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THE PLACE AND PURPOSE OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE TEACHING AT SECONDARY LEVEL

Paul Luddington Knight

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## ABSTRACT

Paul Luddington Knight

'The Place and Purpose of English Literature Teaching  
at Secondary Level.'

It is the aim of this thesis to trace the path of English Literature's developing and changing place and purpose within the aim of the development of a liberal education. It will do so from the nineteenth century's time of socio-economic change, through the reassessments and confirmations of the importance of Literature's place described by writers following the social and political upheavals caused by the Great War, through to an analysis of the contemporary situation, and to a consideration of likely future developments.

The study is concerned with the placing of contemporary and possible future proposals for the teaching of English Literature in the historical context of past provision and beliefs concerning Literature's purpose, and the first part of the thesis will show how and why Literature came to have a major role in a liberal education's provision assigned to it, and how that role evolved over the ensuing decades.

The second part will consider how contemporary national pressures have brought about a reassessment of Literature's place and purpose, caused by demands for change. The agents of that change will be examined and the thesis will indicate where the traditional role of English Literature teaching stands in relation to some of the changes in educational emphasis being introduced.

Finally the study will examine the implications such nationally designed initiatives and changes may have upon the provision and teaching of Literature in secondary schools in County Durham. Through survey, it will investigate how English departments are responding, bearing in mind their views on Literature's place and purpose in their teaching.

It will appear from surveys and interviews that responses are complex and that actual and predicted changes may differ markedly from those expected.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Historical Context.

One of the major aims of teaching in England has been to provide a 'Liberal Education', an aim which has been promoted for many years. As a means of achieving this aim, for a long while experience of and contact with English Literature have been employed. Two questions arise from this, one concerns the concept of what a 'Liberal Education' is, and the second is that of why English Literature was chosen as the means to achieve the aim.

With regard to the first question, as with many concepts, definitions and interpretations differ in detail if not in substance. John Milton for example defined 'a complete and generous education' as one:

"which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." (1)

Perhaps one can adequately substitute 'liberal' for 'complete and generous'. If one moves chronologically forward to the nineteenth century - for here it was that English Literature began to be read in schools - Thomas Arnold emphasised the need for a liberal education to fit the pupil for:

"The calling of a citizen and a man." (2)



A liberal education at that time was seen to be one that gave a breadth of mental culture, and Mathew Arnold followed and developed his father's thinking and felt that the value of such a culture was not simply in the acquisition of knowledge but in its applications to a changing world. Arnold's view is summarised in this way:

"'Sweetness and light' would be achieved through a true education, through the appreciation of past nobility, present beauty and wonder, and future promise." (3)

T.H. Huxley's view and understanding of a liberal education was one that saw the achievement of the aim through a balanced diet to produce a free man, he said:

"one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience, who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of Art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself." (4)

These hoped for ideals may have been too impractically optimistic to be achieved, for one senses education was still some way from achieving the ideal when, some seventy years later, the aims of what might still be described as a liberal education were being promoted by the then Ministry of Education, and again the question was being asked:

"What kinds of experiences will help them (pupils of only moderate skills) to develop their full capacities for thought and task and feeling?... They need to develop a sense of responsibility for their work and towards other people, and to begin to arrive at some code of moral and social behaviour which is self-imposed." (5)

Such an aim appears very similar to that of Milton and of the nineteenth century writers and such descriptions can be applied to interpretations of the concept of a liberal education with which English Literature came to be associated.

This leads then to the second question, that of how English Literature came to be associated so closely with the achievement of a liberal education, for this had not always been the case.

The rise in the place of Literature came about because the provision of a liberal education in the nineteenth century was not being achieved satisfactorily. There were hindrances to the achievement of the aim and these acted to promote the place of English Literature within the school curriculum by providing the subject with the purpose of overcoming these obstructions.

There were three major hindrances. Firstly the charge was being levelled that the process by which the liberal education was to be achieved was not succeeding, but nonetheless one centrally educative subject could achieve the aim. Secondly, many purchasers and providers of the liberal education felt it should exclude knowledge of, and contact with, science, industry and commerce. Thirdly, the liberal education was costly and such an expensive item automatically excluded many from obtaining its benefits. Cardwell writes:



"The universities were concerned with the liberal education of men of a privileged class who would later adopt suitable professions, or else follow the life of leisure. The educational ideal was the Christian gentleman." (6)

In the main, the public schools prepared pupils for the Universities. However, these schools were themselves hampered in their developing of the liberally educated person by the first two hindrances mentioned. These now need to be considered in greater detail in order to establish why English Literature grew to a place of significance within the curriculum.

Firstly is the charge that the syllabus designed to achieve the aim of a liberal education was failing, but that the view was held that one subject could be centrally educative and could achieve the aim. The syllabus taught, as it had been for centuries (see appendix 1), consisted in the main of a study of the Classics - Latin and Greek. It had been believed by many that this subject area was sufficient for the achievement of the aim, for as the Head of Winchester said:

"Classical learning is the inheritance of all former ages, it puts a person into the possession of all the inherited wisdom of the ages." (7)

and Henry Sidgwick commented:

"Greek and Latin writing show the purest, serenest and most elevated literary taste." (8)

Hence Classics was seen as being of the greatest value and benefit.

Nonetheless a growing criticism was developing; not of the aim of the liberal education and of a centrally educative subject, but of the failing of Classics to achieve the objective. It was increasingly felt that much Classics teaching was poorly done, was narrow and dull, and that many pupils were not getting beyond the working of exercises in translation. Pupils were not reaching the level of proficiency required to benefit from the writings themselves, and were not gaining access to, and the influence of, the humanising effects of its literature because that access was too difficult for most pupils to achieve. No doubt George Eliot struck several chords of recognition when describing the tortures Tom Tulliver had to undergo:

"Tom's faculties failed him before the abstractions hideously symbolized to him in the pages of the Eton Grammar...it was not until he had got on some way in the next half-year, and in the Delectus, that he was advanced enough to call it a 'bore' and 'beastly stuff'." (9)

It could be argued that these difficulties were the fault of the teachers and their methods, not the fault of the subject, but the difficulties inherent in the subject was the argument for change put forward - from whatever cause.

Some of the critics arguing for change from Classics were of considerable academic standing, and endorsed the experiences described by Eliot. Charles Darwin commenting upon his studies at Shrewsbury for example, refers to them as leaving nothing more than 'a blank'. (10) Thomas Huxley felt the failure was because pupils were getting no further than the:

"getting up of endless forms and rules by heart. It means turning Latin and Greek into English for the mere sake of being able to do it, and without the smallest regard to the worth or worthlessness of the author read." (11)

J.W. Hales made a similar point, and began to suggest a substitute subject. He felt the boy:

"is not at all at ease in the society of the Classics, he cannot converse naturally with them, justly estimate and admire their calm and placid beauty, their noble dignified grace. He must find a society more accordant with his tastes and abilities." (12)

However, change was slow, and some centres of learning continued to hold out against what was becoming a vociferous pressure group. Lancing College for example had a 'Modern Side' in 1885 that:

"consisted of one despised form. It existed. No one had the least wish for it to exist and it was a sort of parasite." (13)

Nonetheless doubts as to the Classics' efficacy to permit access to its higher order aspects continued to grow and slowly a change was proposed. English Literature would be the vehicle used to bring about the liberal education and the complete, rounded gentleman, although despite the proposals there remained for many years a considerable and lingering differentiation of status regarding the relative merits of Classics and English Literature. Much of the differentiation was seen in social status terms. English Literature was thought to be particularly suitable for those 'below' Public School. An example of both the proposed use of literature, and its relative place can be seen in the Newcastle Commission Report. It recommended in 1861 that:

"Student teachers should study English Language and Literature, just as the Greek and Latin classics are read in the superior public schools."  
(14)

By 1868, The Taunton Commission had advanced a stage further in its recommendations. It endorsed a suggestion that modern subjects should be encouraged. It stated:

"give unusual weight to the teaching of English Language and Literature, to the attempt to humanise and refine a boy's mind by trying early to familiarise him with English poetry and to inspire him with a taste for the best authors that can be placed before him." (15)

At this time similar statements were being made by others. Appendix 2 contains a speech made by Robert Lowe in 1868 recommending the study of English.

It was the seminal "Essays on a Liberal Education" edited by Farrer, also in 1868, that would go further and make more explicit the purpose and place of English Literature in education as the replacement for Classics as the central subject, good for most humanising purposes. Although he felt Classics superior, Huxley was one who felt that their inaccessibility was an insurmountable problem, and hence the need for change to a second-rate but nonetheless servicable subject. Hence, he is one who champions the cause of English Literature in the volume. Having criticised the state of English teaching for not going beyond the basic, mechanistic skills, he stresses the need for English Literature because of its ability to 'character build'. As Mathieson comments:

"he firmly believed that the solution lay with the introduction of English. He was convinced that English Literature could provide those formative experiences which most pupils missed in their linguistic battles with Latin and Greek." (16)

In the same volume as Huxley, Henry Sidgwick wrote in terms that were to typify the campaign for English Literature, and in a style that still can be found to influence the subject's ideology amongst individual writers even in the late Twentieth Century. His and others' claims for the value and power of English were striking in their passion and hyperbole, championing their cause in what may seem almost desperate tones and justifying their belief with expressions of great moral seriousness. Sidgwick speaks of a 'missionary of culture' when he says:

"If the schoolmaster is ever to be a missionary of culture...he must make the study of modern Literature a substantive and important part of his training."

This must be done he believed in order that the pupils:

"views and sympathies may be enlarged and expanded by apprehending noble, subtle and profound thoughts, refined and lofty feelings, so that the source and essence of a truly humanising culture may ever abide with them." (17)

Despite, or perhaps because of, this rather lofty vocabulary, one can sense that these and other writers and thinkers were only tentatively feeling their way to the proposal to dispossess the Classics of its place. It was clearly a significant step that was not taken lightly, was considered and the reasons for the step made explicit. The process of change was slow and tentative for the suggestion was new to these thinkers and writers themselves, for they had been brought up in the old way, and of course the ideas of replacing the Classics was new to the wider public too; as well as being an anathema to those opposing change within the system - of which there were many. It might almost be thought surprising that change took place at all, particularly in view of the fact that these change proposals were being mooted in fairly esoteric publications, with no expensive national campaigns and 'launches' to aid acceptance of the change: Change that was called for to counteract the belief that Classics was failing to produce a liberal education because of its inherent difficulties.

It was because of that failure that English Literature was proposed as the centrally educative subject. Initially however, another subject also had its supporters as the replacement for Classics, and that subject was Science. Essentially this proposal failed, and for the second reason given earlier: if possible the liberal education should preferably exclude teaching in, knowledge of, and contact with, industry and commerce, and Science was perceived by fee paying parents as being linked with these traits of the Nineteenth Century. How liberal an education that then leaves is of course open to question. Despite its final failure, the case for Science was strong and must briefly be considered, for English Literature's place, as well as much of education's future tone, depended upon Science's failure.

In the mid Nineteenth Century, a charge being laid against both Classics and the Arts was that England needed greatly increased Science teaching to keep the rising forces of other industrialising nations such as France, Germany and the U.S.A. at bay, and to compete successfully in international commerce, industrial invention and production. As early as 1825 the Westminster Review states there must be:

"science, on which the wealth and power of Britain depends." (18)

Some felt an Arts based education was failing to produce the type of educated young that were seen as necessary. It was thought that some modern scientific knowledge should be

in the curriculum of the public schools for their pupils would almost certainly be the ones to go on to lead politically, industrially and in agriculture.

In order to keep within the known and recognised theories of the curriculum, Science's proponents argued also for the one centrally educative subject, and with similar strengths of belief.

Herbert Spencer insisted on the value of science because:

"not only for intellectual discipline is science the best, but also for moral discipline." (19)

And Faraday to the Clarendon Commission stated:

"an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary one." (20)

Despite such claims, the Science lobby failed to achieve its aim, and the main reasons seem quite clear. Many, if not most, parents who had choice and the money to exercise that choice disliked very strongly indeed the ideas of commerce and industry, preferring the status and image of 'old money', even if theirs had been obtained through the very commerce and industry they appeared to revile. In consequence they wanted nothing at all to do with the teaching to their children of anything that might suggest industrialism or its like; and the schools were very prepared to agree with this view. There was however, a



continuing feeling that Classics was too remote, and English Literature would act as a compromise vehicle that could not only achieve the liberal education desired, but also protect its students from contemporary conditions for which there was such a feeling of distaste.

So, for this second reason the place of English Literature grew as another purpose was assigned to it, and its power and status developed even though the subject was showing some signs of falling into the same path as that trodden by Classics. Where previously Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy or Tacitus had kept the century at bay and had provided status by restricting knowledge and generating esoteric superiority, these were simply replaced by the slightly less inaccessible Chaucer and Milton, Shakespeare and Marlowe, in order to equip pupils to withstand the:

"mechanised, commercialised, industrialised existence" (21)

and hence, the failure of Science.

It is important not to underestimate the strength of feeling held against the Nineteenth Century's industrial, scientific environment. Many people did fear the threat posed by the century's mechanical aspects to cultural standards, and English Literature was seen as the most efficacious source of a liberal education geared to resist perceived ugly forces. And these forces could otherwise have been further promoted had the Science supporters won

the debate: a debate it might be added in which the subject English Literature was promoted, sometimes in the most strident of terms, as a means to another end. Little is said about the values of teaching, reading, experiencing and enjoying Literature for no other purposes than these; for studying literature for its own intrinsic worth. It would seem that any appreciation of the art form itself that might come about would be purely incidental to many of the writers and enthusiasts.

However, such was the belief in the powers of English Literature that the next step in its growing place began to come about, and here the third rider mentioned at the start of this chapter can be considered, for it gave English Literature a broader purpose.

The provision of a liberal education was costly, and access to it was very restricted, but it was felt that here was an opportunity for those many children who would previously have been denied Classical study and the desired education to benefit from another access route to the admired aim. English Literature's purpose was to provide that route. This could be achieved in two ways.

Firstly, because English Literature was more accessible, it could be used further down the intellectual scale than the Classicist had to or could go. Secondly, and more importantly in terms of numbers of children involved, English Literature became seen to be the tool to soften

and improve those from humbler social origins, as well as to protect them also from modern, urban surroundings with their coarsening, brutalising effects. So for these children English Literature had the purpose of providing moral explanation and support, to encourage humanism and understanding in the mechanical, industrially reliant areas of the country, for the realisation was growing that there was a need for such aims amongst this wider population of children to be found being taught in the Board schools. In these schools the syllabus was very restricted, demanding basic mechanistic responses.

The Board schools taught only the most basic reading and writing, for that was all that was required of them. At Standard V (about age 11) for example, a pupil needed only to be able to perform the following:

- "Reading: to read a passage from some standard author, or from a history of England
  - Writing: writing from memory the substance of a short story read out twice; spelling, handwriting and correct expression to be considered. Copy books to be shown.
  - English: to recite 100 lines from some standard poet, and to explain the words and allusions. To parse and analyse simple sentences, and to know the method of forming English nouns, adjectives and verbs from each other."
- (22)

This was the prescription in 1862. It represents all the teaching and instruction a pupil needed to receive in his own language and literature. It was with this situation

that a growing number of eminent Victorians perceived a crisis in the cultural education of society. This was because children of all classes were being deprived of the humanising influences felt to be so important in the new environments; and the mechanistic, technical skills that the school board's syllabus prescribed could not, it was believed, help to alleviate this deprivation.

One of those eminent Victorians who expressed concern was also in a position and had the ability to act. Matthew Arnold, poet, writer and H.M.I.(a) was a man who stressed the purpose of English in schools throughout the country. Such is his importance in terms of influence upon the growth of English that it is necessary to examine his outstanding significance further. His beliefs and work need to be considered in the context of the times in which he worked.

Such was the political and social upheaval, discontent and disturbance of the day - the 1860's and 1870's - with trades union disturbances, Irish outrages, riots in Birmingham, Manchester and other major population centres, that Arnold like others, feared for the future and for the children of that future living in those places and times. For Arnold, his work became a crusade against these disruptions, and against the perceived destructive forces of industrialisation and the negative influences of Science. He set out to do something about his beliefs: actions that still have an influence today. In addition,

(a) Member of Her Majesty's Inspectorate.

he also believed the School board's syllabus to be inadequate in counteracting the contemporary ugly environment; his remedy was English Literature. This would bring culture to the lives of the children most at risk.

It was Arnold for example, who suggested that elementary school children should study the best models of English poetry. Whether, however, one should be grateful for the fact that Arnold introduced the learning of poetry by heart by pupils, may be open to question, particularly as in many cases this may have led to just the sort of bad teaching practice that the introduction of English Literature was supposed to have removed. Many children must have been put off English Literature and hence, according to its supporters, access to cultural improvement must have been closed too. In many ways like was again being replaced by like. Nonetheless, Arnold's belief was strong, and he was deeply concerned about the competitive, materialistic traits of Victorian society, and he believed that utilitarianism tended to exclude English Literature from middle-class schools as well as from the Board schools. Perhaps it is because of this that Arnold has remained a popular figure, for he believed that culture should not be the exclusive property of the few, but that it should be available to middle and working classes too. Hence the third drawback could be overcome, and help to save:

"the future as one may hope from being vulgarised, even if it (English Literature) cannot save the present." (23)

This 'hope' took the form of such a strong belief in English Literature's efficacy that it was put forward as the solution to society's ills with an almost religious zeal. Working as a member of H.M.I., Arnold wrote:

"Good poetry does undoubtedly tend to form the soul and character; it tends to beget a love of beauty and of truth in alliance together; it suggests however indirectly, high and noble principles of action, and it inspires the emotion so helpful in making principles operative. Hence its extreme importance to all of us; but in our elementary schools its importance seems to me at present quite extraordinary." (24)

To summarise Arnold's role in the development of English Literature's purpose, he saw it as the tool to bring about the aim of providing a liberal humanising education for all school children; to do which, much more time and resources would have to be provided to raise the place of English. Through his role in H.M.I. Arnold was able to do this. He ensured that in 1871 English Literature and grammar were made 'specific subjects' taught to individual pupils in Standards IV, V, and VI. By 1882 English was made a compulsory 'class' subject, where it was to remain in most state schools for the ensuing one hundred years: a central plank in the 'common-core' curriculum right through to sixteen and school leaving.

The place of English Literature was further strengthened during the latter part of the Nineteenth Century by other concerned writers, as its rôle of shield and protector was further developed and made more explicit. There was much concern expressed over the coarsening effects being worked

on the emotions of children by the language, and its results, found in what was regarded as 'bad art' - be it cheap fiction, advertising, or later, the cinema. It was felt that English Literature could help prevent some of their more pernicious influences. As one writer put it:

"Pupils are left to pick up their mother tongue from the periodical works of fiction which are the bane of our youth and the dread of every conscientious schoolmaster." (25)

One might wish to comment that much of Dickens' work was first published in periodical form. However, it must always be remembered that these are the writers of another time with different social attitudes and beliefs. When criticism of their beliefs, concerns and prescriptions is expressed by those who would disapprove of Victorian writers' right to prescribe and judge upon the interests and enthusiasms of others; this comment, that the times and attitudes were very different then, must be borne in mind.

In fact, many circumstances were very similar to those of the 1980's. Some of Arnold's expressed concerns, and those of writers in 'Essays on a Liberal Education' describe frighteningly similar situations to those of today. Referring back to the 'cheap fiction' for example, when one could find such titles as 'The Maniac Father', 'Vice and its Victims', and 'The Castle Fiend', one can both understand the worries of the concerned, and see how similar that worry about the less attractive Gothic novel is with concerns over the effects of 'Driller Killer' and

'The Chainsaw Massacre' hired from the local video shop. Then and now, the demand was often expressed for English Literature to be used to counteract such material and its supposed influence

It was felt that good literature could negate the powerful influences of 'popular fiction' and have an uplifting effect. This attitude continued as suggested to almost the present day. It is known for example that Darlington Borough Library in the south of County Durham, still in 1984 had a stand of books labelled in large letters 'Good Fiction', in amongst the shelves of Desmond Bagley and Jeffrey Archer.

To counter such dubious works, it was thought that more time needed to be allocated to the study of English Literature, and more money spent on it too. By 1900 the subject had gained a wide-spread acceptance as the panacea for a number of society's ills, many of which were felt to be all too luridly described and enjoyed in the popular fiction. E. Holmes for example lambasts this fiction as 'a vicious and demoralising literature'. He felt children were taking:

"so readily to this garbage because they have lost their appetite for wholesome food." (26)

He maintained it was the job of the English teacher to counteract this 'garbage' and its influence. Another to make a very similar point was W. Tomkinson who told the English teacher that:



"he must set his face against printed rubbish."  
(27)

Although some of these descriptions and attitudes, like those of the Victorians before, could be challenged for appearing somewhat arrogant in their force and sense of superiority, they carried then, as now, considerable weight and influence. Much hope was resting on English Literature, its teachers and materials. This hope was restated by a number of writers throughout the early decades of the Twentieth Century, Caldwell Cook with his 'Play Way' was one of these. The hope was never more clearly expressed than in two highly influential works both published in 1921 which further helped raise the place of English teaching, and clarify its purpose, bringing to more modern readers the thoughts and views of essayists from previous generations as well as the experiences of World War One which helped refocus thought, opinion and attitude.

The Newbolt Report 'Teaching of English in England' will be briefly considered first, for the author of the second of these Twenties works, George Sampson, sat on the Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Education which produced Newbolt's report, and Sampson's volume perhaps had more popular attention and broader influence.

The Newbolt Report very early on makes its view of the value of English clear:

"The inadequate conception of the teaching of English in this country is not a separate defect which can be separately remedied. It is due to a more far reaching failure = the failure to conceive the full meaning and possibilities of national education as a whole, and that failure again is due to a misunderstanding of the educational values to be found in the different regions of mental activity, and especially to an underestimate of the importance of the English language and literature." (28)

Arguing with the same passionate zeal as Arnold for English and its efficacy, Newbolt too saw English as a moral improver and source of humanitarian development, helping to alleviate the perils and degradations brought about by mechanisation, industrialisation, urban living and the recent war with all its effects and influences; as well as hopes that it could continue to counter-balance cheap fiction and the pernicious influence of the cinema. Hopes were high in 1921:

"We claim that no personality can be complete, can see life steadily and see it whole, without the unifying influence, that purifying of the emotions which art and literature alone bestow. It follows then from what we have said above that the bulk of people, of whatever class, are unconsciously living starved existences, that one of the richest fields of our spiritual being is left uncultivated - not indeed barren, for the weeds of literature have never been so prolific as in our day." (29)

Newbolt gave one further purpose to English, if those already assigned were not enough; the Report believed that English Literature could also act as a unifier of the Nation - in a social sense. The Report saw England split along class and work divisions, and Newbolt believed English Literature could operate to cure such divisiveness

in society by providing a common rich experience of culture and art that all could appreciate, share and grow from. The Report prescribed English Literature as a 'bond' subject to help form a social bridge between classes and their positions of employment, and that employment and a liberal education were well linked, although perhaps uneasily:

"the needs of business must be strictly subordinated to those of a liberal education. To the satisfaction of us all, the answers to our questionnaire made it clear that what the leading firms of the country desired most of all in their employees were just those qualities which a liberal education, rightly understood, should develop in young people...It was refreshing to find the teaching of literature advocated as an essential preparation for a business career."  
(30)

However, one of the compilers of the report responsible for furthering the claims for Literature was George Sampson, and in his seminal 'English for the English' he makes clear his views as to the purpose of English and why its place must be prominent; and he sides very much with the employee, rather than looking for links and bridges. As with the report, he has clear views on the social structure of England and the relative places of employer and employee, the gulf between them and how that might be resolved.

Before considering his views, Sampson's own place in this study must be clarified. He is quoted at some length because of his style and influence. He writes clearly and well and engagingly. His writing is as distinctive in its power as Arnold's, and is shot through with uncompromising

statements - many of which would be an anathema to some current curriculum aims and designs prescribed by Government and industrial agencies of the 1980's. The very style of his writing is such that his work and ideas were easily accessible, and were widely read; consequently the 'take-up' level was high, and his influence remains. To see how this was done, the quotations are more lengthy.

To return to Sampson's views on employment and the purpose of English, he, like Arnold and the Newbolt Report, believed that much of life for many could be unpleasant, and that much agricultural, factory and shop work was brutalising and unedifying. He felt that the aim of education was to prepare people for living, not for earning a living. Sampson says in one famous paragraph:

"I maintain, without any reservations or perhaps, that it is the purpose of education not to prepare children for their occupations, but to prepare children against their occupations."(31)

He paints this picture in support:

"Here are girls who are daily for five or ten or a dozen years doing nothing else but put tin lids on boxes; and all over the country there are hundreds of thousands, adolescents and adults of both sexes - whose wage earning life is spent in tasks just as brainless, just as maddeningly mechanical...it sounds almost morally convincing to say that 'education should be given a vocational bias with reference to the specific character of the local industries.'" (32)

Sampson protests against this demand, he argues and fights with the fervour of his forebears, and his work provides

an interesting comparison with some of the more recent statements on the purposes of education and English teaching to be considered later in this study. Sampson asks:

"Is anyone prepared to maintain that the purpose of education is to teach boys how to hew coal and girls to put lids on boxes?" (33)

Presumably more modern repetitive industrial tasks could be substituted here. Like Newbolt, Sampson was much concerned with the social divisiveness of society that such labour divisions created and perpetuated, and he believed that education establishments helped to maintain the gulf:

"It is I think, indisputable that most people think of an elementary school as something quite different in purpose from a public school. The difference may be thus: Harrow is allowed to make men; Hoxton has to make hands. From the elementary school employers expect to receive a steady supply of acquiescent and well-equipped employees." (34)

Sampson makes the point that elementary schools have done the job expected of them very well, but that by concentrating on the mechanistic, technical skills demanded, they have:

"failed to lay the foundations of a humane education." (35)

which would have counteracted the empty vocational training he previously describes and feels to be so wanting. He states:

"It is our duty to educate a child, not train a hand. The child will become a hand quite soon enough: the school need not hasten the process."  
(36)

In consequence, Sampson calls for the provision of a liberal education once the acquisition of necessary skills has been accomplished. For a liberalising humanising education, simply to help people live together, Sampson prescribes English, in all its modes. He says about the importance of English:

"Whatever the nature of the livelihood that actually awaits them, (all children) must be able to speak, to read, to write, because speaking, reading and writing are the means of human intercourse, of communion between man and his fellows. The inarticulate person is cut off from his kind, and is fatally limited to a communion of sullen contact with the equally inarticulate." (37)

To develop the 'communion' Sampson prescribes Literature as the subject best suited to cure the ills he has identified, best able to provide the vehicle to achieve his purpose of education, and best able to alleviate the dreadful situation of the person he has just described here.

Sampson's tone, whilst prescribing English Literature, is idealist, as he admits:

"If we are really sincere, this ideal must inspire not merely our educational talk, but our educational deeds." (38)

To raise the level of the Hoxton pupils' educational experience, and to equip them 'against their occupations'

Sampson says:

"Our chief task in school is twofold: (a) to treat English as a tool, and (b) to treat English as a means of access to formative life and beauty." (39)

To indicate finally how Sampson envisaged this chief task, he recounts the experience that perhaps encapsulates his views on the purpose of English and the place of English Literature.

