

Towards a Critical Sociology of Reading Pedagogy

EDITED BY

Carolyn Baker
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TOWARDS A CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY OF READING PEDAGOGY

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Towards a Critical Sociology of Reading Pedagogy
Papers of the XII World Congress on Reading

TOWARDS
A CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY OF
READING PEDAGOGY

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XII WORLD CONGRESS ON READING

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CAROLYN D. BAKER and ALLAN LUKE

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Towards a Critical Sociology of Reading Pedagogy: An Introduction

The starting point for this volume is the view that while reading research and reading pedagogy have been fields of considerable educational importance, they have been remarkably constrained philosophically and theoretically, methodologically and empirically. This is despite decades of substantial research effort and despite keen interest and debate among teachers and researchers.

Dominant formulations of what reading is and how it can be studied, and professional concerns with how to best teach reading, have turned on the conceptualisation of reading as an essentially internal, individual, cognitive process. This leads to the idealisation, abstraction and decontextualisation of “reading” such that the orders of phenomena that are taken into account in theory, research and practice are limited largely to those that can be formulated within an idealised, isolable, apparently culture-free, reader-meets-text space.

Where the questions of how to conceptualise reading and how to study reading pedagogy have been taken up before, the debate has occurred generally within the arena of contending psychological theories about reading and their pedagogical concomitants. Admittedly, as the dominant models and metaphors of educational psychology have been transformed from behaviourist to cognitivist (e.g., Anderson 1977), correlative orientations towards reading research have shifted. So where, perhaps ten to fifteen years ago, we might have encountered a defence of reading as a textual stimulus - reader response configuration (e.g., Gough 1972), most current research and pedagogical orientations begin from the assumption that reading is a cognitive and psycholinguistic “process”: one involving background knowledge, memory and discourse schemata, and possibly some kind of “deep” linguistic processing.

Despite these changes in the definition of reading, and related changes in the kinds of models and recommendations generated for teachers and researchers, reading nonetheless continues to be considered an essentially private, psychological matter wherein the reader’s organised prior

knowledge and the text "interact". Many recent attempts by American reading researchers to incorporate some notion of context into their research consist of piecemeal or token efforts to include aspects of the social situation of the readership into experimental design, as variables to be factored into or out of psychometric grids of specification. Even among recent attempts to undertake "holistic", child-centred classroom approaches to the teaching and learning of literacy, an "aetiologico-medical model" prevails (cf. McHoul 1988).

It should come as little surprise that the metaphors for describing reading which have currency among educators are also those of educational psychology. We could date the invention and formalisation of a discourse on reading pedagogy to the work of Edmund Burke Huey, circa 1910, the early work of Americans E.L. Thorndike, Arthur Gates, and William S. Gray, who would later become the first President of the International Reading Association. All were strategically located in key American universities, and from the early part of the twentieth century were called upon by the expanding state school system, and in some cases by corporations, international development agencies and other branches of government to lend their expertise to the amelioration of social and educational problems. Since that time educational psychologists effectively have asserted a monopoly over the specification of what constitutes reading and reading research in schools and classrooms, and in research and teacher education institutions. Occasionally this has been shared when literary theory has overlapped with psychological theory, but by and large the history of reading research and the teaching of reading in the last 80 years - like related developments in other areas of educational research - has been a history of differing theories grafted from American applied psychology (Johnston 1984).

But are shifts in psychological and, more recently, psycholinguistic and cognitive theories indicative that researchers have found the psychological truth about reading? Is it the case that developments in empirical research methods and experimental designs, themselves theoretical products, have led us closer to a state-of-the-art understanding of reading? As Heap and McHoul note in this volume, the confusion of what indeed is moral and cultural activity with a "natural" phenomenon - the latter best apprehended through Kuhnian "natural science" - is a problem that besets most psychological explanations. Yet it is this very aspiration to a definitive, cross-contextual description which has bound the fields of reading theory and pedagogical practice and produced a shared vocabulary and shared characterisations of issues in reading pedagogy. Many reading consultants,

teachers, teacher educators and publishers involved in the culture industries of schooling have come to assume that the latest, newest scientific theory of reading is necessarily, or could be, the 'truest' or the 'best'.

If one begins from the view that educational science in general and psychology in particular involve the production of progressively better approximations to the truth, that educational progress is based on a process of discarding the old, erroneous ideas and knowledge and substituting the new, then such a search for pedagogical truth indeed would be valid. However, if one takes an alternative view, that teaching practices and the particular competences, skills, and knowledges we set out to teach are not given by nature, but are shaped by histories, cultures, ideologies, economies, then an altogether different perspective emerges. Such a reconstruction of reading is the focus of the papers in this volume.

Here we set out to explore the possibilities of critical social theoretic perspectives on reading. Hence there is little acceptance in these chapters of the "reading process", the dominant metaphor which has come to connote a psychological view. Instead, the diversity of reading practices which are authorised and transmitted by social institutions are focal here. The argument carried across the chapters is that the psychologisation and individuation of reading has led to a mystification of what reading is made to be in any particular cultural milieu.

Authors in this volume contend that the monopoly enjoyed by the psychological discourses of "reading" both limits and obscures a range of theoretically interesting and practically significant problems. Beginning from a theorisation of reading not as a (mysterious) internal "process", but as varied forms of visible social, cultural and political practice, the contributors seek to provide useful reconstructions of theory and research in reading pedagogy. These reconstructions draw attention to the origins, embeddedness, and place of (whatever counts as) "reading" in economic, ideological, social and institutional formations. How "reading" might be done in the multiplicity of times and places in which it is done, is itself socially organised: neither minds nor texts nor readings arise outside of historically specific human practices. How people are taught to read, what it conventionally means to read, what and when and where people can and do read, the ways in which they read these things, why they read them, how their readings are used and heard, are not supplied by "cognitive processes" or by texts - they are provided in the social, economic, ideological, cultural and institutional fabric of a given time and place.

What such a shift in perspective implies for theorists, researchers and teachers is the recognition that we are engaged in constructions of reading

practices, and not in the discovery or elicitation of an underlying, "natural" reading "process". Such constructions do indeed have a retrievable history, and considerable noticed and unnoticed work goes into the successful reproduction of ways of reading in different sites, whether in classrooms or communities, in formal lessons, experimental tasks, or bedtime stories. For teachers concerned with understanding in different ways what is assumed and accomplished in their classroom practices, and with understanding the historical and cultural specificity of their current practices, the chapters in this volume will provide insights not available from the dominant educational and psychological traditions of reading research and theory. For researchers and reading educators, these chapters suggest a critical reappraisal of the theorisations which guide much present psychological and professional work, and they indicate limitations in recent attempts to incorporate 'social and cultural context' into otherwise unrevised conceptualisations and methodologies.

In the last decade, the influence of sociolinguistics and of the ethnography of communication (see, for example, the work of Heath, Halliday, Wells, Eder, Edelsky, Green) has in part effected a turn for reading education: from the positivism of psychological theory towards the humanism of sociolinguistics. But, Cook-Gumperz' introduction to *The Social Construction of Literacy* (1986) - an ambitious attempt to widen the parameters of sociolinguistic and ethnographic research - underscores some of the strengths and limits of sociolinguistic explanations of school based literacy instruction. There *are* identifiable social, political and economic considerations involved in the institutional teaching and learning of reading and writing which neither sociolinguistics nor educational ethnography as they are presently formulated can fully analyse or reconcile: specifically, matters of power and discourse in classrooms, authorities of texts and genres, school acquired literacies as modes of social control and as forms of cultural capital. To outline these concerns Cook-Gumperz turns to the work of Bourdieu and Bernstein and to work in the social history of literacy. Yet we would argue that both psychology and sociolinguistics in current configurations have stopped short of theorising or analysing adequately the social and discursive histories and forces which influence what reading is made to be, how reading is done, for students in schools. The former - psychological theory - sublimates such issues. The latter - sociolinguistics - can 'name' them as variable factors but, without recourse to critical theories of knowledge and cultural transmission, of discourse, and of cultural and economic reproduction, cannot go beyond that.

What we present in this volume is a 'sociology of reading' which applies to the theorisation and study of reading a number of critical social theoretic perspectives which focus on the study of material discourses and practices. These include the sociology of knowledge, ethnomethodology, neomarxist and critical theory, social philosophy and poststructuralist theory. We do not replicate that 'sociology of reading' which for several decades has produced large scale surveys of readership, commentary on the social effects of illiteracy rates, and empirical studies of social class, ethnicity and reading failure in school. Our interests are in detailing how what now counts as reading in school has been historically, ideologically and culturally shaped, in showing the boundaries and limitations both for theory and for practice that have arisen through the history and sociology of ideas surrounding school reading, and in offering alternative perspectives on how reading can be conceptualised and on how the study of the practice of reading instruction in schools can proceed usefully.

Section I of the volume, entitled "The Politics of Pedagogy", shows how the theory, materials and methods of current pedagogy are shaped by social, economic and intellectual interests. The chapter by Allan Luke on the history and ideology of literacy instruction develops the argument that in historical constructions of reading and reading pedagogy, we can trace the influence of political, economic and ideological forces. The examples of the development of modern basal readers, and more recently the discourses of "whole language" approaches, serve well the point that forms of school literacy instruction constitute child readers in line with contemporary political ideals and economic imperatives. Teachers who work with such texts and curricula can be well served professionally with access to critical analyses of the materials and methods they are encouraged to adopt. Such analyses assist in seeing and responding to the politics of pedagogy, a politics often obscured by the very discourses of 'teaching' and 'reading' popularised among professionals.

This purpose is addressed also in Pam Gilbert's critique of popular educational discourse about writing. She shows the sources of "gaps and confusions" within the "personal voice" model, the contradictions involved in attempting to effect such a curriculum, and some consequences of liberal-romantic constructions of what writing is and how to hear it - focal among these, the invisibility of textuality. Gilbert's analysis provides a method for a critical re-reading and reassessment of the forms of pedagogical practice that can flow from the circulation of particular educational ideas. It is precisely this kind of critique of the discourses of teaching which has been muted or silent in much conventional professional literature.

While Luke and Gilbert's chapters draw from neomarxist political economy and poststructuralist theories of text respectively, Ian Hunter's discussion of the teaching of literature begins from a Foucauldian construction of the school and classroom as a political apparatus of moral and physical discipline. Accordingly, his stress is on how romantic, individualist approaches to the teaching of literature have embodied a regime of control via ostensive freedom. At the same time, he underscores some of the difficulty that marxist literary theory and cultural studies have had coming to grips with the 'culture' and 'ideology' that might supplant romantic individualism. Hunter's analysis thus calls our attention to the normative character of modern literary education, however conceived.

From a European perspective, Jacob Mey advances the view that school uses of texts, of reading and writing, can be viewed as practices of social control. Working from recent theorisations of 'text processing', and drawing on historical and contemporary accounts of reading and writing, Mey challenges an assumed connection between literacy and personal privilege, instead showing how social control is achieved through the regulation and encouragement of standardised forms of literate activity in schools, and the provision in this for standardised literacy assessment.

While the opening section of the volume focuses on what we might term the macropolitical implications of reading and writing in schools, Section II, "Reading in Classrooms", turns to the specifics of classroom practice. Here alternatives to conventional ways of conceptualising reading and of studying reading instruction in classrooms are developed. The chapter by James Heap, "A Situated Perspective on What Counts as Reading", provides a careful critique of objectivist conceptions of reading from an ethnomethodological position. It argues that, despite the appearance of difference, the various "bottom-up", "top-down" and "interactive" theories of reading debated by psychologists and psycholinguists begin from a shared assumption that reading is a natural phenomenon, accessible to analytic, empirical science. Heap's critique of that assumption carries with it a strong theoretical and methodological alternative for studying classroom reading activities. Given the impossibility of a single theoretical definition of what reading is (an argument also put by McHoul in Chapter 8), and since learning what counts as reading, criterially is found in learning what counts as reading, procedurally, in some setting, then what is available for study is "what could be taken to count as reading, procedurally, in some setting". The recommendation arising from this is that the interactive work that occurs in classrooms in the course of reading activities be the object of study.

That recommendation is taken up in different ways in the chapters by Judith Green and Lois Meyer and by Carolyn Baker, who provide analyses of transcripts of actual classroom reading events. Both chapters are concerned with the details of how reading events are accomplished by teachers and students. In their chapter, Green and Meyer analyse classroom talk from an interactive sociolinguistic perspective. They develop Heap's notion of a situated perspective by arguing that particular instances of classroom talk are situated within the ongoing life of a classroom and cannot be understood adequately without reference to that wider context. They develop a case for observing the intertextuality of oral and written events across time in a classroom. Baker's chapter applies an ethnomethodological perspective to observe the construction of specific school-literacy practices and of teacher-text-student relations within the lesson talk itself. The sociological point is to show the inseparability of pedagogic practice and forms of classroom reading that provide for such practice from the assembly of age and authority relations in school. The practical point of Baker's analysis is to show how familiar, routinised classroom procedures assemble forms of school-literate practice that obscure the playing out of these very relations.

In Section III, "Reconstructing Theory", the interest in classroom reading practices and pedagogies is continued, and theoretical critiques of conventional formulations of "reading" and "context" are extended to incorporate poststructuralist and postmodernist perspectives. Alec McHoul argues from Wittgenstein's notion of "family resemblances" that there is and can be no single practice called "reading", and from Freedman's analysis of games and ceremonies that we recognise instead pluralities of particularised forms of readings-in-sites: the pertinent case of "reading-in-a-classroom" is used to illustrate. Here McHoul observes that the discourses of institutional pedagogy go beyond the construction of "reading", in effect remaking subjectivities of children and teachers, the "producer-recipients" of schooling.

These chapters also contribute usefully to a reconceptualisation of the notion of "context". Where McHoul seeks to blur the reading/context distinction (a distinction which works to preserve the idea of a single kind of "mental" activity inside differing social or physical "environments"), Bill Green responds with a proposal to reconstruct "context" in social-semiotic terms and to study discursive practices of contextualisation, as approached also by Baker. Green's is a selective account of McHoul's chapter, an account which attempts to initiate and enter into something of a critical dialogue, an on-going professional conversation about literacy, reading,

curriculum and classrooms. He advances a postmodernist social theory of the curriculum, which draws from the work of Derrida, Lyotard, Spivak and others. His point that "reading pedagogy is recognisably complicit in a general project of social discipline and moral regulation", reflects themes evident in chapters by Luke, Mey and Hunter as well as McHoul. But while these latter aim to deconstruct, on various terrains, the psychological naturalisation of school reading, Green's aim is also to develop a new theoretical position for the teaching of reading. Referring to recent developments in literacy education in Australia, Green argues that pedagogy can begin from an appropriate reconceptualisation of the subjectivism of progressive models, reframing these "important strategic gains" into a critical pedagogy which reinvests human agency in curriculum practice.

These nine chapters thus offer critiques of conventional theories, categories and conceptualisations of classroom practice; they also offer alternatives for a theoretical and practical reconstruction of reading pedagogy. In the final section of the volume, Peter Freebody comments across critical-sociological and cognitive-psychological perspectives. He provides a critique of some aspects of the cognitive-psychological approach to reading research by explicating some assumptions behind the experimental methodology on which much reading psychology has rested, and some problems with current theoretical accounts of reading. Of note here is Freebody's explication of the discursive and procedural parallels between experimental and classroom 'reading'. At the same time, Freebody suggests that sociological critiques of psychologically-based formulations of reading and reading research may be limited by their failure to specify orders of (preferred) schooling outcomes other than those which enjoy attention under the psychological paradigm. His challenge is that sociological critiques should yield sets of sociologically-framed objectives and associated criteria, if a critical sociology of reading pedagogy is to gain currency and credibility among researchers and teachers.

In their summation, Baker and Luke respond to Freebody's call to specify criteria for assessing alternative reading pedagogies and their outcomes: what would critical sociologists wish to see done, in practice, and how could they decide whether it was being done? Baker and Luke re-examine instances of materials, methods, and practices described throughout the volume and sketch how the adoption of the theory and analyses in the various chapters could influence constructions of classroom practice. This is presented as only one possibility for how a researcher or a teacher might use the critical sociology perspective to reconceptualise activity in the field of reading pedagogy. They argue that an appreciation of the contents of this

volume involves recognition of the links and contradictions between discourses and practices, and of the constitutive force of theorising reading and reading pedagogy in alternative ways. They conclude the volume with an outline of a pedagogy that stresses "discourse critique".

These chapters were compiled on the basis of a subsection entitled "The Sociology of Reading" convened at the Twelfth World Congress on Reading, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia, on July 5, 1988. There, earlier versions of chapters by Luke, Gilbert, Baker, Green and Meyer, McHoul and Green were presented and discussed. Subsequently, we added papers by Freebody, Heap, Hunter and Mey. It is noteworthy that this session and a previous session organised by Heap for the Eleventh World Congress on Reading in 1986 were the only sessions on sociology convened for these respective conferences. Heap's contribution is from that earlier session.

Such scarcity of social and cultural analyses within the official discourse on reading education is indicative of the authorisation of psychological research as the appropriate model for the investigation of reading. This core model has anchored and circumscribed the range of empirical research and theorising, resulting, for example, in literally hundreds of studies of "reading comprehension" published each year and in myriad studies of psychologically-defined tasks and skills entailed in the "reading process".

Should the analyses in many of the chapters in this volume hold, then it might be seen that the monopoly enjoyed by psychologically based studies complicitly services the politics of established research institutions and the interests of corporations successfully involved in the business of defining and deploying school literacies. The monopoly might also be seen to carry such politics and interests into the classrooms of secular educational systems in the Western world, and to preclude some useful alternative lines of research, development and classroom practice. This volume, while far from a comprehensive sampling of possible directions for studies of reading as sociocultural practice, is an attempt to outline alternative, heretofore marginalised forms of research and theorising, and to show their potential for reconstructing conceptions of reading in schools.

The 'possible' within both theoretical and practical discourses is proscribed by de facto and de jure "authorities of delimitation" (Foucault 1972). And within academic and professional discourses, in research and teaching institutions and in funding agencies, various participants - researchers, theorists, editors, conference organisers, consultants, experts, expert practitioners, and others - all participate in the delimitation of an

official field. The delimitation can be made visible and can be contested when the field is observed, then entered, by dissenting members of adjoining academic fields (Fraser 1989). In this case, we have offered alternatives as well as critiques.

The project that this volume represents began as, and continues as, a project of critique and connection. The initial conference session, conceived and organised by Allan Luke, was conducted as a process of critique and reply in the development of a new arena for literacy studies. This has been carried through in the writing, organisation and the editing of this volume. We have shown further points of connection and difference in order to invite further critical appraisals and replies not encompassed by the chapters in this volume. We hope that readings of this text will carry through this statement of project.

This volume, like the forum from which many of these papers originated, is addressed to a broad audience of researchers, educators and students. In the year since that original meeting, we have worked closely with the contributors, aiming to achieve a theoretical coherence across a number of distinctive and innovative chapters, and, of course, to make an accessible, 'readable' volume. Nonetheless, in some of the chapters the writing is dense; in others, poetic and aphoristic. Readers will encounter new vocabularies and varieties of presentation that 're-write' the discourses of literacy pedagogy. Contributors to this volume have engaged with what are, for us as well as for many readers, whole scale reconceptualisations of reading practice and pedagogy. All feature deliberate attempts to 'change the subject': avoidances, critiques, upsettings of and plays against the conventional vocabularies of reading psychology, educational research and curricular programs. We want to foreground the development of this volume as a text because, as this book goes to press, we remain challenged and engaged by the various reconceptualisations of reading pedagogy that it offers. Our comments in this Introduction and in the Postscript are a product of our interaction over the course of editing this collection and of our estimation of its significance and possibilities for restructuring literacy. We have not concluded that process with the publication of this collection. These are by no means closed texts or issues.

-Allan Luke and Carolyn Baker, Townsville and Armidale, October 1989

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I The Politics of Pedagogy

Chapter 1

The Political Economy of Reading Instruction

Allan Luke

The Great Debate Reconsidered

In 1967, Jeanne S. Chall published what has since been recognised by educationists as a major study of approaches to the teaching of reading, *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*. Then Chall accurately observed that reading instruction has been a contested ground in the recent history of US education; although the terms and paradigms have varied, the same would hold for Canadian, UK and Australian schooling. Her assessment was predicated on the need to ascertain which psychologically-based pedagogy for the teaching of reading could be said to yield optimal empirical results. For Chall and colleagues in the reading research community, reading is constituted as an observable, singular psychological phenomenon, and the adjudication of matters of pedagogy is seen to depend on psychometrically derived student performances and on psychologically theorised models of reading development.

Countering this dominant discourse on contemporary reading pedagogy, research on the history and ideology of literacy instruction has focused on the development of basal reader approaches to the teaching of reading in US and Canadian schools (Monaghan & Saul 1987; Luke 1988; Shannon 1988). Much of this work has attempted to connect the political and economic assumptions and conditions of their production with the versions of reading and literacy as prescribed in textbooks, official syllabuses, and other documents. These sociological and historical studies are but part of a broad range of non-psychological disciplinary critiques of conventional approaches to reading instruction, including ethnographic and sociological classroom studies (Rist 1970; Heap 1985; Eder 1986; Baker & Freebody 1989a), and sociolinguistic studies of discourse in small group teaching (Collins 1986; Eder 1982; Green, Harker & Golden 1986).

In reading education over the last decade, a synthesis of 'alternative', non-basal pedagogies has been forwarded. For example, a large scale attempt to develop and deploy "whole language" approaches to the teaching of literacy has been undertaken in Australia (South Australia Department of Education 1986). Hence, the models on offer to educationists in English-speaking countries are apparently divergent: skill-based versus holistic, "naturalistic" approaches; basal textbook programs versus literature-based programs; an instructional locus on worksheet and direct instruction versus an emphasis on independent self-selection and exploration of text. In the ongoing public and professional "great debate" over the teaching of reading and writing, the difference is posed in simplistic partisan terms: the skills approach viewed as conservative and authoritarian and the whole language approach viewed as 'liberal', child-centred and progressive; instructional psychology is said to emphasise testable 'product', while the alternative is said to stress cognitive 'process'; the former is seen as the progeny of behaviourism, the latter as that of humanist and psycholinguistic theorising.

A sociologically based critique can elucidate more subtle parallels between these ostensibly conflicting approaches. For both models remain based primarily on psychological constructions of reading, and both accordingly fail to challenge critically or to recognise their own politicality. Each can be reconsidered in terms of the complex intersubjective, historical practices whereby what counts as reading - what counts as a school text, as *a* reading, as response to text, as interaction around text, as appropriate sign of literate competence - is specified for teachers and learners. And each, moreover, may generate differing but complementary strategies and means for cultural and economic reproduction.

In what follows, I first review previous work on the sociology of educational knowledge, commenting on how it can be used to examine moments in the history of literacy and to frame an agenda for a sociology of reading pedagogy. Second, I undertake an analysis of the political economy of basal readers and skills approaches which spans the period from the early to mid-20th century. There I will be commenting on the role of multinational publishers, governments and educational experts in the specification of reading practices and teaching practices. My aim here is to connect the production (ownership, design, marketing, implementation) of reading pedagogy with the (political) reading practices and positions authorised by curriculum packages and instructional approaches, and the kinds of cultural reproduction entailed therein. Third, from this analysis, a series of hypotheses and preliminary findings on current holistic, child-centred approaches to literacy instruction is forwarded.

My intent throughout is to comment on the assumptions and possible consequences of contemporary approaches to reading pedagogy which are practised in various English-speaking countries. What follows, then, is a deliberately polemical effort to raise sociocultural and political questions regarding current practices which have been omitted from academic and professional and public debate in English-speaking countries.

The Political Economy of School Knowledge and the Institutional Construction of Literacy

The study of political economy attempts to explain the complex historical interrelationships between economic and state structures. From the work of Marx through ongoing theorising by Habermas, Offe, Hall, and others, this has entailed the examination of the evolving historical conditions of society, the relationships between state organisation and means of production. Particularly since studies by Braverman (1976) in the US and Hall and colleagues in the UK (see Curran, Gurevitch & Wollacott 1977), political economy analyses have paid increasing attention to the relationship between larger economic structures and more localised social relations (and cultural artifacts) generated at the workplace, in institutions, in communities and in the family. Though by no means could there be said to exist a 'unified', formalised approach, studies of political economy generally focus on the links between modes of production and labour (economics) with realms of social relations (politics). A more recent emphasis of research has been on the ownership and "social relations of information", both print and electronic (e.g., Mosco & Wasko 1988). My concern here is how the structures of ownership and the relations of production - in this instance the production of textual knowledge and competence - constitute and sustain particular forms of social and political relations, and thereby further themselves. At the same time I want to indicate how the relations and discourses of 20th century pedagogy in effect construct 'literacy' and authorise the 'literate'.

The teaching of reading is an exemplary area of educational endeavour requiring political critique. By this I refer not to its excellence, but to the relative naivete of its practitioners and advocates about its own historical development and presuppositions. Specifically, those involved in the development and implementation of reading curricula - publishers, textbook authors, academic experts and professional consultants, children's literature authors and teachers themselves - tend to see the teaching and learning of

literacy in terms of two dominant, and at times competing, models: the (scientific) transmission of a neutral, unproblematic body of “skills” (see Heap, Chapter 5, this volume); and the (humanistic) sponsorship of the development of individual, creative “voice” and personal competence (see Gilbert, Chapter 2, this volume). In either case, the materials for teaching, and the competences to be learned with them are considered politically and culturally non-problematic; any affiliations that might exist between pedagogical theory and practice, and politics, corporate and state power are made “invisible” to participants in the discourse (cf. Said 1985: 136). In the US at least, the history of reading research and its allied cousin, instructional psychology, has been a history of attempts by educational scientists to find out the ‘truth’ about the “reading process” and to, correlatively, develop the most ‘efficient’ way of teaching competence with text.¹

A critical sociology of knowledge would question this decontextualised position towards pedagogy and school knowledge. For ‘reading’ - whether conceived of as an indicator of moral virtue, distinction and taste, deep linguistic competence, intelligence or psychological skill acquisition - is a social construction: an historic and culture-specific competence which has been regulated institutionally in accordance with particular economic and political interests. McHoul’s position (Chapter 8, this volume; cf. McHoul 1982) that there are instead a multiplicity of “readingS” stands as a critical deconstruction of precisely this regulation. The recent histories of literacy and pedagogy are, *inter alia*, histories of attempts by particular classes and groups to proscribe and authorise ‘Reading’ as a singular, official entity, observable to an array of institutional gazes. The resultant models - and McHoul uses Wittgenstein to corroborate this point - cannot be construed as either (linguistically) arbitrary or (psychologically) ‘true’, but rather directly entail institutional power and control. Reading as it is made in schools is indeed a discursively constituted cultural knowledge and competence (Heap 1985; Baker & Freebody 1989b; cf. Baker, Chapter 7, this volume), not to be misconstrued as either an immutable psychological activity or ‘natural’ process. That is, via the economic and cultural domain of schooling, reading is both ‘produced’ and done in particular, selected ways. In this regard, an analysis of the social relations of the production of (official) reading might clarify how the transmission of reading practices is implicated in cultural and economic reproduction. This reconceptualisation, moreover, fits well with recent cross-cultural research on literacy as an historically specific technology, the uses, sites, purposes and consequences

of which are specified in and through such cultural institutions as schools (Scribner & Cole 1981; Street 1985).

My argument, then, begins from this working hypothesis: that reading and reading pedagogy need to be reappraised not as educational ideals or psychological processes, but as interest-bound historical constructs, as instances of school knowledge subject to “selection”, “classification”, and “framing” (Bernstein 1971). Accordingly, we would need to deconstruct reading pedagogy in terms other than those marked out either in the Arnoldian discourse of “cultural literacy” or what Heap in this volume terms the “Galilean” discourse of applied educational science - with an eye to how it has been constituted in particular historical and contemporary societal contexts. Several examples from the history of literacy suggest how literate competence, whether dispensed and monitored by state, church or school, is not only a social construction, but a political one which enables particular kinds of control over the uses and possibilities of textual practices. Here I want to focus briefly on but two: the Swedish literacy campaign begun around 1700 and literacy training which evolved in the 18th and 19th century Canada about the same time as the industrial revolution in North America. I choose these relatively distant examples because I suspect, as Williams (1962) reminds us, that history is perhaps one of the only lenses which enables current practitioners and advocates to begin to see the present with any critical precision.

The Swedish campaign, which followed the initial Lutheran campaigns by over a hundred years was elegantly simple: a royal decree of 1723 mandated that all Swedes, regardless of whether peasantry or mercantile class, were to “diligently see to it that their children applied themselves to book reading and the study of the lessons in the Catechism” (cited in Johansson 1981:163). Failure to comply was penalised through a system of fines and responsibility for overseeing the instruction and evaluation was vested with the local clergy; examination registers were kept at the local parishes. It has since been judged among the most successful modern literacy campaign in history, particularly because, unlike Luther and Melancthon’s German campaigns, it was achieved *without* the establishment of formal educational institutions (Johansson 1987). According to Johansson’s (1981; 1987) analysis of local figures, in some areas the campaign achieved levels of verbal decoding of psalms, scriptures, hymnals in over 90% of the population, male and female, within five decades of its inception.

Consider here the kind of literacy practices taught (verbal decoding, singing, chanting, praying; writing was *not* taught); the texts taught (the

Catechism and Psalm-books: because of prohibitive costs Bibles were not widely distributed to the lay public); its universal clientele (women and peasants were included); and the kinds of appropriate literacy events taught (reading religious texts which upheld the sovereignty of Protestant church/state structures). It is also valuable for our present purposes to note that by 1726, the Swedish monarchy felt compelled to invoke the Conventicle Edict, which prohibited religious meetings outside of the household. According to Johansson (1981: 163), "such spontaneous meetings were in themselves signs of increasing commitment to individual reading" - a kind of literacy which was seen to potentially threaten the hegemony of church and state.

A second case of the dissemination of a controlled literacy can be found in 19th century Canada: under the direction of Egerton Ryerson and other school promoters, universal, public schooling for provision of the 3 R's was established in the mid 19th century (Graff 1979). Children were taught by rote recitation; they read Canadian versions of the Irish Readers and learned allegiance to the mother country combined with a stolid protestant work ethic (DeCastell & Luke 1986). Again, consider the kind of literacy (rote recitation, genre imitation, handwriting); the clientele (both genders, primarily around urban centres, but in the countryside as well); the kinds of appropriate literacy texts and events taught (public examinations/recitations of British verse, stories about participation in colonial economies and cultures throughout the world, glories of the empire and so forth).

These two cases of reading pedagogy should illustrate a simple point: that the formal means, methods, and texts for the prescription of literate practices and literacy events have served historically particular purposes and ends. Hardly a simple transmission of a definable or cross-contextual psychological skill, pedagogy in effect authorises kinds and levels of textual practice. Pedagogical methods have tended to delineate and differentiate groups within the population along the historical fault lines of gender, class and urban/rural location. As Graff (1981) has argued, industrial revolution era school promoters in both the UK, US and Canada made people literate so better to control them: through moral prescription, physical/intellectual/behavioural discipline, *and* overt textual indoctrination, they were able to constrain how literacy would be used, and to what ends.

The larger picture which emerges from the history of literacy pedagogy is corroborated in recent analyses of national literacy campaigns in developed and developing countries (e.g., Graff 1987; Arnone & Graff 1987). Again, a range of instances - from UNESCO's World Experimental

Literacy Program in sites in Africa, to Freirian campaigns in Latin America - point to the normative relationship between the outcomes of literacy campaigns and their often covert political intents, between the prescribed uses of literacy, and societal structures and conditions of use:

Ultimately, contextual factors - the opportunities for using literacy skills, the transformations that occur in social structures, *the ideology of natural literacy* - determine whether individuals acquire, retain and use literacy skills. Whether literacy and post-literacy campaigns use materials and methods that are truly designed to equip people to play more active roles in shaping their societies, or instead use materials and methods aimed and inducing people into predetermined roles is a telling indicator of the ideology and intent of these campaigns. (Amove & Graff 1988: 221; my emphasis)

Turning to contemporary reading pedagogy, more recent sociological work has indicated just how problematic the contents, values, "possible worlds" and linguistic/literary constructs of reading instructional regimes and texts are (Baker & Freebody 1988, 1989b). But the full explication of the social ramifications of the findings of synchronic analyses of classroom discourses and texts requires a larger political economy of school literacy and reading. In order to critically reappraise current practice, we need to be able to locate or identify not only the classroom relations, but as well the larger political and economic relations by which knowledge and competence have become authorised and institutionalised, enregistered and standardised, distributed and localised.

To some extent, the "critical sociology of the curriculum" (Apple 1983, 1988) has succeeded in rendering problematic the processes of historical selection. The argument from the sociology of the curriculum is, to put it very generally, that what counts as legitimate school knowledge and competence in the classroom is the selection by and in the interests of particular classes and interests in society: hence, the bias of textbooks in the omission and inclusion of particular class and gender roles, ethnic portrayals, and so forth. Williams (1978) calls this the "selective tradition" whereby educationists, like literary critics, reconstruct the canon, "the tradition".

This is hardly a recent insight and indeed the last decade of curricular criticism has been able to provide an overview of how school texts, as total semiotic systems, presented a world view which excluded or distorted social reality. More recently, through classroom ethnographies and sociolinguistic discourse analyses, how such texts are used and interpolated in the classroom by teachers and students has become clear: in this volume Baker

takes this matter up in detail. Nevertheless, the 'new' sociology of education in its initial stages failed to explain how, politically and economically, the process of curriculum development and selection occurred, and how the kinds of competences (as well as knowledge) taught reconnect with political and social life. Explaining the making, the commoditisation of knowledge and competence into official texts and discourses remains a much neglected area of research.

For our present purposes, then, a critical sociology of reading instruction must concern itself of course with: (1) the ideological form and content of children's texts; and (2) the classroom social relations and discourse prescribed by and realised within the regime. But additionally, such research must focus on: (3) the construction of knowledge and competence: historical economic and social relations of the making of text, the making and deployment of instructional systems and approaches, and the making of classroom practices; and (4) the social byproduct of instruction: the prescribed literate practices, the events and the subjectivities to be 'transferred' to the social domain. The latter two points are focal in the following case studies in the political economy of reading instruction: skills-based basal reader approaches, and what has come to be called a "whole language" approach.

Reading Skills as Standardised Commodities

Elsewhere, I have argued that the ongoing domination of reading pedagogy by ostensibly 'neutral' but nonetheless ideological texts and instructional practices was a knowledge effect of the domination of reading research by psychology: through the conceptualisation of reading as a matter of psychological skill acquisition, curriculum developers and researchers effectively marginalised, and continue to omit questions of the moral and political worth of texts (Luke 1988). The early and mid 20th century transition from the moral content of 19th century basic readers and primers to the sanitised middle class ideology of modern reading textbooks - the latter constructed according to lexical and syntactic controls, discrete 'skills' and other empirical criteria - is an exemplary instance where the neutrality of educational science fit well a key intent of secular, industrial era schooling: namely, the standardisation of literacy.

With the commoditisation of reading, reading instruction and reading textbooks by increasingly large publishers concerned with meeting the demands of the US school systems, a correlative reduction, or

'neutralisation' of content occurred. Changes to international copyright acts in the first two decades of the century (Madison 1966), and the move towards large scale state adoption policies in the US, led to an increased realisation by publishers of the potential profit to be made in reading textbooks. The business of reading instruction was born. A parallel development was the consolidation of power over what would count as reading in hands of credentialled authorities of delimitation: university-based psychologists, increasingly monolithic publishing companies, and state-level administrators and consultants (Luke 1988; cf. Shannon 1988).

This shift did not simply eliminate the overt ideology which dominated 19th century instruction, but rather drove it into a more covert moral curriculum. In Commonwealth countries, for example, learning to read by following the adventures of Dick and Jane through a white picket fenced world supplanted study of the Light Brigade, the Prince of Wales and Saba the Indian boy. In the US, much to the dismay of the likes of Henry Ford (Lacey 1986: 26), the literary parables and allegories of the McGuffey-style readers were superseded by 'modern' tales of childhood and growing up in Middletown America: the archetypal, mythic Anglo child was textually constructed. The overtly ideological became naturalised, recast as the consensual values of interwar industrial democracy.

The deliberate aim of the makers of the modern basal reader was not exclusively one of indoctrination to a new industrial order. And without undue scepticism towards the intentions of progressive reformers and educational psychologists, we can outline the political and social agenda of literacy training in terms of the kinds of universally acquired and 'needed' skills prescribed by interwar progressives like Gray, Gates and Thorndike (Luke 1988). "Work like reading" - the then rubric for content-area reading - was necessary for economic participation (both to be an efficient producer, able to follow directions and enact skills on the assembly line and in the office, and, thanks to Ford's constitutive insight into the need for workers to purchase the goods they make, to become full participants in commodity consumption). "Recreational" reading was necessary for the newly focal phenomenon of leisure time. As industrial production became more efficient, well before the advent of TV, and books became cheaper and more portable, the opportunity arrived to guide, channel and create a mass market for "reading as a leisure activity" on an unprecedented scale.

Reading for work and reading for leisure: these might have been passed off at the time as somehow 'natural' or 'universal' needs. Certainly we find few, other than traditionalists and classicists, questioning their validity as educational goals in the inter and postwar debates over literacy.

But consider the anomaly here: to a 19th century Ohio schoolmaster like McGuffey, or for that matter to a member of the 17th century Swedish clergy charged with overseeing the Parish literacy campaign, the possibility that reading might be for something other than moral/religious edification would have been apostasy. With a change in what Graff (1979) calls the “moral economy” of literacy, the 20th century spawned a proletarianisation and secularisation - which Henry Holt, founder of Holt Rinehart and Winston, called the “commercialisation” - of literature (Madison 1966), and of reading, and of reading instruction.

This isn't to say that women and men in the 18th and 19th century, that Emma Bovary and Julian Sorel didn't read for leisure. But educators and clergy of their eras would have shunned love of romantic fiction. In US and Canadian curriculum guides of the inter and postwar years, we encounter a first instance where students actually are encouraged to *choose* materials of interest. This pedagogical approach - which amounted to the authorisation of ‘taste’ acquired in home, community and school - followed reading psychologist W.S. Gray's (1959: 137) axiom: “As psychologists pointed out long ago, it is not what is presented to a child that promotes growth, but rather his reactions to the ideas acquired”. Further, the inclusion of non-traditional texts and newly framed, non-literary types of reading, enhanced the match between school-acquired literacies and those required for consumption, participation in popular culture, and in the workplace.

In terms of the political economy of reading pedagogy, what occurred in the early to mid 20th century in the English-speaking world was a three-fold, concomitant historical process: first, at the level of theory, reading practice was retheorised from a form of moral edification to an individuated psychological event. Thus reading pedagogy could be reformed in terms of the optimal transmission of a universal set of skills (i.e. display behaviours) to be taught, demonstrated, and applied regardless of cultural context and overt ideational content. Second, at the level of economy, reading instruction and reading curricula were treated as standard commodities. If schools were to be sites governed by principles of industrial efficiency (Callahan 1962), and reading practice was an amalgam of universal skills, then mass commodity production and marketing could be rationalised as the spread of the “most efficient” means for skill production. With the expansion of multinationals into the domain of educational products, it became in the interests of publishers to deny the need for localised texts and practices which threatened their market and profit.

Third, at the level of politic, reading instruction itself was reconfigured through the disguise of the ideological content *and* generic form of literacy instructional texts, by the deskilling of teachers, and by the deskilling of students.² The psychological, technocratic approach to literacy bred a kind of learned literacy which itself serviced an economy which demanded acritical, deskilled enactment of behaviours, whether for production or for consumption or for leisure.

The Politics of Personal Development

The above critique of standardised, industrial approaches to reading pedagogy notwithstanding, the emergence of practicable alternatives to this model has not been the result of a sociological commentary on basal textbooks and the psychological skills model. It *appears* instead to be attributable to the retheorisation of reading practice by psycholinguists. It is not my purpose here to describe in detail the disciplinary bases of holistic approaches - to contest the discourse upon which they are based - but rather to establish the grounds for a social analysis of this most recent historical transformation of "child-centred" literacy, an analysis which will outline economic and political conditions and consequences. I use the term "transformation" to emphasise that the current discourse on "holistic" learning, "learning by doing", learning "environments", and the enhancement of "natural" development is a reiteration of tenets of early 20th century Progressivism (cf. Cremin 1961), and that indeed these same humanist and egalitarian ends for democratic education were catalysts for the increasing embrace of technocratic, 'scientific' approaches which whole language advocates now oppose.

By "whole language", I here broadly refer to the ethos and practices advocated in Australia as part of the *Early Literacy Inservice Program* (South Australia Department of Education 1986) and in the US by Goodman and colleagues. These practices include "shared book experience" using enlarged print books, "miscue analysis" of oral reading as an alternative to standardised testing, a "process" approach to the teaching of writing (see Gilbert, Chapter 2, this volume), "naturalistic learning" approaches to early reading, and increased use of a "literature" as pedagogical text. Suffice to say that these approaches are seen, with a good deal of justification, as viable alternatives to the skills approaches in the US which have been so effective at generating 'failure' among minority and working class students (see, for example, Rist 1970). There highly scaffolded variations of

'holistic' pedagogy are reported to be particularly effective with Hispanic and working class children (Edelsky 1990).

These domains of pedagogical innovation, not surprisingly, have been subject to commoditisation: publishers like Holt-Rinehart quickly have made the shift to "whole language" and "literature based" basal series. In other words, while the surface features and stated philosophy of these materials have shifted to embrace a new model of reading pedagogy, the "technical form" (Apple 1983) of the curriculum has remained the same (adjunct worksheets and teaching aids, teachers guidebooks, graded instructional materials, etc.). A whole language basal series like the Canadian *Impressions* texts would read, for many whole language advocates, as a contradiction in terms. Yet the corporate production of school texts and knowledge has shown an immediate capacity to respond to a changing educational marketplace, such that one Australian-based firm currently bills itself as "the Whole Language Publishers". Several publishers of enlarged print 'literature' series, such as the Australian *Eureka* and *Story Box* sets, provide teachers' guide books which have an uncanny resemblance to those of previous basal series, detailing how and which aspects of text warrant instructional highlighting. For an approach which sets out to emphasise a high degree of sensitivity to contextual variables, in some ways a covert standardisation is in evidence, one which risks replicating the deskilling format of previous conventional basal series. Relatedly, there has been a quantum leap in the production and marketing of children's literature for teachers and librarians, since such materials are seen as the central surrogate for basal textbook series in many Australian classrooms.

I will address the ramifications of this most recent extension of corporate commoditisation further on. For now, I want to note several other problematic aspects of the selective tradition at work in these models. First, advocates of literature-based, immersion approaches to reading, while certainly critiquing the skills/behaviourist model, have not taken on with any seriousness the question of the ideological character and consequences of literacy materials, genres or contents. Hence, much of what is passing as "literature", both in children's reading and writing, is being developed without an eye for ideological content *or* generic form (cf. Gilbert 1989; Chapter 2, this volume; Gilbert & Rowe 1989). The rationale, then, has shifted from the psychological criteria of "readability" to acritical humanistic criteria like "the children like it", "charm", while retaining some technical pedagogical criteria derived from psycholinguistic and cognitive models of the "reading process" concerning "repetition", "story structure", and so forth.

This is borne out in a recent study of the implementation of "whole language" literacy strategies in two Australian cities (Luke et al. 1990). Asked to rank order (on a 1-12 scale) "criteria [teachers used] in the selection of children's literature and texts in the classroom", 64 urban teachers, a random sample of early primary (grades 1-3) teachers who had completed the whole language inservice program, listed "children's preference" (3.63) and "literary quality" (3.88) as the two most highly rated criteria; "relevance to children's social and cultural background" (5.94) was listed as of moderate to low importance; and "gender portrayals" (8.82) had the lowest mean ranking of the twelve criteria. What is of great interest to the development of a political critique is how the canon of reading pedagogy is being reshaped: these findings suggest that the authorisation of student choice, the valorisation of particular genres, and the exercise of a range of acritical, subjectivist categories are at work.

A second concern in present reforms has been the discursive reconstruction of literacy and the child literate to stress individualism, personal voice and ownership, and creativity. The study noted above also asked teachers to rank order (on a 1-7 scale) "the most important goals of literacy teaching": "personal expression and creativity" (1.94) was ranked highest by a significant margin, followed by "development of skills" (2.44) and "enhancement of natural growth (2.95); "academic preparation" (5.53) and "social and occupational mobility" (5.70) (Luke et al. 1990). It is revealing that "social and occupational mobility", the goal most explicitly tied to the social and economic consequences of literacy, was ranked lowest of the seven options. Here we also glimpse the consciously held ideology of literacy instruction at work among teachers. This would seem to corroborate Baker's position (Chapter 7, this volume) that many teachers are working with individualist, mentalist notions of what 'reading' is, or could be. Whether in skills or holistic models, this individualist ideology serves to mask the production of classroom authority relations and of textuality described by Baker and Gilbert in this volume. The current emphases on "expression", "creativity" and "natural development", moreover, are not new: as mentioned they formed a central rationale in the 1930s and 40s in the justification for psychological approaches to reading advocated by educational progressives.

That these same individualist axioms were used to rationalise the initial interwar development of basal series, the progressive "project method", streaming into ability groups and so forth, should signal their political efficacy. Bourdieu (1984: 25) has argued that the curricular "strategies" for class reproduction can take various forms, depending on what

"reconversion" of capital among classes is underway. We could contrast as reproductive strategies the elitism of traditional education which excludes those who do not already possess a high degree of cultural and linguistic capital, with the pedagogical sanction of children's prior knowledge and "taste" here advocated in progressive models like whole language. The latter could be seen to effectively reproduce class disposition and values which children differentially and unequally bring to the classroom, thereby ultimately authorising extant cultural capital.

Partly because the new progressivists in this country and others have failed to address, or in cases even enter into debate over, the political and economic concomitants of reading - what has occurred is as follows. First, at the level of theory, reading practice has been retheorised as an affective and cognitive, interactive phenomenon. In other words, reading is still conceived of as a universal, natural psychological competence. The individual, having acquired it, is free to do what she sees fit to do with it. There has been little explicit recognition of the critical, analytic possibilities of textuality, of the role of school-based literacy in cultural and economic reproduction, and of the possibility that new programs might breed or even begin from - as their historical predecessors did - a new kind of selective distribution of differing kinds of literate competences to different groups of children. To recall Arnone and Graff's (1988: 221) earlier comments, the danger here is that materials and methods, however ostensibly geared towards the achievement of "natural[ised] literacy", are covertly "aimed at inducing people into predetermined roles".

Second, at the level of economy, reading instruction has been re-commoditised as requiring a range of commercial textual materials to be provided by publishers at slightly adjusted but structurally similar economies of scale as the basals. So the culture industry of reading pedagogy has been able to continue apace with a simple shift in model and a transposition of authorities of delimitation from one group of university-based experts to another. In Australia, a further economic ramification has followed: the skilling of teachers in this new approach has led to the proliferation of a large service sector of professional consultants, inservice workers, evaluators, specialist teachers and others, together charged with the implementation of reform. The Australian federal government, for instance, has devoted over eight million dollars during a five year period to whole language implementation; this figure has been augmented by state, private and local jurisdictions (Luke et al. 1990). In sum, a small scale industry has arisen to propagate this approach and - although it has at times relied on dedicated educators' free time and commitment - a system of

vested economic interests in the continued propagation of certain pedagogic regimes has arisen, both in the private (publishing) and public (schools and universities) areas. In Australia educators no longer encounter a marginalised, fringe educational discourse, but rather an orientation which over the last five to seven years constitutes the largest single attempt to remake basic reading pedagogy in an English-speaking country since Project Headstart.

Third, at the level of politic, what comes to count as reading and literacy is affective, creative response to text, "meaningful" personal action and the development of "individual" voice. In the Australian model, these humanist goals remain lodged firmly within a medical/aetiological metaphor: the child's reading is seen in terms of "healthy functioning" (South Australian Department of Education 1986), observable through a range of "diagnostic" techniques. Does the identification and enhancement of "healthy functioning" in reading suggest that practitioners, or for that matter reading researchers, are able to identify an organic phenomenon in the subject? Speaking of the parallel problem facing psychopathological theory, McHoul (1988a: 341) points out the fallacy of confusing a moral/cultural construction (e.g., "readings") with a cognitive state (e.g., "Reading"). Where mental phenomena are seen to "inhabit...solitary organisms", psychological explanations

give the appearance of providing medical aetiologies but are glaringly unable to do so. They occupy an essentially metaphorical discursive space and rely, for their 'disease' data, *on actual contexts of diagnosis and talk*....in this case all we can do is to note the multiplicity of actions and forms of speech called, for example, 'schizophrenia'. (McHoul 1988a: 341; my emphasis)

Psychological approaches to reading operate in a domain of metaphor which enables practitioners to ascribe the appearance of observable student social and linguistic patterns to an allegedly extant psychological phenomenon, 'reading'. This theoretical construction, to follow McHoul's argument further, in turn is premised on teacher observation and discursive construction of those very same behaviours generated by classroom discourse. The whole language orientation - like its historical predecessor, the behaviourist skills-orientation - is contingent upon this aetiological metaphor. As well it rests upon a range of other ascribed states or conditions to be observed for: "authenticity" of expression, "love" and "appreciation" of literature, "frustration levels" with text, an understanding that "print has meaning" and so forth.³ The danger here is that, as "behavioural clinician" (Foucault 1977), the teacher will be ascribing to the

student a cognitive state which is indeed the accomplishment of institutional discourse (see Baker, Chapter 7, this volume).

These critical problems of definition - where intersubjective social and cultural constructions are assigned to the interiority of a subject - are accompanied in such programs by a dearth of analysis of the matter of fit with economic and political practices of literacy. Will narrative personal expression become a legitimate form of cultural capital? How are affective response to literature, the ability to retell textual narratives, authenticity of student expression, or the love of stories - for example - tied to the kinds of political power operant in the post-industrial state? How is student "ownership" and "collaborative revision" of texts tied to learning the discourses, contexts and conditions of work?

To model how these matters can be taken up, consider the implications of this latter question. Several sociological studies have described how the emerging "socio-technical" workplace sets out conditions for workers to "resist and adapt" to the system by developing "collective games" which give them "a sense of freedom and self-determination" (Berner 1986: 104; cf. Burawoy 1979). For this kind of participation in post-industrial labour, the individuality achieved through collaborative interaction extolled by progressives would suffice. Unfortunately, Berner (1986) further notes of modern Swedish workers, that in cases this occupational "game playing" often leads not to the establishment of a "counter norm" but rather "produces an acceptance of the system and the management-accepted rules of the game" (104). We might make a similar case here, that the classroom language game of being "real writers", with "real audiences" for "real purposes", for example - focal in the whole language agenda - enables a socialisation into rules of appropriateness for the institutional literacy event (cf. Gilbert 1989), rules which in turn introduce students to authority/text/management relations suitable for particular kinds of service sector labour. Regrettably, however, these are exactly the kinds of matters which bear debate and exploration but to this point have been viewed as insignificant or peripheral by reading educators, many of whom assume, as their classicist and humanist predecessors did, that reading and writing *qua* literary experiences are of intrinsic value.

The Production of the Reader

The discursive construction of the child by reading pedagogy, the making of the aspiring literate, proceeds in several ways. As Baker and Freebody

(1988) have pointed out, the texts children read build possible worlds and possible characters, in effect constructing the child textually. Such texts pragmatically "dictate" their own interpretation, both through the subtle content level portrayal of schools, readings and attitudes and through their very semantic form (Luke 1989b). And narrative structure, Hodge and Kress (1988) remind us, can effectively "naturalise" social and political relations. Furthermore, Baker indicates in this volume, patterns of authority, power and identity are constituted in the discourse of classroom literacy events. Viewed as a total system, reading instruction itself is a powerful medium of socialisation and reproduction.

A sociological perspective on reading pedagogy underscores the finding that literacy campaigns, programs and pedagogical regimes can entail the inclusion and marginalisation of particular groups: the normalisation of literacy, and the formalisation of the roles of the student and teacher. Formal pedagogical systems, to whatever degree standardised and centralised, in effect reinvent the student reader, and prescribe what will count as a valid literacy event. My concern here has been that the social construction and economic production of reading practices, of reader-text relations, of teacher-student interaction around the text, which occur in modern teachers guides, syllabuses and inservice course materials are narrowly prescriptive of particular version of the reading subject within the economy and polity.

[T]here remains the fiction of the 'reasonable man'; the yardstick to which appeals can be made when terms such as 'in reasonable time' or 'due care and attention' are inscribed in law. ...The fictional space which this character occupies is - we are supposed to believe - so far removed from the space of irrationality that it is the very basis of legal reason. ...In economics, the reasonable man becomes the rational, calculating man in the marketplace...the one who maximises self-interest as a 'natural' propensity. ...In linguistics, the central fictional character is the 'competent speaker/hearer'. (McHoul 1988b: 211)

In the case of the mid-20th century basal reader textbook, we see and learn of the ideal of the interwar child: the technicist child, skilled, learning by doing, civic minded, helpful and Anglo-Saxon. A correlative fiction of the reader is prescribed: the child who acquires hierarchical, measurable "skills" for leisure and for work, who participates in the classroom reading group cooperatively and enthusiastically. A contrasting subjectivity emerges in the whole language literature: the child is a "naturally" curious learner, who, left to his or her own devices within the appropriate "enabling" and humane environment (e.g., classroom, office, clinic), will

acquire and use literacy in a non-traumatic, constructive manner. Teachers, in turn, are those "facilitators" who set out "environmental" conditions where "healthy functioning" can be achieved and observed. What are the possible political and social ramifications of these models? I conclude here with comments on implications for those involved in the complex politics of schooling and reading pedagogy.

In Australia at present, various proposals for the reform of education centre on the increasing influence of the private, corporate sector in the development and take over of tertiary educational systems. Often overlooked is the fact that in Australia - as throughout the English-speaking world - multinationals and larger domestic corporations already control the production and marketing of primary and secondary school educational materials. Several critiques have noted the movement of multinationals like IBM, XEROX, Gulf-Western, News Corporation, and CBS into publishing, and in particular educational publishing, through the formation of multinational media conglomerates (Apple 1988; DeCastell & Luke 1987; Wilson 1987). This effect is enhanced by the extension of multinationals (achieved through mergers and buyouts rather than independent research and development) into non-print information fields like software and hardware production and marketing. School knowledge thus stands as a commodity to be consumed by teachers and learners, the achievement of which becomes a metaphorical commodity to be remarketed by the 'client' to the private sector which 'consumes' the human capital generated by schooling. In turn, with the rapid transition from manufacturing to service, and to information 'processing' and producing industries, structures of work increasingly engage these same credentialled subjects in the production of text, whether print, electronic or oral.⁴ The "hunger for [textual] redundancy" (Eco 1978) achieved through school literacy pedagogy is, quite literally, capitalised upon at multiple levels by the modern corporation.

Communications and cultural studies research points to at least two specific knowledge effects of corporate control over the means of cultural representation and reproduction. First, the larger and more heterogeneous the (viewing or reading) market of a secular mass medium, the more homogeneous and sanitised becomes the message (Williams 1968). Mass marketed reading materials tend to aim towards and create a lowest common denominator, the aforementioned discursively constructed child and teacher. Second, modern communications media, while ostensibly responding to the 'needs' of the market, in this case the needs of teachers and children, rapidly begin to produce or create a marketplace, fostering 'wants' on the part of a (corporately educated) audience (Smythe 1981; cf.

Haug 1987). If either analysis holds, the knowledge effect of corporate control is the supplanting of localised knowledges and competences, the covert centralisation of textual practices and reading positions, and increased complementarity between methods and goals of schooling and those of the corporate workplace and marketplace.

It is this effect which is critical in assessing the increased inclusion of pedagogies and curricula into accelerated cycles of commodity development, obsolescence, reinvention and renewal. The consequence for school knowledge and the social relations of the classroom, Apple (1983) has argued, has been the influence of a secular, sanitised corporate ideology designed towards the development of "possessive individualism". While the relationship between "individualism" and "individuation" within capitalism has been historically contingent (Turner 1988), as I have noted here we need only look back to early and mid-century progressivism to identify the institutionally individuated reader with the responsible worker and consumer. The progressive child has his/her psychological model in the pedagogical theory of Dewey and colleagues in the early 20th century, literary model in the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotion from the child/poet described in *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, and linguistic model in the subjective, creative individualism of Humboldtian linguistics, which Saussure set about deconstructing. It is this child who has been renaturalised in current whole language pedagogy.

Cultural and economic reproduction in reading pedagogy may follow a number of ostensibly divergent, but ultimately effectual "strategies" towards control and the distribution of differential kinds and levels of knowledge and competence. It would appear, as Hunter and McHoul argue in this volume, that educational technicism and progressivism are mere equivalent armatures of the same kind of power: through appeals to psychological models of reading, both disguise the role of reading as a social and political practice. Hunter's (1987) comments on the emergence of humanistic, child-centred approaches to UK literary education apply here:

We must learn to treat popular literary education as the contemporary embodiment of a specific government technology: one which first sought to transform the moral and physical condition of the proletariat by allowing it to "learn from experience" in a morally managed environment. (Hunter 1987: 558)

Its avowed egalitarianism notwithstanding, reading pedagogy in secular industrial and post-industrial states - whether behaviourist or child-centred -

succeeds in convincing teacher and student alike that literacy is an individual activity which potentially has little to do with political and social power.

