

Sophia Kanaouti

**The social value of literary reading:
Reading as socio-political practice**

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to illustrate the links between literary reading, social agency and social change using a Cultural Studies approach that addresses the construction of the literary reader in the English and Greek context in the twentieth century.

Via Althusser's notion of the Ideological State Apparatuses and Balibar and Macherey's views of literary reading exerting power over the reader, the thesis questions notions of literature as an institution of suppression. It uses Williams's and Bennett's work, which address the reader in more emancipating terms and attempts to move beyond even these writers' work, theorising the existence of three types of literature reader, connected with education as a social institution. These are the adequate reader, the dependent reader, and the performing reader. Reading as performance addresses social change.

Linking the reader's experience of the text with the understanding of language and following from that the state of being conscious of the experience of social reality, the thesis recognises a relationship between Williams's *structures of feeling*, Althusser's notion of the imaginary relationship of the person with her conditions of existence, and Aristotle's contention that the product of imagination (*phantasma*) is needed in order for the person to understand; starting from them, it theorises what it calls *historical imagination*, as the imaginary reality that takes on the validity of history (of something that is believed to have happened beyond doubt) in the minds of the readers. The importance of language as a social parameter of access is underlined by the examination of official documents regarding literary educational policy and assessment, spanning the twentieth century.

Lastly and very importantly, Bhabha's work on what he called a 'third space', together with Hall's 'arbitrary closure' and hooks's notion of negotiation leading to 'repositioning' are also used; thus the thesis sees reading as a 'third space' of negotiation, which encourages re-negotiation and re-positioning.

PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE

This thesis is concerned with how the reading of literary texts written in English and Modern Greek was viewed during the twentieth century. That century was a turning point for both English and Greek because for the first time schooling addressed (and thus institutionalised in a more prominent manner) the reading of vernacular literature. These conceptions of literary reading, and the social place that they occupied are seen here through the lens of literary education.

Education's organisational character, which extends from schooling 'rituals' to publications make the institutional character of literary reading within this framework more prominent. Education is an institution with a strong social aspect, and creates a community which in many ways is hierarchical; thus the social, linguistic and political aspects of viewing literary reading can be addressed more accurately when literary reading is addressed via education.

This thesis focuses on English and Greek literary education in England and Wales¹ on the one hand and in Greece on the other. It addresses the differences in the historical development of institutionalised literary reading resulting from a different political and social history. In the case of English, the theories of literary reading are studied in relation to the government commissioned 'Reports on Education', which reflect the changes in literary critical focus as well as the development of pedagogical thought and research. Such records are not available in the case of Greek vernacular literature because of the different historical occurrences that affected Greek political conditions. The documents that *are* available started being published as recently as 1974, with the fall of the 1967-1974 Junta. They marked the first time that the Modern Greek language and Modern Greek Literature were established as officially integrated in school education – until then, continuous shifts made sure that no such policy decision would last more than two or three years, and after that time another shift would take place and schooling would return to validating only the language and literature written in the ancient tongue.

With vernacular Greek literature finally institutionally established, the documents are a record of conference proceedings that deal with the concerns about the

¹ Because English vernacular literary education has been addressed in the same manner in England and Wales, but not in the whole of Britain.

implementation of the vernacular language in the media and in language and Literature teaching. The Ministry of Education *Directions for Teachers of Literature* are also used (see Hunter 1991 on the validity of the Directions as objects of study), starting from the 1970s to the end of the century.

Three types of literary reader

Those English and Greek educational documents profess the emancipatory effects of reading Literature, and address literary reading as linked with social and political practices. Seeking to highlight the connections of literary reading with the social and the historical, but also the extent to which literary reading can stand on the text's own terms and those of the reader, and be emancipatory and an aid to democracy, as the official documents claim, the thesis develops around the theorisation of three types of the reader of literature, and thus of literary reading. These three types of reader are an attempt to formulate a hypothesis that the thesis will seek to verify as it develops.

Firstly, **the 'adequate' reader** is for this thesis's hypothesis the reader who has the necessary knowledge of the codes contained in the texts read and is able to understand the meaning of what she reads. Literary criticism has often imagined this reader as the working class pupil who knows *what* she reads, but needs to be taught *how* to read. The adequate reader is a reader who has the basic skills of reading, the reader at an early and necessary stage.

Secondly, **the 'dependent' reader** is the reader who has been constructed by literary critical and educationalist discourse as ideal. Her reading is the institutionally desired reading, the reading that would get a student of Literature good grades. This is a reader who flatters the choices of cultural institutions and organised signifying practices (see Easthope 1999: 42), and also receives support from them, which can be tangible in the form of educationally recognised 'authority': educational certificates – and in that way hers is a reading of 'measurable' success. As Heath and McLaughlin (1993b: 7) suggest, school assessment and policies are linked with the degree that the children are accepting of authority and of its diktats.

Significantly, at one point in the history of vernacular literary education, this concept was reserved for the higher class reader, often modelled on the literary critic *himself*. Leavisite criticism has been a proponent of that attitude towards reading, on the one hand with literary text choices that echoed Leavis's personal choices, and on the other hand with the theorisation of an exclusivity of understanding the 'secret and nebulous' meaning and value hidden in the literary work of art. However, instituted literary education that determines specific works as of high quality may include outlets besides ritualised school education, like TV programmes, books, magazines and periodicals, hearsay, family and other informal, yet still institutionalised sources like social relations. This second type of reader is closer to Hunter's (1991) approach, who saw the literary reader in education in a structuralist way.

