In Glen Byam Shaw's 1957 production, Hymen was brought in, as in a country festival, on a flower-bedocked cart; in Trevor Nunn's 1977 production, he descended from the clouds.)

Are there any colours you would wish to make dominant, either in costume or in set?

What props might Rosalind and Celia be carrying when they arrive in the Forest (II. iv)?

— The Forest of Arden (see also Activity 7) —

With As You Like It, the central problem for the set designer is the Forest of Arden. Solutions to this problem have ranged from ultra-realisim (real trees for Orlando to pin his poems on, live sheep, stuffed deer) to the suspended Plexiglas tubes that suggested the Forest in the National Theatre 1967 production at the Old Vic.

In your group, discuss suggestions for creating an inexpensive set that will suggest a forest scene.

Would it be possible to create a single set that would accommodate both the court and forest scenes? Is the best solution a bare stage? If so, how would you differentiate between the two groups?
Do you want to suggest time passing? If so, how? Some set designers have picked up the hints in two of the songs and have suggested a movement from late winter to early spring. Others have tried to suggest the timeless quality of an Arcadia. When considering which of these alternatives is the better, one must decide what weight is to be given to references to time in the play (e.g., Touchstone has brought a timepiece with him to the forest), and the constant reminders that life in the forest is not always idyllic (for example, Corin’s reference to his harsh master; the wild beasts; the crotal William and the ‘foul’ Audrey).

Are there any other ways in which the set design might echo the mood of the play?

— Follow Up —

Here are some descriptions of the sets of some 20th century productions. Which comes closest to your conception of the play? Why?

‘...the cold morning light slowly gives way to gold and green as the sun strikes upon the shivering, slender trees.’

(RSC, 1957)

‘When the curtain first rose I thought for a startled moment, observing a watery sun above a bleak horizon, and a big bare tree crowning a knoll on the steeply raked stage, that we were to be given instead of the advertised play an outsize production of Waiting for Godot.’

(RSC, 1961)

‘On a burnished, raked stage, mostly empty for the court scenes, the forest descended in the form of hanging Plexiglas tubes and abstract shapes cut out of a metal screen. White light, and black and white Carnaby Street costumes, underscored the artificiality of a psychedelic reverie...’

(National Theatre, 1967)
Stage Business/ Blocking Plans

One of the tasks of the director is to devise appropriate movements and 'stage business' for the actors. For example, the actor delivering Jaques' 'seven ages' speech would probably, in Elizabethan times, have moved right around the apron stage whilst delivering his speech, and even today would be unlikely to stay still throughout.

✧ In your group, prepare a set of blocking plans for Act II, scene vii, using the proportions of the Globe Theatre stage (which was about forty feet wide and thirty feet deep). Where you think it necessary, devise some stage business for the actors (e.g., Oscar Asche, a famous Jaques of early this century, munched an apple during the 'seven ages' speech).

✧ Alternatively, you might like to work in pairs, each pair taking a short segment (say, 20 - 30 lines) which is in effect a duologue. Sections of Act III, scene ii, where Orlando 'woos' Ganymede/Rosalind, would be appropriate choices, as would the short scene between Frederick and Oliver (III. i). Paste your chosen section of text onto the left-hand side of a large sheet of paper, and annotate the lines to show:

✧ how you think they should be spoken (tone, pause, emphasis);
✧ what gestures the actors should use;
✧ what props, if any, they should have;
✧ what their movements on stage would be (a supplementary blocking plan would be a good idea);
✧ how the scene should be lighted (unless you envisage an open-air performance).

When this has been done, pairs could swap notes, and attempt to perform the lines as directed.
Two Major Productions

While the most successful *As You Like It* of the last few decades has probably been Michael Elliott's 'straightforward yet subtle' Royal Shakespeare Company's 1961 production in which Vanessa Redgrave's radiant Rosalind was described as "striking a silver note unheard on our stage for years", this unit will attempt to give you some sense of two more recent productions: the Nimrod Theatre production (Sydney, 1983) and the RSC production of 1985. These have been chosen for two reasons: I was lucky enough to see both, and so can report on them at first hand; and both productions excited a great deal of comment at the time.

--- The Nimrod Production ---

The Nimrod production, directed by John Bell and his wife Anna Volska, with Anna Volska as Rosalind, must rank as one of the most successful of Australian productions of Shakespeare. The play was given an Australian outback setting in the 1930s, complete with meat safe hanging from the branch of a gum tree. John Walton, playing Orlando, was a jackaroo, and Duke Frederick and his henchmen city gangsters, dressed in dark suits. The exiled Duke and his retinue, by contrast, wore white slacks and open-necked shirts. Rosalind and Celia first appeared dressed as '30s flappers; Touchstone wore whites and a straw boater. Magpies could be heard carolling in the forest. The props list gives some idea of the flavour of the production: a billy, a kerosene lamp, rabbit skins, rabbit traps, a picnic basket, tennis racquets.

Orlando was played by John Walton, Oliver by Paul Bertram, Jaques by Robert Alexander, Celia by Deirdre Rubinstein, Touchstone by Tony Taylor. Peter Carmody doubled as Duke Frederick and his brother, Duke Senior.

Most of the stage was taken up by a revolving stand which allowed movement from court to forest. On one side stood a pink marble building in art deco style, vaguely suggesting Third Reich architecture. The forest was represented by lifeless tree trunks. 'It was a lover and his lass' became a campfire song sung while the billy boiled.

The treatment of Jaques was particularly interesting. He stood apart from most of the action: a cynical commentator upon the follies of the others. Robert Alexander won praise from all the critics for his performance in this difficult role.

One clever touch at the end of the play was to make the announcement of Duke Frederick's renunciation of the dukedom by means of an item on the radio news:

*Here is the news from the ABC. Duke Frederick, hearing how...*
The play ended with rousing campfire songs played on bushwhacker instruments.

Most of the reviews were laudatory. H G Kippax, the doyen of Sydney theatre critics, wrote (Sydney Morning Herald, 25/7/83):

This is one of Nimrod’s most deeply considered productions, with Shakespeare’s tough-minded examination of romantic lifestyles and philosophies translated with little strain from the Renaissance to a nearer time, a different kind of romance and different illusions...

Instead of the romantic pastorale of Arden, we have the Australian myth of the new country, fresh fields and untainted opportunity. And—Shakespeare’s point—against it hard facts of wool-growing and weather...

A revelation, not to be missed.

Not all the critics were happy, however. Brian Hoad of The Bulletin (9/8/83) wrote:

...this ‘depression’ version of As You Like It is so muddled that you might well end up not caring at all about the bevy of bright young things and their explorations of the nature of boe, androgynous or otherwise.

In my view, the translation from Arden to the Australian outback worked well, and I found the performances of Anna Volska and Robert Alexander outstanding. The portrayal of Duke Frederick and his henchmen as Mafia-like thugs was particularly effective.

--- The Royal Shakespeare Company Production ---

Adrian Noble directed the Stratford production of 1985. It was a more-or-less modern dress production, with a touch of the Edwardian in the garb of the courtiers. Noble picked up on the mirroring aspects of the play, and in a kind of reverse intertextuality, brought Lewis Carroll’s Through the Looking Glass to bear on it. (This was one case where the purchase of the program was essential; many of the audience who hadn’t read the program notes failed to grasp the significance of the large mirror which was exposed in II. and which Jaques stepped through at the end. Part of Noble’s idea was that court and country, cynic and clown, indeed man and woman are mirror images or opposite sides of the same coin. Rosalind, by taking on the disguise of Ganymede, finds a mirror image of her real sexual identity.)
The set design was particularly interesting - and initially very puzzling. Rosalind was first seen in a huge room with furniture covered by white drapes—presumably the apartments of the banished Duke Senior, now closed up. A white-faced figure in evening dress (later identified as Touchstone) emerged from under a table. In hindsight, one realised that the audience’s expectations of realism were being deliberately destroyed in order to pave the way for the looking-glass transformations: Rosalind removed a dust sheet, exposing a huge mirror; at the beginning of Act II Duke Frederick stepped through the mirror into Arden and became his moral opposite, Duke Senior. Both parts, in other words, were played by the same actor.

At this point the Forest of Arden was also covered in white silk, and initially the characters struggled through it as though walking through snow. Later, the dominant colour changed to green, with the coming of spring, but the sense of a surreal landscape remained, and the distinction between court and countryside was, in my view, largely lost. A huge moon hung over the scene, and the program notes stressed that this was as much a landscape of the unconscious mind as an actual place with lovers meeting and deceptions played out. Hymen was simply seen as a silhouette on a screen upstage, forcing the actors to turn away from the audience to see him. (This deprived the audience of their reactions, and was changed when the production moved to London.) The production certainly challenged both actors and audience!

Rosalind was played by Juliet Stevenson, who also starred in the film Truly, Madly, Deeply, and Jaques by Alan Rickman, who played opposite her in that film and has since appeared in several films, such as Sense and Sensibility. The role of Celia was taken by Fiona Shaw, and that of Orlando by Hilton McRae. According to Alan Rickman, writing in Players of Shakespeare 2 (Cambridge, 1988), the production was simplified when it transferred to London in the following year, shifting 'from a concern for staging effects towards making its characters' inner lives more visible'. This would certainly have strengthened the production; to my mind the white silk was overdone, and the whole conception too heavily psychological. The changes made to the production both during its Stratford season and when the play was taken to London remind us yet again that interpretations of the play can change, not only from production to production but even within a production.

Juliet Stevenson and Fiona Shaw have also written interestingly about the production. They point out that Celia makes the running in the early part of the play, but becomes almost completely silent in the second half - a huge problem for the actor concerned.

As Rosalind becomes increasingly in possession of her powers, Celia is left powerless, drawn into a game which is not of her making, and dazzled by a friend who is now barely recognisable. (Players of Shakespeare 2, p66)
They also note that the decision to set a production in modern dress...

*obliges both audience and actors to recognise the play in the light of contemporary thinking and experience. To liberate Shakespeare's women from the confines of literary and theatrical tradition requires an analysis of the nature and effects of those social structures which define and contain them - the opening of this play sees Rosalind and Celia already contained within a structure that is oppressive and patriarchal, namely the court of Duke Frederick, Celia's father.* (p57)

- Juliet Stevenson has said that she sees the play as 'a vital exploration of gender, the male and female within us all. Rosalind is very released when her masculine aspect is allowed release.' Discuss this reading of the play in your group.

- Can the flight of Rosalind and Celia to the forest be seen as an attempt to break away from a patriarchal structure? Can the actions of Rosalind in the forest be interpreted as seizing power from men? (Stevenson and Shaw write that 'Rosalind, ever-changing, becomes a sort of ring-mistress, drawing together all the threads of the play...')

- In your group, attempt a feminist reading of the play's ending.

(If you are interested in reading an account of what was probably the most startlingly original production of *As You Like It* ever staged, a production mounted in West Berlin in 1977 by Peter Stein, consult Dennis Kennedy's *Looking at Shakespeare*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993.)
An Examination of Colonialism

(Note to the teacher: The Open University, in conjunction with the BBC, has produced a video which looks at aspects of two plays, Measure for Measure and The Tempest. The section on The Tempest examines themes of colonialism, both Elizabethan and current, with reference to the play, and includes excerpts both from the BBC version [see Activity 21] and from a reworking of play by the West Indian/French dramatist Césaire, Une Tempête. In Australia, the video is available through Educational Media Australia, 214 Park St, South Melbourne 3205.)

Evidence

Unlike most of Shakespeare’s plays, The Tempest is not based on some pre-existing story, but he was clearly making use of two important sources:

1. The voyages of colonists to Virginia, and in particular a storm off the Bermudas in 1609 which nearly wrecked the flagship Sea Adventure. The crew managed to land on one of the islands, and repair the ship, and several accounts of their experience were published.

2. Montaigne’s Of Cannibals, which was translated into English in 1603. This book raised questions about the ethics of colonisation and idealised the ‘cannibals’. Gonzalo's speech on the ideal commonwealth is a reworking of part of Montaigne’s essay.

Activity

In your group, gather evidence from the play that would support a production emphasising the ethical questions raised by colonisation. For example, in the second scene Caliban, who in the cast list of the First Folio is described as “a salvage [savage] and deformed slave”, says:

This island’s mine, by Sycorax my mother,  
Which thou tak’st from me...

What does the text actually tell us about the events which occurred when Prospero first reached the island?

Look carefully at Gonzalo’s speech (Act II, sc.1) about his ideal commonwealth. Can you find any contradictions in it? How does it compare with the actual situation on Prospero’s island?
Look carefully at the scene between Caliban and Stefano (II.ii). What does it tell us about Caliban's attitude to Europeans? What assumptions can we draw from the way he regards Stephano?

In the bowdlerised editions of The Tempest that were common in British and Australian schools until the 1950s, all reference to Caliban's attempted rape of Miranda was omitted. How would this omission affect one's view of the play?

In your group, imagine that you want to create sympathy for Caliban. What aspects of Prospero's character would you emphasise? What would you emphasise about Caliban?

"Caliban is an instructor in the arts of survival. He has lived alone on the island without any assistance from Prospero. Prospero, on the other hand, cannot survive without the assistance of Caliban." (Jonathan Bate, The Genius of Shakespeare, p245) How does Prospero win his help?

One of the ways in which an actor (or director) can colour the audience's attitude to a character is through the character's physical appearance. As Harold Bloom, in his recent book, Shakespeare: the Invention of the Human, has noted, in various productions Caliban has appeared as half-amphibian, an ape man, a Neanderthal, as well as the archetypal noble savage. Frequently black actors are cast in the role. In one strange production, Caliban was a tortoise-like creature who could be rendered powerless by being turned on his back. But what does the text really say about him? Bloom seems to accept that Caliban is half-amphibian, but, as David Suchet, a distinguished performer in the role, has pointed out, that interpretation, based on Trinculo's first speech (II.ii), refers to Caliban's smell, not his appearance:

A fish, he smells like a fish...a strange fish...his fins like arms

Not 'his arms like fins', but 'his fins like arms'.

In your group, note down all the references to Caliban's appearance, and then decide how he should appear on stage. (David Suchet's account of his investigations, and a photograph of him in the role appear in Players of Shakespeare ed. Philip Brockbank.)

In Peter Hall's 1974 production, Dennis Quilley's make-up as Caliban "was bisected: one half of his face presented the ugly deformed monster, the other an image of the noble savage. This meant that, in visual terms, by turning his profile to the audience he could change his appearance in a moment". (David Hirst, The Tempest: Text and Performance, p48) This ingenious solution to the problem of Caliban's appearance could, of course, only work in a particular kind of theatre.
3.6 CO-AUTHORSHIP

The excerpts from the various *Shakespeare Workshop* titles are my work, as is the whole of *Such a Mad Marriage: a workshop approach to The Taming of the Shrew*. Where there has been a collaboration, the breakdown of co-authorship is as follows:

*The Food of Love: a workshop approach to Twelfth Night* by Ken Watson, with additional material by Gordon Shrub (1991; revised edition, 2003) The royalties (such as they are!) are 90% to Watson and 10% to Shrub; the new edition includes, as do all new editions of titles in the series intended for use at senior level, a supplement commissioned from Dr John Hughes on Shakespeare’s dramatic techniques. (The supplement is the same in all books and so is not specifically designed for the particular play.)

*Love’s Keen Arrows: a workshop approach to As You Like It* by Dennis Robinson and Ken Watson (1998) is a 50-50 collaboration. (See Appendix C)

3.7 RECOGNITION OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SHAKESPEARE WORKSHOP SERIES TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF PEDAGOGY

The following review (*English in Australia*, No. 108, June, 1994) is typical of the critical reception given to my contributions to the Series, the last of which was published in 1998, though more recently a revised editions of *The Food of Love* and *Full Fathom Five* have appeared (2003).
Such a Mad Marriage: A Workshop Approach to The Taming of the Shrew

This is the latest in the Shakespeare Workshop series, and from my practical experience with previous publications by the same author, Ken Watson again has come up with a series of workshop activities that I believe are most appropriate in their treatment of a very demanding but equally rewarding subject, Shakespeare in the junior [high] school. My Year 9 class responded marvellously to Ken Watson and Gordon Shrub's Workshop Approach to Romeo and Juliet after initially expressing mild disdain at having to work on a Shakespearian play.

This publication is based on a similar approach: it has twenty photocopyable activities which range over a wide area and can be attempted in any order. The best place to start, I found, was with the language activities, which, through such activities as cloze and sequencing, help overcome the initial trepidation junior high school students feel towards Shakespeare being someone whom "you can't understand".

One of the really positive features of the activities is the approach to the play as a piece of theatre. Costuming and staging allow the students to step into the play in hands-on activities that boost their confidence.

There are also activities on improvisation, characters, thematic issues and the history of the play. The temptation to write at length on possible outcomes beyond the text is resisted, the only concession to this type of activity being the wedding of Katherine and Petruchio, which takes place off stage. Students can script the scene, based on evidence offered by other characters. There is also a workshop on two film versions of the play. These kinds of activities really promote the teaching of Shakespeare in the junior school.
As a result of my work on the teaching of Shakespeare, I was approached in 1998 by Pacific Educational Press, the publishing arm of the University of British Columbia, Canada, to prepare a book for upper secondary classes and Fine Arts university courses on film versions of Shakespeare’s plays. Unfortunately, health considerations at the time forced me to decline the invitation; instead, I suggested that such a book might best be accomplished through having a small team of writers. I persuaded Dr Neil Bechervaise of the University of Sydney to undertake the editorial work, and confined myself to the writing of chapters on the film versions of Twelfth Night and Richard III. After many delays, the Canadian book, Teaching Shakespeare on Screen, came out in 2001; in the meantime, an Australian version, Shakespeare on Celluloid, was published in Australia (1999). The innovative design of the book (the work of Dr Bechervaise) led to the Australian version being highly commended in the The Australian newspaper’s annual Educational Books Awards.

I have given workshops on the teaching of Shakespeare throughout Australia, and in Britain, Canada, Singapore and the USA. While in the USA in 2002, I was invited to present workshops at the University of Texas, Arlington, and at two campuses of the University of Indiana. I gave a workshop to teachers and teacher trainees at Michigan State University, and another at the University of British Columbia.
3.8 INVITATIONAL PAPER

In November, 2002, as Visiting Fellow at the University of Indiana-Purdue, I gave a public lecture which combines some of my research into an appropriate pedagogy for Shakespeare in schools with my investigations into the history of the subject.

THE TEACHING OF SHAKESPEARE IN SCHOOLS

(Paper delivered at the University of Indiana, Indianapolis, October, 2002, as Visiting Fellow, Institute for Advanced Study, Indiana-Purdue University)

I should like to make clear at the outset that I have no pretensions to be a Shakespearian scholar: my interest, beyond my enjoyment of the plays (especially when performed), is firmly in the area of pedagogy, and I have devoted much of the past decade to exploring with students and teachers the best ways of creating an enthusiasm for, and understanding of, the plays as scripts for the stage. Today, after giving my answer to the often-posed question, ‘Why teach Shakespeare anyway?’, I offer an historical survey of the search for an appropriate pedagogy, with an inevitable Australian bias, concluding with some of the problems facing high school teachers and touching briefly on teaching at university level.

Why include Shakespeare in the curriculum?