Contrary to the positions of educationists from Matthew Arnold to Donald Graves, becoming literate in itself will neither enslave nor emancipate the individual. However, how one becomes literate - what one learns of the sites, locations, practices of writing and reading - will greatly constrain how one conceives of the potential of literacy. By omitting due consideration of the political character of reading practices - many pedagogies unintentionally disburse a 'reading' which fits well with the putative needs of the economy and society, the need for subjects who will use literacy for pursuit of what Habermas (1986) calls the ethos of "civil privatism": leisure, career rewards, and consumption.

Notes

1. For illustrations, see *Reading Research Quarterly* and *Research in the Teaching of English*, the official research journals of, respectively, the International Reading Association and the US National Conference of Teachers of English.
2. For an excellent and, in some respects, parallel theoretical critique of "deskilling" of teachers' work through commercial reading materials, see Shannon (1988). His reading of the political efficacy of "whole language" and "process writing", however, differs from the analysis offered here.
3. McHoul's argument would extend to cover these classroom phenomena which, allegedly 'shown' or 'demonstrated' by the student, may in fact be discursive constructions of classroom interaction and the teacher's epistemic assumptions. For further discussion of the contingent, intersubjective character of "authenticity" see Goffman (1959).
4. For discussion of the reorganisation of work, and textual work, in the information and service sectors see Noble (1984); articles in Mosco & Wasko (1988); Zimbalist (1980).

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Chapter 2

Writing Pedagogy: Personal Voices, Truth Telling and 'Real' Texts

Pam Gilbert

Take the voice away and the writing collapses of its own weight. There is no writing, just words following words. (Graves 1983: 227)

This logocentrism, this epoch of the full speech, has always placed in parenthesis, suspended, and suppressed for essential reasons, all free reflection on the origin and the status of writing. (Derrida 1976: 43)

Many of the chapters in this book focus on the traditions of personalism and privatism associated with reading pedagogy. This chapter will extend the focus by providing an analysis of some of the dominant assumptions connected with classroom writing pedagogy in North America, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. In many ways the two need to be seen together, for the "reading-writing" classroom has, in these countries, become not only a common pedagogical frame over the past decade, but also a popular research field. In addition, it is more helpful to consider writing and reading as part of the same system of signification, to diminish the distance between writing and reading, and instead join them as signifying practice. As Derrida has argued:

... communication must be repeatable - iterable - in the absolute absence of the receiver or of any empirically determinable collectivity of receivers. such iterability ... structures the mark of writing itself, no matter what particular type of writing is involved ... A writing that is not structurally readable - iterable - beyond the death of the addressee would not be writing. (Derrida 1977: 179-80)

However classroom writing pedagogy does not usually describe writing/reading in this way, and as a result, critical sociological approaches to the teaching of writing are rare. It could be argued that the constructed shared world view of writing pedagogy, on the part of many language education writers and researchers, serves actively to preclude a sociological focus. The focus is, instead, a personal and private one, and the discourse

built upon a number of logocentric and phonocentric assumptions. As I have argued at length elsewhere (Gilbert 1989), the result is that school writing pedagogy rhetoric has constructed an elaborate edifice of personal creativity over the social work of the classroom, masking the production of school texts, and instead marketing the process of writing as authoring and "literature-in-the-making".

The pedagogical discourse has achieved a certain degree of credibility and coherence, largely through the workings of the phonocentric metaphor of personal voice and the borrowing of the term "author". The discourse is thus embedded in personal psychology and literary privilege, and discursively linked with "common sense" logocentrism. As a result, currently accepted pedagogy is aligned to child-centred learning, romantic conceptions of creativity and imagination, and a common-sense approach to language as communication between speaking subjects. And yet a reappraisal of this pedagogical discourse, through an analysis of the images and metaphors that sustain it, displays the ideological construction of its seeming innocence. Rather than being textually based, its theoretical underpinnings are speech-centred, and the inadequacies of describing writing as the guise of speech become obvious in classroom practice. As teachers listen for "personal voices" from their students, as they advise them to write truthfully, honestly and naturally, and as they seek the fostering of "real" texts, "real" audiences and "real" purposes, classroom writing practice flounders. The social production of the school text is hidden under a maze of such metaphors, with the result that both students and teachers seem quite unsure of what school writing should be about. Classroom research of teachers' and students' perceptions of school writing practices consistently highlights gaps and confusions in the discourse (Jeffery 1981).

Whether writing can lay such claims to personalism, to naturalness, to authenticity, or to honesty will be questioned in this chapter. It will be argued that such claims are based on a layer of assumptions about writing theory which are questionable. Using a framework of post-structuralist theories of textuality and writing, the assumptions that writing is derived from speech, that it has its roots in speech, and that it makes substitutions for the missing human speaker, will be reassessed. Such a reassessment will have three focal points: the school writer, the classroom texts written, and the readers of texts.

The Writer

Speaking, Writing, Authoring

One of the most obvious features of the prevailing discourse on writing pedagogy is the assumption that writing must be firmly grounded in speech. Graves (1983: 162), for instance, one of the best known American writing researchers, asserts that “writing and speaking are different but writing, without an understanding of its roots in speech, is nothing”, and Harrison (1983: 20), a British writing researcher, similarly claims that “writing grows, with reading from speaking and listening which are the first arts of language ... the vitality of writing depends intimately on living speech”. In this language framework, speech is treated as the primary language mode, and writing as a technology which exists to give it permanence. Appropriately, speech metaphors are used to reinforce the assumption that writing needs to compensate for the physical absence of the human subject: the writer must “talk” to the reader; the reader can “listen” to the writer; and the writing-reading relationship is treated as a rather less satisfactory version of the speaking-listening relationship.

The effect of this has been to centre textual meaning in the “speaker” or the “voice” behind the text - to regard the text as a necessary but distracting barrier between “speaker” and “listener”, “author” and “reader”. As an indication of the importance of this figure in the background as final arbiter of meaning, current writing texts have adopted the terms “author” and “authoring” to describe the student writer and school writing. For instance, Moffett claims that “educators would do best ... to conceive of writing first of all as full-fledged authoring, by which I mean authentic expression of an individual’s own ideas” (1981: 89). Similarly, teachers are encouraged to invite authors into their language classrooms, to study the author at work, to read how authors describe the writing process, to compare children’s texts with authors’ texts. Authorship has become a popular image in current pedagogy. Students are authors in their classrooms, and school writing is the literature of the classroom.¹

However concepts of “authorship” have been deconstructed convincingly in recent times (Foucault 1977; Barthes 1977), as part of a general focus of interest on discursive power networks and their conditions of possibility. By demonstrating the ways in which authorship functions to anchor a text to one person who will “own” and give meaning to it, and to identify writing with creativity, inspiration and imagination, such critiques

illustrate how authorship helps to prevent any real focus on textuality and readings. As a result, Barthes (1977) argues for "the death of the author", and a shift in focus from the work to the text. Images of authorship have been accepted and colonised within classrooms; the concepts of text "ownership" and of student "authority" over texts have become popular terms in current writing pedagogy (see Berkenkotter 1984; Brannon & Knoblauch 1982), and folksy capitalistic metaphors - like this one from Graves - have helped to popularise the assumptions implicit in such concepts of "ownership" and "authority".

Most writers rent their pieces and the teachers own them. Renters speak differently from owners: renters say, "Let him fix it - I pay my rent"; owners say, "In the spring we're gonna re-seed the lawn, in the fall we're going to put in a new partition here with an opening between the kitchen and the dining room". Now what happens is that the owners ... get very fussy about the *appearance* of the place. So in reality the surface features are helped more by ownership than by renting ... (Graves 1981a: 7)

The concept of authorship is thus able to operate in several interesting ways in the language classroom. On the one hand it emphasises the personal, individual, supposedly "unique" qualities of the student writer, while at the same time it ties the meaning of a text firmly to one individual consciousness. In the classroom both of these emphases are highly desirable: philosophically, child-centred pedagogy is still intensely popular, yet, pragmatically, the ability to produce single, relatively speedy sets of meanings from students' texts is essential for the busy classroom teacher. Concepts of authorship can thus at one and the same time encourage the notion of a creative and original human being, yet also provide the teacher/assessor with protection - in the shape of a human being who is anchored to a school text - from cheating, plagiarism, copying. The personalist discourses about learning, and the institutionalised discourses about public assessment, can thus be meshed together, with some ease and comfort, by the concept of "the author".

What writing pedagogy makes little reference to is how such authored texts will be written - how school texts are 'made' - and this gap has largely been filled by the work of a number of Australian systemic linguists working with Hallidayan approaches. Kress (1982), Rothery (1984), Christie (1984) and Martin (1985) have sought to redress this situation by displaying the generic expectations of school writing, but such linguistics-based work is often criticised within contemporary pedagogy as losing sight of "learning" and "the child". Instead Emig's (1983) well-known claim that writing is learned rather than taught is frequently asserted, and "authorship"

concepts seem to be accommodated within such claims. This seems to be possible because “authoring”, as a way of describing school writing, emphasises personal creation, inspiration and imagination (which are presumably “natural”), and de-emphasises teaching, by obscuring textuality (see Baker & Luke, Chapter 11, this volume, on “discourse critique” as pedagogy).

Personal Voice

The predominant metaphor serving to hold together this writing, speaking and authoring nexus is the metaphor of “voice”. To ensure the individual qualities of the writer (“the author”), students are advised to develop a “personal voice”, and teachers are told to “listen” to these voices.

In order to write and so to learn more effectively ourselves, we must learn to recognise and care for the intentions and meanings of others. As learners, this entails listening to and listening for our own divergent, developing voices, as well as the voices of others, and consequently nurturing the growth of a powerful and authentic person voice in writing. (Cook et al. 1980: 19)

“Personal voice” in a piece of writing can be heard and “listened” to; “personal voice” in a piece of writing talks to the reader - it “speaks”. If the effect of a person - a “voice” - can be produced by a reading of a text, then the reader can assume a human intention in the writing, a human engagement with the creation of the text, and a human desire to communicate, to share meaning. The “personal voice” becomes the guarantee of the person, individual qualities of the writer. Text and author merge. The writer is the writing: the writing is the writer. In a school situation, where teachers are concerned with the correspondence of writing and learning, personal voice becomes the indicator of a successful writing program. Writing is presumably of most value, when the writer (the student) is personally engaged in making and sharing meaning.

Many influential and popular school writing texts rely on a concept of “personal voice” in their discourses on school writing. Graves (1984a: 1), the American exponent of an international “writing process” movement of the seventies and eighties, writes at the beginning of one of his recent books: “Everyone has a voice and original thoughts that ought to be shared with others”. His earlier book, *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work* (1983), repeatedly referred to “voice” as the driving force of the writing process.

The writing process has a driving force called voice ... it underlies every part of the process. To ignore voice is to present the process as a lifeless, mechanical act. Divorcing voice from process is like omitting salt from stew, love from sex, or sun from gardening. Teachers who attend to voice listen to the person in the piece...

Voice is the imprint of ourselves on our writing. It is that part of the self that pushes the writing ahead, the dynamo in the process. Take the voice away and the writing collapses of its own weight. There is no writing, just words following words. Voiceless writing is addressed "to whom it may concern". The voice shows how I choose information, organise it, select the words, all in relation to what I want to say and how I want to say it. The reader says, "someone is here. I know that person. I've been there, too." ... Readers can't read voiceless writing when no one is there any more than they can have dialogue with a mannequin. (227-228)

Voice, of course, is equated with 'person' in this discourse, but Graves takes the metaphor further by describing the dialogue between the voice in the writing and the reader beyond the text. "The reader says, 'someone is here. I know that person'".

The stress on "voice" is also found in Murray's texts (e.g., 1968). Murray - professional North American writer as well as professional teacher of writing - makes great claims for "voice". It is "one of the finest surprises of life" because "a creative voice is a single voice, a recognisable voice which is different from the voices around it" (1982: 137). In a short section entitled "What makes readers read?", Murray claims that there are five principal elements which make people read. One of them is "voice".

Readers respond to the voice of the writer, one individual speaking to another individual. Writing is not speech written down, but writing which is widely read gives the impression it is spoken. Readers pay attention to a voice which has authority, concern, and energy. (1982: 40-41)

Murray urges teachers to "listen" for voices, to provide opportunities for students to discover that "they have a voice", and to help students learn to "respect their own individuality". Writing becomes successful when the reader catches a glimpse of the hidden speaker behind the text; when "a phrase, a sentence, a few words" reveal the human subject's intentions and presence.

Graves and Murray have popularised the concept of personal voice for the classroom teacher by linking it firmly to motivation for writing, topic choice, willingness to revise and edit, and textual readability. It has provided what seems to be a crucial personalising element in school writing

- providing the individual writer with a position of primacy. Graves' (1981b) oft-cited claims that "children want to write" and that they should be in "control of their own writing", are based on his explanation of the personal, individualised nature of writing and of writers.

When the American Macrorie writes of how "the voices in their heads speak" (1980: 9), or the British Martin describes "an individual 'voice', which can confidently share its meanings with others" (1983: 10), they are working from within the same paradigm. Similarly Elbow, in his first book for students of writing, *Writing Without Teachers* (1973), argues for the power of a person's own "voice" and for the importance of students' accepting their own voices.

In your natural way of producing words there is a sound, a texture, a rhythm - a voice - which is the main source of power in your writing. I don't know how it works, but this voice is the force that will make a reader listen to you, the energy that drives the meaning through his [sic] thick skull. (6)

The metaphor has slipped unobtrusively into current writing assumptions, as in, for example, the title of Moffett's influential writing program guide, *Active Voice* (1981). Its merit has gone relatively unquestioned. Personal, individualised writing is prized. Such writing puts the reader in touch with the person behind the text (with an author) so that the writing becomes "personal", "real", "authentic", "original": communication is then assumed possible. The writer can "speak" to the reader.

The Text

This is possible because the text is usually regarded as a transparent medium separating two subjects: the writer and the reader. As a result, the school text has almost become synonymous with the student writer within current pedagogy. The reader looks into the text to find evidence of the person who must necessarily be standing behind it. Consequently personal elements in texts are valued, with the emphasis lying on personal discovery, engagement or learning; and emphasis is placed on the need for student texts to be "real", and on the need for students to want to "own" their writing.

Personal Texts

The intensely personal nature of current writing pedagogy is made more apparent when it is considered from within an historical perspective. Protherough (1983) makes this point cogently when he refers to a 1924 British study by Boyd of children's writing, in which a panel of markers praised a type of student essay because it suggested "an adult rather than a juvenile mind": an elevated style, a detached point of view, an unusual number of rhetorical devices. Protherough's reading of the 1924 study seizes upon the "omissions" in this discourse.

There is no mention of such qualities as originality, closeness of observation, perceptiveness or sense of an individual voice (indeed, Boyd praises particularly the "detached" point of view, remarking approvingly that the words "I" and "we" are never used in the essay).

... what is personal, imaginative, emotionally-felt, lively, vividly realised is rated considerably lower than the detached, elevated, fluent and rhetorically varied. (1983: 190)

Protherough's comparison of the Boyd study with post-1960's writing rhetoric emphasises the shift that has occurred in writing pedagogy during that time. An emphasis on the personal qualities of texts can be seen to have been in tune with a number of other 1960's emphases which spread throughout North America, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Best known of these are the "Language and Personal Growth" concept popularised in Dixon's *Growth through English* (1967), and the "creative writing" movement given impetus through texts such as those from Langdon (1961), Clegg (1964) and Holbrook (1967), which urged recognition of the qualities of children's "creative writing".

The writing of poetry for instance has become a well-established classroom practice in the secondary school (Koch 1971; Powell 1973; Tunnicliffe 1984), and students apparently regard poetry-writing as a form of writing teachers expect (Protherough 1978). The poem is considered to be the vehicle of the emotions, a personal language form; and personal language is directly linked to the individual, to the expression of original ideas. The assumption underpinning such approaches to school poetry writing is that the construction of a poem is a relatively free task, as long as the author is emotionally inspired. The author - the creative artist - takes from the raw material of language to create a personally satisfying, original text. The *production* of the school text is again marked by such concepts.

Telling Truths and Writing Spontaneously

The ideal school text is also frequently described as “honest”, “natural”, “genuine”, “real”, “spontaneous”, “sincere”, and Britton’s earlier and influential emphasis on the value of “expressive” writing as the centre of a tripartite language function model (Britton et al. 1975), encouraged such descriptions. The Britton team defined expressive writing as that which was “close to the self”, and which had the function of “revealing the speaker” and “verbalising his [sic] consciousness”. Expressive writing, the Britton team claimed, “submits itself to the free flow of ideas and feelings” (1975: 90).

In this vein, Macrorie, prolific and well-recognised writer of textbooks for high school and college student writers, advises students to write “freely”, concentrating only on “telling some kind of truth”. “When you write freely, losing yourself in trying to tell truths, you’ll often find yourself and others” (1980: 2). Similarly Elbow suggests to students that they be natural: “In your natural way of producing words there is a sound, a texture, a rhythm” (1973: 6). And Graves uses a nudity metaphor to explain how personal writing is a form of exposure. In an interview he claimed that “Writing, real writing, is exposure of inmost thoughts and feelings. When we ask children to write sincerely, we ask them to undress” (Walshe 1981: 8). Children will not “undress” for long, claims Graves, unless teachers “undress” with them - by “exposing” their writing to children. A teacher who does not do this “has the same effect as the fully dressed visitor to a nudist camp who blunders around gaping at others’ nakedness” (Walshe 1981: 8).

This admiration for openness, honesty and naturalness in texts contributes to a distrust of what are seen to be contrived and artificial student texts. Protherough, in a discussion of “creative writing”, draws a distinction between creative writing and pseudo-creative writing, by suggesting that the latter is not spontaneous - that it has been written with a “careful eye on the teacher’s expectations”.

... rather than being personal, much of the thought and language is out of a stock kitty, and gives the impression of insincerity: it is hard to believe in the attitudes expressed. (Protherough 1978: 11)

Protherough suggests that “contrived” writing - writing which is not sincere and truthful - can be identified because it will lack “immediacy” and “directness”. An immediate, direct response seems to offer evidence of “honesty”, of a genuine response. Revised or teacher-directed texts

allegedly lack this honesty, and are contrived, artificial and impersonal. They do not represent personal knowledge, because personal knowledge has been intimately linked with a concept of writing as authoring: a concept of writing which consistently defers authority and authenticity to speech or speech-effects.

This same concern is for honesty and sincerity applies to texts students are asked to write in response to literature or literary stimuli. The 1970's re-orientation in the United Kingdom towards "The Great Tradition", and towards literature as written-down "gossip" or language in the spectator-role, rather than literature as a privileged and elite group of texts (Britton 1970), had signalled an important shift (see Hunter, Chapter 3, this volume). The move was now towards a different form of literary studies in classrooms: towards an emphasis on the reader rather than the text; on reader-response rather than literary criticism. Jackson (1980), for instance, presents a case for the importance of an initial response, rather than a rational and considered one, to literature. First encounters, he claims, produce "an intensity of feeling and thinking" which are lost once "our heads take over" (149).

Reader-response aesthetics has obviously influenced a range of contemporary texts about writing and reading (e.g., Corcoran & Evans 1987), and such texts argue for the value of a plurality of individual personal responses to literary texts instead of the one definitive, traditional literary meaning for texts; for a plurality of forms of response to literary texts; and for a focus on individual reading processes as students engage with literary texts. Literary texts are thus seen to serve as stepping stones for children's own "creative" response and the texts they write may then become the "literature of the classroom".

Responding to literary texts in this way means again to bypass the interference of "the writing" to engage directly with the author's mind, intentions, preoccupations on the other side. The construction of "the personal response", and the reading conventions which will produce "the personal response", are bypassed, in search of "honesty", "spontaneity", and "immediacy".

Drafting, Rewriting, Revising

Concepts of honesty, spontaneity and immediacy run into some difficulty when confronted with any notion of "revision" in writing, and yet revision is seen to be an integral aspect of dominant writing pedagogy. As in

reading pedagogy, the process of writing has become a classroom focus; the emphasis has deliberately shifted from writing products. The "process" approach to writing builds in an assumption that "publication" ("real" audiences and "real" reading) is the desirable end of the process for much of what children will write in schools. Consequently revision strategies can be justified as part of a child-centred writing pedagogy. However the nature and role of revision within the classroom has led to some confusion and contradiction. Graves argues that:

Almost every child is able to change something. What, and how much the child changes depends on the force and depth of the voice, what the child sees in his [sic] writing, and his level of development. Teachers must be acquainted with how children reveal each of these if they are to help revise at all. (1983: 151)

Yet while Graves claims that children revise because they note a discrepancy between their texts and their "real" voices - their intended meanings - he has repeatedly had to defend his approach from over-zealous revision methods (see Graves 1984b) and from claims that revision emphases are reader-centred, not writer-centred (Barrs 1983). The current pedagogy has so emphasised the integration of text and writer that suggestions by teachers that texts are inadequate can be interpreted as suggestions that writers are inadequate. A critique by Barrs of Graves' work focuses on the different sort of text that will result if writers become conscious of "the form of their writing, about how it reads and what people will think of it".

A self-conscious writer's focus is not on the subject of the writing but on the effect that it will have on the reader-over-the-shoulder, and the writing will show this. It will strut, gesture and demand attention, like an actor playing to the gallery. (Barrs 1983: 835)

In Barrs' view such a focus promotes "writing viewed as the production of writing", not writing which promotes the "process of discovery", a personal, "real" journey through experience.

Graves purports innocence of these charges and restates the nature of the revising he advocates: the clarification of an author's meaning. This is what "real" authors are assumed to do. Professional writers revise drafts to perfect the "voice" of their texts, to make their meanings clearer for their readers, and it is common within writing pedagogy to see reference to the writing habits professional writers claim to have adopted. Protherough (1983), Murray (1982), and Emig (1983) all call upon professional writers'

words about the processes of drafting and revision, and in so doing, emphasise the apparently “unconscious” motivation to draft and revise.

If we believe that writing is frequently a “discovery method”, that we learn what we mean in the act of writing, then it is clear that the flash of illumination, the awareness of what we “really” want to say, the apprehension of the appropriate structure, may come late as well as early. When this happens, we have to go back and reorganise the work. (Protherough 1983: 168)

Graves similarly claims, “Children sense imbalances and need to right them”, and suggests that careful “conferencing” and selective “publication” will facilitate student textual revision. The model that students are revising for is the model of “personal voice” - the “dynamo” of the writing process.

What should never be forgotten ... is that the force of revision, the energy for revision, is rooted in the child’s voice, the urge to express. Every teacher has heard the words, “Do I have to do it over? Why do I have to write?” These children are saying: “I don’t have a voice. I don’t see the sense in what I am doing”. (Graves 1983: 160)

“Voice” now equals alignment with a task. If students want to write, they will know how to revise. Revision without this “voice” and “energy” is assumed to produce the “contrived” and “artificial” texts that teachers dislike. If this is so, the key to successful revision must be to project the effect of naturalness. Texts must still carry the effect of the “personal voice” of the student writer so that the “honesty” of the “inner vision” is maintained.

While practitioners agree that revision is a good thing, they are unable to explain what its nature is, other than to describe it as listening to “the force and depth of the voice”, or getting at what students “really want to say”. The teacher’s role is to hear the voice, understand the writer’s intention, and then to facilitate the shaping of the message. The impossibility of this reading practice for teachers has, of course, been noticed. Elbow (1973), for instance, advocates “the teacherless writing class” precisely for this reason.

The examples Barrs (1983) offers of Graves’ team members encouraging student writers towards a variety of lead sentences to open their first person narratives, would seem to be at odds with this concept of listening to the student’s personal voice. It would seem, as Barrs suggests, to be more in keeping with a concern for the readability of the text - for the shaping of a recognisable reading position. The tensions here between writing pedagogy which focusses on personal exploration and learning and

pedagogy which focusses on audience and readability are apparent. The “process” movement’s preoccupation with “authorship” and “publication” has led inevitably to a concern for “products”: for works which are firmly secured to, and owned by, their “authors”. And yet the process pedagogy holds to “personal voice”, to honesty, naturalness, immediacy. The role of revision emerges as particularly problematic and exposes the contradictions within the assumptions underlying the discourse.

Real Texts

In schools where the writing isn’t real, where the teacher or the school makes the decisions at every stage of the writing procedure, children are expected merely to practise and perform. They are not involved in making choices for themselves, their purpose isn’t their own, they are not real writers. (Baker 1981: 4)

Underlying school writing orthodoxy is a clear assumption that personal texts are “real” texts because real communication is involved. The writer’s voice speaks directly to the reader. The voice is heard so the text is no longer a lifeless string of words. The text is real.

For a text to be “real” in this way, contemporary pedagogy has argued that writers need to be able to choose their own writing topics. Graves has claimed that student control over topic selection and writing was the essence of his message for a dramatic improvement in the teaching of writing in American schools.

When people own a place they look after it; but when it belongs to someone else, they couldn’t care less. It’s that way with writing. From the first day of school we must leave control of the writing with the child - the choice of topic and the writing itself. Then children write more and care more, even about the appearance of the writing on the page (Walshe 1981: 9).

If students get involved with their subject then it is assumed that “they become expert”, and that “they develop a genuine intention to write”. It is all “natural”.

However current pedagogy also acknowledges some of the tensions within this position. If real texts (personal texts) need real writers, real readers and real messages, how can a school classroom offer any scope or variety of writing experiences for students where the audience (the teacher) is always fixed? The answer seems to lie in varying the tasks students are

given, and in finding external readers. An Australian writing team suggests that:

The best writing is done for purposes and audiences that are real and significant to the writer. The writing task which satisfied some need of the teacher's - such as assessment - will not satisfy students' needs unless the writing is important to them also.

Children's writing should be published - at least it should be read by the audience for whom it is intended. (Cook et al. 1980: 35-6)

Current pedagogy has consistently prescribed that students should be engaged in a variety of writing tasks, and development of students' abilities to write is frequently described in terms of the range of writing tasks students engage with. The British Schools Council Writing Project team (Britton et al. 1975) developed a set of writing functions, and variations of this still predominate in many textbooks, as do variations of Moffett's analysis of the "spectrum of discourse" and his hierarchy of levels of abstraction from *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (1968). Three of the most commonly referenced writing tasks for student writers appear to be the personal narrative, the opinionative essay, and imaginative writing.

The personal narrative, with obvious links to both the "expressive" and "poetic" categories of Britton's function model and with Moffett's first and second levels of abstraction, is still one of the most popular forms suggested for school writing. The first person anecdotal style is widely encouraged and fits easily into the category of writing which seems close to the author; which is "real", "honest", "sincere". So, too, does opinionative writing.

There are times when you simply have to speak out. The chips are down. Damn the torpedoes. It's the only way to maintain your very integrity or self-respect. In such situations, once you have started, you are usually surprised how fluent (and powerful) your words are. (Elbow 1973: 125)

"I'll write about my accident; that makes me angry; they have no right to serve that kind of food in the cafeteria; I want to write about driving a car ..." (Graves 1983: 31)

Also, writing which leaves the "here and now" and dwells in the realm of the imagination is encouraged. This is the language of the artist: the creative arena. Language tasks which ask students to investigate inner worlds have been strongly advocated by a series of writers (Britton 1970; Burgess et al. 1973; Harrison 1983), and "imaginative" writing has come to be linked with the forms common to literature - the poem, the short story,

the drama script. The notion that 'truth' in literature is typified by an imaginative understanding of human experience is described by Knights, and cited in the introduction to the proceedings of the Literature Commission of the 1980 International Conference on the Teaching of English.

I know the imagination is sometimes referred to as though it were something quite different from - or even opposed to - those mental processes by which we reach out for truth and try to ground ourselves in things as they are. That is not so. Imagination in the writer is that responsive, creative activity by which he [sic] realises - makes real - a particular bit of experience, and embodies in words his sense of it in its directness and fullness - its implications and its significance and value to him as a living human being. (Mallick et al. 1982: 3)

Literature, the person, the truth, and now the imagination, are conflated here in this act of creation: imaginative writing.

"Real", then, can now be interpreted as "real" to the writer: a personal reality acquired through personal knowing. While "real" communication through authorship and publication is sought, its classroom limitations are recognised. A personal sense of "real" must then suffice, but this poses some reading problems.

The Reader

Concepts of writing implicitly project concepts of reading, yet reading is not addressed seriously in discussions of writing practice. School writing pedagogy is instead strongly writer-centred: the writer makes original meaning, and the text reveals this original meaning to the reader. Reading is thus regarded as an unproblematic activity of decoding a writer's intention - and intention is commonly equated with "personal voice".

Reading is a private experience, a human contract from one single person to another single person. I think that effective writing should be conversational. Sometimes the conversation is more formal than others, but it should never be stuffy, pretentious, or incapable of being read aloud by the writer. (Murray 1982: 93)

Murray's claim is that writing and reading are similar to talking and listening - people should be able to "speak" to one another through writing. And if a text is read aloud, "does it sound as if one person is talking to one person?" The speech-orientation is again obvious.

But as papers by Baker, Luke and McHoul in this volume suggest, school reading is not only a “private experience”, but a discursive construction regulated in institutional sites. The “privatism” of humanist approaches to writing stands complementarily with the “mentalism” and “individualism” of psychological approaches to reading as noted in Chapters 5 and 7 by Heap and Baker.

Reading Practices

Murray calls reading a “human contract”. Are there, then, recognisable features of such a contract? Within current pedagogy assumptions are made that while reading is a private and personal practice, it is also a common, public practice because meaning resides in the text (therefore the writer), and not in the reader. The key to a common reading is the location of the writer’s intention and several guides in the search for “intention” are offered.

For instance, implicit in Graves’ work is the assumption that teachers must be listening to “voices”: “the heart of writing process work is listening to children” (1983: 4-5). Teachers who are not successfully implementing Graves’ writing process concepts are not “listening”. With this approach, reading is identified with listening: with the identification of a person, a voice, behind the text.

This is not dissimilar to other reading practices described by teacher-researchers. Contemporary approaches to the study of literature in the secondary English classroom actively encourage students to make their own meanings from literary texts, and to write responses to literary texts in a variety of “free” forms. The personal, private nature of reading, as Murray describes it, appears to operate through this activity, and yet at the same time a public, socially learned practice is also referred to. All teachers can, presumably, learn to read student writing so that personal response can be identified.

For example, Stratta and Dixon (1987) preface a discussion of British school texts with claims like:

We find it impossible to believe that Michelle was not deeply moved by Heaney’s poem: the way she construes her experience and the form she chooses are eloquent testimony ...

The writer is obviously totally involved here ... he is genuinely thinking about the scene, not merely echoing someone else’s opinion. (1987: 187-8)

It would seem that within current writing pedagogy, the role of the reader is predominantly to locate the "writer" in the text and that textbook writers assume there are recognisable methods that readers employ in this search. Less clear are the methods that readers might use to read texts which are not so obviously associated with literature. For instance while Graves hears "voices", Barrs sees "self-consciousness" strutting, gesturing and demanding attention. Currently popular writing pedagogy says little about the nature of reading school writing, but it makes a strong case for the need for "real" readership, often referring to "the needs of the reader" and of how the writer must take account of such needs.

The Needs of the Reader: "Real" Reading

... the reader assumed in any piece of writing has certain needs, and expectations of the genre, which must be taken into account if the communication between writer and reader is to be effective, and if the writer is to make meaning for the reader. (Cook et al. 1980: 12)

Pedagogical discourse consistently expresses the fear that without the safeguards of "real" reading, and "real" tasks, school writing will become a pretence, a mockery, an imitation of the communication that occurs between readers and writers outside of the school. For instance, Lehr and Lange (1981: 72) argue that "students need to practice writing skills in 'lifelike' situations where they communicate with real people. They need to know for whom and for what they are writing". Similarly Protherough (1983:53) claims that "to see school writing as different by definition from writing outside the school is to undermine the learning process".

Implicit in this concern is the fear that academic school contexts can not provide a "real" audience for students' texts: a fear voiced by several writing researchers (Emig 1971: 97; King 1978: 197; Smith 1982: 208-9) as well as textbook writers. Murray, for instance, argues that:

In academic writing the student writes for an audience of one ... Nonacademic writing is considerably different. The writer is the authority, and the reader is not required to read. The student will usually learn best in situations which reproduce the conditions of nonacademic writing. (1982: 40)

Consequently Graves' advice to teachers is to publish children's writing. Teachers are advised to simulate "real", "outside" reading

conditions by using students as readers of each other's texts (Healy 1982), by becoming a writer themselves and developing a reading-writing community in the classroom (Friss 1982), by simulating real audiences (Graves & Hansen 1983), or, perhaps as a last resort, by pretending not to be teachers (Tyrrell & Johnston 1983). Elbow's work, *Writing without Teachers* (1973), advises students to establish their own writing class - without a teacher at the head.

The difficulties of readership in the school classroom have been attacked in different ways and the problem of audience has remained a common research focus as researchers have sought to determine levels of audience awareness in student texts and the influence of audience categories on the development of texts. However considerations of "audience" in a personalist expressive pedagogy are not easily accommodated. Most frequently the audience in current pedagogical statements is a "common" undefined audience, not sited in any particular discursive tradition, and not seriously considered as relevant to the nature of writing.

Conclusion

Current writing pedagogy is predominantly a personalist and speech-centred discourse, and the metaphor of "personal voice" is one of its distinguishing features. Personal texts which are described as honest, spontaneous, natural, and truthful are valued, although reading practices which will recognise such features and writing practices which could construct such texts are bypassed. These prescriptions for pedagogy which stress the "real", the "personal" and the "honest", seem to imply that the classroom is a site of potential artificiality, impersonality and dishonesty. As the classroom discourse of school writing threatens to disintegrate into pretence, cliché, and work, current writing pedagogy attempts to legitimate its standing by forcing a coherence, a unity and a "truth" through speech-centred metaphors.

As with current reading pedagogy, writing pedagogy has thus forsaken claims on the social, the cultural and the ideological. The person-centred nature of both pedagogies suggests that the dominant discursive traditions to which they belong are adjacent and compatible. While reading pedagogy is aligned alternatively to behaviourism and psycholinguistics, writing pedagogy is aligned to humanism. As a result, writing pedagogy cannot address critical social issues, because its basic premises about written language are grounded in assumptions which, as Derrida would argue, make

it fundamentally impossible to consider textuality and readings. The logocentrism of contemporary writing pedagogy shifts attention to "the voice" rather than "the text", to creativity and inspiration rather than the labour of construction, to naturalness and honesty rather than textual ideology. Until writing pedagogy severs its attachment to the speaking subject and instead aligns itself with theories of textuality, it will continue to provide a misleading and confusing theoretical base for the teaching of writing/reading.

Notes

1. Dixon (1967) used this term, but it is also widely used by a number of writers in this field. See also Brown (1987) for a current use. For a critique of the use of 'authorship', see Gilbert (1988, 1990).

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Chapter 3

Learning the Literature Lesson: The Limits of the Aesthetic Personality

Ian Hunter

The Devil's Work

It is good to begin by reminding ourselves of the contingency of our way of teaching literature.¹ In 1563 Richard Rainolde had no qualms in providing the boys of the English grammar schools with the following rhetorical formula for the praise of authors:

First make a proemium or beginning to your comparison.
Then compare them of their countrees.
Of their parentes.
Of their ancestours.
Of their education.
Of their actes.
Of their death.
Then adde the conclusion. (Rainolde 1563: xlvii)

According to the best reconstructions that we have (Baldwin 1944; Ong 1971) it was this sort of training that was pre-eminently responsible for the elaborate set speeches of Shakespearean drama. By 1900, however, the idea that students might be taught to read Shakespeare, or to write like him, through explicit instruction is anathema to the emerging English profession.

The inductive methods required by scientific and mathematical subjects are constantly leading the pupil to rediscover truths for himself, and believe nothing that has not been revealed to his own senses and reasoning power. But these show him only half the world. The other half, that which comes from without, from the experience and thought of the noblest men, which inspires faith and reverence while it trains the imagination and sense of beauty, must be revealed to him in a different way. A boy may be led to rediscover the law of gravitation, but we cannot win for him an entry into Shakespeare's workshop. His plays come as a revelation of a finished and perfect whole. We must teach our

pupils to wonder and admire as well as to reason. (Zimmern 1900: 557-8)

By the time of the landmark Dartmouth Seminar of 1966 - and regardless of the fact that in the interim scholarship such as Baldwin's (1944) had indeed provided the keys for "entry into Shakespeare's workshop" - the idea that literature cannot be explicitly taught had become a self-corrective professional norm.

While the Seminar was united in the essential value of literary experience ... it was full of doubt and dismay about prevailing approaches to the teaching of literature, not only at school level. So many seemed in the process to sap the cultural enjoyment and satisfaction of the act of reading and responding. There is a widespread and self-defeating refusal on both sides of the Atlantic to see that literature cannot be "taught" by a direct approach, and that the teacher who weighs in with talk or lecture is more likely to kill a personal response than to support and develop it. (Dixon 1967: 58)

This is not to say, however, that the modern literature lesson lacks method and purpose. To the contrary; it possesses a complex and subtle pedagogical organisation, but one quite unlike the training in rhetorical schemata that permitted Shakespeare to stock his mind and order his speeches, and one directed to quite other purposes. In place of explicit instruction in rhetorical formulae and the imitation of classical oratorical and ethical exemplars a remarkably different pedagogy has emerged.

Part of our work in written English, then, is to foster the kind of looking and the kind of talk and writing that direct observation of experience demands. We do so, not in the detached systematic way of a scientist, but by watching for, and even helping to provide, moments when such experiences are of personal importance to pupils. For it is their involvement in the experience that will draw them into writing. ... Primary teachers will take pupils into the woods, encouraging them to feel and smell the bark of trees, to look at the fungi, to collect autumn leaves ... and secondary teachers go out with cameras and sketch-pads to look at men working on bulldozers and cranes, the new concrete skyscrapers, or to stare through grated windows at children pushing prams in the alleys of black tenements. On their way and maybe back in class, they talk with groups and groups talk together, sharing and probing - to see more and get it clearer - so that later they may build together, through writing, painting, photographs ... a report of what they found. But at the same time, in the same situation and "lessons", we leave room for the symbolic representation of experience to emerge if it will. (51-2)

In this pedagogy it is not the formation of a specific linguistic capacity that is at stake but, apparently, the 'growth' of the student's sensibility. And here, where the imitation of linguistic and ethical models has seemingly been replaced by exposure to the world, it appears that the teacher's role is no longer to teach the norms and techniques of a specific competence. Rather, it is to stage-manage "experience": to condense and present the world of fungi, autumn leaves, industrial labour, poor children and black tenements where - without the least normativity - the fragile personal responses of the students will form and, almost as an afterthought, linguistic expression might "emerge if it will".

No doubt it will seem to some the devil's work to sow the seeds of doubt and dissolution in this garden where children grow. Still, in our fallen state it is impossible to ignore the paradoxes informing this *Kindergarten*. The cry that literature cannot be taught issues from a highly sophisticated pedagogical environment. The same pedagogy that eschews explicit literary instruction encases students in a world in which they have no choice but to 'learn from experience'. Putting these paradoxes in question form we might ask: How is that so much is learned in the lesson where nothing explicit is taught? And, in fact, this question is not one that should be asked lightly. To answer it will stretch our historical and theoretical resources to the limit, once we have seen that the available answers - those provided by both the adherents and the critics of modern English teaching - are not even remotely helpful.

Adherents

As far as the adherents are concerned, their answer at least possesses the virtue of simplicity. It consigns functional purposes and coercive norms to the compromised domain of utility and bureaucracy and purifies the normativity of the literature lesson by identifying it with the immanent law of "man's" quest for meaning or "personal growth". The following rationale is resolutely representative, both in what it knows and what it does not.

Through literature man attempts to make sense of his experiences, that kaleidoscope of impressions, feelings, sensations, events which constitute his daily life. Man, the pattern-making animal, shapes his amorphous experiences and makes possible the processes of contemplation, reflection and evaluation in seeking to flesh out knowledge of himself, his attitudes and beliefs in relation to other people and the world in which he lives.

At the Conference we reaffirmed our view that English in the eighties would not just be about teaching children to read and write so that they could become merely efficient cogs in a commercial enterprise. Some of us would agree with Peter Abbs that English teaching is in danger of becoming threatened by the utilitarian and pedestrian purposes of the functionalists and bureaucrats whose view of education would discard the truths of the imagination for competence in mechanical skills for routine processes. The carving out and shaping of individual meanings should not become secondary to the pursuit of social significance and verifiable facts. (Parker 1982: 32)

In other words, much is learned but nothing is taught in the literature lesson because it aspires to be no more, but no less, than an expression of the fundamental form of human development. Here development is pictured in the *gestaltische* form of the play of experience and pattern; but elsewhere, and typically, the law of this development appears in the more overtly aesthetic guise of the dialectic between feeling and form, intellect and emotion, the “naïve” and the “sentimental”, and so on. It is on this basis that, in one of the early manuals of the “personal growth” method, Hourd (1949: 19) could recommend to the teacher the “method of indirection”: “The technique of knowing yet appearing not to know, of consciousness in unconsciousness, action in non-action ...”.

The innocence betrayed regarding the scope of bureaucratic and governmental reason and action is relatively easy to deal with. When James Kay-Shuttleworth - England’s first and greatest educational bureaucrat - testified before the 1838 sitting of the parliamentary Select Committee on the Education of the Poorer Classes, on the necessity for the state funding and regulation of popular education, it was anything but “mechanical skills and routine processes” that he was aiming for.² In fact Kay-Shuttleworth’s view was that the public interest in an educated population would be best served through a pedagogical organisation that maximised the space for individual activity and intensified the child’s inner life. Kay-Shuttleworth’s attention to apparently mundane organisational and architectural details, such as the provision of playgrounds, was in fact governed by a far-reaching insight into their pedagogical effects, which he had derived in part from the Scottish educationist David Stow.

Stow had written that:

A play-ground is in fact the principal scene of the real life of children, ... the arena on which their true character and dispositions are exhibited; and

where, free and unconstrained, they can hop and jump about, swing, or play at tag, ball, or marbles.

And by the 1830s he had already mapped the unobtrusive and non-interventionist role of the teacher in this new space where children would learn from experience.

Amidst this busy scene, the trainer must be present, not to check, but to encourage youthful gaiety. All is free as air, and subject only to a *moral* observation of any particular delinquency, the review of which is reserved for the school gallery, and taken up on the children's return there, and pictured out as a training moral lesson. (Stow 1850: 144, 149)

Kay-Shuttleworth saw that the effectiveness of this new non-coercive pedagogy lay in its capacity to allow social norms to be individually "discovered", at play or in the relation to a "sympathetic" teacher. The ambivalent space of the literature lesson - in which spontaneity is married to surveillance - far from outstripping the "pedestrian purposes of the functionalists and bureaucrats", is their monument.³

No doubt to some the reciprocity between individualisation and moralisation - the incitement to free play and the normalisation of conduct - will seem an unholy alliance; or else a sign that this pedagogy had not yet succeeded in aligning itself with the dialectics of "experience" and "personal growth". Are we certain, though, that these dialectics are themselves free of imposed pedagogical normativity - even in that emancipatory pedagogy where "teachers will take pupils into the woods, encouraging them to feel and smell the bark of trees ..."? After all, isn't it possible for students to *fail* to integrate "feeling and form" or "emotion and intellect"? Consider, for example, Hourd's (1949: 83) comment that in one student's composition: "There is not one word which gives any indication that his eyes were open This has all the marks of 'composing legalism'; The imagination is not at work in the poem ...". Here there is a strong *prima facie* suggestion that the reconciliation of "experience and pattern", "feeling and form" may itself be a task of behaviour imposed by the literature lesson.

If this suggestion is confirmed then it will be impossible to explain the tacit and 'contentless' character of the literature lesson by identifying it with experience, the growth of the person, or the development of humanity. It may not be the universal personality of humanity that is formed in the literature lesson but a highly specific and local aesthetico-ethical persona. And the normativity of the specialised pedagogy of which this persona is the artefact may not be lessened by the fact that its tasks of behaviour seem to be discovered in the woods, or to arise from spontaneous "talk" encouraged

by someone who knows while appearing not to know and who supervises by inciting.

Critics

We seem, therefore, to be agreeing with the critics of English - particularly those working with Marxist instruments - who see in the 'contentless' character of the literature lesson the indelible sign of its ideological or hegemonic function. This line of analysis has been variously pursued in a number of studies by Baldick (1983), Bennett (1985), Eagleton (1985-86), Mulhern (1979) and Sinfield (1985), but we can treat Eagleton's version as broadly representative and rewarding in its succinctness and trenchancy.

Eagleton's initial description of the inexplicit character of literary education sounds much like our own.

What Literature teaches is not so much this or that moral value It teaches us rather to be - let me rehearse some of the cherished terms - sensitive, imaginative, responsive, sympathetic, creative, perceptive, reflective. Notice the resounding intransitivity of all these familiar shibboleths. The task of the moral technology of Literature is to produce an historically peculiar form of human subject who is sensitive, receptive, imaginative and so on ... *about nothing in particular*. (Eagleton 1985-86: 98)

However, Eagleton's account of why literary training has this form bears the burden of a weighty theoretical and political tradition.

What is important, in this ideology of Literature, is not so much the object being grasped - that can be any kind of object you like - but the lived experience of grasping it on the part of a particular individual ...

The political gains of this for the given social order are considerable. For what this means, in effect, is that subjectivity is radically depoliticised, and that is always to the advantage of the ruling order. (99)

It is by no means clear that this tradition of analysis is capable of delivering a satisfactory understanding of the literature lesson. It is necessary, therefore, to sketch the limits of its key terms, "politics" and "subjectivity".

Broadly speaking, Eagleton and his fellow critics assume that through a theory of the relation between politics and subjectivity it is possible to provide a general account of the formation of human capacities and the social organisations in which this occurs; an account, moreover, that doubles

as an ethico-political programme. Regardless of numerous theoretical disagreements that fall below the horizon of our present concerns, all the critics mentioned above share with Eagleton the following two assumptions: first, that the organisation and function of the sphere of (social, legal, educational) institutions is fundamentally political in the sense that it exists to secure relations of domination and subordination or hegemony and consent between opposed classes; second, that the agency through which these institutions go to work is human subjectivity, conceived in one regard as the unity-in-consciousness of all its "instruments" and in another as the illusion of this autonomous unity-in-consciousness.

These assumptions give rise to the conception of a single general relation between politics and subjectivity: social institutions secure relations of domination or hegemony between classes by imbuing individuals with the illusion of autonomous subjectivity, as the means of obscuring their true political interests which arise from their class positions. Eagleton, for example, argues that the school is amongst these institutions responsible for

... the production of certain *forms of subjectivity* judged appropriate to the society in question. ... Human subjects don't produce themselves; though as I shall argue a bit later, the mode of subjectivity appropriate to our particular kind of society is one which deceives them into believing that they do. (96)

And the logic of this deception is political.

Because subjectivity has become a purely formal category, definable by no specific set of beliefs, liberal humanism can delude itself that here, and perhaps nowhere else, lies creative exploration, richness of personal response, and the rest of the familiar jargon. They do not see that it is precisely this purely formal subjectivity which capitalism needs, just as the bourgeois individual is the purely formal, abstract individual, but enriched, heightened, intensified, and so with its emptiness concealed from itself. Its imprisonment lies not in its political determinations, but in the fact that it is rendered quite blind to those determinations. Which is what is meant by 'freedom'. (99-100)

The part of the literature lesson in this epic political drama should be clear enough. Its indirect and contentless pedagogy - which Eagleton and Bennett derive from Kantian ethical formalism - has the exemplary role of imbuing individuals with the illusion of an autonomous open-ended subjectivity, in order to obscure knowledge of their real political determination and interests. In short, English is a bourgeois ideology. The aesthetic is a depoliticising strategy which must be repoliticised or else replaced by a

theory of the political organisation of subjectivity. Without at all attempting to launch a full-scale critique of this sort of analysis, let us put a few questions to it in order to clear a space for an alternative account.

The Subject

In the first place, with regards to the question of the subject, is it clear that modern English derives from a domain of literary or aesthetic *ideas* - either Kantian (Bennett, Eagleton), Arnoldian (Baldick) or Leavisite (Mulhern, Sinfield)? Well, we have already noted that the key elements of the literature lesson - the 'self discovery' of social norms in a domain of organised experience overseen by a non-coercive teacher - had been assembled by reformers like Stow and Kay-Shuttleworth prior to the appearance of Leavis or Arnold and, in fact, prior to the emergence of the *literature* lesson. Neither is there any reason to think that the new pedagogy was informed by a Kantian theory of the subject or, indeed, by a Romantic philosophy of the child. In fact this pedagogy emerged as the contingent solution to a highly specific socio-educational problem: the perceived failure of the "monitorial" schools.

The monitorial schools were not fulfilling their potential, argued Stow and Kay-Shuttleworth, because of the form in which they deployed the 'disciplines'.⁴ Their dependence on explicit norms and rules, highly regimented activity, and an impersonal form of supervision - relayed through a hierarchy of student-monitors and physically enforced by a remote, culturally undistinguished master - placed them at too great a distance from the 'natural' milieu of the students (the streets and households of the 'popular classes') and from the sentiments and behaviours formed there. Let us say, then, that it was for this reason that Stow and Kay-Shuttleworth advocated a pedagogy in which the regimented imposition of explicit norms would be replaced by techniques permitting their non-coercive 'discovery' and negotiation. This was to be achieved through the re-positioning of the student in relation to a sympathetic teacher who would incite, observe and guide (rather than forbid, judge and coerce); and in relation to a pedagogical environment that would simulate and re-programme (rather than condemn and exclude) the environments of the street and home. Thus emerged the modern form of the pedagogical disciplines.

If this is the case then we will have to give up the idea that the agency through which the literature lesson operates is the mechanism of the subject;

that is, the mechanism in which the self of the individual emerges from the staging of the (Kantian) idea of an autonomous subjectivity in which this self is (mis)recognised. There is no doubt that Stow's non-directive pedagogy was designed to regulate conduct and build capacities by individualising the students, opening the ethical relation to the self, and progressively expanding the sphere of self regulation. But it seems equally clear that the self built up in this manner does not emerge from a recognitional relation between the individual and an image of full subjectivity: one in which the individual inherits the illusion of what it must become while losing sight of the (class) reality of what it is. The relation in question is not between the individual and the (illusory) subject it must become; it is between what the sociologists call two differentially specified and related statuses: the teacher and the student.

If new social norms were to be relayed in the negotiable currency of a personal relationship, the status of teacher would have to be radically transformed. These were the historical circumstances in which, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the teacher would acquire the attributes of priest, parent, companion and judge. They are also the circumstances in which the student would acquire a new and definitive mix of attributes: soul to be saved, child, friend and delinquent. The resultant pedagogical relationship is one in which the child is required to monitor and regulate its own conduct (i.e. to develop a self) through the manner in which the teacher *withholds* judgement or allows it to surface only as pastoral concern or personal disappointment.

In other words, the relationship onto which the literature lesson would be grafted was not between the individual and the ideological image of its subjectivity. It was between two definite and limited statuses or personae whose attributes were built up within a specific institutional setting and acquired by individuals through specific forms of training and qualification. Let us note, and then set aside for future comment, two immediate consequences of these remarks. First, the self that emerges from the new pedagogical relationship is clearly not an ideological illusion or 'effect', in the sense of being projected by a more fundamental relationship (between the individual and its class position) as a device for keeping this relationship in place by obscuring it. The pedagogical relationship is no less (and no more) fundamental or real than any other social relation; and the self that it gives birth to is not a state of consciousness but a whole set of techniques, practices and dispositions through which individuals acquire a real and irreducible capacity for regulatory 'work on the self by the self'. Second, it should be equally clear that this capacity is in no sense universal or

emergent from the individual *qua* human being. It is the product of a highly specialised relation between two historically constructed statuses or personae; and its rational and ethical provenance can extend no further than forms of institutional organisation and the deployment of techniques responsible for forming the attributes of these personae.

Politics

What about the other side of the equation - the political - where it is claimed that the key to understanding the literature lesson lies in the relations of class domination and subordination that it is supposed to reproduce? In fact this claim is the product of two smaller claims and two quite different uses of the term 'political'. According to the first, literary pedagogy is political in the sense that the norms of achievement and development that it deploys - through the task of the aesthetic response - are not universal and therefore entail the disqualification of other forms of achievement and development. Bennett (1985: 47-48), for example, comments on:

the relative intolerance produced by the functioning, within specific discourses of value, of ideals of personality that are identifiably socially specific in their articulations. In the case of aesthetic discourse, obliged to operate at the level of universality in order to establish the aesthetic as a distinctive mode of the subject's mental relation to reality, such relative intolerance becomes absolute. Within such discourse, the subject who fails to appreciate correctly is regarded as being incompletely human, rather than merely being excluded from full title to membership of a specific valued and valourising community.

According to the second claim literary education is political in the quite different sense of expressing the attributes and interests of antagonistic social classes. So, Bennett comments on studies undertaken by Bourdieu which, apparently, show

... that the premium placed on disinterestedness as an appropriate aesthetic attitude correlates directly with the degree to which a class or class fraction is distanced from the practical need to secure the necessities of life. Indeed, it is a way of *displaying* that distance.

For Bourdieu, then, disinterestedness constitutes a particular form of posturing on the part of the subject which, while serving specific social interests, simultaneously masks those interests as well as its own use in their service. (42)

The orbit of Marxist criticism is in fact an ellipse formed by systematic slippage between these two senses of political: aesthetic education by being political in the sense of operating a non-consensual formation of normative social attributes is (*ipso facto*) political in the sense that this process and these attributes express the interests of a particular class while disqualifying those of other classes; and vice versa. If this equation held up, then the task of a cultural politics would be clear: to include a greater diversity of social attributes - ethnic, gender, class - in the pedagogical sphere as a means breaking the bourgeois cultural hegemony achieved through the 'universal' subject of aesthetics.

In fact, neither side of the equation will work. In the first place, from the fact that literary pedagogy involves the non-consensual normative construction of definite and limited cultural attributes, it does not follow that this pedagogy serves the interests of a dominant class or blocks the development of the attributes and interests of other classes or groups. This follows only if it is assumed that the literature lesson works through the mechanism of the subject; that is, through the ideological process in which attributes are formed when an illusory idea or ideal of universal subjectivity blocks access to other forms of development nascent in the individual or its historical location.

This assumption is quite overt in Sinfield's (1985: 136) claim that through an adverse judgement of aesthetic competence "the pupil is being persuaded to internalise success or failure with particular and relative cultural codes as an absolute judgement on her or his potential as a human being". But we can also detect the same assumption in Bennett's (1985: 49) rejection of the notion "that an ideal of personality might be forged that would be of equal service in the multiple, intersecting but, equally, non-coincident foci of struggle constituted by black, gay, feminist, socialist, and, in some contexts, national liberation politics". Here it is present in the idea that the bits and pieces of humanity not included in the ideal aesthetic persona might themselves form the nodal points of a "conjunctural" cultural politics.

In fact, as we have already indicated, the personal attributes built up by literary pedagogy do not arise from an idea or ideal (illusory or otherwise) but from a sophisticated set of pedagogical techniques, norms and relationships. And the being who acquires these attributes is not the individual as the subject of a true or illusory consciousness, but the individual as the bearer of a specific and relational status - the teacher, the student. The self that emerges from literary pedagogy does not appear negatively, when its image fixates all the other things the subject might

become ("his potential as a human being", "the multiple, intersecting but, equally, non-coincident foci of struggle ..."). Rather it is positively constructed when the techniques of incitement and supervision - spontaneity and normativity - focused by the teacher-student relation *create* specific capacities for self monitoring and self shaping.

In other words, the tendential normativity of literary pedagogy and the definite and limited character of the capacities to which it gives rise should not be taken as signs that these capacities are *formed* by occluding, excluding or disqualifying other sorts of attributes. Other social statuses and human attributes, possessing their own conditions of existence, have no principled relation to those associated with the literature lesson. Far from being excluded from the aesthetic domain as the condition of its existence, these other statuses and attributes are simply different and elsewhere. In short, literary pedagogy cannot be criticised for *failing* to include social statuses and human attributes beyond those formed by its technical organisation, because this is something that it cannot attempt. (Which is not to say that it cannot be criticised on other grounds). And if this is the case then it is misguided to propose a cultural politics based on reinstating excluded or marginalised subjectivities. Somewhat paradoxically, the problem with this proposal is not that it is anti-aesthetic but that it grossly *inflates* the social and political importance of literary pedagogy. It treats a whole array of political movements and campaigns as if they were struggles for reinstatement to a cultural domain from which they have allegedly been banished by 'English'.

What about the other side of the equation, in which the political character of literary pedagogy is attributed to its alleged role in relaying the ethos and serving the interests of a dominant socio-economic class? Drawing on Bourdieu, this is the way in which Bennett treats the pedagogical deployment of "bourgeois" aesthetic disinterestedness. Sinfield provides an optional variant. He claims that the "personal growth" model of English is an adaptation of high-bourgeois political interests - originally expressed in the elite training of grammar-school classicism - to the interests of a middle class seeking to differentiate itself from both gentry and proletariat through the acquisition of sensibility.

In other words, this was an approach for the class-mobile - either those moving from the lower middle class (occasionally working class) towards professional and managerial occupations, or those moving from established middle class towards professions like social work which justify themselves in terms of superior acquired knowledge and personal sensibility. (Sinfield 1985: 144)

Whichever variant is chosen, this sort of account is questionable in terms of both historical accuracy and theoretical adequacy.