This reader's dependency, a constituting element in the second type of reader, although negative when it is dominating the reading, has a significant value when it is approached as only one element of the reading process. The dominant literary criticism itself, which through education may attempt to impose itself on the readers without allowing any alternative views to be heard, is nevertheless the carrier of a valuable tradition. As Williams suggested:

It is often an obstacle to the growth of a society that so many academic institutions are, to an important extent, self-perpetuating and resistant to change. The changes have to be made, in new institutions if necessary, but if we properly understand the process of the selective tradition, and look at it over a sufficiently long period to get a real sense of historical change and fluctuation, **the corresponding value of such perpetuation** will be appreciated (Williams 1998: 55, emphasis added).

Tradition and the perpetuation that it implies are added upon an already significant formative power that education has:

Use of space, the shape and content of narratives, the pace and type of activities, and the ways in which youth leaders gave directions all emerged as the 'stuff' with which youngsters constructed their views of their own lives and of their potential (Heath & McLaughlin 1993b: 3).

The institutional determination of English literary reading within education (McCabe 1978: 26, quoted in Bennett 1986a: 254) offers the reader significant support too, verifying but also counteracting impositions. Heath and McLaughlin (1993b: 3, 8-9) contended that any organisation that accepts the individual in its realm is a significant

support for her – thus a strong institution like education can be especially supportive in situations where other institutions, like family for example, contest the person's freedom to express herself (and thus do not 'accept' the individual).² Regarding the reading of literature, this special support, with the potential to offer the individual a 'lifeline' (hooks 1991: 55) instead of oppression, works together with imagination – and in education it is channelled into specific routes that literary criticism has decided are appropriate.

The third type of reader that this thesis suggests exists is **the 'performing' reader**. This reader's imagination has an active role in her reading and contributes to a more complete understanding of the text, and that understanding to a certain extent ensures that the relevance of her reading to her experience is prominent. Aristotle suggested that 'the soul needs the product of imagination [*phantasma*] in order to understand' (Aristotle 431b 2, also quoted in Ross 1993: 210-211). He also contended that thought appears when the mind discerns (recognises) a point of identity, a same point between two or more 'images', forms (Aristotle 434a 9, 100a 4-13, 980b 28 – 981a 12, also quoted in Ross 1993: 210). Williams also talked about 'those specific and definable moments when very new work produces a sudden shock of *recognition*' (Williams 1979: 164, also quoted in Probyn 1993: 23), and how these make us grasp the reading meaning, the structure of feeling that are described in the work. For the *performing reader*, literary reading demonstrates points of sameness between what she experienced and experiences and the occurrences reported in the text.

The notion of imagination that uses something that is already there in order to create something else,³ is useful in the notion of imagination through reading: in the case of reading, imagination uses the read material as something already existent, in order to create another reality that goes beyond the read instance into social life.

Thus the *performing reader's* understanding moves beyond literary critical limitations, making her agency more prominent – she 'performs' her reading, making it a social act that can affect the society around her. The argument that this type of reading influences the social process is based on historical examples, on Williams's

² See hooks's notion of reading literature as an escape from society's and family's suppression (hooks 1991: 55, quoted in Probyn 1993: 147).

³ See Williams 1991: 262 on the use of a lived past in order to write fiction.

notions of language and the literary text (Williams 1972a; 1977a; 1977b; 1991; 1997a), on Bennett's (1986a) assertions about the ideological character of literature, and on Steedman's concept of the historical imagination (1992b: 44-45).

Literary reading as a social performance *has* led to social change. The contribution of the reading of vernacular English literature to the formation of the Adult Education Movement in the nineteenth century is indicative (as it has the later consequence of comprehensive education).

Williams on the other hand suggested that language should be perceived as performance (1977a: 27) rather than a system, as an 'independent, creative, self-directive life' (ibid.); he also contended that language and literature are integrally linked (for example Williams 1991: 188). The main argument of cultural materialism is that 'device, expression and the substance of expression are in the end inseparable' (Williams 1977a: 172). Influenced by Eliot (see Higgins 1999: 31, 24-25) and his notion of the literary dramatic text, in the end Williams saw text and performance as one (Williams 1972a: see 4-5), and he linked language with the social process. He viewed language itself as material and constitutive of the social process (Williams 1977b: 15-16): the agency and imagination of the performing reader make it possible for her reading to have social influence (ibid.), in the same way that all cultural practices have constitutive features that affect and form the social process (Williams 1977a: 19).

Language is primary because it is **material**... I believe that language is the material process of sociality (Williams 1977b: 15-16, quoted in Higgins 1999: 119, emphasis added).

The social influence of language is coupled with that of imagination in the definition of historical imagination. Steedman defined 'historical imagination' as the fantasy created by children in order to accommodate a romantic view of their life that they consider both true and not true (1992b: 44-45). Steedman sought to describe thus a play with the real, a validation for personal histories that do not necessarily correspond with verified historical fact:

I am very eager to tell readers, close to the beginning of the book [*Landscape for a Good Woman*] that what they are about to read is not history. At the end, I want those readers to say that what I have produced *is* history; which would please me much more than anything else (1992b: 45).

Bell hooks (1991: 55, also quoted in Probyn 1993: 147) also addressed imagination and reading as a lifeline in connection with creating an alternative, safe environment for children reading, referring to child readers who are facing difficult living conditions. In line with this, Macherey suggested that illusion within the literary text has a power of its own, which is a constitutive power (1980: 47; see also Hall 1996c: 443).