As a member of H.M.I. Sampson had to show a visitor around a London school. The visitor, having witnessed a classroom performance of 'Twelfth Night' said "It's very nice for the boys, but Shakespeare won't help them earn their living." As Sampson says:

"This is profoundly true. Shakespeare is quite useless, as useless as Beauty and Love and Joy and Laughter, all of which many reputable persons would like to banish from the schools of the poor. Yet it is in beauty and love and joy and laughter that we must find the way of speaking to the soul, the soul that does not appear in the statistics, and is therefore always left out of the account...And so children think they learn in order to earn, and cannot imagine any other purpose in learning." (40)

Despite, or because of, this ringing tone of idealism, Sampson's influence continued to be felt for very many years. However, it was perhaps at this time that the place of English Literature reached its height in educational thought and planning, with its purpose most clearly defined being intrinsically justified and yet also as a humanising force for good, as a vehicle for the

transmission of aims and ideals in education that were greater than the perceived narrow demands of industry and economy conscious governments and local authorities.

Despite this clear education rationale provided in the early 1920's, what is less clear however, is what level of English Literature provision, resourcing and teaching actually went on. Unlike the hopes expressed, one has the feeling that perhaps a degree of that teaching was probably wooden and mechanistic, taught in a way designed to pass Literature exams, something both Newbolt and Sampson were fearful of. Nonetheless their work brought to a generation that had recently suffered such a trauma as the First World War a renewed hope and direction for the future.

After Sampson, in many ways English Literature's purpose as perceived by many educationists came to be seen to be of less importance than other aspects and purposes of English teaching. In consequence therefore, it also began to have a diminishing place in the syllabus. Changes in emphasis and purpose of English were being suggested by supporters and promoters of English but only slowly, even gently at first, for they saw the need for changes to be suggested and made gradually, and Literature's place had only just been truly established.

Later in the 1920's, a need was perceived for pupils to have a much greater opportunity for self-expression and creativity. Writers held the view that the creative



nature of children should be expressed in order to achieve greater personal development and individuality, particularly to guard against events taking place in Germany, Italy, and Russia at this time. This new need helped reduce Literature's place in the English curriculum. The work fell within the remit of the Language side of English, which continued to slowly move away from the mechanical exercises, repetition and rote learning that had characterised this area for so long. It moved towards work designed to exercise and develop this self-expression and creativity because, as Tomkinson states:

"The creative instinct is as strong and abiding in the child as in the poet. They are both makers. The child strives after the expression of himself and does it in the same way as the poet - by creative work." (41)

and such work would be exercised through 'Language' composition.

It was felt by some that a child's self-expression in its own language and in its own personal response to Literature, rather than somebody else's, could be recommended as formative experiences for pupils. Educationists such as Stanley Hall in America and Percy Nunn in England were such people. As in previous years, the link was made between the quality of life and English; not as previously however, just with English Literature, but with work stemming from English Language that used Literature as an aid to Language's purpose of helping

psychological development. This was a crucial shift of relationship. As a consequence, the term 'English' began to broaden, and the place of 'Language' in the English curriculum became ever more important - at the expense of Literature's.

In the 1927 report 'The Education of the Adolescent', an individual's experience and expression was thought to be best released and realised through English, not necessarily through English Literature. The report felt that Literature was still important, but to it had to be added oral work and drama, as well as creative composition writing in order that:

"through active participation in the learning process, children should achieve fuller individuality." (42)

Clearly, here was a progress, a development on from Sampson who too felt all modes to be of importance but Literature for him had been pre-eminent - now this was no longer to be the case. And so, from the later 1920's onwards, Literature had to accept a diminished responsibility for the development of a child's character and a lesser role in the production of a liberal education, diminished in the sense of no longer being pre-eminent, but sharing the task of liberally educating. Perhaps this change was sensible, for one must question how successfully Literature had accomplished its aim when prescribed by Arnold and others as the one centrally educative subject.

Nonetheless, in the face of reductionist tendencies sometimes found in education, the supporters of Literature have had to continue to justify its position and role, to explicate its purpose in changing circumstances and conditions; to keep it relevant to contemporary demands and situations, and mindful of perceived shortcomings in society and the dangers they present to new generations.

This process of justification of the purpose and the promotion of the place of English Literature has continued throughout the years between the 1920's and the late 1980's. As previously, the justification has often been based upon grounds related to a relevant social context of need.

Following in the traditions of Arnold, the writers of 'Essays on a Liberal Education', Sampson, and the Newbolt Report committee, came the highly influential F.R. Leavis, and some consideration must be given to his thoughts and work on the purpose and teaching of English Literature.

He too identified as his belief the view that only the study and criticism of English Literature could counteract the perceived cultural debasement of England that he felt was occurring. He believed that modern urban society was in a state of cultural disintegration from the influences of ugly environments and mechanical work patterns, and that the trivial mass-media of cinema, music hall, tabloid newspapers and magazines and advertising were conspiring to reduce taste and powers of discrimination.

One contemporary of Leavis, I.A. Richards, states:

"Bad taste and crude responses are not mere flaws in an otherwise admirable person, they are actually a root evil from which other defects follow. No life can be excellent in which the elementary responses are confused and disorganised." (43)

By studying Literature, Leavis maintained, such unfortunate results as these could be averted, and the destructive dangers and influences of ugly conditions of work and unemployment, of the influence of commerce, and the persuasive appeals of the mass-media, could be lessened on the cultural life of England. It seems Leavis felt he had a sense of obligation to all levels of education and society to defend that culture against such influences, and he argued with the passion of his predecessors, the only difference being his metaphors were military; theirs' had been religious.

As to method, Leavis maintains that Art, in this case Literature, is not something that can be seen in isolation segregated from existence and 'life'; it is an integral part that may cast light on our existences and lives, adding meaning and insight, understanding and sympathy. By studying Literature Leavis felt students would be able to discriminate between the highly precise and sensitive writing of experience recreation that affects the reader's reactions, and the crude, superficial and banal presentations that blunt and deaden, and that leave the reader open to:

"a terrifying apparatus of propaganda...emulations of Hitler and his accomplices...What is to forestall or check them? Without an intelligent educated and morally responsible public, political programmes can do nothing to arrest the process of disintegration." (44)

To arrest this process, cultural transmission through language was the answer Leavis proposed. He believed that at the centre of the English culture stood the use of language, and that without language linked with culture and tradition the whole basis of understanding in English society begins to crumble:

"Largely conveyed in Language there is our spiritual, moral and emotional tradition, which preserves the picked experience of ages regarding the finer issues of life." (45)

Writing together, Leavis and Thompson held that the English language was being debased and that therefore it was becoming more difficult to solve problems of:

"conduct, taste, valuation of a response to experience because words and language are losing their life, vigour and potency." (46)

They thought language was losing its vigour because of the debasing uses to which it was being put and that:

"the decisive use of words today is in association with advertising, journalism, best-sellers, motor cars and the cinema." (47)

To prevent this identified debasement of language use, an awareness of language through literature - an integration of the two - was proposed:

"It is to literature alone, where its (Language's) subtlest and finest use is preserved, only to that can we look with any hope of keeping in touch with our spiritual tradition - with the picked experiences of ages." (48)

Leavis further developed his thinking and felt there was a need for greater literary awareness in order to differentiate between invigorating and debasing language use, and he believed that the process of teaching finer discrimination needed to begin in schools in order to repel the assaults being made on cultural standards. He proposed:

"the training of sensibility might profitably begin at an early age...practical criticism of Literature must be associated with training of awareness of the environment...for to the pervasive counter-influence of this environment the literary training of sensibility in school is at present an inadequate reply." (49)

Leavis lastingly influenced those who came under him at Cambridge, some of whom, like Thompson, were later to work with him. Thompson himself, Frank Whitehead, and David Holbrook have all taken on Leavis' ideas and all have held their own positions of power and influence, through which in their own writings they have passed on similar, although modified ideas. Thompson for example:

"In an ordinary school, all the time a literary education is striving to sharpen percipience and to provide standards, it is fighting a running engagement against the environment." (50)

This view of the purpose of English Literature teaching, with it being used as the central humanising experience of

the curriculum to provide a critical discrimination to bring about personal and social awareness, was held by Leavis' followers for many years. However, by the late 1950's and early 1960's, further shifts of emphasis and changes of purpose began to come to the fore and to be taken up in English classrooms. This happened as new voices with different views and motivations began to achieve greater influence on English teaching and its direction, and on the place and purpose of Literature within that movement.

In the early 1960's Leavis' views began to be discredited. His assumptions that the mass-media were a bad influence and that cultures other than his were less 'good' were questioned more forcefully, as were his purposes. By challenging Leavis these new thinkers and writers were also challenging the very foundations and *raison d'etre* of English studies proposed and supported by many of the influential voices of the past hundred years.

Changes were and still are being proposed and introduced by these new thinkers and educationalists, and their views and influence on the teaching of English and its direction have been considerable. As previously there have been several writers and reports that have been most influential; and most of these have tended - until very recently - to continue the trend away from a Literature base, to move its purpose to a more peripheral zone.

One of these forces for change was the Newsom Report of 1963, this stated that pupil achievement at school was closely linked with pupil linguistic ability. This began to shift the emphasis of English teaching towards the improvement of linguistic competence in average and below average pupils, and away from the uses and purposes of Literature. The report was widely read and acted upon and was certainly still required reading in Schools of Education well into the 1970's, where it was considered and analysed by training teachers.

A further shift of emphasis occurred because it was held by the 'New Left' that the study of great Literature was inappropriate, besides being inaccessible to the majority of pupils - a charge levelled a hundred years before at the Classics. It was claimed that the study of Literature was elitist and that it excluded working-class culture. The claim was also made that its study implied support for the present social structure with its inequalities, and helped perpetuate social divisions, thus contradicting the Newbolt Report. Such 'New Left' thinkers felt that Leavis' concentration on great Literature and disparagement of commercial culture and the mass-media, supported middle-class values, encouraged elitism, detracted from working-class values, and adversely affected many pupils' school performances.

The concepts for great Literature and High art were slowly to be taken out of the classroom. This move coincided with the general change to a more child-centred teaching



and learning approach that was being made at that time and that was well established by the mid 1960's. Literature was to be used differently as the new methods advanced. There was a greater concentration on the experience pupils could themselves bring to the classroom, hence introducing relevance and familiarity. To aid this approach, themes and projects were designed and works of literature were dismantled into short extracts to illustrate relevant points.

Such developments can best be seen in school textbooks of the time and the areas they stress. 'English through Experience' (51), emphasises clearly the experience pupils can bring to the classroom, or on experiences that can be offered to them within it, and writing and expression will come from these things.

Also in 1963 the highly influential 'Reflections' (52) was introduced and became a great commercial success. It took a thematic approach of the social-studies type of immediate familiarity to pupils; 'Parents', 'Old Age', 'The Neighbourhood', and 'Work' were some of its themes. It had no grammar or other work on technical mechanics of language, and little or no literature appreciation despite the number of passages included. The Literature extracts were there to illustrate and illuminate the pupils' own experiences, thoughts and emotions, to help him negotiate his world, as well as possibly to provoke thoughts and attitudes he might not otherwise have held.

This use of English to help the child 'make sense' of his world was further advanced by a famous conference held at Dartmouth College in the U.S.A. in 1966. From it came 'Growth Through English' by J. Dixon, who also was a co-compiler of 'Reflections'. Here too, the demand is for a strongly child-centred approach so that the child can: "build his own representational world". The plan of action being:

"In English, pupils meet to share their encounters with life, and to do this effectively they move freely between dialogue and monologue - between talk, drama and writing and literature; by bringing new voices into the classroom they add to the store of shared experience. Each pupil takes from the store what he can and what he needs. In so doing he learns to use language to build his own representational world to make this fit reality as he experiences it." (53)

Dixon went on to claim the need for a shift from having Literature at the centre of English teaching. He stated there had been:

"An erosion of belief in the power of Literature as such, in the value of exposing oneself to the impact of the poem or story or novel for its own sake." (54)

Although the implication here was that others had explicated this 'erosion', Dixon himself was one of those responsible for creating or articulating what may or may not have been there before, and Dixon's influence on the downgrading of the place of Literature was considerable. He felt the important thing to emphasise was the

importance of the experience of the pupils and their life and growth - without reference to the thought of tradition and transmission of cultures and values previously considered so important. Such views provoked a linguistic controversy. Frank Whitehead, a leading light at Dartmouth, challenged Dixon's view. He felt literature was being 'used'. He feared that belief in the power of literature was being eroded. However, despite these and later doubts, the previous centrality of Literature was gone, and Dixon's work must have helped in this. Some of the resultant consequences of Dixon's work are still influencing the role of English in the late 1980's and the purpose and place of Literature within that broader function.

One must consider one of the ways Dixon's views became assimilated. As the success of 'Reflections' became clear, bringing seemingly greater immediate relevance to changing social conditions, other publishers had to produce similar works. Passages were extracted from all sorts of novels in an effort to illustrate themes for their publications. This could lead to abuse of passages and novels with extracts taken out of context, as Allen asks in a response to Dixon's 'Growth Through English':

"how could the unique quality of 'Lark Rise to Candleford' fail to be destroyed by its use for 'Localities and Customs?' (55)

Adams advanced one step further from themes, to projects designed to last one year.(56)'Landscapes' for example was

for the third year pupil, with extracts from D.H. Lawrence, Owen, Sassoon and Frost.

What such textbooks encouraged was the creation of a division within the subject English. One branch of this division saw itself as relevant, and contemporary - explaining and making sense of a pupil's world; the other branch was 'pure' Literature. This 'purity' took the form of a subject devoted to literary criticism, and the passing of exams. A further sub-division occurred with 'good' literature texts being studied by G.C.E. pupils, and more relevant, contemporary texts, supposedly more accessible in nature, being read by C.S.E. candidates. Contrary to the hopes and designs of previous writers and thinkers, such studies became somewhat divorced from 'real' life, and this the exam boards encouraged through the types of questions that were set, (for a closer examination of this, see Appendix 3 'Unlocking Mind-Forg'd Manacles?'). In addition, the subject often tended to become an option in secondary schools years 4 and 5, rather like Geography and Biology. It lost its place and its relevance and purpose.

So by this stage the further shift of emphasis had evolved and become institutionalised, made up of the two divisions. On the one hand the use of such projects designed by Adams tended to indicate that the subject English was becoming less specific, and its meaning was broadening, with subject boundaries being broken down; and on the other hand a specialist 'pure' Literature course

divorced from mainstream English existed too. These developments have continued progressively during the last fifteen years and will now be traced to the present day for they clearly have a major bearing upon what sort of English Literature will be taught in schools for the foreseeable future.

As 'Reflections' showed, English was tending away from clearly defined boundaries, and was spreading into other subjects, in order to 'make sense' of them. The question asked by some curriculum designers was, if knowledge and learning were a unity, then surely there was a need to integrate the 'subjects', so that for example, English, History, Geography, Religious Education and Social Studies could 'unite' in 'Humanities'. Another route was that proposed by Abbs in 'English Within the Arts' (57). He stressed the personal growth of individual pupils to be the aim, to be achieved by the use of 'English' through experience. He argued that it was necessary to reject academic disciplines with definable limits and particular values, that such rigid subject boundaries were not needed. Saunders in 'Developments in English Teaching' sums this movement up with the comment:

"It is a short step from this sort of reference across subject boundaries to a questioning of the validity of the boundaries themselves." (58)

This, and further steps, were taken in the 1970's when there was a great inclination to widen the scope and breadth of 'English'. It is at about this time that one

begins to feel it necessary to place the title, English, in inverted commas, so far had it moved away from the more restricted subject developed over the preceding decades. During the 1970's courses of the 'integrated studies', 'interdisciplinary enquiry', and 'autonomous learning' sort were being established. Here Literature was used as just another 'input' selected by publisher, teacher or writer as being of relevance to the project or theme - not for its own value, and some even as early as 1973 were beginning to question this development for the damage it did to Literature. The claim was made by Allen for example, that to ignore Literature's distinctive qualities is to change it, to bend the author's aim. Using a literary extract only as social evidence to illustrate some human disadvantage might mean the material selected by teacher or publisher, and truncated to fit the theme, only conveys the teacher's values and opinions. He says:

"The teacher becomes a block on the plurality of voices instead of offering real choice." (59)

This statement is reinforced by the danger identified by Lindley. He believed that such teaching could produce wrongful distortions of meaning:

"an application of Literature that ignores the intention behind, and the complexity of, the work in question, is an abuse." (60)

Despite such doubts as those expressed by Allen and Lindley, 'official' voices were moving with the general trend of thought outlined. By removing subject boundaries, and by ignoring the centrally organising concepts of Literature that give it its uniqueness, by distorting its intent to make it fit for other tasks, Literature had lost its place and the purposes ascribed to it over the previous century. It might well be argued that those writers of the 1960's were planning for just such a development, effectively - the loss of Literature from the 'core' curriculum in order that 'English' classroom time could concentrate on other things with a new central emphasis and purpose.

Although moving away from Literature briefly, it is necessary to consider where this new emphasis lay, for it has considerable bearing on what role is assigned to Literature in both the present day, and in the future. A major influence on directing the path of English in recent times came in the mid 1970's with the influential Bullock Report which was considered to be wide-ranging and of value. Its aims were to consider "all aspects of teaching the use of English", and to see "how present practice might be improved", to discover to what extent monitoring arrangements "can be introduced or improved" and "to make recommendations". (61)

Perhaps because of the broad approach of 'themes' and 'projects' that spread across subject boundaries, much of Bullock's findings were linked with this aspect. The

report recommended the need in schools for a language policy - "Language across the Curriculum" as it was known. The rationale was that learning requires language not just to receive instruction, but also as the essential means of forming and assimilating central subject concepts. As Bullock states:

"Each school should have an organised policy for language across the curriculum, establishing every teacher's involvement in language and reading development throughout the years of schooling." (62)

So, language and its use became the central point of emphasis, language as the tool for learning, and English specialists were exhorted to concentrate upon this. In many ways the report formalised and made 'official' the work and views of the London Association for the Teaching of English team, of Rosen, Barnes and Britton. It was in "Language, the Learner and the School" (63) that the place of language was greatly emphasised, particularly the use of talk in learning, and this emphasis was reflected by Bullock. Thus it was that the importance of language for learning in all subjects and learning situations achieved a place of not only awareness in the minds of educationalists and practitioners, but also a place of some dominance; and for the reason Bullock gives:

"The one feature shared by all educational institutions is that they make heavy demands on the language of those who learn, and those who teach...the pupil should be helped to develop increasingly technical control over his language so that he can put it to increasingly complex use." (64)



In consequence the emphasis was to shift in order to concentrate on the development of linguistic competence as an enabling device to help learn and understand other things. As Marland states:

"Language is vital to learning to provide access to the source materials and the learning experiences" (65)

Following the publication of Bullock and its generally favourable reception, many textbooks rapidly became available to English departments that emphasised this service approach with such tasks as reading train and bus timetables, and understanding labels on medicine bottles, within the reading for 'life' sphere. Exercises also became available for work on specimen passages from, for example, Biology textbooks and Science manuals, (see appendix 4), for the 'across the curriculum' area.

Despite the fairly widespread support for the new direction, some were casting doubts. One such was Abbs. He argued in 'English Within the Arts', that:

"The intrinsic concerns of English as a discipline are literary, expressive and aesthetic."

And that English should link closely with:

"The undervalued disciplines of art, dance, drama, music and film," (66)

Abbs takes a different view from Marland, Abbs believes it to be wrong that the English teacher becomes more and more involved with "English as a medium", as part of a "language for learning" policy, rather than English as a discipline. He fears that English will become submerged within the medium. Abbs suggests that as a result of such trends as those set by Bullock, the English teacher becomes a:

"general adviser rather than an initiator into a specific kind of knowledge through a specific kind of procedure and through a specific kind of language...(the English teacher becomes) like a man carrying a bag of tools, but with only other people's jobs to do." (67)

This concern is one more frequently expressed in recent years, and as the 1980's progress, is one being voiced by various individuals in the press. However, much classroom practice has shifted, to emphasise the use of language as a learning tool for other subject areas, and this shift has placed a greater emphasis on the importance of classroom talk, discussion groups for example being central to the discovery and assimilation of knowledge and understanding. Many recent textbooks encourage and follow this approach, 'Oxford Secondary English' (68) being a recent popular example.

With the example of a modern textbook before us, it is at this point that the survey of the development of English teaching, and the place and purpose of Literature within it, reaches current developments. The designers and developers of these will now be examined to cast light on

their value, their implications for future practice, and their actual influence on teachers of English. This must be done against the background of past practice and beliefs about the place and purpose of Literature previously identified.

CHAPTER TWO

Modern Voices

There are many current developments and proposals for innovations within English and many attempts are made to sway teachers to one or another, and importantly this can lead to confusion, uncertainty and discomfort over aims and methods. Such attempts to persuade teachers to one particular emphasis or development are made by various agents and bodies concerned to promote their development, their design for change and innovation. This is perhaps what epitomises the current situation in schools and within English departments: the number of agencies for change, all pressuring for that change from a wide range of directions, and for a wide range of purposes. As a personal example of this, the writer, in the guise of Head of English Department, has received a quite remarkable number of bulletins, pamphlets and instructions during the period of the literature survey which follows, all of which exhort, order, advise or inform of one proposed, advised, instructed or hoped for change or another.

What has not yet changed markedly is that with regard to this present situation, English, as suggested at the beginning of this study, does still maintain a dominance as a subject area alongside Mathematics, although as indicated, Literature's place would seem much reduced. In terms of lesson allocation and in numbers of pupils continuing with the subject through to at least sixteen, this is the case; at C.S.E. level for example in 1986 the total number of candidates sitting the North Regional Examinations Board English Language exam was over 19,000,

as it was for Mathematics. The next closest subject in terms of entries was Geography with just over 9,000 (see appendix 5).

I shall shortly suggest that this situation may change dramatically over the next few years, for currently the forces for change are louder and more powerful than seemingly at any previous time. This is particularly the case in the area of publicity. The use of the mass-media for pressure-group type tactics, and their input of materials into L.E.A. offices, school staff rooms, Headteacher offices and the like are examples of the strength of voice being heard, not just by Heads of English Departments.

There are many of these different change agencies currently operating upon the English teacher. This is not a unique position; all subjects are presently undergoing change, and English is but one of these. However, given its central position and place of dominance in subject hierarchy, these change agencies and what they are wanting to do must be examined for the effects they are having and will have upon the body of English teachers, upon what is taught, and upon where Literature will stand in such proposals.

Briefly one must consider the assumption underlying all proposals for change. They all assume that English teaching does need changing in some way, frequently this

assumption is implied, with no reference made to it. Sometimes it is made explicit but sometimes with nothing more than the like of: "of course we all recognise that standards are falling." Unfortunately this is often the recourse of politicians.

Nonetheless, no matter what the rationale or motivation, it is necessary to identify these agencies for change, and consider their views on what should be being done in English teaching in secondary schools, and what their view of Literature's role is. This study will attempt to place their designs and planned areas of emphasis within the framework of past purpose and practice of English teaching identified in the first part of the study; for that is the base upon which change must build, and it is the current structure with its traditions, methods, and aims.

The following agencies for change have been identified as currently operating within the sphere of English teaching, and having some influence upon it. Naturally not all are as influential as others, and some may have greater power in one area of the country than another. It is necessary to make explicit the methodology for selection. This study must naturally confine itself only to agencies for change that the writer has become aware of; in consequence more localised, or nationally influential but subtler forces for change, cannot be included. For this reason for example, the influence of

specific local or county subject advisers, individual school Heads of Department, Headteachers, or individual L.E.A.'s have not been considered, for their important influences will vary from place to place and this study does not have the scope to include them. However, their influence is great, and must not go unrecognised. In addition it would go against the design of the first part of this study to consider localised influences here as they have not previously been included.

The study then, will consider those influences that come within the wider, national and public domain as there they are able to influence and change all readers or receivers of that attempted influence.

The agencies of influence attempting to change aims and practice, or attempting to retain and maintain current procedures fall within two main categories. These will be examined in the following order: firstly, as in the past, there are the individual voices, the individual thinkers and writers; secondly, there are the official and semi-official groups and bodies, often backed by public money, Government Ministries, or quangos of one sort or another.

As far as the first category is concerned, writers working in the recent past from late '84-'86 will be considered and included, as it is the current state of thinking and writing being examined; work done earlier is already being absorbed into book texts, and into the work and productions of the second category identified above.

As well as strict date parameters, only the writings found in two publications will be reviewed as these are nationally available and contain articles open to the public domain. The two journals give a good impression and are representative of the prevailing state of opinion. The work of writers publishing material in 'The Times Educational Supplement' - the main general journal on Education, and 'English in Education' - the main specialist journal, produced by The National Association for the Teaching of English, will be used to examine individual writers' perceptions of the current position of English teaching and prescriptions for the future of it, and particularly Literature's place and purpose within that teaching. How these views fit with the past framework of English teaching, and which model they tend to emphasise will also be considered.

The individual writers publishing in T.E.S. and 'English in Education' will be considered first. They can be considered as something of a group, for a remarkable point concerning these individual writers is their degree of unanimity; and this feature of their writing needs to be made very clearly. They all appear to take a very similar line.

The individual writers are primarily concerned with promoting and defending the traditional values and purposes of English teaching, and continue to see that teaching working within the literary model. They do at times argue and protest against Government sponsored



bodies' proposed changes of emphasis, and they do so in much the same style as the writers of the past, indeed often calling upon them in support of their cause. They argue because they believe the semi-official and official Government view and that of some of its sponsored bodies appears to be that there is a need for English teaching to have:

- a) a far greater degree of centralised control in terms of aims, planning, method and assessment
- b) in terms of content, a far greater concentration upon a mechanistic functionalistic English curriculum; with greatly reduced Literature content
- c) greater 'relevance', for it to be more closely tied to the demands of 'market forces', the economy and manufacturing and the requirements of prespective employers.

This promotion of a more mechanistic approach and emphasis and how it is being encouraged will be considered in due course. However, the work of the individual contemporary writers, which includes protests against such developments as those outlined, will be first considered.

All T.E.S. articles directly related to, and concentrating upon, English, written between November 1984 and 1986 have been included, and these will be examined first for they fall into a wider public domain than the more specialist and less easily obtainable 'English in Education'. In essence the analysis will work from the

general journal to the specific journal. Although each article will be treated separately, a consideration of threads common to each will also be made.

As a preliminary comment, what is of interest is that to one degree or another, all articles are fearful of proposed changes of emphasis being considered by official and semi-official bodies, and they exhort teachers to resist such changes. They plead for the central emphasis of English teaching to be Literature and the enriching of lives and spirits.

David Holbrook, Director of English Studies at Downing College, Cambridge, writing a major 2000 word article in response to the then Secretary of State's outline for debate on the 5-16 curriculum, fears for English as art, as an aid to personal expression and experience, for personal development. He fears for the possible loss of the English Literature model. Holbrook believes that the danger to English comes from the newly proposed concentration on 'language' meaning 'language skills' or 'communication skills' that may come about as a result of pressure from the Department of Education and Science to be 'business like' and to address much more time to the new technologies. He sees this as a danger that will bring poverty to people's lives.

Holbrook quotes Sampson to support his view, and calls for teachers to resist pressures from the D.E.S. for less imaginative work and for more 'practical skills'. He

argues that the humanities in fact aid technology and industry, for it is the arts that stimulate: "spirit, of vision for the future, of flexibility and imagination." He goes on to state: "many thousands of teachers know that the most efficient way to foster the dynamic of learning in children is to stimulate their imaginations." He restates his claim, made originally in 1961 in 'English for Maturity' that the need is to continue to foster creative writing and an imaginative response in the pupil in order to continue to "discover himself and the world", for as he quotes Samuel Coleridge: "The imagination is the primary agent of human perception."