Let me begin by agreeing that it is possible to overstate the greatness of Shakespeare. To assert, as does Harold Bloom, that Shakespeare “invented the human as we know it” (Bloom, 1998, p. 714) – in other words, that we did not know how to be human until Shakespeare wrote Hamlet and Henry IV - or to imply, as so many have, that Shakespeare’s genius was such that the plays distill the wisdom of the ages, is Bardolatry taken to an absurd level. Terry Eagleton, in his book on Shakespeare, neatly satirises such views when he writes:

Though conclusive evidence is hard to come by, it is difficult to read Shakespeare without feeling that he was almost certainly familiar with the writings of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Wittgenstein and Derrida.

(Eagleton, 1986, p.ix-x)

I am much more comfortable with Robert Graves’ comment that “The remarkable thing about Shakespeare is that he really is very good – in spite
of all the people who say that he is very good" than I am with Bloom's fulsome tribute. And for those who want something more concrete, I offer John Keats, who argued that the quality "which Shakespeare possessed so enormously" was

... negative capability, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.

(quoted in Bate, 1992, p.198)

Unpack that statement, and you discover why it is that so many wonderful and different performances can be created from the same text.

Shakespeare was certainly not concerned to present the solutions to all life's problems; as Germaine Greer (1986, p.18) points out:

Shakespeare was not a propagandist; he did not write plays as vehicles for his own ideas. Rather he developed a theatre of dialectical conflict, in which idea is pitted against idea and from their friction a deeper understanding of the issues emerges.

Although the term 'problem plays' is usually applied only to a small group of Shakespeare's plays (All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida, Measure for Measure), most of the plays pose problems, and they disappoint those who seek answers. T.S. Eliot claimed that Hamlet is a bad play because it provides no answers to anything, but Shakespeare did not write 'answers to problems': he was interested in exploring situations and characters, and showing both from all sides.

Those of you who have visited Stratford on Avon know that as well as the main theatre, the Memorial Theatre complex includes the Swan Theatre, in design similar to the original Globe Theatre. Here it has been the policy to stage not only Shakespeare's plays (I was fortunate enough to see there a brilliant Troilus and Cressida, directed by a young Sam Mendes, later to direct the Academy Award-winning film American Beauty) but also the plays of Shakespeare's Elizabethan and Jacobean contemporaries. This juxtaposition of plays by Ben Jonson, Marlowe, Webster, Beaumont and Fletcher, Chapman and the rest with Shakespeare's plays makes one realise how far Shakespeare stands above his contemporaries, especially in his conception of dramatic character. (The word 'character', by the way, did not appear in our sense until a couple of centuries later.) Jonson, for example, clearly had a view of characters as fixed entities, expressions of the notion of the four humours. Shakespeare's characters are, as Jonathan Bate points out, "the embodiments of the fluidity, the play, of emotion" (Bate, 1997, p.151).

If we accept that Shakespeare explored situation and character better than dramatists then or since, that is one argument for granting him a place in the school curriculum, but there are others. To begin with, communication in
any society is difficult enough without denying its members some common knowledge. In our culture, the Greek myths, the Arthurian legends, the works of Shakespeare and some parts of the Bible provide, albeit tenuously, some of the links that allow us to communicate with one another. As an example of how Shakespeare has permeated our culture, I recently learnt that over 20,000 musical works draw their inspiration, directly or indirectly, from Shakespeare.

Secondly, while it is possible for some writers to ignore the world around them when they write – Isaac Walton’s *The Compleat Angler*, for example, though written as the English Civil War raged, gives no sense, if memory serves me, of the conflict – Shakespeare was not such a writer. He was writing at a time of crisis and he reflects a struggle between the old and the new such is still going on in our day. For him, it was a struggle between the old, the feudal and aristocratic, and the new bourgeois, Protestant order; today the oppositions are different, but it is not very difficult to find modern parallels to many of his plays. Sometimes Shakespeare can astonish us with his contemporaneity. As I was writing this paper, Spain and Morocco seemed on the verge of fighting over an uninhabited rock off the African coast, and I was reminded, as Britons were during the Falklands War of 1982, of the following lines from *Hamlet*:

*Hamlet*: Good sir, whose powers are these?
*Captain*: They are of Norway, sir....
*Hamlet*: Goes it against the main of Poland, sir,
Or for some frontier?
*Captain*: Truly to speak, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground
That hath in it no profit but the name.
To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it;
Nor will it yield to Norway or the Pole
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee. (IV.ii.9-10;15-22)

This is, of course, an extreme example, but no audience can miss the modern parallels in *Romeo and Juliet*, or *Troilus and Cressida* (“Still wars and lechery! Nothing else holds fashion” V.ii), or fail to ponder the ambiguities of power after seeing *Coriolanus*. As Rex Gibson (1994,p.141) says, “Shakespeare’s characters, stories and themes offer virtually endless opportunities for interpretation and reformulation.” Under the influence of Jan Kott’s *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, in the 1960s Peter Hall formulated “one simple rule” to govern the practice of the Royal Shakespeare Company: “that whenever the Company did a play by Shakespeare, they should do it because the play was relevant, because the play made some demand upon our current attention”. (quoted in Taylor, 1989,p.310). This seems to me a good principle to apply when choosing a play to be studied in class.
Rex Gibson, who edits the Cambridge School Shakespeare and was the
director of the Shakespeare and Schools Project, which ran in the UK from
1986 to 1993, has offered additional justifications for teaching Shakespeare:

1. Language: “Shakespeare’s language is both a model and a resource for
students: powerfully energetic, vivid, sinewy, active, physical, robust,
sensuous, volatile, immediate and reflective.”

2. Feeding students’ imaginations: “Shakespeare’s plays evoke open,
multilayered responses. They therefore give opportunities for students
of all ages and abilities to encounter them imaginatively in a wide
variety of ways.”

3. Shakespeare resources students’ writing: “Because every play has its
own unique characteristics, Shakespeare provides pupils with rich
models for study, imitation and expressive, personal re-creation.
Shakespeare himself worked within the dialectic of discipline and
freedom, convention and originality, formality and flexibility. The
discipline of English is based on a similar dialectic. Students can learn
from Shakespeare how form resources freedom.” (1994, pp.140-142)

The search for an appropriate pedagogy - a brief survey
of the teaching of Shakespeare over the last century

Today’s teaching of literature relies on yesterday’s, and more often on the
day before yesterday’s, scholarship and criticism. The time lag has been more
evident in the teaching of Shakespeare than in other areas of literature
teaching: the influence of A.C. Bradley's Shakespearean Tragedy, first
published in 1904, can still be seen in classrooms throughout the English-
speaking world.

For the purposes of this paper, two strands of Shakespearian criticism may be
discerned:

1. that which focuses on the words on the page, viewing Shakespearian
plays as literary artifacts;

2. that which is stage-centred, performance-based, seeing the works as
playscripts whose potential can only be realised in performance(s).

(Regrettfully, I must largely leave to one side a mass of criticism, particularly
the work of the cultural materialists, who show not only that the plays
emerge from a particular set of material circumstances, but that readers and
critics themselves are also to a degree socially and culturally constructed. I
should say, however, that I believe very strongly that the basic tenet of
reader response theory, that a range of responses to a novel, poem or play is
not only admissible but inevitable, must be grasped by students at the very
beginning of their high school careers, if not earlier. I have shown elsewhere (Watson, 1992; Stephens and Watson, 1994) that children of twelve can understand, and find liberating, this fundamental idea.)

Literary criticism

When one thinks of textual criticism, one thinks of A.C. Bradley, whose Shakespearean Tragedy (1904) must be the most influential book of Shakespeare criticism ever published. While generations of teachers have found Bradley’s work valuable, it has to be admitted that his influence of the classroom has not been wholly beneficial. While his stated aim was “to increase our understanding and enjoyment of these works as dramas” (Bradley, 1904, p. 1) his emphasis on the words on the page rather than on the play in the theatre and his conception of character, conceived, it would seem, in terms of the 19th century novel, pushed the classroom teaching of Shakespeare into the same mould as the teaching of the novel. Gary Taylor (1990, p. 230) has remarked that in Bradley’s hands “Shakespearian criticism became a philosophical novel”. J.L. Styan questions “whether Bradley has been good for Shakespeare” (1977, p. 40), insightful though many of his character analyses are. (Harold Bloom, whom I mentioned earlier, strikes me as being very much in the Bradley tradition, and having hardly a good word for any Shakespearian production since Sir Ralph Richardson played Falstaff in the 1950s, more or less endorses Charles Lamb’s view that it is better to read Shakespeare than to watch him acted (Bloom, 1998, p. 720). One of my reservations about Bloom is not that he echoes Bradley in his elevation of character, but that he takes little note of the interplay of characters which is the stuff of drama, and, because, in his emphasis upon reading rather than viewing Shakespeare, he seems largely unaware of the different perspectives on character that good actors can provide.)

Performance criticism

It is a central argument of this paper that criticism which understands “the controlling importance of stage performance” (Harry Levin, quoted in Brown, 1993, p. 197) is the more valuable as far as the classroom is concerned. This is not to deny the value of such critics as Bradley as background reading for teachers, and particularly of a critic such as William Empson for his demonstration that Shakespeare’s language does not present us with single meanings (Empson, 1930), but criticism that constantly reminds the teacher that what the students have in front of them is not the play, but a blueprint for a play, is more likely to lead to teaching which explores the dramatic and theatrical aspects of the playscript as well as its purely literary qualities. In performance criticism, “the demands of text and
stage are considered together" (Thomson, 1989, p.15); the performance potentialities of the dramatic text are always kept in mind. The St Clair Shakespeare Workshop Series, which I co-edited and for which I wrote or co-authored several titles, and Shakespeare: a Teacher's Handbook (Michaels, Hise, Watson, Adams, 2nd ed., 2000) draw their theoretical basis from the writings of several of the performance-based critics. Such criticism can be dated back to Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt, but in the first half of 20th century only Harley Granville-Barker, in his still very valuable Prefaces to Shakespeare (1930), could be said to have highlighted theatrical values (and here I must interpolate that the fluency of staging unbroken by scene changes that characterises most of the best Shakespeare productions these days, and which is sometimes ascribed to the influence of films, is the legacy of Granville-Barker, who was actor and director was well as critic).

Performance criticism really took off in the 1950s with Raymond Williams's Drama in Performance (1954;1968). Key writers since then include J.L. Styan, John Russell Brown, and Peter Holland. Other publications with the potential to influence classroom practice have been the ill-fated Bristol Classical Press Plays in Performance series, ed. Julie Hankey & J. S. Bratton (e.g., Hankey, 1987). Each volume in this ambitious project printed the full text on one page while on the facing page there was a detailed commentary described how important scenes have been handled and characters portrayed over the centuries. The Press foundered after only four volumes had been published: The Duchess of Malfi and three of Shakespeare's plays – King Lear, Othello and Richard III, but fortunately Cambridge University Press has taken over the project under the new series title Shakespeare in Production, and so far has added six further titles: Romeo and Juliet, Much Ado about Nothing, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, Antony and Cleopatra and Hamlet. Dennis Bartholomew's Macbeth and the Players (1969), the Manchester University Press Shakespeare in Performance series, and the Macmillan Plays in Performance provide detailed analyses of actual stage productions. Graham Holderness's Shakespeare in Performance: The Taming of the Shrew, (Holderness, 1989), for example, provides detailed descriptions of four productions: John Barton's 1960 RSC production, Zefferelli's 1966 film, Michael Bogdanov's controversial 1975 RSC production, which began with an altercation between an apparent drunk (Jonathan Pryce as Christopher Sly and later as Petruchio) and an usherette (Paola Dionisotti, who played Katherina), which so completely deceived some members of the first-night audience that they rose in their seats to call the police, and Jonathan Miller's BBC/Time-Life 1980 television film.

It is astonishing, given the prominence of J.L. Stryan in the area of performance criticism, that Michael Taylor, in his book surveying the major literary critical movements of the twentieth century as they relate to Shakespeare (Taylor, 2001), barely mentions Stryan and his two extremely influential books, Shakespeare's Stagecraft (1967) and The Shakespeare
Revolution (1977). As we shall see, Stryan’s influence has been wide-ranging, with David Mallick and Wendy Michaels, two Australians who have had a major effect on the teaching of Shakespeare in Australia, acknowledging their debt to him, just as he himself acknowledges a debt to Granville-Barker. There is no doubt about the enormous value of Stryan’s work, both in making us cognisant of the original performance environment of most of Shakespeare’s plays, the Globe Theatre, and in making stage performance an essential part of Shakespearian criticism in the second half of the 20th century.

Another performance critic, John Russell Brown, has played a significant role in the revolution in the teaching of Shakespeare. His Discovering Shakespeare (1981) was based on the premise that

we should read and study the plays as if we were rehearsing them, and ... we should then attempt to imagine performances... Character-analysis and the search for an underlying theme must wait until after the play has begun to come alive in a reader’s imagination — with all the excitement and strength of theatrical performance, and with the sudden revelations and slow revaluations which are the ordinary signs of vitality in rehearsal. (Brown, 1981, p.1)

Later, he writes

We should never begin by asking what every word means, or what a play means, or whether we know its argument. If we start by trying to nail down what the drama is saying, we shall never rise with the poet’s invention and enter the strange world of his plays. (p.21)

And,

At school or university the reader may have been trained to read a text so that he can be sure that he understands precisely what is on the page; whereas he should have been encouraged to play with conjecture and to enter imaginatively within a forever-changing image, or mirage, of another life. (p.9)

The basic pedagogical principle to be gleaned from the work of the performance critics is that students need to realise that what they have in front of them is not the play, but a blueprint for a play, and that if they are to engage fully with the text they must learn to think dramatically, think theatrically. The only way to do this is to explore the text in an active way: improvising and performing, exploring the sub-text, designing sets and costumes, constructing missing scenes, holding mock trials — in short, opening up the dramatic and imaginative aspects of the text. Traditional methods — reading round the class, scene-by-scene summaries, character analyses and the like — do not foster the active, imaginative reading that can re-create the text in the mind. Such methods differ little from those
employed in the teaching of the novel; hence, in the public examinations so 
beloved of the English and Australian education systems examiners 
constantly encounter essays beginning “In the novel Hamlet …”

Interestingly, despite the almost complete lack, until at least at least the 
1960s, of a performance-based criticism which could support a performance-
based pedagogy, there were appropriate models of teaching Shakespeare on 
offer. As far back as 1917 the Englishman Caldwell Cook, in his book The 
Play Way, had advocated active involvement by the pupils in all aspects of 
English:

When I wish to help little boys to see the might and beauty of poetry, I do 
d not discourse on poetics. As playmaster I know it is more practical to start 
the whole miracle with one word “Make”. Cook, 1917, p. 20)

In his chapter on teaching Shakespeare he stressed the importance of acting, 
and … with a play to act… it will be easily understood how a playmaster is not 
only willing to ignore parsing, paraphrasing, and the cramming of notes and 
introductions, but feels himself in a position to dispute with (and even to 
ridicule) those who give all their attention to such things. The important 
thing about the study of Shakespeare…is that the play must be acted first…
(PP. 187-8)

Caldwell Cook’s ideas were picked by an Australian teacher, George 
Mackaness, who put them into practice at a Sydney high school and 
subsequently published Inspirational Teaching (Mackaness, 1928). Writing 
about teaching Shakespeare, he asked: “Why should…a dramatic work be 
treated in any other way than dramatically?” (p. 64). Having pointed out the 
weakness of the method of reading round the class, he offered the following 
description of his approach:

I always divide my classes into permanent study groups, numbered A, B, C 
and so on, each group consisting of six or eight members, a boy of character 
and initiative…being appointed leader of each group. When beginning a new 
play a large portion of the work of organising is placed on the shoulders of 
the group leaders… The scenes are taken one by one. The group leaders 
alloit the parts in each scene, or each act, to the various members of the 
group, and arrange for rehearsals and discussions of the work set. I find that 
two or three days, or a week at most, are quite sufficient for preliminary 
preparation. Then on each day allotted to Shakespearean work we act the 
play, scene by scene, each company in turn presenting its version of the same 
scene…..

As each has prepared the same scene independently, there will naturally 
exist wide differences not only in the interpretation, but in the presentation. 
of the scene. The most important work is to follow. As each group completes
its work, the members are lined up before the class and subjected to detailed criticism. The actors are always given the right of reply and explanation. (pp.63-4)

Another book the potential of which to change the teaching of Shakespeare was not realised, either in England where it was published or in Australia where it found its way into professional libraries, was A.K. Hudson's *Shakespeare and the Classroom*. The introduction, written by actor Bernard Miles (later Sir Bernard), accurately conveys the thrust of the book:

*Mr Hudson argues that [Shakespeare]...should be studied first of all in action... I cannot imagine a class of little savages being more happily and successfully weaned to [sic] Shakespeare than by lurking about the legs of a blackboard in order to chop Banquo down with their rulers, or brewing a hell broth of fenny snakes and poisoned entrails in the classroom waste paper basin.* (pvii)

Unhappily, Caldwell Cook and George Mackaness, and later A.K. Hudson, seem to have had little influence on classroom practice (though there were doubtless a few classrooms where the sort of exciting work they described was being done).

As far as I have been able to determine, the message of the performance critics did not begin to make an impact upon the classrooms of the English-speaking world until the 1980s, and even today it appears that only a minority of English teachers have adopted the active methods so essential if students are to gain imaginative entry into playtexts. Recently I was looking over past volumes of the American journal *Shakespeare Quarterly* and came across the following assertion in an article published in 1984:

*A decade ago 'performance-oriented' pedagogy was relatively unfamiliar among Shakespeareans and was anything but universally accepted as the wave of the future. Now it is difficult to find a dissenting voice: virtually everybody acknowledges the need to approach Shakespeare's plays as dramatic rather than literary works.* (Andrews, 1984, pp.515-6)

I beg leave to doubt this claim, which would have put the American classrooms of 1984 far, far ahead of today's classrooms in the rest of the English-speaking world. My own, admittedly very small, samplings of U.S. classrooms in 1984, 1986, and 1991, together with my conversations with English teachers at various NCTE conferences and the IFTE Conference of 1995, certainly left me with the strong impression that the traditional methods to which I've referred were just as strongly entrenched in the USA as in Australia, Canada or the UK throughout the 1980s, and that change was only just getting under way in the 90s with the impact of such publications as the Folger Library's series, *Shakespeare Set Free* (O'Brien, 1993, 1994, 1995), though earlier I did discover some splendid work being
done in Arizona by Jesse Hise, who each year was holding a Shakespeare Festival in his school – and I’m sure that there were others doing similarly exciting work. But as far as I could see the stress was on explication of the text and reading round the class; one thing holding back change, it seemed to me, was the fondness for those large anthologies with comprehension questions as their main teaching device.

In Australia, the change can be said to have begun in 1984, when David Mallick, of the University of Tasmania, published *How Tall Is this Ghost, John?* (Mallick, 1984). In his introductory note to teachers, Mallick declared:

> Shakespeare is meant to be performed; practical performance work is the best way to encourage close scrutiny of the text...the answer to [the problem of how to teach Shakespeare] lies in making the classroom the classroom a workshop where we try to understand meaning through action.