Steedman (1992b: 44-45) suggested that different children 'create' their life history using the same romantic images, because they have been exposed to the same medieval or Elizabethan imagery. For the purposes of this thesis, *historical imagination* is the feeling and conviction that history has been (and reality is) what the person has come to imagine it is in relation to what she has read. This real is a mixture of received and created, written and personal fiction, but the point is that it can affect social change.

[The child knew] that the point isn't what happened (...); the point is what the child does with that history (Steedman 1992b: 46-47).

The concept of the *historical imagination* is also relative to Williams's structures of feeling. In *Marxism and Literature* (1977a) Williams described his *structures of feeling* as 'feeling', 'chosen to emphasise a distinction from more formal concepts of 'world-view' or 'ideology', is 'concerned with meanings and values as they are actually lived and felt'; 'not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought' (Williams 1977a: 132). Transformed in this thesis, what the historical imagination means includes more than what is felt and lived; it includes what is being *created* by the person so as to be lived – a stronger element of emancipation. Williams's 'structures of feeling' are also formative of reality, but the term historical imagination has the capacity to include both feeling formations and formations of a *collective* imagination. There can be a common vision for the readers who use their *historical imagination*, because there can be a common context – as even what appears to us a crazy text can be understood by contemporary readers because they have been exposed to the same context (Bennett 1989a: 208-209). In Bennett's theorisation of *reading formations* the main determining factor is **context**, perceived

...as a set of discursive and inter-textual determinations, operating on material and institutional supports, which bear in upon a text not just externally, from the outside in, but internally, shaping it – in the historically concrete forms in which it is available as a text-to-be-read – from the inside out (Bennett 1989b: 72).

This is ‘proposing a way of re-thinking context such that, ultimately, neither text nor context are conceivable as entities separable from one another’ (ibid.). It can be to a great extent a reduction of the text to context (Bennett 1989b: 71), but Bennett contended it is just as much an elevation of context into text.

Yet the notion of the *performing reader* moves beyond that: it addresses the text *elevated* into context. If text and context are inseparable, within the culturalist tradition and according to which ‘man is an active agent in the making of his own history’ (Hall 1986a: 42), the text is possibly responsible for the formation of a specific context, in the sense that reading activates its constitutive potency.

According to Colin Mercer, literary texts are social texts and have social functions: they ‘actively contribute’ ‘to the shaping of social relations through the ways in which they organise relations of class, community, nation and history (...) and inscribe their readers in those relations’ [Mercer (Colin) 1986: 183-184, quoted in Bennett 1990c: 4]. The conception of ‘culture as a constitutive social process, creating specific and different ‘ways of life’’ (Williams 1977a: 19-20) can be extended, through the notion of the performing reader, to reading being constitutive of social process.

PART I

**READING ENGLISH LITERATURE:
PEDAGOGY AND SOCIETY**

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

PART I:
READING ENGLISH LITERATURE: PEDAGOGY AND SOCIETY

CHAPTER 1
THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

1.1.1 ROSEN AND DOYLE AS PART OF THE PEDAGOGICAL MOVEMENT THAT SET THE QUESTIONS

As the text influences the context in which it exists and is read through the reader's agency, literary reading can be constitutive of social existences. A decisive context for the literary reader is that of education.

The main theme of this thesis is the study of literary reading, and this first chapter attempts to review some of what has been written in the field of literary reading and set up some of the fundamental questions asked about it in the twentieth century.

Whereas early English teaching since the late nineteenth century was related to literary criticism and focused on literature (the text), and the writer (characterised by a social elitism that can be traced back to the work of Matthew Arnold and Frank Raymond Leavis), English teaching of the second half of the twentieth century became more concentrated on pedagogy and on the reading of literature. Thus it was now the reader rather than the author who was seen as central in the act of reading, and attention was focused on the language that comprised the text rather than on the literary value of the text as a vague merit.

In the 1960s and continuing until the 1990s, reactions from the practical field of the discipline (Doyle 1989: 137), such as English teaching as it was experienced in the classroom, started to become more evident, supported by cross-disciplinary and international research and theory in education.

1.1.2 The influences that brought language to the forefront: Bernstein and Labov

Authors that had experience of teaching English Literature, like Harold Rosen and Brian Doyle, became part of a movement that from the 1950s onwards questioned the value of the educational system that taught Literature in a framework which had remained the same since the late nineteenth century. Influenced by empirical studies like those of Basil Bernstein and William Labov, they saw that system as limiting and discriminating against the children of lower classes.

Bernstein had come from the field of sociology and developed into an educational sociologist – hence he was concerned with class – while Labov was a linguist – hence he was mainly concerned with language – but each dealt with both language and class in their work. Bernstein’s work was groundbreaking in that it addressed the different social backgrounds of the pupils in a classroom. He said that their different social class gave them a different experience of the language spoken and written within formal education – and then introduced the notion of *educability* (Bernstein 1972: 116). Labov’s work took that realisation a step further, demonstrating that the language of working class black children had its own structure and rules and was as valuable and able to express feelings and concepts as the middle class language type used in school (Labov 1976: see for instance 237-239).

Those seminal influences caused the emergence of smaller-scale or less known studies of classroom interaction (see Rosen 1973: 120-121 on some of them) in Britain as well as in the U.S.A.