Holbrook argues that: "culture and the poetic faculties, in the widest sense", come first. He believes, for example, reading Huckleberry Finn or Keats will excite children to write: "the most marvellous sentences" that will develop articulateness from which technical and mechanical matters can be developed and dealt with; so there becomes no problem in coping with the 'practical' needs of writing and reading in the world. In consequence, he resists the emphasis of the "limited concept of practical English" being proposed by the then Secretary of State for Education, Sir Keith Joseph and the D.L.S. as being "misguided and ill-informed".

So, Holbrook sets his stall very firmly in the arts/personal development area of emphasis, as one might expect from a former follower of Leavis, and he ends with

the call: "teachers should resist, because they know it just won't work." (69)

Here, clearly, is a call from a powerful individual voice for teachers to listen and for their work and practice to be affected by an individual writer.

A similar point is taken up in an article by Roger Knight, Senior Lecturer in Education, University of Leicester, and Editor of 'Use of English'. This too is concerned with personal development. Knight's main thrust is a criticism of the Secondary Examinations Council English Working Party's 'Report and Draft Criteria for G.C.S.E.'. He criticises the report as recommending and promoting "external, observable, measurable objectives" that ignore the "centrality of English Literature".

Knight cites the importance of Literature by quoting from the Newbolt Report and from F.R. Leavis. From Leavis he quotes: "English Literature gives us a continuity that is not yet dead...a full continuity of mind, spirit and sensibility". Knight believes that English is changing its emphasis through Bullock and the S.E.C. to place too great an emphasis on linguistics that has nothing to do with "mind, spirit and sensibility", an English teaching: "in which Literature has a distinctly subordinate place". He identifies the danger as he sees it as that: "the heart has gone from the subject when the centrality of English Literature to promote the inner, the individual, the imaginative, the symbolic are ignored".

As with past writers, one can hear the similar strains of exhortation and fervent belief for the place of Literature study to be at the centre of English, and Knight too ends by warning English teachers that: "the acceptance of such terms (as those laid down by S.E.C.) could only betray the true values of the subject and travesty its best contemporary practice."(70)

Nicholas Shrimpton's article is less directly concerned with schools, and deals with the purposes of Literary criticism at University level. However, he closes by linking this to schools and considers the purpose of Literature as a school subject. He makes no reference to external agencies for change that recommend the more 'practical' and 'mechanistic' elements of English teaching. He places Literature study and its purposes in the same area as that identified by Sampson and Arnold, and considers the various accusations made against Literature teaching. He says: "we are left teaching reading skills, cultural history and taste, albeit more self-consciously than before" and believes that the taste and culture of English Literature is worth transmitting. To establish this point he has to refute the Marxist view that such transmission of culture and taste reflects and reinforces economic inequality in society.

Shrimpton then examines the supporters' views: he questions the validity of the claim for the moral power of a literary education as being hard to sustain; he considers the view that specifically English Literature

is better than others is a patriotic argument, unfashionable and questionable; he also questions the belief that literary criticism as an academic discipline has been coherently justified.

However, despite making the teaching of literary criticism problematic and finding unsatisfactory proofs for its continued study, Shrimpton finds: "we still seem to be in business" because "the transmission of taste by teachers of English has its importance."(71)

So here too, in the Arnold, Sampson and Leavis mould is the continuing purpose of English teaching, without reference to language and 'linguistic competence skills'.

An article by Michael Church reviews an essay competition devoted to the improvement of English teaching. Church entitles the article 'Keeping the Faith', and wonders whether English in schools is a "service department or elite occupation?" and goes on to quote from various competitors' essays. Without exception these lean away from "the service department" and towards Literature. Mrs K. Huggett from Roseberry School, Epsom, is typical both in thought and style:

"The finest writing creates a space around it into which tendrils of association and memory grow...from word hoards we offer an alternative magic which owes nothing to technological marvels."

It may be that this is a biased sample - the extracts carefully selected - for certainly Church can be accused of establishing a false dichotomy with "service department or elite occupation", and his views are clear from the article's title. Nonetheless, this article is published and presumably read, and Church's attempt at influence made as he too stresses the centrality of Literature.(72)

In the major piece headed an 'English Extra', Dr. Philip Crumpton, General County Inspector, Staffordshire, warns that the place of English in the curriculum is being eroded. He too poses the danger of concentration upon "a service department". He states:

"Many English teachers see no need to distinguish between the kind of work that is done in English lessons and the language element in all learning."

He fears that 'subject English' is in a dangerously vulnerable position as the erosion of subject boundaries leave no specific purpose: "questions are being asked about what exactly is its role".

Crumpton foresees a possible future when, as Bullock, and indeed Sampson suggested, all teachers do recognise and accept responsibility for language and when all teachers would be provided with the expertise to carry out such work: in which case it would be possible for pupils to become articulate in the varying types of

language without attending subject-specific lessons. Crumpton believes it vital to define and stress again what the central purpose of 'English' is.

He too returns to Literature and its value. He believes, and here once more he calls for the help of English teachers, that English teachers should again:

"demonstrate the personal, social value of Literature and those language concerns that foster the 'whole life' of the young person rather than just his or her role as learner."

In an echo back to Sampson he adds:

"all subjects are concerned with language for learning; the distinctive concern of English is with language for living." (73)

With the exception of articles and comments published referring specifically to new National Criteria for English, and with exam board syllabuses - both of which will be considered in due course - these articles constitute those on the subject English. It is clear how there is this common thread picked up by all writers in T.E.S. over the late 1984-86 period. It stresses the centrality of Literature and the dangers inherent if Literature loses its place to, as they see it, a mechanistic, instrumentalist 'communication' centred approach fostered and encouraged by some external agencies. One does wonder however, if had the same writers been defending the place and centrality of the



Classics one hundred years before, whether they would not have used the same arguments and forcefulness as is used here.

The other relatively accessible organ of current thought and debate to be examined is the more specialist journal 'English in Education', published triennially by N.A.T.E., the association "for all those professionally concerned with the learning and teaching of English from the nursery years to higher and adult education". (74)

N.A.T.E. itself is a body with representatives on many committees. It makes representations to all major reports and initiatives sponsored by central government, as well as to exam boards and other institutions. Not infrequently the chairman of N.A.T.E. is called upon to comment on matters effecting English teaching which reach the public domain of the national newspapers. It is an association that has many branches which hold regular meetings designed to disseminate and encourage good practice, to inform and update English teachers, and to provide a forum for discussion. The association and its members possess a considerable body of knowledge and experience in English teaching that is often turned to for reference, guidance and advice; it was, for example, referred to by Bullock, and by the designers of the National Criteria for English.

The writer believes then that it is important to review N.A.T.E.'s official public journal to examine its current thought and practice regarding the place and purpose of Literature teaching, for in the light of T.E.S. articles all expressing concern and fear over the future direction of English, a more specialist organ with the opportunity for longer, more profound papers would indicate the degree or otherwise of agreement with these individual writers; or with the official proposals and designs of the Department of Education and Science, the Manpower Services Commission, Her Majesty's Inspectorate, and the exam boards. Where N.A.T.E. stands is important for the Association's voice does have considerable influence over the work and practice of many teachers, and consequently over the type of teaching children receive.

Five issues of the N.A.T.E. journal will be reviewed; those of Spring, Summer and Autumn 1985, and Spring and Summer 1986; because of what they say and do not say, the writer believes it important to examine them in some detail. These reviews will begin with the most recent edition and work chronologically backwards. As with the T.E.S. articles, each will be treated separately, but a consideration of common threads will also be made. These common threads will be briefly outlined first.

There appear to be two of these. One is that contributors to the journal see Literature as central

to English, both for its intrinsic worth, and as a stimulus for humanitarian considerations. The second is that whereas the articles found in T.E.S. were uniformly of a campaigning sort, calling for defence against the dangers of unwarranted change, papers in 'English in Education' tend almost to ignore the likelihood or danger of externally promoted change being imposed.

The Summer 1986 'English in Education' contains eleven major articles, ten of which are concerned with methods of making Literature more accessible to school children. One article concerns 'Readers at Risk' - how and why some children stop reading. One questions the structure of the traditional 'A' level Literature examination, another discusses transferring Shakespeare from text to performance in the 6th form, one on 'making sense' of poetry, two articles refer to 'reader-response' criticism of 'Heart of Darkness', and one article is language biased, on the language of newspapers and advertising.

The Spring 1986 edition, unlike the Summer one, does at first appear to address itself to the problem of direction and emphasis. It questions the D.E.S. publication 'Curriculum 5-16', and its call for concentration on knowledge skills and concepts, and whilst recognising their importance states:

"it is only by experiencing something and imaginatively engaging with it, that we can come close to having understood it. In this spirit we open this issue with a poem. We are reminded that language and literature provide ideal opportunities for exploring sensitive but important areas of experience."(75)

Here may be signs of an integrated language and literature approach; however the articles which follow are concerned mainly with method; with anecdotal accounts of 'good practice' described by the writers. There is an article on gender bias in Literature, one on homosexuality in Literature, one on developing classroom atmosphere conducive to providing "an intimate, sense for the power of ideas through Literature", one article on essay writing, and one on teaching 'King Lear' in junior schools.

There is no further reference made to external agencies of change after the brief mention in the editorial, and no debate or discussion on possible changes of emphasis being imposed; or that the time and chance for the sort of literature study in the classroom which six of the eight articles describe and advocate, might well be reduced by external imposition.

The Autumn 1985 edition is one devoted to a series of ten papers on multi-cultural education, seven of which describe work in progress in the London area.

The Summer 1985 journal contains eight major articles, four of which are closely connected with Literature teaching and believing in the centrality of Literature to English. Most are similar to those in the Spring 1986 edition. One article however is devoted to an examination of the H.M.I. document 'English from 5-16'.

In 'Dover Beach Revisited: A Response to 'English from 5-16'', Barry Smith, Head of English, Bishop Luffa School, Chichester, questions the central direction proposed for English teaching by Her Majesty's Inspectorate, and here is found something of the concern expressed by T.E.S. writers.

Smith criticises the H.M.I. call for a concentration upon language skills and knowledge of grammar and the concomitant loss of Literature's centrality which inferentially most N.A.T.E. articles believe in. His fear is put so:

"Linguistic studies has in recent years given stress to language over Literature, to the point where Literature has become reduced to nothing more than one example of written expression, of no more intrinsic value than any other form. In drafting 'English from 5-16', H.M.I. appear to have given official approval to this utilitarian view of English."

Pursuing as Smith puts it of:

"the idea of personal growth through creative, personal expression and engagement with Literature," (76)

he looks, as the article's title would suggest, at the work of Matthew Arnold, and then Newbolt to re-emphasise the place of Literature. He poses the question that is important to English teachers about the direction of English:

"How should we consider English teaching? As about skills or as about the illumination of life?"

He demands from H.M.I.

"a reaffirmation of English as the education of the human spirit, and helpful guidance about ways we can set about this process."(77)

The Spring 1985 edition reverts exclusively to a mix of seven articles that consider various aspects of English teaching, four of which follow the common thread and are Literature based, and all of which are of a similar style to that described for the Summer 1986 edition.

It can be seen then that the organ of 'English in Education' devotes itself generally to the study of what it believes to be the good teaching of English in schools. Excluding the Autumn 1985 edition, the other four reviewed have twenty four articles on Literature teaching, and only ten on other aspects of English teaching. From this survey, the implied assumption must be drawn that the dominant and central emphasis for English teachers and their pupils must be in the realm of Literature, but only Smith's Summer 1985 paper makes this view explicit, challenges the work of an external agency of change, and defends with a traditionalist view, couched in traditional terms.

Whether explicitly stated, or implicitly assumed, contributors to both T.E.S. and 'English in Education' appear in agreement over what is central to English and where present and future emphasis must lie. They also seem in accord on what they see as the threat to Literature's centrality. To them the danger of a change of emphasis and direction in English teaching during the latter part of the 1980's and into the 1990's comes from the second group of agents attempting to influence the direction of English in the late twentieth century. As identified earlier, these are the official and semi-official groups or bodies who have been producing their own documents and designs for schools and teachers of English.

These groups, their methods and proposals shall now be considered.

As with T.E.S. and 'English in Education', the purpose here will be to see how these groups perceive English teaching and the place and purpose of Literature within it, both now and where they want it to go in the future, and what model of English teaching they would wish to emphasise, and how their designs fit with past practice. More detailed and specific changes are promoted by agencies such as D.E.S., M.S.C. and H.M.I. A brief summary will first be provided.

Generally these agencies call for a greatly reduced emphasis on Literature and the traditions of English teaching, accompanied by demands to leave 'ivory towers' and for teachers to provide 'relevant' work and experience - often and increasingly in 'communication skills'. This functionalist 'communication skills' approach is most often called for by the increasingly dominant vocational training boards sponsored by M.S.C., an organisation working from the Department of Employment. These agencies are having considerable influence and are clearly promoting very different emphases to those found in traditional English teaching. In addition they appear to promote a reduced place for Literature. These change agencies will now be considered in greater detail and separately, although again common threads of emphasis will be identified.

One of the official Government agencies is the Department of Education and Science. This department has designed and has now imposed through the Secondary Examination Council, compulsory subject National Criteria, implemented through the examination boards' own G.C.S.E. syllabuses; consequently the D.E.S. influence is direct and immediate because the influence on secondary teaching which an exam syllabus at 16 has is very great. For the new General Certificate of Secondary Education (G.C.S.E.), started in September 1986, all syllabuses must conform to the D.E.S.'s National Criteria, so much of what is taught in secondary schools both in exam years and earlier will be



much influenced by their requirements. These National Criteria will be considered to see where the emphasis is placed, and to what extent they demure from the emphasis identified by T.E.S. and 'English in Education' writers.

The development of National Criteria was already underway when further developments came as a result of a statement made by the then Secretary of State for Education, Sir Keith Joseph, at the North of England conference in January 1984. That statement has set the tone for much of the following design and innovation for exams at 16+, and therefore for the accompanying teaching. His statements have been reinforced more recently by his successor Mr Kenneth Baker at the 1987 conference. It is useful to consider Joseph's statement for it has a direct bearing on designs which followed. It is also helpful to look at how the work on National Criteria was organised.

As far as Sir Keith Joseph's statement is concerned, the Secretary of State said that there was a need to move more firmly towards criterion-referenced exams, and away from norm-referenced ones. He stated:

"The existing system tells us a great deal about relative standards between different candidates. It tells us much less about absolute standards."

He went on to say:

"we need a reasonable assurance that pupils obtaining a particular grade will know certain things and possess certain skills or have achieved certain competence...we need to move towards a scheme of grade criteria."(78)

In response to this and other statements from Sir Keith Joseph, the G.C.E. and C.S.E. boards Joint Council for 16+ National Criteria was established and reported in December 1984. In addition the Secondary Examination Council (S.E.C.) reported on their working parties' deliberations on grade criteria in September 1985 which are planned for introduction at some future date. Since this time, the S.E.C. has become the dominant body even though having been established only in May 1983 by the Secretary of State. It speaks with the authority of the official and approved voice, and its purpose is clear. To it must all new exam board syllabuses first be submitted for approval, to ensure they conform to the relevant National criteria. If they do not then the S.E.C. refuses to sanction their use. Therefore S.E.C.'s view of what falls outside the assessment criteria, and hence will have less teaching time devoted to it, is interesting and important, for that will determine to a considerable extent, what is taught. Their decision on priorities is also of great significance.

It was decided that there would be two separate certificated exams within the English area. One would be for a qualification titled 'English', the other would be 'English Literature'.

The 'English' certificate was to replace the old 'English Language' qualification and would be of a unitary design intended to demonstrate competence in a number of elements of reading and writing, because of the necessary skills taught and tested it would continue to be of much greater basic importance than 'English Literature' to parents, schools, employers and pupils themselves.

Of the two certificates, the 'English' G.C.S.E. syllabus was the first to be designed, reflecting its greater relative importance. Proposals for 'English Literature' came 18 months later. Prior to the introduction of G.C.S.E. in 1986, in the Northern Examining Association (N.E.A.) area, the new English had been available since 1982 in the guise of the 16+ English Language - there were very few changes made when the title changed to the 'English' G.C.S.E. English Literature however, was not available as a G.C.S.E. type 16+ course until one year prior to the change to G.C.S.E., and hence few centres took it up as an option, preferring to wait until the enforced change.

Given the importance of English, and of the content of any syllabus leading to a qualification in it, an area of concern to many teachers at the time of design was the degree of consultation permitted prior to the S.E.C.'s introduction. Within the area of this study, that of County Durham, that process of consultation was

thin. There was little opportunity for teachers and individual schools and departments to express their views, for even though S.E.C.'s and exam boards' proposals and deliberations were circulated to various interested parties for 'consultation and comment', the designed timescale was such that it did not permit very much of this. Certainly English teachers in County Durham had no opportunity to consult and comment, (see appendix 6). If this was a case repeated elsewhere then in fact little or no teacher consultation actually took place, and their views and beliefs on what the central emphasis for English should be were not heard. In view of the expressed priority and emphasis on the place of Literature-called for by the earlier writers and practising teachers contributing to T.E.S. and English in Education - had full consultation been allowed, it is difficult to see them agreeing with the S.E.C.'s only reference to Literature in the document which proposed a unitary, integrated course in 'English' being as follows:

"many course activities will not be intended for assessment purposes and will have objectives such as delight in language for its own sake, the awakening of curiosity and the development of empathic understanding which will fall outside the purview of the public examination system."(79)

This final statement seems to be at odds with the views of writers described earlier who see such development as their area of central emphasis, approached through Literature, and that such work does not preclude the development of Language skills at the same time.

However, it may be that the effect of such a statement is that because exam pressures are so great, and school finances so tight, only those items to be actually assessed will be taught by a teacher and school that is pressed for time and short of resources.

It would seem then that the G.C.S.E. proposals were designed to discourage Language teaching from being able to work towards such objectives as those listed above. Many individual writers and teachers might see this as a retrograde step, believing that the teaching of Language could be influenced for the worse by such a proposed shift of emphasis, and believing instead in having Literature at the centre of all English teaching - including that of Language development. This problem is not reconciled by another of S.E.C.'s statements for although S.E.C. recognises some importance of Literature in the English syllabus, stating:

(the working party) "would wish to emphasise the need for English courses which give students both the desire and the ability to read for their own enjoyment...(there is a need) to allow this aspect of reading to be given full weight,"..."however it would be impossible to define criteria for the measurement of this enjoyment."(80)

Hence there is the likelihood that such work might be omitted because the consequence of this statement is that the emphasis for English work would be prodded away from Literature and its use in English, towards the measurable, with most of the draft grade criteria

related to performance characteristics (see appendix 7), to observable measurable objectives of the type criticised by Sampson sixty years before.

In the criteria for English, which because of its greater importance is likely to be a major part of any core curriculum, these measurable objectives are mainly in the writing and reading of 'different types of material' realm, essentially of a functional, relevant style. The material to be used is described thus:

"texts which present an argument or intend to persuade, texts which intend to inform or explain, expressive and imaginative texts."  
(81)

No one of the three is given greater weight or significance than any other, but such a weighting of two thirds 'factual' to one third 'expressive and imaginative' is clearly at odds with the emphasis on Literature desired and believed important by individual writers, and with the traditions of English teaching described earlier.

However, there is a counter argument that must also be recognised. Because Literature is a stipulated part of English, it may be that Literature emphasis would be increased and more pupils exposed to it despite fewer pupils taking English Literature. These are areas of uncertainty. What is not uncertain is the degree of doubt felt by many teachers of English as agents and agencies of change work upon them with their, at times,

contradictory areas of emphasis. It is difficult to say at this stage which will have the greatest eventual effect, but S.E.C.'s will probably be considerable, especially in terms of content, method and assessment, for imposition of centrally designed syllabuses can be brought about with perhaps their emphasis at odds with that hoped for and promoted by others. Such contradictions clearly can be a cause of confusion amongst teachers as they attempt to redefine their work in the light of such requirements, particularly where emphases may be different to those of the past. Difficult decisions, as to content and method, have to be made. These are made more difficult when as is apparent, elements of the S.E.C. designs and proposed innovations have been called into question.

One of the first areas to be scrutinised was that of the proposed grade criteria that the S.E.C. developed and intend to introduce at a future date. Roger Knight questions the use of objectives in the English proposals for grade criteria and their descriptions.

Knight believes that:

"the attempt to be concrete, particular and definable leads to the abstract, generalised and vague."

He uses the S.E.C.'s statement referring to 'delight in language' and 'empathic understanding' as an example of the way they have cast doubt on the teaching of

Literature by emphasising the wrong things. He poses the question as to whether it is possible to divorce delight and empathy, for which S.E.C. states it is impossible to measure, from the ability still to assess a response to Literature in the following way:

"A grade C/D candidate will: demonstrate an understanding of the implicit development of the text, such as interrelationship of ideas,"

while

"A grade A/B candidate will recognise and comment on the thematic development of the text."

Knight states that such distinctions are not only confusing and unclear, but also they:

"deny the nature of our responses to Literature and are - for that reason - unusable."  
(82)

This is, he claims, a case of criteria ignoring what is central to the subject. The demand for measurable performance and for "skills and competencies" generate an approach to criteria that elude an understanding of that subject; and again contradict the work and belief of past and current writing and teaching.

Similar criticism of the criteria descriptions were made of other aspects. With regard to oral work for example, teachers assessing competence need to differentiate between "using a deliberate gesture to enhance what is said" and the more difficult "using



non-verbal signals (eye-contact, direction of gaze, posture, etc.,) to enhance what is said". Such fine distinctions may be no more easy to identify than taking a 'delight in language'.

Despite these doubts, such a concept of English as being performance related to definable skills, and grade related, has had considerable effect on the design of G.C.S.E. syllabuses. Doubts also remain as to how such designs were introduced to teachers in Summer 1986, and on the stressed language emphasis which importantly did not recommend a Literature centred approach.

It was S.E.C. that took the lead in the introduction of the new exam system and in the establishing of guidelines. The view they took was important in cementing still further their thoughts on centrality of content.

The S.E.C. rightly placed its central emphasis in the language domain. It took note of the view, held by individual contemporary writers, that Literature should be central to the English curriculum, and agreed Literature to be of value - but not central. In consequence, because Literature is often an option, it must be assumed that many 4th and 5th year pupils will sit only for 'English' and not also for 'Literature [1]'. Therefore it is necessary to look at

[1] A point examined in the questionnaire to all County Durham Comprehensive schools.

what amount of Literature they will have access to and be exposed to in their 'English' course. To do this one must first examine the implicit and explicit balance and stressed areas suggested by S.E.C. in their guidelines and suggestions.

In the S.E.C.'s 'A Guide to the G.C.S.E.' which deals with a brief introduction to all subjects to be examined under the new system, it is made clear that Literature's place and purpose is subordinate to that of 'English'. In this guide 'English' is covered in five paragraphs, as is Maths and History/Geography. Only one of the five deals exclusively with a proposed G.C.S.E. paper in Literature. The 'English' paper concerns oral communication, writing "such as letters, reports and instructions as well as imaginative compositions" and reading which has:

"to cover Literature through novels, stories, plays and poems, but also more everyday material such as instructions, newspaper articles and advertisements."(83)

A move of emphasis is identifiable here. Reading of Literature is less 'everyday' than other more mechanistic forms, and the conjunction 'but' rather than 'and' implies a dominance of the latter reading materials over the former that is not made explicit. In such ways is a change of emphasis and centrality brought about.

The shift towards a language approach that does not have a Literature base is reinforced by the 'English G.C.S.E. - A Guide for Teachers'. This was a very important and influential training manual, the standard work, used at all phases of the training for G.C.S.E. which were held in 1986. The manual explains the National Criteria and gives a rationale as to exam design. It gives methods of assessment, and examples of good teaching practice. It was used extensively for the in-service training and its practical activities based approach was familiar to many teachers through their contacts with the Open University. Because of its widespread use, and the approval given it by advisers, L.E.A.'s and Exam Boards, the areas of emphasis and view of what is central to English that it expresses may well have a considerable effect upon the forthcoming direction of English teaching as it is absorbed by those teachers at training sessions.

The previous S.E.C. design had already maintained the separation between 'English' and 'English Literature', the former needing some familiarity with Literature as another form of reading material. Whereas previous writers and current contributors to T.E.S. and 'English in Education' wished to see the emphasised English area being in the Literature domain, this was not the case with 'English G.C.S.E. - A Guide for Teachers'. The emphasised areas can be discovered by using both a crude measuring system, and secondly by considering the rationale behind the course design.

The manual was designed to include explanations, examples and guidelines for both the 'English' syllabus and National Criteria, and the 'English Literature' syllabus and National Criteria; however a measure of space indicates the emphasised area. In the chapter on differentiation for example, there is firstly a general explanation of what constitutes 'differentiation', and relates both 'English' and 'English Literature', but all examples and activities are English Language based, none are based in Literature. At the end of a long paragraph on 'Differentiation by Outcome', twenty four lines are given to 'English' - but with no examples using a Literature base - then two further lines state:

"In English Literature similar issues will obviously arise to the literary texts studied. Those questions are discussed further in Section 2.4 below."

Inevitably when considering the two separate certificatable areas, there is a clear weighting towards English and Language development. When discussing the National Criteria for English, 'English' receives fifty four lines, while 'English Literature' has thirty seven, and follows the 'English'. The placing second was significant in the manual because at training, all had to be covered in two days; effectively in County Durham at least, this meant there was not time to cover the latter section as 'English' had over-run its training time schedule. As far as Literature is concerned therefore, this placed greater importance on where it appears in the scheme of things for teaching within 'English'. The manual states:

"The G.C.S.E. proposals bring them (language and literature) together."

In this way Literature is subsumed perhaps rightly into the wider, broader 'English' course and syllabus and might lead to a more unified coherence. However, this statement is followed by:

"You will need to think about how you will integrate your approach to language and literature in your teaching...because the study of both literary and non-literary material is required in syllabuses leading to the assessment in English." (84)

Consequently, rather than being at the core of English, Literature becomes one of many parts of 'English' to be considered and taught. Although one might find it difficult to disagree with the following area of emphasis, the area into which it leads might be considered to be more open to question by the earlier writers. The 'Guide for Teachers' states:

"The emphasis given throughout the National Criteria is to the appropriate and effective use of language for a wide range of purposes - both in terms of students' abilities to communicate effectively on their own behalf and to recognise and understand the purposes for which language is used by others." (85)

This statement of emphasis is followed by a term used for the first time in S.E.C. writing, although hinted at above, and that will be found to be used more and more frequently by other influential agencies. The definitive statement to summarise the National Criteria is:

"This view of language - as a means of effective and appropriate **communication**" (they use italics) - "is also evident in the importance given in the criteria to spoken as well as written language."(86)

The term "communication" becomes used with increasing frequency - as will be seen when examining T.V.E.I. and C.P.V.E. designs; it represents a considerable move away from the Literature centralisation supported by others.

This move of emphasis must obviously be considered and deliberate, but the closest the manual comes to making this explicit is when the new differential status is exemplified by a:

"single unified course leading to an assessment in English (with a possible)" - their brackets - "separate assessment in English Literature."

There are other questionable elements within the manual; for example when the manual discusses teachers' course designs, The National Criteria refer to the four language modes of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and the manual suggests these are of equal importance:

"courses must provide students with a range of experiences in each of the language modes."

However, a further differential status is then built into the assessment procedure by:

"there will also, of course, be a separately assessed component for oral communication itself."( 87)

It is difficult to see the reason for 'of course', or why it is so obvious, as if all readers and teachers assume this to be a correct policy. Hence, the oral communication assessment, despite its stated equal importance, will appear only as an endorsement on the final examination certificate, using a different, shorter grade scale, and is hence seen to be of lesser importance.