As far as the history is concerned, we have already indicated that "personal growth" English emerged from a series of pedagogical innovations independent of any particular class ethos and, initially, not specifically literary or aesthetic. The contingency of the aesthetic investment of these innovations is visible today in those purely psycho-therapeutic "personal growth" pedagogies that compete with English or extrapolate it into hybrid psycho-aesthetic forms. The emergence of the school as a space of supervised freedom, and the teacher-student couple as a device permitting social norms to be relayed through a personal relationship, occurred on historical 'surfaces' quite removed from the minority pursuit of Romantic ethics and aesthetics. Moreover, these developments did not signify the ideological adaptation of bourgeois grammar-school classicism for the subordinate classes. They emerged instead from a quite autonomous sphere which today is called 'social welfare' and whose key agencies were not classes but an archipelago of social technologies.

These technologies (of health, education, social insurance and discipline) were themselves amalgams of an array of techniques for assembling problem populations and reorganising their personal attributes and social environments according to new norms of health, well-being, conduct and consumption. The pedagogical techniques of the monitorial school - the time-table, division into classes, behavioural drills, monitorial supervision, examination - were examples of these 'disciplines'. And, we have already seen that the appearance of the modern school as a space of supervised spontaneity controlled by the sympathetic surveillance of an unobtrusive yet ever-present teacher - that is, a space dedicated to the "personal growth" of the student - was itself a specific transformation of the monitorial disciplines.

However, even if it is agreed that the literature lesson emerged from the new welfare technologies and not the aesthetic ethos of the bourgeoisie it might still be argued that these technologies themselves served the interests of the middle class; for example, in producing a healthy, disciplined and docile working class. To answer this objection we must move on to discuss the theoretical adequacy of the analysis of literary pedagogy in terms of class interests.

In a broader perspective the issue here concerns Marxian theories of politics and, in particular, the relation between classes (as positions in the relations of production) and political actors (defined in terms of forms of

political organisation and calculation). Hindess (1986a, 1986b) has sharpened our sense of the problem by arguing that classes are not the kind of entity that can have political interests. Having a political interest presupposes capacities for political calculation and assessment; and Hindess argues that these are formed not through "class position" or "class experience" but through the practical deployment of definite and limited techniques of calculation and means of assessment.

In other words, to describe an individual or group in terms of their position in the relations of production - or in terms of their ethnic or gender positions for that matter - is to say nothing about the *means* by which they will come to formulate political assessments or undertake political action. The 'interests of a class' are in this sense always an object of instituted forms of political calculation; and the autonomy and normativity of these forms makes such interests inescapably controversial and irreducible to the class as a putative subject of experience.

As such, political interests do not derive from classes but from the agencies formed by the deployment of techniques of political calculation and assessment: political parties, special interest groups, state instrumentalities, community organisations, bureaucracies, organised religion, voters associations, trade unions, and so on. While some of these agencies claim to represent class interests there is no way that the *means* of political representation can be derived from classes as positions in the relations of production. And the terms purporting to do so - class experience, class consciousness, class culture - are simply so many metaphors thinly stretched over a theoretical chasm.

So, while during the first half of the nineteenth century the emerging British pedagogical apparatus was indeed shaped by competing political interests, the agents of these interests were not economic classes. They were, in this instance, the Anglican and non-conforming churches, the two major political parties, the educational reform associations and statistical societies, and an emergent educational bureaucracy. And the issues they struggled over were not those of class domination as such but, pre-eminently, whether the popular school system should be religious and if so whether it should be denominational; or, whether it should be secular and if so whether it should be philanthropically organised or funded and supervised by the state.

These were the issues over which the various political actors divided and struggled and we can note in passing that these struggles were decisively inflected by the deployment of a new technique of political calculation and assessment: moral statistics. The emergence of a network of private and

then governmental bureaus of statistical survey and calculation - themselves dependent on new technologies of social surveillance provided by the police, health, welfare and education systems - created new capacities for political assessment and new objects of political interest. By joining normative medical, social and ethical attributes to techniques for calculating their mathematical correlations and distributions as fields of frequency, moral statistics made it possible to conceive of whole populations in terms of the administrative distribution of socially desirable cultural attributes.

Thus, when Kay-Shuttleworth (1832) produced his survey of *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes of Manchester in 1832*, and made the proposals that would eventually see a proliferation of state-funded school playgrounds overseen by their unobtrusive guardians, it was not as the mouthpiece for a bourgeois class interest. Instead, it was as the agent of an apparatus of political calculation that divided the population into classes that were simultaneously normative and mathematical (the poor, destitute, rising, working, criminal, profligate, sick, illiterate); correlated the distributions of their defining attributes; and proposed to transform them by (amongst other measures) creating a national network of public pedagogical environments. In fact these were the same classes that Engels was to describe thirteen years later in a work similar in name to Kay-Shuttleworth's survey and dependent on it. Of course, Engels would speak in the name of the historical self-consciousness of these classes, and propose not schools and infirmaries but the revolutionary transformation of the relations of production. I leave it for the reader to consider who achieved the more significant transformation of social existence.

It is enough for my argument to indicate that the techniques of moral statistics and the new social technologies that supported them created capacities for and objects of political assessment - in particular, populations as distributions of normative social attributes in manageable environments - that are irreducible to class positions or interests. It is not a sign of "bourgeois hegemony" then, or the formation of an "historical bloc" through the political co-option of the subordinate classes, if all parties to the education debate - even the Chartists - developed a political interest in re-making the attributes of the popular classes through the construction of morally managed pedagogical environments. Instead, it is symptomatic of the emergence of a technology for assessing social well-being which, while making classes and their attributes into objects of political calculation, was supported by entities of a quite different order: the network of private and state instrumentalities (pedagogical, medical, penal, insurantal) in which politics was inseparable from specific kinds of expertise.

The main lines of battle over popular education - religious versus secular, public versus philanthropic - were drawn on a common political terrain, formed by this new means of assessing the social welfare of problem populations. And it is for this reason that it makes no sense to undertake an ethical or political analysis of these political options by asking which class interests they served. For all its apparent realism and sophistication this sort of analysis becomes wide-eyed and clumsy when confronted with the ethical and technical complexities of an actual political decision-context. In seeking to resolve these complexities by conjuring up the ghostly ethical presences of exploited and exploiting classes, such analysis simply fails to master the social instruments which are the condition of political assessment and ethical judgement.

Those social theorists and social historians who treat Kay-Shuttleworth as the representative of bourgeois economic interest or bourgeois cultural hegemony are looking in the wrong place for the source of his power and expertise. It was Kay-Shuttleworth's pivotal position as an agent of the new statistically informed welfare technologies that permitted him to effect a remarkable settlement of the education debate. He secured the governmental regulation of popular education not through legislative fiat but by allowing the new forms of educational expertise to permeate the existing religious systems through the device of inspection, to which funding was tied. And it was in this context that the transition from religious inculcation to moral training took place - through the piecemeal deployment of those new pedagogical techniques in which social norms were relayed through the negotiable currencies of 'experience' and the 'personal' relation to the teacher.

Operative Criticism

Today's literary pedagogy is the direct inheritor of these techniques. Its eschewal of explicit schemata and norms in favour of "learning through experience" does not derive from the ideological deployment of Romantic aesthetics. Rather, this characteristic is the outcome of the piecemeal modification of a social technology dedicated to managing populations through the creation of a morally administered environment. The appearance of Romantic aesthetics in this environment in our own century, as a specialised task of behaviour, was of course a condition of emergence for literary education. This event was not, however, the foundation of the moral technology of popular education but a local mutation of it. And, far

from embodying the political rationality of English in a form that opens it to political critique, the aesthetic personality is only a status defined by this rationality, whose forms of calculation and assessment are irreducible to subjectivity or class.

Marxist criticism is of course quite correct in pointing out that the pedagogy from which English emerges involves the non-consensual formation of definite and limited cultural attributes - at first punctuality, cleanliness, literacy but later, yes, aesthetic responsiveness. But this well-founded allegation does not constitute a political criticism of literary pedagogy. It is quite possible for a pedagogy to be non-consensual and normative without being repressive. To suggest otherwise, on the grounds that human beings must be allowed to 'grow' or develop according to norms emergent from their 'ethical substance' or class position, is in fact to invoke the model of aesthetic *Bildung* or culture. Once again, it is Marxism's *dependence* on the Romantic aesthetic and its 'politics' that comes to the fore in this regard. Compare, for example, Schiller's (1795: 35) complaint about the modern state:

But even that meagre, fragmentary participation, by which individual members of the State are still linked to the Whole, does not depend upon forms which they spontaneously prescribe for themselves ...; it is dictated to them with meticulous exactitude by means of a formulary which inhibits all freedom of thought.

with Sinfield's (1985: 136) claim that in the literature lesson

... the pupil is being persuaded to internalise success or failure with particular and relative cultural codes as an absolute judgement on her or his potential as a human being.

or, indeed, with Bennett's (1985: 47) in-house complaint

... that the predominant tendency [even] within Marxist aesthetics has been to constitute members of oppressed social groups as subjects whose aesthetic judgement needs to be transformed, by being conformed to some already elaborated aesthetic norm.

On the one side, meticulous formulas, tendentious cultural codes and prescribed aesthetic norms and, on the other, forms of development which individuals or classes "spontaneously prescribe for themselves": the Marxist aesthetic distinguishing itself by locating this spontaneity in the struggle of classes or other "oppressed social groups".

I have argued to the contrary that it is impossible to mount a political critique of literary pedagogy on the basis of the potentialities of the subject or the class that it allegedly disqualifies or precludes through its normativity. On the one hand, this is because developments of 'human potential' have no more estimable or general forms - 'history', 'culture' - than those provided by historically available political and social technologies such as the education system. On the other hand, it is because these technologies do not form attributes negatively, by encasing possible growth in formulas, but positively by transmitting the norms, techniques and practices whose practical mastery allows individuals to develop specific abilities and capacities - to become particular kinds of person.

This does not mean, however, that literary pedagogy is immune from political criticism and transformation. It simply means that such criticism cannot take the form of an appeal to higher non-normative forms of human development supposedly repressed or excluded by English. For the moment, let us say that an operative criticism of English must be mounted in terms of the need to develop other - equally normative and limited - social attributes and types of person. In other words, it will not be a criticism based on a theory of what persons or classes are or might be, but on norms and decisions as to what they should and can be. If - as we shall argue - literary pedagogy has limits, these cannot be ontologically derived from the human attributes that it supposedly excludes. They must instead be imposed on it by decisions taken with regard to the requirements of other equally normative spheres of social existence. In order to develop these remarks we need to turn again to the literature class, to learn its lesson afresh, having given up the idea that this might have been the lesson of our humanity or its repression.

The Literature Lesson

The materials for this reconstruction are drawn from an American handbook for English teachers, *12,000 Students and Their English Teachers*. The handbook was prepared by the Commission on English (1968) - an umbrella organisation for English teaching in state, private and parochial secondary schools - under the supervision of the College Entrance Examination Board. The fact that it draws on the work of 250 English teachers and 12,000 students, and was pilot tested in over 120 high schools across America during 1966-67, gives us good reason to treat it as representative.

The handbook consists of a collection of exemplary student assignments, divided into sections according to the genre of the work under discussion and into sub-sections based on particular works. Each sub-section begins with a note "To the Teacher" which is in effect a lesson plan informed by norms of literary competence. This is followed by student papers graded according to norms of competence in aesthetic reading and writing - high, average, low - each paper being accompanied by an exemplary pedagogical commentary. The fact that the handbook takes this form - a collection of exemplary aesthetico-ethical symptoms and diagnoses - is, of course, not without significance. We must remind ourselves, forcefully, that handbooks for geography and mathematics teachers do not organise the transmission of knowledge by equipping teachers with the capacity to interpret the state of their students' sensibilities. Neither - closer to home - would a philological handbook do so. How and to what end, then, does the literature lesson assume such a form?

In fact all the materials needed to answer this question are contained in the notes "To the Teacher". Despite their stated wish not to pre-empt the "creativity" of the teacher and the spontaneity of the lesson, these notes contain a pedagogical programme of striking uniformity, consisting of two main elements.

First, they transmit the blueprint for a particular kind of pedagogical environment and relationship. This is done by constructing or activating a specific tripartite relation between teacher, student and text. The key to this relation lies not in the transmission of a definitive body of information concerning the text (its compositional form, social uses, historical conditions) but in determining the precise point at which to *withhold* such information. For the literature lesson to work, the student must be given sufficient information to, as we are wont to say, 'respond to personally' but not enough to constitute the work as an object of linguistic or historical description. Neither, typically, will the teacher be competent to offer such descriptions.

A representative example of this sort of staging of the literary work, as a device eliciting the student's personal responsiveness for the teacher's inspection, is the following:

The first aim in this unit is to guide a student's study of the Whitman poem by confronting him with a series of questions concerning Whitman's theme, purpose, form, and diction. After the discussion of the Whitman poem, the student should receive a copy of the Cummings poem for which no discussion questions have been supplied. Hearing the poem read aloud several times should be the student's only preparation

before he does the composition assignment calling for a comparison of the two poems. (Commission on English 1968: 128)

In this sophisticated play between giving and withholding information - between the transmission of knowledge and the triggering of response - we can recognise the literary variant of that pedagogy through which the nineteenth-century reformers had projected the moral and psychological transformation of the unlettered classes. This was to be achieved, it will be remembered, not through explicit teaching but through the building of an environment enabling students to manifest their "true dispositions" to the remorselessly sympathetic gaze of the teacher.

Those wishing to trace transitional points between the work of Stow and Kay-Shuttleworth and that of the Commission on English might turn, for example, to an early twentieth-century tract on how to prepare a class of working-class children to read Milton. Writing in *The Pedagogical Seminary* - a journal dedicated to the moral, psychological and eugenic management of problem populations (the socially deprived, delinquents, the retarded and the insane) - McNary (an instructor in the State Normal School of New Jersey) recommends the following strategy:

Lists of words, and a compiler's sketch of an author's life, are not likely to arouse a desire to read a given work; neither device appeals in any way to the life-experience of the pupil, - to his ideas, his emotions, his potential sympathy with the author's mood. Such an appeal must be made skillfully, by personal talk, by suggestive questioning, by carefully elicited reminiscences, above all by the contagion of the harmony between the teacher and the author. When such an appeal has been made successfully, the soul even of a child may understand the work of an artist, and the vital essence of a poem may be inwrought into his spiritual fibre. (McNary 1908: 490)

The personal response (and the space it opens between the individual and his or her 'self') is the artefact and instrument of a sophisticated technology of moral regulation, being nonetheless 'real' for that.

The second component of this literary pedagogy is indeed provided by the Romantic aesthetic - no longer, however, the voluntary practice of aesthetic and ethical stylisation undertaken by virtuosi like Schiller and Arnold, Ruskin and Morris, but a supervised task of pedagogical behaviour responsible for problematising the self and programming its aesthetic and pedagogic reconstruction. Once the relationships and environment of the personal response have been established it is the role of the Romantic aesthetic to provide the norms or ethos in relation to which this response will be problematised and worked on. In all cases this is done in precisely

the same way, through the institution of two counter-posed imperatives whose mutual modification forms the fulcrum on which the literature lesson is so finely balanced.

The deployment of these imperatives in the teacher's instructions accompanying the Whitman-Cummings comparison is typical. On the one hand, students will be required to understand that the theme or content of the two poems - the typically Romantic one of the insufficiency of 'book-learning' and science in comparison with personal experience - was sufficiently authentic and immediate to require a break with existing poetic form and conventions. Hence, students

... can be helped to realise that the form in both poems is a revolt against the poetic conventions of the time, that Whitman's free verse was probably as jolting to his age as Cummings' syntactical and typographical distortions are to ours. Nor is it beyond the powers of an able ninth grader to come up with the understanding that in each poem the unconventional form is in itself a rebellious way of rebelling against the conventional reverence for books and science. (Commission on English 1968: 127)

On the other hand, the resourceful twelve-year-old can also "be helped to realise" that this idea or theme cannot or must not be treated as separable from the specific poetic forms of the two poems.

But the ninth grader needs also to discover that though each poem is a rebellion against conventional form, neither is casual, haphazard, or formless. The more the student examines the poems the more evidence he will uncover of each poet's meticulous concern for form. It is particularly important for the student to unearth the intricate patterns of rhyme and rhythm in the Cummings poem and to see how these patterns fit the theme and the content. (127)

In other words, the form-content dialectic provides the means for shaping the personal response - hence the relation to the poem and the teacher - by construing it as the site of two opposed impulses or tendencies, each of which is incomplete or disfiguring in the absence of the other: the tendency to treat formal organisation as nothing more than a convenient vehicle for authentic experiences or ideas; and the tendency to treat authentic experiences and ideas as if they were merely by-products of a purely formal organisation.

While contemporary aestheticians (e.g., Gribble 1983:17) treat the "didactic" and "formalist" tendencies as fundamental attributes of the human subject, there can be little doubt that they are in fact the historical product

of an instituted ethical technique in which the self is problematised through successive applications of contradictory imperatives. We must be clear that the doctrine of form-content unity is not so much a theory or ideology of literature as a recipe for problematising one's responses in relation to the (teacher's) 'work'. In a sense, the student reads the work *in order to be wrong about it* - of necessity displaying an earnest moralism or a pedantic or rhapsodic formalism - the contradictory character of the two avenues opened to the work marking the site of a compulsory discipline of self problematisation and cultivation.

Time and space permitting we would pause at this point to wonder at the developments that saw the erstwhile caste practice of the aesthetic virtuosi redeployed as a device in the moral regulation of the "popular classes". We will have to content ourselves, however, with describing the operation of the ethical technology that emerged from this event. Once the two components of English have been assembled - that is, the aesthetic dialectic deployed as a task of behaviour shaping the space of supervised spontaneity - the pedagogical mechanism works with unswerving predictability. The possible outcomes are finite and exemplary.

On one side, it is possible for students to describe the formal organisation of the work without displaying a sufficiently personal response to the ideas or experiences contained in it. For example, a student who discusses Whitman's syntax and Cummings' rhythm and rhyme patterns without responding adequately to the common philosophical theme, draws the grade of "average" and the following assessment:

... this is good, but it is not enough - not even for a ninth grader. The same relentless pursuit of facts appears in the treatment of figurative language. This student can spot a metaphor and quote it, but there he stops with no comment on how the metaphor relates to or illuminates the theme of the poem. (133)

In case there is any doubt that what we are dealing with is an aesthetico-ethical judgement of the normative persona or sensibility that the student must acquire, consider the following assessment, of a student who is average for the same reason as the one above:

The mind revealed in this paper moves in a world of the obvious and the uncomplicated, but it is not exactly Dylan Thomas's world. The writing is unexcitingly decent. The organisation is neat, obvious, and perfunctory The naiveté, the pedestrian accuracy, and the flair for the obvious that permeate all parts of this paper but one are all apparent ... (167)

On the other side, it is possible for students to betray a didactic or moralising sensibility by discussing themes or ideas independent of their prophylactic poetic embodiment. This is the fate of a grade 11 student who ventures the following remarks on a poem by W.H. Auden:

In my opinion Auden's "Musés des Beaux Arts" is not great nor is it good. All too sadly, however, it is very serious.

Auden dilutes a good two-line couplet proverb of Shakespearian greatness which I see in the poem. In Auden himself there must have been better but, for discussion's sake, I have carved all of the fat off the poem to reveal the one meaty idea of his discourse ... (194)

The teacher's agreement that this student has indeed paraphrased the poem's "one meaty idea" neither saves him from a grade of "low" nor deflects the teacher's corrective energies.

No moralistic platitudes dull the piquancy of this paper. The assignment invited the student to express his opinion and this student has done exactly that. The poet might be surprised at the butchering this student does to the poem in an effort to carve "all of the fat off". Unfortunately, the two lines he comes up with as the "one meaty idea" of his (Auden's) poem look more like chop suey than a slice of defatted beef. And beefing is more the student's province than the poem's anyway ... (194)

So great is the personal deficiency revealed by the incapacity or refusal to subordinate observations concerning the ideas expressed to an appreciation of the poet's mastery of formal organisation.

We must resist all temptation to practice the arts of indignation at this point, however. Neither can we afford to take refuge in irony, by pointing to the extreme normativity of a pedagogy whose official rhetoric eschews all norms save those which growth "prescribes for itself". Oppositional stances, assumed via the allegation that the normativity of the literature lesson represses the "human personality" or disqualifies and marginalises other ways of reading, are at best beside the point and at worst complicit with what they denounce. Criticism of English as an ideology or failed knowledge in fact does little more than transpose the official rhetoric into a Marxist register. Such criticism assumes that the transformation of English can be brought about through the discovery of a true knowledge of literature or forms of development attuned to the norms that oppressed groups prescribe for themselves. Let us outline an alternative analysis.

In the first place, the programme for English as represented by the work of the Commission on English and similar bodies⁵ cannot be a failed

knowledge because it is not a knowledge at all. It is something quite different: a hybrid ethical technology formed when a specialised practice of aesthetic self cultivation was deployed inside a pedagogical system dedicated to the moral regulation of the population. While many of the formulations used in the teaching of English appear to be falsifiable descriptions of literary works they are in fact typically unfalsifiable imperatives whose function is to institute a specific relation to the self through its aesthetico-ethical problematisation. Recall in this regard Wittgenstein's (1953:190-91) apothegm that:

The language-game of reporting can be given such a turn that a report is not meant to inform the hearer about its subject matter but about the person making the report.

It is so when, for instance, a teacher examines a pupil. (You can measure to test the ruler).

And then consider Schiller's (1795: 157) comment on the reflexive character of the judgement of aesthetic formlessness: "But it is by no means always proof of formlessness in the work of art itself if it makes its effect solely through its contents; this may just as often be evidence of a lack of form in him who judges it". In other words, as students quickly discover, the formulations of the literature lesson are not the elements of a (true *or* false) knowledge of literature but a recipe for revealing the state of the sensibility to the teacher and for inducting individuals into a particular practice of aesthetico-ethical cultivation.⁶

Second, for this reason English is not an ideology either. English exists neither as a set of ideas or representations, nor as the little theatre where the 'formation of the subject' is staged through the narcissistic relation to its ideal image. Rather it exists as the autonomous and irreducible ensemble of ethical techniques and pedagogical practices and relations whose hybrid form we have described. It has already been noted that at the centre of this ensemble we do not find the human individual with its alleged limitlessly conjugable forms fixated (by the relations of (mis)recognition or signification) in the form of the subject. Instead we find - to borrow the language of sociology - an instituted relation between two differentially specified ethical and social statuses: that of the student, characterised initially by moral and psychological immaturity, and later by a dissociated aesthetic sensibility, manifested in the endlessly significant responses called forth in the domain of supervised spontaneity; and that of teacher whose 'many-sided' persona is joined to the student through relations of emulation and supervision, love and surveillance, and provides

the surface of diagnosis and correction on which the student's responses are registered. The statuses and personae organised by the student-teacher couple, along with modes of aesthetic experience attached to them, do not derive from the human individual or the subject it is supposed to become. They are products of the ethical practices, aesthetic devices and forms of pedagogical organisation that define and constitute these statuses and personae. The individual occupies a status and acquires what cultural riches it may contain through the practical mastery of capacity-forming technique. Outside the status is not the untapped potential of the human subject - temporarily fixated by ideology - but a scatter of other statuses.

Neither knowledge nor ideology, 'English' is in fact the name of an instituted means of forming a particular type of person. This is both its strength and weakness: strength, because as an irreducible and autonomous ensemble of ethical techniques and pedagogical practices and relationships English is immune to criticism in terms of the truths of literature that it supposedly overlooks or the elements of the 'human personality' that it allegedly represses; weakness, in that, as such an ensemble, English stretches no further into the 'human personality' or 'culture' than the definite and limited norms informing its technical organisation; and the type of person that it forms, far from being complete, is in fact the highly specialised persona of the aesthetico-ethical exemplar. It is on this basis that we can begin to outline the limits of this persona.

Limits of the Aesthetic Personality

We have already indicated that the aesthetic persona is formed through the practical mastery of specific aesthetico-ethical techniques inside a particular ethical and social relationship. Like the athlete's body the aesthete's personality is something that must be worked on. Moreover, this persona is only one among several that the individual may come to occupy as the bearer of a range of statuses defined by familial and public life - by the social relations constituted by legal or ethical institutions, political or religious technologies. Only in novelists and critics, students and teachers of English, cultural sociologists and historians, the remnants of the cultivated classes, and a certain species of cultural journalist will the aesthetic persona appear to define the individual who occupies it. For others, occupancy is more or less sporadic and contingent. Nonetheless, it is worth discussing the pure form in order to clarify its contours.

Let us say that the aesthetic personality is formed through the (nowadays administered) mastery of a double-sided technique and practice of aesthetico-ethical self problematisation. In specifically literary contexts, this practice requires the initiate to divorce ideas, arguments and desires from their 'mundane' spheres of determination and contexts of judgement by attaching them to the formal organisation of the work of art; and, conversely, it requires that the formal organisation of the work be subordinated to the ideas, arguments and desires allegedly expressed through it. More generally, the aesthetic personality is formed through a contrapuntal ethical practice in which attachment to mundane judgement is mortified as 'moralistic' through contemplation of a higher or disinterested level or formal order; and attachment to this level of formal organisation is problematised as 'aestheticist' through 'personal' commitment to some idea, cause or experience. One of the things that we have to comprehend is that the ethos of detachment and that of commitment are successive moments of a single ethical regimen.

In order to examine this practice at work, we can consider some passages from Gribble's *Literary Education: A Revaluation* (1983), which purport to exemplify and justify the kind of moral judgement made available by literature and the aesthetic education. It is no surprise that Gribble's remarks take the form of an aesthetic commentary on a novelistically rendered "moral dilemma". He begins by quoting a passage from Iris Murdoch's *The Flight of the Enchanter*. In this passage the central character inspects his own feelings of bitterness at the prospect of a portion of his garden being resumed in order to allow a hospital to extend its X-ray department.

When a well-meaning lady next door exclaimed to him that really, when you saw how much they needed the space, poor things, you couldn't be resentful any more, he replied with positive rudeness.

Rainborough ... quietly deplored his attitude but left it to take its place in that ensemble of realities, a clear-sighted vision of which had lately come to serve him in the lieu of virtue. Self-knowledge, after all, was his ideal; and could not knowledge, by its own pure light, transform the meanest of discoveries? Rainborough did not feel that he was called upon, at his time of life, to put any more work into the development of his character than was required to provide a fairly minute commentary on how that development was in fact progressing. Actually to interfere with it did not enter his head. In moral matters, as in intellectual matters, Rainborough took the view that to be mature was to realize that most human effort inevitably ends in mediocrity and that all our admirations lead us at the last to the dreary knowledge that, such as we are, we ourselves represent

the elite. The deariness of this knowledge is only diminished by the fact that it is, after all, knowledge. (Murdoch cited in Gribble 1983: 9)

Gribble goes to work.

Rainborough's jadedness is a product of his recognition that he is not able to *feel* towards the anonymous "poor things" who will be treated in the new X-ray department sufficient sympathy to outweigh the loss of his precious garden, and his refusal to disguise this from himself is something that he sees as a kind of virtue. Or *does* he see that his self-knowledge is "in the *lieu* of virtue"? It is extremely difficult to determine the extent to which Iris Murdoch is drily placing Rainborough, in this passage, rather than Rainborough wryly placing *himself*. Each of the ironies could be part of Rainborough's "fairly minute commentary" on himself. The question, "and could not knowledge, by its own pure light, transform the meanest of discoveries?" is a question which seems equally to be asked by both character and novelist. And whether either Rainborough or Murdoch believes that the deariness of the conclusion is diminished by "the fact that it is, after all, knowledge" (or whether either of them is convinced that the conclusion *is* "in fact" knowledge, or evidence of maturity) remains opaque.

But I do not think that this opaqueness is evidence of Iris Murdoch's evasiveness about moral matters. On the contrary I think that what she offers in this passage is a marvellous dramatization of an approach to morality or virtue that coherently sees self-knowledge as an over-riding value, which replaces or undermines "goodness" in the conventional sense, but which in its attempts to be unillusioned cannot escape disillusionment. (Gribble 1983: 10)

We can note at the outset that the passage drawn from the novel is itself an artefact of the aesthetic regimen. It uses the social problem as a pre-text for an imagined work on the self rather than, for example, as an occasion for political or legal argumentation on the relation between the rights of citizens and those of welfare instrumentalities; a town-planning discussion on the relation between gardens and hospitals; an ethical analysis of the relative priorities to be awarded to private enjoyment and public good; and so on. This is just to remind ourselves of the current limits and specialised character of the novel form. Moreover, in constructing the option between normative "interfering" in the development of character and detached observation of it, the passage itself activates the aesthetic dialectic between moral judgement and disinterested contemplation. The result of this is that the possibility of taking an ethical or social interest in the issue is relegated to the mundane world of the "well-meaning lady next door". She stands as a negative exemplar of the self that the reader must problematise

in order to enter the "world of the novel", that is, to engage in the practice of self cultivation.

Gribble's commentary is nothing more than an extension and consolidation of the aesthetico-ethical programme or recipe relayed through the novel. It extends the work of the novel by transposing the aesthetic mortification of mundane judgement onto the level of critical discourse ("a marvellous dramatisation of an approach to morality or virtue ... which replaces or undermines 'goodness' in the conventional sense"). And it protects this strategy itself against judgement by blurring the limits of the novel. This is done by attaching the novelist's opinions to the character and the character's to the novelist; that is, by activating a variant of the form-content dialectic known as "framing".

It should be clear that I am not interested in disputing the adequacy of Gribble's commentary to the novel. That is beside the point. It is the commentary *and* the novel that are brought into question when they are treated as optionally equivalent instruments or devices deployed by a certain aesthetico-ethical regimen. What is problematic about literary education and the aesthetic personality is that they treat all sorts of social, ethical and political decision-contexts as so many occasions for staging the drama of self problematisation and self cultivation. And while there may be nothing wrong with this practice as such - indeed, it is in a certain sense inescapable for us today - it often incapacitates other (civic) forms of ethics and reason when, as in the case just examined, it is treated as the highest or most authentic form of judgement and being available.

If we are to speak of an 'aestheticisation of politics' in this context than it must be clear that we have in mind a meaning quite unlike the one that has been given to this phrase since the 1960s. The presence of a certain conservative individualism in the novel and commentary just discussed is not the significant issue. The formation of the aesthetic persona works just as well with Marxist and collectivist doctrines. Here, the aesthetic problematisation of 'mundane' spheres of judgement appears in the form of the critique of 'reformism'.

Consider in this regard Williams' criticisms of the "ladder" of educational and social opportunity made available by the emergence of state education systems. According to Williams (1958: 317-18) "The actual process of reform, in so far as it has not been governed by working-class pressure, has been, in large part, the giving of increased opportunity to climb". And this is "objectionable", says Williams, because it "weakens the principle of common betterment"; establishes a "hierarchy of merit" at the expense of community and solidarity; and leads to the development of

limited normative skills rather than participation in a “common culture”. But underlying all these criticisms is an assumption that Williams shares with Murdoch and Gribble: the process of development should not be interfered with or prescribed by norms or formulas.

To tolerate only this or only that, according to some given formula, is to submit to the phantasy of having occupied the future and fenced it into fruitful or unfruitful ground But the emphasis of the idea of culture is right when it reminds us that a culture, essentially, is unplannable The idea of culture rests on a metaphor: the tending of natural growth. (Williams 1958: 321)

And the notions of “growth” and “tending” are neither more nor less than emblems for the practice of the aesthetic dialectic.

The former [growth] alone is a type of romantic individualism; the latter [tending] alone a type of authoritarian training. Yet each within the whole view, marks a necessary emphasis. (323)

The cultural critic thus subjects the actual - planned and normative - forms of social organisation and assessment responsible for the historical emergence of state school systems to a general aesthetico-ethical problematisation. He does so by appealing to a higher, disinterested form of human development, “cultural growth”. In so doing, the array of problems arising in the fields of educational administration and planning is transformed into so many occasions for the critic to engage in a specific public staging of the self: speaking in the name of growth against (authoritarian) planning and, alternatively, in the name of planning against (individualistic) growth. Appeals to the working class notwithstanding, it should be clear that what we are dealing with here is neither more nor less than an optionally equivalent practice of aesthetic self-cultivation - that practice in which the aesthetico-ethical problematisation of mundane decision-contexts is the key to opening a particular ‘relation to the self’ and the development of aesthetic personality and standing.

The apparently paradoxical complicity between Marxist critique and its Romantic target thus loses its mystery. The politicisation of aesthetics, announced by Williams and taken up by the cultural studies movement, succeeds in being no more (but no less) than a variant form of the aestheticisation of politics, attendant on the dissemination of the aesthetic persona through the school system. Adapting Schmitt’s (1919/29) analysis of *Political Romanticism* to our own ends, we can say that the political character of literary education is defined not by the (various and often

opposed) political doctrines that it transmits but by the fact that it forms a particular type of person. To argue against English by identifying it with a political doctrine or programme - as many have done in the instances of Eliot, Lawrence and Leavis - is thus beside the point. Aesthetic education is less concerned with doctrines than with forming the self who will adopt (or eschew) doctrine; or, with forming a capacity to treat (any) doctrine as an occasion for self cultivation. It is not a political analysis of English that we need today but one capable of situating English as one technology of the self amongst others. We have already argued that the ethical and political limits of literary education and the aesthetic persona cannot be read off from the bits of the 'human personality' or the forms of political development that they are alleged to disqualify or repress. Instead, these limits must be patiently constructed, in the absence of an alternative general ideal of human development, by arguing the need for ethical abilities, social competences and personal capacities - in short, for types of person - other than those formed by the aesthetic regimen. Let us conclude by indicating the general direction of this argument.

Conclusion: Aspiring to the Mundane

In criticising the social personality of the cultural critic, for transposing too many departments of existence into the single specialised register of aesthetic self-cultivation, I have been implicitly asserting the ethical and political autonomy of these other departments. Further, in arguing that the idea of 'complete' non-normative human development is in fact the reflex of a highly specialised and normative practice of self formation, a space has been cleared in which to discuss types of person-formation without reference to notions of cultural growth (of the 'human personality' or the 'universal class'). Without mortifying ourselves, we must learn to consider the possibility that specific departments of existence are responsible for specific distributions of human attributes, and that these may occur without practical or principled reference to an ideal or sum human type. Only then is it possible to address the ethical and political questions that arise in these departments on their own terms; that is, without turning them into accoutrements of aesthetic self stylisation.

Consider again, in this regard, Gribble's recipe for withdrawing from "'goodness' in the conventional sense" in favour of the 'higher' ethic of detached self development. The dilemma he uses as a pre-text - a case of adjudicating the competing rights and interests of private citizens and public

instrumentalities - is not uncommon and is typically decided by legal proceedings. For our purposes, the important facts about such proceedings are that the distribution of rights is not known in advance or independently of definite processual forms of legal reasoning and judgement; and, the recipients of rights are not general-purpose human selves, but specially constructed 'legal personalities'. The bearer of a legal personality or status may indeed be a non-human entity such as a hospital or local government board. And where the bearer is a human individual, rights are not recognised on the basis of their inherence in the self but through a process of ascription. Here, rights are differentially distributed to legal personalities - hospital board, home owner - in order to allow each to undertake specific legal actions or to enter into legally specified relations.

If this is so then it is misguided to propose that the appropriate ethical stance on rights dilemmas can be discovered by opening up the relation to the (aesthetic) self. That is not where legal and social rights are constructed or ascribed. In fact we have seen that this relation is constructed through a practice of problematising the individual's attachment to mundane decision-contexts and forms of judgement (as "conventional", "didactic", "moralistic", "oppressive", and so on). A pedagogy transmitting the techniques of the aesthetic practice of the self as an "over-riding value" thus runs the risk of incapacitating individuals for significant kinds of social and legal agency. A "rich personality" is in this regard a poor substitute for practical competence in a range of non-personal social, legal and political spheres. This is particularly the case where the main recipients of this personality in fact belong to those social strata undergoing "personal growth" in state school systems. On this basis we can begin to construct policies for ending the pre-eminence of English in the domain of moral training and developing more specific, varied, and 'worldly' forms of ethical competence.

A parallel process of revision and reconstruction can be envisaged at the level of cultural theory. We have already noted that what looks like a theory of the social role of education in Williams is in fact the vehicle for a specific practice of aesthetico-ethical problematisation. In problematising the planned normativity of the education system through an appeal to unplanned "cultural growth" - an appeal which envisages the "whole community" organically governing its self-development - Williams withdraws from the sphere where the public intelligibility of education is determined in order to practice the dialectic between planning and growth.

We have already argued that the political intelligibility of popular education is determined for us by the historical deployment of specific

instruments of social and political assessment and calculation. These instruments - typified by nineteenth-century moral statistics - made popular education thinkable by integrating norms of human development with techniques for administering their formation and distribution across populations. Moreover, the fact that these instruments do not represent fragments (classes) of our full humanity and do not take the latter as their goal - constituting instead specific and irreducible forms of technical expertise - makes it meaningless to propose the organic integration of educational administration in 'the community'.

In other words, the intelligibility of modern education systems is inescapably planned and normative. We can think of education only with administrative instruments because these are the instruments that brought what we call 'education' into being. The problematisation that Williams launches through the dialectic of planning and growth is thus not one that succeeds in subordinating the 'conventional' intelligibility of education systems to a higher and more integrated principle of theorisation, culture. It is one that withdraws from the instituted field in which the political rationality of education systems is determined in order to practice the personality of the cultural critic: that exemplary personage who arrogates the privileges of social prophecy not by virtue of technical expertise but through the display of a dialectically balanced or many-sided persona. Again, it is possible to envisage setting limits to this version of the aesthetic personality. To do so entails affirming the irreducibility and autonomy of the forms of calculation and norms of development - the instituted expertise - informing cultural technologies such as education systems. The self-problematising and self-stylising practice of the aesthetic intellectual can then be located as a definite, limited and normative exercise within this field.

Notes

1. I would like to thank David Saunders for his helpful comments on an early draft of this paper.
2. Kay-Shuttleworth's testimony can be found in volume 6 of the *Reports from Select Committees on the Education of the Poorer Classes 1834-38*. His advocacy of a non-coercive pedagogy, in which the provision of playgrounds would decrease the moral distance between school life and street life, is at pp. 530-47 of the new Irish University Press edition of the British Parliamentary Papers.
3. These and a number of the other arguments that follow are developed at greater length in Hunter (1988).

4. The term is taken from Foucault (1975) where it refers to an ensemble of specific techniques for shaping the social conduct and ethical demeanour of individuals and groups with a view to optimising their collective good order, productivity and well-being. However, Oestreich (1986: 158-59) refers to the same historical phenomena when he describes early-modern techniques of 'police' as a

... 'disciplining' of society ... which affected every possible sphere of life and virtually all classes, groups and professions. With regard to urban development I would rather speak of the regulating of society. But here too the idea of discipline and order finds expression. At first the aim was apparently simply to preserve or restore traditional Christian propriety and respectability, but subsequently the police ordinances invaded private life and laid down rules and precepts for every conceivable area of it. At the same time a start was made on educating people to a discipline of work and frugality and on changing the spiritual, moral and psychological make-up of political, military and economic man.

The theoretical novelty of these concepts of 'police' and the disciplines is that they embrace the augmentation and enhancement of the capacities of citizens as well as their regulation and, being techniques, have their own domain of 'governmental' effectivity irreducible to the political will or economic interests of their agents.

5. For example, the Australian Association of Teachers of English, the (British) National Association of Teachers of English and the (American) National Council of Teachers of English.
6. It is from this perspective that I would question Lloyd's (1985-86) attempt to construe Schiller's integrated personality as a model for the "incorporationist" state. Schiller in fact uses the latter as a model for the former.

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Chapter 4

Literacy: A Social Skill

Jacob L. Mey

Introduction: Text, Context, Social Control

While earlier theories of text and text production focused on the structural aspects of coding and decoding messages, a modern view stresses the functioning of the text in a societal whole. Traditionally, the descriptive devices (whether formalised or not) that have been offered for the linguistic description of texts (mostly in the form of so-called “text grammars”) have been oriented towards the structural apparatus made available by modern linguistics in the guise of generative formalisms such as “trees” (e.g., Van Dijk 1972). Moreover, the theories that paid attention to what those texts had to say concentrated exclusively on the latter’s (abstract) content. That is, in order to describe a text, they first decontextualised it, then represented its content by means of abstract semantic networks and hierarchies (e.g., Van Dijk 1977).

An adequate theory of text production and consumption should pay attention to the conditions under which the text is produced and consumed. These conditions can be captured, if one desires, by the general term of context.¹ One should keep in mind, however, that the term ‘context’ has the disadvantage of focusing too explicitly upon the immediately ‘visible’ conditions surrounding texts; in contrast, the implicit conditions that govern text production and consumption can only be understood if we consider the text from the wider perspective of societal power, as we will see in a moment.

Adapting and modifying a concept originally due to Foucault (1980) I want to suggest that we deal with this wider context as a discursive power space, a space generated by a set of coordinates, ‘power-brokers’ that comprise, as their main representatives, parameters embodying some form of social control. In this way, the characterisation of text production and

consumption as discursive activity necessarily includes the evaluation of textual activities in their societal functioning. For example, consider the role of the written media as taught in the schools, with their interactional (roughly: the classroom part) and institutional (roughly: the exam part) settings (for this distinction, see Michaels (1987)).

It will be my thesis that textual activities in our society are perceived and transmitted, in and through pedagogy, as decontextualised activities which, as such, can be made to obey 'objective' testing procedures. To get the proper perspective on what people really do with texts, therefore, one needs to recontextualise the texts they produce and consume, by reinserting the texts, along with their producers and consumers, into the whole of society-oriented and society-controlled discourse, the latter to be understood as "the very condition by which language as a structure or a system, exists" (Luke et al. 1989). Society, in its turn, is nothing but a short formula to capture the essential distribution of power among people, whether one conceptualises society in Foucaultian terms, as a "net-like organisation through which power is employed and exercised" (1980: 98), whose power is not localised in, and focused on, any singular, individual representative or class of representatives, or identical with it ("individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application", according to Foucault); or, alternatively, whether one conceives of society in terms borrowed from classical Marxist analyses, which establish power primarily in the access to the conditions that govern our common human life, the ownership of the means of production and the social control that derives from there.

The Decontextualisation of Text Production

The production, maintenance, and consumption of texts is often called literacy. In a very broad sense, literacy is the ability to handle a text: 'text processing', one could say, abstracting for a moment from other, more recent connotations of that term (I shall have more to say on this below). Traditionally, literacy is connected with schooling, and in particular with its formalised variety, 'education', in the sense that a literate person is one who has been put through 'letters' (and 'arts' as well, to stay within a somewhat outmoded, humanistic terminology). Being a person of letters entitles one to participate in the cultural and social life of the community; being illiterate means suffering social and cultural deprivation.²

Moreover, the same tradition that assigns this culture to the cultured few, traditionally also generates the mechanisms by which the social

privileges are maintained. In earlier centuries and countries, such as England in the 1700's, laws were on the books prohibiting the teaching of the skills of literacy to the poor, for fear that they would become aware of their lowly and disprivileged status and rebel against the lawful authorities (cf. Cook-Gumperz 1986: 25). Culture, furthermore, was seen as the typical possession of the individual who, during his formative years, acquires enough of this 'cultural capital' to serve him and his needs for the rest of his life (see Cook-Gumperz: 41; Luke, Chapter 1, this volume). My use of the masculine pronoun here is deliberate.

Culture, as well as literacy, its instrument and visible proof, were thus safely ensconced in their contemporary social context. Texts were produced to serve the interests of the happy few; whatever did not conform to that current context was labelled dangerous or seditious, and was not allowed to be propagated. The restrictions on the printed word that came into effect almost simultaneously with the invention and spread of the printing press speak for themselves: on the one (positive) hand, there is the benign privilege extended by the authorities to those in lawful possession of printing devices; on the other (negative) side we have the whole business of censorship, the *Index librorum prohibitorum*, and the physical annihilation of texts and their authors in the *auto-da-fé's* of the 16th and 17th centuries that were rampant throughout Europe, spreading even into North America. This latter process, of course, continues throughout the world today - whether in textbook censorship in 'developed' countries, or in book banning in authoritarian states.

In this social context, two aspects of literacy should be distinguished. Literacy can be taken to mean being literate (which, among other things, allows one to participate in the 'good life' of one's surroundings); alternatively, it can refer to the process of becoming literate (or even *a* literate), something which connotes (at least hopefully) the process of 'getting there', of making it in society. No wonder then that what initially was a task exclusively allotted to tutors and home instructors for an affluent minority, in the course of time became the preferred and bountiful, and in the end also exclusive, province of institutions of learning. 'School', from its lofty origins as the aristocracy's way of spending their 'free time' (Greek *scholê*) became a common household word; 'schooling', in particular in its formal, institutionalised variety called 'education', was now seen as a necessary condition for achieving social success. Thus the literate became a public figure, and often actually was, accredited by the state institutions.

This is, then, what I will call the *first* decontextualisation of literacy skills. Moreover, instead of bringing the student in contact with the cultural

heritage of the nation (a purpose of the schools that is often stated in official documents regulating and circumscribing the activities of institutions of learning), the point of 'getting an education' becomes now: to be able to secure oneself a job; and, supposedly, the better (read: longer) one's education, the better (read: more highly paid) the job. As Cook-Gumperz (1986: 41) expresses it succinctly, this *second* decontextualisation happens when 'schooled literacy' becomes "a system of decontextualised knowledge validated through test performances". From being an aim in itself (the production and consumption of culture through the processing of texts), literacy becomes a dues paid to society in order to get access to its activities. A good education is a necessary condition for participation in the great rat race; however, it is by no means a sufficient one. And besides: where the old values of literacy placed one among the gods and demi-gods of the cultural Parnassus, the new-style 'text-processing' abilities at most allow one to become a victorious rat!

The Context of Literacy

The problem with the situation as described above (which corresponds, to a greater or lesser degree, to the state of affairs in most of Western(ised) culture today) is that access to society by way of literacy is controlled in such a way that the controllees are in principle unable to spot and identify their controllers. In Michaels' (1987) terms, both the "interactional" and the "institutional" forces that are at work in what I have called the 'discoursal space' of literacy instruction remain implicit in institutional processes such as the classroom teaching of reading and writing. To make those implicit forces come up to the explicit level of understanding, we need observation and analysis "shed[ding] light both on the writing that gets done in a classroom and on *the broader institutional goals and constraints* which influence teachers' and students' behaviour" (Michaels 1987: 322; my emphasis). These forces are operative at the *covert* level of control; below, we will see how the hidden curriculum structures the discoursal space in which texts are produced and consumed, for example, in a classroom situation, where students are 'taught' that "teacher knows the answer" (Michaels 1987: 343) and that it pays to follow the schemas and constraints imposed from the top.

This situation of implicit control of the discoursal space stands clearly in contrast to that obtaining in Europe during earlier periods. In the 16th and 17th centuries, for instance, the culturally deprived were materially

indigent, too, and on top of that practically disenfranchised both as regards material and cultural goods and rights. By contrast, the affluent in those days didn't even have to bother about justifying what they considered as their rightful privileges. Rich people, both townsfolk and landed gentry, were not just better off: they were better, *tout court*. By the same token, their superiority in the moral sphere entitled them to whatever privileges in the area of culture and riches came their way, either by heritage or by direct exploitation. For the poor, the moral law consisted in "watching their proper stations", while praying to God to "bless the squire and his relations", as Dickens has it, quoting a contemporary ditty.

All this changed with the advent of industry. The general demand for enlightenment that preceded and in a sense was instrumental in achieving the industrial revolution, brought the uneducated poor to the cities, where they crowded together in miserable conditions, but also were exposed to the general spirit of optimism and 'can-do' that had been, and still was, characteristic of the revolutionary movements of the time, industrial or otherwise. The masses were increasingly difficult to control, and education became something that was not only possible, given city conditions of teacher availability and accessibility of pupils: it was also desirable from the point of view of the burgeoning class of capital owners. Workers were now not only hired for their purely technical skills, but for their 'understanding' of - and care in - manipulating the new machines, for their 'machine literacy', one could say, using a modern parallel. But since the only way to achieve this asset was through the schools, the latter (in the wake and under the guise of enlightenment and moral reconstruction) commonly came to be considered as places where the poor, in addition to the 'three R's' and the rudiments of a general education, could be taught socially correct behaviour, such as parsimony and sobriety and a certain moral code (which included the use of soap, as Gilbert Keith Chesterton once ironically remarked). As Graff (1986: 65) aptly puts it, "literacy is sometimes conceived as a skill, but more often as symbolic or representative of attitudes and mentalities".

The switch from schooling as a means of perfecting an individual's outlook on life and increasing the self-understanding of a person, to a mere instrumental value in the process of 'making it' in society determined the intellectual and social trends that were prevalent in the latter half of the 19th century, culminating in the establishment of institutions that avowedly dedicated themselves to the development of 'real' knowledge, as opposed to the more intangible values of culture-as-such. The 1860's and '70's saw the beginnings of that educational innovation called in Germany the *Realschule*,

in Scandinavia the *realskole*, in Holland the *Higher Citizens' School* (*H.B.S.*), and so on. On the college level, institutions explicitly training students for a business career multiplied - not only in Europe, but even in Japan, where some of the oldest universities (not counting the old Imperial Universities) in the Tokyo area started their careers as 'Colleges of Commerce': even today, the janitors of Hitotsubashi University in the suburb of Kunitachi proudly wear caps embossed with the historical initials 'C.C.', even though both the location and the name have changed a long, long time ago.

Naturally, such a switch did not go wholly unnoticed. The great debates on the nature of education that took place in the second half of the 19th century (see Luke & DeCastell 1985: 24ff) resulted, however, in a stand-off, rather than victory or defeat.³ In the present author's high school days, much time was spent by the members of the various debating clubs and school academies on efforts to establish the true nature and ultimate justification of the 'gymnasium' and its classical educational pattern, contrasting it with the lack of culture allegedly prevalent in sister institutions such as the aforementioned H.B.S., even though that same institution shared our very roof and buildings.

In present times, we may observe how the historical split, caused in the continental gymnasium when more 'real' science was introduced (keeping along Latin and Greek, at least initially), has given rise to a commonly accepted, household conceptualisation of the cultural field that everybody in Holland is familiar with: "alpha"- vs. "beta"-disciplines, outlooks, attitudes, literature, sports, arts, and even cooking: where the α indicates the 'pure', old-fashioned humanistic tradition, where the β stands for a more modern, science-adapted curriculum. Since the latter disciplines used to be the ones giving the greatest competence and allowing entry in the more important areas of advanced study, the instrumental character of modern education is borne out once more.

For a proper understanding of literacy's historical role it is important "to stress the integrating and hegemony-creating functions of literacy provision through formal schooling" (Graff 1986: 80). Schooling, as I said above, becomes an admission ticket, a first rung on the social ladder, with entrance-fees (some built-in, some to be paid in hard cash)⁴ levied on all who want to start climbing. But inasmuch as the old ideals of education still are alive and demand respect, their role becomes a legitimating one. The screening and weeding out that is practised by society's agents, in this case the educators, is covered by a familiar layer of true, humanistic values (see

Gilbert, Chapter 2, this volume), thus giving more power to the 'educrats' posing as the guardians of time-honoured traditions.

The conclusion imposing itself from this quick look at a segment of European educational history is that social control is the central issue, even though it isn't always called by its proper name. Below, I will put this concept to work in my discussion of the use of texts in contexts, and then extend this view to comprise certain modern developments, especially in the area of so-called "human-computer interaction" (HCI).

Text in Context: Social Control

The question now before us is: how is text, in the broadest sense of the word, produced and consumed? My answer is grounded on the assumption that both text producers and consumers, in their text-oriented ('text processing') activities underlie the same mechanisms that control the access to, and the purposes of, literacy. The rationale for such a generalisation should be obvious: text processing is nothing but an exercise in literacy, and literacy itself is nothing except inasmuch it is being put to work in the production and consumption of text-in-context.

What I call the context of literacy, then, is but a short formula that tries to capture the fact that all handling of text is a social function. Texts are *ab usu* and *ad usum*: their quality is determined in and by their use. That is to say that the human text processor is the key figure in the textual process; but his or her capabilities are exercised in a space that is narrowly defined by societal constraints, both as to origin and as to extension. In this discursal space, the voices that are heard are not the monological cries of solitary prophets and poets, but the polyphony of human discourse, as it is created and perceived mediating the constraints of society.

Eco (1979) has characterised the activity of text processing as the creation of a world; conversely (or, if you prefer, dialectically), the instrument used in that creative process is the text itself. But clearly, a world created in such a fashion is a human product; as such, it is determined, even in its wildest creative freedom, by the conditions governing the creators. Nothing in this creative process happens *ex nihilo* (contrary to the theological notion of creation): the possible worlds that the text calls into life are precisely *possible*, that is, within the possibilities of the users, and not outside of these. An impossible world is by definition impossible.⁵

When defining the space in which possibilities are realised as texts, we have to keep the latter's creators in mind. That holds for the producers of texts, the authors, playwrights, movie-makers, and so on, as well as for their consumers, the readers of novels, the spectators present at a dramatic performance, the movie-goers, etc.: they are the texts' co-creators, cohabiting the discursual space with the original creators of those texts. Here, I will not dwell so much on the actual conditions governing the process of poesis (for more on this, see Mey 1989), as on the factors of use and access in text creation.

With regard to use, the first question to ask is: who can be a text user? Clearly, the ability to read and write is a minimal condition here, but it is not nearly a sufficient one. Normally, the capability of language users to read exceeds their writing potential. In England, around the middle of the 18th century, half the population could sign their names, and an even greater percentage were able to read.⁶ However, if we ask what use this minimal literacy was put to, the answer is very simple: apart from a few standard books, such as the Bible and the current yearly almanac, there wasn't much to be had in the line of reading material if you didn't belong to the class of library owners (this was before the advent of the public library as an institution, which was to happen only about a century later). As to writing, having once signed their names in the marriage register, most people didn't often afterwards have the opportunity to use their writing skill: and even if they did, it was mostly for purely practical purposes. The worlds that were created in such a fashion were at best, poor replicas of the immediate, drab surroundings in which most people lived.

But even in our own times, with literacy being almost universal in countries such as Denmark, Israel, or Japan, the question remains: what *do* people actually do with their literacy? What *can* they do? What worlds do they (co-)create, and what are the conditions for their creative processing?

As noted, contemporary social thinking has largely redefined literacy as an instrumental quality: a necessary condition for being a member, however lowly and passive, of modern society. For instance, our legal system works on the presumption that people actually *read* the law: that is to say, not only must they be familiar with the legal texts themselves, but also with the environments in which the latter were created and promulgated, as well as with the debates, comments, and criticisms surrounding them. Any change in the legal dispositions, even concerning such mundane matters as the maximum allowable speed on certain roads, must be officially promulgated through the official parliamentary organs (such as *Hansard* in the UK, or the *Statstidende* in Denmark), in order to

have legal force. While these sources thus, in principle, become accessible to the literate public, not many people (even though they are literate) actually take the trouble to read them. What they in fact know about the laws on the books and changes in the legal text usually comes from other sources, many of them not even textual in the literal sense of the term: hearsay, TV, a State trooper pulling you over on the highway (when it's too late), new road signs (many of them iconic)⁷ and so on. In this way, 'reading the law' comes very close to what we call (professionally) 'reading law': which indirectly confirms the instrumental, yet forever insufficient character of popular literacy.⁸ Thus, with literacy remaining the "root of democracy", as the apt illustration on the cover of Cook-Gumperz' (1986) book tells us,⁹ its actual importance for the user is clearly on the wane, even in the rather passive contexts referred to above.

As to the active use of literacy, the unrestrained production and consumption of (literary and other) texts is now, as before, a matter of cultural and social privilege, shared by the happy few that have unlimited access to those privileges (among the latter, a 'good education'). This is true both for officially recognised literacy and for what one could call 'everyday literacy': even such simple things as letter-writing can turn out to be a chore for a person not actively trained in literary production (cf. Heath 1986: 19ff on literacy and its use in the homes of unskilled and semi-skilled workers). With regard to so-called 'trivial literature' (typically, romances or action novels), one is sometimes tempted to ask oneself if that is what letters were invented for in the first place. Would the world be much worse off if people had never been initiated to the sanitised environment of romance *à la* Victoria Holt, or the predictable adventures of serial novel and comic strip heroes and heroines *à la* Clark Kent, Tarzan and Jane, or James Bond? Such texts, and the creative processes involved in reading them, are no more demanding than passing a radio quiz test on the morning program: familiar facts and worn-down scripts illustrating mundane truths and trite patterns of behaviour, nobody being the wiser, and the course of human destiny (including 'democracy') not being in any way affected.

Access, as already intimated above, is the other factor that we have to consider. The question is, first, how people get channelled into the narrow concept and practice of texts as purely instrumental, and second, how society actually avails itself of text processing as a means of controlling its members.