In the U.S.A., Shirley Brice Heath, coming from linguistic anthropology (Heath & McLaughlin 1993b: 2), was deeply influenced by Labov [1976 (1972)] in her major work on classroom language and communities of different social class [Heath 1989 (first published in 1983)]. In her ethnographic study of three communities and their school teachers and classrooms in the years between 1969 and 1978 (see Heath 1989: 5), she saw, in line with Labov and Bernstein, that the abilities working class children *do have* are suppressed in school (Heath 1989: 349, 353). This implied ‘that something is lacking in the family, and so in the child’, and the idea was that ‘the school has to ‘compensate’ for the something which is missing in the family, and the children are looked at as deficit systems’ (Bernstein 1972: 106). Heath also showed that middle class children are already trained in the way school operates within their family and in their other social activities (Heath 1989: 350-353). Her study addressed those problems with direct reference to teachers and classroom practice (Heath 1989: 354-356), and the teachers involved in it had the chance to implement her ethnographic results in their own approach to the children. Their efforts offered support to children from all communities, and made it possible for children who would not otherwise have done so to succeed. Yet, following the schools in time, Heath reported that the teachers’ efforts were displaced by educational bureaucracy, and government policy imposed computer evaluation, to the disillusionment of the teachers (Heath 1989: 356-359).

In spite of the outcomes in the geographical area where Heath worked, the fact remained that work such as hers *was* taking place. At this point in history it was more difficult for the old tradition to succeed in ‘silencing’ the effects of studies such as Heath’s, since there was an array of supporting discourse of academic status and even international trends. Indeed studies of classroom practice had appeared before, and their conclusions were significant; from the beginning of the twentieth century there had been voices like that of George Mead, who argued that *language* ‘puts the intelligence of the individual at his own disposal’ (Rosen 1973: 126, referring to Mead 1934), but they were undermined by the resistance of the established tradition of literary criticism.

This time, reaction regarding established ways of teaching literary reading was forcefully represented by important academic figures and institutions – different voices had crept into the strongholds of the old tradition. Due to historical conditions like immigration, society was also changing from within, and together with the fact that such protest was now itself ‘established’, since it had been going on for decades, it meant that objections had infinitely better prospects of being heard and of ‘intertextually’ starting a new avalanche of protest themselves.

In Britain, Rosen had started out his career as a teacher of Literature and later became a professor at the London Institute of Education, overseeing the teaching of teachers of English. Doyle’s *English and Englishness* on the other hand, influenced by the developments in the new project of Cultural Studies, gave a historical account of the construction of English as a discipline.

The works of Rosen and Doyle are important tokens of the realisation in British education that language and literature are linked together and jointly form the pupil’s consciousness of reality and her ability to respond to that reality. This led to the point that language therefore needed much more attention in the curriculum (see for example Williams 1991: 188; Rosen 1974: 19; Doyle 1989: 142). That realisation was at last expressed and heard, and their work and their proposals for change in English education were a step towards seeing English as a more complicated subject than literary criticism had previously admitted to. Instead of focusing on literary critical practice, emphasis was shifted to literary reading and literary education. *English and Englishness* contended that

... First, English can be understood as a set of formal institutional mechanisms and curricular frameworks. Second, English is the locus for particular **teaching and learning practices**: this is the discipline's practical content, its curriculum in action rather than as formally structured. And third, English remains a professional space offering employment, as well as its own documentary field with its own forms of association. **Any proposals for change must address all three, and suggest alternative ways in which each might be related to the other** (Doyle 1989: 136-137, emphasis added).

Rosen's work attested to how an over-inflated attention to literary criticism in the classroom had rendered literary education's language dry and rigid, hindering communication:

Most of the understanding which schools attempt to inculcate in a highly organised way is embodied in language. (...) [Yet] what are finely adjusted systems of discourse become all too easily **verbal rituals** clung to like talismans in every field from literary criticism to physics (Rosen 1973: 132-133, emphasis added).

Teachers of Literature warned about the effects of the pupils not understanding that 'talisman language'. It was in the classroom that the teachers realised that talking and understanding the teacher's language was of great importance as a first step towards understanding abstract language (and hence literary texts) – but the teacher's language use could not start from this advanced level. Rosen thought of the school as the main factor that could help pupils develop their use of abstract language, which in turn would help them to understand reality in a better way. He suggested that teachers helped pupils master abstract language by avoiding rushing them into it, respecting their pace and acknowledging their achievements (Rosen 1972: 124) – talking was the first step in the process of making new meanings (Rosen 1973: 128).

1.1.3 From Latin and Greek to English Literature

The shift of attention to language was a breakthrough for literary educational thought, since the history of literary education in Britain counted centuries of English being in effect a scorned language. English stayed in the background until the late nineteenth century, as the word 'literature' was reserved for Latin and Greek (Doyle 1989: 24). Even the advent of English vernacular Literature in the schools' curricula meant that

Greek and Latin 'remained almost exclusively the preserve of private ('public') and grammar schools and of the ancient universities' (Batsleer et al. 1985: 19). English vernacular Literature was initially solely taught in state education (Batsleer et al. 1985: 19) and was intended to educate the lower classes and women (Doyle 1989: 3-4, 11-12, 25) – groups of the population to whom society did not recognise the right to aspire to significant educational qualifications. What they were allowed was access to vernacular English literature, which had 'a dramatically lower cultural status than the upper-class masculine studies of Classics and Mathematics' (Doyle 1989: 2).