Such explicit contradictions cast doubt on the S.E.C. design, for there may also be other, less obvious contradictions too.

Also challenged, and although of much greater fundamental importance, there is little space to consider the matter here, is the basis upon which 'the four modes' theory of language is based. N.A.T.E. in a paper state:

"Language is the sum total of talking, listening, reading and writing - no one of these four modes is more important than the others, and all should be developed equally."(88)

This proposition was adopted by H.M.I. as well as by S.E.C. in its course design. However, John Bald - tutor, Reading and Language Centre, Colchester Institute, challenges this theory. Citing Vygotsky's 'Thought and Language', he makes the point that Vygotsky analyses the existence of 'inner speech' -

"a condensed, personal language which each of us has within our mind whether we are communicating or not."

Bald states:

"all channels of communication depend upon it" (inner speech).

He goes on to state:

"It's omission from the four modes theory prevents it from dealing with formulation.. .and isolates the theory from the dynamics of intellectual development."

Bald ends with the challenging statement:

"The existence of inner speech as a distinct form of language is sufficient to render (the four modes theory) untenable."  
(89)

However, how such "inner speech" could be taken into account is a difficulty not discussed. Although such a challenge to the basic premise upon which much of H.M.I. and S.E.C. curriculum design is founded, is a concern that might cast doubt on much of their work; so far the writer has seen no further discussion or refutation on this point. The design for syllabuses based on the National Criteria's use of the 'four modes theory' goes ahead but as can be seen, in several ways the rationale behind design can be held open to question. Nonetheless, the S.E.C. and Open University work and publication have had their enforced influence on exam



board syllabus design, and hence on classroom practice, by determining the emphasis of the English teaching, which appears to be reducing the place and purpose of Literature and promoting a language for 'communication' approach.

This concentration on 'English', and increasingly 'Communication' is being developed further by other agencies for change, which make recommendations, and offer guidance to schools and teachers of English.

These agencies include Her Majesty's Inspectorate, and the Assessment of Performance Unit (A.P.U.), and those linked with the Manpower Services Commission (M.S.C.) through the Technical, Vocational and Educational Initiative (T.V.E.I.), and the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (C.P.V.E.) with their Business and Technician Education Council (B.T.E.C.) awards.

The recommendations for English teaching made by H.M.I. and their discussions and proposals for emphasis will be considered first of these groups as they are the longest standing of the bodies mentioned.

An important and influential document produced by H.M.I. has been a proposal for discussion paper 'English From 5-16, Curriculum Matters 1'. This is described as an "H.M.I. document" in an "H.M.I. series" and is in addition endorsed by the Secretary

of State for Education, therefore the paper must be seen as containing something akin to an official, approved statement of policy aims and objectives for English. Although the document was only a discussion paper naturally it carries some weight. As with the S.E.C. the paper believes the primary aim of English teaching is to be in the area of:

"achieving competence in the many and varied uses of our language,"

and that this is:

"a vital part of the education of pupils in our schools."(90)

The document restresses the four modes of language theory, and then suggests aims for each of these modes separately - having first stated that they 'constantly interrelate'. Many of the report's aims are laudable and worthy - but for this study H.M.I.'s thoughts on the place and purpose for Literature within such a report is the concern. Again it would appear Literature is planned to have a much subordinated role and function, both separately and within 'English'.

In the "area of reading" the aims stated are:

"to read fluently and with understanding a range of different kinds of material, using reading methods appropriate to the material and the purposes for which they are reading;

to have confidence in their capacities as readers;

to find pleasure in and be voluntary users of reading, for information, for interest, for entertainment, and for the extension of experience and insight that poetry and fiction of quality afford;

to see that reading is necessary for their personal lives, for their learning throughout the curriculum, and for the requirement of living and working in society."(91)

Again therefore, reading of Literature for the purpose of personal growth and development towards a liberal education becomes reduced to one of several equal aims in the same way as that proposed by S.E.C., so here there is a consistency of purpose. In addition, the dominance of objectives at specified ages which follow the aims tends to indicate an official consistency, and maintains the trend away from recent and mid-term past theory and practice, and reverts to those very specific objectives laid down in the nineteenth century by the Code and Schedules' Standards 1 - 8, and so vilified by Arnold and Sampson.

As already shown, a number of individual writers have challenged elements of the H.M.I. document, concerning themselves particularly with these points. The point about personal growth and appreciation has already been covered. The criticism of the use of specific objectives needs to be further considered as an aid to considering the rationale behind the design aims of H.M.I. for a concentration on the objectives model is increasing.

A number of writers were critical of this. B. Moorhouse of the English Advisers' Association, is concerned with the use of specific objectives. He believes that:

"the mechanistic element in objectives might reinforce less good practice."

which is surely a paraphrase of Sampson and the Newbolt Report's views. This is a point that Prof. Denis Lawton reinforces:

"If you have proper behavioural objectives, designed in a way that you know whether the child has met them or not - in English they will cover the most trivial of things."

The sense here of individual writers straining away from such prescriptions proposed by H.M.I. is continued by Prof. Andrew Wilkinson who, amongst other points, questions the objective for 16 year olds who should be able, it is stated, to identify prepositions and conjunctions. He says that such an objective may:

"prevent them from doing other worthwhile things to improve their language and writing."

This belief that there is a need for wider understanding that it is felt the objectives will not achieve, and that are more difficult to assess, is reiterated by Michael Marland who criticises as an example the objective for 11 year olds that they should "know the rules of spelling". He comments that

the objective should not be to "know the rules", but to know how to spell, but the wider aspect is his major point:

"the rules are so limited. Other approaches are necessary - talking about roots and derivations and pointing out other relationships."(92)

The shift of emphasis is perhaps most clearly recognised by the content of recent publications from the A.P.U.

In 1986, the A.P.U. in conjunction with the National Foundation for Educational Research (N.F.E.R.) produced three booklets:

'The Assessment of Writing, Pupils Aged 11 and 15' by Janet White,

'The Framework for the Assessment of Language' by Tom Gorman,

'Speaking and Listening, Assessment at age 11' by Margaret McLure & Mary Hargreaves.(93)

These three booklets are a logical development from previous central publications and work outlined above, and they indicate the likelihood of massive changes of emphasis. None of these booklets addresses itself to Literature, and only fleetingly to 'English'.

All three booklets stress the mechanistic functionality of language and its use for 'communication'. The McLure & Hargreaves publication stresses "the functional and communicative role of spoken language" and that "oral communication is relevant across the curriculum" and "oral and written modes should be seen as reciprocal and integrated aspects of pupils' overall communicative abilities."(94)

The Gorman publication makes explicit some "assumptions". These include the statements: "different varieties of language are used in different circumstances," and "communication in different modes involves different demands." Now nobody is likely to disagree with these "assumptions" but again, the emphasis shift is what needs to be identified, and this is not made explicit. The term 'communication' becomes more frequently used, and in view of the subject of this study, the direction for 'English', the point needs to be made that the term 'English' is hardly used at all. In Gorman's publication of 42 pages, the word 'English' is used three times. In White's work of 42 pages 'English' appears eight times, and in the 54 page paper by McLure and Hargreaves, 'English' appears only once, in this phrase:

"opportunities for collaborative and explanatory talk are not restricted to the English lesson."

It is this loss of the word 'English' that the writer means when the term 'massive changes' is used.

The proposed policy here would appear to be the deliberate removal and non-use of the word 'English'. When used, it is often in a disparaging and/or critical fashion. In 'The Assessment of Writing', one of the eight uses is:

"The prominence of the English department in defining what writing is at secondary level, may lead to an overvaluing of 'literary' genres, to the detriment of other ways of writing."( 95)

This powerful denial of the literary tradition, but made without statistical support of 'overvaluing', is reinforced later in the same booklet by:

"a disturbing picture emerges; one in which the majority of the more able writers (mainly girls) concentrate their energies on the writing of fiction and other 'literature' based prose."(96)

This statement has two disturbing features, firstly the value judgement that is made but not supported concerning the 'disturbing' way in which better writers concentrate on what is implied as the lesser task of writing 'literature based prose'; and secondly there is a sexist implication.[1]

[1] Elsewhere in the booklet there appears something similar:

"more boys than girls of both age groups (11 and

Footnote [1] continued

15) show negative or reluctant attitudes towards writing" and "at both 11 and 15 girls as a group tend to do better in writing than boys, this is true for all tasks used and holds for all categories of assessment."(97)

This is a statement of empirical fact; what is concerning is what A.P.U. recommends to counter this imbalance. It suggests that different situations, different tasks be found, and to move writing into the skill based sector of writing about hobbies, topics, and technical writing. An example is given - an explanation of a game of snooker, but this is a predominantly male game: however, judging by the latter statement made, girls would still do better, given the chance. The A.P.U.'s first 'general recommendation' of their conclusion is:

"Pupils could be helped to improve their writing performance...by producing less in writing in total".

Whether this is one way of lessening the superior performance of girls over boys is difficult to judge. It is of passing interest to note that of those of identifiable sex on the A.P.U. Steering Group on Language given in Appendix Two of all booklets, nine are men, two are women.



The role of the 'English' teacher is also strongly questioned. Janet White states:

"Development of a range of writing skills should not be the sole responsibility of the 'English' teacher" (her inverted commas).

She criticises the central role of the English teacher to be involved with the development of writing by saying "a majority of secondary schools automatically address requests for writing to the English teacher." This she implicitly criticises with the phrases: "without specific instructions to the contrary" and "even requests for argumentative writing", and "once again English".(98)

All of this would appear calculated to reduce the English Department's role, and although there is much to be said in favour of other subject staff being more closely involved with language development, such an approach has dangers which must be recognised. One of Literature's features is its richness of language, and Literature can be employed to enrich both language teaching and resultant understanding and usage. However, the non-specialist might well avoid using Literature as a basis for language development and this could result in a reduction in quality and depth in pupils' language use, were White's suggestions fully implemented.

Although White's work has dangers, there are also possibilities. It could be argued that by reducing the emphasis on an English department's responsibility for writing, more time would become available for a Literature course, but this too might be less than satisfactory. To propose Literature as an isolated and separate subject within a school's curriculum might lead to its becoming an optional subject of somewhat minor and esoteric appeal. Such are the pressures on resource allocation that it is possible to foresee such a Literature course diminishing in 'take-up' and consequently few pupils being enriched by Literature's properties. To remove Literature's centrality to language teaching, as A.P.U. appears to desire, increases this risk.

It is appreciated that the A.P.U. is mainly concerned with language, and much less with Literature, but they do claim to be involved with both, and complex issues of responsibility and control are raised here, for these points are concerned with changing the English department's role and affect its ongoing development. Teachers need to be clear as to what they want, and to appreciate fully the A.P.U.'s less integrated approach. The overall significance of the A.P.U.'s belief in a reduced Literature input and to a heightened 'communication' and 'language for use' approach needs to be recognised.

This approach is fully illustrated in Gorman's publication, and in the questionable assumption he makes about the nature of literary language. The only time he writes about 'works of Literature' is in a thirteen line paragraph. He states:

"the abilities required to interpret language used for literary or aesthetic purposes do not differ...from those needed to interpret language used for other purposes...it is not assumed that 'literary language' differs in any radical way from language used for other purposes. All literate pupils are assumed to be capable of understanding and appreciating some aspects of works of literature."(99)

Having made his assumption, Gorman gives no further consideration to Literature, and the word 'English' is used but twice more. This view and concept of what was 'English' is clearly a very different one from that of the traditional model developed and described earlier.

Such is the wording, the titles, the language used by A.P.U. in these publications that one begins to doubt the assumption first made by this writer's headteacher, and then by the writer himself when these publications were forwarded to the writer in his role as Head of English. One assumes at first that they are for English teachers, but such are the examples given and the lack of reference to English and its traditional aims and designs that doubts arise. If the A.P.U. work is for English teachers and departments, then the A.P.U. envision and expect those

teachers and departments to have very different aims and beliefs from those of the past. If they are not for English departments the question arises as to whom they are addressed; and at where that leaves English departments.

One must assume that the A.P.U. work originated in the English domain, for Gorman's work says it started from the Bullock Report which was certainly about English. In addition many of the A.P.U. Steering Group are with English departments of one sort or another. However their work is moving so far away from English that one ends by doubting original assumptions, even whether the A.P.U. work falls within the scope of this study.

Moving on from the A.P.U. some of the most recent initiatives being introduced are those emanating from the Department of Employment through the Manpower Services Commission, working through T.V.E.I. and C.P.V.E. and in many ways their initiatives follow the A.P.U.'s line.

The C.P.V.E. is promoted by M.S.C. through various agencies and courses. It, too, emphasises the aim of gaining mechanistic skills. Its information and explanation booklets omit use of the term 'English', and have little or nothing to say on personal growth and development or aesthetic appreciation; the

C.P.V.E. calls for attention to basic communication skills, with little regard for Literatures role in such plans, although design explanations are obscure. According to a pamphlet published by the Joint Board for Pre-Vocational Education, the C.P.V.E. is:

"available to all 16 year olds with a positive wish to achieve their full potential."

It is part of a scheme whose aim is to:

"equip students for adult and working life ...they are given help to develop the attitudes, knowledge, personal and social maturity which they need and employers want." (100)

In another publication from Central Office of Information the following appears:

"It is hoped that ultimately the great majority of young people will be able to benefit from C.P.V.E. experience." (101)

Clearly therefore, C.P.V.E. has been given a very broad remit and there are major hopes and plans for expansion. The programme is currently (Late 1987), receiving increased central government resources, and although at present still restricted to 16+, it may not be very long before entry age requirements are lowered; particularly if C.P.V.E. were to be united with T.V.E.I.

The scheme is very much concerned to link students with work and training, the qualification itself is to be issued by B.& T.E.C. One stated aim is:

"It is for those who wish to find out more about their employment potential and prepare themselves for the adult world." (102)

It could perhaps be argued that M.S.C. and the C.P.V.E. initiatives are solely concerned with communications and vocational objectives and that therefore Literature falls outside their remit, but M.S.C. through the C.P.V.E. attempts, it claims, to cover all areas, including personal development; they state for example that students on their course "prepare themselves for the adult world" (103) and they are concerned to "equip students for adult life" (104).

Vague though M.S.C.'s statements are on this issue, they do presumably involve some forms of development of wider aesthetic appreciation, of personal imaginative growth, of a richer intellectual life, and of a deeper human understanding of the sorts previously proposed. This is a fair assumption to make because the C.P.V.E. is made up of ten 'core competencies', 'core areas' as they are known. One of these is 'creative development', and another is 'communication', both of which have been identified in this study as areas of emphasis given to the teaching of English. These new course proposals clearly indicate a future direction for that teaching.

In 'Steps Forward to Work', 'Creative Development' is described as being for:

"young people both to become aware of their own creativity and to develop their powers of critical judgement by experiencing, originating and participating in a range of creative and expressive activities."

Here may be some indication of the possible use of Literature as foreseen, proposed and implemented for 'traditional' purposes, a return to the beliefs described earlier. However, page 7 gives an example of a student profile of achievement in the 'core competencies', and under the heading 'Creative Development' is the statement:

"can appreciate the need for good product design".

This is an example of achievement of the aim 'Creative Development', and clearly has little to do with English or Literature, other than perhaps appreciating a paperback book cover.

Under the 'Core Competence', 'communication', the explanation given states:

"to develop a range of communication skills that will facilitate understanding between individuals and groups living within a modern and multi-cultural society."

Again, the possibility is here for some English work and input to achieve such an aim. But here too the opportunity is missed, and a very reductionist, thin, almost poverty stricken profile example is given:

"can read and understand a variety of written materials."(105)

One would imagine writers of the past, establishers of the Literary tradition, viewing these statements with some disquiet, for there would appear to be a danger of working towards a very restricted form of 'Communication' and 'Creative Development' that will not broaden thought, develop imagination, or enrich the student's life and intellectual growth, let alone foster an appreciation of human interaction. It must also be remembered that the aim is that "ultimately the great majority of young people will be able to benefit from C.P.V.E. experience."

This future trend is further reinforced when studying the course books produced by the Joint Board for Pre-Vocational Education, the City and Guilds of London Institute, and B. & T.E.C. The aims for 'Creative Development' and 'Communication' are given in full in appendix 8. Here it can be said that statements are vague, indeed incomprehensible at times, and yet they form the stipulated design. An example of this is:



"Aim 3, Reading: To read and understand written texts...relevant to a particular purpose by reading and understanding written information presented in a variety of styles."(106)

Once more there is no use at any time of the term 'English' or 'Literature'. The closest the course book for teachers comes to this is in the 'Creative Development' section under Aim 2.4:

"To apply own creative and expressive skills to the practical world by expressing own feelings through chosen expressive medium - writing, drama, dance, art."(107)

It is difficult to know what is meant by "the practical world" or "chosen" medium, or what is indicated by "writing", but no further clarification is given. This epitomises the work of the central agencies for change, and although as yet there has been very little written about their work, designs, aims and methods, it is possible to summarise their main features with regard to the place and future of English.

Firstly, there is the complete loss of Literature, and the point must be stressed - these agencies do claim to foster "creative development" and to "facilitate understanding", and Literature is placed to be able to do this. Secondly, the removal of the term 'English', with a shift to the exclusive concentration on 'Communication Skills' by the use of short term objectives.

It is possible to raise certain objections or to have concern over some of the ways these two things have been done. Unlike previous proposals for development and change for English; with D.E.S. and M.S.C. designs there is total anonymity; one does not know who wrote the C.P.V.E. aims and measures of achievement for example. It is therefore difficult to communicate with such bodies in order to request clarification or explanation. This leads to a second concern: there has been little or no discussion or debate leading up to these changes of a quite radical nature; they have been and are being imposed with seemingly almost the attitude of dictating change. There has been no acknowledgement, that these new designs deviate from past practice, aims and purposes, and this silence is a concern. It has to be so for there is little in the way of curriculum design rationale, beyond a few somewhat vague and woolly statements, which can be contradictory in nature and based on challenged theory. One must also be concerned with the semantic manipulation, the loss of 'English' and particularly Literature without explanation or reason given, even though Literature could provide the means and achieve the stated desired aims. It can be difficult not to become suspicious when things are done in such a covert fashion. Nonetheless this is the route seemingly proposed by some central agencies for change.



However, to what extent such innovations will be implemented within schools, and particularly with pupils of 14 - 16, is presently still difficult to measure, and is an area in need of further monitoring [1].

Whether these new directions which concentrate upon a more mechanistic, functionalist and practical approach will supplant the more historical liberal tradition with its centrally educative literary model proposed by Arnold, Sampson and the like; and what position the liberal language tradition worked for by such as Dixon will hold in secondary schools of the future are points to be investigated.

[1] This is a point raised in the follow-up survey to selected schools.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Investigation

The main concern of this study is now to attempt to discover the place and purpose Literature may have assigned to it in the coming years in schools in County Durham, given the increasing pressures on resources and emphasis changes that are being called for.

The scope of this research into both current as well as future practice in schools can only be limited and of small scale. The scope is limited by constraints of time, money and access to schools. Therefore the gathering of information had to be designed to work within these constraints. In addition was the constraint of time imposed upon the respondents. Heads of English departments were first asked to respond in the Autumn term of 1986, shortly after the introduction of the G.C.S.E., and it must be appreciated that they were already working under a very heavy workload.

Having had six years experience of teaching 16+ English Language, using the course work option, the writer has been aware of the amount of time and organisation required to run such a scheme. In consequence, prior to embarking on the survey of schools' English work, the writer was somewhat pessimistic about the amount of time and work that

English teachers would be able to devote in future to Literature; the writer feared for its position in the English curriculum, particularly when one adds this immediate practical constraint to that of the other pressures for change and lessening for Literature's syllabus allotment outlined previously.

In consequence it was with some trepidation, but with considerable interest, that the writer began the survey. The pessimism was felt because of the writer's hypothesis. The hypothesis was that:

Firstly the writer expected specific 'pure' Literature study to decline considerably in terms of numbers of pupils taking the subject, and for it to become something more of an esoteric, possibly elitist optional subject area within the arts. Secondly the writer expected that the use of Literature within English Language teaching would also decline as a result of the G.C.S.E. English syllabus.

The reasons for these expected outcomes were twofold. Firstly because of the external pressures of curriculum design and proposals affecting the purpose and place of Literature initiated by the agencies for change already identified, and secondly because of constraints imposed by time on teaching staff. This latter point does need a brief further explanation. The writer has taught English Language 16+ G.C.E./C.S.E. for seven years, using a syllabus

involving 60% coursework. The N.E.A. G.C.S.E. which has followed from the 16+ syllabus is very similar indeed to it. The introduction of the 16+ seven years ago to the writer's English department demanded a restructured and redesigned English syllabus, not just in the fourth and fifth years, but also in years 1, 2 and 3. The innovation resulted in unavoidable increased demands on teachers' time and commitment, with changes in strategies and methods and use of materials. It demanded more frequent meetings of staff, with time consuming consultation and discussion extended further to exam board representatives, as well as to pupils. Such demands were being made within the framework of a 95% contact timetable, for all but the Head of Department. Essentially, demands on time, cash, materials and most importantly, goodwill were greatly increased.

The G.C.S.E. Literature syllabus presented by N.E.A. necessitates increased demands of similar proportions and types. As a projected outcome therefore, the writer expected to find from the survey that either there would be planning for increased timetable time for the global English provision, or alternatively, and more likely in the writer's view, that Literature would be increasingly offered only as an optional subject in the 4th and 5th years. In addition it was thought that the use of Literature in the G.C.S.E. English course would not be as great as might be hoped

because of the perceived increasing emphasis on technical, mechanical skills more frequently deriving its applied work from factual, non-literary material. In view of the 'backwash' effect external exam syllabuses exert on work done earlier in the school it was thought that 1st, 2nd and 3rd year pupils too would work within similar areas of emphasis. It was against this background that the survey was conducted.

It was thought possible to carry out an initial survey that would encompass all comprehensive schools in County Durham, recognising that more profound follow-up enquiries would be carried out in three schools. The initial survey was conducted for the following purposes:

1. to discover: current English Language and Literature provision, the number of 5th formers (1986-87) studying Literature for external exam.
2. whether there is any immediate change of ratios, reductions or increases in pupils studying for external exams in Literature because of the introduction of G.C.S.E., in current 4th formers.
3. whether any further change in numbers and ratios is foreseeable in the amount of Literature studied by pupils now in 1st year of comprehensive schooling.
4. some indication of current and future method and practice in Literature teaching, whether Literature is separated from, or integrated with Language and whether Literature is compulsory or optional for 4th and 5th formers.

The initial survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire (see appendix 9) sent to all

comprehensive schools in County Durham. The questionnaire was made up of three parts. The first dealt with current 5th form English provision for both Language and Literature, and requested information on numbers studying for external exams, and whether Literature was optional or compulsory. Very similar questions were then asked in the second part which focused on current 4th years. This year on year comparison was thought to be of particular interest to this investigation because this cohort is the first to be examined by the G.C.S.E. and not by separate G.C.E. and C.S.E. The third part of the questionnaire was not in the form of the specific, closed questions of the two previous parts which requested factual and numerical information. The third part attempted to elicit longer term expectations regarding numbers of pupils studying for Literature in four years time (1990), upon what the respondents based such expectations, and what changes in method and content they foresaw for that time.

The questionnaire was addressed to Heads of English Departments, with a covering letter of explanation and enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the completed questionnaire. The package of material was dispatched several days prior to the Autumn half-term in order to arrive before the week holiday. Of the forty four schools to which the material was sent, twentyfour responded.



These responses from the twenty four schools were analysed, and the following findings were the result of the statistical and factual enquiry. In view of the writer's hypothesis, some of the findings came as something of a surprise. It must, however, be recognised that the detailed factual and numerical returns from schools relate only to two years groups and not to any longer term; in consequence extended trends have not been measured. It will of course be a number of years before this can be done. Generally it would seem Literature is receiving considerable, and continuing, emphasis within the broader English domain.

Of the twenty four responding schools, slight changes were to be found from the 5th form of 1986-87, the last pupils sitting the old G.C.E. and C.S.E. and 4th form of 1986-87, the first pupils sitting the new G.C.S.E.

In the 5th form, 14 schools had Literature as a compulsory subject - 58%

In the 4th form, 14 schools had Literature as a compulsory subject - 62%

Unfortunately the school which changed was unidentifiable.

In the 5th form, 19 schools operated an integrated Language & Literature policy - 79%

In the 4th form, 21 schools operated an integrated Language & Literature policy - 87% [1]

[1] A matter explained more fully in the follow-up interviews.

Both schools to change stated the purpose was to bring themselves more in line with the ethos of the new G.C.S.E. course, and that they were happy for this to occur. They both also stated that Literature would continue to be available as a separate externally available exam.

Of surprise to the writer was the number of expected candidates for these exams. As was expected, the results of falling school roles caused by national demographic trends meant a fall in total numbers of year group pupils, from 4822 in the 5th form to 4467 in the 4th form.

There was what would ordinarily be described as a consequent reduction in the projected numbers of candidates sitting for:

English Language (G.C.E./C.S.E.)	-	from 4298 in the 5th form, which is 89% of the cohort
English (G.C.S.E.)	-	to 4046 in the 5th form, which is 90% of the cohort

Here there is a reduction of 355 total year group pupils between the years, but only a reduction of 252 between the two year group English entry numbers. The discrepancy is small however, and could be accounted for by the accuracy of 4th year numbers of entrants being less than those for 5th years.

Given this slight English Language/English reduction, the Literature figures become more interesting. The projected number of candidates for:

Literature in the 5th form G.C.E./C.S.E. is 2780 which is 57% of the cohort

Literature in the 4th form G.C.S.E. is 3032 which is 68% of the cohort

This is an increase of 252 despite a global year group reduction of 355, and is a notable 11% rise. It would appear therefore that in the twenty four responding schools at least, and these represent the majority of secondary schools in County Durham, the number of pupils studying Literature is increased by a notable 11% rather than the expected reverse trend.

Interestingly such a situation is expected to continue, or indeed to rise still further. In answer to the question: "Do you expect a:

considerably higher,

slightly higher,

similar,

slightly lower,

considerably lower,

proportion of pupils to be entered for an externally recognised English Literature qualification by 1990?"

The findings were:

7 thought numbers would be 'slightly higher'	- 29%
14 thought numbers would be 'similar'	- 58%
2 thought numbers would be 'slightly lower'	- 8%
1 thought numbers would be 'consid. lower'	- 4%

It must of course be recognised that such projections are necessarily less precise than for fourth and fifth years, and may well need alteration in the light of experience as 1990 approaches. Nonetheless this is the expectation believed most likely by respondents, and will be presumably worked towards when planning resource allocation; which in itself goes to aid the fulfillment of prophecy.

Such rising expectations and beliefs concerning the place of Literature were carried over into the third part of the questionnaire. The writer believed that this part was of as much importance and perhaps of greater value in terms of obtaining an impression of teachers' perceptions and hopes and beliefs. This third part was designed to elicit written information concerning some explanation and expectation for the future place of Literature within the overall scheme of English, with some thoughts on emphasis and method.

The two questions were open-ended and it was hoped that those Heads of Department with more time could here make a greater contribution. They would also help serve as an indicator of schools which might be more able or willing to offer further assistance and contribution to the proposed follow-up interviews.

Of the twenty four respondents to the questionnaire, seventeen made some further comment or gave a further explanation of reasons for change of numbers or course content or method, and/or expectations for implications for future teaching of Literature.