(Introduction)

His book provides teachers with examples of ways in which the elements of the sub-text – pace, tone, silence, emphasis, stage business, movement, entrances and exits – could be actively explored in the classroom, in group discussion and performance. Shortly afterwards another Australian, Wendy Michaels, published *When the Hurly Burly Is Done* (Michaels, 1986), which considerably widened the range of methods that could be employed in the active exploration of Shakespearian texts. Both Mallick and Michaels acknowledge the influence on their work of J.L. Styan.

Michaels’ work brings the story almost up to my own work, which in the case of Shakespeare was very much a case of standing on the shoulders of the true pioneers. A visit to the UK in 1988 brought me into contact with two first-rate teachers, Brenda Pinder and Mike Hayhoe. The latter’s very practical *Creative Work Ideas for Macbeth* (Hayhoe, 1988) inspired me to design a series, the *Shakespeare Workshop Series*, in which each volume provided teachers with a range of small-group activities designed to promote active exploration of the text. To quote from the introduction to one of these volumes, *The Food of Love: A workshop approach to Twelfth Night*,

> The activities stress the fact that this is a play, and thus must be constantly thought of in theatrical terms. To be able to read a play script and simultaneously visualise an performance going on inside the ‘skull theatre’ (to borrow J.B. Priestley’s phrase) is not a skill that comes easily, and it is therefore essential that classroom treatment of play scripts, whether they be by Shakespeare, Shaw or Miller, be undertaken in terms of the interplay of actors, play script and audience that one finds in real performances and the rehearsals that precede them. (Watson, 1991)

The introduction to the volume on *As You Like It* emphasises that
...what the students have in front of them is not the play, but a playscript that has to be turned into a play, and the play that is created by one set of actors from a particular playscript may be very different from the play created by a different set of actors. Hence it is vital that the students be encouraged to think about a Shakespearean play in theatrical terms.
(Robinson and Watson, 1998)

In its final form, the series provides open-ended, theatrically-oriented activities on twenty-one plays. In these books there is a good deal of stress, following on Mallick, on exploring aspects of the sub-text: tone, pause, emphasis, gestures, movement. Each book also contains activities which play the students in various roles: director, stage designer, costume designer, writer of extra scenes.

An over-arching publication, Shakespeare: A Teacher's Handbook (Michaels, Hise and Watson, 1994; 2nd edition, Michaels, Hise, Watson and Adams, 2001), incorporates sections from Michaels' When the Hurly Is Done and provides explanations and examples of the pedagogy which arises out of the realisation that a Shakespeare text must be seen as simply a blueprint for a play rather than the play itself. As well as providing a range of activities designed to help students think in dramatic, theatrical terms – activities such as designing costumes and sets, blocking scenes, exploring the subtext – considerable attention is given to ways of overcoming the 'language barrier', something seen by most students as a greater problem than it really is. Since another problem teachers face is to persuade students living in the 21st century that something written 400 years previously can still have relevance to them, both the Handbook and the individual volumes offer examples of 'parallel improvisations' that both create a context for the play to be studied and make the students aware that many of the situations in Shakespeare's plays have their modern counterparts. Here are two group improvisations taken from the volume on Romeo and Juliet:

In Australia, a Serb boy falls in love with a girl from a Croatian background. How do the parents react?

In modern Belfast, a theatre company is about to put on Romeo and Juliet. The cast discuss the pros and cons of setting the play in modern Belfast, and making the feud between the Montagues and Capulets one of religion.
(Shrubb and Watson, 1991)

One of the problems that have bedevilled the teaching of Shakespeare has been a belief in the sanctity of the text. Teachers have often been afraid to tamper with the text in any way, not realising that not only are the texts used in the classroom often composites (most editions of King Lear, for example, combine elements from the 1608 Quarto and the 1623 First Folio) but that almost no Shakespearian play is ever performed in its entirety.
(Kenneth Branagh made news some years ago when he directed an uncut
Hamlet; it ran for four hours.) In placing students in the role of directors, the Shakespeare Workshop Series makes them realise that performance means interpretation, and this may involve altering the order of scenes (many productions of Twelfth Night, for example, begin with the storm scene, which in the text is the second scene), cutting scenes (the clown scene in Othello is rarely performed), changing the period in which the play is set, and establishing atmosphere by physical action and sound effects before the first words are spoken.

At much the same time as these developments were taking place in Australia, in Britain Rex Gibson had launched the Shakespeare and Schools Project. Initially the Project had little effect outside the UK. Its real impact came later, with Gibson's Cambridge School Shakespeare, which departs from the typical school playtexts by providing on each left-hand page suggestions for active exploration of the text. As Gibson notes in an article in Shakespeare Survey 49 (1996, p.144), “each edition embodies an active pedagogy that respects and resources the paradigm shift in school Shakespeare teaching methods”. These practical activities are “firmly and organically linked to the play[s]”. In 2002, the Cambridge School Shakespeare titles are slowly becoming the preferred editions in British and Australian schools, particularly at junior and middle secondary levels, and I note that in the USA Cambridge University Press is co-sponsoring the journal Shakespeare, which is vigorously promoting an active pedagogy.

If one may judge from interviews published in Shakespeare Quarterly (McDonald, 1995), American teachers moving in this direction are more narrowly focused than their counterparts in Britain and Australia. The emphasis appears to be firmly on the preparation and performance of scenes, often student-directed. This, of course, is no bad thing, but I would argue for a much wider range of activities aimed at developing students' awareness of the theatrical possibilities of the text. I do envy, however, the much greater opportunities American students have these days to see Shakespeare performed: I note that the latest edition of the journal Shakespeare (Vol.6, no. 2) a listing of 57 offerings of Shakespeare in 38 States in the summer just past, and of course they can cross the border to the north to see the wonderful Shakespeare Festival at Stratford, Ontario, and less ambitious but very professional performances such as the annual 'Bard on the Beach' in Vancouver.

Have the changes really been a revolution? In order to gauge the success, in my home state of New South Wales, of what has been a concerted campaign over more a decade - innumerable workshops, twenty-one titles in the Shakespeare Series, two editions of Shakespeare: a Teacher's Handbook, with the further impetus provided by the arrival of the Cambridge School Shakespeare and Rex Gibson's publications - I recently undertook a survey of trainee English teachers who were still at school in 1995-8, asking them about their memories of how Shakespeare was taught. The results were
somewhat disappointing: about two-thirds of teachers, it would seem, are still clinging to traditional methods, which, if these trainee teachers are to be believed, bewilder, bore and alienate students from Shakespeare. Still, the results do show that there has been a shift; a similar survey a decade previously identified only one or two teachers employing active methods which really do address the three fundamental problems facing the teacher of Shakespeare:

1. How to persuade students that something written in the distant past can still have relevance for them;

2. How to help them over the language barrier;

3. How to help them to think in dramatic and theatrical terms.

Incidentally, the responses to this survey show quite clearly that those who did experience the active methods I've described came to their university studies with much more positive attitudes towards Shakespeare than did the others.

This suggests that, until university teachers can be confident that those enrolling in their Shakespeare courses had had positive experiences of Shakespeare at high school, some of the active methods I've described should be included in undergraduate courses. Work on the sub-text can be quite revealing, even to students whose academic study of Shakespeare has been quite intensive. With one such group looking at ways of teaching *Hamlet*, I drew attention to the lines from Act I, scene 2:

Queen:  
*Good* Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off.  
*And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.*  
*Do not forever with thy vailed lids*  
*Seek for thy noble father in the dust:*  
*Thou know'st 'tis common; all that live must die,*  
*Passing through nature to eternity.*  

Hamlet:  
*Ay, madam, it is common.*  

Queen:  
*Why seems it so particular with thee?*

We found that the insertion of a pause, followed by emphasis on 'common', converted a statement of agreement into an insult, and led to the Queen's adopting a very sharp tone in her reply. Possibilities such as this came as a shock to some members of the group.

The same group had fun converting the first part of that scene into a White House press conference, with Polonius as grey eminence handing a puppet President Claudius his speech to deliver to the court. (I won't say which US President they had in mind!) They found, of course, that while such a view
of Polonius worked well in that particular scene, problems occurred when one tried to carry the interpretation into later scenes.

Such reading against the grain is occasionally carried into a full production – and both school and university students should discuss accounts of major productions. In 1995, for example, Gale Edwards produced The Taming of the Shrew at Stratford in which Josie Lawrence made Katherine in her final speech so emotionally bruised, so despairing, that Petruchio was appalled by what he had done. Hence the most famous lines in the play –

Why there's a wench! Come on and kiss me, Kate

– could not be uttered. Is such a reading, such a cut, going too far? Or is it simply the obverse of Mary Pickford's wink at the audience after her final speech in the early film version?

With another group we looked at the ways in which modern productions often establish a scene before words are spoken, and we explored different settings that would determine how the words that open Antony and Cleopatra –

Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure

would be spoken. (Curiously, although some had studied the play before, only one or two had realised that the 'Nay' signals a conversation already in progress.) We developed possible scenarios: Philo whispering to Demetrius as a doting Antony and Cleopatra are seen upstage; sounds of revelry offstage and then a raging Philo and Demetrius storming downstage, and so on. Such activities get the students thinking theatrically, thinking dramatically – and some students may not ever have seen a play on stage, let alone a production of Shakespeare. I would add that university students must be made aware of performance-based criticism. I would regard Stryan's Shakespeare's Stagecraft as basic reading. An exploration of the performance potentialities of the dramatic text must be a part of the study of Shakespeare at all levels.

As for the fast-growing areas of Shakespearian criticism that I have so far barely touched on – the application of feminist, poststructuralist, new historicist ideas to the analysis of Shakespeare's plays – I would suggest that it is of little use discussing such in any depth until one is sure that the students have mastered the art of reading the texts as playscripts and not as novels. Further, as Janet Bottoms of Homerton College, Cambridge, has argued, "there is a danger of encouraging [school students] to 'read against the grain' before they have found which way it runs, or to 'privilege the marginal' before they have discovered the centre" (Bottoms, 1994, p.28) This means that such explorations will be mainly undertaken at university level, perhaps in the sophomore year, though now that I have found out the root meaning of 'sophomores' (a term not used in Australia, and meaning 'wise fools') this may signal an even longer postponement! But students who are thinking theatrically could be ready, once they have gained a sound
knowledge of the text, to apply feminist ideas to sections of Shakespeare (the opening of A Midsummer Night's Dream is a good starting point) and certainly at university level students need to at least question the view of Shakespeare as somehow universal and ahistorical. The shift from text to context represented by the new historicist/cultural materialist strand of literary theory can be a valuable part of the in-depth exploration of particular plays that is often undertaken at university level.

But to return for a moment to a strand of performance criticism that needs thinking about. In their survey of this area, Marvin and Ruth Thomson (1989, p.15) declare that one of the aims of such criticism is that it "works toward defining a sense of the authentic". They agree that such a task is "hard if not impossible...when certain textual problems are unsolvable and when a variety of first stagings are lost", but they argue that it is still necessary to work towards such a goal. They offer three reasons:

(1) in order that we can judge any present-day performance for its approximate authenticity; or, more often, (2) in order that we can better judge a performance for its "translation" into modern stage idiom; or, finally, (3) in order that we can apply knowledge of historical performance since 1660 for our more complete understanding of the possibilities inherent in any given play. As to this last point, our accumulated historical knowledge about both text and performance helps us to work towards the "authentic" in the larger sense. As is true of a cantata or major choral work by Bach, so with a play by Shakespeare: one is never quite finished with it. Such a work has its own organic, living growth, and as each age interprets it, successive performances of a play take us a bit closer to the larger – if forever elusive – authentic.

Of these, the third seems the only reasonable aim. Judging "approximate authenticity" seems an impossible task, even when a director has followed Tyrone Guthrie's dictum (Sryan 1977,p.6), that "a play can be best presented by getting as near as possible to the manner in which the author envisaged its performance". While the stage at Stratford, Ontario, and the new Globe in London reflect ever more closely Shakespeare's Globe, making it possible for Philip Brockbank (1989,p.2) to state that "it may well be that our present experience of Shakespeare's plays is closer to that of the audiences of his time than it has been for many years", the physical design of the stage is but one aspect of the material historical context in which Shakespeare's plays were originally performed. The 'meaning' of a play comes about through a collaborative relationship between author, actors, and playgoers in a theatre event, and since at least two of the three elements are constantly changing, it is doubtful whether the "genuine Shakespeare experience" that Sryan seeks (Sryan, 1977, p.1) can ever be recuperated.

Incidentally, the Globe was not the only place where Shakespeare's plays were performed in his own time. While the denouement of the film,
Shakespeare in Love, showed Queen Elizabeth attending the Globe, it is most unlikely that this would ever have occurred. The plays of Shakespeare and other Elizabethan playwrights must often have been performed in settings, such as the court and the great houses of the nobles, where the physical demands must have been different from those at the Globe. Thus does, of course, emphasise the flexibility of the plays; as Sryan notes (1967, p.8) "there is nothing in Shakespeare's plays, either at the outset of his career or at its end, that could not be readily fitted into any conditions, from a make-shift to an elaborate stage and equipment".

Further, though we know a great deal about the Globe Theatre, there are still areas of dispute. A minimalist view of the stage, where setting is created by the presence of the actors and the words that they use - "to see Cleopatra on stage is to realise that we are in Egypt, and a royal entourage accompanied by a king announces a presence chamber" (David Bevington, quoted in Foakes, 1989, p.151) - has been challenged, with evidence about the relatively lavish expenditure of the Chamberlain's Men (later the King's Men) listed in Philip Henslowe's Diary. In 1598 the company possessed an elaborate stock of scenes and properties, including the city of Rome, steeples, a stable, and two moss banks (Foakes, 1989, p.151). The box tree in Twelfth Night, notes Sryan (p.31), was probably sizable enough to conceal Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Fabian.

While musicians playing original instruments can provide us with a close approximation of the music of Bach as he himself would have heard it, we do not know enough of Elizabethan acting styles to provide the same sense of authenticity when performing Shakespeare - and of course the pronunciation of English has changed considerably. And when we take into account the very different demands placed on Elizabethan actors, who did not receive complete scripts to study (they were given their parts, together with their cues), and who had to perform several plays in a week, we are entitled to wonder whether such authenticity would be worth striving for. And, as I mentioned earlier, since the concept of 'character' as we know it was just beginning to develop, the fully realised performances we feel entitled to expect probably never occurred in the Globe. As the actors' accounts in the Players of Shakespeare series show, today's actors are concerned above all with individual character, and search the text for clues that will enable them to create individual portraits.

Further, although a German visitor to London, Johannes Rhenaus, writing in 1613, wrote: As for the actors, as I noticed in England, they are given instruction daily as if at school; even the leading actors expect to take instruction from the playwrights (quoted in Sryan, 1967, p.53), other evidence suggests that the playwrights generally had far less control over their texts than is normal today. In Shakespeare's time the plays were owned by the particular companies of actors. Indeed, Stallybrass and White (quoted in Worthen, 1996, p. 26) assert that
The company commissioned the play, usually stipulated the subject, often provided the plot, often parcelled it out, scene by scene, to several playwrights. The text thus produced was a working model, which the company then revised as seemed appropriate. The author had little or no say in these revisions: the text belonged to the company, and the authority represented by the text – I am now talking about the performing text – is that of the company, the owners, and not that of the playwright, the author.

Does all this mean that the death of the author, Shakespeare, can be proclaimed, that no authority can be said to reside in the text? Thoroughgoing poststructuralists, of whom Worthen appears to be one, seem to take this position; he accuses the “Shakespeare” of universities and classrooms as “effacing the dynamic of cultural change behind the mask of permanence” (Worthen, 1996, p.25). But there is another strand of performance criticism, that contributed by the actors themselves, that shows that interpretation can be based on the text while recognising the demands of changed social conditions, changed theatre practices, changed audiences. The actors who discuss their interpretations in the volumes, Players of Shakespeare I, II, III (Brockbank 1989; Jackson and Smallwood, 1988; Jackson and Smallwood, 1993) certainly do not see themselves as, in Katherine Brisbane’s phrase, “a piece of plumbing which connects the composer’s mind with that of the audience” (quoted in Kiernander, 2001), but neither do they see themselves as free to ignore the signals given by the text. There is a middle ground between striving for an authenticity that can never be truly achieved and treating the blueprint of the text in a completely cavalier way.

I would argue that the only definition of authenticity would be “Is the production in consonance with the textual resources?” (The use of the plural ‘resources’ is made to remind us that sections of one play have been quite legitimately included in another (as in Olivier’s production of Richard III) and that a director has an obligation to take note of the rest of the playwright’s work, which provides a further context for understanding (Clayton, 1989)).

This notion of the Shakespearian playtext as “a working model” which allows a “mutual rewriting” (Worthen, p.22) thus legitimates a wide range of dramatic interpretations – a liberating notion for the classroom as well as for the theatre. That having been said, there is, nonetheless, much to be said for having school students aware of, and at least initially working within, the restraints imposed by Elizabethan theatres such as the Globe. What Styan (1967, p.31) calls “the fluidity “ of the Elizabethan stage is something that can be re-created in a large classroom or school hall; “a drama calling for a liberal imaginative collaboration from the audience” (p.8) is ideal for cultivating the powers of the imagination – an aim of education that is too often forgotten about in schools.
I would to conclude with yet another quotation from John Russell Brown:

Shakespeare's plays are wide open to individual imaginative exploration...Shakespeare knew how plays come alive on the stage and how actors create characters out of an interaction between the text and their own beings and imaginations...Plays were given an exact and personal life by the meeting of individual actors before particular audiences on specific days: they took on different appearances with each change in the cast and with each day of performance. The comparative tiredness or vitality of the two actors in the last fight of Hamlet or Macbeth could swing an audience's sympathies in one direction or the other. An actor's hesitation could undermine the strength of an assertion of suggest a depth of feeling that could surprise the dramatist as much as an audience seeing the play for the first time. The mirror that a play holds up to nature is not an scientific instrument but a part of nature itself, unpredictable and fascinating in its own being. A confident, accomplished dramatist will allow his play to breathe, so that it draws upon the life which actors and audiences offer to each performance. (p.8-9).

We must give up teacherly authority over Shakespeare's texts, and allow students to explore them actively and imaginatively. We too must allow Shakespeare's plays to breathe.

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CHAPTER 4

CURRICULUM HISTORY, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE TEACHING OF SHAKESPEARE

4.1 RESEARCH PURPOSES

The paper that forms the centrepiece of this section is based on research undertaken during the period of candidature. Curriculum history, particularly in the areas of English and literacy, has been a largely neglected area; it is not surprising, then, that until now there has been "a striking dearth of historical perspective and imagination apparent in curriculum work in and on the teaching of English" (Green and Beavis, 1996, p.1). My purpose has been to make a contribution to the filling of this gap.