Gradually, a prominent position for English in education was secured for reasons such as the need of the empire to impose itself on its subjects that lived away from the metropolis and the necessity to man the administrative positions of the colonies with 'anglicised' native people. The need for broader social control among British nationals was another reason why English literary education was used as a unifying 'apparatus', in the hope that the lower classes, women and colonial subjects would forego their claims to common resources, misled by the substitute of a common culture.⁴

1.1.4 Developing an English literary criticism: Arnold, Eliot, Richards

English literary education as a common cultural asset that united society was a prominent concept in Matthew Arnold's literary criticism. For him, English taught in schools could and should unite the social classes and eliminate any separatist efforts of the radical masses (Arnold 1962: 88, quoted in Baldick 1983: 34; Baldick 1983: 59). He believed the masses needed guidance, symbols and institutions, like the state and the English literary tradition, even if these symbols and institutions had not reached their ideal form.

As in the late nineteenth century the clergy and aristocracy were losing their power, in Arnold's numerous influential books and publications poetry was superior to religion, just as it was superior to philosophy and science (see Baldick 1983: 19, 34, 39). Against 'political and religious advocacy of all kinds', Arnold suggested that critical judgement, the way he conceived it, was unquestionable. For him, there existed a

⁴ Court 1992: 17-18; Doyle 1989: 11-12, 18, 60; Batsleer et. al 1985: 19, 20, 28, 30; Baldick 1983: 61, 67-68, 72.

natural response to the literary work that was self-evident and could not be debated (Arnold 1974: 130; Baldick 1983: 38-39).

American born and later a British citizen,⁵ Thomas Stearns Eliot used Arnold's own arguments to simultaneously pay homage to him and reject his critical reign (Baldick 1983: 112). Against the over-inflated humanist rhetoric of chauvinistic attempts of criticism that were the norm in the 1920s, characteristically expressed in the 1921 Newbolt Report on the teaching of English in England, Eliot was going back 'to Arnold's European scope' (Baldick 1983: 111; Arnold 1903: for example 79), seeing value in European literature rather than concentrating on the English.

He protested 'against the inadequacies of English criticism' (Baldick 1983: 133, note 28, referring to a 1918 article of Eliot), and took a distance from the academic establishment of criticism – yet his political and religious conservatism cancelled out the strength that this distance gave his criticism: he failed to see 'the importance of the educational system as an agency for cultural continuity' that Arnold had recognised (Baldick 1983: 131; Eliot 1962: 95-109, particularly 108).

The most important distance between the two critics was perhaps drawn by Eliot's poetical aspirations. He was adamant that criticism and creation should go together (Baldick 1983: 113-114), and that the critic's work should be restricted in favour of the creative process, because overemphasis in critical work would cause the author to fall victim to 'a suppressed creative wish' (Eliot 1950c: 7, 95; Baldick 1983: 114-116). In bringing creative work and criticism together, Eliot also suggested that they would have to be simultaneous, opposing Arnold's view that they were historically alternating (Baldick 1983: 119-120).

At a time when English was making its first steps towards being institutionalised, in the early twentieth century, it was Eliot's criticism that first offered it the concept of a literary tradition (Lodge 1989: 69; Eliot 1989a: 71-72). And he addressed that literary tradition not in terms of a valuable past that would unite society, but in new terms, formed within a literary critical theory of the author. In 'Tradition and the individual talent' as in 'The function of criticism', tradition is present in the consciousness or even the unconscious of the author, leading his steps in writing (Eliot 1989a: 71-72; 1989b: 77).

⁵ <http://www.google.com/search?q=cache:xeamBJrOxjMJ:www.qbbooks.com/Eliot.pdf+Eliot+was+born+in&hl=en>

Besides the author, what is important for Eliot is the text itself: whereas for Arnold poetry 'is a criticism of life' (Arnold 1903: 61), for Eliot the poem is autonomous (Eliot 1950c: 51; 1989a: 76; Baldick 1983: 119-120). He reconnected criticism with the 'words on the page', the text itself (Lodge 1989: 70; Eliot 1989a: 73, 75).

Although his conservatism made him unable to see education as an agent of progress and to recognise the power that education has in terms of supporting a cultural project of a wide range (Baldick 1983: 131), English studies as a university movement took hold of his groundbreaking criticism and expanded on it (ibid.).

Eliot's stance towards education could be related to his own distance from the academic establishment (Baldick 1983: 130): he was a critic, but not an academic critic in the strict sense. Yet with his notions of literary tradition and his insistence upon attention to the words of the text, Eliot prepared the ground for the work of *academic* critics like I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis (Lodge 1989: 69-70), who expanded upon his work 'and used it for their own purposes' (Baldick 1983: 131). As Baldick suggested:

[In Cambridge] the innovations of Eliot and Richards enabled what had been suspected of being a soft option, a frivolous subject, to adopt the appearance of strenuousness and difficulty proper to a serious branch of study (Baldick 1983: 197, see also 75).

In 1929, Richards published *Practical Criticism* and thus introduced a new method of reading literature and teaching its reading. Williams saw practical criticism as two methods in one: the one is the analysis of the text, and the other its evaluation, a search for its critical merit (Williams 1991: 183). The part of practical criticism that was analysis was adopted throughout the school system. The idea was that, based on the text rather than being based on the historical background of the literary work or speculations of what the author might have meant to say, analysis could accept that the reader could have a critical response to the text itself, without the critic as an intermediary. School children as readers were addressed in a more democratic way, as they had the same access to 'personal resources' of critical ability. The concept of personality that Eliot had rejected as a reference for the writer [for Eliot, '...the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality...' (1989a: 75; also Eliot 1989b: 77, 81)], was returning

'through the back door': as a reference for the reader, brought to the forefront by Richards.