The first question can be answered by pointing to the curricula that are currently being followed, as far as literacy is involved, in most of our elementary and secondary schools. What "the making of literacy into a

school-based skill" (Cook-Gumperz 1986: 27) has done to the imaginative potential of non-school oriented literacy among the population-at-large has its parallel in what happens to your happy six- or seven-year old producers of interesting, exciting, original, moving, and truly 'literary' texts upon entering grade one or two of elementary school. For them, reading and writing now become school-tasks, to be performed under the strict supervision of, and with the constant feedback from, the teachers. The result is in some cases an actual decrease in the children's original textual skills - skills that are only very slowly retrieved, and that normally do not return (if at all) before the end of puberty.¹⁰ The school embodies society's demand for texts, as well as its definition of text processing as an activity that conforms to the current norms of literate behaviour. Thus, the value of orthography, commas, and "sentence level mechanics" (Michaels 1987: 328) replaces, in the minds of the producers, the validity and substance of what they originally had to say.

The way in which this process of re-valuation is carried out - and here we will find the answer to the second question - is essentially that of the so-called "hidden curriculum" (Jackson 1968; see also Mey 1985: 72). Jackson pointed out that most children, during the first two to three years of their school careers, exhibit a striking change in their behaviour: from normally spontaneous, easily self-asserting, generally unproblematic five and six year olds, they turn into the well-disciplined, self-conscious, mostly passive and constrained school population that we all know from grades three or four on. Rather than attribute these changes to the burdens of their daily school workloads, as is often done, or to some psychological change in their personalities (e.g., the concept of the 'latency period', as developed in Freudian psychoanalysis), it seems fair to assume that, along with and underneath the regular curriculum, another hidden curriculum is operating that teaches the students to be attentive to the teacher's words, to remember the ways to express themselves for better reproduction of the teachers' instructions (and hence for better grades), to second-guess their teachers' intentions (for better results on tests and exams), and in general, to be quiet, to sit still, and to respect authority: "to reproduce a preferred version of adult social order", as Baker (Chapter 7, this volume) has called it. In a more general societal context, this hidden curriculum has been perceived as "training in getting trained": "the sequence of earlier school development serving to prepare the future work force for the conduct, habits, behaviour, rhythms and discipline required by the factory" (Graff 1986: 77). Thus, we see the aforementioned power-brokers, the parameters of the discursive space, fleshed out as very real dimensions in the learners' lives in the guise

of the teachers' "unstated values, goals, and ideology with respect to the teaching" (Michaels 1987: 343) - unstated, but precisely for that reason all the more important and powerful.

By contrast, those who, for whatever reason, are unable or unwilling to absorb the code of behaviour that is implicit in this hidden curriculum may get labeled 'hyperactive', and are treated accordingly. Thus, the traditional concept of the 'dumb' ghetto child ('underprivileged' is just a condescending euphemism for this) depends entirely on the child's willingness or reluctance to subject him- or herself to the process of "training in being trained". Both in the eyes of their teachers and as far as their future prospects in society are concerned, such traits distinguish many black children from their white counterparts - of course, to their supposed disadvantage.¹¹

One may notice the perfect parallel between on the one hand, the instrumentality introduced into text handling by the hidden curriculum (i.e., correct grammar and orthography, conformity to the given standards of production, and thus having it accepted where it counts), and, on the other, the subsequent use of literacy by society as an entrance ticket to jobs and (better) positions. Thus, continuity and control are insured, along with the elimination of possibly subversive text handlers. The 'possible worlds' that the authorised text processors are allowed to create are thus maximally safeguarded against revolutionary or utopian tendencies of any kind. Mass literacy becomes a mass soporific: the original fears that literacy might promote sedition (cf. Cook-Gumperz 1986: 25) have been neutralised completely by this promotion of literacy as universal sedation.¹²

A particular case of this use of literacy is found in the vocational training of special groups of students, such as immigrant workers. As I have shown elsewhere (Mey 1985: 151ff), the language teaching programs that, among others, are used in Scandinavian countries to help immigrants become 'integrated' in their new 'home environments' officially serve a double function: not only to help the immigrants adjust to their surroundings, but moreover to enable them to 'make it' in their new society, with everything that such a 'making' implies, both on the professional and social level.

Unfortunately, in many a case, this 'making' is the new-fangled denizen's unmaking: being unable to adjust to what to many must appear as strange and indeed, 'outlandish' behaviour on the part of their 'hosts', having insurmountable difficulties in learning the language, and hence not finding themselves in a position to acquire even the most basic, necessary literacy skills, the immigrants remove themselves from, or are officially

remanded to, locations where the distribution of power is unilaterally in their disfavour, both on the personal and the social level: to true "ghettos of the soul", as Swetland (1979) has dubbed such places. And even in cases where the explicit curriculum of well-intentioned courses such as "Technical Swedish for Immigrants" (Mey 1985) is distinguished by a no-nonsense, unsentimental approach to some badly-needed vocational capabilities, relayed in basic, ready-to-use language, there still remains an awareness about matters that are not talked about, needs that are not taken seriously enough to be made the subject of instruction. "Teacher is right", also in this context: what to teach, and how to go about it, is decided from the top, not from the bottom; the hidden message is that what is not part of the curriculum (such as knowledge about labour laws, workers' rights, access to grievance, avenues of protest, etc.) is not worth learning, and will not be accepted as a qualification - quite to the contrary. Thus, the application of this 'decontextualised knowledge' is an important tool for the appropriate manipulation of social problems among the immigrant population: again, sedation preempts sedition!

Latter-Day Literacy?

The kind of social control that is typical for the exercise of modern text production has a perfect parallel in the context of what is often named 'computer literacy'. Depending on which author one consults and which authority one subscribes to, this concept is variously defined as comprising well-nigh everything from the ability to find the on-off switch on a machine to the writing of complicated computer programs. What is common, though, for all definitions, is that this special kind of 'literacy' is thought of as purely instrumental, in the sense described above. Computer literacy is a necessary asset in modern society, and whoever is computer 'illiterate' is not only unable to participate fully in society's life (which includes landing a good job), but moreover is a pitiful and backward person. Computer illiteracy is as much an obstacle to societal progress as it is to personal advance and happiness.¹³

In this connection, three things deserve to be noticed. First of all, literacy as possessing the ability to manipulate a certain mechanical device has, in itself, very little to do with the textual competences that I talked about earlier. Nobody ever thought of calling the ability of finding the keys on one's typewriter 'typewriter literacy'; and in general, the arts of writing and reading comprise much more than a competence of handling letters (by

hand or mechanically). Thus, 'computer literacy' is basically a misnomer, having nothing to do with text processing as we have defined it earlier.

Ironically, however, precisely this latter notion has become one of the main ingredients of the concept of computer literacy: the Danish word *tekstbehandling* (literally: "text handling") is the literal, semantic equivalent of the English "word processing". Notice that I'm not denying that the ability to use a word processor can enhance one's facility for operations with and within texts, much as the typewriter until quite recently used to be an invaluable aid, even an indispensable tool, for journalists and authors in their daily text-working. What I'm contending is that such an ability, in and by itself, belongs to the material prerequisites of text processing and that *ceteris paribus*, its influence on the textual procedures depends on the context, both social and individual, that authors work in. Clearly, ease in formulating one's thoughts and speed of expression are good things in themselves, but their eventual use depends on the context. If output is measured purely in terms of productivity and efficiency, the computer is an ambiguous blessing for the text worker for whom speed and quality not always are commensurate: text production is more than word processing, despite the dubious Danish etymology.¹⁴

The second point to be made has to do with testing. As already said above, literacy in our society is on its way from being an inherent cultural capability to figuring exclusively in situations whose context is mainly effect-oriented and prescriptive. As Cook-Gumperz (1986: 41) argues, in such a "system of decontextualised knowledge validated through test performances", demonstrating knowledge is more important than knowing. As I have shown elsewhere (Mey 1985: 72-77), this particular use of tests, along with its implied, perverted use of language and language facilities, is one of the worst instances of societal manipulation: it places an effective check on selection, while at the same time posing as a neutral, objective procedure, based on a test that is related to a useful competence, such as computer literacy.

The third and final point to make is that we need to spend a few moments thinking about what it means to be denied access to all sorts of societal possibilities (careers, environments for work, leisure, education, and so on) in the name of a purely instrumental capability, that of being able to manipulate a computer. True, the ability to write is a "root of democracy", as the quote on the postage stamp admonishes us; but it is a relatively humble root, whose manifold ramifications perhaps are more important than the root itself. Moreover, is it really the case that democracy is unthinkable apart from this "root"? That would be a crass

generalisation of the typically Western-shortcut type, flying in the face of countless societal formations whose democratic functions were exercised by the 'living word' only (typical cases comprise, e.g., much of Australian Aboriginal or indigenous American culture).¹⁵ Likewise, the access that computer literacy provides to the good life is only very remotely related to the good life itself: a 'computer culture' needs more to function than mere machinery, and any human-computer interaction is premised on, and should respect, the human aspect of that interaction more than it stresses the purely hardware aspects (as it does frequently now; for details, see Mey 1987).

Conclusion

One could formulate the mutual relationships between the three central concepts discussed in this paper in a slogan-like formula such as: "No text without context; no context without social control". In particular, as regards reading and reading instruction, Heath's (1986: 22) observation that "reading is highly contextualised" can be extended to comprise all texts produced and consumed in society, not just those taught and employed in one particular community.

Logically, the above formula would entail a further proposition: "No text without social control". That is to say, society mediates the context in which the individual expresses or discovers him- or herself. Hence, in order to make sense of any text at all, one has to know the social context in which it was generated and in which it functions. This means, to use Baker's expression (this volume, Chapter 7), that we are able to position the text, the teacher, and the student in relation to each other - a positioning which "is observably done in the discourse, whatever else might be accomplished there". Only thus will we be able to recontextualise the text in the discursive space that I talked about initially.

However, this context, in its turn, makes no sense unless we consider the broader, societal framework in which it originates and on which it depends for its own life: the context's life-space thus contains the discursive space of the text. In essence, that life-space is the framework of society itself, which means that social 'control' on literacy (including reading) can be seen both as a necessary and as a sufficient condition, both as a constraint and as an opening, both as a motor and as a brake. The dilemma that faces the individual text producer is on the one hand, how to safeguard him- or herself from the restrictions that are imposed by societal agents such as school teachers, while on the other hand looking towards those same agents

for support and recognition. This dilemma is aptly described by Michaels as the clash between the “positive and negative aspects of guidance” (1987: 344). In a way, all text workers are biting the hand that feeds them, and should continue to do so (and with a good conscience) because it is a necessary condition for surviving in their work. The day either the hand stops feeding, or the mouth loses its bite, text work will degenerate, both in the context of society and within the individual.

Notes

This is a reworked version of a paper delivered at the International Workshop on “Text and Context”, held at Tel Aviv University, July 5-9, 1988. Thanks are due to Carolyn Baker and Allan Luke for useful hints and suggestions.

1. A distinction is often made between what is called (the strictly co-occurring) co-text and the wider notion of context (see, e.g., Dressler 1972: 9-11). As will become clear from the following, my use of ‘context’ is more closely akin to this latter concept, without being identical with it.
2. However, one should be careful, as Olson (1988: A7) admonishes us, not to regard literacy as a common “nostrum for such social problems as poverty, malnutrition, unemployment and social failure”.
3. In an historical perspective, it seems that the trend has continued even to our days, and that the modern university education is rather far removed from the ideas and ideals that inspired such champions of the sake of education as an aim in itself as John Henry Cardinal Newman, whose *Idea of a University* distanced itself from the thoughts of those who would like to introduce more ‘practical’ disciplines into the university and college curricula - meaning mostly the exact or ‘real’ sciences. (Even today in Norway, a person studying mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc. is called a “realist”, and his or her university degree is called *candidatus/a realium*, “cand. real.”).
4. One is reminded of certain present-day Danish Ministers of Education, whose principles demand that formal schooling again be made subject to “user payment” (Danish: *brugerbetaling*).
5. As the late Thomas T. Ballmer used to say: “Unmögliche Welten? Nee, das gibt’s nicht” (personal communication).
6. According to a study by Laqueur (1976; cited in Cook-Gumperz (1986: 24)). For another source, see John Fowles’ (1986) novel *A Maggot*, where conflicting views on literacy are documented with references to authentic documents from late 18th Century England.
7. In the US, road signs traditionally have been devised as ‘texts’ in the narrow meaning of the word; hence, literacy tests are still an obligatory part of the driver’s license exams there.

8. The "instrumental" function is among the seven uses of literacy (here in relation to the skill of reading) that are enumerated as important in the small US community which was studied longitudinally by Heath (1986: 21): instrumental, social-interactional, news related, memory-supportive, substituting for oral messages, provision of permanent record, confirmation. Interestingly, such important (also reading-related) skills as critical, aesthetic, organisational, and recreational that are "usually highlighted in school-oriented discussions of literacy uses" (Heath 1986: 22) are not on the above list. This again shows the importance of placing the possession and use of literacy skills in their proper context of evaluation.
9. The drawing is based on an actual US 1c stamp displaying a goose feather and inkstand as symbols of literacy, with the words: "The ability to write - a root of democracy".
10. The following anecdote may serve to illustrate the gap between school learning and incipient 'true' literacy, as it occurred in a then 7-year old Norwegian niece of mine. One afternoon, when Eline had come home in her first year of grade school, her mother asked her the obligatory question: "And what did you learn in school today?" At the moment of being asked that question, Eline was sitting curled up in an easy chair, reading the local newspaper (Reading was an art she had taught herself, and was completely fluent in at the time of entering first grade). Without any hesitation, or without seemingly feeling any affinity between what she actually was occupied with, and the activity she was referring to in her answer, Eline said: "Oh well, today we were taught the letter 'F'".
11. In the US school system, such 'hyperactive' children are frequently treated with drugs such as ritalin, often without the knowledge and sometimes even against the will of the students themselves or their parents.
12. On the use of the "hidden curriculum" and its effects, see also Wells (1986:70ff).
13. As Olson (1988) says, "the term 'illiterate' is often little more than a term of abuse".
14. Analogously, the advent of the typewriter was often thought to have a deteriorating influence on the production of certain texts, such as newspaper articles, where speed often was more important than quality. Thus, in the mailrooms of the official Vatican daily newspaper, the *Osservatore Romano*, the use of typewriters was forbidden, way into the 1950's, the Editor-in-Chief, Count Della Torre, being of the opinion that good journalism was by hand only.
15. Cf. also the varied perspective that studies of cultures such as the African Vai have provided on the use of writing vs. oral text production (see Scribner & Cole 1981).

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II Reading in Classrooms

Chapter 5

A Situated Perspective on What Counts as Reading

James L. Heap

When experimental research on reading resumed in the 1950s (Venezky 1977), theorists began again formulating what reading consists of, as sets of processes in the mind. At least since that time there has been a vexing issue: how can theory and research contribute to instructional practice? This issue has been a perennial conference topic during the last thirty or so years. While process-product research has made headway in formulating the correlates of effective teaching (Rosenshine & Stevens 1984), researchers have tended to feel that classroom practice can, and needs to be, put in line with current research and theoretical thinking on reading (Calfee & Drum 1978). In 1970 Levin and Williams spoke for many of us, though, when they averred (ix) that “the relationship between understanding the nature of a complex skill and teaching that skill is not at all clear.” As we begin a new decade it is no clearer. A few, like Kintsch (1979: 324), have gone so far as to say that “we do not have a theory of reading worth speaking of”. Thus we are in no position to give strong, theory-based guidance for instruction.

Most commentators, despite differing views, agree on one paradigm for conceiving the theory-practice relation. All take it once we have better theory we will be able to turn to practice and straighten it out, reform it to make it consistent with state-of-the-art knowledge about reading.

This essay works from a different paradigm. Simply put: we must reflect on both theory and practice if we are to understand how theory best can be used to reform practice in rational, valuable directions. In Part One, I give attention to dominant types of theories of reading in order to demonstrate flaws which are internal to their attempts to formulate reading in Galilean, essentialist terms as a context-free object. In Part Two I introduce a shift to a situated perspective and a particularist approach to understanding reading and reading education. This is a shift from looking at what reading is, theoretically, to focusing on what counts as reading, criterially and procedurally in particular settings. My aim is to develop an

argument for examining the social and cultural organisation of pedagogic practice. Before concluding, I offer insights from inquiry into the social organisation of oral reading and comprehension phases of lessons.

I

Objectivism

Within the arts and sciences concerned with reading, the conceptions of reading which have been developed, refined and debated have been primarily what I will call, for simplicity's sake, "objectivist." The notion of objectivism relevant here goes back to Galileo. Using Euclidean geometry as a prototype, Galileo accomplished the mathematisation of nature (cf. Husserl 1970). He conceived reality as a thoroughly rational universe: "being as it really is, in itself." At the same time he took this universe (nature) to be accessible to a totally rational (i.e., mathematical) science. Through the process of idealisation the scholar could have rationally controlled access to how the phenomena of nature really are, apart from all their appearances in concrete places at specific times, as observed by particular persons. Idealisation gives us the context-free object, as it is in itself. Idealisation also gives us the conditions under which the phenomena of nature occur and expire.

Others before him had conceived of "objective reality", but with Galileo we find this conception combined with a call for sense experience, rather than tradition-borne dogma, as the source of authority for deciding claims about nature. But he did not take such experience grossly, as given to him in daily life. It was Galileo's genius to combine idealisation of nature with the processes of abstraction whereby particular sense experiences, in concrete places, at specific times could be cleansed of their particularity, concreteness and specificity. So cleansed, such experience inductively furnishes an abstract approximation (and measurement) of (idealised) phenomena as they really are in nature. The experiment can be understood as Galileo's method for gaining clean access to nature (context-free phenomena) through the muck, mire and messiness of (context-specific) experience.

Objectivism, thus, is a term I apply to any epistemological or ontological perspective¹ which has an interest in an "object-in-itself." This is the object conceived and oriented to independent of any context of its appearance, and independent of perception, or who perceives the object.

Operating under an essentialist presupposition, the object so conceived consists of its essential properties. These properties define what the object is. An object, as idealised, is a well defined class or category (cf. Wilson 1970). Conceiving objects as clearly drawn classes provides for the possibility of subsuming objects under more general classes, or subdividing them into more restricted subclasses. It is this way of idealizing phenomena that makes possible the reductivist conception of sciences, where the phenomena of psychology can be reduced to a biological level, then reduced down further until the level of physics is arrived at (see Carnap 1953). The Galilean conception of a mathematical universe is presupposed in all of this. This conception, and the reductivist enterprise fail if the objects of study do not have an essentialist mathematical structure, i.e., cannot be defined and described exclusively and exhaustively as a common set of properties, a class.

The essentialism which is central to Galilean science is deeply rooted in Western thought and science. With the Greeks (Plato 1953; Aristotle 1948) we find a concern with the essence of phenomena, as when Socrates asks what is virtue, what is justice, what is knowledge? The difference between the prescientific essentialism of the Greeks and that of Galilean science is the difference between Aristotelian and Galilean science. The former works from reasoned conjectures about how the world must be organised in *a priori* ways, for example, into categories and forms, whereas the latter seeks, through sense experience, to develop and support conjectures about how the world might be organised. Galileo's great contribution was the idea and practice of consulting experience, albeit in controlled, abstractive ways. But the consulting and the resulting idealizing of the objects of study invariably operated under the essentialist presupposition that the world of things, and the world as a thing, are organised into classes of objects defined by the set of properties shared by each member of the class.

Very much in line with Galilean theorising, essentialism treats objects as having their properties independent of the context of their occurrence. Context is rendered controllable by formulating it in terms of discrete "conditions of occurrence." If these conditions are present, then it can be claimed that some object occurred, some event transpired.²

As objectivism has had a life in psychology, one other thinker has been important. In the work of Descartes, through idealisation and abstraction, mind and body are theorised to be separate. Their separation denotes a difference in quality between the two, but not a difference in quantity. That is, the region of the mind is taken to parallel the region of the body, of nature, such that the elements and phenomena of the mind are idealised and

conceived as (abstractly) measurable, quantifiable. Hence, the mathematisation of the mind. The mind is rendered studiable by and to a Galilean science: experimental psychology. It is assumed that this science of the mind ultimately can, will and needs to be reduced to sciences of the body, that is, biological and natural sciences of the brain (but see Searle 1984).

The objectivist perspective takes it that what was studied via abstraction and idealisation is manifested in all its essential details and relationships in the workings of any (typical) individual's mind at the concrete, empirical level. Hence the view that reading-in-the-context-of-its-occurrence, is but a manifestation of reading-as-it-is-in-itself. *That* the object, for example, reading, now occurs in some specific context, is taken to make no difference, to cause no alteration to what the object is, really, in that context. The objectivist perspective retains the idea of the object-in-itself remaining unchanged through all its appearances in particular contexts.

Within the technical controversy over whether reading is a bottom-up or top-down set of processes, or a mixture of both, all sides in the argument are Galilean and Cartesian. All are after "reading as it really is, in itself" independent of particular instances of reading behaviour. Experiments are run wherein particular, controlled behaviours are interpreted in terms of idealisations of "the reading process," with the latter differently conceived by proponents of different theories.

Reading Theory Differences

When one looks closely at the various bottom-up, top-down and interactive theories of reading it turns out that they differ significantly not in terms of what they take reading to be, but in terms of how they formulate reading as being done.

The difference which has been touted in slogans is that one group of theorists takes reading to be decoding (of graphemes into phonemes), while the other, now dominant group, claims reading to be meaning apprehension. Yet, bottom-up theorists never claimed that reading is unconcerned with the meaning of the text. And in top-down models of reading, there is decoding, or what Goodman (1967) articulates as recoding, decoding and encoding of information. Of course, in interactive models meaning apprehension and decoding go on simultaneously (cf. Rumelhart 1976).

All three types of theories take reading to be a combination of processes of decoding and meaning acquisition. Their true differences revolve around how they formulate these processes as ordered and organised (Carroll 1976). Bottom-up theories (Gough & Cosky 1977; LaBerge & Samuels 1974; Mackworth 1972) conceive reading as involving continuous decoding of all graphic information on a line of print. Top-down theories (Goodman 1967; Smith 1978) conceive reading as involving a selection of graphic information to be decoded. The selection is said to be based on "hypotheses" about what the decoded information will turn out to mean. And with Rumelhart's interactive model of reading, graphic stimuli register on the visual system but are only selectively decoded, in line with the type of hypotheses represented in top-down models. Hence, while the different types of theories account for decoding and meaning apprehension, they differ in how they view these processes as being executed in the course of reading.

What the Differences Show

That the differences between theories of reading can be formulated in terms of how reading is done, instead of what reading is, has some important consequences for our understanding of the Psychology of reading, as well as for our understanding of what reading is.

In that reading is something which is done, rather than simply something which occurs, there are difficulties in conceiving it as a true Galilean object. My thesis is that reading is a cultural phenomenon, not a natural phenomenon, and thus is a different type of analytic object than can be handled within a Galilean framework. Reading is made possible by our bio-physiological equipment, but merely having that equipment, that is, being human and alive, does not make reading occur. Of course, how reading is done is constrained by our biological and physiological capabilities. Those things which seem to be natural, biological processes, as in the perceptual system, and in memory storage and retrieval, do set limits to how reading proceeds, but they do not determine what reading is, or how it is done.

To the degree that reading addresses humanly produced sign systems it depends on historically derived conventions (see Morrison 1987). These conventions are regularities recognised, accepted and expected within some culture, for example that "n" and "o" are letters in our alphabet, that they are to be read left to right when they occur in this order: "no", and that they

mean something negative, unless they are preceded and/or followed by other letters, as in "know" and "nose". As conventions change, and are different between cultures, reading changes and is different. Think of reading in the middle ages and before, when reading was primarily oral (Mathews 1966). Think of cultures with different alphabets, or even icons, with different ordering systems, for example, requiring reading to go right to left, or top to bottom.

As a cultural phenomenon, reading has a feature which is essential, but which is troublesome for Galilean science. Reading is an activity, and as such is both normative and moral in character. In that it depends on conventions, reading is normative: persons ought and must follow the culture's conventions (or some set of them) in order to recover meaning which they can claim is extractable from some text.³

The convention-dependence of reading is a normative dimension which raises no direct trouble for objectivist theories. All three types of reading theories presume that conventions for writing have been followed, and will be oriented to during the reading of text. However, the conventions can be oriented to differently, in the sense noted above: decoding and meaning acquisition can take different paths.

Each theory of reading consists of, and depends on more than just natural, bio-physiological processes. Minimally, those processes have to be activated (as with icon formation). In some cases they must be stopped as well (as with fixations). In all theories there are a series of things which must be done; they do not just happen. This is obvious in top-down theories, where input is predicted, cues from the text are selected, tentative choices are made on the basis of the cues, and regressions are made when the choices appear wrong. This motivated, goal-oriented behaviour also is posited in bottom-up theories. Finding the beginning of lines of print, and moving letter-by-letter, and word-by-word, are actions, not the mere occurrence of processes. In Gough and Cosky's theory (1977), when they discuss their comprehension device, Merlin, they say that if a semantic interpretation is not achieved, the fixation on the text will be maintained to provide further processing time, or regressive eye movement will be called for. No matter what the theory, and no matter how detailed it is in laying out processes that occur, reading does not, and cannot happen without the reader doing something. And the things done must be controllable, and must be repeatable at will. What are formulated as processes either require skill in their execution, or are themselves skills, for example, selecting cues.

That decoding and meaning apprehension are skills which can be differently organised, means that reading may be done in different ways.

Different theories of reading might apply to different readings. When this is recognised, the great debate about how reading is done, and especially about how reading is learned, must be re-appraised. The debate can be characterised in terms of three issues:

- 1 whether persons could read in the ways claimed by the theories;
- 2 whether persons do read in the ways claimed by the theories;
- 3 whether persons should read in the ways claimed by the theories.

In the debate about the nature of the reading process the first two issues were explicitly taken up and discussed. Top-down theorists questioned whether persons could read in a bottom-up fashion (e.g., Smith 1973). Studies by Pierce and Karlin (1957), Neisser and Beller (1965) and Neisser and Stoper (1965) suggested that word identification is too fast for letter-by-letter (bottom-up) analysis. Gough and Cosky (1977), on the other side, showed new evidence for letter-by-letter processing, but also revealed evidence which could rule out the possibility/viability of such processing. Caught in the middle of this first issue, they retained Gough's bottom-up model (1972).

On the issue of whether persons could read as theories claim, debate seems to have ended with more evidence in support of the top-down theories. No position was developed, though, which accounted for the existence of evidence in support of each side of the debate. Interactive theories from the mid-seventies account for more of the evidence than do top-down models. But they still do not account for evidence supporting a strict bottom up view (cf. Calfee & Drum 1978). The problem is that all sides in the debate assumed that reading is done in only one way. If we dispense with this assumption, we are able to accept *all* the empirical evidence generated during the debate. We can treat those findings as evidence that reading can be done in a *variety* of ways.

On the second issue, evidence supporting the bottom-up position that persons can read letter-by-letter established that persons do, at least at times, read in this way. Other researchers, such as Smith and Holmes (1971), have found little evidence that skilled readers identify letters enroute to words. Top-down theorists would claim that mature readers do not read that way. However, I am aware of no studies which attempt any kind of systematic, or even arbitrary sampling to decide, empirically, how people read in one country, region, city, school, or classroom. The second issue is an empirical one, but has not been addressed in terms of empirical distribution. The second issue, clearly, has not been resolved.

This brings us to the third issue, the normative, moral one. Disagreements here have been largely implicit. Where the issue has been explicit, as in designing basal reading series and reading curriculum, the movement to how reading ought to be done (and, therefore, how it should be taught) has been justified on the basis of arguments about the first two issues, about how persons could and do read. However, those arguments have been inconclusive, or, at least, have not been resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned. If reading cannot be done in a letter-by-letter fashion, it does not follow necessarily that it is and should be done in a top-down fashion, for there are interactive possibilities.

What is important to recognise here is that argument about how reading ought to be done and taught has been based on empirical evidence for theoretical positions. However, Western culture rarely settles for deriving "ought" from "is".⁴ How things are, does not determine for us how things ought to be. If we wish to understand the attraction of different theories of reading, and the bases for resolving the third issue, we must look beyond (around?) the empirical.

If texts can be processed in different ways, i.e., if decoding and meaning acquisition can be differently ordered and organised in their orientation to the conventions of reading and writing, then we can put aside the question of whether one theory better describes what happens when a person reads.

Bracketing concern for the empirical validity of any one theory (cf. Husserl 1962), a question remains of how persons ought to read, and ought to be taught that reading is done. Viewed in terms of this question, bottom-up theories can be interpreted as recommending that no matter how reading can be done, say by a speed reader, persons, and students in particular, ought to read letter-by-letter, word-by-word. This normative position is also moral (cf. Blum & McHugh 1984): it values accuracy over speed in reading.

Considered in this normative light, top-down theories are interesting. Even if theorists of this ilk could be convinced that persons could read, or learn to read, letter-by-letter, word-by-word, they would not want to alter their theories. They would still want a theory where the reader draws on a variety of information from in front of and behind the eyeball, to guess at, and sample text, to "reduce uncertainty" about what the reader takes to be there anyway. If readers are found who do not read this way, say in an elementary grade, or in an adult education class, top-down theorists would declare that they should read in a hypothesis-testing fashion. They should read in this way, because this is how to read fluently.

This normative position of top-down theorists reveals a moral position. The type of reading valued here above any other type which can be done, is one which is fast and efficient. Efficiency here can be formulated in economic terms: the most return for the least expenditure of energy. The reader is formulated as one who already may be able to guess accurately what is on the page. Given this formulation, what is the best use of energy is to see if text matches hypothesis. As long as the selected input does not disconfirm the reader's hypotheses, there is no need to attend to and decode every grapheme. No need to waste energy and time.

Summing up, we can say that reading theorists differ in how they approach and handle the three issues of how persons can read, do read, and should read. All theorists claim that persons can read as described by their theories. The apparent fact that some persons, under some conditions, have read in the way that each type of theory describes, has been used as evidence for the general claim that all instances of reading can and are done in the way that each type of theory describes.

What has not been noticed is that theories of reading formulate moral models of how reading should be done. Each type of reading theory, whether bottom-up, top-down, or interactive, formulates a version of the value, the Good (see Plato 1953; Blum & McHugh 1984), which reading serves. Bottom-up theories formulate the Good of reading as accuracy. The bottom-up reader is the accurate reader, one who is concerned with the details of a document, the signs exactly as they appear on a surface. Top-down theories formulate the Good of reading as efficiency. The top-down reader is the efficient reader, one who is concerned with quickly grasping the meaning of a document. Interactive theories are least clear about the Good of reading. Since such theories combine bottom-up and top-down processing they formulate the good reader as one who is both accurate and efficient, without giving an account of how these sometimes conflicting values can be served over the course of any particular instance of reading.

The great debate between proponents of different theories of reading has mixed the three issues of how reading can, is and should be done. As a result all sides claim that all reading should be done in the way their preferred theory claims it can be done. And all sides back up their claim with evidence of how reading has been done in line with their type of theory. The great debate about reading has flourished primarily by assuming that reading can be done, and is done, in only one way. If we drop that assumption, then we can understand the great debate as establishing that reading can, and is, done in different ways, in spite of claims to the contrary by contestants in the debate. If there is no one way of

reading, then we are left with the question of how reading should be done in any particular situation where written materials are encountered. None of the three types of reading theories is designed to answer this question.

Selective Abstraction

When the competing types of reading theories are seen as being at odds over what actions should be taken during reading, we begin to see how reading, as a cultural phenomenon, cannot be treated successfully as a Galilean object. The hub of the problem resides in the principles and procedures for conceiving reading as a proper object-in-itself. Recall that Galilean science arrives at the mathematical structure of an object by abstracting from all occurrences of the object. That abstractive work is done to arrive at the essential features of the object, which then can be idealised as the context-free object. Where those features are found in nature, we are free to speak of the idealised object as present-at-hand (cf. Heidegger 1962), as occurring, as realised in some context.

The type of abstractive work required to idealise reading as a set of bottom-up or top-down processes proceeds differently than the type required to idealise, say, "gravity." While our theories of reading are presented as if they are fully general, that is, cover all instances of what we call reading, they are more restricted. There are some, unannounced, selection principles by which theorists abstract from all behaviour which can be called reading, to say how reading is done. I shall touch on three, those concerned with the materials of reading, the purposes for reading, and the normal ways that reading is done.

In English-speaking cultures we can talk of reading books, newspapers, letters, signs, equations, tea leaves, faces, and the writing on the wall. That theories of reading apply only to some of these is an obvious point, but not a trivial one. There is some selection made, to which we, as sensible persons, assent. Some types of things which can be read are more important than others. We are back at values, back at the moral dimension of a cultural phenomenon.

Notice that we have introduced another element into our discussion. Reading, as a pseudo-Galilean object is context-free: just an organised set of cognitive processes. But as a cultural phenomenon, as a type of action which we undertake, reading never occurs without there being something to read. Here we begin to realise that the abstraction procedures for idealizing reading-in-itself work from a piece of context⁵ to which reading is

necessarily oriented: the material object, the document to which attention is addressed during acts of reading (cf. Heap 1977a). While theorised versions of reading are necessarily oriented to specific types of documents and genres of texts, this (con)text-dependence of reading acts never receives serious attention when reading theories are presented. The closest we have come to treating text genres as important is in the literature on story grammars (Mandler & Johnson 1977; Rumelhart 1975; Stein & Glenn 1979; Thorndyke 1977). While this literature has been quite important, reading theorists have not been led to re-formulate their theories as applying specifically to stories. Since the theories are intended to be fully general, no attention is given to which genres of text the theories best handle (see Heap forthcoming).

What is virtually entirely missed in theorists' selective abstraction from the materials which are read is the issue of familiarity. Familiarity does receive some treatment, if only indirectly, in work on word recognition (e.g., Gough 1984), but above the level of words (as signs or sense), familiarity of what is read is not accounted for. The issue of familiarity is important in two different ways, having to do with typicality and identity. In terms of typicality, two levels must be considered. There is the level of familiarity with the type of document, where by "document" I intend the physical object upon which signs and symbols appear. The second level is that of the text and its familiarity as to genre. By "text" I intend the meaning or sense which is derived through acts of reading the signs-on-a-surface, that is, the document (cf. Heap 1977a, forthcoming).

When we read, we always read something which is formatted. The format of the document, its physical layout, will be more or less familiar to us as to type, for example, a newspaper, a cereal box, a cheque, a journal article, a road sign. Given the familiarity of the type of document we encounter, we are able to bring to bear sets of assumptions and practices for recovering from the document its meaning, i.e., the text. The genre of text we are about to read is usually foregone by the type of document which some material object appears to be (see Heidegger 1962).

Consider this example: We receive a letter in the mail. It looks like personal correspondence from the fact that the addresses on the envelope look handwritten. The letter/document itself is in the same script. We read it and realise that it really is business mail, indeed, political junk mail, sent to us by our local branch of Luddites International, asking for funds to quash the wave of computerised junk mail. To say that something looked like personal mail, but turned out to be junk mail, is to say that the same type of document can carry different genres of texts. How we read

documents/texts, the strategies and practices we employ, the assumptions we work under, all depend initially, and at various points along the way, on how familiar this type of document and that genre of text are, given our personal stocks of knowledge (cf. Schutz & Luckmann 1973).

The second way in which familiarity is an important issue for the organisation of reading has to do with the identity of the text. I am using "identity" to gloss the recognitional work done by a reader to recognise, if the reader did not already know, that "I've read this before". Perhaps the document is the very one which was read before, for example, a primer found in a parent's attic. Or, the document is unfamiliar as to identity (not type), but the text is familiar (yet another reprint of a favourite poem). When a text is familiar not only by genre, but by identity, then our ability to predict what will come next (*à la* psycholinguistic theories of reading) is greatly increased (to varying degrees).

Certain genres of texts (and document types) have been assumed to be the most important. The bases for this assumption are unformulated in the reading literature. The types of reading acts directed to the preferred types of documents are selected to be the source of abstractive work for building (and testing) theories of reading. The tacit selection work involved never thematises what constitutes the type of documents or genres of text which are important to read. If we do not have some theory, or at least definition, of what constitutes the relevant genre, we have a problem of knowing when a theory of reading can be taken to apply.

There is a second abstractive problem and selection principle. Reading never occurs without there being something to read, but there is no act which can be called reading which is without purpose. If reading can be conceived as action, then it is an *apriori*, grammatical truth (cf. Hacker 1972) that each instance of reading must have some purpose. A motive or intention can be ascribed to the act, as its property, or the property or state of the person doing the act: the reader.

As purposeful behaviour, reading not only can address different types of documents, it can be carried out with different purposes. Extant theories of reading are based on unformulated assumptions as to what purposes are served by persons acting in the ways described by the theories. As "information processing" models of action, the theories assume that they are neutral as to the exact purposes of the reader. The "information" which is processed during reading is not what we ordinarily call information. Conceptions of the former are tied to theories of perception and sense experience. Whatever impinges on the visual system is "information." This

is not the type, or level of information we seek, as when we look through an encyclopedia or tourbook for information.

It is not clear, though, that the theories of reading are fully neutral in promoting the accomplishment of any or all purposes which a reader may have. Recall that I characterised bottom-up theories as valuing accuracy, and top-down theories as valuing speed and efficiency. When a reader's purpose requires that he or she be accurate in reading, reading may well occur in a bottom-up fashion. Think here of reading lyrics, scripts, addresses, cheques, and humorous greeting cards. Think of reading an apparent suicide note, or a message in code.

When the reader's reason for reading requires speed and minimal effort, he or she may well read in a top-down, or interactive fashion. Think of reading one's lecture notes or copies of one's letters. Think of reading advertisements in newspapers or on buses and billboards. Think of "leisure reading" of newspaper stories, magazine articles, and novels.

Different types of theories of reading foster and support different types of purposes for reading. As Galilean type objects, each theoretical formulation of reading can stand as an abstraction and idealisation of reading primarily for some purposes, but not as effectively for all purposes. An unformulated selection principle seems at work, which reflects that some materials and purposes historically have been more important within North American culture than other materials and purposes. No matter what historical period we examine, the materials read and the purposes for reading are essential parts of the context of reading, and cannot be ignored in the effort to idealise acts of reading as context-independent cognitive processes, that is, Galilean objects. Materials and purposes necessarily constrain how reading is done.

Normal Acts

There is a third feature of reading which makes it unsuitable to be treated as a Galilean object. The feature follows from reading's normative and moral character. Reading, as a set of acts, can be done well, or poorly. The grammar of our use of the term "cognitive processes" makes us lose sight of this fact. Processes are not good or bad, because they are not things which are done. Gravity, as a Galilean object, may be said to be strong or weak, but not good or bad. We do not ascribe moral value to naturally occurring processes in the ways we make such judgments about cultural phenomena.⁶

The point has been made that, grammatically speaking, reading must always have a purpose, if the acts so performed are to be called reading. If this is true, and if it is possible to use different organisations of decoding and meaning apprehension processes, then it is possible to accomplish the same purpose in reading in different ways. However, not all ways of accomplishing a purpose will necessarily be equally effective. Some ways will be oriented to circumstances of action, others will be designed in relation to the reader's sense of what is important and familiar.

As to circumstances, there are obvious, but trivial, ways of accomplishing reading in an effective, situationally appropriate fashion. These mundane ways require modifying and calibrating the methods of reading to the conditions and situation of their employment, for example, squinting at the page in the glare of the noonday sun, or holding the page at an angle to catch the sun's last rays. Consider the rationality of folding the newspaper to read a story while enduring a rush-hour subway ride, or reading-aloud-inside-your-head to drown out the noise of chattering commuters. As well, reading in a situationally appropriate fashion involves orienting to how one's behaviour will be viewed and sanctioned by others, as when a student moves his eyes (but not his head or shoulders) to peek at what someone else marked as an answer on the test.

Beyond showing sensitivity to the circumstances of one's reading efforts, there is a more obvious, but nontrivial, rationality to reading acts. This rationality is oriented to how one values what one reads, and how familiar it is, by type and identity. To illustrate: What would we say if a colleague described an instance of his reading as having been done in a bottom-up fashion, even though the material (text) read was quite familiar, but unimportant to him? Or, what would we say if another colleague described her reading of an important, unfamiliar legal contract affecting her tenure as having been done like a quick game of psycholinguistic guessing, resulting in multiple regressions and miscues? Such readings may be rare, but they are possible.

If we encountered colleagues who employed their decoding and meaning apprehension skills in these ways, we might be warranted in judging them to have read in odd, or inefficient, or insensible ways. Upon what would we base such a judgment? Commonsensically, I would expect that we would have recourse to ideas about how we typically read unimportant, familiar documents, and important, unfamiliar documents.

What we, as fluent readers in some culture, typically do in reading a certain genre of text, is used by theorists to generate idealisations of the processes we use. Those idealisations, in being rational reconstructions of

typical, nontrivial ways of reading, result in a theory which is about how reading is done, *normally*. In terms of theory, to read in a normal fashion is to read in a typically rational fashion. Let me unfold this claim.

First, rational, as I am using the term here (cf. Parsons 1937), simply refers to the analyst's judgment as to how effectively the organised elements outlined in a theory of reading achieve the implicit goal of the reading effort, for example, to test hypotheses, to reduce uncertainty about what the text means. Acting in a rational fashion, under this definition, involves selecting and using means which are adequate to the ends we wish to pursue.

Second, a (theoretically) normal fashion of reading is typically rational in that it is an idealisation not of the most efficient, quickest, or accurate way which, say, some gifted person could read. It is an idealisation of how the "average person" could read most rationally. In that the normal way is judged by the theorist to be the most rational way, for the average person, it becomes the way average persons should try, and should be taught, to read. Reading theories, in trying to achieve the generality of Galilean science, necessarily aim to characterise how reading can be done by most people, all of the time.

Third, what most members of a culture typically do, insofar as what they do is judged to be effective, that is, rational, becomes what theorists treat as the normal fashion for reading. Since such treatment is expected to hold for average persons, a theory would be suspect if such persons themselves would judge a theoretically normal fashion of reading to be culturally abnormal or unusual. Here we are merely invoking a standard view within interpretive sociology as to the relation between members' constructs, and theorists' constructs. If theorists wish to explain the behaviour of the members of some culture, theorists' constructs, for example, "normal", must be idealisations of members' constructs (cf. Schutz 1962), or at least not be inconsistent with such constructs (Heap 1976).

In that we seem to have a number of ways in which people with different purposes can read, normally, we have a number of different types of theories of how people read, normally. If persons read in any of these normal ways, we can say that they have read well, that is, we can make a moral judgment. However, reading in a normal fashion involves more than just effectively employing reading skills. Reading in a normal fashion, that is, well, involves applying the right kind (and order) of reading skills to *materials* for which they are appropriate, in light of their *familiarity*, given the *purposes* at hand. Reading well is a context-specific achievement. As an achievement, it is something valued, but as something normal, it is taken for granted.⁷

When theories idealise and formulate “the normal”, a further, third principle for selective abstraction is at work. This principle, as with those applied to materials and purposes, abstracts reading acts from the contexts wherein they are intelligible, and evaluable. The third principle idealises reading into levels and elements which are then treated as context-free. In so doing, not all acts of reading receive consideration. With this third principle of abstraction, the real interest is not any or all empirical acts of reading. Only rational, that is, normal, acts of reading are a concern. And they are a concern only in terms of how they can and should be done. How persons *could* read (quickly or ineffectively) does not receive consideration.

Flaws

Consider the implications of using the normal acts principle for selective abstraction. Suppose theorists of reading introduced explicit caveats about the genre of texts and purposes for which their theories were appropriate. The theories could be considered to be restricted domain theories. None would be a general theory of reading. However, if they used the third principle for selective abstraction, the theories would still not account for all empirical occurrences of reading in their domains. The theories would account only for readings done in a normal fashion in those domains.

Theories which selectively abstract from documents/texts, purposes and certain ways of doing an activity cannot formulate reading as a Galilean object. They are unable to deliver idealisations of reading which are context-free, which tell us about reading-in-itself independent of anything outside the processes which are posited as constituting reading. It is only in terms of certain purposes for reading that bottom-up and top-down theories have application. The former cover purposes which require accuracy of letter identification. The latter are appropriate for purposes which are best served by speed and minimal effort to process the maximum amount of information.

Theories differ in some of their components and in the ordering of those components during processing. Interactive theories share properties with both of the other types of theories, but they disagree with the assumption of unidirectional processing found in the other two types. If there is a degree of empirical support for all three types of theories,⁸ then “reading” cannot be defined and described exclusively and exhaustively as a common set of components, properties. “Reading” is not a class of events, in the mathematical sense presumed and required by Galilean science. It is

rather more like a family in Wittgenstein's sense (1958: 31-32), than a class. That is, there are a number of courses of action which can be called reading. They share some properties, but not all, and not a common, defining core. This is what we would expect of cultural phenomena (cf. Heap 1981).⁹ The essentialist presupposition, which is so closely tied to objectivism, is inappropriate when theorising about historically developed, culturally generated phenomena.

This brings us to the major flaw in the attempt to construct reading as a Galilean object. Leading theories selectively abstract from exactly what they require: the materials and purposes of reading. Theories are formulated in this way so as to render reading as a context-free, object-in-itself. However, theories require some conceptions of materials and purposes if they are to formulate an idealisation of how reading can be done in a normal fashion. To read well, that is, in a fashion considered normal for fluent readers, is to employ the skills appropriate to the relatively familiar or unfamiliar type and identity of material being read, given some purpose for reading. No theory can be logically sound which formulates reading as rationally employed skills, oriented to conventions of written language and print, yet which excludes the very things that decide for readers what skills to use, and how to orient to conventions. Theorists cannot exclude consideration of familiarity, materials and purposes, yet aim to describe or explain normal forms of reading.

It is the addition of the third selective principle, for idealizing normal reading, that undermines the success of the first two selective principles, those concerned with cutting reading out from the materials it addresses, and the purposes for which it is done. I see no way of dropping any of the three principles to achieve a Galilean conception of reading. If the principle is dropped which aims at normal reading, then what remains are unbounded groupings of processes and acts for which no rational organisation can be envisaged. There would be no way of separating skilled from novice reading, or reading from non-reading.

If either of the first two principles is surrendered, there would be no hope of generating a fully general theory which could account for all things we call reading. Theorists would have to admit that "reading" is a family of particular, overlapping properties, rather than a mathematically drawn class of properties. The only hope would be the discovery of some essential set of properties shared by all the things we call reading, no matter what materials were read, how familiar they were, for what purpose they were read, and no matter what skills were required to read them. My expectation is that such a theory would have achieved a Galilean conception of reading

at the price of having anything worth saying about how reading is done. Certainly, such a general theory could say nothing about how reading is done in any particular situation.

II

Shift

Our animating concern is how theory and research are to be used to inform the practice of reading education. From Part One we arrive at the view that theories of reading are flawed in some essential ways. Those flaws become clear only by judging the efforts of theorists in relation to a strong conception of science, as issues from the tradition of Galileo. Present day theorists may reject the dependence on Galileo as inappropriate to the type of science they wish to pursue. Such a rejection poses no problem as long as an alternative conception is made available which makes reading, and inquiries into reading, intelligible in non-objectivist, non-essentialist, non-reductivist terms. My interest would be to see how such an alternative provides a different interpretation of the types of theories we have discussed. That interpretation would have to demonstrate how current theories do not ignore the very things reading needs (materials and purpose), while formulating reading in a normal fashion.

In fact, given our animating concern, what is important is not debate about my arguments, and not the development of an alternative interpretation of current theories. Even the development of an alternative conception of science's objects is not what is needed most. Debate and development will not tell us how we should go about using existing theory and research to inform practice.

I assume, of course, that in spite of their flawed character, current theories are still of use. Indeed, they may become more useful once we begin to understand how to respect their limits. If I am correct, it will be necessary to rethink the wisdom of suggestions for practice which have been based on extrapolations from flawed theories, and from the research which supports them.

In Part Two I develop an alternative to essentialist, objectivist approaches to the cultural phenomena we call reading. I use this alternative to articulate how the social organisation of activities mediates the learning, and teaching, of reading. I argue for a shift to a situated perspective on reading. This is the perspective from which we can answer the question of

what counts as (adequate) reading in the situation where reading, as an activity, is carried out. I introduce "particularism" in order to establish an alternative to conceiving reading in essentialist terms. Particularism is the position that things which we encounter and speak of daily need first to be understood by analysts in their contextual particularity, rather than in terms of (assumed) universal, essential properties. It is particularism which gives us a way of understanding how certain actions come to be called reading, or writing.

The particularist assumption also provides the basis for understanding the acquisition of reading skills as a form of acculturation. Persons become acculturated as readers by learning what counts as reading, criterially and procedurally. Criterially, certain behaviours count *de jure* as reading. Procedurally, certain behaviours count *de facto* as reading. Becoming acculturated is a matter of learning and deciding *in situ* when procedural definitions of reading are criterially adequate.

Teachers need to understand how the social organisation of classroom activities, especially the organisation of reading lessons, contributes to student acculturation into reading. The way activities are organised introduces resources and limits which constrain the application of reading theories to reading curricula and pedagogy. I illustrate this point by considering what has been said about interruptions during oral reading, as opposed to what can be learned by examining the social organisation of small group reading lessons when interruptions occur.

Situated Perspective

Central to the effort of rethinking the wisdom of practices and theories is what I call the situated perspective. This perspective is an alternative to objectivism. It is an epistemological, methodological position developed in ethnomethodology through the adoption and modification of principles in phenomenology, interpretive sociology and ordinary language philosophy. The heart of the position is the phenomenological conception of consciousness as a relation between acts (both cognitive and corporeal) and the objects (in the widest sense) toward which those acts are directed. Consciousness is spoken of as intentional. All acts of consciousness are called intentional acts. All objects so intended are known as intended objects (cf. Gurwitsch 1966). Intentionality is simply a relation between acts and their objects.

What is most important for our concerns here is the way in which the phenomenological conception of consciousness *situates* an object as known, in relation to a knowing subject. Where the objectivist perspective treats objects of knowledge as having their properties in-themselves, the situated perspective of phenomenology has it that any properties claimed for some object must be accounted for in terms of the acts of consciousness through which such properties could be known. The objectivist perspective conceives of an object as an object-in-itself. The phenomenological perspective conceives only of an object as an object-for-consciousness.

The intentional theory of consciousness was recognised by Schutz (1967) in the 1920s to be appropriate for the grounding of Weber's interpretive sociology (1968). That sociology attempted to explain the occurrence of patterned social action in terms of the motives and motivational context of actors (persons). To understand social phenomena, Weber saw it as necessary to take the point of view of the actor.

In Schutz's terms (1964), the question to ask about any social phenomenon is not "What does this mean to me, the analyst?" This is the question which objectivists answer, as when they identify certain events as errors in oral reading. No, the question to ask is "What does this mean to the actor(s)?" Schutz's sustained writing efforts during his career aimed at formulating and presenting the methodology appropriate to providing an answer to this latter question.

The adoption of the actor's point of view, coupled with the phenomenological conception of consciousness, gives us the better part of what I call the situated perspective. It is a social scientific perspective adopted for methodological purposes. Adopting it directs us to ask how the properties of some object can be known *in situ*, in the settings where that object can be encountered. Obversely, we ask how some event, some behavioural display comes to be regarded *in situ* as a display of something. For example, the objectivist perspective tells us what reading is; the situated perspective orients to what counts as reading in the settings where persons understand someone to be reading (cf. Heap 1977b, 1980a).

The final element of the situated perspective involves a linguistic turn away from the strongly subject-oriented conceptions of "situation" found in interpretive sociologies (e.g., Blumer 1969). What counts as reading, error, or any object is not merely a matter of individual interpretation. It is not arbitrary, unconstrained. The constraint is language. The ordinary language philosophers, and the later Wittgenstein (1958) in particular, have written extensively and persuasively on the nature of language as a social,

historical, situated set of constraints on (and resources for) what anyone can mean by saying something.

This intertwining of Husserl, Schutz and Wittgenstein is recognised as the peculiar accomplishment of ethnomethodology (cf. Garfinkel 1967; Heap & Roth 1973; Coulter 1974).

Particularism

Combined with my use of the situated perspective is a presupposition which is an alternative to objectivism's essentialism. The particularist presupposition takes two forms, one strong and the other weak. The strong form takes it that all things about which we can talk and write are constituted in families rather than classes. Whereas essentialism assumes that the universe consists of objects and events which can be defined in terms of sets of common properties, strong particularism assumes that all things in the universe can be grouped together in terms of family resemblances. The idea of family resemblance is traceable to Wittgenstein in his well known treatment of games.

66. Consider for example the proceedings that we call "games." I mean board-games, card-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? - Don't say: "There must be something common, or they would not be called 'games'" - but *look and see* whether there is anything common to all. For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look! - Look for example at board-games, with their multifarious relationships. Now pass to card-games; here you find many correspondences with the first group, but many common features drop out, and others appear. When we pass next to ball-games, much that is common is retained, but much is lost. - Are they all "amusing"? Compare chess with noughts and crosses. Or is there always winning and losing, or competition between players? Think of patience. In ball games there is winning and losing: but when a child throws his ball at the wall and catches it again, this feature has disappeared. Look at the parts played by skill in chess and skill in tennis. Think now of games like ring-a-ring-a-roses; here is the element of amusement, but how many other characteristics have disappeared! And we can go through the many, many other groups of games in the same way; can see how similarities crop up and disappear.

And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing; sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.

67. I can think of no better expression to characterise these similarities than "family resemblance:" for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, feature, colour of eyes, gait, temperament, etc., etc., overlap and criss-cross in the same way. - And I shall say: "games" form a family. (1958: 31-2)

The weak form of particularism takes it that as between essentialism and strong particularism, it is better to assume the latter until evidence is found to support the former *in some particular case*. That is, weak particularism does not prejudge how the universe is organised, in terms of classes vs. families. Instead, this version of particularism begins inquiry assuming that the domain of study will be organised in terms of families, but is open to discovering *in this case* that "the family" is actually a class of common properties.

As a research heuristic, I prefer weak particularism (see Heap 1981). It allows one to take a situated perspective toward some events to see "what should be said" about them (see Austin 1970). This saves one from committing to a definition of the object of study which is insensitive to what something can be called in some particular setting by members of some culture.

While commitment to weak particularism is incompatible with a commitment to reductionism, it does not preclude discovering that some phenomenon evidences an essential structure of common properties. When the latter is discovered, one has lost some grounds for opposing the idea that all of Y, e.g., "reading", can be reduced to neurophysiological mechanisms and operations. Though, one still may not want to claim that Y could be *explained* by so reducing it (see Louch 1969). Weak particularism, however, has the advantage of turning the metaphysical search for reductionist science, (e.g., reducing cognitive processes to brain processes) into an empirical quest. The grail is thereby made no less holy; only harder to find.

Key differences between particularism and essentialism are to be found in their interests and in their corollary assumptions about the genesis of object identity. Essentialism is concerned with what something is. In the naturalism of essentialist thought, the source or basis for an object being what it is its properties. In having a certain set of properties any particular object becomes identifiable as being an instance of a certain class of object.

Particularism is concerned with what something can be called. The particularist approach has its roots in the linguistic philosophy of Wittgenstein, Austin and Ryle. From their work comes the central insight that what something is a display of, for members of some cultural, linguistic

community, depends on what that thing, event, occurrence, phenomenon can be called. What it can be called, appropriately, intelligibly, defensibly, depends on the conventions and situated ways of using language which that community can be taken to respect, or at least find sensible (see Heap 1976). Objects from the situated perspective are always objects-for-someone, but they are always objects as anyone (any apparently competent language user) could take, and report them to be. They are objects-(within-language)-for-someone in some circumstance.

In the pragmatism of particularist thought, the source or basis for an object being called one thing rather than another is the functions it serves. In being used, usable, or accountable (see Garfinkel 1967) in certain ways, something counts as a member of some family. For all practical purposes, it *is*, for example, a tool, a toggle, or writing.

To expand on the latter point: an object becomes a tool by being used like a tool; its use gives it a family resemblance to a tool. A command in a software program becomes a "toggle" because the object which it manipulates, for example, the insert mode, is either "on" or "off." That the command operates like a toggle gives adequate grounds for establishing the convention of calling hitting-a-key "toggling." And so it is with the very idea of issuing a "command" from a keyboard by pressing a key. The use, the function of pressing the key is *like* a command issued by one person to another. It brings certain desired results.

In seeing that the stretching and expansion of usage works from family resemblance - "what something is like" - we note one other important feature of particularism. A use or function occurs only within certain contexts, circumstances, settings. Something can be called, for example, "writing," because in the circumstance of its occurrence it is enough like the family name it goes by, for example, "writing," to be called writing - even though it is only a scribble made by a child (cf. Luria 1978). There is nothing about the scribbling in and of itself to make it, essentially, "writing." Rather, it is how the scribbling can be understood within the contexts of its occurrence, for example, what the child says about the scribbling, what the child has written and said before about her scribbling, and how recent scribbles compare in shape to prior efforts.

For particularism, the source of an object's identity is what people do, and what people can say about what they do. In this way, object identity is historically, culturally and socially derived. It is what it is called because it appears in circumstances where it is intelligible and (somehow) appropriate to call it that. Its identity is not context-free, as it is in essentialism.

Acculturation

The things we call reading are cultural phenomena. Consistent with particularism, what we call reading covers a variety of skills, processes and actions, all employed appropriately in a variety of different contexts. In order to understand the uses of reading theory in guiding practice, we must employ a situated perspective to consider how one can acquire reading skills, govern cognitive processes, and learn to act in one of the typical, rational fashions when reading. How does one learn a normative order, and the value of that order, that is, become acculturated?¹⁰

Rational ways of doing some acts can be discovered by trial-and-error, e.g., how best to shovel snow. For other types of acts, such as the various moves in martial arts, trial-and-error is possible, but terribly time consuming. In such cases, it is helpful for someone to demonstrate the acts, and to set up and monitor drills for skill acquisition, for example, kata in karate.