4.2 RESEARCH PROCEDURES

As noted in (1.9), the literature search has been dogged by problems resulting from the apparent failure of successive Boards of Studies to fulfil their statutory duty of depositing all public documents in the State Library of New South Wales and the Fisher Library of the University of Sydney. Apart from library research, the chief research tool was a survey of trainee English teachers who were at school in the period 1995-8 in order to match the results with the earlier surveys, noted in (1.3), which had spurred me to make a major effort to improve the teaching of Shakespeare in schools. The purpose of the 2002 survey was to determine whether there had indeed been a shift in the teaching of
Shakespeare over a decade in which a concerted campaign – innumerable workshops, twenty-one titles in the Shakespeare Workshop Series, two editions of Shakespeare: a Teacher’s Handbook, with further impetus provided by the arrival of the Cambridge School Shakespeare and Rex Gibson’s publications from the UK (e.g.Gibson, 1998) – had been waged to promote active methods of teaching Shakespeare. (As noted in (1.3), almost none of the Dip.Ed. students surveyed in 1989-90 and 1992 had experienced the active, theatrically-oriented approaches that Mallick and Michaels were advocating.) As shown in detail in the paper printed below and shortly to appear in English in Australia, when put together the surveys show that there has indeed been a shift in teaching methods, but that there is still a long way to go before the great majority of teachers adopt approaches designed to help students think dramatically, think theatrically.

Significantly, almost all those taught by traditional methods wrote of their bewilderment, boredom, and growing dislike of Shakespeare, while those who experienced, even briefly, an active, theatre-oriented approach, wrote of their enjoyment and of the greater understanding that resulted. As I have written in the paper, “If nothing else, the survey was a powerful endorsement of the principle that how one teaches shapes what one teaches.”

The joint paper with Wayne Sawyer, ‘Mother-Tongue Teaching in Australia: the Case of New South Wales’, published in the Amsterdam-based journal, L1 – Educational Studies in Language and Literature, is an attempt to acquaint mother-tongue teachers in other countries, particularly non-English-speaking countries, with the factors which have shaped English teaching in New South Wales. The review article included in the portfolio is a joint piece looking at a recent contribution to English curriculum history.
4.3 THE REVIEW ARTICLE AND THE RESEARCH PAPERS

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In October, 1996, Dr Kemp declared that ACER tests had provided him with the "evidence" to declare that "30% of (Year 9) students... did not have basic literacy skills". By December, the States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education) Act had been passed, bringing radical funding changes to the detriment of state schools. The establishment of private schools was made much easier, and every child moving to a private school now carries disproportionate funding taken from the state sector.

Eight years before, Peter Traves had written of the context then pertaining in the UK:

The phrase "Children don't read as well as they should" or even more often "as well as they used to" is probably the single most effective cudgel with which the education system - and teachers in particular - have been beaten. It has played a major role in creating the sense of crisis so necessary in order to allow the Right to push for effective dismantling of a comprehensive, publicly funded education system (Traves, 1988)

Kemp and Howard declared that it was all done in the name of consumer choice. Traves referred to the UK milieu as that of "Choice (and) Consumerism".

This is not just to repeat the cliché that those who don't learn from history are condemned to repeat it, but rather to re-emphasise the particular importance of an historical perspective for teachers in those areas where curriculum collides with public policy. The New Right have made something of a virtue of re-writing the history of English for their own purposes in the last thirty years. When the UK Black Papers of the late 60s looked for demons to blame for economic stagnation and an alleged decline in social order, the demons they found were "progressive" teachers who were responsible for declining literacy standards and the neglect of "great literature". Kemp similarly blamed the literacy results (or rather his own preemptive interpretation of those results) for a rise in youth unemployment. All this of course is always done with scant regard to what is actually being done in schools. One of the present authors studied the implementation of the 1972 NSW English Syllabus in the mid-70s at a time when that Syllabus was being widely blamed in conservative circles for an alleged decline in literacy and found that the Syllabus' implementation in schools was patchy at best (Watson, 1978). Similarly, recent work by Green, Hodgens and Luke
reminds us yet again that there never was the Right’s “golden age” of literacy from which they argue we are continually declining (Green, Hodgens and Luke, 1994).

Reductionist or distorted views of the history of English teaching are not confined to the Right, however, particularly when the past thirty years and the “growth model” are the subject of discussion. The Christie Report is a case in point. In this and elsewhere, Christie argues that the “growth model” continued a “received tradition” in English teaching which neglected the teaching of language. The real content of English is the English language itself, she asserts (Christie, 1993, p.99) and the most appropriate model of language is language as a social semiotic. The problem with the growth model is that in valuing the individual voice, it showed a commitment to the individual’s language that led to neglect of the language system itself. This all flowed from its origins in romantic, progressive, child-centred pedagogical theory. Moreover, the growth model held many of these concerns in common with what Dixon called the “cultural heritage” model and between them, these two dominant models of English teaching destroyed any focus on the language itself. Where focus on language survived, it was in the form of grammatical analysis – a form of language study that itself helps move away from Christie’s preferred “rhetorical” model. The implication of Christie’s historical view that language was neglected was at the time to pave the way for Christie’s version of English itself to become the dominant model.

Brock has delivered a brief, but very pertinent, critique of such a view of the history of English in this country (Brock, 1993). He emphasises that other models were operating in Australia, as shown in the work of Homer (Homer, 1973) and demonstrates that Christie’s reductionism stems from a failure to appreciate the eclecticism with which curricula evolved in this country. We would build on two of his rejoinders in particular:

- the 1972 Syllabus in NSW was heavily influenced by the work of Moffett – an influence brought to bear on the Syllabus by the Syllabus Committee’s chairman, Graham Little – and enshrined “up-front” in that Syllabus’ philosophy. Moffett saw himself working very much in the tradition of rhetoric as opposed to grammar and is explicit about this very distinction in Teaching the universe of discourse, which is built entirely on traditional rhetorical categories of narration, description, exposition and the kinds of language forms that enact these.

- the importance of language study in the “growth model” itself – not only that of the “London School” led by Britton, but also of the “Language in Use” model of Doughty et al, based on the work of Halliday, the arrival of which coincided strongly with the arrival of the “growth model” in Australia. The oft-repeated assertion that language was totally neglected seems to mean that the view of English itself favoured by Christie and
others was not widespread. In any case, one would require empirical
evidence rather than simple assertion that this was the case. (Sales of
Sadler, Hayllar and Powell's Language series in the 70s would seem to
suggest that language study, though not of the sort that either "growth
model" advocates or Christie would approve, was far from neglected).

Further, it seems special pleading to emphasise the commonalities between
"cultural heritage" and "personal growth" on the tenuous grounds that they
both value individual voices when so much of the work of "growth model"
advocates has obviously been to distance themselves from the view of
curriculum represented by the Leavis/Cambridge School. Indeed, the notion
of "personal response", which Christie and others see as almost equivalent to
"personal growth", has a quite different origin and meaning in the "New
English" from what it had for Leavis.

Presently, English curriculum finds itself in a situation where much of the
knowledge and experience that English teachers have accumulated in the
last thirty years is being questioned, even discounted. "Growth" pedagogy is
seen as "individualist", "liberal", "progressive", "naturalising" and
"expressive"; Critical Literacy, on the other hand, is "social", "radical",
"problematising" "cultural" and, of course, "critical" (McCormick, 1994;
Peim, 1993; Griffith, 1992; Patterson, 1992; Ball, Kenny and Gardiner, 1990;
Boomer, 1989). What might be fruitfully attempted is an examination of
critical literacy and "growth model" ideas in terms of a number of "spaces"
around which curriculum in general could be conceptualised in praxis. The
opposition of "personal" and "social" of course constitutes the most
fundamental distinction between the "growth" school and the critical
literacy school – at least as conceived by the latter. Critical literacy
celebrates the social and argues that "growth model" curricula place too
much emphasis on the notion of the individual, without recognising that
language users are socially constructed. McCormick points to an application
of this theme when she argues that "students must become able to analyse
how they themselves are culturally constructed as subjects-in-history"
(McCormick, 1994, p.16). Moreover, the logic of the post-structuralist
position in which all things are text underpins the theme of constructing an
oppositional and resistant curriculum. "Personal growth", so goes the
argument, puts too much emphasis on "personal" and leaves students in no
position to analyse or critique the institutional parameters of "subject
English", i.e., it does not provide for students questioning the curriculum
and thus, ultimately, the basis of the dominant and valued culture.

But "growth model" pedagogy always had a social dimension. The founding
minds of the 70's whose ideas have been taken up most readily by "growth"
pedagogy had their most central ideas embedded in ideas about social
context. From Moffett we learnt not only that sequences of curriculum
continuity could be based on individual language development, but that
such development was characterised importantly by a developing sense of social context.

Barnes taught us about the social interaction of the classroom, especially the possibilities of group work in having students grasp key concepts. From Halliday we learned that language development is a process of constructing meaning in interactional contexts. Halliday of course is the Old Testament god of many of those critiquing the “growth model”, but his emphasis on meaning and interaction also made him a major influence on that pedagogy. Britton stressed the need for writing for a variety of audiences because of the difference this made to language forms and Dixon emphasised that “the primary purpose in language (is) to share experience” and in so doing described the aim of a curriculum that, for him, emphasised social processes.

The social constructionists would of course draw a distinction between such senses of “social context” and the notion that language is a social construct or between a curriculum that celebrates students’ cultures and one which critiques them. However, as Hodgson has shown, the “growth” school was not homogeneous and included a large radical element critiquing social organisation, an element that at York in 1971 recognised that the achievement of the central tenets of “growth” pedagogy would represent a challenge to the contemporary socio-economic system. Hodgson too made the distinction between radicals and liberal humanists and categorised leading “growth” adherents of his time as “radicals” (Hodgson, 1974). One need only remember Harold Rosen in Teaching London kids (1973) and Language and class (1974) to recall the argument that “the conditions that foster language growth are by their very nature anti-authoritarian” and advocacy of “the development of a linguistic competence to resist manipulation”.

Resistance to such reductionism and distortion requires continued attention to an historical sensibility. Calls for curriculum history have gained momentum since the 80s (see, for example, the work of Goodson, 1984, 1985a, 1994, Goodson and Anstead, 1994) and a number of major works have appeared (see for example, Ball and Lacey, 1982; Goodson and Ball, 1984; Popkewitz, 1987; Goodson, 1985b; Goodson and Medway, 1990; Green, 1993; Luke, 1988).

This very point about the need for historical sensibility is made strongly in the “Introduction” to Teaching the English Subjects, a series of localised histories of areas of English curriculum in Australia. Individual chapters in Teaching the English subjects deal with: the history of “literature” as a notion in the classrooms of Victoria; the history of NSW secondary English 1959-1965; senior secondary English in Victoria since the 1940s; secondary English in Western Australia 1890s-1915; the construction of junior primary teachers through official curriculum documents in South Australia since the 60s; programming primary English teaching; a history of primary reading
instruction in Australia and the topic of grammar in Australian curriculum history.

The collection begins by itself complaining of the Christie Report that it "glosses over the complexities of history, and, in doing so, arguably closes off as many opportunities in research and pedagogy as it opens up." At the very least," argues the Introduction to this volume, the Christie Report "needs to be carefully and critically scrutinised for the manner in which it uses history, in arguing for its own version of both the present and the future directions of the field". (p.9). The editors make a very comprehensive argument about the need for curriculum history – an argument too large to be taken up in any one volume, in fact. Usefully, they point to areas which need to be addressed in further work: exploration of the theoretical roots of, and distinctions between, "Progressivism" and "Romanticism"; the "Englishness" of English and its teaching; the need for national and region-specific histories and, particularly, the history of English in primary teaching. That primary English has usually been more that one entity – "literacy", "writing", "reading", "grammar", "language", "literature" - often taught as separate subjects, is some justification for seeing English as something of an umbrella term for a number of areas often with distinct histories and origins and is the explanation of the volume's title. It is also the editors' way of avoiding the simplification of simply parading a series of models of English, as if they represented what English essentially is. In fact the act of defining "English" is something they see as a central preoccupation for curriculum history.

Green and Beavis distinguish two main lines of methodological inquiry in current curriculum history and argue that these need to be brought closer together. One is the curriculum history of Goodson, Ball and others, while the other is the "genealogical" approach originating from Foucault. Tyler and Johnson, quoted in the present volume, have summarised the essence of this latter approach:

*The project of histories of the present can be understood as the making of histories that locate the present as a strange, rather than familiar landscape, where that which has gone without saying becomes problematic.* (p. 118)

We would, in fact, have welcomed a longer discussion of what the editors perceive as distinguishing these two traditions. They are not terribly clear about just what methodology characterises the tradition of Goodson, Ball and others. Historical case studies and the elucidation of the human processes behind the definition and promotion of school subjects – a concern with the motives and activities immanent and inherent in their construction and maintenance - have certainly been a concern of Goodson's work, while Ball has tended to see the history of subjects in terms of their control by members of interest groups over key resources and positions of power. Methodological discussion could have been a most interesting issue had it
been a chapter or so of its own, though a number of individual writers do
take it up.

Nevertheless, it is a strength that no one methodology dominates in this
volume. The American literary critic and historian, Kenneth Burke,
frequently reminded his students that “every way of seeing is a way of not
seeing”. In the history of English curriculum, as in any other field, there is
need for a variety of approaches if such historical endeavour is to claim any
right to influence decision-making. In addition to the linear narrative to
which we are accustomed, we need to borrow the “thick description” of the
anthropologist and the literary artist’s technique of defamiliarisation.
Without necessarily accepting the view that language is wholly unstable or
that meanings cannot be expressed, we can adopt the techniques of the
deconstructionist and interrogate texts for contradictions and hidden
meanings. And we can develop our own powerful techniques to illuminate
both past and present, as Peter Medway (1990) has done in his “window"
approach, in which he looks at everything written in the field in each of two
widely separated years.

Teaching the English Subjects provides examples of several of these
approaches. In “Writing the teacher: the South Australian junior primary
English teacher, 1962-1995”, Phil Cormack and Barbara Comber make
powerful use of a defamiliarisation technique. They offer a review of “the
discourses which have shaped the [South Australian primary] teacher”,
highlighting both the continuities and the changes that characterise her (the
documents quoted always construct the teacher as female) over three
decades in which there has been a move from prescribed syllabus to a set of
guidelines, but also a somewhat contrary movement, in the latter half of the
period, from voluntary inservice to compulsory professional development
courses. Both Foucault and Bakhtin help shape their insights:

... we do not see the teacher as a unified and stable figure: simply
enacting, in a puppet-like fashion, a set of dominant discourses. Rather,
we see English education in the junior primary school as a heteroglossic
site, wherein overlapping and contradictory discourses are evident in the
production of institutional and pedagogic practices and identities. (p.120)

Cormack and Comber’s analysis goes a long way towards explaining the
dissatisfaction and confusion evident amongst teachers, both primary and
secondary, in the late 1990s; it also points the way to further research. In the
light of current disputes there is, for example, a need to examine how the
teacher is constructed by the “genre theorists” in their writings, and also to
examine the construction of the teacher in the writings of those espousing
the growth model.

In adopting what Elliot Eisner calls the methodology of “structural
collaboration”, Paul Brock in his chapter on the shaping of the NSW English
secondary curriculum in the period from 1950 to 1965 moves research into curriculum in the direction of thick description. His methods included "archival research to locate and scrutinise the minutes of all committee and sub-committee meetings, as well as extensive interviews with key players involved in the processes of English curriculum change during that period". (p.40) Not surprisingly, these interviews "were often remarkable for revealing information that the written minutes had omitted or oversimplified".

Brock's chapter repeats in summary form the salutary story described in detail in his English in Australia article, "The role of ignorance in the shaping of an English curriculum" (Brock, 1984). A paper by the Chief Examiner for the 1951 English Leaving Certificate paper, claiming, on what was subsequently found to be a set of false premises, that there had been a dramatic decline in standards, had the effect of shaping the direction of curriculum change during the next decade. The recent assertions of Dr Kemp seem to be based on equally faulty premises, and Brock's remark about the "the powerful influences wielded by factors such as errors and ignorance [and] the role played by key individuals and their particular passions..." (p.41) is a timely warning to the profession not to allow the Minister's claims to go unchallenged.

One way of avoiding the simplification we discussed earlier is, of course, to focus on small areas in some detail. This has been the tendency in much work on curriculum history in the last few years, particularly in the work of Goodson and Ball already alluded to. Collections edited by Goodson, Ball, Medway and others have contained articles focusing on short periods of time and local events in some detail. Teaching the English subjects adopts this method in almost all its chapters. Thus it does not pretend to be giving a sweeping view of the history of English teaching in Australia. In fact, it could almost be described as the Australian version of Goodson and Medway's Bringing English to order. The social contexts out of which the two volumes arise show, in fact, a number of similarities. Published in 1990, Goodson and Medway's volume came out at the height of debate over a National Curriculum in which English was such a key strategic component. Its essays concern the very issues that crystallised debate over that curriculum: grammar, the place of literature, the role of an English curriculum in constructing a national identity. If these seem "perennials" in discussions of English, that was probably the very point of raising them at the time. While the National Curriculum is at best a lame issue in Australia at the moment, the attempts by Kemp in a climate of economic "rationalism" to revive the "falling literacy standards" agenda are being run in exactly the same terms as that of the Thatcherites — highest on the agenda being links to economic decline and the need to create the competitive creature of the market. In such a climate, essays in the present collection such as Green and Hodgens' (on the place that grammar has had
in social discipline) and Reeves' (on the uses of reading as moral instruction) become all the more timely.

Something of an exception to the more localised nature of the histories presented here is Noelene Reeves' chapter on the history of reading pedagogy in Australia. Reeves mixes a discussion of teaching methods with a very comprehensive overview of the reading materials used in classrooms to teach particular social values. She also offers a salutary warning about notions of progress that are commonly affixed to education in general and to the teaching of reading in particular. She points out, as does Catherine Beavis in the opening chapter of the book, that in colonial days the goals of schooling were as much to keep the recipients in their place within the social order as to improve or uplift; the readers used included the moral tales which Sarah Trimmer wrote in order to teach children that each person should be "contented with his station, because it is necessary that some would be above others in this world".

Reeves further reminds us that the word "literacy" itself is quite new, with the first instance of use in the USA being in 1833 and the first recorded use in Britain a decade. The social stigma attached to illiteracy is a quite recent phenomenon. A recent and absolutely fascinating book for the general reader, Alberto Manguel’s A history of reading, reminds us that even silent reading is a relatively late development. Written texts had existed for thousands of years before people began to read silently. St Augustine, he of the Confessions, marvelled at his friend St Ambrose’s silent reading, and wondered what pleasure or profit could possibly be gained from such a practice. In her chapter, Reeves notes that the primacy of oral reading in the schools of Western Australia was not challenged until 1912, when the Education Circular of April in that year contained the statement that "reading is both oral and silent, and silent is more important". Reeves also traces the gradual growth of Australian content, often of a strongly patriotic nature, in the readers used in schools. At this point, her chapter links up again with Catherine Beavis’ opening discussion of the growth of literature teaching.

Green and Hodgens' chapter on grammar makes the point that the current debates about grammar are also tied up with concerns about social control, particularly about hierarchical relations of power and authority. Arguments about declining standards of grammar tend to be really about standards in many areas of language usage ("grammar" = "spelling", "usage", "punctuation", "standard dialect" etc., etc.), which themselves reflect views about standards of behaviour, social relations, "manners", and "morality". Hence, in Green and Hodgens' view, grammar lessons need to be understood as practical training in the formation of "cultured body subjects", "Grammar", in this view, becomes a yardstick of basic social competence; thus, debates about grammar usually reflect some general sense of social crisis in a culture. This of course is how right-wing politicians tend to use the
standards debate - one is reminded of the British Tory Government's attempts to blame rising juvenile crime on an alleged decline in spelling. Partly for this reason the current debates about grammar are an "historically...obsessively recurrent theme". Grammar has also historically been associated with discipline and logic, and Green and Hodgens's specific study of Australia in the so-called "golden age" of the fifties shows all of these themes occurring in that milieu. Talk of an "historically...obsessively recurrent theme" is of course true of many of these themes. Debates about skills-based versus meaning-based pedagogies in reading, about standards, about the relative virtues of language or literature study, about formalism or "creativity" in writing are hardly new, and this collection shows them being argued in precisely the same terms since the beginnings of formal education in this country. But that of course is precisely the value of curriculum history.