Richards's method replaced earlier methodologies (based on a knowledge and speculations about the history of the personality of the writer), and asserted that "we have nothing to rely upon in making our choices but ourselves" (Richards 1929: 351). Yet the word 'practical' concealed the fact that there was also a theory in practical criticism: theory was in reality inseparable with the practice in Richards's work (Williams 1991: 183) and practice on its own was set out to fail because the reader's natural response was not enough. The practical part of practical criticism in time prevailed in Cambridge English, at the expense of its theoretical aspect, and close reading and analysis became indispensable for English studies (Williams 1991: 215), but it then suffered from its self-imposed isolation (Williams 1991: 215, 183) from theory and from history.

1.1.5 Leavis

Frank Raymond Leavis took Richards's *practical criticism* to another level, as he championed it with greater rigour and 'improved' upon it. Leavis thought that close reading and analysis of literature, 'practical criticism as it ought to be' (Leavis 1987: 175), could discover and animate the most central human values (Williams 1991: 185). Thus his 'project was not only to 'revalue' the accepted order of English poetry, but to establish the first authoritative critical scale upon which English novelists were to be measured' (Baldick 1983: 162).

Yet his highly specialised selective tradition was in effect composed of works that served his own ideas about traditional values, which means that he could refuse entry to literary works which did not serve his purposes (Williams 1991: 185). What was strange was the intense Cambridge opposition to him, since his was just a stepping out on paths that had been already trodden by others at Cambridge, even though not admitted to (Williams 1991: 185, 214). Still, Leavis's influence spread with the dissemination of his books and his followers who, having become 'a faculty within the faculty', had 'over the years some surprising actual results' (Williams 1991: 214). It moved 'to define objective criteria for literary analysis' (Ahmad 2000: 46).

Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness (1933), a book Leavis wrote with D. Thompson, played a most significant educational role, staying in print and in use by some training colleges until the early 1970s [Steedman 1999: 255, (notes to Steedman's article)]. His book *The Great Tradition* did not simply produce a canon and a syllabus but also a critical discourse (Belsey 1982: 121), which, supported by his other works, affected the whole literary culture and the national educational system in a decisive way. And to a great extent rightfully, since Leavis's early contribution was just as great as Eliot's and Richards's, as he took the focus of criticism away from the autobiography of the author and the historical conditions surrounding the work to the text itself, and made reading a matter of the reader. The impression is that Eliot had done this in a theoretical way, while Richard's way was more academic, whereas Leavis's influence and work were more focused on pedagogy.

Literary history, as a matter of 'facts about' and accepted critical (or quasi-critical) description and commentary **is a worthless acquisition**; worthless for the student who cannot **as a critic** – that is, as an intelligent and discerning reader – make a personal approach to the essential data of the literary historian, the works of literature (an approach is personal or it is nothing: you cannot take over the appreciation of a poem, and unappreciated, the poem isn't 'there') (Leavis 1987: 175, emphasis added).

The above example provides an insight as to why – when Leavisite criticism became the norm, in spite of having posed some right questions 'with a campaigning energy and seriousness' – it gradually became just as imposing and undemocratic as the previous tradition of literary criticism (Williams 1991: 190-191). It shows that for Leavis the ideal reader was not any reader, but the critic himself (see also Leavis 1976: 212) and thus he rendered literary criticism and critical judgement a highly discriminatory practice (Williams 1991: 185). He was led to this because he made a distinction between the correct reading and a *misreading* of the literary work, seeing literary reading as an exclusive practice, one which actively discriminated against a large proportion of culture and society.

In any period it is often upon a **very small minority** that the discerning appreciation of art and literature depends: it is (apart from cases of the

simple and the familiar) only a few who are capable of unprompted, first-hand judgement (Leavis 1998 (1930): 13, emphasis added).

In line with Arnold's notion of a self-evident critical judgement (for example, Arnold 1974: 130), Leavis saw the critic's reading as an expression of his 'natural response' to the work of art, rather than something that he needed to make an effort to learn.

'Natural response' was not seen as something developed and cultivated, but as something that was there already in the person's personality, and only needed guidance and direction. In such a conception, the critic was born a critic, not made into one. That the critic's response was right, there was no doubt, nor was explanation needed or given; it was as self-evident as the superiority of the works of the Great Tradition.

The theme that repeatedly appeared in Richards (1926: 82-83), Arnold, Eliot and the Newbolt Report was that *poetry* can defend a society of traditional values in the face of social and cultural anxiety (Baldick 1983: 137). For Leavis, literary criticism was the appropriate 'social force' (Baldick 1983: 168) defending those values – and in his case criticism would preserve an elitist society (Williams 1991: 185). Williams traced the reasons why Leavisite criticism prevailed, in that it served the political intentions of conservatism:

In its weak version this [the Leavisite tradition] has gone on, intellectually untroubled because in any case, until very recent times, this specific role [of the guardians and witnesses of the significant literature] fitted so well into the idea of a necessary and privileged humane university: an idea which, seeing dangers only from radicals and levellers, was eventually to find its **assumption of privilege within a traditional social order** undercut by the real social order that had come through not so much from the seventeenth as from the nineteenth century: a world of the open struggle of classes, including in education, and of the fierce priorities of industrial capitalism, with its very different ideas of what universities are for (Williams 1991: 187, emphasis added).