In terms of content, eight made the point that with the G.C.S.E. English Literature, departmental freedom appeared to have been widened because the range of texts that could be studied, and that were permissible, was considerably greater. In consequence, department members' particular interests and strengths could be better reflected, and pupils' interests and enthusiasms could also be encompassed within the framework of the exam. Such responsiveness, it was believed, might well lead to a greater number of pupils opting for Literature in schools where the subject was not compulsory. Such possible developments were welcomed by respondents.

With regard to method, nine respondents were hopeful that the G.C.S.E. would encourage a more creative response to the Literature. One school made the point that:

"the 'learning/memory' element is no longer necessary. Less traditional more imaginative approaches and responses to texts are now possible."

Another school from the other end of the county stated:

"The new scheme is inviting creative response to Literature rather than expecting the formal traditional exam response to the text, (more open-ended assignments etc.); less 'drilling' required."

Such comments as these, and others like them, seemingly reflect the work of Dixon and Stratts in 'English in Education', Summer 1985 edition. (108) A further ten respondents expressed the expectation and hope that the new course would develop further a more child-centred approach to the work, and that such would be beneficial. Many of these comments followed on from statements concerned with personal and creative responses to texts.

One such respondent made this very point:

"The material will be more child-orientated and their response more personal. Individuals will be able to use their own choice of materials; a more lively response should be possible with discussion by the children playing a major role."

Another made the contrast of method explicit:

"A more personal response compared with former fact-learning techniques,"

One Head of Department summarised a number of these issues by numbering out the changes foreseen:

- "1. More individual preparation needed.
2. Greater emphasis on personal opinion and evaluation of work.
3. Greater choice in selection of texts by pupils.
4. By fifth year, teacher's role will be concerned more with guidance than the teaching of facts and techniques."

Eight respondents were of the belief that the G.C.S.E. would encourage, and result in, the use of a more integrated Language and Literature approach, as is suggested by the G.C.S.E. English syllabus. For some this appeared as nothing new: "We have been waiting for the 'powers that be' to institutionalise our methods for some time", and from another school: "this kind of teaching has been done here since 1982." From a third came: "Language teaching is Literature based."

Two respondents stated that the integrated approach would mean Literature being taken out of the option block system altogether. One school explained it thus: "The timetable is unlikely to change, this means the English/Maths core will remain the same here. As the English work is integrated throughout the school, Literature is unlikely to become an option." This explanation came from a school in the centre of the County. One from the north saw the integration as an opportunity for expansion:

"We feel that at the moment separating English Language and English Literature is going against the National Criteria. We are therefore hoping to take Literature out of the options and increase time in the core: approx. 4 hours. Therefore more children will be completing Literature work, thus increasing our number of entrants."

Part of this explanation and expectation sounds rather like a submission to an headmaster, and is certainly indicative of much County English thinking.

There were however, a significant number of Heads of Department who took a less sanguine view. Generally this was because of the constraints imposed by time and other resources.

Some Heads of Department perceived this time constraint operating because of the increased and heavy workload, and that this would affect particularly mid and lower ability pupils.

Several respondents saw the 'English' course as something of a safety net into which less motivated pupils could fall, and still receive some Literature provision. One commented:

"We are finding the G.C.S.E. more difficult than the old Syllabus B, for less able children because the lengthened assignments system is more burdensome. Many will only do English."

Another school made a similar comment about the volume of work acting to restrict access:

"The volume of work required in oral, Language and Literature in G.C.S.E. means that the burden of work for anything less than the top 60 pupils will be too great. We are concerned that the extra work in Literature may be too much even for them."

This thought was echoed by another respondent who felt that the sheer quantities of work involved would mean that: "it will be difficult to allow the pupils to get the most out of their reading."



Because of the demands being imposed, some departments were already planning for a very different future from that envisaged by others described earlier. One Head of Department explained her expectation thus:

"Setting has been devised so that pupils who fall behind or lose enthusiasm may switch to an 'English only' set."

Another respondent, from the extreme south of the County, made these remarks which rather summarise the thoughts of this group of respondents:

"Pupils must present some Literature work for the 'English' exam, therefore lower ability groups will not be entered for both, only for English because:

1. more time must be given to oral work and assessment,
2. below average pupils have difficulty in coping with two separate exam requirements,
3. demands upon English teachers re. setting and marking of work, meetings, agreement trials etc. (particularly when following a syllabus B!) and no extra time allowed."

Here then, one can sense a very different feeling about future English provision, one somewhat less optimistic. It is held by this latter group that the 'English' course will provide the Literature contact for lower-ability or under-achieving pupils. Only brighter or harder working pupils will continue with a course providing more profound Literature contact.

Nonetheless, because the English syllabus design requires it, all pupils will have some Literature content which may be deemed sufficient, but which, one senses, will not be rich and to which only lip-service may be paid.

As to which approach is taken, this would seem to be influenced by and dependent upon the individual teacher and department's perception of what is achievable within their own situation. It would appear that those perceptions vary as schools and individuals vary, and the responses to those perceptions clearly vary too. This may illustrate a forthcoming difficulty in the creation of greater uniformity, caused by differences in interpretation and response. For example, all English departments do now have the opportunity to broaden and deepen Literature contact and experience within an integrated course of some richness and value, but one senses a few departments to be taking a more restricted approach - despite their professed strength of feeling about the place of Literature. It may be that the greater degree of uniformity and standardisation of curriculum and syllabus hoped for at national level is not, at least yet, being achieved at county level. This may be due to continuing feelings of uncertainty and doubt expressed by many departments.

As has been seen however, judging by the initial survey, the views and responses held by the less optimistic group of respondents are not shared by the majority. They may have similar feelings of doubt, but this majority appear to see future English provision more hopefully. They believe there is an opportunity to broaden and deepen the Literature provision particularly within an integrated course that ensures literary experiences are provided for all in a meaningful way. This group appears to believe that the teaching will be carried out in a more lively and interesting fashion, expecting it to be both more stimulating and more effective. They also expect that more pupils rather than fewer will be in a position to become candidates for an externally recognised Literature examination.

Such are the general conclusions to be drawn from the initial survey of schools carried out in the first ever term of the G.C.S.E.

The preliminary survey of English department expectation was necessarily fairly brief, designed as it was to give an introductory overview of Head of Department thinking, and general conclusions have been drawn which do provide a useful indication of trends of thought and planning. Recognising these points, the second part of the survey was designed to explore more fully the views of Heads of English departments regarding current and future attitude, expectation and practice.

The plan was not to obtain an overall, detailed picture of County-wide views and practice; such a survey would fall outside the scope of this writer's work. The plan was to take a sample, and to look at the views and practice of three English departments within their comprehensive schools in the County, in greater detail. From such a sample it was hoped that some final thoughts and conclusions might be drawn regarding English and Literature's place and purpose and future within that broader heading.

Three schools were selected because this was the maximum number that could be accommodated within this survey. It is recognised that such a number imposes limitations upon the drawing of conclusions. However, they were selected to illuminate returns from the much wider initial survey and therefore are, as far as possible, a reflection of the balance indicated by the initial survey.

The representatives of the chosen departments were all highly experienced professionals, able to bring the knowledge and understanding of the connoisseur to their work and their consideration of the areas for discussion.

In the light of these points, the three schools were selected for more detailed research, using the following criteria:

- a) schools' English departments that had responded fully to the initial survey, particularly in response to the open-ended final question, answering in more detail perhaps because they had thought more deeply and therefore had more to say,
  
- b) departments that appeared to mainly reflect the general tone of optimism and hopeful expectancy/discovered and expressed in the initial survey,
  
- c) schools which were of similar type and size: all were state co-educational comprehensive schools with between 600 and 900 11 to 16 year old pupils.

Topics and areas for discussion and exploration were identified. These included: a brief survey of departmental response to the current practical demands made by G.C.S.E. and what effect these demands were having upon Literature input. In the light of this experience the discussion was planned to go on to consider what Literature's place in the overall scheme of English might be in the foreseeable mid-term future. Finally, a consideration of how such predictions and expectations might fit with the department's own beliefs and views on English teaching.

Having selected the schools, English departments participating in the follow-up study were each provided with papers outlining the proposed areas for discussion prior to the meetings held between the writer and the schools' Heads of English (see appendix 10).

Although each interviewee was previously provided with a copy of the areas for discussion, the paper was both brief and fairly open, in order that discussion and response could be similarly flexible within the designated topic area. The writer found that this briefing paper was of value in that it both forewarned the interviewee, and gave them the chance for reflection, consultation and preparation within the department prior to interview. In this way, a considered and detailed response was hoped for, and, the writer believes, achieved.

Face to face interviews were arranged between the writer and departments' representatives - in all but one case the Head of department, and these took place straight after the Easter holiday in late April and early May 1987. Initially it had been planned to hold these interviews before Easter, but such were the time demands on Heads of department and other English staff caused by the external exams that postponement occurred. This had the benefit that most departmental heads had been released from some of their normal timetable by the departure of fifth years after the exams and so gave them a chance to reflect and review progress of the G.C.S.E.

Each interview, with its findings and comments, will be considered in turn. Where the department's work and philosophy fits within the framework of past and current English, design and practice will be examined. The effects proposed curriculum and syllabus development may have upon departments' teaching content and strategies will also be considered because the place and purpose of Literature within that teaching may be affected.

Although each will be discussed in turn, where departmental experiences, views and responses are similar these will be identified and commented upon where appropriate; as will contradictory or differing beliefs, practices and plans. This will be followed by a concluding summary of findings.

Prior to the account of each department's summary of findings, a brief situational analysis of the department and school will be given in order to provide a context in which to place that departments' work.

Department A functions in a mid County Durham town of about 12,000 people, it is the only secondary school in that town, and has about 650 pupils on roll. The school's pupils are grouped into three broad bands according to academic ability. Within this system

the English department appears to thrive. The departmental members are highly experienced, retain a lively interest in their work, and are familiar with current trends and innovations. They wish to implement change, and to do so successfully.

Historically the department had been entering candidates for the joint G.C.E./C.S.E. 16+ English Language exam for three years before the introduction of G.C.S.E. Until September 1986 there had been a clear, distinct division between language work and Literature. Literature had been compulsory for 4th and 5th year pupils, and the vast majority sat either G.C.E. or C.S.E. Literature exams at the end of the 5th year. This had been the state of affairs since 1974 and continued until June 1987.

However, the introduction of G.C.S.E. for pupils entering the 4th year in September 1986 had by May 1987 already resulted in changes being planned for this cohort's exam entry for May 1988. It was expected that far fewer pupils would be actually entered for the English Literature G.C.S.E. than had originally been expected, and would be very much fewer than in previous years under the old system. It was felt that Literature, as a distinct and separately examinable subject, would become available essentially only to the top academic band because of constraints imposed by time, and more significantly by the degree of difficulty imposed by the Literature



syllabus. Where previously less academic pupils could follow the C.S.E. Literature course and achieve a grade, this was felt with the G.C.S.E. to be unlikely because of its design. No time had yet been found to consider Mode 3 schemes in detail.

It was thought by the department that for the less academic pupils, exposure to Literary experience would be changed in terms of method and content. It felt that a great danger of heavily reduced Literature content would become a reality unless positive steps were taken by the department in order that literary experience continue to be provided for as many pupils as possible.

A further risk envisaged by the department was that if Literature were to become a restricted option available to few pupils, a danger was present in the possible threat of reduced timetable time being imposed upon the department, with a concomitant reduction in resourcing, in provision of finances and staffing. It was felt by this department that this could lead to an English syllabus of reduced scope and richness of content.

The department was responding by designing change of method and content, to a considerable extent in the way recommended by G.C.S.E. curriculum designers, and by such bodies as N.A.T.E. In terms of method, class

room organisation had been and still was changing. Desk layout for example was now patterned in clusters rather than rank and file. A heightened awareness of the need for oral practice was changing much teaching method. A more child-centred orientation was developing slowly but steadily as new skills, techniques and materials designed and introduced by the department over the last few years were improved and mastered by the department.

In terms of content, the department members had concluded that the Literature external exam syllabuses they had seen would not be suitable for many pupils in that particular school, and that therefore their Literary experience would be gained solely from the English course. The department wished to ensure a high literature content. In order to do this, the great majority of English course content, both written language and oral work would stem from a literary base. A coherent integrated Literature/Language approach would be employed. In comparison with the department's recent past practice, it was felt that already they were operating a much more integrated system, with much less separation of Language and Literature than had previously been the case.

However, this was felt to be generating difficulties of another sort, and is something other interviewed departments had also identified as a concern. The

department felt it was now doing very little - indeed insufficient - language work. The interviewee stated: "I hardly teach what was called 'language' anymore." Then later added: "I hardly ever do comprehensions any more," and "I often feel I now neglect straight Language essays, particularly when they're having to write quite complex Literature essays. I don't seem to have time to give them the chance to do the 'write about...' type anymore."

Despite these concerns, further content and method changes are being planned by the department for English, based upon their experience of the G.C.S.E. to date, and the recognition of the need for further development. The department is considering a modular approach with various options available for pupils to select from. The options would be designed and offered by department members employing their particular interests and enthusiasms; all of which appeared to be within the literary sphere. One teacher hopes to offer a poetry option, another a Shakespeare option, another an 'islands' theme. It is thought a media studies option might also be available. Whatever the option, a half or perhaps full term would be allowed for it. The department is also looking into the Manchester Modular L.E.A. Humanities Curriculum as a possible model from which to further develop the department's work.

The department is clearly aware that many obstacles are in the path of such innovations; these range from

timetabling - and the need for all participating classes to be 'blocked', to financial funding, the need for much in-service training, as well as the constraints imposed by the Literature exam which the course would still have to accommodate. The English exam did not appear to be a concern to the department in terms of bending to its syllabus and requirements.

In school A then, the English specialists are altering content and method of English teaching in response to and in anticipation of the call for change. The reason why the department is responding in the way described, by developing and giving greater emphasis to the place and purpose of Literature was straightforward and of interest in the light of where it places the department within the traditions of English teaching outlined earlier in the thesis.

Clearly the department as a whole and apparently as individuals, see Literature as the centre of English. The G.C.S.E. English qualification is seen as of prime importance to their work, but in terms of inclination they hold Literature to be pre-eminent. Although recognising and accepting the place and need for the teaching of some of the other forms of Language use promoted by some central agencies for change, they have little time or desire to spend more than a minimally required period on them.

Essentially the staff would rather teach Literature, for in philosophical terms, all are pro Literature. This must have an influence upon content and method. The interviewee simply stated: "I like doing Lit."

As a result, what would appear to be a split between the necessary and pre-eminent requirements of Language and 'English', and the desire to work with Literature, is being resolved by an integration of the two.

Interestingly, it was felt that the G.C.S.E. English syllabus gives that opportunity to integrate. The view held by department A's representative was that for the time being at least, a considerable degree of freedom existed for individual departments to develop courses in the way and with the materials they felt best - in this case with a strong literary bias. The representative felt that this would be the case for only a few years, perhaps four or five. This was thought because currently the exam boards do not have the syllabus fully 'bureaucratized yet', and syllabus imposition is still weak because of the disorganised state of the boards.[1]

It was felt that currently there is little tradition of ethos or tone to the new exams. As yet there is no body of past papers, or examiners' reports to set

[1] In May 1987, for example, N.E.A. was still advertising for examiners to mark the May 1987 exam.

guidelines and impose structure and to indicate content and grades related to degrees of difficulty and content. Hence it was thought it might be possible for schools to influence and affect such tone and ethos over the forthcoming years by establishing traditions of practice; in department A by using a very Literary emphasis.

Essentially the department A representative felt, as did the other departmental members, that the current situation is and will continue for some time to be fluid and dynamic, and that this provides an opportunity whether brought about by accident or design for centres to be flexible in content and method because of this lack of imposed strict guidelines, and the lack of 'formula for passing'. This may, it was pondered; "of course be what the G.C.S.E. is all about. They may be cleverer than we think."

Like department A, department B functions in an 11-16 co-educational state comprehensive school, of about 750 pupils. The school is one of two that serve a town of about 15,000 inhabitants, some way to the north of school A. Here too, the department certainly did appear to thrive. It has been lively and active, encouraging its pupils to participate actively. There have been frequent visiting authors and poets who have worked with pupils of all abilities, there are two bookshops and there was a

well supported 'English for Fun' club. However, it would appear that a combination of factors is reducing such practice. Certainly long term absence through illness and accident has severely affected the department, but according to the Head of Department the greatest cause of decline in activity of the sort described has been a waning in enthusiasm and strength of purpose brought about by the workload imposed by the requirements of the G.C.S.E., this imposition has had a major effect upon the department's English provision. Historically Literature was compulsory for all 4th and 5th year pupils and the department had for many years entered almost all pupils for a Literature exam, either G.C.E. or C.S.E. as well as a Language exam, which for the past five years has been the joint G.C.E./C.S.E. 16+, using the 60% coursework option: they are as a department highly experienced in the administration and moderation of coursework, and deeply committed to it.

Despite this belief in the method, and the accumulated experience and skill, the department found itself in May 1987 very stretched for time. The department, according to its Head, was having great difficulty in fulfilling the requirements and demands imposed by the G.C.S.E. syllabus. One of the major reasons for this was the great volume of scripts being sent by the exam board for departmental marking, grading and moderating; for both English and English Literature. The Head of department stated:

"We're like a team caught in revolving doors that keep going faster and faster, and we can't escape."

Within the English department the problems caused by the increasingly heavy moderating load are being exacerbated by the exam board continuing to provide insufficient time for such work to be done at less than a frenetic pace; in consequence teaching appears to be suffering. To the writer of this thesis, it appeared as if the department and the effectiveness of its work with pupils was in grave danger of collapse. At times the difficulties have been resolved by 'doubling up' of classes. As the Head of department said:

"we have to release teachers this way to get the scripts marked. The teaching is suffering, particularly the language work. We keep asking what are we here for? Sitting folio tests or teaching?"

As with the representative from department A, it appeared here that areas and topics of importance to the department were being neglected because of the greater demands upon time.

As a resultant effect, the Head of department felt such was the load that it would soon be impossible to carry on in this way, and that to try and do so would anyway be unfair on both staff and pupils. She felt: "something will have to go," and that would be compulsory Literature, because of the sheer volume of work. She felt to retain Literature as a subject for



mass study and experience there would need to be both - not either/or - fewer assignments demanded by the exam board, and more timetabled English time. Neither requirement was felt likely to be met. Hence, given the view that English was the more important, Literature as a separately examinable subject would become an option; the reverse of the opinion expressed by this school in its written reply to the writer's Autumn survey.

The Head of department hoped that the requirement to study some Literature in English would mean that Literature would retain a degree of currency within the department's syllabus, particularly as at present much of the department's English work employed a Literature based integrated approach. However, she felt a reductionist tendency was more likely and added: "the extended readers might not even be read in entirety", and within English the Head felt that the Literature input would be increasingly reduced, as it would become increasingly difficult to justify the purchase of texts when the input into the course English might become quite low, particularly as the demand for 'variety of media' grew. On this last point however, as with department A, department B felt that with things in a relative state of flux, this latter requirement might be open to negotiation.

Despite such a latter possibility, from a situation where in May and June 1987 over 90% of the 5th form read a number of literary texts, and clearly studied them in a lively and interesting way, a change would occur whereby 1988 would see many pupils having failed to complete the course because of its degree of difficulty, and that 1989 would see perhaps only 30% of the 5th form as candidates for an external exam in Literature, because of the constraints of time imposed upon departmental staff. Clearly there are similarities here with the report presented by department A's representative. It may well be an area where exam boards will have to enter into further negotiation with the S.E.C. for otherwise department B felt the demands to be too great.

This scenario for the forthcoming years was clearly at odds with the Head of department's personal view of the place and purpose of Literature. Over a number of years, as stated, much encouragement had been given and a considerable tradition established, of pupil participation in and enjoyment of reading. The Head felt this was now under great threat and that the current and foreseeable future situation was undermining the morale and enthusiasm of the department as they started to see Literature's place lessened. The Head of department stated:

"I feel that Literature should remain in the core, but it's getting too difficult to keep it there."

She felt her abilities and experience lay in using Literature to bring about:

"not just skilful communication, but much more; it's the thinking, caring adults that I used Literature to try to produce."

However, her opportunities for working towards this traditional, possibly liberal goal through the use of Literature were being greatly reduced by the lessening of time and chance for Literature in school B's English department.

Department C works in an 11-16 co-educational comprehensive school in a large town in mid-Durham. The school is one of four serving the area. The department has had a relatively low profile within the school, and has suffered from a series of administrative and staffing difficulties. Recently, with the aid of specialist external advice and assistance, some of these problems are being overcome, and the G.C.S.E. with its coursework demands and heightened oral emphasis are being coped with. Until recently teaching was very much teacher centred and directed, with for example most work conducted from language text books employing a traditional approach of isolated passage for following comprehension questions, followed by a grammar section, then an essay topic followed by the next chapter.

For at least twenty years, most pupils sat either C.S.E. or G.C.E. Language but from the late 1950's to 1986, very few pupils in the upper age-range studied or were exposed to Literature. Only the top band had the opportunity for Literature. Having been experimented with over a two year period in the early 1970's C.S.E. Literature for less academic pupils was dropped in favour of continuing with language exercises which had employed: "traditional source material, isolated passages, and comprehension exercises," as the Head of department explained to the writer.

Clearly little had changed for many years; the writer for example noticed a 1961 set of 'O' level Literature exam papers on a teacher's desk top, apparently in use that day.

However, the need for change imposed by external agencies has resulted in a series of major alterations in teaching content and method, although such results are not being easily achieved. The Head of department explained that departmental planning and discussion meetings had been frequent and long - in themselves major departures from past practice. As a result, by altering the content and method of teaching in line with external recommendations and requirements, the new demands of G.C.S.E. were, it was felt, being tackled to the benefit of all.

The Head of department stated:

"the hours of talking were very useful, we worked the things out and kept on explaining to each-other what we thought was needed."

A new emphasis on group discussion was planned and implemented, and found to be most successful with more academic pupils. This was thought to be the case because less academic groups had difficulty adjusting from the more traditional methods they were used to from the first three years. However the department head said:

"we keep trying, what we learn now will be of benefit for the next groups, and we're doing more of it down the school so it's becoming more familiar to them and to us."

The writer observed at least two of the English classrooms were now organised with desks in blocks in a similar pattern to those seen in department A, in order to facilitate group work. This was a considerable departure from previous practice.

In terms of content, perhaps the most significant change appeared to the writer to be the raised place and purpose of Literature within the department. Contrary to the writer's previous expectations, department C like department A, is raising its Literature input markedly, and pupil exposure throughout the ability ranges is increasing

considerably. This is taking place in a quite radical way for department C, and is in clear contrast to the predicted route for department B.

"Four years ago, I couldn't buy enough language textbooks, now nobody in the department wants them!" the Head of department commented. All language textbooks have been dispensed with and complete sets of fiction are now being used throughout the school as the primary resource. The department is now apparently "wholly Literature centred." As a result of the departmental meetings, Literature texts for upper and lower sets were decided upon and with reference to the National Criteria a range of possible approaches was agreed upon, drawing upon the department's members' individual strengths and areas of interest. The syllabus for English with its areas for study - using a thematic approach - was established, and discussion and planning then took place on ways in which Literature texts could be used in line with the National Criteria for English, as well as for Literature. As a result, four of the six classes in the current 4th year will be entered for both English and English Literature rather than the one class that would have been the previous case. The Head said: "they're all now getting more Lit., they're all getting complete texts."

He added: "It's made the work a lot more enjoyable, it's much more meaningful. The emphasis has shifted completely away from the traditional diet of language textbooks."

The Head of department believed the change in content and move to a literary core, coupled with an increasingly pupil-centred approach, was resulting in better motivated staff and pupils, and the latter could see more significance and purpose in their work. Essentially he felt the increased literary emphasis was a good thing. He had always felt a nagging guilt that many pupils had previously had little literary experience provided in school, and thought that despite the immense increase in pressure and workload, the changes were much for the best, and that he would rarely revert to the technical, mechanical exercises of previous years.

In essence, this was a department, in the writer's view, which had become somewhat used to a tried and tested, familiar if less than entirely satisfactory, teaching method and content. It now appeared to be however, a department which was approaching the new G.C.S.E. with renewed interest and vigour.

Perhaps here, as department A had suggested, the new syllabus requirements are being interpreted and adjusted to suit local strengths and understandings, and are being used for a variety of purposes; with department C to revitalise and change. Department C had taken the opportunity provided by the demand to re-think priorities and strategies to re-enhance and emphasise the place and purpose of Literature within the bounds of English.

To the writer it appeared that the Head of department and his colleagues were, like those in departments A and B, of the view that Literature was their main area of interest and enjoyment, from Literature their best and most useful work came, and that this was now available to all pupils.

From these individual departmental findings and from the wider, initial survey into schools' English, and Literature provision, a number of conclusions can be drawn. The final chapter will consider these.



## CONCLUSION

Before this thesis was embarked upon, it was the writer's intention to try and discover something about what was happening to, and what was likely to happen to, the teaching of Literature in County Durham schools' English departments as a result of the many contemporary influences acting upon schools' curricula. It was felt that a number of such influences might well be working together to reduce Literature's place within the teaching of English.

Working with this hypothesis, the enquiry into County Durham English departments' work was initiated.

The enquiry into past, present and probable future teaching of English Literature in County Durham comprehensive schools was initially carried out by means of questionnaire issued to all comprehensive schools. From the analysis of returns trends were identified and sample schools selected for follow-up interviews. The three schools selected for this were representative of the main trends in Literature teaching revealed by the questionnaire. The latter part of the investigation involving the follow-up interviews was instigated in order to find explanations for the trends identified. In this way, conclusions could be drawn regarding English Literature's likely place and purpose in English departments' syllabuses in

County Durham. In addition, the writer has no reason to believe County Durham to be an untypical L.E.A. and within the English sphere, it has some strong N.A.T.E. links which keep teachers abreast of current thought and development. In consequence it may be possible to relate these county-wide findings to National trends - although caution must be observed when doing so. Such conclusions would necessarily be tentative - given the size of the follow-up survey - but nevertheless because the departments' views were chosen for being typical of the schools initially surveyed, the representative nature of the three departments means that conclusions can be drawn from the interviews which are of relevance and authenticity.

Alongside the representative nature of the conclusions, two further points about the conclusion need to be made. Firstly that some findings were very different from those the writer expected to discover prior to the survey of schools. Secondly that the conclusions are not straightforward, because establishing direct relationships between cause and effect is impossible, for too many variables are present, and because little is certain. Conclusions must be hedged around with provisos of probability and possibility.

Bearing these points in mind, the first conclusions to be drawn stem from the findings obtained with the questionnaire issued to all schools.

The responding departments were divided in their views of the effect caused by the G.C.S.E.'s introduction. The majority of departments - 71% were in favour of the introduction because it offered the possibility of what they saw as favourable change. Significantly, that change was seen to lie in the opportunity for increased Literature content in the English teaching. In most instances Literature centred English teaching was proposed.

However, a minority of responding departments - 29%, were of the belief that the effect of G.C.S.E. would be to reduce the chance for Literature teaching. The changes were seen as likely to be reductionist in effect, leading to an increasingly narrow concentration on technical and mechanical competence - something which was not felt to be enough - and leading to a reduced opportunity for development of depth and richness of material and content.

Although departments were divided as to effect, what appeared to unite them came as a finding from the response to the open-ended final questions and from the request for further comment and explanation. It became clear departments saw Literature as of key importance to their teaching. Those that were optimistic over the G.C.S.E.'s effects were happy to see the introduction because of their beliefs and the effects being in accord. Those pessimistic departments were disappointed by their expectation of unfavourable outcomes, by the likelihood of reduced Literature content.