For some acts, such as reading, all the trial-and-error in the world will not, of itself, allow one to learn to read. This is because the acts of reading depend on normative orders. These orders cover the conventions observed in writing, text formatting, and reading itself. A second set of such orders covers how the skills and processes of reading are to be used and governed, that is, rationally organised, given certain materials and purposes. What the repeated efforts of Oxbridge philosophers (Austin 1970; Ryle 1949; Wittgenstein 1958) show, is that the production and reproduction of normative orders require the actions and aid of other persons. One cannot establish or learn a convention alone, for in a world of one there can be no conventions. Language is not possible in such a world, nor is reading. Thus, the question of how one becomes acculturated is a question about how one learns from and with, others. In our case, the question is how one learns from others what counts as reading.

What Counts as Reading, Criterially

The shift from looking at what reading is in objectivist terms to what counts as reading from a situated perspective, is a shift from being concerned with the universal, defining properties of an object-in-itself, to being concerned with the particular, constitutive properties of an object-in-context.

Searle (1969) has put forward a helpful formula for representing judgments about the identity of actions, as objects, in particular

circumstances: X counts as Y, in context C. Some behaviour, or behavioural artifact X, counts as some action Y, in the appropriate circumstances, C. Saying "I do" in the appropriate context, counts as a marriage vow. We can expand the domain of this formula by applying it to more than just speech acts. For example, filling certain blanks in the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests, counts as a display of reading comprehension skill, but only in circumstances where the test has been properly administered (cf. Heap 1980a).

The formula, X counts as Y, in context C, is just a simple gloss, a way of pointing to the context-oriented character of language use, and the cultural embeddedness of knowledge claims. By capturing the context-dependence of action identity, Searle's formula allows us to abide by the notion central to particularism that circumstances wherein and under which we encounter some phenomenon can be consequential for how we identify and understand the phenomenon in question.

Searle's formula presents a convenient way for stating the criteria which warrant a judgement. For example, we can use the fact (X) that a student's essay matches a section from a well-known introductory textbook, as evidence, as a criterion, for the judgment that the student engaged in plagiarism, (Y). Our judgment will be justified as long as the circumstances (C) surrounding X were appropriate for claiming Y. In the essay, if a endnote appears which cites the textbook but the endnote number is omitted in the body of the essay, we may have to revise our judgment. We may feel that the circumstances force us to castigate the student for carelessness (a new Y), rather than for plagiarism, in the preparation of his manuscript.

The particularist approach, at the judgmental level, is concerned with what can be used as criteria for warranting knowledge claims. The work of Wittgenstein (1958, 1965) formulates different types of criteria, and, in spite of difficulties in that work (Heap 1980b), it provides the basis for arguing as to the type of criteria appropriate for judgments about the display of reading skills (cf. Heap 1980a).

What Counts as Reading, Procedurally

Becoming a mature reader, that is, acculturated, involves not simply learning to read. If one is to operate as a competent member of a culture, one must learn what counts as reading, criterially. Learning to read is concerned with how reading is done. Learning what counts as reading, criterially, is concerned with when reading can be said to have been done,

well or poorly. Knowing how to read, presumably, allows one to recognise when others have done it, or are doing it.¹¹ However, in learning to read, one's experience is first of other persons reading.¹² Consistent with work in Soviet psychology (Vygotsky 1978), it is in experiencing other persons reading, and in experiencing one's own reading efforts in certain supervised circumstance, that one learns what counts as reading, criterially, and therefore, culturally (cf. Heap 1989).

How does one learn what it is to read, and what counts as reading, criterially? One pays attention to what counts as reading, procedurally. Among other things, one notes what is treated as reading well, or poorly. As with learning other normative orders, one pays attention to empirical regularities and the orientation displayed to them by others. And one looks for family resemblance between procedural definitions from one setting to another.

The idea that there are procedural definitions of reading is akin to the concept in interpretive sociology of "definition of the situation." "If men [persons] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas & Thomas 1928: 572). Out of the variety of approaches to this concept, the one relevant here is a structural one. Persons' perceptions of the meaning of situations depend on cultural resources for making sense of those settings, and for making public one's understandings, for defining the situation (cf. Goffman 1974). The concept is overwhelmingly used to talk about the "meaning" of situations, although there seems to be no clarity or agreement about the meaning of "meaning."

The idea of a procedural, operative or working definition is more delimited in scope than that of the "definition of the situation." I use the former to refer to interactive work, and the outcome of such work, which apparently justifies, or simply permits, an interactant to hold some belief about a state of affairs. Whether the belief is true, and in fact is justified, is not guaranteed by procedural definition. Procedural definition does not yield knowledge, that is, justified true belief (cf. Lewis 1946). No actual belief need be predicated. Proof of justification for holding the belief, outside of the setting, need not be provided. The truth of a proposition expressing the belief need never be raised as an issue. Procedural definition simply gives interactants a reason to believe that some state of affairs is as it was portrayed or implied to be during the interaction.

What counts as reading, procedurally, is whatever parties to a setting are apparently justified in believing to be the case about what reading is, what the skills of reading are, and how well any of the interactants performed. An interactant learns what reading is, how it is done, and what

counts as reading, criterially, by paying attention to what counts as reading, procedurally, *in particular situations*.

For novices - persons who, by definition, do not know what reading is, because they cannot yet do it well - procedural definition furnishes grounds for two judgments: (1) this is adequate, or inadequate, reading (performance), and (2) this must be like other performances that can be called adequate, or inadequate, reading. In being able to make these twin judgments the learner is able to move from a sense of a procedural definition in one particular time and place to other settings. A connection can be made with, and by, family resemblance.

Of course, this formulation is too linear. The learner has to sort out what in the current situation is "reading" and what are just contingencies of the current performance, for example, that a word was pronounced in a certain way, that the reader did (or did not) point at the word with his finger, etc. Following an early line of research in ethnomethodology, we can say that procedural definitions are disambiguated by their collective overlapping: a pattern emerges from many settings, while versions of the pattern are used to interpret each of the settings. Pattern and particular settings definitions reflexively elaborate each other (Garfinkel 1967). This may be how more complex knowledge structures can be built up and "internalised" (to use Vygotsky's term, 1978).

From procedural definitions interactants also learn the moral side of reading: what materials are worth reading, and what is important to look for while reading (Heap 1985). In learning what to look for the interactant learns what reading can be used for, what purposes it can serve. The interactant learns procedurally about just those things which reading theories do not address, but which must be known if one is to apply reading skills appropriately, that is, read in a normal fashion.

Notice that our learner is now an "interactant." Not only is another person taken to be present, it is assumed that the learner interacts with that person, or persons. Learning to read is done, at least partly, through face-to-face interaction. The learner interacts with one who is taken to know what reading is, how to do it, and what counts as reading, criterially. In appearing to have this knowledge, the other, the "teacher",¹³ has the authority (Bachrach & Baratz 1963) to achieve and enforce procedural definitions of reading. In such settings of text-oriented interactions, whatever the teacher permits to pass, uninterrupted and apparently unchallenged, as an adequate display of reading skill, counts, procedurally as adequate, until further notice. On the teacher's authority, students can take it that this is what (some) reading is like (cf. Borko & Eisenhart 1986).

Obviously, not everything which counts procedurally as adequate display of reading skill, counts criterially. That is, not all the things which are uninterrupted and unchallenged are adequate, that is, would be judged as adequate by fluent readers. Not that all of the latter need agree. The point is that we can expect some agreement that, for example, some word was mispronounced or misunderstood by the reader. We simply expect that not all mistakes are always noticed by the teacher.¹⁴ And even if they are noticed, some may not be brought to the reader's attention, or to the attention of other parties to the setting, as in a group reading lesson. Of course, nothing rules out the possibility of correct reading performances being wrongly defined, procedurally, as inadequate.

What provides for the possibility of learning to read from procedural definitions, also provides for the possibility of developing apparently justified, but nonetheless false, beliefs about what constitutes adequate reading performance. In learning and teaching reading, interactants must communicate. Communication is linked to various infelicities (Austin 1962), not the least of which involves the problem of understanding a speaker's frame of reference, which is required if one is to understand what the speaker means (cf. Heap 1980a). Procedural definitions are doubly important, then, because they are consequential and double-edged. They can edge the learner toward either culturally correct or culturally incorrect versions of reading. And, *within the situation*, the novice is unlikely to be able to decide between the two. Of course, the organisation of procedural definitions has a bias in favour of cultural correctness.

Studying What Counts as Reading, Procedurally

As is no doubt obvious, what counts as reading, procedurally, is situational and concrete. It cannot be stated generally, in a context-free fashion. Every participant in an interaction may have a different perception, and hence a different belief, about what the procedural definition is. From the outside, as observers, we have no direct access to those beliefs. However, we can access any of those beliefs which are predicated in the setting. All we have, though, is our interpretation of the public version of the belief. We have the right, culturally, to ascribe the public version to the speaker as being what he or she really believes, personally, but the two types of belief may not, and need not be in accord (see Heap 1980a).

Given all this, the question arises as to how procedural definitions can be studied, if at all. My answer is that all we can study, and all that needs to

be examined, is what could be taken to count as reading, procedurally, in some setting. This modal shift from actual definitions to possible definitions secures for us the likelihood of agreement among observers about possible definitions, based on membership in the culture which we study. Such judgments should be supportable with reference to audio-visually available materials, for example, audiotapes, videotapes and transcripts of interactions (cf. Heap 1980c).

As between the definitions which participants may take away with them, and the interactive work which results in definitions, the recommended object of study is the latter. The focus of such study is on the ways activities are socially organised, in terms of turn-taking, discourse moves, task demands, and reading materials, as these are woven into the fabric of interaction. These cultural resources are reproducible and can be used across a wide variety of settings, with different cohorts of interactants.

Studying possible definitional work done through these cultural resources is worth doing because the social organisations which compose that work can be changed, to produce other effects. If we know how practices can be organised, we can begin to know how they may be changed. But before worrying about changing them, we need to reflect on the pedagogical and interactional functions which such social organisations support, foster, or inhibit.

Insights

From the study of the social organisation of reading activities, it is possible to say a few things about what such studies can show.

If we look at the literature on teacher interruptions during oral reading, we find the claim that interruptions should be avoided. Interruptions are argued to prevent students from being able to develop a sense of the coherence of the text (Allington 1983). From this view, interruptions are considered to be disruptive (McGill-Franzen & McDermott 1978; Niles, Graham & Winstead 1976). Teacher correction behaviour is to be tolerated only if reading errors change the meaning of the text (Goodman & Goodman 1977).

The literature on interruptions has been generated under the dominant paradigm of the relation of theory to practice. A theory of reading, of the top-down variety, is used as the basis for deciding what pedagogic practices are wise or unfortunate. The literature is valuable in that it does look closely at practice, but it does not provide an adequate appreciation of the

local rationality of practices of interruption. It does not consider the social organisation of interaction during group oral reading lesson phases. Were it to do so, there would be the discovery of a rationale for teacher interruption behaviour which arises from within the activity's organisation, as a group activity.

In applying psycholinguistic reading theories to judge teaching practices, researchers have retained the Cartesian, individualist focus of psychology (Heap 1984). They have looked at reading as something that goes on in the mind of the reader, rather than something that goes on in a group. Oral reading efforts by the designated reader produce behaviours (X) which are used as criteria for judging the adequacy of their reading skills (Y). But such behaviours are not available only to the teacher. The teacher may be the only one whose judgment we would accept, but the behaviours are available to all persons in the group to judge. The other students, may, and should, have an interest in judging whether the designated reader's behaviour is adequate. But their judgment is not final. It is not authoritative. It is the teacher who has authority. The teacher's behaviour is decisive for determining what counts as adequate reading, procedurally.

If students learn from their teacher's behaviour, then there is a local, organisational rationale for correcting student reading errors. Judgment based on the implications of reading theories, focusing on the individual reader, is against interrupting, against correcting reading error. Judgment from within the reading setting, based on a situated appreciation of the consequentiality of teacher behaviour for what counts as reading, procedurally, is in favour of correcting reading error (Heap 1984).

Judgment from a situated perspective does not support the conclusion that all oral reading errors, or "miscues" (Goodman & Goodman 1977), should be repaired, whether or not they change the meaning of the text. Instead, the teacher must exercise judgment based on what he or she thinks might be made of an error by students who are not yet competent and confident in recognising error. The issue here is not the psycholinguists' concern with the consequentiality of an error for altering the meaning of the text. The issue, from a situated perspective, is the sociological concern with the consequentiality of an error for affecting group members' acquisition of reading skills and reading-relevant knowledge.

If corrections are not made, other students, besides the designated reader, may be misled as to how certain words are pronounced. Students may take an uncorrected miscue as *de facto* correct, thus not learning that it is *de jure* wrong. In correcting errors teachers reinforce procedural

definitions of adequate reading which are criterially correct. In circumstances where teachers correct oral reading errors, what counts as reading procedurally, is what counts as reading criterially.

From considering possible procedural definitions resulting from the social organisation of group oral reading activities (Heap 1984), we gain insight into what a teacher ought to consider when students commit errors in oral reading. The teacher must attend to the possible consequences for *all* students of the teacher correcting the error. In doing this, and in order to do this, the teacher must move away from an individualist focus on the designated reader, a focus informed by objectivist theories of reading and reading pedagogy. The teacher must adopt a situated perspective on the social organisation of the reading activity at hand. A situated perspective will allow the teacher to consider what events may mean to each and all group members as those events unfold in the course of a reading activity.

Conclusion: Guiding Practice

Unless we attend to procedural definitions and how teaching and learning activities are organised to produce them, we can never know whether our uses of reading theories are appropriate to the interactional contexts of their application. Those theories, in their flawed ways, tell us what reading is, and how it is done, supposedly in context-free terms. But students' knowledge of the what and how of reading is culturally and socially mediated through interactions with other persons (cf. Vygotsky 1978). We simply do not know how such mediations define reading to the reader. We do not know what we are teaching, procedurally, about the value of reading, and how it ought to be done. We do not know how students are acculturated to reading.

As can now be appreciated, reading theories have their flaws precisely where mediations must turn theory into practice: at the interface of cognitive processes and the materials to be read. The theories provide formulations of reading processes, but not how to use them, in normal fashions, in relation to types of documents and texts, for certain purposes. When introduced in any particular context to a learner, reading necessarily addresses more or less familiar materials, under some purpose. In trying to be context free, reading theories guarantee that the mediation of theory to practice will require a wide set of decisions about matters relevant to reading, but unmentioned by the theories themselves. Further theorizing about reading is needed, theorizing which breaks with the Galilean,

essentialist tradition. That theorizing must aim to formulate reading from a situated perspective as a family of context-embedded activities.

Finally, a new paradigm is required for the theory-practice relation. Guidance of practice cannot be achieved solely by turning to theories of reading to see how reading is done, objectively, essentially. Guidance requires that we look at what can count as reading, procedurally, based on how reading activities can be socially organised. We need to discover the local rationality and moral dimension of these social organisations. Combining knowledge of social organisation with context-embedded conceptions of reading should allow us to reform practice in rational, valuable directions.

Notes

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1. For our purposes here we need not separate the epistemology and ontology of objectivism. The two, of course, are correlative. When an object is conceived as a being-in-itself, inquiry necessarily precedes as if the outcome of the inquiry will be indifferent to the circumstances of its pursuit. Epistemology becomes knowledge without a knowing subject (cf. Popper 1969).
2. To make matters more concrete: if a valid standardised test is appropriately administered to the right age group of students, then the resulting marks (or absence of marks) in the test booklet display the level of the test takers' skills. Establishing that the conditions of occurrence were met is sufficient to claim, within some parameters, that, e.g., word recognition skills were displayed on the Canadian Test of Basic Skills. The properties of "word recognition skill" are thought to be represented by marks on the pages independent of anything except the (controlled) "conditions of occurrence" for administering the text. How the test items were understood, and what resources students used to produce their answers, are excluded as relevant, as part of the context to be used to decide if the "answers" really do display the presence or absence of the test's target skills (cf. Heap 1980a).
3. A reading which did not claim to recover a writer-intended, intersubjective message, a message that others could recover as well, would be a "private reading". As with so-called private language, we are persuaded that the possibility of such readings is unintelligible (cf. Wittgenstein 1958; Hunter 1973).
4. Ironically, it can be argued that the components of reading and learning to read (Carroll 1976) are really components of how our culture believes reading should be taught.

5. I have found it sensible and useful to conceive context in phenomenological terms, as whatever appears relevant to the identity and existence of an object, as perceived from the perspective of the acts directed towards that object (cf. Gurwitsch 1964; Schutz 1970).
6. We do ascribe moral value to the effects and consequences of natural occurrences, as when we swear at yet another snow fall. But in our culture we do not evaluate how well it snows. A good snow is not a *morally* good snow. In that any natural phenomenon can be rendered a cultural one, i.e., treated as motivated, we would not be surprised to find cultures where "snowing" was subject to moral evaluation. This is to say that the boundaries between natural and cultural phenomena are drawn from within culture. They need not be precisely drawn, either. Precision likely would be connected to the need for precision in judging a parameter, a need which, of course, is cultural. Our concern here is with our own culture's distinctions and logics. I must add at this point, though, that "culture" is an open concept. Its boundaries and properties are not fully clear to me, i.e., I do not have a satisfactory way of talking about culture.
7. In line with understanding reading as a valued achievement, it is worth noting that "good" and "bad" are descriptors applied to learners' efforts. After learners are able to perform at a fluent level, good performance is just regarded as normal.
8. I am unable to comment on the validity and reliability of such support. If it turned out, for example, that all the evidence in support of one theory type was invalid, or weak in some devastating way, *and* support for one other theory type was valid and strong, then the dream of a general theory of reading could be kept alive. For reasons noted in the text above, I feel that the dream is only a dream.
9. It is precisely this feature which also foils the efforts of those who seek a Husserlian phenomenological social science focusing on the essences of cultural phenomena (see Heap 1981).
10. I prefer the term acculturation over socialisation because, to me, the former has important moral overtones. Socialisation involves learning how to act, i.e., learning a normative order. Acculturation involves learning how to act, and learning why that way of acting is important, valuable. These, of course, are not standard distinctions, but I believe that they will turn out to be valuable ones for understanding the character of pedagogic practice.
11. That which stands for X in Searle's formula is something displayed in the course, or as a result, of employing one's reading skills. In the case of reading, X is not Y. X only counts as Y (Heap 1980a).

When reading, one is interior to the X-Y relation, and experiences it from the Y side. When observing others read, or in looking at the artifacts of their efforts (e.g., marks on a test sheet), one is exterior to the X-Y relation, and experiences it from the X side. The framework I wish to suggest presumes that one becomes a mature reader only by first being exterior to the X-Y relation. One learns what counts, criterially, as reading, before one can be said to know how to read.

12. Try to imagine a circumstance where someone's first ever encounter with reading was his own efforts at reading. How would he know that he had read?
13. "Teacher" refers to anyone who teaches, and obviously is not limited to state-certified professionals.
14. This is a common sense conception of error, as objective, as there whether or not anyone notices it. As it is our culture's dominant conception, it is an important resource for members and analysts. Bracketing (cf. Husserl 1962) the dominant conception, we can note, from a situated perspective, that errors are only found *in situ*. Every discovery of an error that was "previously unnoticed," has no greater certainty of having located all the errors in that setting than the first consideration of errors in that setting. This abiding uncertainty necessarily appertains to any epistemic claim about contingent states of affairs. Phenomenologically, objective error reduces to what counts as error, procedurally, *in situ*. Objective error which is never noticed may be real, but it is not socially consequential. Socially, it does not exist. It does not enter the public domain of interaction and predication, and thus is not of interest to the type of inquiry I wish to pursue: ethnomethodology (cf. Heap & Roth 1973).

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Chapter 6

The Embeddedness of Reading In Classroom Life: Reading as a Situated Process

Judith L. Green and Lois A. Meyer

The answer to the question, what is reading, depends on why the question is being asked and what framework is used to define and locate instances of reading. The framework that guides this exploration defines reading not in terms of cognitive processes but in terms of the social and academic demands for participation that are constructed as part of the interactions of teachers and students with and about text. From this perspective, members of a classroom form a social group in which a common culture is constructed. This culture is reflected in the patterned ways members of the social group develop for acting and interacting together, for interpreting what occurs, for evaluating what is appropriate to know and do in the classroom. Knowledge of these patterns becomes part of the teacher's and students' frame of reference and belief system (or presuppositions) about how to "do" life in that classroom (Goodenough 1971; Spradley 1980; Zaharlick & Green in press).

Reading, like other elements of classroom life, is viewed as a situated process that is socially constructed by participants within and across the events of life in each classroom. What "counts" as reading in any given classroom or classroom event cannot be defined a priori but is defined over time as part of the interactions of teacher and students with and about text (Heap 1980). In other words, reading is seen as situationally defined and socially produced in classroom events. Participation and reading performances are socially accomplished processes (e.g., Barr 1987; Bloome 1987a, 1987b, 1989; Bloome & Green in press; Collins 1987; Green & Weade 1987; Green, Weade & Graham 1988; Heap 1980, 1985; this volume; McDermott 1976; Weade & Green 1989).

The purpose of this chapter is not to explore how reading is socially accomplished since this has been discussed in depth in the work cited throughout this paper, in other chapters in this volume, and elsewhere. Rather, the purpose of this chapter is to illustrate what is involved in

exploring reading from one particular theoretical framework: the interactive sociolinguistic. In so doing, the intent is to make visible how the theoretical perspective selected guides the exploration of reading as it occurs in the everyday life in classrooms, and influences what can be learned and what claims a researcher can make.

Defining a Situated Perspective

For the interactive sociolinguist, reading is viewed as "situated" in the everyday events of classroom life with and about text. The definition of reading as a situated perspective is not unique to the interactive sociolinguistic perspective that frames this particular paper. Within anthropology (e.g., Geertz 1983; Goodenough 1971; Spradley 1980), education (e.g., Erickson 1986; Erickson & Shultz 1981; Green & Wallat 1981; Green & Harker 1982; Heath 1982; McDermott 1976; Spindler 1982) psychology (e.g., Brown, Collins & Duguid 1989; Lave 1988; Moll & Diaz 1986; Scribner & Cole 1981), sociolinguistics (e.g., Cook-Gumperz 1986; Fishman 1988; Gumperz 1982, 1986; Gumperz & Hymes 1972; Hymes 1974) and sociology (e.g., Garfinkel 1967; Heap, this volume; Heritage 1984; Smith 1987), researchers have adopted theoretical perspectives that focus on examining and understanding the situated nature of everyday life of a social group. Just what questions are explored and what phenomena are studied depend on how these various groups of researchers frame their questions, what theories they use, and what actions they take or methods they use. Thus, what is meant by a situated perspective is itself problematic (cf. Smith 1987).

For example, an ethnomethodologist who is concerned with the production of social order tends to focus on the production or social accomplishment of reading at particular points in time or within particular events (see Baker; Heap, this volume; Heritage 1984). Little or no consideration is given to the social history of the participants in the event being studied.

In contrast, the interactive sociolinguist grounds the analysis of speech events in an ethnography that provides sociocultural and historical information about members of the social group under study (Gumperz 1986). The ethnography provides information for understanding the linguistic, social, and contextual presuppositions members of the group bring to an event from membership and participation in other social groups (e.g., family, other classrooms, ethnic groups). In this way the interactive

sociolinguist is able to explore what is occurring and being accomplished in the local event under study and how knowledge obtained in prior situations (the sociohistory of the group and/or of members of the current group) influences what is, will, and can occur (cf. Gumperz 1986).

Both of these perspectives view events as unfolding and accomplished through the interactions of participants. The difference between these views is one of focus, phenomena studied, theories used, and types of claims the researcher wants to make (Bloome & Green in press; Heap, personal communication, 6/27/89). These differences lead to further differences in the ways that an analysis will be undertaken and in what is foregrounded in the analysis. Thus, each perspective provides a particular lens through which a common situation, an event under construction, is examined (Green & Harker 1988). To understand what is meant by a situated perspective, then, we must know what claims a researcher wishes to make and what theoretical orientation frames the problem or issue under study.

Defining Culture: Framing the Situated Perspective

While there is a common concern for the "culture" of a group by those who adopt a situated perspective, what is meant by culture varies with the theoretical framework of the researcher. Therefore, to frame what is meant by "reading" and how data were analyzed in this chapter using a "situated" perspective, further exploration is needed of how culture is defined.

The definition of culture that underlies the study in this chapter is grounded in the work of cognitive anthropology (e.g., Goodenough 1981; Spradley 1981). From this perspective, social action is viewed as culturally patterned and what members of a social group come to know, understand, expect, produce, and do is learned from participating in and observing how members participate in the everyday events that make up life of the social group (Erickson 1986; Heath 1982; Spradley 1980; Zaharlick & Green in press). That is, from observing who can do what, with whom, under what conditions, when, where, for what purpose and with what outcome members of a social group (and researchers/outsideers) develop cultural knowledge needed to participate appropriately in the events of the social group under study.

From participating in other social groups (e.g., family, church, school, classroom, reading group), members of the group under study develop norms and expectations for how everyday life is "supposed to be" and about

what "counts" as appropriate and/or preferred action, knowledge or interactions in those groups (Heap 1980; this volume). In addition, members construct knowledge and expectations about appropriate roles and relationships as well as the rights and obligations entailed by these aspects of culture.

By defining culture in this way, we can identify the patterns of everyday life of different groups and of subgroups within a larger group (e.g., the school within the community; the classroom within the school; the reading group within the classroom). Just which group (or subgroup) will be studied and how they will be studied depends on the questions, theories, and purposes of the researcher. By using this definition, we can locate a setting in which people affiliate over time (e.g., family, friendship group, Camp Fire group, church, school, classroom, reading group).

Once the group (subgroup) has been located, the patterns of life can be explored. In addition, the ways in which participation in this group influences and is influenced by the cultural knowledge individuals in this setting bring to this situation from membership in other groups beyond this setting (e.g., family, church, community, ethnic group, gender) can also be examined.

Central to this perspective is the view that actions and knowledge of a group are not "owned" by any individual but are seen as constructed and acquired in the social activity and events of a particular social group. That is, cultural knowledge is held by the group and not by an individual. Each individual's actions and interactions, however, reflect her/his own cultural knowledge. The cultural knowledge of an individual, therefore, is always dynamic and an individual's repertoire of knowledge can be extended as she/he interacts with other members of the social group and/or with other social groups as part of everyday life.

To explore what is required within a given situation as well as across the everyday events of life of the social group, the researcher observes, records, and analyses the ordinary as well as extraordinary actions and interactions of participants within and across a variety of situations. The goal of the researcher is to understand what members of the social group need to know, produce, predict, interpret, and perform in order to participate in socially and culturally appropriate ways in the life of the group (Heath 1982). The goal is not merely to describe what is occurring; it is interpretive, to obtain an "emic" or insider's perspective.

Also central to this perspective is the notion that classroom life is dynamic: actions and interactions of teacher and students are not a script to be followed. The dynamic nature of life in classrooms is reflected in the

ways that the norms and expectations for “doing” life in the classroom are constructed and reconstructed within and across the ordinary events of the social group.

The researcher’s task is to capture the ordinary (often invisible) and extraordinary (marked) aspects of life in order to identify the cultural knowledge necessary for participation in socially appropriate ways in the group. One factor that makes this task possible is that during the construction of a novel event or the reconstruction of a recurrent event, individual members may “breach” a norm, adopt an inappropriate role, or communicate in ways that are not clear to others. At such breach points, the expectations for appropriate action, knowledge, interpretation and/or communication become visible (e.g., Mehan 1979; Green & Harker 1982; Heap 1980; Tannen 1979).

These points are often referred to as “frame clashes” or points at which the frame of reference that guides an individual’s interpretation does not match that of other individuals in the situation. The ways in which participants in a situation repair or fail to repair such breaks in the flow of activity and their perceptions as reflected in actions and words make visible what was expected or preferred (Heap 1980, 1985). At such points, then, the “emic” or insider perspectives are visible to an outsider (a researcher).

Exploring Reading in the Everyday Actions of Classroom Life

The exploration of reading in classroom contexts generally begins with an assumption that reading events are those that focus on or involve a written or published text (e.g., Heath 1982). While the analysis of reading reported in this chapter¹ began with this assumption, this definition soon proved to be inadequate. Exploration of the patterns of classroom life (i.e., what occurred, with whom, under what conditions, for what purpose, in what ways, when, where and with what outcome) led to an understanding that reading in this classroom often involved events that on the surface did not appear to be reading in the “traditional” way it has been defined.

To construct a definition of reading in this classroom required three additional concepts: interactions in context, cycles of activity, and intertextuality. While the cultural perspective provided a framework for identifying what was occurring between and among members of the class, these constructs provide a basis for identifying the boundaries of classroom events, exploring the interrelationships among events, and for interpreting what was involved in reading in this classroom.

Interactions in Classrooms

Exploration of interactions in classrooms often begins with the identification of an event that is viewed as "important" to the researcher. The event is then transcribed and the interactions are represented graphically on paper. Little concern is given to defining the context of the event, in exploring the event from the perspective of those involved in the event (e.g., as reflected in their talk and actions), or in locating this event within the lifeworld of the classroom. Therein lies the problem, for just how actions and interactions are transcribed and how boundaries of events are defined depend on the theory (Ochs 1979) and the goals of the researcher.

Our initial analysis involved identifying ways in which time was spent in the classroom for each of the seventeen days of the English class. This procedure was guided by the assumption that by identifying the major blocks of time in the classroom, we could identify the events of classroom life. This procedure also proved to be naive. What became evident was that events often occurred across time, that the various parts of an event did not always occur on consecutive days, and that the beginning and ending of events were signalled in the actions and interactions of participants. Thus, we had to reconsider how to transcribe and represent the event to be explored.

In this study, transcription involved making decisions about whether talk or participation structures (Erickson 1982) would be represented; how boundaries between events and units within events would be identified and represented; the level of detail needed to represent sub-events; how the event would be represented in the flow of life in the classroom (a part-whole relationship); and how verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication would be represented. In other words, transcription was a theoretically driven process (cf. Ochs 1979), a process driven by both sociolinguistic and cognitive anthropological concepts.

For the purpose of this analysis, transcription involved a series of steps. The first step involved constructing maps of the overall structure of the day and identifying the parts of events across time, for example, sharing information about an object that reflected self (Green & Harker 1982; Meyer 1988). The second step involved recording all talk and/or actions as they occurred within a segment of classroom life selected for analysis (Green & Wallat 1981; Green & Harker 1982; Weade & Green 1989). Step three involved exploration of the transcribed event for indications of presuppositions of teachers and students about requirements for participation (Gumperz 1982, 1986) and identification of action and

interaction patterns among participants that indicated for what they were holding each other accountable (e.g., Erickson & Shultz 1981; Green & Harker 1982; Green, Weade & Graham 1988).

While events were transcribed to permit careful “reading” or interpretation, these were not the sole source of information. The videotape records that provided a basis for the transcription were also viewed and reviewed along with the transcript. Thus, nonverbal information (e.g., physical organisation, eye gaze, gesture, distance, use of space and objects) not recorded on the transcript was also considered. The transcript, therefore, provided a framework for analysis and a systematic way of graphically representing select aspects of the events being constructed. The transcripts, the maps (a form of event transcription) and the visual “text” of the videotape record were the actual basis for interpretation. In other words, these sources of information provided contextual information about classroom life and were themselves contexts for analysis. The way in which transcripts were constructed, therefore, influenced what could be identified as reading in this classroom.

Exploring Talk as a Means of Locating and Defining Reading

The segment of interaction that follows was taken from an event that on the surface does not appear to be related to reading. This event involved a “sharing” of objects individual students had brought to class that were characteristic of them. However, as will become evident as the layers of context are considered is that this event was part of a “web” of interrelated events that supported interpretation processes and writing projects in this classroom. Thus, while no text was present, there were several texts related to this event.

Transcript Segment: Talking About Objects with Vicki

Line	Speaker	Message Unit
01	TEACHER P	OKAY
02	TEACHER P	WHO ELSE BROUGHT SOMETHING
03	TEACHER P	VICKI YOU DID
04	Vicki	a picture
05	Vicki	picture of my nephew and I
06	Vicki	practically live with my sister

- 07 Vicki and I just practically take care of him
 08 TEACHER P AAAHH (said on a single tone quickly)
 09 Vicki (inaudible)
 10 TEACHER P HOW OLD IS HE
 11 Vicki eight months
 12 TEACHER P EIGHT MONTHS
 13 TEACHER M AAHHH (said in a tone that descends in pitch)
 14 TEACHER P AND HIS NAME
 15 Vicki aaron
 16 TEACHER P SO WHEN YOU GO HOME
 17 TEACHER P IN THE AFTERNOONS
 18 TEACHER P DO YOU SPEND A LOT OF TIME WITH HIM
 19 TEACHER P WHEN HE'S AWAKE
 20 Vicki yeh
 21 Vicki he starts laughing
 22 TEACHER M AAHHH (repetition of intonation contour in line 13, only longer in duration)
 23 TEACHER P YOU REALLY LIKE CHILDREN
 24 (pause 2 seconds)
 25 Vicki just him (Vicki begins to smile and changes body language to lean forward)
 26 TEACHER P JUST HIM
 27 all (teachers, Vicki, and other students laugh)
 28 TEACHER P DO YOU EVER DO MUCH BABYSITTING
 29 Yvonne (Yvonne comes into class, speaks to TEACHER M; this segment of interaction co-occurs with the talk between TEACHER M, Vicki and the members of the class who are in role of listeners.)
 30 TEACHER P FOR ANYBODY ELSE
 31 Vicki (Vicki's response was inaudible and not visible on the tape)
 32 TEACHER P NO
 33 TEACHER M (giving some direction to Yvonne who proceeds to complete directions)
 34 TEACHER P ALL RIGHT DO WE
 35 TEACHER P DOES ANYBODY ELSE HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE

As presented, this segment is decontextualised from what occurred prior to these interactions and what follows as well as from all other aspects of classroom life. Therefore, the initial "reading" or interpretation of this segment depended on the series of questions posed previously: who can do what, with whom, under what conditions, when, where, for what purpose, with what expected or realised outcome(s)?

By asking these questions several aspects of the interaction became visible. First, this segment of actions and interactions occurred between two teachers (M and P) and one student (Vicki) in the presence of the other members of the class. The class members, however, do not interact directly with Vicki or the teachers (except at line 27). Second, one teacher (P) is doing most of the interacting with Vicki. Third, Vicki's and Teacher P's talk is tied through a series of questions and responses.

Fourth, Teacher M also participates in the interactions (lines 13 and 22) until another student, Yvonne, enters the classroom. Teacher M's interactions, however, are comments ("aahhh") on Vicki's information and not in the primary interaction channel. These comments and her observed actions signal to Vicki and the members of the class that she is listening and participating as a member of the group. Fifth, Teacher M leaves this interaction situation to interact with Yvonne, who enters the classroom at line 29, while Vicki and Teacher P continue the primary event. These events co-occur in the classroom.

Sixth, we learn that this interaction is about an object that Vicki brought to "share" with the class (lines 01-03) and that others will be invited to share (lines 34-35). Seventh, we also learn what the talk was about: Vicki's relationship with her cousin who is represented in the picture, and Vicki's view of other children. Finally, we learn that Vicki's "turn" has ended and the event will continue (lines 34-35).

From this segment, then, we could tell who is participating, what they are talking about, how the event has unfolded to the point at which the transcript ends, what the apparent purpose of the event is, what roles and relationships exist among members of the group within this brief segment, and that the segment presented is part of a larger event.

What we could not tell is why this event was happening, how it was related to other aspects of classroom life, what would happen next, how representative of classroom life this segment of interaction was, or whether or not this event was related to "reading" in this classroom. Thus, to understand how and in what ways this event was part of "reading" in this classroom, we needed to consider larger segments of classroom life.

Cycles of Activity

An exploration of how time was spent within and across days led to the identification of the notion of a "cycle of activity". The term "event" as well as the notion of "lesson" were both problematic. When did an event

begin and end? What was a lesson? How did the members of this group refer to what they were doing? The term cycle of activity was selected to capture the over time nature of classroom events.

The teachers and students did not refer to the events of classroom life in general terms (e.g., as a lesson) but rather often signalled the event by name (e.g., journal writing, table discussion). Thus, there was no common classroom term to identify the boundary of events. The notion of cycle of activity was selected since it indicates a complete series of actions about a single topic or for a specific purpose. To be part of a cycle of activity, events must be "tied" together by a common task or serve a common purpose.

The "tied" nature of classroom events (sub-events) and the identification of cycles of activity led to a discovery that such cycles were part of larger cycles. One of the main cycles of activity in this classroom was "autobiography". Table 1 provides a timeline by day of all of the events that comprise the cycle of activity involving autobiographic personal experiences. It shows the ways in which teachers and students shared personal experiences in their own lives and how they explored life-to-text and text-to-life relations (Cochran-Smith 1984). As indicated in this table, the cycle of activity involving sharing was only one cycle of activity that when combined with other cycles of activity led to the construction of an autobiography. The autobiography was one of the primary bases for the grade in this course.

If we return to the "segment" of classroom life presented in the transcript above, what becomes evident is that this segment is one complete turn at sharing: that is, one student has the floor and is sanctioned to interact with the teacher who is leading the event. This segment of the cycle is not complete on another level since other students are provided with an opportunity to share. Consideration of all talk about sharing of objects that reflected self indicated that the cycle of activity involved in this event occurred across four of the seventeen days of the class (days 10, 11, 12, 14). Thus, the event that was labelled by participants as sharing objects that reflected themselves can only be understood when the entire cycle of activity was considered.

Table 1

Teacher's sharing	Students' sharing	Explorations of life experiences through text characters
DAY 1 INTRODUCTIONS (oral) Give name and something you like; repeat each preceding introduction.	INTRODUCTIONS (oral) Same as teacher column; Last book read what have you written that you like; Choice of colour for folder.	JOURNAL: Caught doing something you shouldn't have done.
DAY 2	Students asked to share "What would be safe to share" from yesterday's assignment; PERSONAL EXPERIENCE #1; Write about a decision which you have made which had an effect either positive or negative.	per LONG JOURNEY: Write in JOURNAL "How do you feel about plagiarism?"
DAY 3 INTERVIEW paired including teachers.	INTERVIEW (paired) finding about each other to be represented to the class for each other.	Identify significant events which affected Walter's life.
DAY 4 Sharing of INTERVIEW with the class.	Sharing of INTERVIEW with class (half of the students students shared); Students paired to review draft of PE#1 and raise written questions for the writer.	
DAY 5 Sharing of INTERVIEW with the class.	Sharing of INTERVIEW with class (other half of class); share an experience of discrimination.	I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS is an autobiography.
DAY 6		Select quotation from CAGED BIRD that student liked; table group select two to share with total class. Mother/daughter relationships; SOPHISTICATIONS also autobiographical; How Maja, how Walter changed?
DAY 7	Sharing of INTERVIEW with class (1 student); Students asked to write comments on their own life per SOPHISTICATIONS especially in terms of relationships.	Teacher read student Journal Entry #1, a sharing about self, another and HOLDEN from CATCHER IN THE RYE.
DAY 8 SP shares reflections on her own son; her deficiencies as a mother; Allan gave her a hug.	Select "gems" from each other's revision papers of PE#1.	Select significant events from SOPHISTICATIONS.
DAY 9 CM shares about her desire to sing when she was young and the choice as it related to her relationship to her husband.	Make a jot list of personal relationships.	NOTEBOOK.

Teacher's sharing	Students' sharing	Explorations of life experiences through text characters
DAY 10 CM Shares about her brother-in-law's living in New York City; Myrna shared how she chose values different from her parents' values.	Students asked to bring something that reflects themselves.	JOURNAL: five words to describe HOLDEN to a friend. Class discussion about Holden; drinking, driving, dancer, lazy, having abilities, smart, potential for living in a city apartment or being a drifter with no permanent address, probably would have skipped school, possibly a teacher not much expected from him.
DAY 11 CM shares about the 1960s.	Three students share something that reflects themselves; Vicki is second to share.	IF HOLDEN displayed something that reflected himself what would it be; If living today HOLDEN would be ...
DAY 12 SP told of her parents' expectations for her; CM told of a friend's dilemma meeting parent expectation.	PERSONAL EXPERIENCE #2: Do parents insist that students follow in their footsteps? PE#2 shared individually among three/four students for revision suggestions. Dana shares; Allan shares reflection of himself; Marybeth shares suicide attempt; discussion led into symbols.	HOLDEN would most admire ... plus other open-ended questions; How would you cast HOLDEN today.
DAY 13 CM shares anecdotes about pickling grapefruit and selling "gummy bears" in water; CM shared about solo work in high school; SP shared her experiences of the South; CM shared her experiences in Scotland and Germany.	PE#3 How do people around you know you are coming of age.	GIFT OF WATERMELON PICKLE Students share quotes about HOLDEN.
DAY 14 CM shares family experience; also shares 3 year confirmation preparation.	JOURNAL entry: write about two themes of growing up making statements about life; student sharing about markers which confirm a sense of becoming.	Response to opinionnaire as HOLDEN would have responded; Discussion of MARKERS .
DAY 15	T read student paper about relationships; students given guide questions for writing final paper about ways in which students have changed; self-reflection on autobiography draft; revision circles on drafts.	
DAY 16		TURRET IN THE SUN: Students read/discuss to identify a significant event in the life of main character.
DAY 17	Peer editing of autobiography.	

Intertextuality

The “tied” nature of the different cycles of activity led to the selection of the notion of intertextuality to explain what was involved in “reading” in this tenth grade English class. One way to think about the relationship of this cycle to other cycles is that each cycle becomes a social and academic text that participants must read, interpret and contribute to as the sub-events within a cycle are being reconstructed (Weade & Green 1989). The text involves verbal, visual, and written aspects of communication and context. It is constructed by participants as they interact with each other.

Bloome (1989:1-2) captures these relationships succinctly in the following definition of intertextuality:

Whenever people engage in a language event, whether it is a conversation, the reading of a book, diary writing, etc., they are engaged in intertextuality. Various conversational and written texts are being juxtaposed. Intertextuality can occur at many levels and in many ways.

Juxtaposing texts, at whatever level, is not in itself sufficient for intertextuality. Intertextuality is a social construction. The juxtaposition must be interactionally recognised, acknowledged and have social significance.

In classrooms, teachers and students are continuously constructing intertextual relationships. The set of intertextual relationships they construct can be viewed as constituting a cultural ideology, a system for assigning meaning and significance to what is said and done and for socially defining participants.

The cycle of activity described previously and the related cycles that comprise the larger cycle of activity that led to the construction of autobiographies for the students in this classroom constitute what Bloome has called intertextuality. The teachers have deliberately linked various smaller cycles to the larger cycle to support the writing of the autobiography. For example, the sharing activity required students to bring to the classroom symbols from their world outside of the classroom that reflected or served to characterise the student. Thus, the teachers were asking the students to make life objects a text for others as well as self.

The texts created by this cycle were then linked to one of the published texts being read in the class, *Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger 1951). The teachers asked the students at a later point in time to consider what Holden would display to represent himself. The sharing activity was part of an intertextual web that involved life to text and text to life interpretations by

students. In building this intertextual web, the teachers were constructing with the students one model of interpretation of published texts (Cochran-Smith 1984).

The life to text, text to life relationships were only one type of deliberately constructed relationship among texts that were available to participants. The teachers also constructed cycles of activity that focused on interpreting published texts (short stories, poems, novels, essays) and relating one published text to other published texts. The published texts with which teachers and students interacted and the cycle of activity related to each are described briefly in Table 2.

As indicated in Table 2, the teachers and students read nine published texts. Each of these cycles of activities involved engaging with the text and a series of sub-events related to interpretation of text. When the structure of these cycles was examined, a pattern was identified: table discussion was common to all texts. In six of the nine cycles of activity, table discussion was followed by class discussion and in one by "sharing" of quotations. In two events, specific elements of a text were selected and then posted on a bulletin board (gem posting, sticker quotes). In one, the last, only a table discussion occurred.

The structural pattern provided a means of entering the events of classroom life so that the requirements for participation and interpretation could be examined. In addition, the identification of these cycles of activity provided a basis for exploring the roles and relationships and the rights and obligations involved in "doing reading" in this class.

Exploration of the rights and obligations, and roles and relationships indicated that the students were expected to read the published text, discuss and argue interpretation of the text in a small group, and then the group (through a recorder or as a whole) was expected to discuss and argue its interpretation with other groups. The teachers' roles were to structure the tasks, introduce the texts, and to probe and question interpretations. In this class, the teachers' interpretations were not "the" interpretation. In fact, at times, the two teachers disagreed with each other as to what something had meant.

An exploration of the intertextual references across cycles of activity showed that the teachers deliberately made text to text, text to life, and life to text linkages for themselves and with the students. In addition, the teachers and students were developing a larger theme, "coming of age". This theme had been introduced on the first day of class and was defined in the materials selected, the actions and interactions of teachers and students, and the projects required (autobiography, personal experience papers, and

Table 2
Intertextuality of 'Growing into Adulthood' Seminar

TEXT & TEXT ACTIVITIES	DAY																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
CATCHER IN THE RYE (n)																	
notes in Journal	a	o	o	o	o	o	o		x	x	x	x	x	x			
T talk about author		x															
THE LONG JOURNEY (ss)		x	x														
table discussion		x															
table reporter			x														
class discussion			x														
WHY CAGED BIRD (ss)			a	x	x	x											
written response					x												
table discussion					x												
table reporter					x												
class discussion					x	x											
sticker quotes						x											
SOPHISTICATIONS (ss)						a	x	x									
intro author autobiography						x											
table discussion							x										
table reporter							x	x									
class discussion							x	x									
NOTEBOOK (ss)								a	x								
table discussion									x								
table responses									x								
CATCHER IN THE RYE (n)																	
tagboard gems										x							
Holden descriptors										x							
table discussion										x							
quotation selection										x							
Holden discussion										x							
filmstrip narration										x							
theme discussion										x							
quote sharing										x							
GIFT OF WATERMELON																	
PICKLE (p)											a	x	x				
table discussion:												x					
class discussion												x	x				
COMIN' THROUGH THE																	
RYE (p & s)												x	x				
table discussion												x					
class discussion													x				
MARKERS (e)																	
table report														x	x		
gem posting														x			
TURRET IN THE SUN (ss)																	
table discussion													a		x	x	

TEXT & ACTIVITY CODES

n = book length novel
ss = short story
p = poem
s = song
e = essay

a = assignment given
x = teach/learn event
o = reference to published text
hw = homework

response notebooks). Thus, the individual published texts, the student- and teacher-produced written texts, and the oral texts of the classroom all produced a larger text with a coherent theme, coming of age, that involves changes and markers in one's life. In addition, the teachers built a model of reading that demonstrated how a person can learn about self from learning about others through text and through discussing texts with others. Finally, the students were shown that their lives and the objects of their lives are forms of text that can be "shared" with others. In other words, interpretation of text in this class was both personal and social as was the construction of personal texts.

In this classroom, reading involved the construction of an intertextual web within and across the oral, written, and published texts that were constructed and reconstructed in this classroom. This deliberate web of intertextuality became important when the grading system used in this classroom was considered. Only the autobiography received a letter grade. Other activities were given points that contributed to the final grade. Other activities received no points but did receive feedback from the teachers (e.g., individual responses to journal entries in the form of a dialogue between one of the teachers and students) and from other students (e.g., peer editing). Thus, those cycles of activity and their products that contributed to "learning how to do autobiography" were not "formally" graded (i.e., given a letter grade). Rather, these elements of classroom life were given differential points which then contributed to a participation grade. The grading structure, therefore, supported the exploration of text by students and allowed students to see that differences in interpretation were appropriate. Thus, the grading system supported the intertextuality of life in this classroom as did the structure of the class.

If we return to Bloome's (1989) definition of intertextuality, what becomes evident is that these teachers were constructing a particular model and ideology about interpretation of text with the students. The teachers and students were socially constructing a system for assigning meaning to the oral, written, and published texts of this classroom. In addition, the ways in which students and teachers engaged with and about text also defined participation in this class.

To view reading as a socially accomplished, cultural event in this classroom required consideration of what was occurring within and across all events of classroom life, what was involved in each cycle of activity, and how intertextual relationships were established within and across the cycles of activity. This task was not unique to the researcher. Students and teachers in this classroom had to monitor what was occurring and the

teachers had to interpret the social text of the classroom in order to guide and structure the development of the intertextual web they stated they wanted at the outset of this class.

Concluding Observations about Reading in Classroom Contexts

This analysis of what was involved in reading in one high school English class raised questions for us about what was involved in reading. Is it reading when the text is not present but is being discussed? Is it reading if the talk will be related to the text in some way at a later time (life to text interactions: see Cochran-Smith, 1984)? In what ways are events in the classroom interrelated? What model(s) of reading is being constructed in and through the everyday interactions with and about text? What becomes a text in a classroom?

The exploration of context in which teacher-student interactions were embedded also raised methodological questions for us. When does an event begin and end? What is the relationship between a particular segment of talk, the speech event in which it is embedded, and other events within the classroom? How are linkages made between oral, written, and published texts as well as about "life texts" of students? These questions, in turn, raised questions about what was required of students to accomplish reading in this classroom and how reading was related to the accomplishment of "class".

The questions raised in this brief chapter suggest the need to explore reading from a situated perspective and that the models of reading that show reading as only a "within the head" model are limiting our understanding of "reading" in its everyday forms. This chapter showed that not only was reading a socially accomplished event, but that from participating in the events of reading in this classroom, students were constructing a particular model of reading or rather interpreting text. Finally, the analysis of the interrelationship of events showed that to understand reading from an "emic" or insider's perspective, researchers need to consider the sociocultural history of life in the social group (classroom).

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Notes

1. The analysis presented in this paper was drawn from a study of a special summer school English class for which the teachers volunteered and for which students applied either to "make up" work or to gain extra credit for graduation. The students had no prior history with each other in most instances and little knowledge of the teachers. Thus, the participants did not "share" a common school culture. The two teachers had worked together previously as colleagues in the same high school and in a professional development program that involved action research and classroom observations. Their goal for the summer course was to develop a curriculum that would engage students and foreground student involvement and knowledge. They had freedom and institutional support to develop an alternative approach, in this case a seminar approach built on the organising theme of "growing into adulthood" (Bartholomae & Petrosky 1986). The unique nature of the English course permitted teachers and researchers to challenge their own tacit and often invisible expectations and understandings of reading and of teaching-learning processes, and to explore what might occur in a regular high school classroom. The latter exploration has been undertaken in the two years following this project. One of the teachers has modified her curriculum to reflect the seminar approach begun in this summer program.

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Chapter 7

Literacy Practices and Social Relations in Classroom Reading Events

Carolyn D. Baker

In this chapter I provide a sociological description of pedagogic practice through analyses of instances of classroom reading events in the early years of school. The point to be developed here is that we can observe, in reading activities, more than and other than “reading instruction” as understood from within a professional-pedagogic perspective. Through critical analyses of the conversational activities that constitute reading lessons and other text-based classroom events, I argue that what is also being accomplished in and through the talk are introductions to institutionalised ways of reading and talking about texts with teachers in classrooms, and simultaneously the assembling of social relations and social order for classrooms and for schooling.

Such an account of reading events is invisible or unavailable from within conventional reading psychology, some characteristics of which have been addressed in other chapters in this volume. It is similarly unavailable from within pedagogic-professional discourses about classroom reading events, in which normative evaluations of teacher and student competence and of lesson quality predominate (cf. Husiler & Cuff 1982). However, professional concerns with the procedures and outcomes of teaching episodes can encompass achievements other than cognitive gains or lesson success. These concerns can properly extend to observing how forms of school literacy are routinely and actively constructed, and to observing how relations among teachers, students and texts - ultimately relations of age, knowledge, and authority - are organised concurrently in routine instructional procedures. These are social relations that can be assembled in different ways and that are necessarily assembled in some way wherever text-based discourse occurs in schools. As this chapter will show, a positioning of teacher, text and students is observably done in the discourse, whatever else might be accomplished there.

The analyses in this chapter of ways of reading and interpreting texts in classrooms extend previous studies of how age, knowledge and authority relations are assembled in classroom reading discourse (see Baker & Freebody 1989a, 1989b). The specific focus of this chapter is on connections across the production of ways of reading and institutional relations in the classroom. This focus can be framed as a set of intersecting questions:

Regarding reading practices:

- How do teacher and students characterise what it means to (know how to) read?
- What kinds of literate practice are being constructed in the discourse?
- How is the status of the text accomplished in the discourse?
- How are conceptions of school knowledge coded in the discourse?

Regarding teacher-student-text relations:

- How is the relation of child reader to the story constructed in the discourse?
- What kind of child (child's mind, child's knowledge) is theorised in the reading of the text and in the teacher's talk?
- How is the relation of the teacher (and the teacher's knowledge) to the text (and its methods and content) marked discursively?

In summary:

- How do forms of literate practice in classrooms relate to the organisation of knowledge and authority relations in classrooms?

These questions extend beyond early reading instruction to other curriculum areas and across the school years, wherever texts are being used. However, records of reading sessions in the early years of school provide pertinent illustration of how students are introduced initially to ways of treating texts, teachers and school knowledge. And here we seek to blur, if not dissolve, the boundaries often drawn between text and context, talk and 'learning', interaction and social order. For 'learning to read' takes place concurrently with, and as a crucial procedure in, acculturation to the social codes that govern schooling. These include: becoming a competent (i.e. acceptable) conversationalist in the classroom community (cf. Mehan 1979); acquainting oneself with the social organisation of knowledge, power and authority in the classroom; discovering the nature and status of textual

knowledge and working out the relativities of teacher and student claims to that knowledge; and listening for how childhood, teacherhood and the relations between them are organised in and for the classroom. These dimensions of acculturation overlap, so that the activities of 'learning to read' are inseparable from the formation of relations with the knowledge and the culture of the school. Consider here McHoul's point (Chapter 8, this volume) that "reading-in-a-classroom" should be seen as referring to "reading, there, as such: not to a separate 'context'". This characterisation would apply also to sharing-in-a-classroom (Michaels 1981), to telling-news-in-a-classroom (Baker & Perrott 1988) and to writing-in-a-classroom (Michaels 1985, 1987). This signals that reading-done-in-classrooms is inseparable from institutional politics and practice. Every instructional event is also a lesson in the conventions that govern schooling (see also Edwards 1980, 1981).

What Counts as Reading in Classrooms

Previous ethnomethodological work on the social organisation of reading activities in classrooms, notably that of Heap (1982a, 1982b, 1985, 1986) has shown how "reading" can be studied sociologically. Heap's argument (Chapter 5, this volume) has been that rather than asking what counts as reading, theoretically, we can ask what counts as reading, criterially, by finding what counts as reading, procedurally. Our interest in the study of classroom reading events thus turns to the observable conversational activities that mark for everyone present what "reading" is taken to be, and that document that 'good' or 'correct' reading has been achieved.¹

The strength of this recommendation for the study of classroom reading events is threefold. First, it situates the study of reading in concrete interactional events available for observation, rather than in 'processes' that no one can see. Secondly, this recommendation acknowledges the point that students work out what it means to be able to read, criterially, by participating in discourse, as a speaker, listener, or analyst in ongoing conversational scenes. Students' own conceptions of what 'reading' is, and their sense of knowing whether they can do it, can only come from experience with particular instances of reading being done, just as teachers' assessments of students' reading skills can only come from witnessing particular instances of student performances. Thus an ethnomethodological study of reading practices recognises and traces those same conversational practices and procedural clues that participants use in conducting and

characterising classroom reading. Finally, this recommendation provides for principled analyses of the pedagogic point and effect of talking in particular ways. From this perspective, the activities of 'teaching reading' and 'learning to read' are demystified and shown to occur in the organisation of classroom discourse: they are given a procedural visibility.

With this foundation, the possibility arises for inspecting sequences of classroom talk not only to characterise what pedagogical interests and purposes reading teachers could have in talking in given ways (Heap 1985). The possibility arises also for analyses that evidence in the same talk the assembling of classroom social relations. From this perspective, as sketched above, classroom relations are construed not as a condition or container for pedagogical activity, but are part and product of that activity. This is taken up in this chapter by observing the interactive production and naturalisation of school-specific ways of reading that themselves produce and naturalise age and authority relations in the school.

Transcripts of Reading Events: Materials for a Sociology of Reading Pedagogy

Studying the practices and procedures of reading pedagogy requires that we inspect actual instances of reading-in-a-classroom, and theorise from these, rather than from prescriptions or idealisations. Transcripts of recordings of classroom discourse are treated here as texts that can be read and re-read for evidence of how participants construct forms of classroom reading and how they assemble social relations and social order. As preview to the connections between reading practices and social relations to be developed in this chapter, consider first this brief segment from a transcript of a first-grade reading lesson.²

Text 1: Year One: Yes Ma'am

- 1 T It could well be just like last week's story tonight couldn't it?
What was our story last week?
- 2 S One Cold Wet=
- 3 T =Oh, someone put (up) their hand up. They
- 4 S Uhh!
- 5 T They might've even had the right answer.Helen.
- 6 H One Cold Wet Night

- 7 T One Cold Wet Night. (From) the look of the outside I think it might be a cold wet day. (2.5) And perhaps a cold wet night. Alright well our story this week is, Yes Ma'am. Yes Ma'am. Do you know something, different about that word ma'am?
- 8 S It's got a comma?
- 9 T It's got an apostrophe there, () it's not quite a comma commas go down on the line. Yes Ma'am. I wonder, and don't answer ().