Though organised around these different places and times, a number of consistent themes run through the collection. Prominent among these is the battle over grammar. Ken Willis shows that even at the turn of the century the aim and necessity for teaching courses in grammatical knowledge was a contested area in Western Australian curriculum and the chapter by Bill Green and John Hodgens shows grammar to be a running theme in all states and at all times— they argue for it as primarily a reflection of a cluster of social attitudes about good manners, morals and respect for authority.

The place of literature in schools is another consistently recurring focus. Catherine Beavis’ chapter on Victoria traces the history of the concept of “literature” through to modern notions of “text “by documenting official curriculum change in that state and arguing that the shift from “literature” to “text” is more than just a change of jargon. Paul Brock’s chapter demonstrates among a number other things the domination of the universities over secondary curriculum in NSW through their effective monopoly on definitions of what constituted “literature”.

The models of English curriculum which served as paradigms for Syllabus developments are also examined in a number of chapters. Particularly interesting in this respect is Chris Reynolds’s chapter on competing paradigms in the Victorian senior secondary curriculum. In this chapter Reynolds represents a select number of curriculum documents as “settlements” between these competing paradigms, though we believe that Reynolds' chapter needs to develop the evidence further to entirely convince about the class-based nature of these settlements.

It is no criticism of this current collection to say that a number of large areas still remain open to even initial investigation in the Australian context. Chief among these, we feel, in the light of current critiques of the growth model, is a study of the ways in which "growth" was interpreted in this country, the antecedents of the growth model and the extent to which it was
adopted in Australian contexts in the 1970s and 1980s. Green and Beavis
open up this project in locating the Christie Report as something of a
departure point and we would have welcomed this issue being taken up
more explicitly, for perhaps not enough of the collection does actually bring
us into the present. Green and Beavis argue that “Concepts... such as
'Progressivism' and 'Romanticism' are all too often deployed with neither
theoretical rigour nor historical grounding and reference” and it is certainly
ture that these two concepts in particular are often unquestioningly taken
for granted as antecedents of “growth” in much curriculum history. Homer’s
study for one distinguishes between “growth” and “progressive” traditions in
Australia and we suspect that a project which perhaps returned us to
individual key texts of the “growth school” such as Growth through English
and sought to locate these in their historical and cultural milieu would yield
a much more sophisticated sense of the origins of “growth” than simply
drawing connections between “growth”, Romanticism and Progressivism
based on some simple commonality, such as “child-centredness” or “valuing
the individual”.

While one might have wished for a greater emphasis upon the developments
during the last two or three decades, given its self-imposed boundaries
Teaching the English subjects is a most worthwhile addition to the as yet
regrettably small volume of work on English curriculum history in this
country.

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Ken Watson
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MOTHER-TONGUE EDUCATION IN SPECIFIC REGIONS

WAYNE SAWYER & KEN WATSON

MOTHER-TONGUE TEACHING IN AUSTRALIA:
THE CASE OF NEW SOUTH WALES

ABSTRACT. Using the state of New South Wales (NSW) in Australia as a case study, this article explores the development of mother-tongue English as a subject in the junior-to-middle secondary years of schooling (years 7–10). The current syllabus for English in years 7–10, and its predecessor, were highly influenced by the work of James Moffett and John Dixon in instituting the ‘growth model’ of English in NSW – a model characterised partly by the substitution of exercises in grammar and related areas by the principle of language learning through use. This model of English has come under attack in Australia generally from two main sources: schools of critical literacy and advocates of a genre-based approach to writing. Each of these rejects what they see as an emphasis on the individual in the ‘growth’ model and a lack of a sense of social construction. From the late 1980s, genre-based approaches to writing increasingly identified themselves with ‘literacy’, until then a unproblematic ‘given’ in ‘English’ syllabuses. ‘Literacy’ in official documentation now refers to language practices across the curriculum and, in terms of writing, to formulaic practices which refuse to see subject-based language as problematic.

KEY WORDS: Australia, critical literacy, curriculum, English, genre, growth model, literacy, mother tongue education, secondary schooling, syllabuses

1. INTRODUCTION

Under the Australian Constitution, education is primarily the concern of the six states and two territories: hence there are eight separate educational systems. While these eight have more similarities than differences, the differences are so great as to make a comprehensive overview impossible in the space of a single article. Hence this article attempts simply to sketch the position of L1 teaching in New South Wales (NSW), the largest state.

Those general trends evident in NSW over the last 10 years or so can be summarised as including the following:

- the political imperative of accountability introducing a uniform framework of outcomes-based curricula into the state. This movement was begun in 1991 with the publication of the NSW Board of Studies’ document, ‘Curriculum Outcomes’, which decreed that all future syllabus documents produced in the state were to include...
“specific, observable indicators of learning” (NSW Board of Studies, 1991).

- politicians increasingly imposing a regimen of state-wide literacy tests from years 3–10 which do not readily link with subject-based syllabuses, yet have the potential to effectively constrict the curriculum
- a separation between the teaching of the mother-tongue subject (‘English’) and the teaching of ‘literacy’

These shifts are most clearly seen when one compares the various documents setting the direction that English took in the junior and middle secondary school years (years 7–10) since 1971, with the most recent pedagogical debates over the subject. This article discusses the two syllabuses since 1971 that have set the agenda for English, and then compares these to the two major debates of the 1980s–1990s: the debate over genre-based approaches to writing, and the move for a more critical literacy.

Before this, however, the NSW situation with respect to the teaching of English needs to be contextualised for the international reader. While the syllabus for English in NSW sets general directions and contains many ideas on teaching implementation (the current syllabus was published in 1987, prior to the introduction of uniform ‘outcomes-based’ syllabuses), teachers are totally free to select both content and pedagogy. The instrument of control in government schools in years 7–10 is the Head Teacher of English at the school level, who is expected to be implementing the syllabus in his/her faculty. In non-government schools, the Board of Studies Inspector ensures that the syllabus is being implemented. Text books are produced on a commercial basis only and are subject to no control other than the market. While Australia generally has become a very multi-cultural society, education remains mono-lingual. White, Anglo-heritage Australians remain a largely monolingual group, and the education system reflects this. Non-English speakers who migrate to Australia as teenagers are given an education in English before entering the mainstream high school and ESL (English-as-a-second-language) teachers are placed in appropriate high schools. ‘English’ is essentially the mother-tongue language as far as the education system is concerned. ‘English’ language and literature is taught through official syllabuses as the mother-tongue language for the society. Where separate ESL syllabuses exist (as they do for years 11–12), they operate within the context of ‘English’.
MOTHER-TONGUE TEACHING IN AUSTRALIA

2. ‘SUBJECT ENGLISH’ AS CONCEIVED BY THE MOST RECENT SYLLABUSES

The still current English syllabus for years 7–10 in NSW was released in 1987 and was an elaboration of its predecessor, released in 1971. These documents entrenched (at least in the official syllabus, if not in all classroom practice) a ‘personal growth’ model of English in NSW.

Though mother-tongue education in other languages have their equivalent models, it is worth reviewing the central tenets of ‘growth’ as manifested in English, especially through the work of John Dixon (3rd ed., 1975).

Dixon’s model of English focused on re-examining learning processes and the meaning for the individual student of what was being covered in English lessons. The revolution brought about by this model was in re-defining English not in terms of curriculum content, but in terms of processes – in contrast to what he characterised as the “skills” and “cultural heritage” models. The “skills” model emphasised drills in aspects of language and literacy. The “cultural heritage” model stressed the “given-ness” of “high” culture. The problem with these approaches, argued Dixon, was in ignoring the lived experience of the learner – and, hence, in ignoring processes. Instead, “skills” and “culture” were simply, “given”. Under the ‘personal growth’ model, English became defined as activity. Central activities were talking and writing and the ordering of experience that these involved. The importance of personal experience meant in turn a necessary respect for the language which students brought to the classroom and a recognition that identity was bound up with that language. As language learning up to school-age had been based on an active use of language in varying contexts, the school ought to attempt to replicate that situation, rather than to engage in “dummy runs” at language (Dixon, 1975: Ch. 2).

Each of these principles was brought to bear in the most recent English syllabus in NSW for years 7–10:

1. Growth in language is integral to the student’s personal growth as a thinking, feeling person.
2. It is mainly through language that human beings explore their public and private worlds, organise their experience and form their values.

(NSW Board of Secondary Education, 1987: 5)

An approach that emphasised contexts and use, rather than isolated skills, required an integrated approach to curriculum structure, rather than the fragmentary approach. Thus ‘integration’ became a keystone of the growth model (Dixon, 1975: 32–33). The material of the classroom on which students brought to bear their organising and learning powers had usually
been literature. Dixon wished to see other experiences valued as well, since “one can also look at people and situations directly” (Dixon, 1975: 54). The life of city children, if it was to be valued as classroom experience, needed to have aspects of that experience examined. So, a thematic approach to curriculum organisation was envisaged as part of Dixon’s model. The 1971 syllabus widened the key ‘contexts’ beyond ‘literature’ to three others explicitly – the media, ‘everyday communication’ and ‘personal expression’. ‘Everyday communication’ as a context meant placing the ability to communicate in a range of everyday situations, both within the classroom and without, in a position of equal importance to literary appreciation. This exactly echoed Dixon’s valuation of experience. Dixon’s inclusion of pupils’ own work in the ‘literature’ of the classroom (Dixon, 1975: 55) is also echoed explicitly in the 1971 syllabus (NSW Secondary Schools Board, 1971: 13). If any further evidence was needed about the explicit centrality of Dixon’s work, it is the conclusion to the ‘Objectives’ section:

Ability to use all the modes of expression dealt with in the syllabus to explore and to communicate personal experience, thought and feeling.

This involves all objectives of the syllabus in all activities in English, and is at once the basis and ultimate goal of English in Forms I–IV. (NSW Secondary Schools Board, 1971: 15)

The first of these sentences virtually echoes Dixon’s definition of English as being about “the intellectual organizing of experience … but also a parallel ordering of the feelings and attitudes with which pupils encounter life around them” (Dixon, 1975: 7). And, again, like Dixon, the second sentence sees that expression as itself the “ultimate goal of English”.

The 1987 document confirmed a model of ‘English as activity’:

1. Language is best developed by having all students engage in an abundance of purposeful language activities that are appropriate to their needs, interests and capacities …
2. Language learning needs to be a STUDENT-CENTRED activity in which students are called upon to take an active part in and responsibility for their own learning …
3. Language learning occurs during the process of students USING LANGUAGE, not simply through their consideration of finished language products or by their accumulating abstract theoretical knowledge about language.

(NSW Board of Secondary Education, 1987: 5–7)

The last of these three principles also echoes the earlier document in eschewing “systematic knowledge of (linguistic or literary topics)” (NSW Secondary Schools Board, 1971: 2).

The 1987 syllabus insists on integration of the various aspects of English by basing planning on the notion of “units of work” (p. 18) and
by defining the role of the teachers themselves (as variously “an initiator, a facilitator, a respondent to students’ work, an instructor, a co-ordinator, but always one who enjoys students’ trust and shares with them their language learning experiences” – p. 18).

The aim of English in 1987 is “to enable students to strive towards personal excellence in using language” (NSW Board of Secondary Education, 1987: 5–7). The notion of ‘striving towards’ contains an explicit sense that language development is not confined only to years 7–10, or, indeed, to the years of schooling. The notion of ‘personal’ in “personal excellence” implied that language development was not easily subject to external, verifiable ideals of ‘correctness’ to which students must attain – thus the syllabus’ stress on concepts like ‘context’ and ‘register’. ‘Growth’ is measured in terms of students growing in their ability to “make meaning in a widening range of language situations”.

There are only two specified objectives in 1987, and each of these is expressed in the form of experience opportunities:

- students are to have the opportunity to develop their competence in oral language, reading, writing, responding to literature and the mass media;
- teachers are to plan and shape integrated learning experiences to develop these four ‘Modes’ (talking, listening, reading, writing) in these four ‘Contexts’ of everyday communication, personal expression, literature and the mass media (p. 15).

The context of ‘Literature’ highlights such principles for both pedagogy and text selection as:

- a variety of genres and breadth of experience,
- relevant literature,
- a strong advocacy of Young Adult and Australian literature (to balance what was, in 1987, still some emphasis on British canonical literature),
- the use of class libraries,
- small-group and whole-class discussion,
- individual silent reading,
- a strong advocacy of imaginative re-creation activities,
- the treatment of drama as scripted performance.

The context of ‘Mass Media’ shows the influence of writers such as Masterman, who, in the early 1980s had increasingly popularised a move away from a Leavisite ‘inoculation’ approach to the media, to an approach based on the deconstruction of media products (Masterman, 1980, 1985).
This context gives equal emphasis to student analysis of media and to student production of media.

At this point, the reader may be wondering about the discussion of the remaining contexts, 'Personal expression' and 'Everyday communication'. The reality is that the syllabus does not elaborate these in any way, as it does for 'Literature' and 'Mass media'. There was perhaps a belief that they were 'too big' or so obviously the province of 'English' that they did not need to be elaborated. Generally these contexts refer to:

- creative writing and the expression of personal thoughts and feelings [personal expression]
- everyday uses of language: letters, forms etc.

Learning time is assumed to be spread fairly equally over the four Modes and four Contexts. Integrated units of work (such as a theme, or the study of a novel) generally allow for roughly equal treatment (e.g. in the study of a novel, some activities will be media-oriented ones, such as writing a newspaper article on events in the novel). Teachers are, however, entirely free to program according to the needs of their class.

In both of these personal-growth-oriented syllabuses, the concept of 'literacy' is an unproblematic 'given'. In 1987, there still remains the uncontested sense that 'literacy' is within the province of 'English' in NSW secondary education. The word 'literacy' is not central to the syllabus document itself; the synonym for 'English' in this document is 'language', though, if asked to identify those areas of the 1987 syllabus that were specifically about 'literacy', the framers of the document would no doubt have referred to the sections on 'Reading' and 'Writing'. Hence, the following sections will deal with those areas.

3. 'Reading' as Conceived by the Most Recent Syllabuses

Reading is one of the 'Modes' and, hence, one of the four macro-skills to be developed in 7–10 English. The objective of the 1987 syllabus with respect to reading is "that students understand, enjoy and respond perceptively to what they read in a wide range of contexts" (p. 29).

The influence of Yetta and Kenneth Goodman (Goodman & Goodman, 1977; Gollasch, 1982) and of Frank Smith (1971, 1973, 1978) is pervasive. The document defines reading processes in terms of the Goodmans' well-known division of semantic, syntactic and grapho-phonetic cueing systems; it puts comprehension at the centre of the process, warns against over-reliance on grapho-phonetic cues, encourages teacher analysis of miscues and adopts Smith's slogan, "Students learn to read mainly by reading"
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( NSW Board of Secondary Education, 1987: 30; Smith, 1978: Ch. 5). From these basic principles, a number of pedagogical practices are seen to follow:

- breadth of range of reading experience,
- the teacher’s reading aloud to students,
- avoidance of isolated comprehension exercises.

The other detectable influences are Lunzer & Gardiner (1984), whose activities which have come to be known as DARTS form the basis of recommended comprehension activities, such as prediction, selective substitution and sequencing.

In general, this section of the syllabus reflects a view that ‘reading’ needed to move away from what were then two dominant practices:

- an over-reliance on phonics alone in the teaching of basic reading skills to high school students,
- an over-reliance on low-level ‘comprehension exercises’ in the classroom practice of reading.

4. ‘WRITING’ AS CONCEIVED BY THE MOST RECENT SYLLABUSES

The objective of the ‘Writing’ section of the 1987 syllabus, and, indeed of the earlier syllabus, is that “students write with pleasure, confidence and competence over a wide range of registers” (Board of Secondary Education, 1987: 35). This involves frequent writing in a variety of forms and for a variety of audiences and purposes. The influence of James Britton and the 1970s ‘London School’ of English is also stamped on the ‘Writing’ section of the syllabus (“Possible audiences include: ... self; ... peer; ... a younger person; ... trusted adult; ... teacher as assessor; ... wider audience, known and unknown, real and imagined” – NSW Board of Secondary Education, 1987: 37; Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod & Rosen, 1975). The other important influence is that of the North Americans Donald Graves and Donald Murray.

Murray introduced the notion of using writing for the ordering of experience and hence “writing oneself into understanding”. His particular version of this idea is his definition of a writer as “an individual who uses language to discover meaning in experience and communicate it” (Murray, 1982: 8). Murray also advocated the notion of classroom writers “doing what real writers do”, and hence ‘drafting’ and ‘publishing’ and the ‘process’ of writing became separate, and central, ideas. Graves’ (1982) own research was also based on approaches to the processes of
writing and it was this aspect of the Americans' influence that found its way into the 1987 syllabus. The ‘Writing’ section takes as its very first assumption the idea that “Writing is both a process and a product” (p. 36). The implications that follow include the Graves–Murray model of writing processes (“thinking, talking, drafting, listening, editing, reading, researching, polishing, publishing, rehearsing and responding to the works of others” [p. 36]) and the Gravesian emphasis on ‘conferencing’.

Both syllabuses rejected the conscious study of grammar as an objective of subject English. This was especially so because of the distinction drawn between what one can consciously describe in language and the knowledge one demonstrates through ‘use’:

Language learning occurs during the process of students USING LANGUAGE, not simply through their consideration of finished language products or by their accumulating abstract theoretical knowledge about language. (NSW Board of Secondary Education, 1987: 7)
The skills students require can neither be achieved nor demonstrated in situations isolated from their use of language in context (NSW Board of Secondary Education, 1987: 11)
Students will need to demonstrate their competence in writing tasks across a wide range of registers. Fill-in-the-blank exercises and dummy runs with phrases and sentences taken out of context are not good indicators of such competence because they cannot demonstrate students’ ability to sustain a register. (NSW Board of Secondary Education, 1987: 41)
Assessment should identify students’ ability to use all the language modes in a range of contexts. It should not be restricted to those aspects of language which are easily measurable or observable (NSW Board of Secondary Education, 1987: 63)

However, the 1987 document was issued just prior to a coming state election, and the Opposition Liberal Party (which, despite its name, is actually the conservative party in Australian politics) had revived a standards debate of the 1970s in terms of an alleged lack of grammar teaching. Consequently, the syllabus underwent a last-minute recall by the Minister for Education and the most explicit statement about grammar teaching in the syllabus underwent something of a reversal when the sentence “Teaching an isolated course in grammar does not necessarily improve students’ ability to write” was made to be preceded by an extra sentence stating that, “Teaching particular grammatical concepts can improve students’ writing if undertaken in context and at the time of need”. Political priorities had led to the syllabus’ most explicit view on grammar being somewhat watered down.