To inquire further into these findings, and in order to be in a position to identify likely trends, three schools were then selected which were representative both of the beliefs and expectations expressed, and that were fairly representative of the balance of that expectation. In order to reduce external variables as much as possible, all three schools chosen had similar numbers of pupils, and all were 11-16 comprehensive schools within the state sector in the County.

From these follow-up interviews and open-ended discussions, the unity of belief in Literature's importance was a finding of major significance to the writer. All three schools confirmed the view first detected in the questionnaire. It was clear that given the choice and opportunity, by inclination English teachers in all three schools would rather teach and work with Literature than anything else. It was quite remarkable to find such strength of feeling on this point about the importance of maintaining and indeed increasing the place of Literature.

In more detail, it seemed these departments' teachers wished to work with the spirit and ethos of Literature teaching identified and described earlier in the thesis. As a result of such wishes, such an inclination can be expected to colour teachers' interpretations and implementations of National

Criteria and exam board syllabuses. The writer believes that all three departments interviewed would want to slant their work towards Literature. It would appear from the survey and findings that all department heads and staff interviewed are of the Literature-as-core school of thought, and fall within the Literature as base for Liberal education area. As a result, they would want to increase the amount of Literature contact and teaching.

However, despite this desire, as the original questionnaire found, a sizeable minority of departments felt that less Literature would be taught and used than in previous years. School B was one in which the English department felt this to be the case. It is representative of the 29% minority found in the questionnaire. It is also representative of those expressing similar views discovered since the questionnaire's issue in informal conversation with representatives from English departments in Teachers' Centres and at G.C.S.E. training meetings. School B's is a case study which typifies this minority.

School B wishes to maintain a high profile for Literature in its teaching content but it believes the only Literature the department will be able to provide will be in the English course, and that that will suffer progressive reduction. One reason given for

this is that it will become increasingly difficult to justify the purchase of new Literature texts when they will be used for only a small Literature input. A number of Heads of English are postponing the purchase of texts, and adopting a wait and see approach. School B's Head is one of these. This in itself, in the writer's view, may well provide the continuing impetus to decline in the quantity of Literature taught. The quality too is in foreseeable danger, as text stocks deteriorate and interest lessens.

The adoption of wait and see attitudes amongst a number of schools is, in the writer's view, an understandable attitude to take in view of some of the writer's findings. Another reason given for the reductionist tendency seems to be because not all departments are well informed or forward looking - something of which department B could not be accused. In terms of information, G.C.S.E. boards have sometimes provided contradictory information and instructions. There have also been times of confusion over the actual meaning of criteria, lack of information over administrative procedures, and a lack of clear direction from exam boards through correspondence, personal visits and at G.C.S.E. training sessions. Such problems have left a number of departments, including that of school B, ambivalent towards G.C.S.E. and reluctant to commit further expenditure of time and money until more is known.

Their decisions are also affected by other issues which go to further complicate the making of decisions. These, as in school B's case, may not strictly be educational issues. School B's English department staff were clearly affected by such matters as insecurity brought about by falling roles, changes in pay and career structure, alterations in contract and the like, to the extent whereby their curricula design wishes were clearly influenced in ways they might not otherwise have chosen.

This level of doubt and uncertainty is clearly having a very unsettling effect, and the writer feels it is important to recognise the very finely balanced position being held in late 1987. The desire to maintain and develop a high Literature profile is demonstrably there - as department B shows, but because of the circumstances outlined, a not insignificant number of schools in County Durham may well evolve an English syllabus with much reduced Literature provision. The writer believes this conclusion to be something of which advisers, exam boards, parents and other interested parties need be aware. The scales can tip either way, and continued monitoring would appear to be necessary.

However, the School B type response to contemporary influences - particularly embodied by the G.C.S.E.'s introduction was not the only, nor indeed the main, reaction discovered during the writer's investigations. Schools A and C were more typical of the majority - 71%, response indicated in the initial survey. Their response was sharply different to that of B and School C's progressivism is a particularly interesting contrast to School B's retraction from held beliefs. Here the new introduction, forced upon a department formerly entrenched in a traditionalist approach has resulted in, initially at least, a new desire to increase the Literature content of all courses, to do

so in a meaningful and coherent way, and to provide this for all pupils by committing and investing heavily in new texts at considerable expense. This new spirit, and the writer does not believe that to be too strong a phrase, is working down through the school year groups, and the well documented 'back wash' effect of exams content and method is having its influence throughout the school, so that much more Literature contact is occurring.

This too is not untypical. Further investigation and discussion held by the writer indicate that a number of English departments within the County are increasingly addressing themselves to the question of designing similar strategems to operate through all years so that a consistency of approach is brought about. The problems of time and sheer bulk of additional work that such a uniformity of approach will bring are recognised as being immense however, and although many departments are investigating ways of making change practicable, it seems to be understood that these difficulties of time and volume of work may be insurmountable. So the departments' optimism must be tempered by practical constraints.

This problem is particularly the case in the area of course work, the moderation of files, and the maintenance of standardisation which go with the design and implementation of new practices and the integration of Literature and Language which department C is attempting. It is felt by a number of schools that to work in this way with all year groups may be too much.



As far as the 16+ level is concerned however, some relief is already arriving, and bears out the comments made by department A. At regional level, the writer, as a member of the N.E.A. Examinations Committee, knows it is proposed that the number of required written assignments in both English and Literature is to be further reconsidered, and in recognition of demand from client schools that number will be reduced. In addition, it is also likely that the number and frequency of course work moderating materials in Literature will also be reduced. So that in a time of change and transition, as department A indicated, schools can and are having an influence on developments.

Such alterations as these may well encourage Schools A and C as well as others like them, to continue their efforts to raise the place of Literature within their schemes of work, and might be sufficient for School B to reconsider its approach, for the situation remains fluid.

It seems that the more traditionalist department such as department C, has been rejuvenated and is tending more toward a greater degree of integration and Literature core content. However, the previously progressive departments are now more pessimistic, believing increasing restrictions are constraining in their influence. It may be that different departments' course content is beginning to follow parallel paths.

It is difficult to say what future directions will be taken, but it is clear that further change and development is continuing as a result of implementation experiences and the following consultations and negotiations. Currently, within County Durham, the writer believes Literature's place in the English department is relatively secure, and its purpose understood as an aid to the development of a Liberal Education. However, the writer would wish to conclude by saying that although this may currently be the case, it may not remain so. He would suggest the need for a further survey of teacher attitudes and curriculum developments in perhaps a year's time when the first cohort of G.C.S.E. candidates have experienced the complete course. And then perhaps again in three years time in order to see how methods and content are being refined and institutionalised. Only then will one be able to begin to say with certainty whether the hopes of most English teachers within County Durham, that Literature plays a central role in the syllabus, have been fulfilled.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

1. Timetable of a typical Elizabethan Grammar School.  
(From Curtis, "History of Education", London,  
University Tutorial Press, 1965).
2. Speech by Robert Lowe, made in 1868.  
(Quoted by The Newbolt Report, 1921).
3. Dixon and Stratta, "Unlocking Mind-Forg'd Manacles".  
(Paper for English in Education, Volume 19, No.2,  
Sheffield, N.A.T.E., 1985).
4. Examples of "reading for understanding" techniques,  
with the use of Science textbooks.  
(From Davies and Greene "Reading for Learning in  
the Sciences", Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1984).
5. Numbers of C.S.E. candidates entered for N.R.E.B.  
examinations in 1985, 1986, 1987.
6. Letter from N.R.E.B., late 1985, inviting teacher  
comment on G.C.S.E. proposals for English.
7. Draft Grade Criteria for English, (as first published  
in accessible form to teachers in "Times Educational  
Supplement", 11th October 1985).
8. Aims for 'Creative Development' and 'Communication',  
in C.P.V.E., in Consultative Document, Joint Board  
for Pre-Vocational Education, London 1984.
9. Copy of a letter of introduction, and questionnaire,  
sent by the writer to all Secondary Schools in  
County Durham, October 1986.
10. Copy of a letter and paper outlining proposed areas  
for interview and discussion between the writer and  
Heads of English, Spring 1987.

APPENDIX I

Time-Table of a Typical Elizabethan Grammar School

TIME-TABLE OF A TYPICAL ELIZABETHAN GRAMMAR-SCHOOL, 1598

(Schools Inquiry Commission, Vol. VII, pp. 262-3.)

Classes III, IV, and V were taught by the master; Classes I and II by the usher. In winter the school closed at 4 p.m.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Class V 7-11 a.m.	Prose theme. Lecture in Cicero or Sallust or Caesar's <i>Commentaries</i> .	Verse theme. Lecture same as Monday.	Prose theme. Lecture in Vergil or Ovid's <i>Metamorphosis</i> , or Lucan.	Lecture in Vergil, etc., same as Wednesday.	Verse theme. Repetition of the week's lectures.	Examination in lecture of previous afternoon.
1-5 p.m.	Latin Syntax or Greek Grammar or Figures of Sysenbrote. <sup>1</sup> Home lessons and exercises given out and prepared.	Latin Syntax, etc., same as Monday.	Latin Syntax, etc., same as Monday.	Half-holiday.	Repetition continued. Lecture on Horace, or Lucan, or Seneca's <i>Tragedies</i> .	Declamation on a given subject by several senior scholars. Catechism and New Testament.
Class IV 7-11 a.m.	Lecture on Cicero's <i>de Senectute</i> or <i>de Amicitia</i> , or on Justin. <sup>2</sup>	Lecture on Cicero, etc., as on Monday.	Lecture on Ovid's <i>Tristia</i> , or <i>de Ponto</i> , or on Seneca's <i>Tragedies</i> .	Lecture, etc., as on Wednesday.	Verse theme, and repetition of the week's lectures.	Examination in lecture of previous afternoon.
1-5 p.m.	Prose theme. Latin Syntax or Greek Grammar or Figures of Sysenbrote. Home lessons and exercises given out and prepared.	Verse theme. Latin Syntax, etc., as on Monday.	Prose theme. Latin Syntax, etc., as on Monday.	Half-holiday.	Repetition continued. Lecture on Ovid's <i>Fasti</i> .	Catechism and New Testament.

Class III 7-11 a.m.	Lecture on the letters of Ascham, or Sturm's Cicero's <i>Letters</i> , <sup>3</sup> or Terence. Paraphrase of a sentence.	Lecture on Ascham, etc., as on Monday. <i>Vulgaria</i> in Prose.	Lectures on Palengenius, or the Psalms of Hess. Paraphrase of a sentence.	Lecture on Palengenius or the Psalms of Hess.	<i>Vulgaria</i> in Prose, and repetition of the week's lectures.	Examination in lecture of previous afternoon.
1-5 p.m.	Latin Syntax or Greek Grammar or Figures of Sysenbrote. <sup>1</sup> Home lessons and exercises given out and prepared.	Latin Syntax, etc., as on Monday.	Latin Syntax, etc., as on Monday.	Half-holiday.	Repetition continued. Lecture on Erasmus' <i>Apophthegms</i> .	Catechism and New Testament.
Class II 7-11 a.m.	Lecture on <i>Colloquies</i> of Erasmus or on <i>Dialogues</i> of Corderius.	Lecture, etc., same as on Monday.	Lecture on the Cato senior, or Cato junior.	Lecture, etc., same as on Wednesday.	Repetition of the week's lectures.	Examination in lecture of previous afternoon.
1-5 p.m.	Translations from English into Latin. Home lessons and exercises given out and prepared.	Translations as on Mondays.	Translations as on Mondays.	Half-holiday.	Repetition continued. Lecture on <i>Æsop's Fables</i> .	Writing out the Catechism in English. Arithmetic.
Class I 7-11 a.m.	The Royal Grammar.	The Royal Grammar.	The Royal Grammar.	The Royal Grammar.	Repetition of the work of the week.	Examination in lecture of previous afternoon.
1-5 p.m.	The English Testament, or the Psalms of David, in English.	As on Monday.	As on Monday.	Half-holiday.	Repetition continued. Lecture on <i>Æsop's Fables</i> .	Writing out the Catechism in English. Arithmetic.

<sup>1</sup> J. Susenbrotus, a German, who died in 1543. Wrote an epitome of Rhetoric in 1540.

<sup>2</sup> Justinian's *Institutes*.

<sup>3</sup> Sturm published a selection of Cicero's *Epistles*. He was Rector of the school at Strasbourg.

APPENDIX 2

Speech by Robert Lowe, made in 1868  
quoted by the Newbolt Report

### *Retrospect.*

it is not a case of giving more time to subjects, it is a case of leaving out. I will give more time to English if we may abolish, say, Latin or Chemistry for example." "More time is wanted than present curricula are able to allow." "The most helpful change would be a reduction in the mathematical requirements of public examinations. It would be much better for the girls to give more time to English."

55. It appears to us a very grave matter that schools such as these are should be restrained by external forces from carrying out their own educational convictions and thus discouraged from relating their teaching to any educational convictions at all. For the only remedy against the menace which we are now considering is that all these varied principles at present competing with each other to the distraction of teachers and pupils should be duly brought under the ultimate purpose of education, which we have called guidance in the acquiring of experience, or the giving of a wide outlook on life. Education must, as we have urged already, bear directly upon life. Its failure, in so far as it has failed, has been due to its turning aside from life and reality. For this it has paid, and is still paying, a very heavy penalty, the penalty of indifference and scepticism on the part of people in general. A passage from a speech made by Mr. Robert Lowe, in 1868, may help to bring out our point.

56. "First," he says, "I recommend to your notice a subject generally overlooked in our public schools, and that is—what do you think?—the English Language; the language of Bacon and Shakespeare; the language of Pitt and Charles Fox; the language of Byron and Shelley—a language richer, probably, and containing more varied treasures than the treasures contained in any other language—which began to be formed and fashioned sooner than any other in Europe, except the Italian, which it surpasses in everything, except mere sound, that constitutes the beauty of a language. Is it not time that we who speak that language, read that language, so much of whose

### *Present Position.*

success in life depends on how we can mould that language; we who make our bargains in that language, who make love in it, should know something about it; that our care should not be limited to the reading of penny, threepenny or even sixpenny newspapers; but that we should, at least in our boyhood, be called on to remember what sort of writers England produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; that we should know our own tongue theoretically as well as practically. I can only speak from my own experience. During the last two years that I was at school I was, if not actually idle, at least not wholly devoted to Latin and Greek, and I had some qualms of conscience on the subject. But there was a certain bookcase in the corner of the study which was full of standard and sterling English books; I spent my time in reading those English books, and I felt like a traitor and ashamed of myself, when I did so, because I was stealing those hours from the study of Latin and Greek. I can only say that I owe my success in life to those stolen hours—that the power of being able to write and speak my native language with some precision and force has been more valuable to me than all the rest I have learned."\*

¶ We have included this quotation because it points out emphatically and yet unconsciously the test to which educational theory and practice must constantly be put, the test of application to life. The sentiment which it reveals is not the less interesting as coming from the author of the Revised Code, with reference to which Matthew Arnold wrote in 1871, "the whole use that the Government makes of the mighty engine of literature in the education of the working classes amounts to little more, even when most successful, than the giving them the power to read the newspapers." Now, as then, there is the danger that a true instinct for humanism may be smothered by the demand for definite measurable results, especially the passing of examinations in a variety of subjects, and if those who are anxious to

\* *Life and Letters of Viscount Sherbrooke.*



APPENDIX 3

'Unlocking Mind-Forg'd Manacles'

by Dixon and Stratta.

In English in Education, N.A.T.E. 1985

Volume 19, Number 2.

# Unlocking Mind-Forg'd Manacles?

John Dixon and Leslie Stratta

## *A unique Opportunity*

'A unique opportunity for improving the quality of education in this country'<sup>1</sup>: this is how the Secretary of State sees the introduction of G.C.S.E. And we agree. It could be so, especially in English Literature—provided that teachers and exam boards work together to seize the opportunity.

For the first time in the sixty-odd years since the 'First and Second Public Examinations' were founded, national criteria are stating some of the obvious truths about assessing literature:

Examination by the assessment of Course Work *is appropriate* to English Literature . . . *provides wider evidence* of candidates' achievement . . . *is especially suitable* for the assessment of wide reading . . .

Thus

In all syllabuses such Course Work *must account* for at least 20% of the total marks [and] It is recognised that some Examining Groups will wish to offer syllabuses which *will be assessed by Course Work only*.<sup>2</sup>

So 'the general objective, as I see it,' says the Secretary of State, 'must be to give teachers all the help and support we can in order that the new examination may be as good as possible and the improvements in the quality of education and teaching may be maximised.'<sup>3</sup>

## *Shortcomings for sixty years*

Now is the time to remember that in 1921, as the national exam system was being set up, the Newbolt Committee commented<sup>4</sup>:

1 'We have heard over and over again that answers to examination papers give much evidence of (unassimilated, and therefore insincere, criticism).' How is G.C.S.E. going to eradicate this—even in coursework?

2 'Many teachers set great store by the cultivation of original work on the part of their pupils or by dramatic performance. It would be a misfortune should the examination system rule such work out of court.' Will G.C.S.E. provide for it?

- 3 '... we agree with the English Association in holding that "if examination in . . . Literature is to be complete and thorough, some part of it at all stages should be oral".<sup>5</sup>

Will there be controlled experiments by the boards on these lines?

Equally, it is worth recalling that despite Newbolt—and only a decade later—L. C. Knights, writing in *Scrutiny* said:

Any English master interested in education who has prepared a school certificate form knows that bitter feeling of waste.... Since the damage done to education by external, 'standardising' examinations is so gross, obvious, persuasive and inescapable, the time has come to press, firmly, for their abolition.<sup>6</sup>

What is NATE going to be saying about G.S.C.E. Literature by the year 2000?—'the bitter feeling of waste' or 'a unique opportunity'?

### Escape from mind-forg'd manacles

For the past sixty years, all of us—teachers, examiners and candidates—have been through a peculiar processing that has distorted our notions of response to literature, especially through writing. Until we thoroughly understand this, we cannot escape.

The evidence is unmistakable especially for teachers of literature, who pride themselves on close reading of the text. How extraordinary it is that we have no tradition of looking equally closely at the language of typical exam questions—and how disillusioning it is when we do so. Let us scrutinise two groups of key words from 1984 G.C.E. exam papers<sup>7</sup>. All are concerned with character study, one of the two major topics in literature papers.<sup>8</sup>

What are the assumptions behind them?

*'In what ways are X and Y similar?'*

*'In what ways do X and Y differ?'*

*'Outline the changes in X's attitudes to Y. . . .'*

*'Refer closely to the text to illustrate the points you make.'*

*'By referring closely to the play, discuss this statement. . . .'*

In this group, the key words we have underlined have two major functions. Primarily they direct the student into generalisation. Characters are to be treated on the whole as a bundle of traits, which may be fixed or may change in some determinate way ('the' changes). So the essay consists in a set of 'points'. Thus, when the text is referred to it is to be treated as purely subordinate, an 'illustration' for the candidate's generalisations.

What's wrong with these instructions? If literature offers us any understanding of character or human nature, it does so by presenting people in action and interaction. Through dialogue and narrative, literature deepens

our awareness of the complexity, ambiguity and even contradictions in human behaviour. Within literature, generalisation does have a place—but it arises directly from this apprehension of the subtle texture of living relationships. In effect, then, key words such as we have quoted reverse the way we learn from literature. But they do more: consider this second group.

*'Point to the difference in this extract. . . .'*

*'Outline the changes. . . .'*

*'What is the effect . . . upon the reader?'*

*'What do we learn from X about Y?'*

*'Point out what is revealed in these scenes of X's character.'*

*'What impressions of X can be obtained . . .?'*

The key words here are even more dangerous. They assume that the knowledge of people that we derive from literature is definitive and consensual. Thus candidates are expected to take on an authoritative role and assert the accepted position 'we' have had 'revealed'. On these assumptions readers are passive, while the text makes 'impressions' and 'reveals' the truth to them.

What is so dangerous? The student is being encouraged to deny self-evident truths about response to literature. Reading is a creative act, whereby the individual reader uses the printed words to construct an imaginary experience.

What's more, this imaginary experience depends on the thoughts, feelings and relationships readers can actively bring to bear from their own personal lives. If what we can draw on continues to develop and mature throughout our lives, then our individual readings too will change and mature. For this reason alone, no reading can be definitive. And to expect a definitive reading of 16-year-olds is nonsensical. Reading literature is problematic, subject to individual, cultural and historical change.

To judge by these two sets of key words, then, examinations are attempting to turn the reading of literature into a form of knowledge which is generalised, consensual, determinate and unproblematic. A mind-forg'd manacle indeed! And it has been there fettering all our thinking for over sixty years now. But, not surprisingly, there are signs of unease, a desire to break free perhaps? At their best, these are giving further clues to what is being unconsciously suppressed as well as what is being enforced. Consider the following set of key words, scattered much less systematically through the 1984 papers.

*'Which of the (characters) do you find most interesting, and why?'*

*'Is there any one . . . for whom you feel a special sympathy?'*

*'What are your feelings about their conflicts . . .?'*

*'Do you agree with her that she should have . . .?'*

*'Do you think he is a suitable husband for . . .?'*

What aspect of the reading process do these key words point to? In one way or another, they acknowledge that, having created an imaginative experience, readers (like spectators at a play) view a character with 'interest' or 'sympathy', their 'feelings' as well as 'thoughts' are aroused, and given the chance they will reflect upon the action from a personal standpoint. As it happens, these questions are still tied to the request to generalise, but at least they do not rule out a vital personal element in literary response, as most character questions do.

To sum up: We have taken the most frequent form of literature question – the character question – and by close analysis of the language we have tried to demonstrate the distorting assumptions behind typical key words. These assumptions deny what the imaginative student, teacher (or examiner) are trying to achieve in their day-to-day explorations of literature. We have discussed elsewhere their effects on the written work of a typical student.<sup>9</sup> The question is: will G.C.S.E. Literature liberate itself, or not? Will 'the unique opportunity for . . . raising standards' be taken, especially in the coursework consortia, and will the boards actively encourage it?

#### *Signs of new thinking by the boards*

Over the past decade or so, we can discern two new directions in Literature exam questions: both seek to recognise fundamental processes in reading and response, and to make room for them – as far as conditions allow – in the examination.

The first arose from the Cambridge Plain Text approach. This accepted that it was wrong to base the assessment of Literature entirely on memory. With the text in the examination room, the way was open for teachers and examiners jointly to consider what processes they wanted to encourage. How could they help students in the first place to re-engage with the text, (re-)creating and extending their imaginative reading and response? What kinds of wording would offer guidance without restricting the student to a closed and pseudo-definitive view? How could the reader be encouraged to dwell on and explore particular moments from which a more general perspective and understanding might naturally emerge? These are not easy questions.

There was fresh thinking here, but some traditional assumptions seem to have been left unquestioned. In general, for instance, this approach still asks the student to take on a version of the relatively familiar university role of 'critical' analysis.

The second new direction offered students a different role; they were asked to write not as the reader but as an imaginary participant or spectator. It is a role that emerges naturally enough when students have taken part in a dramatic production, or dramatically re-enacted sections from a novel (as Dickens did). Writing allows room for the imagination to work empathically, extending the understanding of character and situation. Film and (video-) tape open up further possibilities.<sup>10</sup> Exam questions that

asked students to take on a role have been included intermittently by many boards (the Cambridge Plain Text among them). We have to make a careful distinction here between two poles; at the one end, using the experience of literature as a springboard for constructing (related) imaginative worlds of one's own, and at the other, dwelling on the experience of the text by imaginatively living through it in role. Both show how much students can gain from literature, but it is the latter we want to attend to here.

The question again is what processes to encourage. How can we help the student to explore tacit kinds of empathy and understanding? Is there room also for some explicit (more reflective) commentary, while still within role? Can we suggest ways of extending the language used in searching for appropriate forms? Which parameters of the text are going to be important, which incidental or peripheral (for 16-year-olds of varying abilities)?

#### *Can coursework learn from the plain text approach?*

In our experience, much of what passes as 'coursework' today is still moulded by past examination traditions. 'A unique opportunity' is not being taken up. Yet, as we have just seen, some examinations are themselves moving in new directions. What has coursework to learn from them?

First, short sections of the play or novel can be a natural springboard for the student writer. In the Plain Text approach these are inevitably chosen by the examiners, but in coursework, when a class has been enacting, presenting readings, or taping key scenes, it is possible to encourage and assist students to make their own choices of a section for 'detailed study', where their 'first-hand knowledge' of the text can lead to a 'sensitive and informed personal response'<sup>11</sup> – with the text still in front of them, and the experience of enacting it fresh in their minds.

Second, if they are taking on a more reflective, analytic role, some students may welcome or need guidelines. These will have three functions, at least:

- to keep them actively engaged in re-creating and extending an imaginary world constructed from the text;
- to help them to focus on elements in that experience that they find significant;
- drawing on the ebb and flow of their sympathies, to help them stand back and reflect on what the experience means for them.

Third, if there are going to be guidelines, or prompts, what are they going to look like? Here again Cambridge has been suggestive. Consider the effect of some of these phrasings taken from the last eight years' papers:

<i>recreating and extending</i>	your reactions as you read through . . .
	. . . any lines that particularly interest or puzzle you
	. . . your feelings may vary
	. . . when you look closely at what each man says and
	think about how he says it
	. . . when you think of what each says and does

<i>finding</i>	what impression do you form (of the atmosphere . . . )
<i>significance</i>	. . . what do you find unexpected in their behaviour, attitude and language
	. . . explore some of the contrasts (in feeling, mood, action, character, attitude) that you yourself find interesting
	. . . what differences do you discover . . . in temperament and in the way they look at life
	. . . what hints do you see that help you to understand (later) developments (or relationships)
	. . . your understanding of the problems that confront X and Y
	. . . what portrait of X would you produce
<i>reflecting on personal meanings and judgements</i>	how well does Y cope with (the problems), do you think . . . in your opinion, (do) they deserve pardon or punishment
	. . . what is your own interpretation
	. . . do you think X is being fair

In our view, phrases such as these encourage the *process* of reading and response, so that discoveries can continue to be made in the course of *writing*. Writing ceases to be primarily a summary (or, worse still, a regurgitation) of past thoughts; it is an opportunity to think through and even discover afresh. In imaginative teaching, of course, such writing has the launch pad of animated 'analytical' discussions, arising as a natural corollary of presentations and enactments. Talk precedes writing and helps to shape it.

In one or two cases we find equally suggestive ideas in the Plain Text approaches to lyric poems. Although in the exam the poem was unseen, the following assignment — with adaptation — could equally have been given to a group who had chosen their own poem to explore, present, and write about:

Read the following poem ('*Incendiary*' by Vernon Scannell) a number of times, till you feel you have begun to get inside it; then look at the questions . . . , which are intended to help you to express freely your own reactions to the poem.

What is interesting in this 'introduction' is that it not only recognises the need for 'a number of readings 'to get inside' any poem, but also leaves the student free to accept or set aside the guidelines that follow':

— This poem is about a small boy and a fire that he started deliberately. What impression of the fire does the poem create for you? Mention some of the details in the poem that contribute to this impression.

— Write about your impression of the small boy and the feeling towards him that the poem arouses. How far does the poem enable you to understand why he started the fire?

— The poet repeats the word 'frightening'. What things frighten him about this incident? Do you find that 'frightening' is the strongest, or the final, feeling that the poem expresses for you?<sup>12</sup>

No doubt questions like these are not beyond improvement, but it is impressive to see their effect on students of varying articulacy and maturity in poetic response. Let us look in turn at the opening sections from two students<sup>13</sup>:

(a) The poem gives the impression that the fire ~~was~~ were great and it had spread all over ~~town~~ the farm. its flames spread quickly, as quickly as a tiger hungrily coming towards you ~~and tearing~~, the noise of the fire was as deafening as the roar of a tiger whilst tearing flesh. The brightness of the red and gold flames made the sky look red and fierce, and as persons chocked, you could imagine the stars up in the sky being chocked by the thick black smoke rising into the sky.