It is impossible to separate the talk about the stories from the talk that describes what could count as literate practice in this classroom. For example, remembering last week's story matters, and is evidenced procedurally by recalling the precise title rather than, say, recounting the plot. The possible school-cultural specificity of this practice might be noticed by considering how often readers of a newspaper would need or want to recall a past item's headline, as distinct from the gist of the item or some detail within it. Given that their 'reading' task at this early point appears to be to listen and to answer questions, students could assemble from the kinds of questions that are asked, clues to the kinds of questions that could be asked again, and listen accordingly - itself a reading practice, a form of attention, and an orientation to the story not ordinarily assumed in other reading or storytelling settings. Classrooms, tests and psychological experiments are some of the few sites in which people can expect to be questioned later about what they are reading or hearing now (see Freebody, Chapter 10, this volume), or, put more strongly, where the immediate purpose or point of reading *is* to be questioned about how (well) one has done it. It would not be surprising to find that the kinds of reading practices that occur in classrooms organise forms of attention, conceptions of knowledge, and notions of reading purpose consistent with other aspects of institutional life.

It would be equally difficult to separate the talk about the stories in this segment from the talk that codes social relations in the classroom. "Do you know something different about that word ma'am?" turns out to have referred to the punctuation, in this case, of a word in the title of the book. It also exercises a teacher's prerogative (confirmed by the students' responses) to ask questions and receive answers about the story, and it positions the students both as audience for the teacher's questions, and as potentially fallible in their knowledge of, in this case, commas and apostrophes. The students can be heard both to be answering questions about the stories and to be acknowledging their part as question-answerers in the choreography of the lesson, to be participating in accomplishing a

social order. To recognise that methods of talking are methods for producing a sense of social structure and social order makes it possible to generate sociological accounts from conversational materials.³

It is in these ways that reading practices can be seen and studied as social and cultural practices - practices that assemble the identities of and relations among participants,⁴ that construct what counts as (school-literate) knowledge, and that create a recognisable structure and order in the classroom. In this chapter I develop this approach to interpreting records of classroom reading events. In showing connections between the particular kinds of literacy practices used in classrooms and the institutional relations being conventionalised in the same talk, I elaborate the idea that the activities that constitute teaching or learning reading in classrooms are forms of cultural and ideological practice that create and sustain knowledge and authority relations in schools.

The transcripts were made from audio recordings of classroom reading events collected recently in a variety of kindergarten and first grade classrooms in New South Wales, Australia. The activities that I make observable in the transcripts evidence the practices that teachers in many classrooms may use to teach young children how to read or how to conceive of and treat a text. While the procedures and techniques used in these classrooms may be similar to those used in many others, these transcripts cannot illustrate all possible procedures in current classroom use.

Further, the examples presented in this chapter represent classroom activities in which texts are being read and interpreted: story times and group reading and discussion, but not instances of oral reading practice or decoding exercises. Most of them represent instances of teachers working with groups of students rather than individuals. Thus again, these transcripts do not evidence all of the kinds of events that are commonsensically taken to constitute reading instruction. In kindergarten and first grade classrooms, as in these transcripts, the talk is often about the pictures rather than the words on the page. Such events, nevertheless, illustrate methods used to orient children to text in school, and are examples of early introductions to school-literate culture (see also Baker & Freebody 1989b).

Literacy Practices and Social Relations in Classroom Reading Events

Text 2, from a kindergarten reading session, illustrates the point that it is through participation in public reading activities that students can work out what (classroom) “reading” could be.

Text 2: Kindergarten: Smarty Pants

- 1 T Okay friends, just turn your eyes to the front cover of this book. First of all, how many of you can tell me what you think this story is going to be about, just by looking at that front cover Barry?
- 2 B Sma:arty pa:ants
- 3 T Smarty pants, right. And who is Smarty Pants, do you think? Just by having a look at him on the front cover. Who do you think he is, Rachel?
- 4 R A clown
- 5 T A cu-lown, right. Well, turn over the front cover until we come to the first page. What can you see on that page? What is he doing, Linda?
- 6 L ((no response))
(3.0)
- 7 T What is he doing? (1.5) Is he standing up like we stand up? His two feet? What’s he doing, Sally Fraser?
- 8 S He’s he’s he’s standing upside down.
- 9 T He’s standing upside down. What do you think he’s doing that for? What might he be doing?

In this case teacher and students are ‘reading’ an illustration. Through a series of questions and receptions of answers, the teacher is showing students how this illustration (and hence the story) is to be read. Like the students in the classroom, we follow discursive clues to work out the criteria that the teacher could be applying in deciding what counts as ‘reading’ this illustration and how that is made a criterion of ‘reading’ the story. For example, students can hear that ‘reading’ here consists procedurally in supplying the particulars for a series of “wh-” questions (what is the story about, who is Smarty Pants, what is he doing, what can you see). They could also hear that such particulars are pre-given in the illustration and can be found “just by looking” (as Barry and Rachel are shown to have done), and that there is one such particular for each “wh-”

question. The initial success of these sequences shows that such questions, such answers, and such methods are self-evidently plausible and rational and effective in achieving (what counts as) reading. The teacher and students here are characterising in the course of their activity, what it means to know how to read. When the question in line (5), "what is he doing?", and the proposed methodology, "just by looking", fails to achieve the answer, the teacher shows how the correct answer was available all along, but through a more fully specified methodology: looking for difference from how "we" stand. If any of us had noticed how Smarty Pants was standing, we could assume that we had been 'reading' the illustration well, or properly. We could not know that we were reading well or properly in any way other than against such criteria, and such criteria are unavailable except through participation in some form of discourse about the story.

Talking Culture

Classroom talk in reading lessons, as in other instructional events, is characterised by the use of a three-part sequence made up of teacher initiation (usually a question), student response, and teacher feedback. The pedagogic point of such sequences in reading lessons has been addressed by Heap (1985, 1986). Heap claims that the point of organising talk in this way includes (but is not limited to) the joint production by teacher and students of a propositional lesson corpus. Our examples show that teacher and students do build such a corpus. Consider Text 2 presented above. By stringing together the jointly-produced propositions we get the factual reading that the story is about Smarty Pants who is a clown who is standing upside down.

However, the pedagogic point of the use of such activity structures is different and broader than this. It entails acculturation. Where the point of the discourse activity is in the production of the corpus of lesson knowledge, rather than in the product, what is achieved in the course of assembling the knowledge is "comprehension of culture and the logic of its organization and possibilities" (Heap 1985: 265). If we take this to mean that teachers show students how to find and connect ideas, and to do reasoned elaboration in ways that are recognised and understood as competent or plausible within the culture, we could find evidence for such a view in Text 2. There, for example, we find some elaboration of the idea that a clown stands differently from how "we" stand - a detail that marks, perhaps, the idea of a (circus) clown in western culture. Much of the teacher talk in reading

lessons could be designed to elicit talk about categories of characters, the meanings of words (see Text 4 below), ways of commenting on activities (see Text 5 below), and possible names for things (see Text 6 below). Inevitably, talk from within a culture displays the methods used within the culture to categorise, mark differences, and explain phenomena.

In early reading lessons, part of the teaching project could well be to provide practice with such conventional, commonsense ways of talking and thinking, evidenced by the way teachers organise classroom talk. It could be that such professional-pedagogic outcomes are being achieved. Certainly if another of the objectives of the teachers is to entertain the students, that appears to be accomplished as evidenced by the students' eagerness to answer, by their laughter and even clapping at various points in the story-talk in many of our recordings. But as sketched before, these interests and purposes may not be all that is being achieved: we can look again.

Talking School Culture

We can examine reading lesson transcripts for clues to another order of possible acculturation of students: specifically, acculturation into the logics of school literacies and the conventions governing knowledge and social relations in schools. In part such an analysis turns on a departure from Heap's interest in how teachers might formulate their own activity from within available professional-pedagogic discourses. In this chapter I suggest how teachers might additionally and alternatively formulate that same activity. This alternative turns also on a different consideration of the place of the text in the reading-instructional program. In these analyses, rather than viewing classroom texts primarily as sources of knowledge or bases for inference, and far from viewing them as "simply the site for launching [...] comprehension" (Heap 1985: 265), I see classroom texts as social as well as material resources with which teachers and students organise their institutional relations.

First, the reading of the illustration in Text 2 (Smarty Pants) is a materially constructed reading. It is not merely "guided" by the teacher's questions, which announce what there is already, *a priori*, of interest in the text. That reading is actively generated by the teacher's questions and the students' answers. But just as different questioning procedures effect different readings of a text (see Green, Harker & Golden 1986), there are many possible readings of an illustration which could be generated discursively. Text 2, like others presented in this chapter, supplies a concise

illustration of how conventions of classroom talk provide for the production of a single 'reading'. The teacher's sequential endorsement of a series of 'correct' answers to technically open but situationally constrained questions ("who" Smarty Pants is, is decidable at this point only from the cover illustration) effectively hurdles the problem of the "indefinite extendability of description" (Schegloff 1988). That problem arises and is dissolved in other texts (discussed more fully in Baker and Freebody 1989a) in which the teacher similarly appeals to the self-evidence of the text to adjudicate in favour of one of several candidate answers.

The drawing out of one set of possible significances as the set of actual significances is accomplished largely through the teacher's "metatextual commentary" (Luke et al. 1983) provided through questions, receptions of answers and elaborative comments on the learning-so-far. This teacher commentary is methodological as well as substantive: it describes how we can read as well as what we are reading. With these observations, we can see how instructional practices in these instances produce (1) a single correct reading of a text, (2) an authoritative status for the text, and (3) a demonstration of how classroom reading might be done.

Second, while the pedagogic point of reading instructional activities may not be the production of a propositional corpus, such a propositional corpus is routinely produced. Students participating in instructional sequences like those presented here could take it that the point of their 'reading' is precisely to assemble such a corpus, to provide and to accumulate propositional currency, especially where their contributions to the 'reading' discourse are applauded for being factually correct. The continuation of Text 2 illustrates this further:

Text 3: Kindergarten: Smarty Pants (continued)

- 9 T He's standing upside down. What do you think he's doing that for?
What might he be doing?
((sound of door opening; "I was a little bit late" ()))
- 10 T What might he be doing John?
- 11 J A handstand
- 12 T Right. Why do you think he's doing that? (2.0) Why do [you
think he's doing a handstand, Kylie?
- 13 P [(I was)
- 14 K Because he's being smart.

- 15 T Right. Because he's doing a trick or he's being smart. What, what can we see him doing here? What is he doing in this vehicle do you think. Billy?
- 16 B Um he's his he's racing, in it.
- 17 T Right! He's racing in it what sort of a car is it then do you think if he's racing in it, Jennifer?
- 18 J A racing [car
- 19 T [a racing car, okay. Have a look at the next page. What do we see in here Timothy?
- 20 Tim He's driving a racing aeroplane with a dog in the back that doesn't like () up in the air
- 21 T He doesn't, how do you know he doesn't like being up in the air?
- 22 Tim Because he', only it doesn't look like, doesn't, the puppy isn't looking very uh
- 23 S happy
- 24 Tim happy
- 25 T He's looking rather pale to me! He's sort of thinking we're a bit far up in the air I don't like this very much! How do you think the, Smarty Pants feels Nick?

Taken with the observations made here about the production of a single correct reading of a text, and noting that most of the texts used in early reading sessions are fictional, it is arguable that one effect of the procedures used to talk about texts is to turn a fictional story into an informational text (see also Freebody, Chapter 10, this volume). The construction of the fictional story as a factual domain could make it into a proxy for the expository texts that students will later encounter in school, and the nature of the discourse could be practice for attending to details of content. The fictional story is thus colonised by the reading practices of the information paradigm. When the question-plus-answer-equals-knowledge template is applied to stories like "Smarty Pants", the text is constructed not as something to be played with, not as an open horizon of possible readings, but as a closed domain (see Luke 1989). In Texts 2 and 3 the questions ask for and acknowledge *one* identification of story topic, *one* identification of main character, and *one* identification of the character's activity in various illustrations. In Text 1 presented earlier, *one* difference in the word Ma'am was established. Asking for and getting multiple identifications might well produce conversational and classroom chaos, but this is precisely my point. The limitations to the plays of interpretation, the restriction to one reading,

assist in the accomplishment of classroom order as well as presenting a version of literacy talk.

In addition to assembling what counts as knowledge of a story, the discourse assembles who can know what, when, and how. In Texts 2 and 3, for example, the teacher's questioning repeatedly characterises the students' knowledge of the story as possible and provisional ("what do you think", "what might he be doing") in contrast to receptions of answers ("Right! He's racing in it") which assign to teacher and to text an equivalence of actual and correct knowledge, against which the student's provisional knowledge or know-how can be assessed (see also Baker & Freebody 1989a).

Consistent with this, the story is unfolded page by page, picture by picture; the students are directed to speak from and only from the segment of text currently being inspected. Similarly, the temporal spaces provided for answering, and the overlapping of student talk by teacher talk evident in a number of these transcripts, indicates the preferred pace and length of answers. This segmentation and pacing of the disclosure of story knowledge can be seen as a characterisation of the knowledge-position students are expected to take within the classroom, a position that enables the reading pedagogy to proceed. In the transcripts presented here, teachers apparently seek, and do receive and endorse, single-phrase answers. While individual students are thus made interchangeable as answerers, the line of questioning remains the preserve of the teacher. The simplicity, brevity and factuality of student answers are both resources for and outcomes of the teacher's questioning procedures, resources for and outcomes of the operation of the pedagogy. Consider again this extract from Text 3:

- 15 T ...what is he doing in this vehicle do you think. Billy?
- 16 B Um he's his he's racing, in it.
- 17 T Right! He's racing in it what sort of a car is it then do you think if he's racing in it, Jennifer?
- 18 J A racing [car
- 19 T [a racing car, okay. Have a look at the next page. What do we see in here Timothy?
- 20 Tim He's driving a racing aeroplane with a dog in the back that doesn't like () up in the air
- 21 T He doesn't, how do you know he doesn't like being up in the air?
- 22 Tim Because he's, only it doesn't look like, doesn't, the puppy isn't looking very
- 23 S happy
- 24 Tim happy

25 T He's looking rather pale to me! He's sort of thinking...

From Tim's more elaborated answer in line (19), as from the single-phrase answers provided elsewhere, the teacher selects out one component (the dog looking unhappy) for launching a further question. This apparent teacher preference⁵ for single-phrase answers is part of an instructional technology that could achieve classroom 'reading', procedurally and criterially, as the production of discrete items of information that follow and sustain the teacher's "metatext". The production of single-phrase answers reciprocally allows the production of this metatext, and allows its production as a logical and coherent reading of the story.

Concurrently, the students are asked to treat the story - whether or not they have heard it before - as unfamiliar terrain, while the organisation of talk that validates the production of the metatext shows that the teacher must have read the story before, in order to know what to ask next. Participants are in effect required to suspend disbelief and to dissimulate knowledge in order to perform appropriately in these instructional routines. To show an appreciation of these social conventions - no less than describing clowns plausibly - is school-cultural logic in use.

The Child in and for School-Literacy

This cultural logic-in-use includes recognising the social identity as well as the knowledge-position one is to adopt while learning to read in the classroom. Early school reading practices actively constitute the novice reader as a "child" member of the culture, an identity ascription that would not normally characterise adult literacy classes, for example. Such constitution of the reader as "child" is provided for in the books designed or selected for use in early reading programs (Baker & Freebody 1987), and accomplished in classroom discourse. It can be seen that many teacher questions carry descriptions and ascriptions of the (child) listeners/readers - of the child's cultural position, of the child's know-how in relation to the teacher's, or of the nature of the child's mind. Evidence of the construction of the child as ontologically different from the adult (MacKay 1974a) is available each time that we witness questions or remarks or invitations that could not commonsensically or seriously be put to adults.

Text 4: Year One: Arthur

- 1 T Have a look at that picture. In the story it said, that all the other dogs, that dogs were always popular. Does anyone know what pop-u-lar means? (3.0) Jim?
- 2 J Better?
- 3 T What do you think popular means, Mitchell?
- 4 M Good?
- 5 T Mhu:um? What do you think, [last one
- 6 S [different colours?
- 7 T No, popular means that everybody likes dogs.Right? And, so usually all the dogs got sold but not Arthur. Because he was very
- 8 S ohh!
- 9 T ordinary. You say that big word.
- 10 Ss ((unison)) o:or:rdin:na:ary

In Text 4 we see the teacher selecting out “big” words as those that the listeners might or might not know; the guessing sequence confirms that they do not. The sequence in lines 1-7 has been unsuccessful in eliciting a correct answer, but quite successful in describing the relative knowledge and cultural know-how of teacher and students. This relation of teacher and students to “big” words is again characterised in lines 9-10. Such a display marks not only the superior knowledge of the teacher, but the students’ difference and distance from adult culture and adult knowledge. The maintenance of that difference is a fundamental strategem in patrolling generational boundaries, and hence maintaining social order, in school. Jenks (1982: 23) has articulated the view that “the child is constituted purposively within [social] theory” to support prevailing (adult) “versions of ... action, order, language and rationality”: to reproduce a preferred version of adult social order. This can be applied also to theories of age relations conveyed in classroom discourse: it is not only what is talked about (trains, clowns) but how it is talked about that conveys the relativities of adult and non-adult knowledge not only in relation to words, but in relation to the world.

A further example of the constitution of the child in the teacher’s questioning comes from a teacher-made audioteape produced for individual use with earphones at a “listening post”, in which the teacher raises questions for the listeners to consider during her oral reading of the text.⁶

Text 5: Teacher-Made Audiotape: Three Little Ducks

- 1 T ((reading from text)) COME AND SWIM SAID MOTHER DUCK. AND PADDLE, PADDLE, PADDLE THEY DID.
- 2 T ((commentary)) They're learning fast, aren't they children. Turn the page, please.
- 3 T ((reading from text)) COME AND EAT SAID MOTHER DUCK. AND GOBBLE, GOBBLE, GOBBLE, THEY DID.
- 4 T ((commentary)) Look, children. They're diving with their heads under the water to find food. You don't find your food that way, do you?

The texts of early reading instruction are not neutral with respect to the identities to be assumed by their readership.⁷ Teacher questions often invoke a correspondence between the child or animal characters in the stories and the child reader/hearer, placing the child reader imaginatively inside the story world designed or selected for "children". From analyses of a large corpus of beginning reading books as well as of a number of classroom reading events, Baker and Freebody (1989b) conclude that the strong implication is of a continuity of ideological practice - notably an apparent child-centredness masking an adultist pedagogic interest - across the texts and their actual use as items of classroom discourse. Stories for and about "children" can be used as resources for making children "happen" as cultural events (cf. Atkinson 1980). The teacher and text together supply the cultural location of the child, and equip the child with reading practices - such as comparing themselves with text characters - which evidence that very location.

The commonsense idea that animal stories, fairy tales and fantasy are appropriate for children is culturally and historically specific (Jackson 1982). The point can be turned around, however: the use of story forms and fantasy texts is part of adult practice in creating contemporary childhood. By participating in talk about such stories, by being amused in ways that story writers and teachers suggest they should be, students actively participate in the adult cultural practices that assemble them as a special category of social member. Reading practices, as described here, are central to the achievement of a "child" gaze on worlds inside stories and on worlds outside the classroom. The use of narrative texts appears to naturalise a "child's" interests in the contents of stories and in knowing things about the world.

What such early literacy practices might achieve is the constitution of children essentially as hearers of stories, rarely as analysts of the oral and written texts which constitute their readership in that way. In our collection of records of reading events, teachers and students talk by far the most about clowns, dogs and other characters doing things, or about items in the pictures or stories, and not about *why* they are asked to read and relate to stories such as these in the first place, nor about how the author has used language to construct this story for this readership. Classroom reading practices in this respect describe and circumscribe a narrative world of story telling and story hearing. Students are invited to situate themselves concurrently within the imaginative narrative boundaries of a "child"-appropriate story and within the cultural relation, child-adult.

Teacher questions work as a kind of shuttle service between the story world and the world of everyday life, but rarely make stops in the classroom itself, or in the text. The "child" assembled specifically for schooling is asked to look through the text into the story, and through talk into the world. The text and the talk remain transparent and unread. These are in effect early introductions to a 'realist' conception of the world (cf. Alvarado & Ferguson 1983) in part through 'realist' practices with stories. Classroom reading practices create their own discourses and orders of knowledge: in the examples presented here these appear to be discourses and knowledges about the interiors of stories and about world-knowledge, but not about texts. If literacy is understood as methods for talking about, characterising, and analysing *texts* as such (cf. Olson & Astington in press/1990), this raises the question of whether students are encountering literate discourses at all in these classroom reading events

Questions and Answers, Knowledge and Control

From the analyses presented above, it would appear that the question-answer sequences that are characteristic of formal instructional talk in classrooms can document various features of current versions of reading pedagogy. In this section I expand on the use of questioning and answering in classroom literacy events as a constitutive feature of classroom literacy. Another instance of classroom reading is used in illustration here, although points made apply across the set of transcripts.

Text 6: Year One: Cold Wet Night

((Teacher is questioning students about details of the story which the teacher has just read aloud.))

- 1 T Who can tell me some of the things he's got on. Jacky?
- 2 J He's got a, rainhat on?
- 3 T A big rainhat. See th- how the rainhat comes down right over his back? Does anyone have a rainhat like that at home?
- 4 Ss Yeah [()]
- 5 T [I wonder why they come right down there?
- 6 Ss ((bid to answer)) Ohh!
- 7 T Who can tell me, Danny?
- 8 D So the rain doesn't go down [your back.
- 9 T [So the rain doesn't go down your back, very good. What else has he got on to keep him wet, uh dry.
- 10 Ss hh wet
- 11 S wet hh
- 12 T Robert.
- 13 R Boots?
- 14 T Yes big, boots what-do-we-call those big boots?
- 15 S Gumboots!
- 16 T Two names that I know of, don't call out hands up. Nicolas did you have one? Yes Nicolas?
- 17 N Gumboots
- 18 T Call them gumboots and there's another name too.

The quiz-like features prominent in Text 6 are not exclusive to this example, since in most of the previously presented transcripts, teacher and students build a propositional corpus from the "facts" of the story. This is one order of knowledge that is observably pursued by the participants. The use of questioning to 'elicit' knowledge or understanding may be justified by theories of teaching or learning, although the epistemological assumptions underlying this practice can be seriously challenged.⁸ However, the intensity and the success of this use of (teacher) questions and (student) answers as an organisational format for the conduct of classroom reading can equally be accounted for in terms of classroom control, specifically the control of participation and the control of knowledge. The organisation of classroom talk through questioning and answering achieves, in addition, the local organisation of relativities of reading knowledge and expertise. These

relativities are consequential for what students can know, can say and can do within the cultural constraints of the classroom.

In Text 6 as in the preceding examples, the teacher asks the questions which generate the talk that will, for all practical classroom purposes, describe the story. It is the teacher who formulates the topics (Heyman 1986) and directs speakership (McHoul 1978). By often repeating and elaborating students' correct answers, the teacher incorporates the students' word(s) into the metatextual commentary, their bits of knowledge into the master scheme of textual interpretation. In this way the teacher identifies, and often extends, what is to be taken as important or newsworthy in what the students have said (cf. Edwards 1980, 1981). In this case, the text is used as a resource for showing that the teacher is initiator, receiver, editor and broadcaster of what it is that the students now know. This public "reading" of the story - organised around the teacher's formulation of the sense and import of the text and the talk - is likely to be the reading for which students will later be held accountable for having heard and remembered. (Text 1 at the beginning of the chapter refers to this Text 6 lesson).

Students collaborate in the construction and description of the teacher's expertise and of their novice status in all these examples by, for example, offering answers in interrogative intonation. While from within the execution of such instructional activities it is the students' answers which are potentially right or wrong, the teacher's question is never heard as wrong or incompetent, although it might be unclear or otherwise flawed in its delivery. We see evidence of this convention in Text 6, lines 9 to 12, where some students giggle at the teacher's mistake in delivering the question, but not at the question itself.

The prerogative to question contains the prerogative to enter unpredictable, idiosyncratic and previously unexplored territory by selecting some detail in the story or the illustration, and covering various quirks and specialties of the questioner's knowledge of the social world and of culture (e.g., names for "big boots"). Against such specialised cultural knowledge individual novices can be found competent or lacking. It is not only questions and answers, but also variations in teacher receptions of student answers that convey what school-literate description could look like. Such teacher hearings of student answers are cultural selections that can retrospectively construct correct answerers as school-literate speakers. The teacher's reception of an answer can involve overlapping and repeating the good answer, as occurs in Text 6 above:

- D So the rain doesn't go down [your back
 T [so the rain doesn't go down your
 back, very good. What else has he got on to keep him wet, uh dry.

It can involve an explicit commentary on a student's choice of words, (and the non-hearing of contributions outside the metatext) as in another first-grade lesson:

Text 7: Year One: The Alligator with the Lean Mean Smile

- T ...If you have a le:ean, me:ean smile,
 S He's got a [thing on his back!
 T [what-do-you-think mean means? [I said mean twice
 there but one mean (is different).
 S [thing on his back
 T If he's got a lean, mean smile
 S I think he's [(got a)
 T [Quiet now, give someone a turn besides you ()
 somebody who's thinking hard (). You thinking about it Valerie?
 (2.5) Robert's been doing a lot of good thinking, what do you
 think?
 R (I think) it means, he has a wicked sort of smile and they () and
 they don't know [who he is
 T [Yes I like that word that wicked sort of smile
 that's great [OH DEAR SAID SMALL HIPPO, HE'S
 LICKING MY BIG TOE
 S [Miss () he's got a () on his back
 S (Shh)

The teacher's sequential reception of candidate answers can also characterise answers as good but nevertheless incorrect or insufficient, as in this example of a right-answer hunt in a further extract from the "Cold Wet Night" lesson:

Text 8 Year One: One Cold Wet Night

- T I wonder what skiddely-doo means? If we could put it in different
 words, other words?
 Ss ((chattering))

- T They all ran out, instead of skiddely-doo what's [some other words we could use for that?
- Ss (((chattering)))
- T Hands, hands, Sean did you want to say something? Yes?
- S ()
- S (((whistling)))
- T [Fast () fast
- S ()
- T Fast, fast, what's another word, yeah good one
- S Tromp tromp tromp?
- T Tromp tromp tromp yeah, what's another word though
- S ((derisively)) Tromp tromp tromp!
- T Instead of saying they all ran [out skiddledy-doo
- S (((whistling)))
- T we could say they all ran out fast, (that's a) good one
- S (Uh) speed?
- S (((whistling repeatedly)))
- T [Speed or speedily, yes. Another one starting with quuh?

Such "literacy criticism" of the form and content of students' answers - a criticism that students are shown how to practise themselves (as with "tromp tromp tromp" in Text 8 above) - is an institutional activity crucial to both obscuring and sustaining the cultural sources of educational advantage (Bourdieu 1976; Ozolins 1981). In the search for alternatives to "skiddely-doo" we can see the beginnings of the shaping of the "aesthetic personality" in responses to literature (cf. Hunter, Chapter 3, this volume) through the subtleties of enthusiasm shown for candidate answers. The teacher, as literacy exemplar and literacy critic, is heard to be listening for what the students can and cannot do. What is made problematic within such classroom sequences is the students' capabilities. Yet how the teacher asks questions and receives answers is foundational in the social construction of classroom literacy and in the social production of differences among students as classroom-literate speakers. The notion that there is one thing called reading, and the assumption that the teacher knows how to do it, are naturalised through this asymmetry of doubt in the talk.

A correlate of such an organisation of attention and doubt is the deflection of attention from the construction and qualities of the text. For example, in Text 8 above, a textual device ("skiddely-doo") is used to launch the teacher's literary criticism of the students, conducted as a survey of *their* vocabulary knowledge or choices. The construction of the text remains

outside the spotlight of critical attention. Similarly the production of a metatext by the teacher is naturalised through the questioning procedures.

The consequences for literacy practice of such discourse organisation is therefore more than the 'colonisation' of a fanciful story by the information-paradigm of school knowledge referred to before. The consequences extend to equating collusion in the teacher's preferred reading of a text with literate competence and to naturalising students' self-indoctrination into the epistemic practices of the classroom (cf. Young 1984). This characterises literacy as being *for* colluding in authoritative discourses, not for deconstructing them.

Situated Characterisations of Classroom Reading

In the preceding analyses I have pointed out evidence of the public and social nature of the activities that can be seen to constitute learning to read in classrooms. The public, social nature of these activities is a resource on which teachers and students necessarily draw in order to 'teach' and 'learn' reading at all, even though commonsense notions of what 'reading' is obscure the constitutive force of such discourse events. Teachers and students routinely characterise what they are doing in the course of reading - for example, finding answers to puzzles - as just that kind of activity. But they also, on occasion, characterise what they could be doing *in order to* read, what reading consists of. In this section I draw attention to this foundational literacy practice in classrooms: the characterisation of reading as a social, cognitive, cultural or linguistic activity to students.

Some examples of teacher descriptions of how a student could find or produce reading-knowledge will illustrate the production of such characterisations. These examples are taken from first grade classrooms:

Text 9a: One Cold Wet Night

- T ...tell me what you think this story is going to be about, just by looking at that front cover..Alright let's have a think about our story. Firstly, who can tell me what a giant weta might be. Try looking there's another picture of one...I wonder why a New Zealand insect would find its way into this book...thinking caps on.

Text 9b: The Alligator with the Lean Mean Smile

- T Quiet now, give someone a turn besides you () somebody who's thinking hard (). You thinking about it Valerie? (2.5) Robert's been doing a lot of good thinking what do you think?
- R (I think) it means, he has a wicked sort of smile and they () and they don't know [who he is
- T [Yes I like that word that wicked sort of smile that's great.

Teacher characterisations of what the students could be doing to produce good answers to questions appear to accommodate the notion that reading is an internal process with an acknowledgement that it is actively and effortfully done. Such descriptions convey to students the idea that "reading" is achieved through a kind of mental operation that can be set in motion by "looking" or "thinking" hard or carefully: they provide for students a social construction of the reading mind (cf. Coulter 1979). Insofar as such characterisations of what "reading" could be rely on characterisations of how it might be done, they come close to acknowledging Heap's point (Chapter 5, this volume) that reading is not a process that occurs, but is something done. It is from characterisations such as those reported here along with clues acquired in the course of witnessing question-answer sequences and other conversational routines in classrooms that students could assemble characterisations of their own thought and reading processes.

If what teachers assemble and publicise through such characterisations is a notion of reading as cognitive work, then they have found an artful solution to contradictions between psychological theories of "the reading process" and the political requirements of classroom effort and participation. In effect, the preservation of mentalist notions of reading (e.g., as a specialised kind of thinking) sustains the authority of the teacher to pronounce on the quality of 'thought', and sustains the validity of the opening of versions of literate speaking to competitive assessment. Such assessment would become more easily challenged were the performances (including the teacher's: "yes I like that word ... that's great") to be viewed as cultural.

When students at whatever level of schooling characterise their own performances as "lucky" or "unlucky" dips into their school-cultural knowledge, they come close to such an acknowledgement. To use another analogy, answering teacher questions can be likened to playing pinball

(Perrott 1988: 62). This form of accounting neatly characterises the apparent arbitrariness of correctness. It recognises the politics of school knowledge and comes close to questioning the assumption that correct answers evidence underlying cognitive capacity - and it is a form of accounting that most teachers dismiss in favour of competence- or effort-based accounts.

From these analyses, teaching and learning reading look very much like teaching and learning school culture. The mysteries of learning-to-read-in-a-classroom, from these analyses, look to be identical to the problem of becoming familiar with a code that governs what teacher and students can know, can say and can do with texts and with each other in classrooms (see Baker & Luke, Chapter 11, this volume).

Conclusion: Literacy as Cultural Practice

All of the analyses in this chapter have evidenced McHoul's point that reading-in-a-classroom is "reading, there", and visibly so, in that the transcripts have been shown to document the inseparability of what counts as reading in a classroom from the organisation of age, knowledge and authority relations in and for classrooms. School-literacy practices, including situated characterisations of "reading", sustain institutional relations. These analyses of some instances of reading activities in the early years of school suggest some ways of theorising from the local organisation of discourse about text to the production of institutional relations.

As there is more than one way of reading a transcript, sociologically, specific points of interpretation in these analyses are open to debate. The main point has been to show how a sociological reading of the transcripts could be done: in this case, one built on the proposition that while the story forms the apparent object of talk and interpretation in the reading activity, it may be viewed essentially as a material document around which social relations can be organised. Those social relations, at the same time, circumscribe the kinds of reading practices which are characteristic of schooling and which may be peculiar to it. What counts as reading in the classroom, and how that reading is theorised and done, cannot be separated from the broader purposes and practices of contemporary schooling.

In this chapter I have shifted attention from the problem of what students can and cannot do, cognitively, to the problem of what teachers and students can be seen to be doing, culturally. This is in contrast to most contemporary theories and prescriptions about reading instruction that make

problematic the students' acquisition of and facility with whatever is currently theorised as reading skills or reading process. We see such theories played out locally in these classroom examples. A reading pedagogy that turns its gaze essentially in one direction - to the (problematised) cognitive competence of the "child" reader - is a political pedagogy that naturalises the teacher's expertise and authority *as a reader*. What this obscures is the recognition of teaching procedures as institutionalising and crediting culturally specific ways of reading (and writing: see also Michaels 1981, 1985, 1987). It obscures the recognition of classroom reading practices as constitutive of the social relations of schooling.

Many teachers would not take themselves to be doing those things that my analyses suggest are being done, in their talk. This is in part because teaching, learning, and reading are not conventionally theorised or studied as cultural practice in the terms I have presented here. This is also in part because theories of reading and of reading pedagogy have sustained the transparency of classroom discourse, just as in the reading practices in our examples the text is made transparent. Yet it is in the organisation of classroom discourse, and not in theories, abstractions or idealisations, that pedagogy-as-practice can be found. Working from records of actual - not idealised - classroom activities, as in these transcripts, provides a way of talking about doing teaching that does not gloss the very activities that constitute teaching, practically and procedurally, but rather makes them available for inspection - not only by researchers and theorists, but by teachers themselves.

Notes

1. For the details of the relation between this ethnomethodological view of how reading comprehension can be studied and psychological theories of reading, see the exchange between Bereiter (1986) and Heap (1986).

2. Transcript Notation

T	teacher
S(s)	unidentified student(s)
M	first initial of student's name (changed for anonymity)
()	words spoken not audible
(was)	best guess for word(s) spoken
(())	transcriber description
[two speakers' talk overlaps at this point
=	no interval between turns

UPPER	reading from text
<u>yes</u>	emphasis
slo:ow	sound extended
?	interrogative intonation
...	material deleted
(3.0)	pause timed in seconds

These transcripts do not capture all of the as-it-happens quality of these instructional events, notably physical arrangement of speakers, details of stress or tone, and nonverbal signs. Just as no transcription can be complete, no transcription can be neutral. The transcription is an analyst's interested reconstruction of a conversational speech sequence. People do not talk in upper and lower case letters or in punctuation marks (see Heap, 1982b: 401) nor do they talk in a right-hand column with some sense of a left-hand column to come. This left-hand column shows the transcriber's solution of the problem of how to select a relevant membership category for each of the participants doing the talk (cf. Speier 1972). That solution is found in the talk itself, in members' situated characterisations of who they are, doing what (see Note 4 below).

3. It is from within ethnomethodology that possibilities for doing sociology with conversational materials have arisen and been pursued (see Sacks 1972). Ethnomethodological analyses of talk have encompassed both close analyses of the sequential organisation of informal conversation and analyses of talk in institutional settings (see, for example, Atkinson & Heritage 1984; Heritage 1984). Studies focussing specifically on classroom talk (e.g., Payne 1976; Payne & Hustler 1980; McHoul 1978; Hustler & Payne 1982; Heyman 1986) have shown how the organisation of conversation is accomplished in classrooms and how such conversational practice achieves what is recognisably orderliness, formality, or power/authority in the classroom.
4. The talk in these transcripts is recognisable as characteristic of classroom discourse even without the designations in the left hand column of the letters T and S. That it is "often possible to recognise the 'institutional' character of sequences of talk without any information beyond the words on the page" evidences in another way the point that 'context' is endogenous to talk, "something created in and through that talk" (Heritage 1984: 283). The participants in the talk are themselves creating the recognisable character of their activity (classroom story reading) and their situationally relevant identities (teacher and students).

The transcript is designed to show the sequential ordering of turns at talk - including overlaps indicated by a [square bracket and 'empty' turns ((no response)). The procedure in the analysis is to trace participants' ongoing hearing and interpretation of each others' utterances. For a detailed comparison of such ethnomethodological analyses with analyses that employ predetermined coding systems, see Heap (1982b).

5. This "preference" is inferred from the regularities of the teacher's questioning and reception of answers.
6. Teacher-made tapes, from which I give only one example here, can be read as idealisations of the reading "child". The insertion of the proxy "personal response" in this instance is a specific literacy practice that shows children how they could constitute

themselves - the subjectivity they could assume - for learning to read. Such devices occasion a "child" identity in an (apparently) interactive setting (cf. Hadden & Lester 1978). In the materials and the methods of early reading instruction, "children" are placed in a different, and special, ontological space - a space which teachers may on occasion pretend to inhabit, but which children may have little option but to inhabit or at least to pretend to.

7. Children's first school books contribute to the organisation and character of that ontological space. They clearly invite reading by persons (self)-constituted as "children" (Baker & Freebody 1989b). Such texts, and in particular basal reading series, contain relentless description of the everyday life and consciousness of the mythical, archetypal "child" (Luke 1988); most of these texts are narratives or first-person soliloquies rather than expository texts; and they contain many "fantasy" stories containing speaking animals and other playful elements.
8. There is no guarantee that participation in such discourse amounts to the presence of some theorised mental activity or competence in any of the participants (see MacKay 1974b; Hoopfer & Hunsberger 1986; MacLure & French 1980; Hammersley 1977).

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III Reconstructing Theory

Chapter 8

readingS

Alec McHoul

Preamble

The theme of this paper is straightforward: it argues that there is no unified, prespecifiable thing or practice which counts always and only as reading. Put another way: the word 'reading' has no single meaning. Put yet another way: it is always possible to defeat a definite and distinct boundary between a practice or thing called reading and its opposite, not-reading. That is to say: no one has much of a clue as to the specifiability of the domain of not-reading. Without its opposite a concept's meaning is at best problematic. This does not mean that everything is reading and nothing isn't. Rather it means that almost everything can be reading and that when it is and isn't depends on unforeseeable matters.

Needless to say, then, a consequence of my position is that there cannot be a precise pedagogic science of reading. (And this is also borne out by the fact that and such science would always consist of, or include elements of, that which it would explain; for it is impossible to imagine a science which is not, itself, a reading or readings.) A further and related consequence is that those interested in teaching reading - or one of its contemporary euphemisms such as 'enhancing reading' or 'fostering reading' - must face the fact that no-one can give them precise descriptions of either what it is they are teaching nor, *a fortiori*, how they should go about it. It seems to me to be absolutely and positively the case that there can be no 'programs' of reading instruction, no sets and lists of 'skills' and no developmental 'stages' in the acquisition of reading. In fact, I would want to argue, eventually and tentatively, that we might, on a professional basis, let the singular word 'reading' go, once and for all. And this is why I write 'readingS' with a big 'S'. One implication of this - which I cannot fully explore in this paper but leave to the other contributors to the present volume who are more competent in this respect - is that the same might

follow for the concept of literacy: namely, that there is no such general category.

A second thing this paper sets out to do then is to take from the extremely wide band of things and practices that might be readings the particular things and practices that have counted as 'reading-in-a-classroom'. This is a much more precise and specifiable area, if only because it makes, arbitrarily and under the influence of particular theories, a definite cut into the domain of readings. It makes a definition and enforces it. The theories that accomplish this have tended to be mentalistic in orientation and cut down the domain of readings to a particular set of mental states and activities belonging to already-formed and autonomous human subjects. I do not want to show this to be 'wrong' - but only to show where its limits lie.

Thirdly, I want to argue that if we are to have anything approximating a study of readings - even a study which is limited to the classroom - the approach must be wider and broader than the currently dominant mentalistic ones. This approach could be called sociological, political, semiotic and so on. However it may be formulated, those who prefer the narrow confines of mentalist readings of readings will read my approach as dealing with something like 'reading contexts'. They will tend to read me as providing a theory of the situations in which the 'real' process of reading takes place. If we can see that mentalism's cut into the domain of readings is arbitrary, if we can problematise that particular theory, it should then be possible to see the alternative socio-political-semiotic approach to reading as actually being a theory of reading-as-such and not one simply of an epiphenomenal context. One ought to be sceptical of the term 'context'. It is, for many theories, the prime candidate for being 'not-reading'. Here the reading; there the context. Here the real process; there the mere space and time 'in' which it takes place. But by what criteria do we make this division? I have no idea how one could be so definite; just as contemporary physics no longer considers the Universe to be composed of matter 'in' a 'context' of space and time but instead thinks of it as a space-time-matter unity. So: when I write of reading-in-a-classroom, I am referring to reading, there, as such: not to a separate 'context'. In this sense, the paper asks what it is to read in a classroom: what it is to be produced as the kind of human *subject* which does this. And so, in a paradoxical way, I do seek to make a contribution to reading-as- subjectivity - but in the sense that the production of subjects and subjectivity is always through-and-through a material, social and political practice. To this extent, I agree with Donald (1985: 214) when he says:

How the curriculum embodies a particular ordering of the symbolic, and how this then plays into the ordering of subjectivity, remain perhaps the most tantalisingly underexplored question[s] in the study of education.

So there are three things to argue: (1) reading has no essence; (2) educationalist and psychological approaches to reading have arbitrarily cut down the meaning of the term to the sphere of mental predicates; (3) we can approach particular genres of reading, such as reading in a classroom, an observatory, an office, a library, a tarot-reader's tent and so on, and provide alternative socio-political or semiotic theories of the readings, there, themselves, over and above questions of mere 'context' and with a view to examining the work of subject-production they entail (cf. Henriques et al. 1984).

Reading Has No Soul

My arguments in this section rely broadly on the work of the later Wittgenstein (1968), particularly as he has been interpreted by Staten (1986: 84ff) and other roughly poststructuralist readers. Between sections 156 and 171 of the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein takes apart the idea that reading is a "particular process" - especially the quite popular idea that this process is a mental one. But we shall leave aside the question of mentalism for a short while and concentrate on this idea of reading being particular and specifiable. Wittgenstein asks how it could be that "one particular process takes place" when we read (#167). We might read a sentence in print and then read it in Morse code, to give his example. In such a case, is the (mental) process the same? I expect that most of us will think not. But Wittgenstein is not dogmatic about this. He wants to know, I think, why we come to think of the process as a particular one, as singular. And the tentative answer he gives is that we are perhaps fooled by the uniformity of "the experience of reading a page of print" (#167). He goes on in the same passage:

the mere look of a printed line is itself extremely characteristic - it presents, that is, a quite special appearance, the letters all roughly the same size, akin in shape too, and always recurring; most of the words constantly repeated and enormously familiar to us, like well-known faces (#167).

This is why we feel uneasy about tinkerings with these familiar faces - moves to legislate for spelling reform, for example.

But the uniformity of a page of print, and the repetition effect we get in scanning it, for all that this points to a surface definiteness and specifiability, does not mean that reading is a particular process. Instead, a brief inspection throws up a whole range of differences and distinctions regarding what the concept of reading might cover. Staten speculates that one candidate for the "soul" of reading might be to specify it as being the derivation of repetitions from an original. And this, again, is one of the ways in which computer metaphors of reading have tended to take us. But then we have to ask equally: what is to count as deriving? The problem simply shifts on to another terrain. Perhaps, Staten goes on, we should always refer to the "systematic" derivation of, for example, sounds from marks. But we all know that it is possible to derive the wrong sounds. If someone does that: are they reading? Again, we could say that the essence of reading was the presence of a certain kind of inner experience, rather than a derivation. But we may, and do, have this experience while we are asleep or stoned. Are we to say that, then, we are reading?

Instead of looking for a definite and singular characteristic of reading, Wittgenstein suggests that we look upon reading as an "assemblage of characteristics" (Staten 1986: 85). Moreover, these characteristics will

in each separate case of reading ... be variously reconstituted, and in these different reassemblings there will always be the infection of characteristics of what does not correspond to what we want to think of as really, essentially, reading... It is as though these characteristics had dual membership in two mutually exclusive sets. (85)

Firstly, then, we cannot prespecify the characteristics which go to make up reading. Secondly, if we could, we would always find them in new and varied combinations, in any actual cases of reading. Thirdly, we will always find in amongst them characteristics which we should not want to associate with reading as such but which are crucial to that actual case. Reading is like soup or slime. We should not want to specify its essence according to any neat digital calculus: not that it has no soul as such - rather it has a multiplicity and "any one of them could at some stage take over and guide the sequence in its own direction" (Staten 1986: 103). It is because of, not despite, this *pleomorphism* that we recognise cases of reading.

Mentalism: Limiting the Rule for Reading

Despite my efforts elsewhere (McHoul 1982), Staten's argument convinces me that there are no general rules for reading - though I think we might find some specific regularities operating in particular circumstances which we can easily confuse with deep-seated and general rules. This would mean that reading is not identical with 'knowing rules': rather it is knowing, if there are any rules, what they are rules *for*. For instance, when a child in a classroom 'goes wrong' in their reading, this is like a wrong move in chess. A wrong move in chess is not generally a case of moving a pawn as if it were a bishop: rather it is something unstrategic, like putting your Queen in danger of being taken. Reading, then, is not a set of formal properties like the constitutive rules of chess but is much more like knowing how to play with texts strategically. It arises not when we know the formal characteristics of reading; but rather when we enact certain differences - differences between readings and other sorts of events. Which other sorts of events these are will depend, precisely, on the scene of enactment. 'Enacting' here means going through the process of inscribing a certain cultural practice, P, such that it is visibly not not-P. To read in the classroom, predicting certain things yet to come, means to separate off the reading from other things. Teachers and students do these things together. In enacting reading, they are inscribing what they are doing as a definite case of just-this-thing, for these purposes. And so on. Because this work is inscriptional, because it is left as a trace on the memory, the culture, the classroom wall (e.g., in the form of a timetable for reading), because it is inscribed in, for example, educational manuals and in administrative procedures, because it is historically inscribed: it is not a contradiction to call reading a form of writing-in-general (Derrida 1978).

Having come this far, it is quite strange to look back and find this plurality of readingS - this inchoate soup of strategies for delimiting the field of writing-in-general - egregiously reduced and confined by some theorists to a particular ghostly process, a particular mental state, activity or experience. Here I turn to the work of Coulter (1979: 69ff) and his Wittgensteinian critique of, among others, Chomsky. Unlike Wittgenstein, Staten or Coulter, Chomsky did think that reading could be reduced to a set of specific rules, rules mapping on to particular mental states inside readers' heads as they read. If the rules are discovered to be in place, so are the mental states and so one can say that one has a genuine case of a reader reading. If they are not in place, neither is the mental state and so

'competent' reading is clearly not taking place. Chomsky writes that he, as ideal reader, has:

a (no doubt in part unconscious) theory involving the postulated mental acts of humans performing certain acts such as reading, etc., which is related to my (also unconscious) system of linguistic rules in such a way that I assert that A is reading when I believe him to be in such a mental state, and my assertion is correct if my belief is correct. (Chomsky 1969: 28)

Chomsky's concept of 'rule' here is an instance of what Coulter calls the "rule-regularity conflation". This means that even though a description of actions or behaviours can work with utter empirical reliability and predictability - even though, for example, a grammar might account for all the well-formed utterances of a limited set of a language - all this in itself provides no argument whatsoever for transferring such general properties 'to the mind'. The actional regularities do not, *ipso facto*, translate into mental rules. Even if the toaster always provides perfectly done slices, this does not mean that it 'knows' when the toast is cooked.

In place of this Coulter uses one of the central devices of Wittgensteinian philosophy, family resemblance. He shows how the concept of reading always glosses a non-determinate, only relatively precise, family of cases. They are not held together with some defining characteristic which is 'essentially' reading. Moreover, that single characteristic, even if it were analytically acceptable, could never be something like a feeling, an experience or a mental state of any kind. If reading were an inner process we could not argue with someone who simply closed his eyes, claimed to be having that experience and therefore insisted on being deemed one who could read. This would certainly not pass in a school reading lesson (Heap 1977; see Baker, Chapter 7, this volume) or in an immigration literacy test. In fact, it would not pass in any social formation - no matter how mystical.

In place of defining characteristics, Wittgenstein argues that it is *criteria* of application which hold together concepts or families of practices such as reading. While we may want to argue from entailment and so be able to say 'If x is in place, then y is occurring', no such definite characteristics can always be found. Criteria, for Wittgenstein, *replace* the logician's goal of strict entailment:

For Wittgenstein, the notion of a 'criterion' replaces the notion of truth conditions in semantics. A criterial relationship between an assertion and its evidences is weaker than classical entailment but stronger than inductive evidence. If q is a criterion for p, then it is part of the meaning of p that q is a conventionally fixed evidence for the truth of p. However

a criterion is not decisive evidence in itself, for additional circumstantial evidences can defeat the criterial support for an assertion. And yet, *undefeated criterial evidence constitutes the correctness of an assertion.* (Coulter 1979: 74)

Note, then, that the application of a concept like reading cannot depend on entailment of the form ‘If the mental state, then the reading’; rather it depends on a relation of “conventionally fixed evidence”, the ‘soupy’ details of Staten’s argument. To understand reading is to understand the conventions and ingredients that can make it up, that can surround it, that can come into and out of play, in particular cases. For educators this must mean looking to the conventions and traditions of reading in the classroom, to what Freadman (1988), for example, calls its “ceremonies”. This almost calls for a ‘philology’ of classroom reading - a history of its texts and textual practices. What, accordingly would the genre of reading we call ‘reading-in-the-classroom’ look like under such a description? What are its sub-genres, for example? And what practices lie in the fields adjacent to it? Even a sketch of an answer provides an analysis which one would barely expect in a collection of papers on reading: for it is an answer which has more to do with sewage systems than semantic systems, more to do with the issues of public health than with those of private experience.

Notes Towards a Political Semiotics of Reading-in-the-Classroom

Political semiotics? Well, then, there *has* to be Halliday. But is there really very much in the concepts of field and tenor, for example, which is going to be to the point here (Halliday 1978)? Isn’t this, in effect, only another version of back- and foregrounding - one which ultimately begs to be read as text and context as soon as we attempt to think it politically? Freadman’s distinction between game and ceremony is perhaps more to the point for our purposes: if only because, for Freadman, where one begins and the other ends is unclear and there cannot be an analysis whose goal is to ‘clear up’ the distinction. The framing of game and ceremony is not clear. Along with the playing of the game, as such, whatever ‘as such’ may mean here, there are also

the preparations, the choice of partners, occasion and venue. There is the warm-up, the toss, and, at the end, the declaration of the winner and the closing-down rituals - showers, presentations, or the drink at the bar. (Freadman 1988: 71)

Who is to say that these elements of ceremony are not elements of the game of tennis? Tennis could barely even be tennis without them: and yet they are not what are commonly known as 'the essential ingredients'.

We can make the same mistakes about reading. We sometimes think only of the reader scanning the pages, deriving sound from print-image, having a mental experience of a certain sort and so on. And this is equivalent to serving, lobbing at the net, scoring a point and so on, in tennis. But there are, also, and essentially, the ceremonies of reading without which, I want to add, it is equally just not reading. When we think of 'reading' we think too much of a particular genre of it called 'reading off', including sub-genres like 'deriving' and 'scanning'. But what are these other possibilities, these ceremonies? How do they differ from games without being not-games exactly? Freadman goes on:

Ceremonies are games that situate other games: they are the rules for the setting of a game, for constituting participants as players in the game, for placing and timing it in relation to other places and times. *They are the rules for the playing of a game, but they are not the rules of the game.* Games, then, are rules for the production of certain acts in those 'places'. To the extent that the grammatical rules of my language permit me to make this distinction, I could say that, where ceremonies are rules for playing, games are rules of play. That there is 'play' at both these levels is important: knowing the rules is knowing what would break the rules, but being a skilled player is knowing how much play the rules allow and how to play with them. (1988: 71-72, emphasis added)

In 'professional' circumstances, coaching tennis or reading, it is very easy to teach the game (the rules of play) and not the ceremonies (the rules for that playing or playing out). Seeing how much the formal rules can be subject to free play, we think, comes later - after the 'skill'. One wants almost to limit the field or the court to those kinds of technical considerations. Still, of course, to be fully professional, one is necessarily interested at the same time in the individuality and uniqueness of the (perhaps young) player/s one is coaching. As we shall see: this humane interest does not rule out a technicist limitation of reading to the pure game, the game which does not stand on ceremony; on the contrary the two can be seen as equal parts in the strategy of the reading coach, of the model player.

So, since my approach to reading seems to boil down to this, what would it be to turn one's attention to the ceremonies - which Freadman (1988: 72) reads as constituted by "moments, phases, stages, or 'places'" where each of these, moreover, can be called 'a genre'? - to the ceremonies, that is, not instead of the game but as well as the game? For the category of ceremonies, in effect, subsumes the game. My own preferred tactic here

would be to look at precisely the place or genre of reading closest to the hearts, minds and bodies of the educator: the place or genre of reading-in-a-classroom. In particular I want to consider the sub-genre or micro-place of beginning-reading-in-a-classroom. The beginning of reading, as we shall see, is not utterly distinct from the beginning of the modern classroom in the political/historical sense.

The point of the speculations which follow is to show that these ceremonial places *are* readings. A reading is never not-framed and there is never any simple distinction, as with Möbius strips, between the 'inside' and the 'outside' of the frame. The distinction, in order to be made at all, needs to be an utterly fuzzy one; that fuzziness is not a fault but a prerequisite. The indistinct picture, as Wittgenstein says, is "often exactly what we need" (1968: #71). The framing itself, always there but never specifiable without indefiniteness, consists of what a text "does to situate itself in relation to its social, formal, and material surrounding" (Freadman 1988: 92). This is much more of a candidate for the title 'what reading is' than any ghostly or internal process. Moreover, it is this reading-as-always- already-enframed that teachers and students must actually orient to in deciding whether or not it takes place, as a purely practical matter (Heap 1977). They simply do not have available, as part of the frame itself, inside it, or outside it, any pure mental process or experience separate from the reading with which to compare the reading. What they do have is social practices. Here are my speculations, then, about the politics of classroom reading: my minimalist descriptions of it. They ask how reading is administered, almost in a medicinal sense, and what it administers to readers. Each numbered remark could be heard as prefaced by a phrase like 'In the classroom...'. Together they constitute a certain, almost 'stereotypical', view of reading-in-the-classroom.

1. We read together, sometimes aloud, sometimes silently. There are places and times for the aloud and for the silent. We learn these and sometimes they are marked on the wall in other texts which we must know how to read. To know the sub-genres of 'aloud' and 'silent' there is something we must already be able to read: a timetable, a movement of the teacher's finger, the volume of noise in the room, etc.

2. We are compared in our reading together, aloud and silently. The moments and times come around when we are to go up or sit quite still for this comparison. There are winners and losers in this, whether or not their names are spoken in public. We are separated, for example, the fast from the slow by relative degrees. We are given our orders as to how we should proceed in our reading - the advance and the retard are sounded for us

collectively and individually. These changes of routine are no more and no less than markers of the school day, like bells for playtime and home on a smaller scale.

3. We are put into competition in our readings. Sometimes there are ladders and tables with names and stars on the walls of the room. These represent, they map on to such things as 'where we are up to' - Book 6 or Book 7. It's no good being able to read if you can't read these.

4. Sometimes, we do not know whether this is a private or a public space. Sometimes the reading is in our heads, private like our thoughts and a refuge from other things in the classroom. Then we feel like autonomous souls with thoughts of our own. Sometimes, on the contrary, the reading is a matter of public rhetoric. Reading in and reading out: both of these can come into play. They can be in play at the same time. And they can commingle with reading aloud and reading silently. Sometimes it's your innermost thoughts that are up there in the space of public rhetoric. Other times it's a big impersonal public historical voice that's playing through your own head.

5. There are serious consequences for either being low on the reading scale or not taking the scale seriously: playing badly or not playing seriously (nb. 'serious playing'). The consequences are the same for both because they look the same. They give off the same appearances to those watching from the side.

6. The reading we do is controlled: we can't just read any way we like. Sometimes the control is word-by-word, as when the teacher points to words on the board. Sometimes it's paragraph-by-paragraph, or book-by-book, and so on. We learn to see parallels between textual levels by learning their similarity in terms of their control. We can feel that these things are 'meted out' to us, like controlled doses. Someone somewhere knows how much each can take and also the techniques of feeding us by the rules of those precise quanta. The teacher is the closest someone who knows this, but there are probably others. The schemes of reading, the regimes of reading-books: these must come from somewhere. There is some design to this - for it is so strictly controlled. It is within this strict control that the free play of our reading must take place - that we must show ourselves as we 'really are'. (For example, see Maclure 1965: 80, 'Definitions of Standards by the Revised Code, 1862', cited in Donald 1985: 234.)