1.1.6 The 'French connection': moving back to the 'words on the text' through Barthes and structuralism

Leavis proclaimed that he did not propose close reading as a laboratory method, nor as a 'technical apparatus and drill', but 'rather, [as] the use of intelligence upon the text' (Leavis 1987: 176). The reader/critic's 'natural response' did not mean an access to tools but an exceptional personality.

For Williams, one of the reasons why Cambridge English did not address Literature in a way that would expand and deepen ways of thinking and writing about it, was 'the distance from modern linguistic studies, which were beginning to offer some more precise and varied forms of analysis' (Williams 1991: 189). Structuralism used Saussurean linguistics as a way of seeing language and literature: as a system of signs that were interrelated in order to produce meaning (Lodge 1991: 1). Seeing language as a structured system implied that, for literary criticism, the text could be seen in a more scientific and systematic way (Lodge 1991: 2). Structuralism did not address the meaning itself that was produced (because that was 'open to infinity'), but the forms and codes *in* the text that made meanings (Barthes 1991: 173), the common structures (Barthes 1977a: 80; Lodge 1989: 545). The tools and technical apparatuses that Leavis had rejected, even as concepts in the description of his method of close analysis (Leavis 1987: 176), structuralism embraced and promoted as analytical practice; thus it claimed the 'possibility of a science of literature' (Rice & Waugh 1989: 23), and close reading became prominent in new ways.

It was now considered possible for the reader to dismantle *any text* using these tools/conventions, and then compose it again. The notion of the text itself was broadened to include anything that had something to say, from pictures and paintings to musical pieces. Already in the 1960s Roland Barthes was using Saussure's linguistic mode of analysis, developing it and applying it to 'a much wider field of signs and representations'; yet structuralism 'seemed to confine the process of representation to language, and to treat it as a closed, rather static, system' (Hall 1997c: 41-42).

1.1.7 Barthes: post-structuralism

Opening that system, and wanting to insert the subject in it, was the result of a process of reinstating the reader (Saussure's approach involved a disregard of the reader in favour of the language of the text). From structuralism Barthes moved to post-structuralism, and to a position that was strengthening the reader (rather than the author). Yet he did that in a way different from that of Cambridge criticism: unlike the attention that Leavis and Richards had given to the reader, for Barthes reading did not depend on the reader's personality but on the text itself (Williams 1991: 184).

Past 'recriminations' (Barthes 1977b: 148) of the reader were based on the personal in her: whether the reader would understand and appreciate that the literary text had been dependent upon her personality. The fact that, previously, a 'genuine personal response' was only met in a very small minority, i.e., only in critics [Leavis 1998 (1930): 13], implied that the lack of appreciation was the *fault* of the reader's personality. Rendering the reader a concept, that conception of a fault was eliminated and the text came to occupy a primary position in reading.

This destination [of the text, i.e. the reader] **cannot any longer be personal**: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted (Barthes 1977b: 148, emphasis added).

Also eliminated was the conception of the 'right' reading: in his 'Death of the Author', Barthes undermined not only the role of the author, but also the role of the critic and criticism (Barthes 1977b: 147).

Post-structuralism developed almost together with structuralism temporally, yet it involved 'a more radical attack on critical orthodoxies', including structuralism (Rice & Waugh 1989: 109-110). However, an important criticism was that structuralism stressed the structure of the text at the expense of its substance (Lodge 1991: 62).

At the level of concepts, in relation to literary study, language was central to both, but post-structuralism questioned the independent existence even of categories such as literature, the author and the text itself, and suggested instead that their identities are arbitrary; it stressed the 'process' of becoming instead of the 'product' (Rice & Waugh 1989: 110-111). Post-structuralism suggested that meanings and identities are unstable and saw language and its signifiers and signifieds as relative, even at the very

primary instance (Rice & Waugh 1989: 111; Baldick 1996a: 175-176). (Eliot had seen English Literature as relative before, as a national value, but now the concept of literature itself was seen as relative).

Arnold had suggested that criticism could be a creative practice in itself (Arnold 1903: 4); Eliot that criticism needed the literary work, and only the latter was autonomous (Eliot 1989b: 78); Leavis had suggested that criticism is a central human activity and that 'the ideal critic is the ideal reader' (Leavis 1976: 212; Steiner 1989: 625); structuralism aspired to show that any reader could be a critic and an author, scientifically analysing, and therefore able to reconstruct, the literary work. Now, post-structuralism was going even beyond Barthes, dissolving the hierarchy that wanted the creative work to stand above its criticism, and even reversing the hierarchy between literature and criticism: 'without criticism, 'literature' would have no meaning' (Rice & Waugh 1989: 111; Baldick 1996a: 176).

1.1.8 More of post-structuralism: Foucault

Another significant representative of post-structuralism in regard to this thesis's concerns is Michel Foucault. In his early work Foucault saw power, and therefore hierarchy, as central, and was defined as a structuralist. For him, writing is a form of power, and the text a system of subjecting the reader (Foucault 1996: 251). Yet a more adequate description of his work is post-structuralist as he 'used the history of social and political institutions and discourses' as his methodological tool (Lodge 1991: 196) – therefore he is not as far from history as structuralists were. Foucault's practice is to 'historicise grand abstractions' (ibid., quoting Paul Rabinow). Yet, although he denied it, there are structuralist elements in his work, like his view of power as all-determining: for him, agency is only a product of the system itself (see for example Foucault 1981: 95).