4.1. Challenges to the Syllabuses’ View of English: Critical Literacy

From the early 1990s, the ‘growth model’ embodied in the two syllabuses discussed above began to come under further challenge from ‘critical literacy’, based largely on insights gained from post-structuralist literary theory:
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)

Under this orientation, 'growth' pedagogy is seen as "individualist", "liberal", "progressive" "naturalising" and "expressive"; 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). It would be simplistic to characterise all writers on critical literacy as a single 'school' and Morgan has discussed in some detail the differences between approaches in this country (Morgan, 1997: Ch. 1). Nevertheless, there are a number of characteristics which all approaches would seem to hold in order to be perceived as critical literacy. These are discussed below.

The perceived opposition of 'personal' and 'social' constitutes the most fundamental distinction between the 'growth' model and critical literacy – at least as argued by adherents of the latter. Critical literacy celebrates the social and argues that 'growth' model curricula place too much emphasis on the individual, without recognising that language users are socially constructed. McCormick points to an application of this theme when she argues that "... students must become able to analyse how they themselves are culturally constructed as subjects-in-history" (p. 16). Moreover, the logic of the post-structuralist position in which all things are text underpins the theme of constructing an oppositional and resistant curriculum. Thus curricula are suggested with variations on themes such as:

- making explicit the ways in which readers are positioned by texts so that those positionings can be "resisted" (Griffith, 1992) – such 'resistance' is usually demonstrated by examples of anti-sexist or anti-racist readings of chosen texts;
- making the classroom itself and its curriculum into the 'text' which is explicitly open to discussion and change (Griffith, 1992; Boomer, 1989) – thus classroom practices, including the pedagogy itself, become the 'texts' which are under discussion;
- the 'institutional conditions' of English becoming the curriculum (Peim, 1993; Patterson, 1990) – thus, the notion of what texts, for example, become chosen as suitable for study, is itself open to classroom discussion;
- favouring an explicitly political curriculum such as a working class curriculum in opposition to the dominant culture (Ball, Kenny & Gardiner, 1990: 61).
‘Personal growth’, so goes the argument, puts too much emphasis on ‘personal’ and leaves students in no position to analyse or critique the institutional parameters of ‘subject English’; it does not provide for students questioning the curriculum and thus, ultimately, the basis of the dominant and valued culture: “... while response pedagogy appears to give students a voice, it can also leave them unaware of the determinants of that voice, and therefore powerless either to develop or interrogate it” (McCormick, 1994: 40). Because of its emphasis on the social, rather than on individual cognition, critical literacy also allows little room for recognition of developmental issues.

4.2. Challenges to the Syllabuses’ View of English: The Genre Debate

The debate over ‘genre’ approaches to writing probably first came to the national attention of teachers with the 1987 publication of Ian Reid’s The place of genre in learning. Again, it is important not to over-simplify this debate by discussing genre-based approaches to writing as if they constituted a single ‘school’. To take just one example: it has long been clear that the most influential ‘Australian’ approach to genre studies, rooted in Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics, differs considerably from North American New Rhetoric studies as represented by Freedman and Medway (Freedman & Medway, 1994, 1995). Essentially, as Richardson (1998) shows, these North American studies approach genres as evolving, situated in contexts and adjusting with those contexts according to need — that is, as essentially ‘rhetorical’ structures. Richardson contrasts these approaches with the stability and rigidity that the ‘Sydney School’ sees in curriculum genres (pp. 232ff.).

Nevertheless, it was this ‘Sydney School’ with an approach to genre-based pedagogy claiming derivation from Hallidayan functional systemics, that was to eventually have the most influence on policy in NSW. The basic argument of the ‘Sydney School’ in the 1980s was that genres of writing are identifiable and fixed and boundaries can be established around them. In schools, generic structures ought to be directly taught and consciously chosen by writers and their writing conform to the particular genre’s structure. In this view of pedagogy, learning to write becomes primarily a matter of learning to control genres. Moreover, subject-based knowledge across the curriculum is constructed by, and in turn, constructs, particular generic forms (‘genres make meaning’). Hence, it follows that one of the roles of primary (elementary) schools is to prepare students

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1 Richardson argues that “The influence and impact of the Sydney genre school in dislodging expressivist process pedagogy in primary and secondary schooling in Australia has been profound” (1998: 235).
for the kinds of subject-based writing they will meet in secondary (high) school. In fact, direct teaching of genres needs to begin in the earliest stages of schooling. One immediate priority was to move away from the emphasis on narrative forms in primary school, since this is poor preparation for the diverse genres to be encountered in secondary schools (Christie, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c, 1985d, 1987; Martin, 1984; Martin & Rothery, 1981; Rothery, 1984, 1985; Martin, Christie & Rothery, 1987a, 1987b; Christie & Rothery, 1989; Christie, Martin & Rothery, 1989).

Demonised in the theory of the ‘Sydney School’ were what they referred to as “process writing classroom(s)”. The key demons were Graves and his Australian followers such as Walsh (1981a, 1981b) and Turbill (1982, 1983). The problem with ‘process writing’ classrooms was primarily the Gravesian concepts of ‘choice’ and ‘ownership’. These were concepts that essentially ‘imprisoned’ most children in ‘their own words’, because only bright, middle class children have the backgrounds to take advantage of the choices. Working class, ESL and Aboriginal children have no such choices from their background and ‘process’ pedagogy does not give it to them because teachers are trained to “bite (their) tongues in conferences” (Martin, Christie & Rothery, 1987a, 1987b; Christie, 1987; Christie & Rothery, 1989). Hence, ‘process’ pedagogy is essentially disabling for most children – a form of benign neglect, rooted in the Romantic progressivism of those like John Dixon who were seen to be behind the emphasis on individualising at the expense of a social-construction orientation (see, for example, Christie, 1987). Finally, the ‘Sydney School’ claimed that under ‘process’ pedagogy, knowledge about language was regarded as ‘taboo’ (Martin, Christie & Rothery, 1987a [esp. pp. 73–74, 77–78], 1987b; Christie, 1987; Christie & Rothery, 1989).

A state election in March 1988 saw a new Education Minister, Dr Terry Metherell, replace his Labor counterpart just as both the new English Syllabus, and a related and compatible document, Writing K-12 were beginning to be implemented. At this time, the ‘Sydney School’ had joined with others to form the Literacy and Education Research Network (LERN). Though LERN and the ‘Sydney School’ were very strong critics of Writing K-12, in April, 1988, LERN announced that they had been commissioned by the Department of Education to develop, in conjunction with the Department’s own Directorate of Studies, to write curriculum support materials for Writing K-12, “introducing an up-to-date, functional grammar; ways of teaching different types (or ‘genres’) of writing; and evaluation methods” (Cope, 1988). The title of Cope’s article, ‘Fundamentals of literacy’, as well as the title of the broader group, Literacy Education Research Network, were among the earliest examples
of the identification of ‘literacy’ in NSW with genre-based approaches to writing.

While ‘English’ in NSW had formerly included the notion of ‘literacy’, and had also been synonymous with the concept ‘language’, ‘literacy’ from 1988, in official state curriculum documents, became both separated from ‘English’ and narrowed, at least as far as writing was concerned, into ‘genre-based’ approaches. Moreover, though ‘English’ in the 1970s, through its identification with ‘language’ had been conceived as central to the total curriculum, that centrality was weakened as ‘English’ became less attached to ‘literacy’ at the same time as the latter became synonymous with the uses of language in other curriculum areas.

The model of pedagogy developed for the Directorate of Studies/LERN project to support Writing K-12 consisted of three tightly sequenced phases, each of which has identifiable and tightly sequenced internal stages:

1) modelling – consisting of questions asked around a particular context, followed by study of model texts in a particular genre;

2) joint negotiation of text – in which students decide how information is to be gathered and then the teacher acts as scribe for the class to shape student contributions into a text which approximates the genre under focus;

3) independent construction of a new text – in which students draft in the genre, followed by conferencing with peers and the teacher and then editing and publishing (Literacy and Education Research Network/Studies Directorate, ndA: 9–12).

The typology of genres developed out of the project was also tightly defined. In years 3–6, for example, texts are divided into ‘story’ genres and ‘factual’ genres. The former are sub-divided into ‘narrative’, ‘news story’, ‘exemplum’, ‘anecdote’ and ‘recount’, and the latter into ‘procedure’, ‘explanation’, ‘report’, ‘exposition’ and ‘discussion’. In turn, each genre is given defined structural characteristics. ‘Reports’, for example, are structured as follows:

- a general classification, followed by
- description, in terms of types, parts (and their functions), qualities, habits/behaviours.

Language features are: a focus on generic participants, use of simple present tense, no temporal sequencing, and the use of being and having clauses (Literacy and Education Research Network/Studies Directorate, ndB).
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It is important to note that tense and clause structure become an important part of what it is that students are required to know in writing ‘reports’, just as exclamatives, intensifiers, temporal and continuative conjunctions and the distinction between material and relational processes are among what they are required to know in constructing anecdotes (Literacy and Education Research Network/Studies Directorate, ndA: 28).

As already stated, by the beginning of the 1990s, ‘literacy’ in NSW was increasingly synonymous with ‘genre’ in terms of writing. By 1997, with the publication of the NSW Department of Education’s Literacy Strategy ’97, that identification and separation from English was to become fixed.

5. ‘LITERACY STRATEGY ’97’

In 1997, the Department of School Education in NSW released a major strategy on literacy in NSW. The aims of the strategy were that students:

- be able to express themselves well and clearly in English, and enjoy doing so;
- read widely for pleasure and instruction, with discernment and understanding;
- be articulate in speaking;
- be good listeners in terms of comprehension and evaluation;
- gain an appreciation of that part of the cultural heritage embodied in English (NSW Department of School Education Curriculum Directorate, 1997a: 3).

These aims generally echo the objectives of the ‘Modes’ of the 1987 English syllabus (though the final aim might be seen as running against the syllabus’ emphasis on Australian literature).

The definition of ‘literacy’ contained in the document was from The Australian Language and Literacy Policy:

Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately, in a range of contexts. It is used to develop knowledge and understanding, to achieve personal growth and to function effectively in our society. Literacy also includes the recognition of number and basic mathematical signs and symbols within text.

Literacy involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing. Effective literacy is intrinsically purposeful, flexible and dynamic and continues to develop throughout an individual’s lifetime.

All Australians need to have effective literacy in English, not only for their personal benefit and welfare but also for Australia to reach its social and economic goals (DEET, 1991: 9).

Three main features of the policy were: explicit teaching, systematic teaching and a whole-school focus guided by a School Literacy Support
Team. Despite echoing the ‘Mode’ objectives of the 1987 English syllabus, ‘literacy’ in the policy is totally equated with ‘across the curriculum’. ‘Literacy’, in practice, replaced the concept ‘language across the curriculum’ in NSW. Moreover, a particular view of that concept is adopted, in which the language of the subject areas are not problematic, nor are they considered problematic for student learning. Direct instruction in those forms is the very point of ‘literacy’:

In the secondary school. ... All subjects have literacy demands that are specific to the reading and writing needed by students to participate in that subject. It is the responsibility of all teachers of all subjects to teach students explicitly how to address these specific features. (NSW Department of School Education Curriculum Directorate, 1997a: 12).

Drawing on the work of Freebody & Luke (1990), the teaching of reading was divided into four ‘roles’: code-breaker, text-user, text-participant and text-analyst (NSW Department of Education and Training Curriculum Support Directorate, 1999a). In practice, this entailed the use of traditional DARTS-oriented strategies such as prediction, cloze and retelling (NSW Department of School Education Curriculum Directorate, 1997b). In writing, the approach was based strongly on modelling of ‘text types’. Specific ‘text types’ were identified for specific Key Learning Areas and these were to be taught on the basis of:

- text processes (social purposes and specific ‘stages’ that relate to overall structure),
- text features (language and organisational features appropriate to specific text types),
- sentence features (grammatical features),
- word features (vocabulary and spelling).

(NSW Department of Education and Training Curriculum Support Directorate, 1999a).

For secondary schools, the Education Department (known as both the Department of School Education and then as the Department of Education and Training over this period) produced, over the next two years documents for each of the secondary Key Learning Areas, each entitled ‘Teaching literacy in...’. The degree to which the language of the subject areas is considered as unproblematic in itself, as well as unproblematic for student learning can be gauged from material produced in order to review school programs – as well as the degree to which ‘literacy’ had become synonymous with ‘learning about language’:

Several schools are using text types as a unifying focus for their school’s literacy program. Teachers in all KLA’s agree that their students need to be able to interpret and produce texts in the forms and formats that conform to the language conventions of the subject... while
teaching particular text types, they uncover other aspects of literacy needing attention, for example, sentence structure, grammar, punctuation and spelling (NSW Department of Education and Training Curriculum Support Directorate, 1999b: 37).

With the production of *Teaching Literacy in English in Year 7* in 1998, the split between the concepts ‘English’ and ‘literacy’ would seem to have become entrenched, at least for government schools. This, of course, is not necessarily a negative thing, provided teachers outside English do, in fact, take ‘on board’ the teaching of literacy in their subject areas. But, given that much of what is ‘literacy’ derives from the curricula for ‘English’, it nevertheless remains for these two areas to work out their relationship – a problem which may be solved in a forthcoming review of English 7–10 in NSW. Who, for example, is to be responsible for the teaching of ‘basic’ reading to those students who enter high school still backward in that area? What does appear to be negative about the particular definition of ‘literacy’, however, is the unproblematic acceptance of the language of the subject being automatically appropriate for all learners.

6. Conclusion

It is difficult to gauge the extent to which practices of ‘literacy’ have supplanted practices of ‘English’ in classrooms. Evidence is largely anecdotal – and many anecdotes revolve around the effect that public examinations of ‘literacy’ have had on English classrooms. ‘Literacy’ is examined by public examination at year 7 – the first year of high school – and at year 10. In the year 7 case, particularly, students are expected to demonstrate, in great detail, through writing, knowledge of the textual and grammatical features of specific genres. Assessment through public examination is always likely to ‘drive’ curriculum and it would seem that this is becoming the case in NSW.

‘English’ in NSW has recently undergone a review in years 11–12, in which new syllabuses were written which broadened many of the notions central to ‘English’. It broadened the notion of ‘text’ to include multimedia and a diverse range of electronic text. It broadened the notion of appropriate forms of writing for years 11–12 from the formal essay to more imaginative uses of writing. It even broadened the notion of students’ own products from writing alone to the broader notion of ‘composition’, which can include visual representation such as film-making. The notion of studying a single text was replaced by a more ‘cultural studies’ orientation in which texts are juxtaposed and contrasted in relation to a particular focus, in order to compare the ways different texts treat a concept. A
similar review has just begun for years 7–10 and it is to be hoped that this review will follow the lead of the years 11–12 review in broadening the mother-tongue subject, rather than following the trend towards reductionism that characterises the approach to ‘literacy’ in this state, particularly when dealing with writing.

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WAYNE SAWYER & KEN WATSON

c. Research paper:

SHAKESPEARE IN NEW SOUTH WALES SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A BRIEF HISTORY

Ken Watson

Throughout most of the past one hundred years, the place of Shakespeare in the New South Wales secondary English curriculum has not in itself been a source of significant dispute; what has been in contention has been the question of how the plays should be taught. Interestingly, only one side in this struggle has sought to present its position explicitly; the other has, until relatively recently, silently forced acceptance of its views through control of the examination system. And of course, over the years both sides have modified and refined their positions, being influenced by a huge body of criticism, some focusing on the words on the page, some on the plays in performance, and some on what has been seen to work in the classroom. Thus while the battle-lines have been clearly drawn between syllabus committees and their supporters on the one hand and examination committees on the other, other groups not involved directly in the struggle have nonetheless influenced it.

The Reforms of Peter Board

The obvious starting point for any investigation of the teaching of Shakespeare in the secondary schools of New South Wales is the major reorganisation of secondary education that took place in 1911, largely as a result of the work of Peter Board, who had become the first Director of Education in New South Wales in 1905. Board’s reforms greatly increased the number of secondary schools and gave the curriculum a more humanistic emphasis. Board’s foreword to the Courses of Study for High Schools (NSW Department of Public Instruction, 1911) stressed the importance of school subjects “having no immediate bearing on vocational ends, but designed to provide for the common needs and the common training for well educated citizenship” (p.5). The English Syllabus contained

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3 Of course, for close on forty years teachers of classes below Year 12 have been free to decide for themselves if and when to introduce their students to Shakespeare, and Contemporary English, an HSC course introduced in the early 1980s and originally designed with ESL students in mind, did not include a compulsory Shakespeare text. Hence media debates such occurred in Britain in the 1980s and early 1990s (see, e.g. McEvoy, 1991) have not been mirrored in New South Wales.
in *Courses of Study* specified the study of *The Merchant of Venice* in the second year of the high school; in subsequent years the set texts would be changed regularly.

Before turning to the details of the English Syllabus, we ought to consider the general teaching principles outlined in Board's preface. The pupil, wrote Board,

> should carry away with him at the end of his course a store of the kind of knowledge most worth having... not merely learnt but grasped as the result of the pupil's own thinking. Whatever may be the path to which the teacher has directed the pupil, the pupil himself has travelled it and made all its features his own...

> The library, the laboratory and the workshop are essential adjuncts of the school for secondary instruction. The path that each of these takes in the education of the pupil should be governed by the fact that it is there that he has to do work on his own account. In each of them he is an investigator, an experimenter... at no time should notes be dictated to the pupil... (pp.7-8)

**Shakespeare in The English Syllabus**

The section of the English Syllabus on Shakespeare reads as follows:

> It is suggested that in this the main work would centre round the reading of the play, thus:

1. **Introduction** – The aim in this would be to arouse interest in the play. The introduction may not be necessary in all cases, but in a Historical Play, as, for instance, *Julius Caesar* or *Henry V*, it would be desirable to discuss the historical setting of the play, or even to devote a couple of lessons to the History of the Period in which the play is set.

2. **Reading of Play** – Preferably by the teacher, in order to give pupils a general impression and appreciation of the play as a whole.

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4 For the next few years an Intermediate Certificate was issued on successful completion of the second year's work, with a Leaving Certificate at the end of the fourth year; in 1918 the high school course was lengthened to five years, with the Intermediate Certificate Examination occurring at the end of the third year.
3. Dramatic reading of all the finest scenes in the play by members of the class. It will be necessary to prepare for this reading by a preliminary discussion of the scene about to be read. This will entail a study of the chief characters (the development of these characters will be watched and noted as the play progresses); the dramatic situation, the setting of the scene, etc., also the elucidation of any difficult passages that may interfere with an effective oral interpretation.

4. Language Study - Brief study of the language may follow the reading of each scene, but only so far as to lead to a due appreciation of its beauties of sound and form.

5. Character and Plot Study – a general discussion of the characters and chief personages in the drama, the construction of plot, striking characteristics of the play etc. This should involve simply a summing up of the impressions gathered by the pupils during their reading of the play. At this stage, pupils of the fourth year might be encouraged to read some Shakespearean criticism by good authors.

General Reading of a Shakespearean Play

In a general reading of the play, Step 3 would be considerably modified, only a few of the most striking scenes chosen for dramatic reading, and (4) and (5) might be omitted, the teacher contenting himself by briefly discussing with the class the most interesting characters in the play, drawing attention to its chief beauties, and encouraging the pupils to memorise some of the more striking and effective passages (pp 7-8).