7. While we are to find connections and derivations on a word-by-word basis, occasionally on a sentence-by-sentence basis (at least for now), we are rarely asked to make them on a book-by-book basis. The area of our own particular mastery is delimited to specific amounts of text. We are

not asked, for example, what a whole book means, what it says - at least not yet. And when enough is meted out to us for us to be able to be tested on our judgment of whole books there will no doubt be some greater unity that is kept from our personal judgment and mastery. How far can this go?

8. While we are always massified in our reading, as a class, what we read is the smallest units - sometimes even individual sounds or letters of print. Somehow there is an association between our individual smallness and the smallness of the units we are allowed or required to scan or interpret. And there is an association between our massified nature as a class and the bigness of the book- and supra-book-levels that may or may not be 'out there', beyond the frame of the classroom, at the 'destination' of our learning to read. On the one hand, the tiny mind and the phoneme - on the other, history and the canon of literature. This is a model for living: a hierarchised morality for us which learning reading in the classroom teaches - whatever else we may or may not learn, however good or bad we are at reading. In fact, we might learn the moral lesson better if we're poor readers.

9. There is also another set of analogic relations: between the space of the reading classroom and the space of the textual practices that occur there. And this analogic relation means we are always taught something more than reading when it is reading that we learn or fail to learn. Some examples follow.

10. The classroom has definite, familiar spatial arrangements. You can spot a classroom a mile away. It is designed to permit:

an internal, articulated and detailed control - to render visible those who are inside it. [That is] an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them. (Foucault 1977: 172; see also Donald's treatment of this passage, 1985: 227ff)

This architecture, in the broadest sense, produces and contains specific kinds of subjects, specific social identities - student as against teacher is the primary one, but there are others too. The spaces one finds in the basal reader, to take one example only, also make up an 'architecture' with equally well-sectioned boundaries and characteristic identities: the domestic space as against public street; the city street as against the trip to the country and the obligatory farmyard; Dad vs. Mom; the pet vs. the little sister. If these boundaries were not clear (let alone if they were inverted) nothing would be possible at all - in the classroom or in the text. This is an absolute morality; it marks off the strict bounds of moral play. We are to strive for

equality here - equality presumably with the teacher, the model. Yet we must never reach this, for if we were equal with the teacher this could not be a classroom - a classroom in which we are to strive for equality, etc. The same is evident in the represented spaces within the basal readers. Mom is utterly not to be Dad. The domestic space only exists because it is not the public street. Babies are not pets.

11. In the space of the text and the space of the classroom, no one is ever alone but is defined by a position in a hierarchy of relations. The story of 'being lost' is so popular here, perhaps, because there is always a resolution, a return to the familiar hierarchy. Outside the text, outside the classroom, outside the family: all are spaces from which one must eventually return. To be in neither place is to be nowhere. Aloneness and other spaces always dissolve back to 'here', to 'now', to a dependable bourgeois presence. This same presence was demanded, to mention only one case, by the charity schools in the 1870s: that the child be present at school or within the family. Hence Dr Barnardo's Photographic Department, by means of which

children absconding from our Homes are often recovered and brought back ... [or] ... have been recognised by parents or friends and finally restored to their care. (Barnardo quoted in Lloyd 1974: 14; also in Tagg 1980: 43-44; and cf. Donald 1985: 235)

Under a similar kind of injunction, basal reader characters exist in certain proper places but do not think - at least they do not think very much. They say, mostly, and they act, a little. But they are always 'in play', being watched.

12. In the class and in the early reading book there is always, in any given case, an authority to be appealed to or to intervene: there is no possible relativistic space of play or debate over relations of authority. They are always merely given. Over each text and each classroom hang the twin lights of truth and falsehood; on and off; binary; digital. Nothing goes unresolved. Nothing is left indefinite. Neither space allows 'maybe' to hang around for long. In the class and in the text, the middles are always excluded. The question of representation is unasked, the problem unmentioned.

13. Class and text: each marks clear space and time zones. There is the school timetable; but also the cycle of the family day, week, year. That institution, the family, constitutes a main site, while its 'cycle' constitutes a main technique, for the surveillance and regulation of the child. As Donzelot (1979: 47) writes, a number of mechanisms of policing have been

designed since the 19th century to “shepherd[...] the child back to spaces where he could be more closely watched: the school or the family dwelling”. And each of these sites and techniques are part of a more general armature of policing, representing

a decisive shift from the total power of the monarch to the infinitely small exercise of power necessary to the discipline and productive exploitation of bodies accumulated in large numbers. (Tagg 1980: 21)

The early reader is clearly a case in point. It tells about where we all are supposed to be when we're, precisely, not in schoolspace. It is rarely self-reflexive - it rarely opens a possible space for reflection on (let alone critique of) the school or the family. School and family practices are 'natural' - always were, always have been. The family home is everpresent and thoroughly normal. Not so the classroom. When it does figure in the reading book, it is very carefully treated. In comics, in trash: this is the moment and space for the classroom to be subjected to humour and criticism. On another tack: one never finds the reader *in* the reading of early school readers - for that would open up a potentially plurivocal space, a difference. Again: the reading is paced, cycled, calendared - Series 1, Book 1, and so on. These are no more and no less than filing systems: forms of objective and external benchmarking. One is, unarguably, 'up to' a certain point in the story, the Book, the Series. It is simply not open to question, reflection, difference, undecidability. The basal reader and the reading classroom exist in an utterly archaic Newtonian space. They exude more certainty than the monastery.

14. At school we read a certain kind of book from the vast ranges of kinds of books that there are. It is a schoolbook. As much a school as a book, then. We know, all along, that no-one but schoolkids read them and that they read them *in* school - just like us. The books and the readings are almost unimaginable outside. They are like the materials of labour specific to a highly particularised - if widespread - kind of factory. The schoolbook is as specific to its site as the precision gasket punch is to the car factory; as the heavy-duty industrial buttonholer is to the sweatshop. We use different machines, for example, at home, or in other readings, in other sites whether for fun or for a different kind of necessity. The schoolbook tries to limit its possible uses to *one* and only one. It always tries to write of similitude and against difference: it is the most successful writing-against-difference we can imagine in a post-theological world. If it has only one use, then it has only one meaning, and only one truth. It has, it strives for, one reading. It begs to be taken as the paragon of the limitation of reading to a particular

essence - which, as we have seen, is precisely the ideology of psycho-educationist theories of reading. The school reader tries to be the very model of this technology: one is only supposed to read it one way. In fact, the triplet of teaching, textbook and authority asks to be read one way. That way is sometimes called 'literally'. And it is no coincidence that, at the same time that it limits reading to singularity, to the definite space of the classroom which is other than home, the basal reader also always speaks of 'home' or some relation to home. Why is this the case? Is it to taunt and to worry? Is it as if the factory machines did not buzz and scream but said, gently, 'freedom, freedom, freedom'?

15. For many - perhaps all - of us, these 'homes' that the basal reader shows are always imaginary. They speak to us as if they were actual homes, but they are always over-neat, overly well-lit, well-laid-out figures of the imaginary. They are just like advertisements in this respect and they retain much of the politics of advertising. What they advertise is a model of the modern home. They show that a certain architecture (the children's and the parent's bedrooms being separate, for example) is good; that a certain set of domestic relations is good; that it is normal and expectable for there to be TV, good sewerage, hot and cold running water, visits by doctors, good and beneficial relations with older generations, plenty of nourishment, no scarcity of basic essentials, gas and electric power, heating and warmth, a roof that doesn't leak. The basal reader advertises precisely what contemporary advertising cannot: what is taken for granted, unglamorous and yet, as we shall see, part of a very specific technology of, as Hunter (1988a) puts it, "morally managed experience" and "regulated freedom".

16. Psychologistic and educationistic readings of reading focus on the reader in the classroom as a relatively pure consciousness and on the text as an effect of a relatively pure grammar. Reading is the meeting of grammar and consciousness. This quite specific version of the subject/object double requires, in order for it to be so firmly in place (in psycho-educational studies of reading and in professional pedagogy alike), a pair of assumptions which are also devastating for those studies and that pedagogy when spelled out clearly. The first assumption is that reading is always reading *as*. It has to be so in order to be, for just one example, reading-as-consciousness. The second assumption is that interpreting a text always changes not only the text but the reader - it changes what counts as the reader. These are Heidegger's insights and they have a number of consequences, as follows.

17. To say reading is always reading *as*: this is to say that it has an 'as-structure'. Reading's as-structure shows a multiplicity of possible extensions of the 'as'. Grammar and consciousness are only a couple, and

they are limited. What we read the schooltext as (*qua* readers) is not grammar. We do not read it as grammatical rule but as grammatological ceremony. We read it, for example, as a *world*, as a moral sample or example, and so forth. Both in and after the moment of merely scanning the text - in and after the moment of consciousness of the text, which is to say: in and after the moment which psycho- educationalism calls 'reading' - what we read the text *as* has its effects on what we become. For what we become is, among other things, often things in concert with this training in reading, effects or products of just these sorts of texts. The *as*-structure of the reading and its subject-effects are not separable and discrete moments in the way that models of 'reading and context' would like. What then would be the *as*-structure of reading, for someone beginning to read in the classroom?

18. To read in the classroom is to read inside a particular kind of machine which was produced in the 19th century in Europe - for most of us this machine is a variation on the English model. But think about this: the machine of the classroom is not just a producing machine, it too is produced. It is both a product and a producer. What it is a product of and what it (re)produces is a set of specific techniques related to a kind of dialectical - or even contradictory - ethics. That is: the 19th century's twin goods were culture and utilitarianism. Again, I rely here and below mainly on Hunter's (1988a/b, Chapter 3, this volume) work but also on historical material from an Donald's (1985) important paper. The popular schools were designed to provide both (a) the romantic goal of self-enlightenment and the cultural and spiritual development of the 'full being' of the child as well as (b) the citizen-worker, the useful tool of the state and the community. In Donald's words, they were both "intimate" and "secure".

19. To read a text here, and to read it as a moral world - here - is to read oneself as the ethical-moral effect of these twin, oppositional requirements. One is invited to become a kind of schizoid being: the model of full selfhood and the model of selfless citizenry. What does this dual being look like? On the one hand, it is in training. It is supposed to be travelling *towards* fullness of being, along the course that is often mapped into 'stages' by psycho-educationalist pedagogy. And so it continually hears of its own incompleteness. The welfare techniques which constitute the space of the popular school classroom require that the reading subject aim to achieve 'equality'. But equality with what - with what model or exemplar? The only concrete exemplars in the class are: the teacher and the text. And so: we read the cozy scenes of the bourgeois family within the text as identical with the fantasy homelife of the teacher. The teacher is

'Mother' (less often, 'Father') and the reader is her 'son' or 'daughter' - and I refer, of course, to the names of characters in books. The popular schools, as they were founded at the beginnings of mass education in the 19th century, were projected specifically at the literacy of the working class: at almost nothing other than their literacy. And so it is little wonder that the basal readers eventually come to contain fantasies of bourgeois life. It - formed around the exemplary text-teacher-authority triplet - is precisely what one must imagine oneself as 'equal' to in the act of reading. The text is read as exemplar in a very literal sense.

20. The liberal reformist education manuals of the 19th century continually represent the school as a machine - but a machine which is humane, which is anything but mechanical; one which reaches the heart and soul of the child. It is built in such a way as to normalise and individualise at the same time: in fact to do each through the other. Each acts as a means to the other's end. Utility and culture are not opposites so much as a single technical strategy with a range of tactical options: now the 'soul' will be bared and attended to; now the skills will be taught. These are double moments of a single, apparently contradictory ethical armature. They make classroom knowledge possible. So to read the texts specifically designed for this space, *in* this space, is to construct oneself and be constructed as the bearer of this knowledge. One is an incomplete soul moving, if successful, to 'full being' and 'full consciousness' - the very consciousness, be it noted, which the psycho- educationist model of reading assumes to be already in place so that reading-off can take place. But one is not only incomplete in this 'internal' respect, one is also an as-yet useless, incomplete member of a utilitarian citizenry. So the story goes: one *will* be a full member, one day, if one reads properly, but one is not that yet. The school is always a hypothetical space in the utilitarian state, a section where 'training for' is separated out, taken out of the mainstream citizenry, a space of preparation. (For example: how many college education students still write essays which speak of 'preparation for society', 'out of school, into society' and so on?) The classroom reader, in this preparatory space, reads herself as someone who is 'not ready yet', 'not fit yet'. When she reads or writes in school, this action is called 'work'. But it is also called 'schoolwork' and it is made very clear to her that this does not mean real work. The school is a space of the imaginary pre-social - of social inauthenticity, as well as the space of personal- developmental incompleteness. The real thing is always elsewhere and elsewhen. The *loci* of that elsewhere and that elsewhen are fictional spaces within fictional spaces. For example: what the character called 'Daddy' does when he goes off, out of the narrative, 'to work'. And it is

specifically not what the character called 'Mummy' does in the domestic space. It is alluded to by the arrivals of such emissaries as postmen and removal men, by interesting scenes in the street such as excavations; very occasionally will be shown in the form of farmers (within the sub-genre called 'The Trip') though these are more often character types than working farmers.

21. At the same time, the reading is supposed to be a means of repairing these disequalities and incompletenesses of the reader: a means of making her a 'whole person', a unified, non-contradictory, neurosis-free, autonomous subject. In short, a fiction. The example is not confined to the primary school but migrates through the education system as far as the university. Think, for example, of how the university English department checks and balances its student readings: the poem is scanned and one offers one's reading. The reading may be, say, too personal, or else too didactic. It may be too romantic or too formalist. Eventually a reading is arrived at within the correct range of judgment and discernment - with the correct balance between personal response and scientific over-accuracy. Then it is marked. Its producer-recipient is congratulated, etc. But this technique emerges out of specific social programs, first assembled in the 19th century and specifically within the space of state-administered urban welfare directed at the working class. This was and is an ethical practice: one of the armatures of which is the specific ethical practice of the classroom - the balanced healthy reading. It goes along with the other aspects of urban welfare reformism: health, medicine, policing, housing, domestic architecture, sanitation, and so on. The techniques of reading we have, then, are much more to do with threatened and actual outbreaks of cholera in 19th century British cities than they have to do with natural developmental proclivities or with romantic culturalist designs. Healthy readings are only a single manifestation of a widespread and general movement for popular-education-against-infestation. To read a beginning-reading book is to have, for example, bodily, spatial, psychological and sexual impurities written off one's life-agenda. Children specifically do not read the details of their own working-class daily lives: no dirt, no drunkenness, no overflowing sexuality, no deviance or sedition of any kind, no masturbation, no incest, no sickness, no lonely old-age, no death. The reader reads herself a very specific - and utterly uniform and widespread - personal ethics, a corrective to her own possible or actual moral defects. As Hunter (1988b) puts it: the classroom is where one finds oneself and finds oneself wanting.

22. At the same time, the degree to which the reader has learned this lesson, the degree to which she has moved somewhere along the staged and plotted road to correct morality, is measured. And it has tended to be measured by quite technicist and utilitarian matters such as the 'speed of response' which she is able to show to a new text, to an unseen - or by cloze tests, by the reader's ability to translate print into correct phonemes and vice versa. In short there is a whole array of psycho-behavioural - mostly quite blatantly physiological - observations, checks and corrections. A major site of decision-making as to the effectivity of the quite ethical techniques of training can be the reader's body - for it is the body which is a major target and recipient of welfare ethics overall. Yet there is also the culturalist-romantic form of response, the form in which the reader is (one hardly dares to say) 'tested' by the aesthetic techniques of the composition and the comprehension test. In the way that the first popular schools had playgrounds built into their designs so that teachers could see their charges at play - a slice of the 'real life' of the streets - in order to know their 'true' and fundamental selves; so the composition or the guided writing of the comprehension exercise led out the inner thoughts, the true psychic life of the pupils. They were asked to give their intimate preferences, their tastes, their most inner and private thoughts at the behest of a rhetoric of self-fulfilment whose only goal was to 'really know' the child.

23. The parallel measures to uniform basal readers in the emerging cities of the 20th century were such urban revolutions as the provision of multi-bedroom houses which prevented fathers from polluting daughters; the connection of these houses to adequate sewage facilities so that massed bodies lured from country to city could be protected from their own wastes; the availability of minimum standards of health care on scales unknown in any other time and place, thereby protecting children not only from death and disease but also from the constant visibility of death and disease as natural sights. And one should remember here that the popular school itself was and still is a crucial and focal instrument in the provision of health and health-training. In this period there also emerged the bobby on the beat, providing both supervision and surveillance of a new street-centred population as well as a secure and visible adult in the street as well as the school - the teacher and the policeman have very parallel histories in this respect. All of these, and other, measures were *measurable* in their effects on the body of the child: it was sick less often, lived longer, did not get molested so frequently, did not masturbate so regularly and so on. These frequencies could be measured: the techniques had their exact quantities of success and failure. The techniques which the frequencies meted out,

techniques for the prevention of the physical and moral degeneration of the working class included the extension of basic literacy. Reading - of a quite specific kind - was healthy and could consequently be relied upon to have its measures of success, its assessments, in a way analogous to the other healths. These came to be measures of bodily duration, type, psycho-physiological behaviour, and so on.

24. Overall, because reading emerges as a site of correction, its aesthetic demand is virtually identical with its ethical-corrective demand. One reads as, and one reads oneself *into* a particular kind of being. But the correction ethic means that I read the schoolbook in order to find what is lacking in me. There is a particular demand that I have a visibly personal relation with the text - visibly, that is, to the teacher - and that it be assessable for its lacks against some norm or grid of the standard reading subject. More often than not, this is a statistical norm, a bodily frequency and regularity. The regime of the classroom and the regime of reading are practically identical: they are regimes of "regulated freedom" to invoke Hunter's (1988a) term. The child is invited and expected to be no more and no less than herself - for now - right in front of the teacher; to make an utterly free, unconstrained and personal response to the text in the best child-centred tradition. And this is exactly so the teacher can see how the child actually *is* - how she is in what counts as her essentially expressed being. The child is not coercively controlled in the act of reading - not forced to scan and derive like a slave or a computer's disk-reading head - for that would only repress and constrain and so would not do what is, above all, necessary which is to *display*. What is displayed is the degree to which the child's 'inner being' measures against a well-calculated benchmark. Left to herself, free to express whatever it may be, exactly as she wishes: in this process emerge herself, her mental contents, her wishes and desires. They come out - into the play of scrutiny. The philosophies of 'child centredness' and 'normative skill-based constructs' look like formidable opposites - motives for grand-scale debates. But while the debates go on around these antinomies, what is hardly seen is that they are poles of a single educative strategy. They are reciprocating tactics within that single normalising-individualising strategy.

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Chapter 9

Reading 'readingS': Towards a Postmodernist Reading Pedagogy

Bill Green

McHoul (Chapter 8, this volume) raises some very basic issues of ontology and epistemology, with specific regard to reading and the teaching of reading.¹ As such, it is an important and useful intervention in the current discourse on reading pedagogy. It is also, however, very clearly a *provocation*. It throws out a real challenge to that discourse as it is currently formulated. McHoul's concern is with the conditions of possibility and intelligibility for current-traditional reading pedagogy. His account suggests not only that the commonsense connections between reading and pedagogy need to be reassessed but also that the terms themselves are unstable. That is, he calls specifically into question the notion of 'reading', and in so doing unsettles our usual understandings of and assumptions about the notion of 'pedagogy'. He proposes "that we might, on a professional basis, let the singular word 'reading' go, once and for all". To do so, if he is correct in his analysis, might well constitute a significant political move, both inside and outside the profession, and in this, may constitute a particularly important contribution to the task of formulating a critical pedagogy for reading curriculum.

McHoul argues that "there is no unified, prespecifiable thing or practice which counts always and only as reading... the word 'reading' has no single meaning". That is to say, there can be no general category 'reading' ('Reading') which can be called on as a kind of transcendental signifier, an organizing and authorising context for each and any reading activity that we might engage in; which, that is, makes readings meaningful and coherent instances of Reading. This means that, rather than relying on an ('onto-theological') superordinate concept as a primary source of both explanation and justification, there is a need for local, specific and historical accounts of social phenomena. In the case of education, this would pertain, for instance, to categories such as 'reading', 'literacy' and 'literature'. What such a move does is to throw into question both the politics and the practice

of *over-generalisation* in curriculum discussion, in both its popular and professional guises, and to allow for the possibility of a more pragmatic approach to social and educational issues.

'Reading' as it is used in McHoul's paper refers to and draws in a larger field than that (simply) of the pedagogical. Reading conceived as a social practice is indeed a larger phenomenon than that activity labelled 'reading' which occurs in schools and classrooms, and the relationship between reading inside and outside of educational settings is far from straightforward. However, my discussion proceeds more directly on the basis of an expressly educational interest, within the (inter)disciplinary ambit of what I want to call critical educology. That is, there is a sense in which this discussion is both less ambitious and wide-ranging than is McHoul's account of the social meaning of reading, and more focussed in its emphasis and its concern. In this regard, I am conscious that in what follows, there may well be a lingering odour of the "psycho-educationalist", that *bête noir* that McHoul stalks so fiercely through his argument. However, it seems to me that there is, and continues to be, considerable strategic value in what is sometimes called 'progressivism' as an educational ideology, in this present conjunction at least. It does represent, as I see it, a positive thesis for literacy instruction, notwithstanding its problems and contradictions, and it is important accordingly not to lose sight of the hard-won advances made in recent times in the institutionalised practice of literacy education.

Reading Pedagogy and Postmodernism

One of the first things needing to be observed is that McHoul's paper can be read within the general terms of *postmodernism*. What is at issue here is therefore the proposal of a postmodernist reading pedagogy, and by extension, a postmodernist pedagogy for reading teacher education. I don't want to enter into precise matters of definition, or the current debate over the question of postmodernism itself.²

I understand the term 'postmodernism' here to refer simply to that particular cultural-intellectual formation arising out of the convergence of post-structuralism and neo-marxism (Hall 1986). What links a rather disparate and sometimes conflictual venture is a common concern with matters of framing and contextualisation, an overtly political agenda, a commitment to methodological reflexivity, a critical problematisation of the concept of meaning, and a general interest in notions of discourse,

textuality, structure, (re)production and subjectivity. Further, while there is some controversy over the political implications of postmodernism, what it draws into consideration is precisely the question of the social. This is notwithstanding the point often observed that postmodernism characteristically deconstructs the social. Accordingly, it is potentially at least particularly useful to that educational discussion that works with a commitment to critical-democratic schooling (cf. Lather 1988a, 1988b).

One central feature of postmodernism is what Lyotard (1984: xxiv) has described as an "incredulity towards metanarratives" and a refusal of modernist rationality as predicated on a general commitment to "meta-theory" (Murphy 1988). McHoul's argument that "the word 'reading' has no single meaning" - his insistence on the inescapable plurality and difference of reading ('readingS') - needs to be grasped in these terms, as a refusal of any generalizing or transcendental category, and as an exemplary expression of the postmodernist valorisation of "locally-determined" (Lyotard 1984; cited in Murphy 1988: 180) knowledge and site-specific analysis. This raises immediately what may well be an intractable problem for reading education, since in its current-traditional form it involves a 'metanarrative' *par excellence*, in its basic commitment to a scientific rationality and an enlightenment problematic (see Heap, Chapter 5, this volume). For various reasons, some of which are certainly institutional in nature, reading pedagogy and its associated forms of teacher education rely heavily on certain governing assumptions, "as principles that make culture possible" (Murphy 1988: 180). Central to these is the organizing concept of 'Reading': the view that, notwithstanding the different kinds and occasions of 'reading', there is a general notion operating at a higher logical and epistemological level which organises, unifies and makes possible these disparate reading events.

It is precisely this meta-theoretical move that McHoul challenges and calls into question, which in turn problematises the very notion of a 'science' of reading pedagogy: "Needless to say, then, a consequence of my position is that there cannot be a precise pedagogic science of reading." Further, a "related consequence is that those interested in teaching reading must face the fact that no-one can give them precise descriptions of either what they are teaching nor, *a fortiori*, how they should go about it". Clearly this is to issue a major challenge to mainstream reading pedagogy, since on the face of it to accept the argument offered here is to abandon the normative principles which make formal, organised pedagogy possible. However, my view is that, on its own terms, there is no general refusal of 'science' in this line of argument, merely of its modernist formulation; and

rather, what it compels us to contemplate is the possibility of a *postmodern science* - one which is, in fact, emerging in recent state-of-the-art scientific discussion (Prigogine & Sengers 1984; Bohm 1980; cf. also Weaver 1985; Lemke 1984).

One direct implication of McHoul's refusal of any generalising modernist category is that there is a crucial need to understand reading with reference to and within specific sites, conceiving of these expressly in social-semiotic and discourse-theoretical terms and drawing on appropriately critical and reflexive forms of ethnographic enquiry. Central to this is a reconceptualised notion of context, and a (postmodernist) view of reading as an 'undecidable' play of text/context relations. McHoul's explicit refusal of the notion of 'context' needs to be taken up as a challenge to develop a more sophisticated concept than that which currently and increasingly features in curriculum discussion. My point is, there *are* clearly ways in which McHoul's account of reading pedagogy can be of immediate value in furthering our understandings, with regard to both theory and practice.

Rethinking 'Context'

McHoul is adamant that what he identifies in his argument as an approach to "a study of readings - even a study which is limited to the classroom" which is "wider and broader than the currently dominant mentalistic ones" is not to be seen, reductively, as a matter simply of 'context'. As he indicates, perspectives on curriculum which are avowedly "sociological, political, semiotic and so on" all too often find themselves lumped together as somehow external to the specific matters of textual practice that are traditionally the province of reading pedagogy 'proper'. Hence: "One ought to be sceptical of the term 'context'. It is, for many theories, the prime candidate for being 'not-reading'. Here the reading; there the context. Here the real process; there the mere space and time 'in' which it takes place".

What is being refused here is what can be called a conceptual-empiricist view of context which, naively or otherwise, posits matters of occasion, place and situation as independent and outside of human events and activities and as existential "containers" for them. Frow (1983: 92-93) describes this "thoroughly empiricist conception of context" as "a major theoretical embarrassment" and proposes an alternative perspective "which treats the concept of context in terms of its semiotic dimension". Alongside

activities and as existential "containers" for them. Frow (1983: 92-93) describes this "thoroughly empiricist conception of context" as "a major theoretical embarrassment" and proposes an alternative perspective "which treats the concept of context in terms of its semiotic dimension". Alongside the work of Foucault, Pecheux, Halliday and the systemic-functional linguistics perspective generally, this might be better described as a *social-semiotic* orientation to cultural analysis.

In such a view, 'context' is reconceptualised as both abstract and semiotic in nature, and hence a matter of situation-typing and intertextuality. The relationship between text and context is far from straightforwardly a matter simply of event and situation, where each of these is understood in a limited and even naive sense, that is, within the terms of both realism and empiricism. Rather, both text and context are to be grasped in thoroughly semiotic terms, as intricate and mutually constitutive signifying practices (cf. Kress & Threadgold 1988: 237).

In drawing in a more markedly post-structuralist orientation (Derrida 1976), it is necessary to deploy the term 'context' *under erasure*, so that its usage is read always as problematised and problematical, for the reasons already indicated as well as various others. Hence, it is to be written, and understood, in the following way: ~~context~~. What this enables is firstly a foregrounding of what Derrida (1982: 310) calls "the problem of context" and secondly, relatedly, a calling into question of the (modernist) project of "a rigorous and scientific concept of the *context*". Hence, the refusal of a general 'science' of reading pedagogy, based on a particular ideology of rationality and objectivity. The point is, 'context' is itself an indeterminate concept, in that it has a virtual mode of existence and is constantly shifting, dynamic, multiplex and heteroglossic in nature. Hence it is better to refer, following Lemke (1984, 1989), to *contextualisation* and more generally to 'meta-contextualisation relations', which is to work specifically with a social-semiotic theory of metacommunication (Lemke 1984: 4), within a more general semiotic perspective.

What all this involves, then, is an insistence firstly on the *necessity* of some appropriately understood concept of 'context', with regard to meaning and human action, and secondly on its *problematisation*.³ This is only apparently a paradox or contradiction, however; or rather, it is a necessary paradox, given the full complexity of social signifying practices. But it is important all the same, having done this, not to allow the concept of 'text' to be reified but to see it as similarly problematical and in a quite specific sense "undecidable" (Derrida 1981: 43). This means that it is unwise, to say the least, to understand 'text' in simplistic, realist-empiricist terms, and that

'text' similarly refers to or involves a virtual, semiotic mode of existence. There are certainly implications here for reconceptualising subject-area learning and its associated literacy,⁴ and also for understanding reading as a social signifying practice involving a complex interplay of 'text'/'context' relations characterised by what is, in effect, a motivated and constrained *undecidability*.⁵ This is obviously something worth further investigation. The point is, McHoul puts the undecidability of the text/context interplay usefully and squarely on the agenda.

On 'Thirdness': Introducing The Social

What occurs in a pedagogical context? One seemingly more promising suggestion is indicated in McHoul's critique of the psychologistic definition of reading as "the meeting of grammar and consciousness". As McHoul goes on to argue, this opposition between grammar and consciousness, as "a quite specific version of the subject/object double", cannot be sustained, not only because it is limited as an expression of this particular dualism, but also because it is so unstable and finally inadequate to the complex dynamics of reading conceived as at once social practice and grammatological displacement. Further, and for instance, the postulation of reading in these terms ("the meeting of grammar and consciousness") indicates an ambivalent agency at work, as revealed in McHoul's quite deliberate staging of mentalism's (anxious, if ignorant) manoeuvrings. Who or what is it that 'meets' here, and under what kind of volition and intentionality? Which is subject and which is object? It is by no means assured or axiomatic that 'reader' corresponds to the former, while 'text' corresponds to the latter.

What this introduces is the possibility of a third term. There is a measure of ambivalence here, since as expressed in this fashion, although the expression may well be symptomatic, it is very much an *absent* third: the Other. Hence it may refer, in this particular instance, to the distanced observer, the academic 'other' as dramatised in the rhetoric of the paper; and indeed there would be some value in exploring this further, given that it can be argued that the abstractions of "grammar" and "consciousness" cannot do justice to the lived complexity of classroom life as the dynamic enactment of any actual instance of a reading pedagogy. Even so, the point is often made that enlightened reading pedagogy *is* about bringing texts and readers together - teaching in this case, that is, as a matter of making good connections. So the agency inscribed in the expression "the meeting ..." may well be that of the teacher, teaching. This would have the following implications. To begin with, it would effectively displace the dualism carried in the relationship between text and reader by introducing a third

pedagogic agency - a case, that is, of both/and rather than either/or. Further, there is a proliferation and a network of relations in this, such that the subject-object couple becomes a matter of positioning, engagement and displacement, rather than a fixed, immutable condition of dualism and dichotomy. What is important to note in this is that priority is given here to reading pedagogy rather than to reading in itself, which is to offer something of a counter to the orientation in McHoul's paper, which as I have suggested reverses this order of priority. The implication here is that curriculum frames reading - a contention that as I believe McHoul provides for, in his important assertion that "a reading is never not-framed" and hence we need to think in terms of "reading-as-always-already-enframed".

This is worth taking further. What I have described as the necessary introduction of a third term in considerations of reading/pedagogy may, obviously, be idealised and reified (the 'Other'), or it may be realised in critical-materialist terms, as the introduction of a productive difference. In this latter case, which is clearly the more desirable way to go, this may be seen as the introduction of contextual features and conditions, and by elaboration and extension, of both history and the social. Put for the moment far too simply for the purposes of strategic summary, what we are left with is an open set of relations among readers, texts and contexts, and it is this set of relations that reading pedagogy must engage with and take as its object.

What is important to note at this point is that, while it is certainly possible to restrict this discussion of 'thirdness' to a consideration of the empirical presence of teaching and teachers (and indeed this does need to be taken into account), there is no good or sufficient reason for doing so, and compelling reasons for extending the discussion into the conceptual realm. This is where the socio-historical dimension of reading practice becomes a crucial consideration, absolutely and thoroughly intrinsic to the whole matter of schooling, curriculum and pedagogy. The teacher (teaching) must be understood here as 'standing in' for, and hence as mediating, culture, tradition and (the) discipline - all of which need to be seen in plural and even contradictory, conflicting and heterogeneous terms.

Teaching means, in this view, speaking with the full investments of social authority. Therefore, notions such as 'difference', 'thirdness' and 'context', as used here, need to be understood most emphatically as pointing to the significance of the social, as a primary organizing category. It is in this sense, in part, that reading is to be understood as a social practice - a distinctive social-semiotic practice, that is, characterised necessarily by a certain determinacy which is at once enabling and constraining (Frow

1983). What is more, this is overdetermined by its immersion and participation in the general field of social contradiction and conflict; which is not to say that social meaning is given in advance and hence preordained, but rather, that it is a matter of on-going struggle and "invention within limits" (Connell 1983). With specific regard to the semiosis associated with reading, further, it is important to emphasise both 'invention' and 'limits', and the former just as much as the latter, something which can be overlooked or under-estimated in recent social orientations in literacy education (cf. Reid 1987; Threadgold 1988).

Reading and Social Practice

So, against the 'mentalist' or 'cognitivist' view of reading carried in current-traditional reading pedagogy, as McHoul argues - a criticism with which, with some qualification, I concur - what is it that he presents in seeking to account for reading as a *social practice*?

First, there is the innovative and illuminating use of Wittgenstein, in conjunction with Derrida, a particularly generative move, it seems to me, from the point of view of curriculum discussion and certainly that of reading pedagogy. Wittgenstein's emphasis on *difference* is likely to be helpful for understanding how it is that literacy events have both a singularity, a specificity, and a sociality, linked as they are practically by "family resemblance" rather than by some organizing common assumption operating as a distinguishing, essential characteristic.⁶ Further, the Wittgensteinian perspective on language, grammar and meaning is helpful in extending (and critiquing) already existing accounts of the necessary relationship between language and learning - including their stress on *usage* and *operation* - via his concepts of 'training', 'practice' and 'convention'. Something to be considered here, also, are the consequences of this insistence on difference, with regard to 'reading' (but also 'pedagogy'). On the one hand, there is a proliferation and plurality of 'readings'; on the other, it is a matter of proliferating 'pedagogies'. As Hall (1983: 6) has observed: "There is no general pedagogy: only pedagogies, like horses, for courses". How, though, in practice, to deal with and manage such complexity, such difference? For one thing, there is a need for a proper understanding of the notion of *institutionality* in this respect, some way of disciplining the play of difference, while at the same time allowing and providing for innovation and creativity. There is much to explore here, in terms of rethinking curriculum and pedagogy along non-essentialist lines

and specifically as a form of social practice. These uses of Wittgenstein link up with what can appropriately be called a 'postmodernist' orientation to social theory and cultural practice.

This immediately raises, therefore, as I have indicated previously, the possibility of a postmodernist pedagogy of reading, and by extension, of reading teacher education. This would involve, among other things, a recognition of the necessity of discontinuity, reflexivity, specificity, plurality, difference and negotiation as key pedagogical principles. McHoul's account is certainly suggestive in this regard. However, it must be recognised as a particular inflection of postmodernism, a *version*, one which works with a radical scepticism and a basic commitment to both a rhetoric of surfaces and capacities and an updated version of what Ricoeur (1970) described some time ago as "the hermeneutics of suspicion".

In this view, reading is not "a set of formal properties" or the activation of specific and specifiable rules "mapping on to particular mental states inside readers' heads as they read"; rather, "to understand reading is to understand the conventions and ingredients that can make it up, that can surround it, that can come in and out of play, in particular cases." Further: reading is "knowing how to play with texts strategically. It arises not when we know the formal characteristics of reading", and can realise these in their corresponding mental and cognitive operations, "but rather when we enact certain differences - differences between readings and other sorts of events." What this means is dependent on "the scene of enactment" - the 'context', understood specifically in semiotic terms, that is, as a situation-type. Finally, as McHoul notes:

'enacting' here means going through the process of inscribing a certain cultural practice, such that it is visibly not not-. To read in the classroom, predicting certain things yet to come, means to separate off the reading from other things. Teachers and students do these things together. In enacting reading, they are inscribing what they are doing as a definite case of just-this-thing, for these purposes.

There are a number of observations that can be made here.

Firstly, reading is presented as a particular kind of 'doing', or a particular set of 'doings'. It involves enactments, activities, actions in and on the social world - not mental operations, or 'experiencings' as internal states and processes. It has a visibility, a visible and readily discernible materiality, and hence requires both an optics and a physics, rather than a psychology, if by that is meant a more or less positivist science of the individual psyche; it also requires some means of rigorously describing

what is *seen*, as a marked difference (from its 'surroundings', from "other sorts of events"): an 'ethnography', or perhaps an 'ethnomethodology'.

Further, as McHoul observes: to understand reading in these terms "almost requires a 'philology' of classroom reading - a history of its texts and textual practices." To read, and to be accepted as a reader reading, in the specific community for whom reading is accepted as occurring in these ways, with these effects, is to perform certain public behaviours. These include such relatively basic and even trivial matters as moving one's eyes from left to right and from top to bottom of a page, as well as the capacity to 'think' and 'feel' in certain ways, in accordance with the conventional (and learned) requirements of written textuality. In other words, to understand reading in this fashion is to refuse all notions of interiority - or rather, it is to see interiority as an effect, a construction, and hence in a quite specific sense a fiction. In this sense, an argument such as this is both counter-intuitive and profoundly anti-humanist. This is a radical step, and one that is likely to be simply scandalous from the profession's point of view, given the premises and investments of mainstream reading pedagogy. But it is a useful step, within limits, provided one accepts the shortcomings of 'mentalism'. This is because it provides an accessibility, a positivity, and hence allows more actively for both communication and interaction as principles of a socially-managed pedagogy. It allows - potentially, at least - for the radical demystification of 'learning', 'understanding' and 'knowing' as acts in and on the social world, rather than private, inner experiences which ultimately cannot be shared precisely because they are private and unique to particular agents. It provides, that is, for the possibility of a properly social theory of curriculum.

At the same time, it is by no means assured that this concentration on surfaces and capacities, in its most rigorous and uncompromising form, is the (only, or exclusive) way to go. What is arguably missing from this account is a sense of the significance of *desire*, as a necessary supplement to the power-knowledge nexus, and the relationship between social power, psycho-emotional investment and the symbolic order (Donald 1985; Henriques et al. 1984). This requires a theoretical account which can deal with the intrication of psychic processes and social processes; or, as it has been expressed, the bringing together of "two often unfortunately separate struggles: the changing of subjects and the changing of circumstances" (Henriques et al. 1984: 266). What this requires, in other words, is an adequate theory of subjectivity. This is something I want to explore a little further. Before I do this, however, it is necessary to return, very briefly,

to my earlier point about the "radical scepticism" and insistent (if critical) 'positivism' of the position in question in McHoul's paper.

There are, as I have suggested, real gains in refusing the all-too-easy recourse to psychologism in treatises on reading pedagogy, and indeed in curriculum discussion generally. Curriculum itself needs to be understood most emphatically as a social practice, and hence as a matter of the (re)production of material effects, including specific knowledges, as well as subjectivities. Unfortunately the dominant paradigm with regard to schooling, curriculum and pedagogy has been a particular combination of psychologism and logocentric rationalism, in one form or another. This said, however, the admittedly strategic reduction (or, better, delimitation) of social analysis to 'appearances', however critically that is theorised via Foucault and Wittgenstein, is arguably fraught with hazard. This is because, methodologically and epistemologically, it rests upon a principle of scarcity and the refusal of depth-analysis, on the grounds that, rather than 'hidden', or 'occluded', or 'repressed', social meaning is at once piecemeal, partial and particulate - that is, lying around and hence readily at hand and available, and accessible to whatever use it may be put. There is a stringent adherence to a rhetoric of surfaces here, and a refusal of both totality and virtuality as heuristic devices or categories. What you see is what you get, in what almost amounts to a programmatic asceticism. The problem is: who or what is the 'you' here? What or whose agency is implicit in this kind of formulation? And further: What is involved in this admittedly metaphorical (but is it?) reference to vision and perception? Are there, possibly, undeclared agendas in this, with regard to the motivations and capacities and even the (differentiated) positioned-practices inscribed here? Finally: What are the costs of such a methodological scepticism?

One arguably is a kind of political and theoretical determinism, along with a certain pessimism when it comes to the contemplation (to say nothing of the construction) of programmes for social change and cultural mobilisation. Curriculum and pedagogy are in this view simply mechanisms of social reproduction, discipline and control. Missing from this kind of analysis is any real sense of resistance, opposition and possibility. The programmatic anti-humanism that is at issue here can lend itself rather too readily to conservative appropriations, particularly in its by-passing of the whole question of social agency and its complex and contradictory construction, as well as its conditions of possibility. There may therefore be less that is progressive, politically, in these particular developments in social theory and cultural analysis than is hoped for, and an attendant risk in them that they simply return us to those forms of the power-knowledge nexus

associated with the academy as a kind of clinical practice. This is captured in Donald's account of what he describes as a "reorientation in cultural analysis" along post-Foucaultian lines: notwithstanding its undeniable advances, "the cost can be begging the question of the subjective dimension of, or investment in, the *dispositif* of education or entertainment. The danger is of ignoring consciousness and subjectivity altogether and slipping into a behaviourism familiar from the old social sciences" (Donald 1988: 75). At this point, it is worth turning more specifically to the problem of subjectivity itself, because it relates in various ways to this very issue.

Reading and Subjectivity

A particularly interesting and important aspect of McHoul's paper is its assertion of the relationship between reading and subjectivity; its concern is with "what it is to read in a classroom: what it is to be produced as the kind of human *subject* which does this." He claims to be making a "paradoxical" contribution to the view of "reading-as-subjectivity" in proposing what is effectively a *counter-view*, one which holds that "the production of subjects and subjectivity is through-and-through a material, social and political practice" and, further, that reading involves paradigmatically what he calls "the work of subject-production". What is important here is the postmodernist emphasis on the *constituted*, rather than constitutive, nature of subjectivity - that is, the recognition that identity and experience, as well as individual agency, are produced in and through social and discursive formations, rather than, as in liberal-humanism and other forms of bourgeois social theory, the site and source of both social meaning and cultural authority. In Lather's (1988a: 9) terms:

A post-humanist theory of the subject combines Derrida's critique of the metaphysics of presence with a post-Althusserian focus on human agency. The result is a shift in cultural theory to seeing subjectivity as both socially produced in language, at conscious and unconscious levels, *and* as a site of struggle and potential change. (my emphasis)

Significantly, subjectivity is a *social* concept, relating as McHoul indicates to the production of "specific social identities". This production is managed through the intrication of discourses and practices, and includes the school's role in what has traditionally been seen as a process of 'socialisation'. Drawing in particular on Donald's (1985) work, McHoul goes on to argue that the concept of the classroom and the pedagogical

practice of reading need to be seen as closely related cultural technologies, and that together they work towards the (re)production of individual identities and their organisation and mobilisation in terms of populations. As he observes in this regard, "the beginning of reading ... is not utterly distinct from the beginning of the modern classroom in the political/historical sense".

His argument draws on Foucault in this respect, and it is particularly suggestive with regard to understanding reading (and literacy more generally) as a form of *self-production*. In reading - in choosing certain kinds of texts, or consenting to others' choices in this regard; in engaging with them in certain learned, culturally-significant and sanctioned ways - one is actively engaged in constructing a sense of self; in a quite specific sense, 'writing' one's self into being. This is what Foucault (1988) describes in terms of "technologies of the self": "certain modes of training and modification of individuals, not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes", which enable individuals "to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to obtain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (18). Importantly, for Foucault this includes the literate activities of reading and writing:

Writing was also important in taking care of oneself. One of the main features of taking care involved taking notes on oneself to be reread, writing treatises and letters to friends to help them, and keeping notebooks in order to reactivate for oneself the truths one needed Taking care of oneself became linked to constant writing activity. The self is something to write about, a theme or object (subject) of writing activity. (Foucault 1988: 27)

Further:

The new concern with self involved a new experience of self. The new form of the experience of the self is to be seen in the first and secondary centuries when introspection becomes more and more detailed. A relation developed between writing and vigilance. Attention was paid to nuances of life, mood and reading, and the experience of oneself was intensified and widened by virtue of this act of writing. A whole field of experience opened which earlier was absent. (Foucault 1988: 28)

It would be extremely interesting and worthwhile to use these observations to develop an account specifically of reading in relation to both

self-production and what can be described as the socialisation-effect. In such an account, reading pedagogy becomes in a quite specific sense a form of social training, whereby individuals are provided developmentally with the means to understand themselves as certain kinds of social being, and hence to participate in their own social construction as subject-individuals. That is, they come to know themselves in their individuality by constructing themselves *as* individuals, in and through the discursive practices of reading. Reading, therefore, is to be understood within the terms of a reconceptualisation of socialisation as a form of 'socialisation'/'subjectification', and this is to be understood in turn within the terms of the Foucaultian notion of the double-sidedness of disciplinary-and pastoral-power, as at once enabling and constraining.

Hence, in what he describes as a series of "minimalist descriptions" and as "a certain, almost 'stereotypical' view of reading-in-the classroom", McHoul presents a relatively extended account, organised in discrete segments, of reading/pedagogical practices, in terms of the construction over time of certain forms of subjectivity: "We read together ... We are compared ... We are put into competition ... Sometimes, we do not know ..." etc. These numbered sections continue until the end of the discussion, thus suggesting that they fall within a common ambit of specific concern.

From the specific perspective of the relationship between reading/pedagogy and social subjectivity, the presentation of what is almost an ironic phenomenology of reading-in-the-classroom works effectively to indicate the insistent routines and activity-structures which characterise reading pedagogy (as it is understood here). These involve, over time and as a direct consequence of their repetition, a disciplining effect on the body (that is, the reader's body; the reading body) and, relatedly, a particular production/projection of distinctive forms of sensibility, character, identity and self-understanding. In Lemke's (1987: 11) sense, this involves the definition of what he calls *participant roles*: "meaningful social activities [such as reading-in-the-classroom] which are recognised as such and are both potentially and in most cases actually repeated (with variations) on many occasions define *participant roles*". These participant roles, which are always features and functions of social practices, as they are 'occupied' and enacted, contribute to the social formation of what is at once a "biographical individual" and a "social type" (13), which together constitute what he calls the *social subject*.

"The schemes of reading, the regimes of reading books", then, are clearly instances of subject-production at work, precisely in the sense of a socialisation-effect. What McHoul describes is a particular set of social

relations and a particular set of social *practices*, characteristic of and specific to a particular set of classroom routines, and hence carried in the on-going minutiae, the small change, of everyday classroom life. Of particular note is the construction, via experience and enactment, of a particular view of and relation to authority: the construction, that is, of a lived ideology, realised however in terms of a "moral lesson", and hence to be understood precisely in terms of *moral training*. The teacher-student couple, as an immediate and distinctive form of social relation, intricates with the reader-text couple to form a collusive (but non-coercive) network of a particular kind, which McHoul describes as "the triplet of teaching, textbook and authority". In this fashion, reading pedagogy is recognisably complicit in a general project of social discipline and moral regulation.

This is an extremely important insight which is an exemplary absence in mainstream versions of reading pedagogy. There are some indications that this kind of critical understanding is coming more onto the agenda of *literary* education (Eagleton 1985-6; King 1987), but little elaborated evidence of this to date in *reading* education and primary English teaching.⁷ McHoul provides some indication of what this might mean, via his avowedly somewhat caricatured account of basal reading strategies and programmes; however, it is not explicitly dealt with or developed in his discussion (or rather, shades into a more macro-sociological concern with the 'social' question, in the larger sense).

A particularly interesting argument in this respect is the discussion by Kress (1985) of what he presents as the play of *reading*-positions and *subject*-positions in textual practice. There is considerable implication in this account for the development of a sophisticated and socially-critical reading pedagogy, within which explicit attention is given to the relationship between reading and subjectivity. This is usefully complemented, I believe, by drawing in the recent work by Meek (1988) on a literature-based approach to literacy education. Although this work is certainly not without its problems and contradictions, particularly in its investment in a certain version of literary ideology, it does offer useful insight in "how texts teach what readers learn" - that is, "how texts teach how they are to be read" (Meek 1988: 91). In such views, becoming a reader is a matter of both reading and textual practice; that is, of positioning. In my terms, this connects up with the work cited earlier, and the previous discussion of self-production and socialisation-effects, to compel attention to the social and discursive construction of what can be called the reader-subject. This reader-subject - a particular version of the generalised subject of schooling - is both subject to and subjectively positioned within social reality,

understood as a complex field of contradiction, conflict, difference, and heteroglossia. Importantly, this is to become, via reading in this instance, functional and more generally competent within that field, equipped with certain skills and capacities, as well as with quite specific and (self)-serviceable attitudes, dispositions and understandings. Hence, it is to become invested with a certain productivity with regards to the processes and practices of both social (re)production and cultural-critical mobilisation.

That is not to say, however, that these are entirely satisfactory accounts of pedagogic possibility. A consequence of working with a Foucault-Wittgenstein nexus, as Donald indicates, is that there can be no allowance made for, or recognition of, psycho-emotional investment and different forms of psychic economy (1988: 75-76), or more generally "how subjectivity is produced within the terms of the symbolic" (1985: 241). This requires some way of grasping how the "ordering of subjectivity as an identity is a precarious fantasy, whose 'failure' is constantly revealed by the operations of the unconscious" (Donald 1985: 242). To do this, there is need for a somewhat different theory, one which works with the notion of "a triad: power-knowledge-subject" (Henriques et al. 1984: 118), encompassing a theory of fantasy along with, and as part of, a "power-desire-knowledge complex, wherein subjectivity is intricated" (225).⁸ The main benefit of such a move, with specific reference to McHoul's arguments and proposals, would be to avoid a tendency towards too strict an adherence to an overly rationalist position and to the social reproduction thesis, and allow accordingly for resistance and struggle and for a sense of pedagogic possibility.

This is arguably missing from McHoul's perhaps overly-deterministic account of the socio-political apparatus of mainstream reading pedagogy. Donald expresses it this way: "What is needed ... is an account of subjectivity which comprehends its aggressivity, and which does not reduce it to an identity or to the passive reflection of an external order" (Donald 1985: 242). Nor, one might add, to merely an effect of pedagogical and textual practices, which might be one way in which McHoul's account is read. This allows for resistance, opposition and the counter-politics of refusal and desire:

Both subjectivity and social relations are characterized not by security but by tension and instability. The production of subjectivity ... involves not the reflection of a social order by the passive individual, but the precarious ordering of symbolic categories. This is an active, even aggressive process - not least because such categories are never

encountered in the abstract, but always as they are formulated in discourse and deployed in social interaction. (Donald 1985: 246)

The Other Side: On 'Natural' Reading Pedagogies

What is left *out* of McHoul's discussion of reading pedagogy - but which in fact from another perspective *is* considered but deliberately embedded in and collapsed into its account of the basal reader - is reference to those pedagogies often crudely grouped together under the rubric 'progressivism', variously described as 'process' or 'response' pedagogies, placing a particular emphasis on notions of 'experience', 'pleasure' and 'meaning'. More recently, they have involved a rise into prominence of constructivist and psycholinguistic paradigms and perspectives, and draw in "language-experience", "shared-book" (Holdaway 1979), and "literature-based" or "story-oriented" (Johnson & Louis 1985; Meek et al. 1977; Saxby & Winch 1987) approaches to literacy education, as well as, more recently still, what is becoming known as "whole-language" pedagogy (Cambourne 1987). These initiatives link up with others located more in the literary studies area, particularly those identified with reader-response theory and criticism (Freund 1987). Although there are clearly differences and variations in this work, what characterises it generally is what may be called a new 'subjectivism'. This is realised in a renewed interest in matters of affect and emotionality, response, 'feelings', and the (individual) psyche, via notions such as that of "identity theme".⁹

These movements embody real advances, "important strategic gains precisely in the area of literacy education" (Green 1987). There are, however, significant contradictions and even major flaws in such formulations and programmes, which need to be understood more explicitly in ideological terms; that is, with recourse to a critical-theoretical framework which draws in notions of social structure, power and ideology - something which is, by and large, remarkably absent currently. To put it rather polemically, whereas these recent advances have made much of the assertion of intentionality and a particular version of human agency in promoting what is called an "inside-out" perspective (Cambourne & Rousch 1980), what needs to be drawn in by way of complement/supplement is expressly the view from 'without' - that is, a reassertion of the significance and indeed the necessity of a reconceptualised 'outside-in' perspective, one informed by the aforementioned social-semiotic and discourse-theoretical theory of 'context' and contextualisation (Lemke 1984).

This relates directly to McHoul's general argument, in his presentation of reading pedagogy in terms of "a set of specific techniques related to a kind of dialectical - or even contradictory - ethics". In this, he draws upon important recent work by Hunter (1987; Chapter 3, this volume) on the emergence of popular education and what he sees as a specific form of ethical-supervisory pedagogy centred in English teaching. What McHoul does, however, following on from Hunter, is conflate what might otherwise be seen as conflicting or contrasting perspectives and impulses, seeing himself as working from an expressly critical-theoretical point of view which arguably transcends and hence contextualises the apparent opposition that this represents. Consequently, they are seen as "double moments of a single, apparently contradictory ethical armature" and as "reciprocating tactics within [a] single normalizing-individualizing strategy".

What is specifically in question here is the recent insistence and popularity, certainly in Australia, of so-called "natural language learning" models and perspectives in literacy education. These range, as I have indicated, from "language-experience" to "literature-based" approaches, and are characterised by the assertion of the "natural", seeing this on the one hand in the speech-oriented language of the child and on the other in the language of literature and specifically of *story*. There is a complex account still to be written of the problems in notions such as "*natural* language" and "*natural* learning", which have been nonetheless so effective rhetorically as organisers and mobilisers of what is often relatively enlightened pedagogy: a matter, that is, of deconstructing the natural. Already there are useful moves in this direction, in the work for instance of Walkerdine (1982, 1983, 1986) and Rose (1984, see also 1985), which complement and extend the critique initiated in McHoul's paper, making questions of power and ideology central to a socially-critical account of literacy education. For both Rose and Walkerdine, *language* must be conceived as a central problem in and for pedagogy, precisely because of the connection between social power and the symbolic order (cf. Donald 1985). Hence, 'natural language learning' pedagogies need to be critically reconceptualised, capitalizing on their strategic gains and significant advances, but drawing in matters of institutionality, history and social practice, so as to *recontextualise* them within a socially-critical framework.

At the same time, it is important not to overlook or otherwise slight the very real possibilities in 'progressivist' forms of reading pedagogy and literacy education. Bernstein, for instance, cautiously refers to the transformative *potential* in what he calls "invisible pedagogy" (Bernstein 1977: 28-29), in appropriate conditions and circumstances. This potential is

not something which can be simply assumed, but neither is it to be dismissed out of hand; rather, it needs to be actively worked for, in a conscious attempt at the critical-pedagogic rearticulation of ideological elements. Seen in this light, McHoul's account may well be ultimately reductionist in that it works with an overly-socialised and insufficiently complex and contradictory notion of social subjectivity, as well as what in the end may be far too unsympathetic a view of what is indeed a positive thesis in the current discourse on curriculum and literacy.

The question remains, however: What is it in such perspectives that warrant description in terms of positivity? To return to Bernstein for a moment, briefly, it is possible to view his work, and perhaps reproduction theory generally, as locked into a limited perspective on social practice via a theoretical allegiance to binarism. He posits two ideal-typical forms of pedagogy, one which he describes as "visible", corresponding to traditional forms of curriculum and pedagogic authority, the other identified as "invisible" and corresponding to so-called 'progressivist' developments in educational practice (Bernstein 1977).

This connects up with reading pedagogy in the following way. Not only is what I have described here as "*natural* reading pedagogy" to be seen within the terms of Bernstein's account of "invisible pedagogy", but a similar (and similarly problematical) binarism is evident in these recent developments. The particular opposition in play here is that between 'nature' and 'culture'. Natural reading pedagogies are to be contrasted, in these developments, with what can be seen as cultural pedagogies (such as those associated with the basal reader). Clearly there is a strong valuation of the former, as somehow more 'authentic' and closer to an originary source. However, there is a need to refuse the simple binary that this line of argument represents, with all its ideological and metaphysical paraphernalia. This means recognizing that the so-called 'natural' is just as constructed, just as artificial and artefactual - just as 'cultural' - as that to which it is opposed. This being the case, it can be understood as part of a general move towards more subtle and pervasive (because 'invisible') forms of surveillance and control, and towards what Foucault (1982) describes as the co-option of individuals in their own subjection/subjectification. What this enables, therefore, is a more critical view of such (otherwise apparently positive) matters as the rhetoric of 'play' and 'pleasure' in recent developments in reading pedagogy, involving the calling into operation of the individual/reader's involvement and engagement, their willingness, and hence un-coerced complicity in their own 'subjugation'.