My impressions of the small boy ~~is~~ are that he was lonely and needed some attention just to tell him that he was still loved. . . . The last two lines of the poem 'He would have been content with one warm kiss had there been anyone to offer this', made me feel sorrowful for the child. I wanted to reach out, ~~and~~ pull him close and give him the one warm kiss that he so much wanted, which no one would give him.

Space does not allow us to discuss here the detailed developmental features in this staging point of written response: however, we can point to the way she dwells on and imagines the possibilities in two dense poetic images in the poem ('flame-fanged tigers roaring hungrily' and 'set the sky on fire and choke the stars'); to her empathic understanding of the boy and the love he needed; to the directness of her warm, human response. She has trusted to the guidelines and found them valuable.

(b) The fire was huge to compare ~~to~~ with what his heart needed. His need for love was 'brazen, fierce and huge'. That small boy with 'a face like pallid cheese' seems almost under other circumstance to be an angel. But the fire of hatred in his heart for not being wanted has burnt out his eyes. People say the eyes are connected to ~~his~~ the heart his certainly seem to be. The colour suggests life and ~~fire~~ fierce ~~very~~ reactions. I don't feel it is true of the boy. He is almost ash in his feelings. Almost dead and gone. . . .

And it is frightening that such a small child should carry such pain in his heart. That such a child could as the poem says 'set the

sky on fire and choke the stars stars to heat.' It is frightening that we can allow such people to exist in such a state. The fear is emphasized by mentioning the boys actual size. The smallness of him to cause such a fire. 'such skinny limbs and such little heart'.

And then we are offered the remedy. So simple as remedies usually are. So pure a feeling and action 'one warm kiss'.

Again, briefly, we can point to a vital element of imaginative construction in her reading of the symbolism (the fire is not only external but internal); a synthesising of 'fact and metaphor'; the sense of multiple meanings in an image like 'burnt-out little eyes' or an action like 'one warm kiss'; a wider reflection on what 'we can allow'. The phrasing of the assignment has been helpful to her, but—impelled by her imagination—she has felt free to develop her own complex response.

#### *Can coursework grasp the potential of imaginary roles?*

During the past decade a number of boards have experimented intermittently—both at A level and 16+—with the idea of asking candidates to write in an imaginary role, rather than within the analytic tradition. So far as we know, there has been no national review of the lessons that have been learnt. What are the options? Let us consider, for simplicity, a set of examples drawn from the past five years' papers in the Cambridge Plain Text syllabus:

— There are as many different ways of directing *Macbeth* as there are directors. Each director has to make crucial decisions about what Shakespeare's play means and how the production will bring out the meaning.

What would you, as director, want to convey to the audience about *one* of the following . . . difficult problems . . . and how would you do it? (June '81)

— Uncle Ben's appearances in (*Death of a Salesman*) have a mysterious and puzzling quality. What do you make of him? You may, if you wish, think of yourself as a director talking to the actor who will be playing the part. (June '81)

— (In 1984) As she sits in the cell, awaiting questioning, Julia looks back over her affair with Winston. What do you think her thoughts and feelings about their relationship would be? If you wish, you can write as if you were Julia. (June '84)

— Explain exactly why (Bathsheba) feels unable to knock at the door and speak to Oak (in Chapter 43). You may write as if you were Bathsheba if you wish. (June '84)

— Imagine you are Laura's mother (in *Lark Rise*), and say what you think and feel about your nine-year-old daughter. (June '81)

Coursework gives students ample opportunities to take advantage of such approaches—and others like them. The actual experience of working in class on the production of a scene from a play leads naturally into exploring what can be learnt in the role of director—or actor. All the script offers is printed dialogue on the page: taking on these roles adds in such new dimensions as gestures, actions and reactions; movement, stance and juxtaposition; inner thoughts and feelings; and, crucially, the spoken interpretation of the text.

Similarly, in preparing a reading from a novel or short story, students have to imagine themselves into the role(s), in a particular era, culture and setting. Whatever the text—be it a Hemingway short story or a proposal scene from *Pride and Prejudice*—there will be massive demands on the reader to construct beyond the words. The sub-text of motive, intention, attitude and feeling may be no more than hinted at, or very obliquely indicated.

Role play associated with prepared readings, then, is a method of slowing down the reading process, allowing for a fuller imaginative creation, while at the same time giving students the responsibility and the opportunity to learn from their own discoveries. As an alternative way of getting at sub-text, 'explication de texte' from the teacher, while it certainly slows down the reading (!), is more than likely to deaden both imagination and response.

Thus, as an element in coursework writing, the 'imaginary role' approach seems to us equal in significance to analytical writing, and best viewed as a complement and parallel to it. If so, no coursework folder should exclude either.

As our final point, let us indicate briefly what may be gained: with space for no more than one example, we have chosen a piece from a C.S.E. folder, by an 'average' student, written—as it happens—in a mock exam and based on a N.W.R.E.B. question.<sup>14</sup>

'Imagine yourself a character in one of the books you have studied and write the full entry you make in your diary for one especially interesting and important experience.

Include in your entry your thoughts and feelings.' (May '84)

'Kes'

22nd of November, something very important happened with my bird, 'Kes' he started as a chick that wouldn't kill for its food unless it was fed by me so I looked up about this in library books and they say that you should give the bird time to get used to not having a mother and so I did, and now he's flying around and fending for himself like any other wild bird.

I took him out to the park early this morning and let him go—at first I thought he'd fly off but he came straight back to me, so I let him loose again to catch some meat which I tied to a string and spun it round my head untill 'Kes' saw it and lunged at it.

I then took a sparrow which I had caught before and ~~took~~ let it loose 'Kes' was flying so fast I thought he'd miss it, but he never missed, his aim was superb he went straight through the skin ~~with~~ with his sharp and killing claws, I know this was cruel but at least I gave the sparrow a Fifty-Fifty chance. I am glad that my training of the bird hasn't hurt its natural instincts to kill for food, but I am also sad that I will have to let him go soon because it belongs in the wild with the rest of the wild birds.

Its been a long time since I ~~1st~~ First found him in an old building abandoned so it seemed; just waiting for some one to just walk along and help it, the little chirps that meant 'help me', almost brings tears to my eyes.

The essential question to ask, it seems to us, is what kind of evidence such writing offers of empathy with Billy Casper, and understanding of the significance of the bird for this character. At two points, the prose seems to be unusually responsive to feeling and thought. In the first, there is exultation and pride, 'he never missed, his aim was superb', followed by a more ambiguous acknowledgement of brute power, 'his sharp and killing claws'. There is a kind of wrestling with ambivalent judgements, 'I know it was cruel . . . I am glad . . . my training . . . hadn't hurt its natural instincts.' In the second, the poignancy of the coming loss of the bird is prefigured, as Billy remembers finding it. The cadence of this final sentence suggests a writer of surprising sophistication—'Its been a long time since . . . abandoned so it seemed, just waiting . . . almost brings tears to my eyes.' In order to recognise such evidence, we have to interpret what it enacts, rather than expect analytic fullness (of the kind our own commentary begins to offer).

Admittedly, there are two minor objections we may need to meet, in this instance. First, writing under exam pressures, with more than one text to cover in the session, Leslie has misremembered and kaleidoscoped more than one incident. Does it really matter, though? ('Undue emphasis should not be placed on mere recall' as the new National Criteria state.) Second, the opening reads more like a letter to a close friend (offering contextual explanation) than a diary entry. Neither of these takes away from the positive achievements, in our view. The vivid external events evoked with such delicacy, the exploration of inner thought and complex feeling, the precision of the language and appropriateness of the rhythms, and the overall coherence of the piece are a fitting testimony to what this writer has learned in responding to literature.

#### References

1. Letter from Sir Keith Joseph to Sir William Cockcroft (S.E.C.) 21 Dec. 1984. Para 1.
2. National Criteria for English, Jan. 1985, pp 8–9.
3. Sir Keith's letter above, para 2.
4. *The Teaching of English in England* H.M.S.O., 1921, p. 118.
5. Ibid. pp. 302–8 (see discussion in Dixon and Brown, *Responses to Literature*, 1984, obtainable from NATE, Sheffield).
6. 'Scrutiny of Examinations', in *Scrutiny*, XII, 2, pp. 157–8—a brilliant discussion, and published in 1933!
7. Including A.E.B., J.M.B., London, Oxford, and joint W. Midlands/Cambridge.
8. See Barnes and Seed, *Seals of Approval*, 1981, p. 24, University of Leeds, School of Education.
9. L. Stratta and J. Dixon, *Character Studies—changing the Question*, forthcoming from Southern Regional Examinations Board, Southampton.
10. See, for example, Stratta, Dixon and Wilkinson, *Patterns of Language*, 1973, chapter 2, Heinemann.
11. National Criteria for English, Jan. 1985, *Assessment objectives*, p. 8.
12. Cambridge English Literature (Plain Texts), June 1982, Q.17.
13. We are grateful to Geoff Lambert and the Cambridge Syndicate for permission to quote these extracts, and to Jane Ogborn, chief examiner, for bringing them to our attention.
14. We are grateful to Leslie Brownhill and to Bob Lever, his English teacher, at Norton Priory School, Runcorn, Cheshire, for permission to quote this piece.

APPENDIX 4

Examples of 'reading for understanding' techniques,  
with the use of science textbooks.

from "Reading for Learning in the Sciences"

Davies and Greene, Schools Council,

Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh 1984.



Here we would expect to find references to the deck, the cables, the anchor points, and so on. Again these are specific items of content, but as related items of information they can also be classified as the 'parts of a structure'. And where the information constituent 'parts' is present, so too will be the constituents *properties*, *location*, and *function*.

The occurrence of this particular structure in geography and history as well as in science texts enables us to identify similarities as well as differences amongst texts across the curriculum.

In illustrating the notion of information structure we have identified two distinct structures underlying different types of science, and other texts: *instruction* and *physical structure*. This is a first step towards describing variations in science texts which is followed up in detail in Chapter 4.

We now use the notions of writer intention and information structure to examine text variation across the curriculum.

The distinction between English and science texts is sharpest and will serve to illustrate the distinctions we wish to draw out.

### Comparing the texts of science and English: writer intention

With the exception of poetry and passages specially selected for particular exercises, most English texts are *narrative*; science texts and many texts in the humanities used in schools are *informative*: they are expository or instructional. These general terms do not tell us anything about particular writer intentions; but they do point to the wider purposes of the different types of text.

We might say that the general function of narrative texts is to tell a story; in practice, things are much more complex than this. The novel or short story may well be thought of as an end in itself. Nevertheless, its story-telling function differentiates it, at the most fundamental level, from texts written for the purpose of informing: describing or explaining the real world, or instructing the reader in a particular procedure.

The narrative texts studied in English all share certain quite consistent features:

1. they all tell a story, ie they are structured by a story 'frame';
2. they are frequently written by professional writers;
3. they make reference to the personal rather than the public;
4. they are not intended, in themselves, to be 'educative'.

The texts which are used in science are all written for quite specific pedagogic purposes, but these purposes are manifold. While the instruction texts of science, like the narrative texts of English, do have consistent features in common, informative texts do not. For instance, an informative text which

introduces a theory is as different from an informative text which describes a mechanism as it is from a narrative. Reading in science, we suggest, is more demanding than reading in English because it requires, as a basic condition, a willingness and capacity to deal with a wider range of text types.

### Meaning or information constituents

The meaning constituents of the narrative are familiar, in principle, to all readers: the characters or actors around which a story revolves, their qualities and goals, the settings in which they find themselves, and the events and resolutions which result. The information constituents of informative texts, by contrast, vary widely according to the topic of the text.

Thus, while texts giving *instructions* to experiment may all share the constituents – 'apparatus', 'materials' and 'steps' – texts describing a *theory* will have different constituents; and these will further differ from those describing *structures* or *processes*.

It is this wide variation in the basic constituents of science texts which, as we show in Chapter 4, gives rise to information structures which are not as familiar to readers as the story structure.

### Meaning or information structure

The structure of the story has been widely investigated by linguists and psychologists in recent years. They have been able to show how implicit knowledge of this structure serves as a framework for understanding; and that a knowledge of the basic structure of the story is acquired by children at an early age.

By contrast, the structure of expository and instructional texts has not been widely investigated, and the models which have been proposed are very tentative. More importantly, it seems likely that pupils coming to the task of reading in science do not bring with them the implicit knowledge of the structures of science texts that they have of the narrative. This is one reason why the reading demands of the text used in science and English are quite different.

### Reading demands of texts in science and English

Narrative text is conducive to the kind of reading termed *receptive reading* by the 'Effective Use of Reading' team. The reader who reads receptively

is metaphorically carried along by the text, or, if you like, by a story framework; s/he is so involved that s/he is likely in fact to be unconscious of what s/he is doing.

Receptive reading may be contrasted with *reflective reading*. When reading reflectively the reader does actually break the flow of his or her progress through the text and reflect on something s/he has read about or related to what s/he is reading about. Reflective reading may well occur in reading narrative prose; indeed it is an essential requirement for the advanced study of literature – but it is not an essential requirement for the reading of narrative.

Both receptive and reflective reading play a part in learning from text but they make very different demands on the reader:

1. Receptive reading, by virtue of the fact that it is intrinsically rewarding, maintains motivation and generates interest in a topic or theme;
2. Reflective reading results in learning and in this respect may also be regarded as potentially rewarding;
3. Reflective reading is harder work – and it is the predominant demand of reading expository instructional texts;
4. Whereas (most) narrative texts offer the reader the option of reading receptively or reflectively, and we assume that some readers do pace themselves in this way, expository and instructional texts do not. Non-narrative prose does not offer the same opportunities for gear-changing.

The opportunities to read receptively are rare in science, so it is essential that reflective reading is rewarded by understanding. But this does not happen unless the reader knows when and where to stop and reflect. Knowing when and where to break reading for reflection is facilitated by knowledge of structure. The question is, do pupils coming to the task of learning from the expository and instructional texts of science possess even implicitly this knowledge? Our view is that they do not.

Without this knowledge, and the support and guidance from teachers who know the nature of the task, pupil reading in science is unlikely to be truly reflective, and is likely in fact to become rejective.

*Rejective reading*, as the term implies, is manifest either in a rejection of the task and the text, or in a passive passing over of print which does not result in satisfaction or learning. We know from personal experience when we ourselves respond rejectively to print, and we also know, from experience, the sort of texts which are likely to give rise to this reaction.

We doubt whether we are always as sensitive to the potential responses of our pupils. It is true that we have all encountered some pupils who manifest, even in junior school, the motivation to read widely about science and the flexibility and capacity to deal effectively with a wide

range of types of text. These pupils seem to possess an implicit knowledge of information structuring from an early age and use it to pace their reading: they cope with new content and terminology with ease. Perhaps these are the students who go on to become great scientists or science teachers. They are, nevertheless, in the minority. For most pupils, reading in science is probably one of the most challenging demands made on them throughout their secondary schooling.

**If pupils are to be encouraged to maintain a lively interest in science beyond the novelty of experimental work in the first years of secondary schooling they will need to read, and read effectively.**

This, we believe, will not come about unless science teachers are prepared to provide support and guidance in reading throughout the secondary school. Because the demands of reading in science are subject-specific they cannot be met by 'reading' or 'skills' lessons which go on elsewhere in the curriculum. The responsibility for training must be in the hands of the experts in science – the science teachers.

## Summary

In our discussion of the nature of reading in science we have tried to suggest some starting points for providing support and guidance for our pupils.

1. We propose that a first step is to concentrate on the content and structure of texts used in science, rather than on features like terminology. In effect we are saying that if we take care of content and structure, terminology will look after itself. This we will illustrate in the next section.
2. We have said, however, that we have much to learn about structure, but have pointed to some quite fundamental differences between the structure of the narrative texts of English and the instructional and expository texts of science.
3. We have also tried to show that pupils have an advantage in reading narrative, namely possession of the story framework, but lack the counterpart(s) of this structure when they come to read science texts.
4. A further challenge of reading in science is that pupils have to deal with a range of different text types, with unfamiliar and extensive content.
5. Three kinds of reading response have been discussed: receptive, reflective and rejective.
6. It has been asserted that the opportunities for reading receptively are rare in science. Teachers will themselves consider whether or where there is a place for provision of material which will give rise to receptive reading.

are protected by plastic or acetate covers, or inserted into plastic envelopes. Any marking of the text can then be done on the cover in washable pens and subsequently erased. Alternatively, pupils may be provided with acetate sheets to lay over material which is going to be re-used.

In general, most of the teachers with whom we have worked prefer their pupils to keep copies of worked-over texts. These are useful both for revision of content and as exemplars of a method of text study. We like the idea of pupils being able to return to texts which they have, for instance, underlined and labelled, especially when a recording outcome of the text marking, like a diagram, is also included in the file.

## 2. Discussion

Discussion is facilitated by the provision of a copy of each text to be used for each pupil involved, and by keeping group size to a minimum; pupils work in pairs or in groups of three.

Only when the teacher and pupils are experienced in small group discussion does the size of the group increase. Furthermore, teachers experienced in working with mixed-ability classes usually ensure that weaker readers are paired with at least one more confident reader. In classes where there is a predominance of less-confident readers, pupils are often given the opportunity to follow the print while the teacher reads it aloud before the pupils undertake the reading task. Indeed, with almost all classes, the lesson begins with the teacher reading the text aloud while the pupils follow.

The discussion has a purpose. Pupils are expected to make decisions. They are also expected to revise their decisions in the light of further information. This is made available through the pooling of ideas in a teacher-led class discussion at the end of the lesson. The nature of the topic and of the text, as well as the teacher's own teaching style, determine the extent to which conclusions are open or closed. Frequently, though not always, a consensus is reached.

## 3. Observing pupil responses

Because the lesson has been very carefully planned, and because pupils are taking an active part in the lesson, it is possible for pupil performance to be closely monitored by the teacher.

Insight into pupil interpretations may be gained from group and class discussions; and further evidence is available from marked-up texts as well as by recording outcomes.

Pupils are also informed about the objectives of the lesson and are clear about what follow-up is required of them. The relevance of the reading activity for their homework and study is frequently discussed.

## Examples of directed-reading activities: reconstruction activities

### Completion

There follow three examples of completion activities.

#### 1. Text completion: prediction of words deleted on a regular basis

This is the activity known as *cloze procedure*. Originally developed as a technique for assessing the readability of texts, it is also used as a test of comprehension.

When used as a directed-reading activity, deletion serves to initiate discussion and reflection about the important concepts and language of the text.

Words are deleted from the text to leave gaps. Gaps are usually of uniform size so that clues to the word are drawn from the meaning of the text, rather than from 'letter clues' or word shape.

An example of text prepared for cloze by the deletion of every fifth word is shown below.

#### Modified text 1: Expansion and contraction of solids

Materials expand when they are heated. Most materials expand, or become larger, when they are heated, and contract, or become smaller, when they are cooled. The expansion of solid materials, like iron and brass, is so small that it is not noticed unless special apparatus is used to measure it and to show that it is, in fact, occurring.

The expansion of solids. Push the metal ball of a ball and ring apparatus through the ring. Heat the ball and, when it is red hot, lift it with tongs and place it on the ring. The ball does not fall through the ring. It has expanded. What happens when the ball cools and contracts?

Heat the bar of a bar and guage apparatus. Try to push the bar into the guage. It does not fit. Allow the bar to cool. It now fits into the guage for it has contracted in length.

Lay a thick iron rod across two bricks. Use Plasticine to attach a straw to one end of a knitting needle. Place the needle, so that the straw is upright, on one of the bricks and underneath the rod. Then

heat the rod. The straw turns. Why? Now allow the rod to cool. The straw now turns in the opposite direction. Why?

Expansion and contraction can \_\_\_\_\_ a nuisance or even \_\_\_\_\_ damage. Therefore, engineers make \_\_\_\_\_ for expansion and contraction. \_\_\_\_\_ pipes are built with \_\_\_\_\_, bends and moveable collars \_\_\_\_\_ that no damage is \_\_\_\_\_ when the pipes become \_\_\_\_\_ and expand. Telephone wires \_\_\_\_\_ power cables are left \_\_\_\_\_ so they do not \_\_\_\_\_ when they contract in \_\_\_\_\_ weather. Large metal bridges \_\_\_\_\_ loosely on rollers or \_\_\_\_\_ pads built into their \_\_\_\_\_.

Then expansion can take place freely and no damage is done to the bridges. Narrow tar-filled gaps are sometimes made in concrete roads so that cracking does not occur when the concrete expands. The rails on a railway track are welded together to make a single rail that is often more than one kilometre in length. This rail is heated and stretched. It is then fixed down firmly in the expanded state so that it contracts only slightly when the weather becomes colder. The pendulums of clocks are sometimes provided with wooden or plastic bobs and adjustable nuts. Wood and plastic do not expand as much as metals. The nut of a pendulum is turned so that the position of the bob is altered and allowance made for expansion and contraction.

From C. Windridge, *General Science*, Book 1.

more than one kilometre in length. This rail is heated and stretched. It is then fixed down firmly in the \_\_\_\_\_ state so that it contracts only slightly when the weather becomes \_\_\_\_\_. The pendulums of clocks are sometimes provided with wooden or plastic bobs and adjustable nuts. \_\_\_\_\_ and plastic do not expand as much as \_\_\_\_\_. The nut of a pendulum is turned so that the position of the bob is altered and allowance made for expansion and contraction.

From C. Windridge, *General Science*, Book 1.

With a regular system of deletion, 1 in 10, 1 in 7, 1 in 5, the teacher has little control over what aspects of content or of language are focused on. When deletion is selective there is much greater control, since the teacher decides what words will be deleted.

A comparison of the two 'Expansion' examples serves to illustrate this. The comparison is best undertaken through reference to the deleted words listed below.

<i>Example 1</i>	<i>Example 2</i>
<i>Regular deletion</i>	<i>Selected deletion</i>
be	loosely
cause	expansion
allowances	damage
steam	gaps
loops	cracking
so	single
done	expanded
rest	colder
plastic	wood
supports	metals

Of the ten gaps in Example 1, five can be filled by words (either the original – 'be', 'cause', 'so', 'done', and 'rest' – or synonyms) purely on the basis of language cues. No reference to the content of the passage is required and hence in discussions about clozing the gaps there is unlikely to be reference to the important concepts discussed in the passage. The remaining five gaps, by contrast, do require reference to the content of the text. But there is a sense in which they also require reference *outside* the text. There is not enough information left in the text for 'good' predictions about appropriate words to be made. There is no way of knowing in advance, for instance, that the example of allowances for expansion cited by the writer will be 'steam' pipes, nor of knowing in advance that 'loops' as well as bends will be built in. In sum, deletions may not be sufficiently demanding of effort, or irrelevant to the content, or they may be too demanding.

## 2. Text completion: words deleted on an irregular basis

While we believe that pupil discussion based on cloze passages deleted on a regular basis does have some potential for learning, we consider that an irregular or selective system of deletion has greater potential.

A selective pattern of deletion is illustrated below.

### Modified text 2: making allowances for expansion and contraction

Expansion and contraction can be a nuisance or even cause damage. Therefore, engineers make allowances for expansion and contraction. Steam pipes are built with loops, bends and moveable collars so that no damage is done when the pipes become hot and expand. Telephone wires and power cables are left slack so they do not snap when they contract in cold weather. Large metal bridges rest \_\_\_\_\_ on rollers or plastic pads built into their supports.

Then \_\_\_\_\_ can take place freely and no \_\_\_\_\_ is done to the bridges. Narrow tar-filled \_\_\_\_\_ are sometimes made in concrete roads so that \_\_\_\_\_ does not occur when the concrete expands. The rails on a railway track are welded together to make a \_\_\_\_\_ rail that is often

APPENDIX 5

Number of C.S.E. candidates entered for  
N.R.E.B. examinations in 1985, 1986, 1987.

THE NORTH REGIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD

CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

1985 EXAMINATION - PROVISIONAL RESULTS

Mean grades are not shown where the number of candidates is less than 10.  
Percentages are not shown where the number of candidates is less than 100.

The following subjects are available under all Modes:

SUBJECT	TOTAL NO OF CANDIDATES
Art	6 967
Elements of Accounts	800
Commerce	1 965
Commercial Organisation and Office Practice	1 813
Typewriting	8 413
Home Economics	6 065
Needlecraft	2 166
English Language - Written	22 014
English Language - Oral	13 978
English Literature	15 306
CDT: Metalwork	2 979
CDT: Woodwork	3 726
CDT: Design	892
CDT: Technology	394
Technical Studies: Graphical Communication	2 673

SUBJECT	TOTAL NO OF CANDIDATES
Geography	11 894
History	10 835
Mathematics	27 031
Computer Studies	4 066
Arithmetic	6 603
French	5 440
German	1 884
Spanish	432
Music	997
Rural Studies	944
Religious Studies	4 715
Human Biology	2 720
Biology	9 962
Chemistry	8 575
Physics	8 403
Science	4 849

THE NORTH REGIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD

CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

1986 EXAMINATION - PROVISIONAL RESULTS

Mean grades are not shown where the number of candidates is less than 10.  
Percentages are not shown where the number of candidates is less than 100.

The following subjects are available under all Modes:

SUBJECT	TOTAL NO OF CANDIDATES
Art	5625
Elements of Accounts	818
Commerce	2097
Commercial Organisation and Office Practice	2132
Typewriting	8658
Home Economics	5562
Needlecraft	2094
English Language - Written	19011
English Language - Oral	12078
English Literature	16321
CDT: Metalwork	2607
CDT: Woodwork	3551
CDT: Design	1271
CDT: Technology	841
Technical Studies: Graphical Communication	2083



SUBJECT	TOTAL NO OF CANDIDATES
Geography	10965
History	10189
Mathematics	24772
Arithmetic	6523
Computer Studies	5045
French	5153
French Alternative Syllabus (GOML)	493
German	1688
Spanish	274
Music	1161
Rural Studies	991
Religious Studies	4836
Human Biology	2676
Biology	9009
Chemistry	7864
Physics	7314
Science	5296

THE NORTH REGIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD

CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

1987 EXAMINATION - PROVISIONAL RESULTS

Mean grades are not shown where the number of candidates is less than 10.  
Percentages are not shown where the number of candidates is less than 100.

SUBJECT	TOTAL NO OF CANDIDATES
Art	5175
Elements of Accounts	817
Commerce	1860
Commercial Organisation and Office Practice	2354
Typewriting	8783
Home Economics	5651
Needlecraft	2082
English Language-Written	16514
English Language-Oral	11919
English Literature	12002
CDT: Metalwork	2214
CDT: Woodwork	3171
CDT: Design	1198
CDT: Technology	781
Technical Studies: Graphical Communication	1683

SUBJECT	TOTAL NO OF CANDIDATES
Geography	10458
History	9619
Mathematics	25976
Arithmetic	6029
Computer Studies	4490
French	3736
French Alternative Syllabus (GOML)	317
German	858
Spanish	117
Music	930
Rural Studies	1043
Religious Studies	3745
Human Biology	2580
Biology	9518
Chemistry	8210
Physics	7104
Science	4772

SUBJECT	TOTAL NO OF CANDIDATES
Nautical Studies: Navigation	2
Nautical Studies: Shipbuilding	25
Nautical Studies: Seamanship	23
Human Movement Studies	1043
Media Studies	176
Business Studies	314
Applied Science	833
Building Studies	484
Technical Studies	1366
Related Studies	5499
Information Studies	160

APPENDIX 6

Letter from N.R.E.B., 1985,  
inviting teacher comment on G.C.S.E. proposals for English.