This syllabus, with minor revisions, remained in place until 1944.

Bearing in mind the date of its composition, Courses of Study (and the English Syllabus embedded in it) was not an illiberal document. The student was to be "an investigator, an experimenter"; dictated notes were forbidden and ideas should be "grasped as the result of the pupil's own thinking". As far as the study of Shakespeare was concerned, dramatic reading of scenes should be prepared for by preliminary discussion and a prior reading, "preferably by the teacher"; where "a general reading of the play" was to be undertaken (presumably with students in the Intermediate grades), Language Study and Character and Plot Study "might be omitted".

Public Examinations and the Syllabus

How does this compare with the questions set at the Intermediate Certificate? In 1925, for example, students were asked to select four passages from seven, of which three were from The Merchant of Venice. They were asked:
What do you suppose the author intended you to feel as you read? Where
the passage forms part of a play or novel or narrative poem, what light does
it throw on the character or characters?

This was then followed by three quoted passages from the play. In the same
section students were asked to “quote a passage of not less than twenty lines
from any of the books set for this examination – the passage chosen must be
pathetic or melancholy in its effect”. The final section of the paper consisted
of two questions, both to be answered:

♦ What characteristics of Shylock appear in his relations with Jessica and
Launcelot Gobbo?

♦ Explain fully and in detail the meaning of the following (followed by four
extracts from the play).

Clearly, these questions require a detailed knowledge of the play far beyond
the requirements of the syllabus; clearly, too, any teacher who based his/her
work on the syllabus’s suggestions would have been disadvantaging the
students. And it must be stressed that the 1925 Intermediate English Paper
was not an aberration: the same pattern of questions can be found in the
(randomly selected) 1936 and 1945 papers (the latter still unaffected by the
1944 modifications).

As might be expected, the Leaving Certificate questions over the period
tend be of the traditional ‘lit.crit.’ kind, with the addition of a number of
questions focusing, in ever increasing detail, on language study, for example:

Treat three examples from the play of Macbeth … to show how
Shakespeare’s grammatical usage differs from that of to-day. (1939)

or

In brief notes of not more than a page for each passage quoted, (a) explain
the underlined words, (b) say how the passage comes to be spoken in the
course of the play, and (c) say what light the passage throws on the
situation. (Four passages from Macbeth are then quoted) (1939)

or

Explain the meaning of each of the following four passages by giving (a) the
context, (b) notes on the words underlined, and (c) a paraphrase. (followed
by two quoted passages) (1945)

Almost the only gestures towards a consideration of the plays as plays were
questions requiring candidates to scan a passage (i.e., mark the accented
syllables) and comment on the effect, or (a distinct improvement) the
following:
Imagine you are speaking the following lines. Write a few notes on their rhythm, emphasis and the like, so as to give your idea of the way in which they should be spoken. (1939)

Clearly, what we have here is an examination system at war with a syllabus, with, as ever, the examination system winning – with dire effects on pedagogy. Arid language study, dictated notes and reading round the class became all too common.

In succeeding decades the power of the examination system over the teaching of Shakespeare diminished somewhat with the disappearance of the Intermediate Certificate as a public examination in the 1950s. Even so, at the Leaving Certificate level the instruction in the 1953 Syllabus that there be “no detailed textual study” of the plays except where absolutely essential for “comprehending meaning” (Board of Secondary School Studies, 1953, p.35) was, as usual, ignored by the Examination Committee.

The Introduction of the Higher School Certificate

The radical reorganisation of secondary education, lengthening the high school years to six, with a School Certificate examination at the end of the fourth year and the Higher School Certificate (HSC) at the end of the sixth year that occurred as a result of the Wyndham Report (the first Higher School Certificate examination was held in 1967), led to a more relaxed approach to the teaching of Shakespeare in the junior years, and to a diminution of the language study component in the senior years. Nevertheless, the Higher School Certificate remained the de facto syllabus, with questions requiring much the same kind of intensive preparation that was being given to the novels set for study. (For a detailed analysis of the history of secondary English curriculum in the period 1950-1965, see Brock., 1996.)

In 1971 the HSC English paper seemed to signal a change towards a view of the set text as a play to be performed –

“Accident is admissible in tragedy when it is used as an accelerating and not as a governing factor”

If you were directing a performance of Othello, how would you handle the series of unlucky chances that contribute so largely to the tragedy? (You may, if you wish, focus your answer on a specific episode, e.g., the lost handkerchief.)

(1st Level English, 1971)
but almost all the HSC questions for the remainder of the decade focused firmly on character, and occasionally on themes, and could, with name changes, have been just as easily asked of the novels being set - for example:

“In Richard II, the hero is a match for tragedy and death but not for the duties of life.” Is this view consistent with Shakespeare’s presentation of him? (1st Level English, 1974)

“Despite his villainy, Claudius has qualities that can attract the sympathy and even admiration of an audience.” Consider this in the light of the following quotations… (3 Unit English, 1976)

“The characters in The Tempest lack depth and fail to develop. The play is concerned purely with action.” Discuss. (2 Unit English, 1977)

The examination system cannot bear all the blame for encouraging teachers to treat plays as though they were novels. Until the 1970s, Shakespearean literary criticism trod a similar path, focusing on the words on the page, and viewing Shakespearean texts as literary artifacts rather than as plays. Criticism which was stage-centred, performance-based, seeing the works as playscripts whose potential could only be realised in performance(s), was, with the exception of the work of Harley Granville-Barker, almost non-existent. The critic most teachers turned to was A.C. Bradley, whose Shakespearean Tragedy (1904) must be the most influential book of Shakespeare criticism ever published. While generations of teachers have found Bradley’s work valuable, it has to be admitted that his influence on the classroom was not wholly beneficial. Though his stated aim was “to increase our understanding and enjoyment of these works as dramas”(p.1), his emphasis on the words on the page rather than on the play in the theatre and his conception of character, conceived, it would seem, in terms of the 19th century novel, helped to push the classroom teaching of Shakespeare into the same mould as the teaching of the novel.

Apostles of Change

Despite the almost complete lack of a performance-based criticism which could support a performance-based pedagogy, there were appropriate models of teaching Shakespeare on offer. As far back as 1917 the Englishman Caldwell Cook, in his book The Play Way, had advocated active involvement by the pupils in all aspects of English:

When I wish to help little boys to see the might and beauty of poetry, I do not discourse on poetics. As playmaster I know it is more practical to start the whole miracle with one word “Make”. (p. 20)
In his chapter on teaching Shakespeare he stressed the importance of acting, and

... with a play to act... it will be easily understood how a playmaster is not only willing to ignore parsing, paraphrasing, and the cramming of notes and introductions, but feels himself in a position to dispute with (and even to ridicule) those who give all their attention to such things. The important thing about the study of Shakespeare...is that the play must be acted first... (pp.187-8)

Caldwell Cook's ideas were picked up by a Sydney teacher, George Mackaness, who put them into practice at Fort Street Boys' High School and subsequently published *Inspirational Teaching* (Mackaness, 1928). Writing about teaching Shakespeare, he asked: "Why should...a dramatic work be treated in any other way than dramatically?" (p.64). Having pointed out the weakness of the method of reading round the class, he offered the following description of his approach:

I always divide my classes into permanent study groups, numbered A, B, C and so on, each group consisting of six or eight members, a boy of character and initiative...being appointed leader of each group. When beginning a new play a large portion of the work of organising is placed on the shoulders of the group leaders... The scenes are taken one by one. The group leaders allot the parts in each scene, or each act, to the various members of the group, and arrange for rehearsals and discussions of the work set. I find that two or three days, or a week at most, are quite sufficient for preliminary preparation. Then on each day allotted to Shakespearean work we act the play, scene by scene, each company in turn presenting its version of the same scene....

As each has prepared the same scene independently, there will naturally exist wide differences not only in the interpretation, but in the presentation of the scene. The most important work is to follow. As each group completes its work, the members are lined up before the class and subjected to detailed criticism. The actors are always given the right of reply and explanation. (pp.63-4)

(It should be noted that Mackaness was working with extremely able pupils. Fort Street Boys' High School was then, as now – the major change being its amalgamation with Fort Street Girls' High - a selective high school. Further,
since the range of literature to be studied each year was at this time limited to five works, the time constraints were fewer.)

As I have written elsewhere (Watson, 1981; rev. ed., 1987), one of the puzzling questions in the history of English teaching in New South Wales is why Caldwell Cook’s ideas, as interpreted by Mackaness, failed to have greater impact on English teaching. Mackaness was ideally placed to change the direction of English teaching, since he was not only a member of the English Syllabus Committee for two decades (and the official Assessor of the suitability of the Intermediate Certificate English papers!) but also, throughout much of that period, superintended the training of all graduate English teaching in the State. While it is a truism that when beginning teachers get into the classroom they teach as they themselves were taught rather than as their teacher education lecturers recommend, one must conclude that Mackaness too readily deferred to the various University of Sydney Professors of English who successively held the position of Chief Examiner.

As far as I am aware, only one other book on the teaching of English was published in Australia in the inter-war years. This was R.G. Henderson’s *The Teaching of English in Secondary Schools*, published in Sydney in 1935. Henderson had no doubt about where the power of curriculum-making resided:

> This book deals with English as a school subject. Therefore (we may as well confess it at once) its boundaries will be largely determined by the public examinations for which the pupils sit. That is, the range of school English is fixed by the examiner’s sense of what is necessary and sufficient for a boy of eighteen… (p.5)

Henderson gives (pp.121-2) an outline of how a Shakespearean play should be taught, taking *Julius Caesar* as his example. His advice represents a step backwards from Mackaness’s position. The first three lessons were to be devoted to reading the play: “Parts are allotted to various pupils; the readers could be in front of the class and entrances and exits could then be observed.” So far, so good, but the students were apparently not given the opportunity to prepare the parts beforehand, as Mackaness rightly insisted. Instead, “To set a good example of pace and tone, the teacher could take a part, not one of the very best…”. The remaining seven lessons were to be

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5 In 1927, for example, the Intermediate Examination, taken at the end of the third year of secondary school, listed five texts for study: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Selections from the Australian Poets, Great Expectations, Treasure Island, The Ancient Mariner.*
devoted to examining the structure of the play and the characters ("studied on much the same lines as in the novel"), with the penultimate lesson devoted to "the great scenes...Shakespeare's style; great lines", and the final lesson a summing up, with emphasis on "the conflict in Brutus" (Henderson's emphasis).

Another book, the potential of which to change the teaching of Shakespeare was not realised, either in England where it was published or in Australia where it found its way into professional libraries, was A.K. Hudson's *Shakespeare and the Classroom*. The introduction, written by actor Bernard Miles, accurately conveys the thrust of the book:

> Mr Hudson argues that [Shakespeare]... *should be studied first of all in action...* I cannot imagine a class of little savages being more happily and successfully weaned to [sic] Shakespeare than by lurking about the legs of a blackboard in order to chop Banquo down with their rulers, or brewing a hell broth of fenny snakes and poisoned entrails in the classroom waste paper basket. (p.vii)

**The Impact of Performance Criticism**

While Caldwell Cook and George Mackaness, and later A.K. Hudson, seem to have had little influence on classroom practice (though there were doubtless a few classrooms where the sort of engaging work they described was being done), during the 1980s there were a number of initiatives which did bear fruit in the following decade. The groundwork for these was prepared by the emergence, from the 1950s onwards, of a genuine performance criticism. There can be little doubt that criticism which understands "the controlling importance of stage performance" (Harry Levin, quoted in Brown, 1993,p.197) is more valuable than traditional literary criticism as far as the classroom is concerned. This is not to deny the value of such critics as Bradley as background reading for teachers, but criticism that constantly reminds the teacher that what the students have in front of them is not the play, but a *blueprint for a play*, is more likely to lead to teaching which explores the dramatic and theatrical aspects of the playscript as well as its purely literary qualities. In performance criticism, "the demands of text and stage are considered together" (Thomson, 1989, p.15); the performance potentialities of the dramatic text are always kept in mind. Such criticism can be dated back to Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt, but, as mentioned earlier, in the first half of 20th century only Harley Granville- Barker, in his still very valuable *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (1930;1963), could be said to have highlighted theatrical values. The change really began in the 50s with Raymond Williams’s *Drama in Performance* (1954;1968). Key writers since then include J.L. Styan (1967;1977), John Russell Brown (1981), and Peter Holland (1997).
Styan's influence in particular has been wide-ranging, with David Mallick and Wendy Michaels, two Australians who have had a major impact on the teaching of Shakespeare in New South Wales, acknowledging their debt to him, just as he himself acknowledges a debt to Granville-Barker. There is no doubt about the enormous value of Styan's work, both in making us cognisant of the original performance environment of most of Shakespeare's plays, the Globe Theatre, and in making stage performance an essential part of Shakespearean criticism in the second half of the 20th century.

Another performance critic, John Russell Brown, has played a significant role in the revolution in the teaching of Shakespeare. His Discovering Shakespeare (1981) was based on the premise that

*we should read and study the plays as if we were rehearsing them, and ... we should then attempt to imagine performances... Character-analysis and the search for an underlying theme must wait until after the play has begun to come alive in a reader's imagination – with all the excitement and strength of theatrical performance, and with the sudden revelations and slow revaluations which are the ordinary signs of vitality in rehearsal.* (Brown, 1981, p.1)

Later, he writes

*We should never begin by asking what every word means, or what a play means, or whether we know its argument. If we start by trying to nail down what the drama is saying, we shall never rise with the poet's invention and enter the strange world of his plays.* (p.21)

And,

*At school or university the reader may have been trained to read a text so that he can be sure that he understands precisely what is on the page: whereas he should have been encouraged to play with conjecture and to enter imaginatively within a forever-changing image, or mirage, of another life.* (p.9)

Thus by the 1980s there was a body of scholarly criticism which gave support to the pedagogy first promoted sixty years earlier, and again a syllabus revision (1983) emphasising that:

*... The study of the drama needs to acknowledge that the text of a play is a script for performance... [Students] need to visualise how a scene might appear on the stage, and realise how the impact may be enhanced by gesture and tone of voice, once it is lifted from the page. Adopting the standpoint of a director and actors, they might consider how a particular role should be developed, and what features of a given scene a good performance should bring out.* (Board of Studies, 1983, p.11)
Two conditions for bringing about a revolution in the teaching of Shakespeare still were needed: a concerted effort to make teachers aware of the value of the pedagogy first promoted by Caldwell Cook, and a recognition by those responsible for the Higher School Certificate English examination papers of the value of the statement about drama in the 1983 syllabus revision.

The Work of Mallick and Michaels

In 1984 David Mallick published *How Tall Is this Ghost, John*. The book has since sold about 4000 copies. In his Introduction, Mallick declared:

> Shakespeare is meant to be performed; practical performance work is the best way to encourage close scrutiny of the text...the answer to [the problem of how to teach Shakespeare] lies in making the classroom a workshop where we try to understand meaning through action.

His book provided teachers with examples of ways in which the elements of the sub-text – pace, tone, silence, emphasis, stage business, movement, entrances and exits – could be actively explored in the classroom, in group discussion and performance.

In 1986 Wendy Michaels published *When the Hurly Burly Is Done*. Finding some of her students resistant to Shakespeare, she began to

> ...look for innovative ways to introduce Shakespeare's work in the classroom. In the mid-seventies the drama process/product debate was raging, with the educational drama camps opposing performance, production and canonical works. Although not a canonist, I could not totally align myself with their ranks, but I did draw on much of the pedagogy and reapplied it to the work that I was doing with scripted drama – particularly Shakespeare. So while other drama teachers were off doing drama games and exercises and improvisations I was appropriating strategies such as “mantle of the expert”, “hot seat”, “alter ego” and “freeze frames” to the teaching of Shakespeare’s plays. And at this time also, I became involved in youth theatre and theatre in education and began to realize the potential of the playbuilding approaches that these groups used with young people. This firmed up my approach to teaching Shakespeare by giving it a performance framework that I eventually called “Playbuilding Shakespeare”.

At the same time I was directing my own Shakespearian productions. I had become dissatisfied with the performance spaces usually assigned to me – proscenium arch stages – and had begun experimenting with more open stage configurations and more interactive audience situations – as well as with more innovative ways of managing the rehearsal process. I tried to emulate what I knew about Shakespeare’s stage and how it would have worked for the players and audience. I came across the research of John...
Styan and found that the things I had been surmising and experimenting with had been well documented by an academic of world renown. And then a wonderful synchronicity occurred – John Styan came to Australia to give a six week course at the very time that I was directing a thrust stage production of *The Merchant of Venice*. I went to Styan’s course and loved it – he came to my production and praised it. We established an on-going dialogue that extended my knowledge, understanding and confidence to continue exploring in what was generally considered an unusual approach. (Wendy Michaels – personal communication to the author)

The Shakespeare Workshop Series

Mallick’s book and Michaels’ workshops were two of the major influences on my own work. In addition, a visit to the UK in 1988 brought me into contact with two first-rate teachers, Brenda Pinder and Mike Hayhoe. The latter’s very practical *Creative Work Ideas for Macbeth* (1988) inspired me to design a series, the *Shakespeare Workshop Series*, in which each volume provided teachers with a range of small-group activities designed to promote active exploration of the text. To quote from the introduction to one of these volumes, *The Food of Love: A workshop approach to Twelfth Night*,

*The activities stress the fact that this is a play, and thus must be constantly thought of in theatrical terms. To be able to read a play script and simultaneously visualise a performance going on inside the ‘skull theatre’ (to Borrow J.B. Priestley’s phrase) is not a skill that comes easily, and it is therefore essential that classroom treatment of play scripts, whether they be by Shakespeare, Shaw or Miller, be undertaken in terms of the interplay of actors, play script and audience that one finds in real performances and the rehearsals that precede them. (Watson, 1991)*

In its final form, the series provides open-ended, theatrically-oriented activities on twenty-two plays. In these books there is a good deal of stress, following on Mallick, on exploring aspects of the sub-text: tone, pause, emphasis, gestures, movement. Each book also contains activities which place the students in various roles: director, stage designer, costume designer, writer of extra scenes.

At much the same time as these developments were taking place in Australia, in Britain Rex Gibson had launched the Shakespeare and Schools Project. Initially the Project had little effect in New South Wales, though one of its publications, *Secondary School Shakespeare* (Gibson, 1990) sold a few hundred copies. The real impact came later, with Gibson’s *Cambridge School Shakespeare*, which departed from the typical school playtexts by providing on each left-hand page suggestions for active exploration of the text. As Gibson notes in an article in *Shakespeare Survey* 49 (1996, p.144), “each edition embodies an active pedagogy that respects and resources the
paradigm shift in school Shakespeare teaching methods". These practical activities are “firmly and organically linked to the play[s]”. In 2002, the Cambridge School Shakespeare titles are slowly becoming the preferred editions in Australian schools, particularly at junior and middle secondary levels.

**Changing Examination Questions**

Despite the clearest possible endorsement of an active approach to Shakespeare given by the 1983 Syllabus, the second condition for a radical change in teaching methods did not really take place for a few more years. While the specimen HSC paper produced as a guide to English teachers promised, with its stress on personal response and imaginative re-creation, a radical shift in the kinds of examination questions that could be asked, the actual examination harked back to the 1950s. It seems that the Chief Examiner was antagonistic to the theoretical position underpinning the new syllabus, that of reader response /reception theory with its stress on personal response, and sought through the examination system to force a return to traditional approaches to literature. In succeeding years the literature questions gradually moved closer to the intentions of the 1983 Syllabus, but it was not until 1989-1990 that questions appeared that clearly required students to demonstrate a recognition that they were discussing texts written for performance.