This is certainly not, however, to dismiss such developments. What they represent, potentially at least, is a commitment to human agency and a recognition of the significance of investment in and for curriculum and educational practice (cf. Giroux & Simon 1988). These aspects of so-called 'natural' pedagogy need to be seized and exploited, in the service of a critical-democratic schooling project. Further, the crucial significance of language (and more generally the cultural-symbolic order) for pedagogy and learning, redefined in terms of social practice, needs to be better understood and consequently incorporated in curriculum theorising, working from the basis already laid via recent work on interpretation and negotiation orientations in curriculum (Barnes 1976; Boomer [in Green (ed.) 1988]) and as increasingly informed by recent linguistic and social-semiotic initiatives (cf. Reid 1987; Lemke 1984). Finally, the so-called 'natural' is located firmly in history and, having been constructed, can be changed and otherwise worked on - that is, further developed and *reconstructed* - in critically progressive ways. There are, currently available, important insights into pedagogic practice and these need to be realised in their radical potential; further, there are important and positive moments in the discourse of 'natural' reading pedagogy which should not be overlooked in the proposed development of a critical pedagogy for reading curriculum.

Conclusion

I hope to have indicated in the preceding discussion something of what I see as the real value of McHoul's arguments for rethinking reading pedagogy along critical-pedagogic lines. This has meant engaging with what was identified here as a postmodernist perspective on socio-cultural practice, which certainly includes education. At the same time, while appreciative of McHoul's efforts in this regard, I consider that he presents on the one hand a restricted vision of what such a reconceptualisation might mean for reconstructing professional ideology and classroom practice, and on the other more of a provocative guide to further work in the area than a substantive curriculum contribution in itself. This is not to deny the usefulness of his arguments; rather, it is to say that they need to be translated, and transformed, into more specifically curriculum discourse. In particular, there is considerable value in his critique of essentialism, and this is something which needs to be further developed in educational discussion so as to avoid the pitfalls and praxis traps that he points to and

which are otherwise suggested in his account. This means, for instance, giving more explicit attention to the plurality of literacies which are possible and which currently exist in and across school settings, as well as outside in the community. This will involve proper regard for difference and heteropraxia (Lemke 1987), as well as careful, socially-sensitive ethnographies of literacy practice across a wide range of situations and settings.

At the same time, there are problems in taking up such a rigorously anti-essentialist stance for those of us concerned with the practice of curriculum and reading pedagogy. My feeling is that while proper regard must be given to the problems and dangers of essentialism, there are circumstances in which it may be *strategic* to adopt such a stance, in the service of specific politico-pragmatic goals (Spivak 1984/85).¹⁰ One such circumstance might be teacher education, whether pre- or in-service, on particular occasions and in particular contexts, where it might well be rhetorically and pedagogically appropriate as well as useful to counter-pose perspectives and ideologies. This is perhaps consistent with the general tenor of McHoul's insistence on site-specific analysis and the value of a certain measured scepticism in critical-cultural work.

My main concern, however, is with the *effects* of such an argument, given its commitment to a relatively hardline social reproduction thesis, and with the *use* to which it lends itself so readily. More attention needs to be given, in my view, to the 'spaces' and 'escapes' and generally the contradictions in cultural practice than is allowed for in McHoul's account. As it is, all the indications are that these are more often than not overlooked or ignored, with clear political consequences. A particularly disturbing sign in this regard is a recent debate on genre and pedagogy, in which the following point is made:

... as Alec McHoul pointed out in his [paper] 'readingS' ... classrooms are a highly explicit ceremony which, give or take a few minimal differences, remains governed by a largely inflexible set of discursive practices. In particular, the enunciative structure of classroom interaction - even taking into account the full range of possibilities a 'liberal' teacher might exploit for diminishing her/his presence - is governed by the assumed mastery of the teacher, and her/his assumed role which is to give tasks and evaluate students' performances. (Freadman 1988b: 6)

There is no doubt that institutionalised pedagogy is highly constrained, and the difficulties confronting alternative and oppositional pedagogies are considerable. However, the position outlined here - and arguably to be observed in McHoul's paper - evinces both a determinism and a pessimism,

culminating in what is described as “an insoluble dilemma” and in effect the *impossibility* of a critically progressive pedagogy. I suggest that this is far too limited and constricted a view of the ‘classroom’ and of pedagogic space generally. Constraints exist, certainly, but so too do possibilities, provided one works with a more open-ended, flexible and self-reflexive perspective on curriculum and pedagogy than is offered in such accounts: a better sense of the dialectical relationship between freedom and constraint in social practice, and of the need for a critical pedagogy - as well as a critical sociology - predicated on notions of possibility and empowerment, as well as critique.

Notes

- 1 Albeit from might be called a ‘counter-ontological’, as well as counter-epistemological, position; for the latter, see McHoul & Luke (1988).
- 2 There is available now a considerable body of discussion and debate in this area (e.g., Collins 1988; Milner, Thompson & Worth 1988), some of which refers to educational practice in the context of “a postmodern era” (Murphy 1988; Lather 1988).
- 3 There are welcome signs recently that more appropriate accounts of ‘context’ issues are entering literacy curriculum discussion. See, for instance, Raphael (1986) and Torbe (1988); also Luke and Ward (1988).
- 4 “Subject-specific literacy” refers both to the repertoire of literacies involved in school learning and more generally to the relationship among disciplinarity, literacy and school knowledge (Green 1988). McHoul’s discussion is useful in elaborating and extending this argument, although it needs to be supplemented by a fuller account of the *motivated* and *constrained* nature of school knowledge and its associated textuality (see Reid 1987; Threadgold 1988; Freadman 1988b).
- 5 For a useful account of the term “undecidability” in Derrida’s work, see Ryan (1982:16ff). Kress and Threadgold (1988) present a more critical account, in the course of refusing what they see, rightly, as the excesses of various forms of postmodernism, with specific reference to the notions of “undecidability”, “freeplay” and social meaning.
- 6 My comments on these matters are drawn from private discussions with McHoul, as well as his lecture material on Wittgenstein. He is, however, obviously not to be held responsible for my ‘translations’.
- 7 A notable exception is recent work by Baker and Freebody (1985, 1987, this volume), and others working in the ethnomethodological and sociolinguistic orientation. What is needed is the critical synthesis of this work with other work such as that of Kress (1985) and Meek (1988), so as to develop more actively the implications for curriculum and classroom practice.

- 8 The obvious danger here is that such a move could involve simply slipping back into yet another version of *psychologism*; the task remains as to how to avoid this, at the same time as capitalizing on the need to incorporate such matters into a properly critical theory of social subjectivity.
- 9 Grant (1984) has usefully extended these initiatives and developments into the literacy education area.
- 10 See also Cherryholmes (1987) on the *heuristic* use of “essentialisms” and general(ising) categories in curriculum studies.

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IV Reading the Social

Chapter 10

Remarks on Cognitive-Psychological and Critical-Sociological Accounts of Reading

Peter Freebody

The aim of this chapter is to present a number of criticisms of some current cognitive-psychological accounts of reading and of some critical-sociological descriptions provided in this volume, drawing attention to directions in which both perspectives may consider expanding their views of what is interesting and problematic about reading instruction. These comments arise from two related observations. First, there is currently an active and sizeable group of researchers whose work on aspects of literacy draws upon but does not fall easily into the traditionally-defined categories of psychology, sociology, linguistics, philosophy, or history (for example volumes edited by DeCastell et al. 1986; Green & Harker 1988). Thus there has recently been increasing cross-perspective contact and the consequent development of new orders of interest in a research field traditionally occupied mainly by educational psychologists.

A second observation is that, if educational researchers are to take part as contributing members of a larger professional culture, then an important target audience for this research is practising teachers. Teachers' understandings and concerns are characterised by a recognition of the interactiveness of literacy-learning processes with the social and cultural features of the classroom, of parents' perceptions, of bureaucratic demands, of material resources, and so on. Such understandings and concerns do not permit the easy substitution of one order or level of descriptive discourse with another. There is a need, then, for researchers to develop a sophisticated interplay among levels of analysis. In particular, teachers are faced with bodies of research either that focus on specifiable outcomes arising from textual and social ecologies that fail to reflect, even through extravagant extrapolation, real classroom sites and real reading materials, or that describe the institutional and ideological parameters of educational sites without defining or locating alternative teaching practices and resultant

student learning. This chapter develops these concerns and comments on relevant directions for research and theory.

My point in this chapter is to draw attention to some of the assumptions underlying particular theoretical positions that systematically limit their heuristic and practical value. While other chapters in this volume have addressed the assumptions and operations of cognitive-psychological reading theory, my aim here is to undertake a closer reading of some of the methodological features of some current reading research.

I will first centre my remarks around two related issues: the experiment as the basic methodology of cognitive psychology, and the nature and implications of schema theory as an archetypal example of the conceptual armory called into play to account for what happens in experiences with the written word. I will then outline some problems that both cognitive psychologists and critical sociologists might wish to highlight. While I acknowledge immediately that these research traditions are not homogeneous among themselves on many important issues, I will nonetheless characterise common assumptions, approaches, and problems.

The Reading-Comprehension Experiment

Reading research in the cognitive-psychological tradition has typically employed the experiment as the methodological foundation for developing knowledge about reading processes. It is instructive therefore to examine some assumptions underlying this methodological disposition in the light of the social and cultural concerns outlined in this volume. The point of experimentation is to pare down the environment so that hypothesised universal or at least common associations among relevant variables may be made visible. In the cognitive-psychological research tradition, this aim often shows itself in three related tendencies. The first is the use of artificial, specially constructed textual materials, rather than sampling from the array of texts that readers may encounter in their work (school or otherwise) or in their leisure reading. The second is the provision for the reader of unspecified or global purposes for reading the material. The third is a focus on the production of factual and inferential recall as outcomes.

In a number of the classic foundational studies in modern cognitive-psychological research on reading comprehension, the tendency to use highly artificial texts - indeed, texts that the researchers admit would never be found in ordinary reading material in school or elsewhere - is evident.

Bransford and Johnson (1972), for example, used the following text to demonstrate the role of prior organised knowledge in the facilitation of understanding:

The procedure is actually quite simple. First, you arrange items into different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities, that is the next step; otherwise you are pretty well set. It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do a few things at once than too many. In the short run, this may not seem important but complications can easily arise ...[text continues]

This passage was used to demonstrate the difficulty or even impossibility of comprehending a text without an organising knowledge framework - a framework that, when provided (in this case by the title "Washing Clothes"), allows the instantiation of general terms and makes orderly the informational elements. Similarly, Thorndyke (1977) in describing story comprehension and memory processes used the following text:

There was once an old farmer who owned a very stubborn donkey. One evening, the farmer was trying to put his donkey into its shed. First, the farmer pulled the donkey but the donkey wouldn't move. Then the farmer pushed the donkey, but still the donkey wouldn't move. Finally, the farmer asked his dog to bark loudly at the donkey and thereby frighten him into the shed. But the dog refused. So then, the farmer asked his cat to scratch the dog and so the dog would bark loudly ... [text continues]

It is difficult to see what the pragmatic function or intertextual context of these particular texts might be. That is, of what public discourse types are these texts representative? What knowledge need readers use in order to construct a possible function for such texts? What is focal here is perhaps not readers' comprehension *per se*, but rather the possible relationships between the functions of language use in three domains - the experiment, the classroom, and the larger society.

In addressing various aspects of these possible relationships, to be developed further below, a critical point is not just the goodness-of-fit of functions in differing domains but also the ways in which research on reading serves, usually implicitly, to stipulate and constrain definitions that come to be applied in the classroom and the broader society. In summarising his own experiments documenting the different reading and retention processes entailed in 'reading-for-an-experiment' versus 'reading-for-real-life-purposes', Spiro (1975) concluded that much current research

on memory for text is essentially irrelevant to the goal of describing understanding and memory processes as they occur in real life settings:

The point is that the context of the prose in a memory experiment is the experiment itself. ...

...the view of memorial functioning derived from conventional experiments is a qualitative distortion of that found with a minimal simulation of normally occurring contingencies. (1975: 7 & 53)

The functional decontextualisation in which such textual materials seem to operate is paralleled by the lack of specificity of the purposes and demands placed on a reader in an experimental context ("we'll discuss it later", "I'll ask you some questions about it", "recall everything you can" and so on). Regarded in these terms, the experiment can be seen as a unique social circumstance in itself, having a covert purpose and function well understood by test-wise subjects (not a small point given that many of the subjects in cognitive experimental research have been university undergraduates studying psychology). The stronger point is that through the experimental setting the reading process itself is to varying extents decontextualised (as in other testing situations) in that the interpretive resources available in non-experimental contexts are marginalised or explicitly denied (cf. MacKay 1974). While this denial might be interpreted as a purification of the (putative) reading process, it may also be interpreted as substituting tasks that are both covert and inaccessible to many readers.

Further, the performance of the reader in such an experiment is usually assessed in terms of literal and inferential recall. The text itself is read and studied with a view to reproducing a close-to-original form. We might ask in what circumstances this is the appropriate use of textual material - where texts "contain information", and the reader's task is to retain temporarily that information and reiterate it as a personally produced form of discourse up to some acceptable standard. The circumstances of current schooling is one obvious answer - that is, the knowledge-production practices of the experiment parallel those evident in much schooling.

Closed Equations

Turning to school reading, Baker and Freebody (1989a) have argued that the peculiarly impoverished nature of much "story" material in early schooling, combined with the nature of teachers' questions during comprehension phases accompanying or following story-readings, lead

plausibly to the view that such stories offer so little as entertainment that they are realised functionally as informational expositions. Pictures and words are interpreted and teachers pronounce on the acceptability of students' answers, often to apparently discretionary or 'subjective' questions about the stories. Thus the prevalent use of 'stories' in early schooling can be seen as precursive of those expository-learning strategies, textual materials, and responses more explicitly required in the content areas of later schooling. Such a view is compatible with research on story comprehension in the sense that a non-entertainment, expository function for story reading is realised through the use of dull, informationally dense "stories" and a reliance on retention and reiteration as the major indices of "comprehension". Comprehending in order to reiterate in discourse is a special feature of school learning. By contrast, much out-of-school informational reading is undertaken in order to help with some concrete task (fixing a machine, deciding on a holiday locale, mastering new factory machinery, learning a new word processing language) or to develop and refine some awareness of current affairs - that is, such reading has a functionality beyond the contents and demands of the text itself.

Reliance on the recall experiment as a proto-methodology in reading research equates reading with studying, and in turn, equates studying with studying in order to complete school tasks. Such equations are in no absolute sense irrelevant or trivial: they relate to the study and use of textual material in some school tasks. The question that arises concerns the extent to which such methodological predispositions afford a general account of how people go about reading.

Extrapolating findings from experimental studies of the sort characterised above to instructional programs is not only a matter of the researcher's responding to a notion of relevance to schooling, but also serves to reinforce and naturalise a particular version of school reading. Researchers' exclusive attention to reading and studying for retention and reiteration itself serves to buttress the limited uses of the written word in school contexts. We can describe a set of 'closed equations' in which the function of reading is defined by the logistics of the experiment, which, in turn, builds a definition of reading for the classroom, which, in turn, stipulates the proper limits of the culture's uses of reading, serving finally to justify the nature of 'research on reading'. This chain of generally unexplicated reasoning relates in part to Scribner and Cole's (1981) observation that the effects of literacy and schooling are often conflated. It seems that this conflation is neither accidental, nor is it caused only by the difficulty of empirically separating literacy onset from schooling onset. It

is also built from within by the methodological characteristics of many experiments on reading.

The questions arise: Do such criticisms necessarily lock the experimental paradigm into theoretically and ideologically limited uses? Or are there modifications that can be entertained that might allow for a more critical and comprehensive application of the experiment as a way of illuminating the practices that build competence (and thus educational advantage and disadvantage) in school-literacy? Partly, my answers to these questions relate to the materials, task demands, and 'outcome' characteristics that a critical-psychological approach to literacy would wish to put in place, and to the cultural and professional function of research reports as documents.

First, the issue of the nature of domain sampling is pertinent. In the nomothetic tradition, research usually derives its external validity from the representativeness of the sample of participants. However, the inference of generalisability is not generally applied to the domain of pertinent materials or task demands. Indeed, artificial, "stripped" textual materials and outcome performances are taken to be strong points in many research projects related to literacy. So, while the participants need to represent some broader population of, say, middle primary school students, no comparable qualms are typically expressed about what reading or performance domains are "represented" by the experimental materials and the tasks comprising the independent variables in the study. It is hardly novel to suggest that these components of the research project need to derive their interest from their representativeness of the textual and performance domains that the researcher wishes to inform.

It is neither novel, nor does it solve the problem, since the issue of representativeness applies also to the social circumstances of the experiment itself. Without a knowledge of the common interactional practices that surround literacy activities in a range of classrooms, it is hard to imagine how the conclusions of an experiment (conducted within a qualitatively different set of interactional practices) could be applied to classroom practice. This consideration is no less central to the issue of external validity than is the characterisation of the sample of participants. Yet conversely, the historical development of classroom practice - specifically in terms of what teachers define as reading and thus, to some extent, what goes on in literacy lessons - has largely been shaped by the experimental research tradition, as noted above.

The need is for experimental or quasi-experimental studies of variations in teacher and textual practices based on examination of the

available research on classroom interaction, and on the basis of expanded conceptions of what counts as successful reading (cf. Heap, Chapter 5, this volume) and what is or may be learned from reading. What would be lost in this expanded notion of experimentation is the appropriate degree of duration available for a manageable and controlled experimental intervention. The strengths of focus and control become seriously "threatened" the longer that intervention; the weakness that arises from short, manageable interventions is the diminished generalisability of the findings. A critical psychology of reading has to address such theoretical and methodological issues, in particular the ways in which theoretical presumptions and methodological dispositions mutually constrain one another, and the tensions between a technicist methodology and literacy as everyday practice.

This observation needs to be considered in the light of the function of research documents in education. It seems to me that there is a notion in some quarters (not occupied only by experimental or quantitative researchers) that the "definitive" or "archival" empirical demonstration of a particular phenomenon can be produced. It cannot. Any carefully developed research documentation can function only as a step, of this or that degree of confidence, in an ongoing argument about accounts or practices surrounding reading. The compelling study, be it experimental, descriptive-linguistic or sociological, serves largely to advance a line of argument and to shift the onus of counter-demonstration on to those who have argued differently at that step, or those whose policies are placed under challenge by the study.

Describing Reading: Theorising

The reading-comprehension experiment, in which readers' knowledge and perspectives or certain textual features are manipulated, presupposes a separation between social and cognitive space that is reminiscent of the separation of perceptual and semantic space effected through the use of nonsense words or random word lists in the verbal learning tradition. Dovetailing with experimental methodology is theorising in cognitive psychology about reading - that is, descriptions of what novice and expert readers do. In the following remarks, I will focus on schema theory as one such description, since it explicitly attempts to address the issue of reading comprehension by drawing attention to the nature of knowledge and its use in reading events. Thus, in principle, it appears to offer a theoretic

vocabulary that is sufficiently comprehensive and flexible to accommodate a range of discourses about literacy events.

Rumelhart (1980) outlined a number of key features of schema theory and its central place in an account of reading. A few points will be highlighted here to draw attention to both limiting and promising assumptions that typically underlie such a theory. Consider the following description Rumelhart gives of schemas.

According to "schema theories" all knowledge is packaged into units. These units are the schemata. Embedded in these packets of knowledge is, in addition to the knowledge itself, information about how this knowledge is to be used. ... A schema, then, is a data structure for representing the generic concepts stored in memory. (4-5)

The notion of schemas as data structures is consonant with the experimentalist's prespecification of reading as the study, retention, and reiteration of information. In this sense, the production of recall or performance on some other comprehension test is intended to reflect the possession and appropriate interrelation of the informational packages within these hypothetical containers in mental space. Comprehension is thus defined as an exchange of "legal tender" on the reader's part, and knowledge as a criterially pre-specifiable commodity in which the classroom participants can unproblematically traffic (a point reminiscent of Ong's (1983) observation concerning the effects of text book literacy on the pedagogical practices and epistemological assumptions of the European Renaissance academies).

Later, Rumelhart gave a more provocative description of schemas.

Schemata can represent knowledge at all levels - from ideologies and cultural truths to knowledge about what constitutes an appropriate sentence in our language, to knowledge about the meaning of a particular word, to knowledge about what patterns of excitations are associated with what letters of the alphabet. We have schemata to represent all levels of our experience, at all levels of abstraction. (13)

Note that such a broad description affords the possibility of using schema-style discourse to discuss levels of textual force, implicature, and the socially constitutive dimensions of the reader-text relationship, well beyond a view of textual information as supposedly neutral factual content. Similarly it appears to afford an awareness that pieces of "information" are given their distinctive character through their embeddedness within cultural/ideological interpretive frames (a point explored in Luke, 1989). This awareness, however, is rarely dealt with in cognitive-theoretical

descriptions of reading, partly because of the limited conception of topic knowledge underlying such theories.

McClelland and Rumelhart (1981) have elsewhere drawn attention to the necessary mutual informing between levels of analyticity that occurs in reading. Most of the attention in this work, however, is drawn to the ongoing interplay between orthographic, phonetic, syntactic, and (local) semantic sources of knowledge called upon by the reading task, even though promissory notes are issued concerning the importance of "higher" levels of knowledge. (An unexplicated acceptance of masonic, architecturally flavoured terms often pervades both cognitive accounts, as in Rumelhart's "building blocks" title, and social constructionist accounts). In these respects, the empirical programs developed from within the cognitive approach to reading seem to have been disappointingly restrictive in their focus on demonstrating the centrality of phono-graphic, syntactic, and local "topic knowledge" in understanding the written word. As the theory is realised in experimental practice, the nature of 'relevant background knowledge' is essentially stipulated to be driven by the visible topic of the text.

Describing Reading: Practices

An example may clarify the issue. Comprehending the following school text, about the Aztecs, might be described as a "schematizing" process, entailing the acquisition and alignment of the factual packages within the text, and the relating of the elements through the processes of linking, enabling, and informational inferences. This text is taken from the opening pages of a school book written for upper primary/lower secondary students:

The Aztecs were Indian people who controlled an empire in Central Mexico when the Spaniards opened up the New World to exploration, conquest, and settlement. Under Hernando Cortez, the Spanish reached Mexico in 1519, when the Aztec civilization was at its height.

The Aztecs came from the North and arrived in the so-called Valley of Mexico in the 12th century. This area is located between mountain ranges in the middle of the country halfway between the gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. The Aztecs were nomadic until they established their capital at Tenochtitlan.

Aztec civilization was not the true creation of the Aztecs. Their artistic and technical achievements were based on the more advanced cultures of the Toltecs, Mayans, and Zapotecs, earlier tribes they conquered and

displaced. Aztec culture combined elements of these earlier civilizations. Their language is related to that of several of the Indian tribes of the South Western United States.

Aztecs developed a culture that included a distinctive stonewheel calendar; their own methods of weaving cotton, feathers, and maguey fibres ... (text continues to describe Aztec craft and architecture; Purdy & Sandak 1982: 1-3).

How might schema theory as it stands account for comprehension of this passage? It would, I think, draw important attention to the question of the organised prior knowledge a reader needs to draw upon in order to represent appropriately the elements of information (e.g., knowledge concerning the geography of North America needed to understand the second paragraph). Schema theory might also point to the necessary or helpful inferences that the reader would need to draw in linking various text elements (e.g., the temporal sequencing from the dates stated in the first and second paragraphs), and in understanding and instantiating ambiguous, general, or specialised terms (e.g., "height", "nomadic", "combined elements"). Schema theory treats such background knowledge as a reader's cognitive rather than cultural resource - in effect locating culture in individual minds.

But in what terms would schema theory account for the clearly Eurocentric framing of the passage established in the first paragraph? The Spaniards are described as "opening up" the New World. In what way might this be instantiated? Further, they opened it up to "exploration". In what sense (or, in whose sense) was the continent "unexplored" prior to the arrival of Cortez? How is the statement concerning the height of Aztec civilisation to be instantiated? Was it simply coincidental that Cortez happened to arrive at the moment when the Aztec civilisation was at its height, or is there some particular reason why the civilisation declined following the arrival of the Spaniards? The notion that the New World was in some sense "opened up" (presuming that that term is not meant to signify the widespread evisceration of many of its inhabitants) is a particularly benign way of describing the events that occurred following Cortez's arrival - a way that buttresses particular cultural and political interests. Further, how might we describe the specificity of description of the distinctive cultural elements of the Aztecs as opposed to the broad, apparently more significant aspects which they borrowed from other cultures? So, what is *learned* from reading such a paragraph?

The unquestioned instantiation of 'comprehension' as the exchange of textual information and textually-driven inference implies that what is

learned is pre-specifiable by the researcher - that there is one way of reading a text properly, and that way is definable through a set of "comprehension" questions. These pre-specifications assume even more force when the cultural resources that the reader might bring to bear in recalling the text are defined by the researcher as 'appropriate' or 'inappropriate' inferences (or "elaborations and distortions" as in, e.g., Steffensen & Colker 1982). Comprehension questions, to which there are pre-specifiable answers that are taken to display an essential understanding or inference, parallel those questions asked in classrooms that decide understanding a text. This is a means of privileging certain forms of cultural knowledge and discourses under the guise of the neutral testing of comprehension (Baker & Freebody 1989b). The idea of a decontextualised, universal, essential process (reading, comprehending, inferring, etc.) can serve to work against the reformation of curricular and assessment practices by bypassing the relationship between culture and cognition or by turning culture into the cognitive currency of "schemas". Success and failure at reading, comprehending and inferring thus become naturalised as individual, cognitive differences.

The coherent set of implicatures in the *Aztecs* text seem to me to construct and reinforce a Eurocentric perspective (in which continents and cultures are described and given significance through their contact with, in this case, expanding European empires). Through the bland and even condoning description of this "opening up" of the "New World", such a perspective is naturalised by the very fact that it is left unexplicated in the text (much less in the classroom and in the experiment). Readers are covertly positioned into ordering their meaning-making procedures within this textually inaccessible perspective. It does not seem to illuminate greatly these features of the comprehension process by describing them as the "accessing" of a schema for Eurocentricism and then binding the explicit information through instantiations into that schema. It is rather that needing to develop and use such a perspective actually serves to characterise and order the arrangements of information. Further, the perspective is embedded as an interactive frame by the text itself and by a steady diet of similar texts and schoolwork. Thus the text is as much a covert agent in the construction of a perspective as it is an instantiation and elaboration of some previously existing schema. What is learned from reading this text, then, may be only indirectly and partly made available in a recall or recognition test of comprehension. The issue of the abiding experiential effects of such a text is left, in large part, untouched, due to the omission, equally in

schema theory, in the experiment, and in the classroom, of the recognition of textuality.

Implications: Privatising Knowledge and Culture

A complaint frequently levelled at cognitive-psychological accounts of reading is that they treat encounters with the written word as exhaustively describable by internalised and individualised events. This assumption that knowledge and skills are privately possessed further underpins the separation of cognitive and social space and thus may seriously delimit cognitive research and theorising. Rumelhart (1980: 9) again:

It is useful to think of a schema as a kind of informal, private, unarticulated theory about the nature of events, objects, or situations which we face.

The privacy (and, by inference, the idiosyncrasy) of knowledge and skills may serve firstly to underpin the assessment and ranking of comprehension performance evident in schooling and in much cognitive research; second, to support a unitary model of the reading process in which the individual displays private ownership of information effectively as a trait across varying situations; third, to shift focus away from the public, discursively formal nature of knowledge; and finally, to deflect attention away from the embedded nature of reading-for-school, by separating some variables into context, some into text, and some into 'inside-the-head' variables. Such separations permit spurious distinctions in theorising, and an overstatement of the centrality of artificial manipulations in the collection of experimental data. They also, more importantly, serve to divide the theory and research tasks up - some students of literacy concentrate on contextual issues, some on analysing texts, and some on cognitive processes (an apparently unfortunate division of labour that is not restricted to reading but permeates much educational research).

Note also that schemas are described as 'unarticulated' in Rumelhart's formulation. This characterisation serves to specify the task of the teacher and researcher alike as one of constantly inferring toward a transcendent trait in the learner, only opaquely evidenced in the sole data source available in learning contexts - the discourse of the participants (including the writers of school texts). The concentration on articulating models of 'unarticulated knowledge' is a critical step in the universalising of *the* reading process, and draws attention away from detailed analyses of the actual discourse

exchanges that occur among students, teachers and texts in a variety of contexts.

Such model-building thus sidesteps both conceptual and methodological agenda that are critical to an understanding of school reading. As Heap (Chapter 5, this volume) has argued, what counts as reading in school is enacted through a set of conventions, and further

One cannot establish or learn a convention alone, for in a world of one there can be no conventions. Language is not possible in such a world, nor is reading. Thus, the question of how one becomes acculturated is a question about how one learns from and with, others. In our case, the question is how one learns from others what counts as reading.

This view calls not only for an expanded conceptual armory (even within a schema-theoretic framework) but, as importantly, methodological devices targeted at the analysis of naturally-occurring discourse.

Recently, Langer (1987) has proposed a "socio-cognitive perspective" on literacy, attempting to draw attention to the need to supplement such a private, individualised account of literacy by pointing to the social origins of literacy performance. A Vygotskian view was endorsed by Langer in the following terms:

Higher sociological processes are direct reflections of social processes in which the child participates at an earlier stage - that processes evolve from *interpsychological* to *intrapsychological*. (7)

While Langer argued that the origins of strategies and assumptions relating to reading and writing are socially constructed, the ideal point toward which individuals evolve (that is, the adult form) is, if successful, a private intrapsychological set of events, abstracted from their contextual origins and functions. This abstraction then allowed Langer to describe the idealised form of literacy that needs to be put in place:

We can also view literacy another way - as the ability to think and reason like a literate person ... literate thinkers objectify the subject matter, making it opaque and malleable, thereby permitting self-conscious distinctions to be made between language structure, discourse meanings, and interpretations. (2-3)

Such a description of the idealised literate person seems not only to be at odds with available research on the uses of literacy in a variety of different cultures (e.g., Street 1984), but also to put in place a restrictive conception of how people within any particular culture might use the

written word in various situations for various purposes. To suggest that strategies and understandings related to learning to read and write are social in their inception but become hermetically privatised as the individual becomes more proficient (and becomes an "owner" of literacy skills) seems in fact to deny the sensitive variations and flexible uses of reading and writing that highly literate people display from context to context. The terms Langer (1987) used to describe the processes of literacy acquisition have a clearly ideological flavour - they describe an actuarial, managerial version of the mind:

As learners assume ownership for their literacy activities ...they are in a sense learning to master themselves - they gain control of their own abilities as literate thinkers and doers, using language to serve their own ends. (7)

Literate individuals routinely partake in a great range of the functional discourses (whether apparently 'private' or 'public') that are made available and given authority in their cultures, rather than idiosyncratically and unpredictably using a private commodity as currency in whatever way strikes them on the moment.

We might wonder why cognitive psychologists, who go into great detail in the analysis of textual material and in the depiction of the internal cognitive architecture of the reader, do not similarly attempt to detail the fluid patterns of social construction that go on around reading events in common educational settings. Of course, this is not an oversight, but rather a direct consequence of the separation of cognitive and social space that undergirds the discourse of cognitive psychology. An example can be drawn from Bransford's (1979) comprehensive review of cognitive approaches to learning, understanding and remembering. Having spent 260 pages integrating research and theory, Bransford drew attention to the directions in which further work is needed. In the third-to-last paragraph of the book, Bransford made the following remarks:

the social context of one's everyday interactions may have important effects on knowledge acquisition as well as on the development of criteria for assessing comprehension and mastery. There may be important differences in the degree to which people experience the types of challenging everyday conversations and interactions that enhance school-related comprehension skills. Furthermore, the general content of conversations may differ. Thus, some families and peer groups may spend much time discussing the types of concepts taught in school-related settings; others may focus on different sorts of topics. Processes affecting cognitive development surely are not confined to formal

educational settings. Indeed, everyday social interactions are probably much more important than school per se. An analysis of learning to learn therefore necessitates a concern with the social environments in which people live and act. (1979: 262)

That these comments occur half a page from the end of the book and are couched in such tentative terms ("everyday interactions may have important effects on knowledge acquisition") indicates the marginality of interactive-discursive experience in cognitive accounts. The assumption is that the processes of learning and understanding are universal, even if the contents upon which they work to develop may incidentally differ from one sub-cultural formation to another. There seems little realization that cognitive processes themselves are adaptive acts in everyday social circumstances (including school), that they are not internally devised or idiosyncratically used, and that they are transmitted and acquired just as are organised bodies of topic knowledge. Further, Bransford contrasted school experience and "everyday social interactions", implying that cognitive accounts have been developed within and are thus most directly applicable to the more "known" ecology of the classroom. In fact, there are very few available research reports that attempt to link the prevalent patterns of classroom interaction to students' understanding or learning performance (for an exception, see Golden 1988).

Reconsidering Research

I have argued here that the materials, methods, and theorising found in cognitive families of research, as they stand, offer far less than they might to critical perspectives on reading (a domain not conceptually exhausted by the contributions in this volume). Perhaps they are at best a series of intriguing promisory notes, currently too narrowly effected in research programs. The insistence of cognitivists that textual materials (textbooks and teacher talk), in persistent interaction with the reader's current state of knowledge, are constitutive of the reading experience seems to me important. The ways in which that experience comprises simultaneously the inferences, instantiations, and importations of the reader also seem crucial elements in descriptions of reading activities.

Similarly, the attention within cognitive psychology to the details of student performance and the attempt to link that performance to important features of the ecology, while at present locally and narrowly construed in many cognitive-psychological accounts of reading, seem to me important

focal points, and tasks that critical sociologists might consider more seriously. Whatever the nature of the ideological commitment or the basis of the critique of current literacy practices, the researcher nonetheless needs to specify or at least imply the kinds of performance and dispositional outcomes of school experiences that might be conceived as desirable from within the critique. The objectives of critical analysis should permit some specificity in the connection with problems experienced by the profession that researchers aim to influence.

The technicist outcomes of the cognitive agenda seem at least clear, although limited in their view - the enhancement of acquisition of packets of 'information'. The written word is seen as an informational technology, and the point of schooling in literacy is increased fluency in managing that technology as a way of acquiring structured information-knowledge. How are the outcomes of the critical-sociological agenda to be characterised? Having done away with essentialist, monolithic notions of reading, having deconstructed the myth of 'literacy-as-liberation', and having politicised the relations among students, teachers and texts, what clear and positive agenda for reading pedagogy can be rebuilt? What would be the documentable features of its effects? As with cognitivist accounts of reading, a significant next step in the development of critical-sociological accounts seems to me to entail necessary expansions of both the conceptual and methodological armories to address these questions.

To some extent, the cultural function of research discourse itself needs to be considered. To the extent that either cognitive psychologists or critical sociologists wish to shape different educational practices, some broader and more convincing accounts of the experiences of reading in school need to be developed. This needs to be done in language that in part reflects and in part deconstructs the vocabulary currently used in education to account for the conduct and outcomes of schooling. For example, one central difference between cognitive-psychological and critical-sociological accounts of literacy relates to the distinct classes of inference that are given warrant from what they differentially take to be data. The community of cognitive psychologists typically gives a warrant to infer generalisations concerning the operations of the mind (as in, e.g., Rumelhart 1977); on the part of critical sociologists, generalisations concerning the character of social and institutional relations are often treated as inferrable from observed practices (as in, e.g., Baker & Freebody 1989b; Baker, Chapter 7, this volume). In both cases, this inference-warranting practice allows theoretically and professionally important features of the varying material circumstances of school-literacy to be hurdled with apparent impunity. It is

many of these same circumstances that teachers must take into account when evaluating the utility of educational research.

It is still the case that educational advantage and disadvantage are routinely produced in schools, largely through overt and covert patterns of pedagogical discourse. Indeed, some dominant forms of educational research have themselves been major contributors to this process. The "surfaces and cracks in the edifice" of schooling, that is, those points at which teachers and students redefine, resist, challenge or comply with educational practices need to be documented by observant critical analysts whatever their theoretical or methodological persuasions.

Just as cognitive psychological approaches to literacy acquisition and use have typically had little or nothing to say about well-documented sub-cultural factors in school achievement (such as social class), we might wonder if some forms of critical-sociological analysis of literacy practices similarly marginalise such differences in school-literacy encounters. The seriously unequal chances offered by schooling to members of different social classes (and genders and races) cannot be permitted to fall into the gaps between these two major research programs, in the one case because of a conception of the socially-sealed "mind" and in the other because of a commitment to the detailed analysis and deconstruction of instances of educational discourse, unaccompanied by demonstrations of how such forms of discourse effect the inequality of experience. The ways in which teachers and students account for and ascribe learning 'processes and products', and, importantly, how these accounts and ascriptions are differentially associated with pedagogical practices in differing sites (e.g., Da Silva 1988) are questions that call for renewed versions of the theoretical machinery evident in both critical-sociological and cognitive-psychological enquiries.

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Chapter 11

Discourses and Practices: A Postscript

Carolyn D. Baker and Allan Luke

Critiques

This volume has provided critiques of dominant discourses that have defined school reading. These chapters present challenges to the political neutrality of school literacy materials and methods, as in the historical analyses by Luke and Mey, and challenges to the naturalisation of various categories of persons, sites, practices and processes as the self-evident objects of a pedagogical gaze. For example, such discourses have relied on a consensual recognition of the pre-existence of a universalised, essential “child”, whether “whole” or “skilled”, “the story”, “the text”, “the author’s voice” and “personal experience”, all available for discovery and authentic expression through a transparent language. Chapters by Gilbert, Hunter and Baker in this volume have shown how such essences can be sought and found, privileged and naturalised in professional texts and in everyday classroom practice. Similarly discourses on reading have relied on the possibility of such essential entities as “comprehension”, “reading”, and “learning”. The arguments by Heap and McHoul in this volume concerning the impossibility of a universal theory of reading strongly support, as Bill Green remarks, the reconceptualisation of reading pedagogy.

The reconceptualisation of reading in directions such as those indicated here also begins identifying possible implications for current pedagogic practice. Those versions of reading theory and research in ascendance for most of this century, and those pedagogical discourses that have shared and extended the same vocabularies, have enjoyed a security sourced in a variety of economic and institutional conditions. That security has been tightened significantly through the consonance of the categories of the discourse of “reading” with those of the discourse of “teaching” more generally. Thus Freebody (Chapter 10, this volume) raises pertinent political questions about how the perspectives presented in this volume can be articulated with existing pedagogies in a way that addresses longstanding concerns about the

distribution of educational advantage. His related call is for a positive thesis arising from the critical analyses in the volume, for some indication of what preferred discourses or practices might look like. These are the concerns that we take up in this postscript, where we propose some alternative vocabularies for describing literacy events, and then sketch directions for a reformulated pedagogy.

Freebody argues that the introduction of alternative pedagogical vocabularies needs to both reflect and deconstruct conventional vocabularies used to account for classroom practice and for schooling "outcomes". Within conventional psychological-pedagogical thought, schooling "outcomes" have been formulated and measured largely with reference to a cognitive notion of "learning" as the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The isolation and naturalisation of "learning" as an abstract psychological process is central to the assumptions operative within personal growth and other romantic approaches to literacy instruction.¹ Within psychological theories, "Learning" has become an object-in-itself² that refers to a special process ultimately located in individual student minds. Here we encounter the same order of problems that have been addressed in relation to "Reading", compounded even further in formulations such as "learning to read". It can be argued that, within pedagogical discourses, both "Teaching" and "Learning" are used as glosses³ that obscure the origins and operations of discursive and other interactional practices that constitute knowledges and knowers, readers and readings. As Freebody has noted, various attempts are underway theoretically and empirically to reconcile the social with the cognate, to admit social factors into the cognitive equation. Our aim here has been to refocus on the social, construed in terms of the discourses and practices of the local political sites where institutional reading pedagogy occurs - the school and the classroom.

A longstanding concern of the sociology of schooling has been with the production and reproduction of systematic inequalities among categories of students. Decades of sociological work have shown how class, race and gender advantages and disadvantages are produced in and by schooling. Our view is that studies of discourses and practices are essential to explicating how regimes of pedagogical knowledge and authority are organised textually, what their economic or political derivation might be, and how they work in and across local classroom sites to produce and distribute competencies, and to constitute categories of 'learners', 'readers' and so forth. What we propose is not a reduction of the problem of inequality to a problem of discourse, but a cross-cutting of that problem by situating issues of authority, advantage and privilege in the circulation of

discourses and practices repeatedly shown in these chapters not to be culturally or politically neutral. Our intended sociological shift here, and our break with the conventional categories (but not the concerns) of the inequality literature, is to attend to the social organisation of discourses about texts and textualities and their consequences as classroom practices.

So, far from allowing the politics and consequences of institutional knowledge and practice to fall into a gap, we propose a redirection of critical attention to the theories and languages and procedures that constitute literacy pedagogies. But akin to McHoul's resistance (Chapter 8, this volume) to separating event and context - "here the reading, there the context" - we are wary of replicating the notion of "outcomes" framed within a linear cause-effect conception of school experiences/practices *resulting in* independently observable performance differences or systematically unequal chances. First, separating what is done and achieved in local sites - in lessons, in professional and student texts, or in forms of classroom practice - from skills, performances, abilities or advantages construed as independently observable results of such textual practices misses the point: practices of teaching and discourses of assessment themselves produce what counts as skill or ability and what counts as more or less skill or ability (see Hunter, Chapter 3; Baker, Chapter 7, this volume). The relation is not causal but concentric:

Educational discourse ...can be seen as a system of signs and representations which traverse laterally through a synchronic grid: from the academic article, to the policy document, to curriculum specifications, to staffroom 'common sense', and to the classroom text and student worksheet. (Luke & Luke 1990: 79)

Secondly, while acknowledging the importance of class, gender and race analysis, we also recognise the "enormous theoretical difficulty with locating class or ascribing class to groups" (Luke & Luke 1990:78). The question of whether and how educational discourses and practices work systematically in favour of or against members of particular class and gender categories (however defined or observed) can be approached also with the notion of the "lateral traverse" - by showing discursive histories, continuities of cultural inclusion and exclusion, and practical politics and economies in and across contemporary pedagogies.

Alternatives

What is being achieved in the “reading lesson” or the “literature lesson” or the “writing lesson” can be viewed as the constitution of the literate and of what counts as “reading”, “writing” or “literary criticism” in and through discourse. The focus here has been on the character of those discourses, the oral, written and bodily practices that sustain them, and their appropriation or contestation by readers. It includes a concern with the kinds of reading and writing positions made available to readers within those discourses (Kress 1985). Language can no longer be viewed as a transparent medium for the direct expression or reflection of ideas, knowledge and experience. Instead, the languages of texts, of readers and writers, and of classroom talk itself can be seen and studied as contributions to the discursive construction of literacy practices. This “textualising” turn applies both to critical reappraisals of the discourses, subject positions and practices currently offered by reading and writing pedagogies, and to the reconstruction of literacy practices in classrooms.

Alternative vocabularies for the description and analysis of what is accomplished in the course of encounters with texts in pedagogical sites give primacy to the production and use of discourses, within which “reading” and “readers” are made and remade, produced and reproduced in the lesson. Consider Baker’s analysis of the production of “child”-specific and classroom-specific literacy practices which achieve the intellectual and cultural positioning of students and teacher in relation to texts and to worldly knowledge. One implication of that chapter, and of Gilbert’s discussion of process approaches to writing, is that participation in such “story” discourses accomplishes and naturalises a school-cultural reading “code”: a normative order governing how reading/writing is done, an order that is achieved reflexively by members through “practices of showing and telling each other that particular encountered features are typical, regular, orderly, coherent” (Weider 1974: 171).⁴

To say that students are participating in mapping a “code” of school culture during reading lessons does not necessarily imply the pre-existence of a planned or wholly coherent system of discourse, or a prior system of authority and authorisation at work (cf. Sawchuk 1988: 70), although the recognisability to most readers of “reading lesson” discourse practices shows the hand of historical metanarrative - of theoretical discourses of pedagogy - in modern practices. These various practices can be found to connect and reiterate one another. Classroom language games together constitute a discursive logic, a syntax of related events, and produce specific

kinds of readings and specific kinds of readers; at the same time they provide instances for learning the self-discipline of reading. The "code" is audibly told in the production and innovation, hearing and up-take of ways of speaking proffered to "children", to text-characters and to teachers.

A poststructuralist perspective enables the identification of how particular textual discourses constitute subject positions and reading positions. The inscription of subjectivities encompasses more than Baker's attention to the problem of how one speaks as child-reader in the classroom, and extend to bodily practice. An example is found in Cochran-Smith's (1985: 25-26) description of the physical postures and gestural choreographies that make children "look like readers":

The rug-time framework told the children how to listen and look like readers, how to sit up and take notice of the text being shared. This is not to suggest that looking like a reader (e.g. sitting up and not handling other items) is necessarily or directly related to the act of making sense of written decontextualized print. This is to suggest, however, that the rug-time event served as an important framework for the act of reading that physically and psychologically set bookreading apart from other preschool activities...

Entailed here is a child's "knowledge of the proper nonverbal orientation for bookreading - how to hold the book, how listeners ought to attend, how to relate pictures to the discussion around them, and how to pace the turning of the pages" (Cochran-Smith 1985: 26). And to Cochran-Smith, in this instance, the child had "clearly internalized a reading orientation" and presented "an image of the child as an active learner". The self-discipline of correct classroom reading, it would appear, has been taken on as one's own.

This concept, "looking like a reader", is in effect a description of the pedagogic gaze turned to the student's body-mind relation. "Looking like a reader" is itself a teacher's discursively constructed reading of bodily signs of a "correct" reading subjectivity. For an historical parallel, consider the case of 19th century 3R's instruction, where a correct postural schema, a *habitus*, was prescribed for the acts of oral recitation, finger style penmanship, slate work and so forth (DeCastell & Luke 1986). This notion of "correct" *habitus* also arises in many studies of how teachers read signs of conformity to prescribed morality in girls' dress, voices and physical movements (Lesko 1988 terms this the "curriculum of the body").

To "look like a reader" - by accident, fortune or design - is effectively a cultural and political resource in the classroom. To not have acquired the look of a reader is a liability. Within this semiotic, this teacher's theory of

signs, the body is turned into a surface of the mind, and the teacher becomes a reader of that surface. The child becomes the author of her bodily text as her "personal body": she should inscribe a reading discourse upon herself in order to be fully available to the inspection of the teacher, and to fulfill her moral duty, in the modern case, as an "active learner".

The making of readers-in-the-classroom through processes of inscription, in which discourses are written on to and read in to subjectivities and bodies, is conveyed most fully in McHoul's descriptions (Chapter 8, this volume) of participation in the ceremonies of classroom reading events. McHoul's account of how "we read" as an account of inscription, dissolves boundaries among minds, bodies, sites and practices. The focus here on a body that is written upon by history (Ostrander 1988; cf. Turner 1984) and by the political instrument of schooling, is a significant departure from the individualist, mentalist notions that permeate most contemporary educational thought.

The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated Self (adopting the illusion of substantial unity), and a volume in disintegration. Genealogy ... is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's deconstruction of the body. (Foucault 1977: 148)

We can extrapolate Foucault's analysis of the consequences of the panoptic gaze - that is, a "means of correct training" - to analyse the body pedagogically reconditioned, as "traced by language, lacerated by ideology, and invaded...by the field of power" (Kroker & Kroker 1988: 20).

Discourse - in the case of pedagogy, regimes of pedagogical truth and practice - does not teach subjects but rather constitutes knowledges and subjectivities: "What [teachers] teach ... is not knowledge. It is *preferred discourses*" (Alvarado & Ferguson 1983: 29). Here Freebody's discussion of the relationship between the procedural discourse of the experiment and the discourse of the reading lesson is revealing. We could posit them as reflexive regimes of power: the experiment providing and procedurally modelling the "theoretical" truths of reading, and school texts, rules and models for the teaching of reading providing a complementary practical discourse. In this sense the discourse and signs of the reading lesson do invest the subject with a procedural code: a modernist/technical code based on the scientific definition of the subject, of teaching, of learning and of skill. The experimenter and the teacher search out the same "processes", they look for the same "reader". Following Freebody's analysis, the discourse of the reading experiment and the reading lesson thus stand in a

closed, tautological relationship. Each can be used to justify the rationality and efficacy of the other as sites where Reading is done. The signs of the classroom reading event therefore have a referential function, referring to a set of procedures that can be called "school reading", established via modernist science. At the same time the discourses and codes of school reading refer to and reinforce each other as simulacra: they are self-referential.

We see this illustrated also in the actual reading texts: the stories, talk and actions which occur in the materials children read and interact around - materials designed or selected to produce the child-reader - in effect have a mimetic relationship with nothing outside of themselves and their discrete intertextual heritage. For example, nobody speaks like basal reader characters speak (Baker & Freebody 1986) and the communities signed in basal reading texts refer to every community and thereby no community (Luke 1988). So "readings" in school, like those in the experiment, may indeed refer to nothing other than themselves (and each other); they create a set of specialised practices and subjectivities designed for nothing other than more of the same kinds of Reading that service and rationalise schooling.⁵

Those specialised discourses and practices, including reading practices, that have been taught in schools have naturalised, neutralised and privileged the skills and knowledges that are carried by them and that are made the visible criteria of achievement. The invisible criteria might well include the reproduction of preferred discourses in speech and in writing (cf. Ozolins, 1981; Michaels 1987; Hunter, chapter 3, this volume). As Bourdieu (1976) notes, schools have ensured systemic patterns of educational advantage and exclusion by privileging discourses and associated subjectivities and "tastes" rather than propositional knowledges as such. The discourses and practices that organise the routine, everyday life of classrooms and schools are discourses and practices that work in and across local sites to produce educational advantage and exclusion.

Reading Pedagogy as Discourse Critique

Our critiques of naturalism and essentialism and our analyses of discursive practices point strongly towards a reconceptualisation of reading (and writing) pedagogy in poststructuralist terms, informed by the analytic contributions of several distinct approaches to the study of reading pedagogy. What poststructuralist theory offers educators

is a theory which decentres the rational, self-present subject of humanism, seeing subjectivity and consciousness as socially produced in language, as a site of struggle and potential change. Language is not transparent as in humanist discourse, it is not expressive and does not label a 'real' world. Meanings do not exist prior to their articulation in language and language is not an abstract system, but is always socially and historically located in discourses. Discourses represent political interests and in consequence are constantly vying for status and power. The site of this battle for power is the subjectivity of the individual and it is a battle in which the individual is an active but not sovereign protagonist. (Weedon 1987: 41)

Theories of reading and reading pedagogy, like many other forms of educational research and theorising, are historically and culturally specific discursive constructions of knowledges and truths, in this case about readers and reading. As such, they are by definition vulnerable to challenges from competing discourses, in this case about readers and reading, and they are vulnerable to deconstructive analyses and counterpractices in educational sites. The parallel histories of reading research and of reading pedagogy have included lively in-house competitions (e.g., "top-down" vs "bottom up", "meaning" vs "skills") that have not shifted the orders of concern from those that have serviced and sustained reading psychology as an "authority of delimitation" (Foucault 1972). Ideology critique has offered a form of counter-practice in humanist terms, effectively a counter-construction of ideas about what reading, readers, and teachers should be and do. There is a further and different shift to make: making reading discourses and practices themselves the objects of a reading pedagogy.

The contributors to this volume have argued for such a shift. This is done not in order to substitute a competing "true" discourse about reading or to introduce yet another airtight regime of classroom practice (and power). Rather, the intent is to introduce a variety of methods for critical analyses of discourses and practices that would refuse such authorities as well as refuse the naturalism and essentialism that characterise much reading psychology. These political projects of analysis, deconstruction and critique demonstrate alternative "reading" practices that recognise rather than deny textuality in the making of the social (cf. Mulkay 1985; Kress 1985). Notions of the discursive construction of reading and readers, of the inscription of a code, enable analyses of the acts and substances of constructions and inscriptions themselves. This position differs from the dominant ideology critique described in the conclusion of Chapter 9. Ideology critique - at the basis of various radical pedagogies to counter technicist education - entails the elicitation and substitution of one set of 'contents' for another, one set of terms of 'authenticity', 'voice' for another,

as in the recovery of working class history, experience or voice. It privileges itself as a discourse from which critiques of other discourses can be launched. The attempt to graft radical pedagogy onto humanist, child-centred pedagogy risks the discursive fabrication of an alternative domain of the 'real', and of the institutional authorisation of the 'authentic'. It assigns to the critical pedagogue and the critical reader the task of unmasking distortions, of locating the undistorted, of recovering previously subordinated voices and discourses. The possibility remains that in countering the messages of hegemonic formulations of school knowledge, the stress of such a pedagogy could remain on ideology *qua* content.

If reading pedagogy is reconceptualised as the discursive construction and inscription of reading, writing, and other classroom literacy codes and practices, then any way of organising literacy practice will entail some such outcome or 'effect'. Consistent with the analyses in this volume, the alternative could be in the construction or inscription of practices which enable and encourage the critique of codes, practices and discourses even and particularly in early schooling.⁶ This would make the artifice of classroom discourses and texts visible to teachers and to students (see Spivak 1988: 95-117). In brief, an alternative is that discourse critique should supersede ideology critique: an approach that engages readers, writers and speakers in the reading, writing and speaking practices of critiquing reading, writing and speaking practices. This analytic stance towards texts would properly come under its own analysis (cf. Mulkay 1985) as a "pedagogic practice-theory that would allow us constructively to question privileged explanations even as explanations are generated" (Spivak 1988: 117).

With this notion of pedagogy as discourse critique we do not mean to forward a version of textual formalism or radical technicism which sets out to generate sophistry or how to play with words. If, as Heap (1985: 265) suggests, reading lessons (and other literacy events) teach "cultural logic", if textual analysis entails learning to apprehend and construct "possible worlds" in culturally sanctioned ways, then pedagogy could set as its goal the critique of cultural logics and their sanctions, the critique of ways of 'reading' the "world and the word" (Freire & Macedo 1987). But, unlike some current radical pedagogies, we propose going beyond the institutional substitution of progressive or radical cultural logics for a conservative cultural logic, although such substitutions could be part of the practice we propose. We argue here for the development of reading and writing positions and practices that make their own organisation and procedures visible and accessible to teachers and students, that recognise their own

artifice, and that are opened to debate and critique. Such an approach would produce texts and classroom practices that pragmatically invite criticism and that invite deconstruction. It would place at its centre the politics and practices of language and discourse, not least as these occur within the course of classroom talk, reading and writing.

So in response to Freebody's call for our discourses of critique to articulate their own alternatives for how teachers might conceptualise their literacy practices and what teachers might seek to achieve, we have suggested: (1) that what occurs in classroom reading, writing and speaking events is inevitably some discursively based invention of "reading", "readers" and "texts"; (2) that pedagogical categories and discourses (including "teaching" and "learning") can be denaturalised and deconstructed to see how they constitute readers and reading; (3) that the preferred outcome would be to move towards events and practices that demonstrate and encourage critiques of discourses as discourses of critique. This book is but a first step in that direction.

Notes

1. As Hunter (this volume) notes, much of this kind of pedagogy proceeds from the assumption that one can "learn *from* experience". We emphasise the term *from* here, for it points to the supposition, however veiled, that "learning" is separate from "experiencing" or "reading" or "talking". The suggestion that one can "learn from" some other activity is descended from the kind of break between doing and knowing which Goody suggests was brought about by literacy. In *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (1977) Goody revisits Levi-Strauss' notion of bricolage, arguing that literacy enables a (textual) abstraction from experience. Literacy has typically been associated with decontextualisation, with the separation of practices from theorising about practices, with the separation of execution from conception (but see Scribner & Cole 1981).
2. As with "Reading" there can be no single class of events to which "Learning" refers exclusively. "Learning" is nevertheless purportedly available (via a transparent language) to the expert pedagogic or scientific gaze, it can be subjected to comparative and competitive assessment, and it occasions various forms of individualistic remediation, intervention, and moral control. These practices are enhanced by pedagogical readings of culture as cognition, for example the appropriation and transformation of cultural resources into cognitive possessions through the notion of all-encompassing "schema" (see Freebody, this volume).
3. These glosses, "Teaching" and "Learning", especially when used as intransitive verbs, become self-explicating and moral accounts of what people are doing in classrooms. As with the "teacher-student couple" noted by Hunter (this volume) the "teaching-learning" couple is an ideological device that assumes and enforces pre-existing, natural and permanent differences of positions in relation to classroom knowledges and

discourses, in which "learning" construed as acquisition becomes derivative of "teaching" construed as agency. Heap's specification (this volume) of differences between theoretical, criterial and procedural indicators of "reading" can be applied equally to theories and studies of "teaching" and "learning".

4. By "code" here we do not refer to an airtight system of one-to-one correspondences, or a cipher. Rather codes are systems of semiotic possibilities and constraints that allow for free play, interpolation, innovation, and ultimately, contestation (see Wilden 1980).
5. Just as the experiment mimes and reproduces "school" reading, the repeated study and analysis of how classroom reading *is* done is a self-limiting basis for constructing alternative conceptions of how it *might* be done: another 'loop', this one connecting research and practice. Critical studies of reading-*outside*-classrooms might usefully be introduced to inform reading pedagogy programs and theories, not to privilege or naturalise those alternatives, but to hold up to critical scrutiny other readings in other sites, and avoid narrow prescriptions of, for instance, "inferential" and "literal" readings or for that matter "literary" readings.
6. As noted by several contributors here, the modern tendency is to treat 'learning to read' as a technical/psychological achievement in early schooling. Textual "criticism" - in formations that vary from secondary school New Criticism and reader response, to latter day versions of (neutral) "critical thinking" - becomes a curricular add-on in secondary school literature study. We would argue the need to engage multiple competing reading positions and practices in the early primary grades, and that criticism is a viable reading practice for young children.

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