The North Regional Examinations Board

Wheatfield Farm  
Westerhope  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 5JZ

Telephone (091) 286 2711

S123A

28 November 1985

Dear Sir/Madam

English Panel

Consultation on NEA proposals for GCSE syllabuses A and B in English

Copies of the enclosed Northern Examining Association syllabuses have been sent to all NREB centres, and teachers are invited to comment on the proposals by Friday, 10 January 1986.

I should be grateful if you would arrange a meeting as soon as possible for the teachers whom you represent, using your usual LEA consultative machinery, so that they may have an opportunity to discuss and comment on the syllabuses.

The next meeting of the English Panel will be held in the Board's offices on Wednesday 8 January at 10.00 a.m. Members will be invited to discuss the proposed syllabuses and report on the comments of their teachers. The Panel's response to the proposals will be reported to the NEA English Subject Committee.

If any member is unable to attend this meeting a written summary of teachers' comments would be of value.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Anne M. Wesenrafft'.

for Secretary to the Board

To: Members of the English Panel

APPENDIX 7

Draft Grade Criteria for English,  
as first published in accessible form to teachers.  
Times Education Supplement, 11th October 1985.

# NEWS

## Draft criteria for GCSE: the standards of oral and written communication

### ENGLISH

### Grading System

#### Domains Oral Communication

This will carry the same weight as the other domains if the working party's recommendation is accepted. All candidates will have to reach a pass standard in oral communication to achieve an overall pass. The working party has suggested that this domain should be subdivided into:

- (i) Content
- (ii) Organization and structure.
- (iii) Language features – the selection and appropriateness of the vocabulary and grammatical structures, with an equal emphasis on formal and informal registers.
- (iv) Social context – the way in which speakers and listeners respond to their audience and use skills such as intonation, pausing, intervention and other types of non-verbal skills.

#### Writing

Candidates must be able to develop a variety of styles in response to different situations. A "sense of audience" is vital.

Candidates must be able to write in the following contexts:

- Expressive writing and narrative in response to stimuli and experience.
- Argument and persuasion.
- Giving information.

#### Reading

Pupils must be given the chance to respond to whole books and to respond to a wide variety of texts, including:

- Expressive and imaginative texts
- Texts which present an argument or intend to persuade.
- Texts which intend to inform and explain.

The grade criteria for reading cannot be assessed through traditional comprehension tests, warns the working party.

Aggregate	GCSE grade	Restrictions
2	G	The candidate must satisfy the F/G criteria in oral communication and in one other domain.
3	F	The candidate must satisfy the F/G criteria in oral communication and in at least one other domain
4/5	E	The candidate must satisfy the F/G criteria on all domains
6/7	D	The candidate must satisfy the F/G criteria on all domains
8/9	C	The candidate must satisfy the F/G criteria on all domains
10	B	No further restrictions
11/12	A	No further restrictions

The working party would welcome suggestions on the most appropriate method of obtaining an overall grade.

### Examples

- #### A. Oral communication
- **Content**  
Grade A/B candidates can:
    - (1) Distinguish between power of expression and the force of the ideas expressed.
    - (2) Sustain a coherent amount of personal experience.
    - (3) In conversation, discussion or argument after preparation which may include the consideration of source materials.
  - Select subject matter which is relevant to the task and adapt it as appropriate to the purpose and audience.
  - Formulate a tenable conclusion and justify it.
  - Compare points of view and weigh these against each other.
  - Go beyond a stated point of view to explore its implications for the argument.
  - Expose and challenge bias, un-



Expose and challenge bias

ported opinion or hearsay evidence.

- Give a balanced summary of the views expressed by the participants.

- #### Grade F/G candidates can:
- (1) Recognize a speaker's more obvious attitudes, aims and intentions and react to them.
  - (2) Tell or retell an anecdote or story.
  - (3) In conversation, discussion or argument after preparation which may include the consideration of source materials.
  - Include subject matter relevant to the task set.
  - State a point of view.
  - Acknowledge the points of view of different speakers.
  - Contribute ideas "relevantly."

- **Social context**  
Grade A/B candidates can:
  - (1) Speak fluently and confidently in a variety of situations.
  - (2) Use the voice for emphasis, contrast or dramatic effect.
  - (3) Engage and control the response of the audience.
  - (4) When speaking:
    - Use non-verbal signals to enhance what is said.
    - Take account of non-verbal cues from their listeners.
  - (5) When listening.

- Assist the speaker in pacing his delivery by non-verbal means – nods, frowns, etc.
  - Recognize when the delivery contradicts what is said (e.g. as in irony).
  - (6) In discussion or argument.
  - Recognize the cooperative nature of group exploration of an issue, taking the lead where appropriate.
  - Sense when to recapitulate in order to make progress.
- #### Grade F/G candidates can:
- (1) Exchange ideas on a one to one basis and in small groups.
  - (2) Speak audibly and clearly.
  - (3) Hold the attention of a peer group.
  - (4) When speaking.
  - (5) When listening.
  - Concentrate upon the message being conveyed.
  - Interpret non-verbal cues as a gloss on meaning.
  - (6) In discussion or argument.
  - Ask questions in order to seek assistance.

- #### B. Writing
- ##### In expressive writing and narrative, Grade A/B candidates can:
- (1) Give a coherent and perceptive account of both actual and imagined experience.
  - (2) Write imaginative narrative with convincing characterization, setting and plot.
  - (3) When asked to reflect or respond, explore feelings and reactions with insight and sensitivity.
  - (4) Describe a scene or character as the task requires.

- ##### Grade F/G candidates can:
- (1) Give a coherent account of personal experience.
  - (2) Write imaginative narrative with a discernible plot.
  - (3) When asked to reflect or respond, give a direct statement of their personal feelings or reactions.
  - (4) Describe a scene or character as the task requires.
  - **Use of language.**  
Grade A/B candidates can:
    - (1) Accurately use a wide vocabulary.
    - (2) Judiciously use a variety of sentence structures.

(3) Write with secure control of punctuation, grammar and syntax.

- #### Grade F/G candidates can:
- (1) Use simple vocabulary appropriate to the task.
  - (2) Write in sentences.
  - (3) Punctuate, and use grammatical conventions with sufficient accuracy to be easily understood.

- #### C. Reading
- ##### In all their reading, Grade A/B candidates can:
- (1) Recognize and comment on the thematic development of the text.
  - (2) Show an understanding of the relationship of what is written to what is meant.
  - (3) Identify, illustrate and comment upon significant features of the text.

- ##### F/G candidates can:
- (1) Identify main ideas in the text.
  - (2) Identify a text as having an expressive, persuasive or expository intent.
  - (3) When their attention is drawn to specific features of a text, find words, phrases or sentences which exemplify those features.

- ##### In their reading of texts which present an argument or intend to persuade, A/B candidates can:
- (1) Where appropriate, challenge an argument in a text.
  - (2) Evaluate the effectiveness of an argument.
  - (3) Recognize the significance of the sequencing and organization of the text e.g. reserving most telling point till the end.

- ##### F/G candidates can:
- (1) Identify a point of view argued in the text.
  - (2) Distinguish fact from admitted opinion.
  - (3) List some of the points made in an argument.

**Next week: French and maths**



# Made to measure: draft exam criteria

The draft criteria for the GCSE could revolutionize public examining, if they can be properly applied and implemented. They aim to provide a description of what any exam candidate knows, understands and can do.

The new assessment techniques which will be needed to measure pupils' abilities in this very precise way may completely change the way subjects are taught as well as altering the contents of syllabuses which have already been drafted for the GCSE.

The decision to develop the criteria was taken after Sir Keith Joseph's Sheffield speech in 1984, which called for "clear definitions of the knowledge of level and performance expected from

candidates for the award of particular grades". But working out the definitions has proved more complicated than Sir Keith anticipated.

The draft criteria for the first nine subjects have been published two months late, and it no longer seems likely that any of the grade criteria will be ready to be incorporated into the first GCSE syllabuses, as Sir Keith intended.

The criteria will need to have extensive trials before they can be used in the GCSE. At the moment, nobody knows if the different levels of criteria actually match pupils' abilities. The working parties have been simply using their own experience to define the standard of criteria for grade F, for instance, which is supposed to correspond to CSE grade 4.

Some subjects have been able to draw on the experience of the Assessment of Performance Unit while others, like French, are familiar with precise grading techniques from their use of graded tests. But examiners in English, for example, have never before had to draw up such detailed measurements of oral skills.

When speaking, a grade E candidate must be able to "use deliberate gesture to support or enhance what is said", whereas a grade C/D candidate should be able to "use non-verbal signals (eye-contact, direction of gaze, posture etc.) to enhance what is said, and take account of non-verbal cues from their listeners."

Some of the working parties have found it very hard to distinguish between different levels of

achievement. In history, level 4 (the top level) candidates must be able to show their ability to use historical concepts by "selecting recalled or given items of information and presenting the items in a connected and sustained manner". Level 3 candidates, however, must present the items in a "connected" manner.

Examining groups, subject associations teaching unions and local authority associations now have until early next year to comment on the draft grade criteria. They have not been sent to schools, as the Secondary Examinations Council felt that it would confuse teachers to see them at this early stage.

Susannah Kirkman

## Any hairs to split?

This week the running battle over the curriculum passed quietly into a new phase, as the long-awaited and long-delayed GCSE draft grade criteria were unveiled. The collected thoughts of the Secondary Examinations Council on nine major subjects are now on their way to the unions, local authorities, subject associations and examination boards - comments by the end of February.

Let it be stated again, for those who have been under the forgivable impression that these notions were to be set in concrete next autumn: these particular proposals are not expected to be implemented until the early 1990's. The GCSE syllabuses which are intended to come into effect next year will follow the "national" criteria recently laid down. Syllabuses based on the new criteria are due to be tested from next autumn in pilot form.

The underlying philosophy of the latest SEC offering follows Sir Keith Joseph's decision that competitive norm-referencing must yield to non-competitive criterion-referencing. In plainer terms, the system whereby pupils' attainments are graded (in theory, anyway) against national averages is to be replaced by a system whereby their attainments are measured (in theory) against objectively established criteria. The old system implied that a significant proportion of the nation's children had automatically to be judged failures; the new system is an attempt to escape this corporate stigma.

It has already been pointed out that since Sir Keith wishes a Grade F in the new dispensation to be of an equiva-

lent standard to a CSE Grade 4, the purity of the conception is sullied in advance: criterion-referencing was not born yesterday, and norm-referencing will live on. Far more serious objections will now be raised as theory is turned into practice. Has the SEC made the new notion work? Can anybody make it work?

It seems clear that some forms of learning - progressively-acquired intellectual skills of maths or foreign-language learning for example - lend themselves more to measurement by objective criteria than others. It is fairly easy to tell if someone can or can't tell the time in French.

The trouble arises with those subjects which depend primarily on the imaginative and aesthetic faculties. Two years ago the Assessment of Performance Unit published its thoughts on "aesthetic development", and made a complete ass of itself in the process. Next week on this page we shall print a historian's verdict on the SEC's history proposals, but first impressions of these and their counterparts for English suggest how easily the SEC could get bogged down in ambiguous nonsense.

History is subdivided into three supposedly separable "domains": "historical knowledge and understanding", "historical enquiry", and "historical reasoning", each of which is itself subdivided into four levels of achievement. At the highest level, "recalled or selected" information is presented in a "connected and consistent manner"; at the level below, in a merely "connected" manner, and at the level below that "in a manner that shows some connection". This is an attempt to turn hair-splitting into a fine art.

Some of the English proposals are frankly bizarre. Teachers assessing competence in the domain of "oral communication" are asked to differentiate between "using a deliberate gesture to . . . enhance what is said" and the higher-grade "using non-verbal signals (eye-contact, direction of gaze, posture, etc) to enhance what is said". How would they grade those excitable continentals who traditionally talk with their hands? The hair-splitting proposed in the analysis of

ding and writing skills would drive examiners straight back into old-fashioned impression-marking, if it didn't drive them mad first.

## Use of terms

● **Domains:** subject areas. Each subject has been divided into at least three domains.

● **Levels 1 to 4:** Level 1 corresponds to grades F/G, Level 2 corresponds to grade E, Level 3 corresponds to grade C/D, Level 4 corresponds to grades A/B.

● The draft grade criteria define what candidates must be able to do to achieve each level or grade in every domain.

● The criteria for French describe the levels of achievement as "areas of competence," and there are seven, not four.

● **Aggregation:** adding up the points scored in each domain to produce a final grade.

● In most subjects, successful completion of one level or grade in a domain entitles the candidate to one point, which goes towards their total score.

APPENDIX 8

Aims for 'Creative Development' and 'Communication'.

Consultative Document, Joint Board for  
Pre-Vocational Education.

London 1984.

**COMMUNICATION**

**Main Aim**

To develop an awareness of the role of communication in structuring and defining attitudes and relationships between people and groups in a changing and multi-cultural society.

**Sub-Aim 1**

The young person should communicate effectively, using a wide range of methods.

*Course Objectives* *Suggested Teaching/Learning Activities*

<p>The course should provide opportunities for the young person to</p> <p><b>1.1</b> listen and respond appropriately to oral requests and presentations, and identify points relevant to a particular purpose</p> <p><b>1.2</b> read, understand and present written texts, tabular and graphic data in various forms and identify points relevant to a particular purpose (ref: Numeracy 1.9, Science and Technology 1.7/3.3)</p> <p><b>1.3</b> find and use information from a variety of given sources, including electronic information sources (ref: Problem Solving 2.12)</p> <p><b>1.4</b> respond to and use non-verbal communications</p> <p><b>1.5</b> talk in a controlled and effective way appropriate to a range of situations, roles, purposes and relationships</p> <p><b>1.6</b> write competently and effectively, organising content and observing the conventions of legibility, spelling, punctuation and grammar to an appropriate standard such as to maintain the confidence of the intended audience (ref: Problem Solving 2.13, Science and Technology 2.3)</p>	<p>by tasks involving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- listening to instructions and carrying them out</li> <li>- listening to telephone messages, taking them down and acting appropriately</li> <li>- observing the causes of breakdown in spoken communication, e.g. wrong level of material for listener, failure to listen carefully, speed, poor articulation</li> <li>- reading and acting on instruction manuals, notices, letters and labels</li> <li>- using questionnaires, memos and worksheets</li> <li>- making own notes</li> <li>- by planning an event or course of action, working individually and in groups, e.g. a journey by public transport, making an object, buying a vehicle - using sources such as catalogues, timetables, indexes, dictionaries, yellow pages, Prestel</li> <li>- by considering, in familiar and non-familiar situations (work experience, leisure activities, role plays), how speech is affected by situation, background, culture, emotion, etc</li> <li>- by participating in exercises involving use of eye-contact, body space, etc</li> <li>- by improvising a given role (e.g. interviews or being interviewed)</li> <li>- observing and simulating the conventions of formal meetings</li> <li>- initiating and carrying through a range of different types of telephone calls</li> <li>- taking a variety of parts (e.g. defending a point of view, explaining a process, selling an item, retelling an experience, giving directions) in a variety of groups, formal and informal, culturally mixed</li> <li>- attempting to shape, conclude or destroy a discussion</li> <li>- by writing formal letters, reports, agendas, etc</li> <li>- filling in forms (driving licence/insurance applications, insurance claims)</li> <li>- writing informal notes and messages</li> <li>- writing a personal account of a work placement</li> <li>- using appropriate language of persuasion/complaint</li> </ul>
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NB: The above activities must be placed in the context of the student's experiences and aspirations. Many of them may be undertaken within work experience and cross-curricular projects.

**Sub-Aim 2**

The young person should develop language skills as a means of thinking critically about the world around them.

*Course Objectives* *Suggested Teaching/Learning Activities*

<p>The course should provide opportunities for the young person to</p> <p><b>2.1</b> use the main methods of spoken communication to express their views on a range of issues or to solve problems</p>	<p>by tasks involving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- debating issues, e.g. the environment, the role of the media, the responsibilities of the individual</li> </ul>
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<p><b>2.2</b> identify, analyse and respond to complex, confused, emotive messages and unsupported claims in a range of texts and data</p> <p><b>2.3</b> make informed judgements about the appropriateness of sources and media for retrieval and presentation of information</p> <p><b>2.4</b> understand and respond critically to the presentation of information, ideas and opinions in a range of mass-media</p> <p><b>2.5</b> evaluate his/her own and other's communicative strengths and weaknesses through observing and participating in a range of verbal encounters (ref: Social Skills 1.1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- examining and appraising given faults, problems or events (faulty equipment, college over-crowding, a fall in sales) working individually or in a group</li> <li>- by examining sales literature, comparing products, identifying instances where expert advice is relevant to a matter of opinion</li> <li>- by participating in small group discussions, demonstrating an ability to attend to another's point of view and to present a personal point of view articulately</li> <li>- by analysing the methods of communication used in large organisations, e.g. for publicity, internal communication, information storage, recruitment</li> <li>- by participating in the planning and creation of a complex piece of communication, matching medium to purpose</li> <li>- by a critical appraisal of, e.g. a novel, TV programme, biography, record, identifying style, imagery, message being transmitted, influence of the technology, etc</li> <li>- choosing language appropriate to a given situation and demonstrating understanding of tact, implication, persuasion</li> <li>- experiencing the communication requirements of certain jobs (e.g. with children, in an office, with customers, with VIPs) and evaluating their reaction to them, and their ability to learn</li> <li>- by continuing the study of mother tongue or a second language, as appropriate</li> <li>- considering the role that language plays in national and international communication</li> <li>- considering the uses - both practical and philosophical - of languages other than English</li> </ul>
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<p><b>2.6</b> appraise the value of possessing competence in a second language or languages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- by continuing the study of mother tongue or a second language, as appropriate</li> <li>- considering the role that language plays in national and international communication</li> <li>- considering the uses - both practical and philosophical - of languages other than English</li> </ul>
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NB: This explicitly creative dimension of communication is also to be met by Creative Development 1.

# CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

## Main Aim

For young people both to become aware of their own creativity and to develop their powers of critical judgement by experiencing, evaluating and participating in a range of creative and expressive activities.

### Sub-Aim 1

To become aware of individual creativity in its personal and social contexts.

Course Objectives	Suggested Teaching/Learning Activities
The course should provide opportunities for the young person to	The objectives in Sub-Aim 1 may be achieved by
1.1 demonstrate his/her flexibility and creative and expressive powers through a variety of activities	by participating in a range of activities which  encourage "immersion" in an activity, developing capacities for reacting at the feelings level  encourage "distancing" from an activity, developing capacities to react without becoming involved  develop a sense of the extraordinary in the everyday
1.2 develop his/her awareness of self, others, and groups in their societal context, and of the creative interaction between them (ref. Social Skills 1.6)	– encourage the juxtaposition of ideas from different sources, or the application of problem tackling methods from one discipline to another, e.g. thinking games, problem-solving exercises, simulations/role plays or work or non-work situations which are:  a) closely linked to the young person's experience, e.g. of family, adolescence  b) at some historical or cultural distance from the young person's experience
1.3 appreciate factors influencing the presentation of self in different social situations (ref. Social Skills 1.7)	– by undertaking tasks which  involve working constructively with a small group  involve community participation
1.4 develop his/her ability to work creatively with others on a collaborative project (ref. Social Skills 1.1)	– develop understanding of the social, political and economic contexts of local or national culture  – which link life at college or workplace with life with friends and family  – e.g. <i>producing drama/dance/film, etc., participating in community events/actively responding to texts/words/TV programmes, etc., working on projects in industrial archaeology/local crafts, etc.</i>
1.5 be able to make connections between work and non-work activities and between the private and public domains	

### Sub-Aim 2

To develop the basic cultural awareness necessary for life in a technological and multicultural society.

Course Objectives	Suggested Teaching/Learning Activities
The course should provide opportunities for the young person to:	The objectives in Sub-Aim 2 may be achieved by:
1.1 demonstrate cultural awareness through his/her experience of a variety of cultural contexts for creative activity	– being familiar with and able to discuss:  the nature of his/her own culture (whether ethnic majority or minority) and of other relevant cultures
1.2 demonstrate understanding of culture as a set of historical, social, religious, political relations which form a context for human action and interaction	– the forms in which cultures manifest themselves in public representation, e.g. Art, Music, Film  – the range of subcultural options, e.g. Methodist, Rastafarian, Cricketer, Punk  – some of the ceremonials, traditions and customs associated with the young people and other cultures  – attending  a range of cultural activities/events including if possible one from each of the following:  "high" culture, e.g. Opera, Play "popular" culture, e.g. Circus, Rock concerts "industrial" culture, e.g. Miners' Gala, Design Exhibition "ethnic minority" culture, e.g. Reggae Dance, Gaelic, Ceilidh "foreign" culture, e.g. French film "local" culture, e.g. Craft Museum, Community Festival "traditions and ceremonies," e.g. religious services, festivals, political rallies/meetings, weddings, funerals, etc.
1.3 be aware of those aspects of life and work which are irrational, human, ritual, tense – as well as those which are rational, mechanical, technical and everyday (ref. Science and Technology 2.1)	– applying the knowledge gained above to: a) a cultural activity of the young person's own choosing  b) a survey of the local possibilities in a particular cultural area

### Sub-Aim 3

To apply creative and expressive skills to the practical world and as a result, to develop the ability to make critical judgements in aesthetic areas.

Course Objectives	Suggested Teaching/Learning Activities
The course should provide opportunities for the young person to:	Objectives 3.1 – 3.5 may be achieved by
3.1 develop a feeling for, and a sense and quality of an object	– designing and making something, e.g. a clay pot, metal hook, herbaceous border, poem
3.2 be familiar with criteria used in appraisal in the aesthetic areas (ref. Practical Skills 1.9)	– seeing and responding to examples of good design, e.g. architecture, hi-fi, technology
3.3 be aware of the creative aspects of work – that made objects can be seen as "work in progress" as well as finished products in the traditional sense	– working on a project which links the use of modern technology and the notion of creative play (making a computer game)
3.4 be able to relate creative experiences in a college/working environment to the wider world of industry (ref. Industrial, Social and Environmental Studies 1.2)	– working on a project involving a number of different stages or processes, e.g. video projects linking sound and vision  – radically redesigning or reworking a manufactured object, or inventing another use for it
3.5 demonstrate understanding of the interrelationship of form and content, of the influence of the medium in which it is understood.	– visiting a company design department or the different departments of a theatre  – working on design problems  – comparing the presentations of different events in the same medium and the same events in different media

APPENDIX 9

Letter of introduction, and questionnaire,  
sent by the writer to all Secondary Schools  
in Co Durham in 1986.

52, Salutation Road,  
Darlington,  
Co. Durham.

15th October 1986

Dear Head of Department,

As a recent Head of English myself, I am currently engaged in some research concerning the purpose and place for English on the secondary school curriculum. One major aspect of this work involves the terminal qualification at 16+.

To this end, I would like some idea of what is, and what might be likely to go on in all secondary schools in County Durham: hence the enclosed questionnaire that I would be very grateful if you would complete and return in the stamped addressed envelope? by the end of October please?

Thank you very much indeed for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Knight

NAME OF SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

Changes in English.

I would like to start by thanking you for giving up your time to fill this form in, I am grateful. I know how busy you are.

I want to discover in what ways the organisation of English Literature teaching is changing at secondary level as a result of the introduction of the G.C.S.E.

Firstly I would like to know the current amount and proportion of English teaching that 4th and 5th years have. Recognising the changes taking place I have separated 4th from 5th

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Fifth Form:

- 1) How many pupils are in the year group? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How many hours per week of lessons (all subjects) does a 5th former have? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Are English Language and English Literature available as separate examinable subjects Yes/No
- 4) Approximately how many of the 5th form pupils will probably be entered for an externally recognised English Language qualification next summer? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Will some of them be entered for G.C.E.? Yes/No  
 Will some of them be entered for C.S.E.? Yes/No  
 Will some of them be entered for 16+? Yes/No  
 Other? (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Excluding literature used for English Language work, is English Literature compulsory (not necessarily as an examinable subject) for all 5th formers? Yes/No
- 7) Is English Literature a) taught in an integrated fashion as a part of the total English timetable, but still leading to a separate certificate Yes/No  
 or b) taught as a separate subject, available in the option block system? Yes/No
- 8) Approximately how many of the 5th form pupils will probably be entered for an externally recognised English Literature qualification next summer? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Will some of them be entered for G.C.E.? Yes/No  
 Will some of them be entered for C.S.E.? Yes/No  
 Will some of them be entered for 16+? Yes/No  
 Other? (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- 10) If you answered YES at 7 a), how many hours per week are allotted to English? \_\_\_\_\_
- If you answered YES at 7 b), how many hours per week are allotted to Language? \_\_\_\_\_
- and how many hours per week are allotted to Literature? \_\_\_\_\_

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Fourth Form:

By 'English' I refer to the G.C.S.E. course of that title.

- 11) How many pupils are in the year group? \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) How many hours per week of lessons (all subjects) does a 4th former have? \_\_\_\_\_

- 13) Are English and English Literature available as separate examinable subjects? \_\_\_\_\_

- 14) Approximately how many of the 4th form pupils will probably be entered for an externally recognised English qualification in the summer of 1988? \_\_\_\_\_

- 15) Will some be entered for anything other than G.C.S.E.? Yes/No
- If YES, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

- 16) Excluding literature used for English work, is English Literature compulsory (not necessarily as an examinable subject) for all 4th formers? Yes/No

- 17) Is English Literature a) taught in an integrated fashion as a part of the total English timetable, but still leading to a separate certificate? Yes/No

- OR b) taught as a separate subject, available in the option block system? Yes/No

- 18) Approximately how many of the 4th form pupils will probably be entered for an externally recognised English Literature qualification in 1988? \_\_\_\_\_

- 19) If you answered YES at 17 a), how many hours per week are allotted? \_\_\_\_\_
- If you answered YES at 17 b), how many hours per week are allotted to English? \_\_\_\_\_
- and how many hours per week are allotted to English Literature? \_\_\_\_\_

- 20) Do you expect: a considerably higher/  
Slightly higher  
Similar  
slightly lower  
considerably lower  
proportion of pupils to be entered for an externally recognised English Literature qualification by 1990?

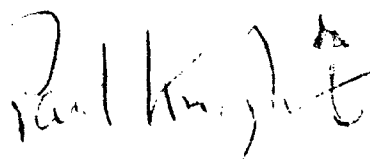


21) Why do you think this expectation is likely?

22) Do you foresee any changes in the way you teach for English Literature at 16+ because of the changes in criteria introduced by G.C.S.E.?

Please indicate and identify what these might be.

23) Once again, thank you for the time and thought you have given.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Knight". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small mark above the 't'.

Paul Knight

APPENDIX 10

Copy of a letter and paper  
outlining proposed areas for interview and discussion  
between the writer and Heads of English, Spring 1987.

Survey of current and future English Literature provision in County Durham.

Question areas for discussion:

- 1) Brief report/comments on departmental G.C.S.E. progress -  
administration  
&  
organisation,  
particularly of Literature input / content in 'English' syllabus,  
and of 'English Literature' syllabus.
- 2) How are new demands and / or encountered problems being responded to?  
Are you envisaging change for the future?
- 3) Where do you see Literature in your department's overall scheme for  
English in the next five years?
- 4) How do you view both current practice and future possible changes  
when compared with your beliefs and views on English teaching?

Thankyou,

Paul Knight.

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