> Suppose you are going to direct a performance of one of the set plays (Romeo and Juliet and five modern plays were listed). You have decided what you think of the play as a whole, and how you plan to present it. To assist the actor or actress who is to play one of the parts, you are going to write an outline of that character and his or her role as you see it. (1989, 2 Unit General English)

> What the audience sees and hears in the opening moments of a play sets up expectations which will be confirmed or contradicted subsequently. Explore the effectiveness of the opening of both plays (The Winter’s Tale and various modern plays were set) you have studied this year. You will need to pay attention to the way the dramatist uses features such as set, action, characters and dialogue to catch the audience’s interest and to anticipate what is to follow. (1990, 2/3 Unit)

In the succeeding decade, such questions become more common.

**A Revolution in Teaching?**

Thus no longer were the examination questions at variance with the syllabus, and both a range of books on pedagogy and a substantial body of performance-oriented criticism were available to support an active approach
to Shakespeare in the classroom. But has there really been a revolution in the teaching of Shakespeare, as least as far as New South Wales was concerned? In order to gauge the success of what has been a concerted campaign over more a decade - innumerable workshops, twenty-one titles in the Shakespeare Workshop Series, two editions of Shakespeare: a Teacher’s Handbook (a kind of summary collection of the activities in the Shakespeare Workshop series) with further impetus provided by the arrival of the Cambridge School Shakespeare and Rex Gibson’s publications from the UK (e.g., Gibson, 1998) - a survey was undertaken of trainee English teachers who were still at school in 1995-8 of their memories of how Shakespeare was taught. The aim was to compare the results with those of a similar survey undertaken in 1989 and 1990, when over sixty Diploma in Education students at the University of Sydney whose secondary education had taken place in the period 1980-85/6 were asked to describe the sort of teaching of Shakespeare they had experienced at school. Of that latter group only two had experienced what could be described as an active approach to Shakespeare. (In 1992 the same question was asked of that year’s Dip.Ed. group, with similar results).

The results of the survey undertaken early in 2002 were as follows:

Macquarie University

– traditional literature-based approach: 13
– active approach, emphasis on the text as a play script: 11

(The group also included a number of older students who were at school in the 1980s-early 1990s, and three who were at school in the late 1970s – or even earlier. Only one of these had memories of any approach other than a literary-critical one.)

Newcastle University – Ourimbah Campus

– traditional approach: 3
– active approach: 3

(The remaining six members of this group were all older students; of these, only one had experienced a little acting in class.)

University of Sydney

– traditional approach: 7
– active approach : 9

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6 One of the titles, Bitter Bread, contains activities on two plays, Richard II and The Winter’s Tale.
(There were some additional responses, all of which omitted to state the
years when they were at school. All but one of these responses fell into the
'traditional' category.)

University of Western Sydney

- traditional approach: 5
- active approach: 4

(Of the seven older students, only one reported anything that could be
called active; most mentioned reading round the class, scene-by-scene
summaries and the like, with the occasional film or video.)

University of NSW

- traditional approach: 16
- active approach: 6

Characteristics of “traditional” approaches were typically (and repeatedly):

_The entire text was read around the class, with difficult terms explained by_
_the teacher._

_We had to rewrite every line in modern English._

_The method of teaching was simply that the teacher read out the text to us,_
_and then he would explain it. He would advise us to learn certain_
_soliloquies._

It should be noted that almost all of the students who reported experiencing
an active approach that emphasised the texts as plays also made it clear that
this was at the hands of a single teacher, and that other teachers at their
schools adopted traditional methods. Significantly, almost all those taught by
traditional methods wrote of their bewilderment, boredom, and growing
dislike of Shakespeare, while those who experienced, even briefly, an active,
theatre-oriented approach, wrote of their enjoyment and the greater
understanding that resulted.

While such surveys, relying as they do upon the students’ recall of teaching
methods experienced four, five or six years earlier, have obvious weaknesses,
they cannot be dismissed as completely invalid. At the very least they do
suggest that a shift in the teaching of Shakespeare has in fact occurred,
though, clearly, much remains to be done.

The Current Syllabus

The Stage 6 Syllabus published in 1999 (Board of Studies, NSW) and first
examined in the 2001 Higher School Certificate Examination provides many
opportunities to study Shakespeare in a variety of contexts in Standard and Advanced courses. Because it followed considerable ferment in university English departments in the 1970s and 1980s when various literary theories—deconstruction, feminism, new historicism, cultural materialism—were being debated, there were fears in some quarters that teachers would, in Derek Peat’s words, (2002, p.28) “subject the students to what the new-fashioned pedant could do to a play of Shakespeare”. These fears seem largely unfounded. The section on ‘Critical Study of Texts’ invites students to explore “the ways in which different readings are possible and imply different values that may be realised through different productions” (Board of Studies Prescriptions, 2002, p.18). It is difficult to see how teachers can continue to treat play texts in the same way as novels when questions such as the following (from the 2001 and 2002 HSC English examination) are being asked:

How might different productions dramatise the struggle between chaos and order in King Lear? (Advanced, 2001)

How are dramatic techniques used to explore Macbeth’s relationships with the women in the play? (Standard, 2001)

Two people who value [King Lear] in different ways and for different reasons are having a conversation. Compose their conversation, which should include consideration of the structure, staging, language and ideas of the text. (Advanced, 2002)

Now that syllabus recommendations and examination questions are no longer in opposition to each other, and a range of appropriate activities is provided by the Cambridge School Shakespeare and the Shakespeare Workshop Series, it would seem that no obstacles remain to the adoption of an active pedagogy by all teachers. Since, however, many students now enter senior classes without prior experience of Shakespeare, teachers who wish their students to undertake any of the variety of Shakespeare options available under the current syllabus will need to bear in mind that their classes could contain both students whose prior experience disposes them to read dramatically, read theatrically, and those who have had no experience of the activities which promote such abilities. Some of the responses to the surveys make it clear that those who have had no such experience feel bewildered and alienated when confronted with a Shakespeare text unless the teacher takes steps to rectify the deficiency. Further, my own work with groups of senior students over the past decade has convinced me that even those who have experienced active approaches in the junior years still do benefit from such activities when related to the plays set for examinations. Time and again it has become evident that active exploration in small groups can reveal interpretations that have not occurred to armchair readers, no matter how many plays they have encountered before. With Shakespeare, as with everything else, how one teaches shapes what one teaches.
I wish to express my thanks to the following people who assisted in the collection of data for the survey: Jill Bough, Gillian Lovell, Jackie Manuel, Dennis Robinson, Wayne Sawyer, Gordon Shubb. I am also grateful to Rex Gibson for clarifying some points about developments in the UK in the 1990s.

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4.4 CO-AUTHORSHIP

The paper on mother-tongue teaching in NSW and the review article were written in conjunction with Wayne Sawyer. We see these as joint articles in the full sense (see Appendix C).
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The portfolio chiefly represents those aspects of my research over the past decade that have had practical outcomes in helping teachers and their students to come to terms with the more enlightening aspects of modern literary theory and to improve the teaching of Shakespeare. The success of the Shakespeare Workshop Series indicates that more and more teachers are adopting teaching methods that lead to imaginative engagement with playtexts. With the explicit inclusion of some literary theory in the current Syllabus for the Higher School Certificate, there has, in particular, been an explosion of interest in the idea of using picture books to get across complex theoretical ideas, and From Picture Book to Literary Theory, which I conceived and compiled with the assistance of Professor John Stephens and a team of classroom teachers, is now in its second edition (2003) and has sold well over 3000 copies, mainly in Australia but overseas as well.
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PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning the following pages. The best possible results have been obtained.
APPENDIX A
IMAGINED CORNERS: A MULTICULTURAL ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY POETRY

AT THE ROUND EARTH'S IMAGINED CORNERS
A Multicultural Anthology of Contemporary Poetry
Edited by Ken Watson
St Clair Press
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APPENDIX B

THE SHAKESPEARE WORKSHOP SERIES

The Course of True Love: A Workshop Approach to A Midsummer Night’s Dream – Mark McFadden
Creative Work Ideas for Macbeth – Mike Hayhoe
A Dagger of the Mind: Macbeth for Senior Students – Brenda Pinder
The Dogs of War: A Workshop Approach to Julius Caesar – Wendy Michaels and Ken Watson
The Food of Love: A Workshop Approach to Twelfth Night – Ken Watson (with Gordon Shrubby)
Full Fathom Five: A Workshop Approach to The Tempest – Brenda Pinder
Gaze on Cleopatra: A Workshop Approach to Antony and Cleopatra – Wendy Michaels
The Green-Ey’d Monster: A Workshop Approach to Othello – Ken Watson and Stuart Wilson
Let Him Look to His Bond: A Workshop Approach to The Merchant of Venice – Gregory Seach
Love’s Keen Arrows: A Workshop Approach to As you Like It – Dennis Robinson and Ken Watson
Moonshine Revellers: A Workshop Approach to The Merry Wives of Windsor – Michael Kindler and Andrew Lasaitis
Sharper than a Serpent’s Tooth: A Workshop Approach to King Lear – Brenda Pinder
A Skirmish of Wit: A Workshop Approach to Much Ado About Nothing – Gregory Seach
Some by Virtue Fall: A Workshop Approach to Measure for Measure – Wayne Sawyer
Star-Cross’d Lovers: A Workshop Approach to Romeo and Juliet – Gordon Shrubby and Ken Watson
Such a Mad Marriage: A Workshop Approach to The Taming of the Shrew – Ken Watson
The Theme of Honour’s Tongue: A Workshop Approach to Henry IV, Part 1 – Wendy Michaels
To Prove a Villain: A Workshop Approach to Richard III – Calvin Durrant
We Happy Few: A Workshop Approach to Henry V – Joanne Nibbs
A Workshop Approach to Hamlet – Brenda Pinder
APPENDIX C

Statements from Co-Authors

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re joint authorship of articles written by me and Kenneth D Watson and contained in the latter's EdD portfolio

This is to verify that the ratio of joint authorship of the aforementioned articles are:

• in the joint article on teaching Shakespeare: 90% KDW ; 10% WS
• in all other articles, 50% joint authorship

Yours faithfully

[Signature]

Associate Professor Wayne Sawyer
School of Education and Early Childhood Studies
The Chair of the EdD Committee,
School of Education
University of Western Sydney

18 March, 2003

With reference to the following refereed publication:


Ms Goodwyn and I were M.Ed students of Mr Watson's in the faculty of Education at the University of Sydney when we undertook the research on which this article is based. The research project itself was designed by Mr Watson, and Lynne and I worked under his close supervision throughout in gathering the classroom data. While we contributed to the writing of the paper, I should like to acknowledge that the major credit for the article rightfully belongs to him.

Yours faithfully

Calvin B Durrant
Deputy Chair of Initial Teacher Education (Secondary)
Lecturer in English Curriculum and Media Education
School of Education
Murdoch University
Sunday 18 May 2003

Mr Ken Watson
PO Box 287
Rozelle NSW 2039

Dear Ken,

I am writing to confirm that in the St. Clair Press publication, *The Food of Love: a workshop approach to 'Twelfth Night'* , the proportion of the text you wrote was 90%, and I wrote 10%.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Shrub

209
The University of Sydney
N.S.W. 2006
Australia

Reference:

30 March 2003

To Whom it may concern

In our joint publication, *Love’s Keen Arrows: A Workshop Approach* to *As You Like It*, Ken Watson was responsible for writing half of the text.

Yours faithfully,

Dennis Robinson

Dennis Robinson.
APPENDIX D
CURRICULUM VITAE
KENNETH DARYL WATSON

Academic Qualifications:
BA (Syd) 1951 Dip Ed (Syd) 1952

Previous Experience:
1952-63 English/History teacher in high schools in NSW, UK and ACT
1964-70 English/History Master at Farrer Agricultural High School
1971-73 Seconded Lecturer, Sydney University Dip Ed Program
1974-79 Permanent Lecturer in Education
1980-90 Senior Lecturer in Education

Administrative Responsibilities:
Co-Ordinator of the University's Dip Ed Program, 1976-79
Co-ordinator of English Curriculum Area, 1972-90
Co-ordinator of Secondary Teacher Education Electives Program, 1983.

Other Activities:
University Representative on the NSW English Syllabus Committee (Years 7-10) 1975-1989.
Member of the Council of the English Teachers' Association of NSW, 1967-77.
Vice-President, Australian Association for the Teaching of English, 1973-7
Secretary, Australian Education Network, 1994-2000
Co-Founder, International Association for the Improvement of Mother Tongue Education (IAIMTE)
Co-Chair, IAIMTE, 1994-2001

Visiting Lectureships, Awards etc:
Visiting Specialist, Regional Language Centre, Singapore, August 1986
Visiting Professor, Department of English, Michigan State University, USA, September-December, 1986.
Canadian Government Faculty Enrichment Award, 1987.
Visiting Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Cambridge, April-May, 1990.
Visiting Professor, Department of English, Michigan State University, March-June, 1991.
Visiting Professor, Department of Teaching & Learning, New York University, July-August, 1992.
Temporary Lecturer, School of Education, Macquarie University, 1996-7.
Visiting Fellow, Institute for Advanced Study, Indiana University, Oct, 2002.
Life Membership of the English Teachers' Association of NSW.
Life Membership of the Australian Association for the Teaching of English

Editorships
Editor of AATE Guide to English Books, 1970-76
of Journals: Editor, English Teachers' Association Newsletter, 1969-75
Co-Editor (with Geoff Williams), New Horizons in Education, 1975-79
Co-Editor (with Yvonne Larsson), Issues and Ideas, 1979-84
Co-Editor (with Roslyn Arnold and Paul Richardson), Developments in English Teaching, (1982-84)
Editor, Australian Education Network Newsletter, 1991 –2000

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Co-Editor (with Arthur Ashworth) Towards a New English, Sydney: A H and A W Reed, 1972.
Editor, New Directions, Sydney: ETA of NSW, 1972.
Editor, Aspects of Children's Literature, Sydney, ETA 1978.
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Co-editor (with L. Cairns) Six Interesting Schools, Sydney: Sydney, WEF, 1981.


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GLOSSARY

ACTIVE APPROACH (TO SHAKESPEARE)

A pedagogy that not only involves students in active engagement with the text, as in imaginative re-creation (q.v.), but provides activities which require them to think in dramatic and theatrical terms [designing sets and costumes, preparing blocking plans, exploring the sub-text (q.v.), acting scenes, taking on the role of director etc]. The activities are usually undertaken in small groups.

CULTURAL HERITAGE MODEL

A view of English which “emphasises the role of schools...in leading students to appreciate the books widely regarded as the finest in the language”. (Peel et al., 2000, p.362) While in essence pre-dating him, it is a position particularly associated with the British critic F.R. Leavis.

IMAGINATIVE RE-CREATION

This term covers a range of activities designed to help students re-create imaginatively the experience that an author wishes to convey. Activities such as changing the point of view, adapting part of the text for a different medium (e.g., for radio or television) or changing it into a different form (e.g., from short story into newspaper report) help students to ‘get inside’ the text, consider it from different angles, and extend their understanding of it without relying on the teacher’s interpretation. The term first

NEW CRITICISM

“New Criticism refers to a method of literary study which emphasises the ‘close reading’ of texts with an emphasis on word meanings and the text’s ‘internal’ structure. This tends to ignore the social and historical differences among texts.” (Moon, 2001, p.93) New Criticism is particularly associated with the American critics Cleanth Brooks, W.K. Wimsatt, Allan Tate and Robert Penn Warren. In Britain, F.R. Leavis and I.A. Richards adopted a broadly similar position.

PERSONAL GROWTH MODEL

The Personal Growth Model “focuses on the child or student, and uses the experience of English to develop their aesthetic and imaginative lives”. (Peel et al., 2000, p.262) Personal Growth is particularly associated with the Dartmouth Seminar of 1966 and one of the books that grew out of it, John Dixon’s *Growth through English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, 1969).

READER-RESPONSE/RECEPTION THEORIES

Reader Response theories developed in reaction to the New Critical position that a literary text could and should be interpreted without regard to the reader’s experience of it. Response theorists hold that the reader brings meaning to the text as well as taking
meaning from it; in fact, a poem or novel could be described as an experience created when reader and text come together, as opposed to text as object. The leading theorists are Wolfgang Iser, Louise Rosenblatt, Norman Holland, Stanley Fish and David Bleich. As noted in the essay, there is a marked division between those theorists, such as Roseblatt and Iser, who believe that the text embodies objective constraints on the reader, and those like, Bleich and Holland, who take the view that meaning is not to be found in texts but in readers.

SEMIOTICS

The science of sign-systems.

SUB-TEXT

A term used in drama for the unspoken or underlying intention of the words, which the actor must imply through tone, pause, emphasis, gesture, facial expression.

* * * * * * * * * * *
DOCUMENTING PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE:

THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE IN
NSW SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1990-2001,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
TEACHING OF SHAKEESPEARE

Kenneth D. Watson, M.Ed. (Hons 1), B.A., Dip.Ed.

A Portfolio submitted to the University of Western Sydney in
fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
the degree of Doctor of Education

2003
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
DECLARATION

I declare that this Portfolio has not been submitted for the award of a higher degree at any other institution. I further declare that the contents of the essay are entirely original except where clearly indicated and acknowledged.

[Signature]

Ken Watson

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ABSTRACT

The teaching of literature in New South Wales secondary schools has shifted significantly in the period 1990-2001, influenced both by the newer literary theories and by the belated application to the teaching of Shakespeare of active approaches designed to encourage students to think dramatically, think theatrically when approaching playscripts. This essay explores the ways in which my research papers and the pedagogical materials that they have generated have supported and indeed to some extent been instrumental in bringing about these changes.

Beginning with an overview of literature teaching in secondary schools in 1990, the essay identifies the questions which have driven my research over the past decade:

- Can Reader-Response Theory be made explicit to junior and middle secondary students? Would such knowledge be of value to them?

- Are there other aspects of modern literary theory that are worth exploring with secondary students?

- Can young readers be encouraged to reflect on their processes of response? Is such an endeavour worthwhile?

- How can the teaching of Shakespeare be improved?

This last question led me, during the period of candidature, to explore the puzzling question of why the pedagogy of teaching Shakespeare had lagged so far behind the methods employed in the teaching of other literature, and thus to an historical enquiry covering the teaching of Shakespeare over the past hundred years. At the same time I have been concerned to refine some of my teaching materials in order to encourage senior students to explore the plays from, for example, feminist, new historicist and post-colonial perspectives.
I have also been concerned with wider issues in curriculum history than simply the teaching of Shakespeare, as an article and an extended review, both written jointly with Wayne Sawyer, demonstrate.

It should be noted that the journals in which my articles have appeared, *English Education* (USA), *English in Australia* and *L1 – Educational Studies in Language and Literature* (Amsterdam) are all fully refereed. The papers included in the Hull University Press book, *Young Readers, New Readings*, were also subjected to academic review before publication.
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