The fact that power produces its own boundaries – thus it also creates its own subversion – opens the way for the relative agency implied in his later concept of the *technologies of the self* (Foucault 1980: 155; 1982: 209; 1988: 18, 27-28; Nixon 1997: 322). Yet he saw even those processes to form or/and reform oneself, as *offered* to the self by historical and social institutions (Danaher et al. 2000: 128-130).

Foucault suggested that the author of a text is an ideological figure imposed as a limit because 'we fear the proliferation of meaning' (Foucault 1991a: 209): stressing the

existence of an author, we stress that that author intended a specific meaning, or at least a finite number of meanings.

Whereas structuralism advocated the separation of the text from history and society, (Rice & Waugh 1989: 23), history and the social re-entered literary study with post-structuralism: meanings were seen in their social and historical context (Rice & Waugh 1997: 226). In America, from the 1930s to the 1960s, influenced by Eliot and Richards, New Criticism tried to see the literary work as ‘an organic unity’ of form and content, and gave attention to the text itself rather than to biographical or historical context in relation to it (Baldick 1996a: 150; Baldick 1996b: 17) – but in that way it did not avoid formalism (Radway 1991b: 2); New Historicism on the other hand, in the 1980s, drew on post-structuralism [also, particularly on Foucault’s notion of power (Rice & Waugh 1997: 228)] in order to express a revived interest in the historical and political context of the literary work (Baldick 1996a: 150) – even though, for post-structuralism, history is ‘the shifting and contradictory representations of numerous histories’, a process and not a set of unified historical eras (Rice & Waugh 1997: 228).

1.1.9 The shift of attention from post-structuralism to language: connecting social class and language

The attention to the process instead of the product, which post-structuralism stood for, and the return to the use of history in analysis (in historicising the meanings of the text) brought to the forefront the relativisation of value. Since within post-structuralism even identities were relativised and their fixed meanings doubted, the notion of historical and cultural relativity of the literary work and of the reader’s reading emerged more strongly.

As we saw, Eliot had first addressed the value of English compared to European literary culture as relative, at a time when the country and its criticism was based on chauvinist views of literature (Baldick 1983: 111). Now once more, Doyle suggested that there is a lot to be gained from ‘the cultural relativisation of Englishness’ (Doyle 1989: 139). The implications for the classroom were that English would no longer aim

to unify the readers socially, and the lesson would respect a different linguistic use of the same language.

We also took the view that linguistic diversity is potentially a source of strength, an access of new resources and new abilities. (...) Pupils could be encouraged to take pride in the languages and dialects they could muster and an interest in the nature of language variety (Rosen & Burgess 1980: 4).

Labov and Bernstein's 1970s research and conclusions were thus evidently part of a general educational climate, influencing and being influenced by it. The mark of Labov and Bernstein's work is evident in later works like *Languages and Dialects of London School Children* (Rosen & Burgess 1980), and in the fact that centres like the Centre for Educational Disadvantage were created during these three decades (Rosen & Burgess 1980: 1).

The broad criticism that Bernstein's work attracted is an indication of the attention it drew. Rosen too suggested that Bernstein's work could be interpreted in both conservative and groundbreaking ways, as the Plowden Report's use of it that followed showed. Focused on class and making it look as though working class people are themselves responsible for their limited access to an education which is not socially accessible to them, the Report avoided confronting the broad social and educational issues of social relations.

Many immigrant children are at a disadvantage because of the poor educational background from which they have come. It is difficult to discriminate between the child who lacks intelligence and the child who is suffering from 'culture shock' or simply from [an] inability to communicate (Plowden Report 1967: 70, emphasis added).

Yet the vagueness of Bernstein's work, and the difficulty in understanding it that served 'both right and left in education politics' (Rosen 1974: 2), did not negate its contribution. His work provided a strong answer as well as a tool to elitist stances of a tradition of authority that started in the late nineteenth century and was revived in the 1950s.

Indeed the success of English as a discipline and the beginning, in the late 1950s of a period of 'even more buoyant growth' (Doyle 1989: 108), contributed to the rise of a new right, comprised of people concerned about preserving the elitist character of

literary education. In 1963, Albert Sloman, Vice-Chancellor of the new University of Essex, saw the expansion of education as resulting in a 'drop in standards', responsible for which he saw the inclusion of students coming 'from homes with no tradition of culture or learning' (Sloman 1964: 11-10, quoted in Doyle 1989: 113). In the 1960s and 1970s a large number of university teachers of English protested against mass instruction. For them, 'those unfitted to benefit', the 'lazy' and 'unable', should be excluded from English teaching (Doyle 1989: 119-121).

Indeed the Leavisian tradition had not given way (Leavis's *The Great Tradition* was first published in 1948 and continued to be published at least until 1982). It owed much of its appeal to the fact that it was received and used as flattering of conservative forces and established authorities (Williams 1991: 187), and Doyle, Rosen and many other academics (Doyle points to the contributors of Widdowson's *Re-reading English*) had to fight against voices who would have abolished 'dissident books and courses' (Doyle 1989: 138) in a way that would neither have claims to democracy nor would care to.

Even earlier than Widdowson's and Doyle's books, there were significant reactions. For Collie, English, instead of seeing itself as the saviour of civilisation, should devote itself to instil to students 'mental discipline, the capacity for argument, and the [capacity for] independent, sensitive, and rigorous sifting of evidence' (Collie 1958: 184-185, quoted in Doyle 1989: 106). On the other hand, Barbara Hardy (1973), a teacher of English herself, urged a shift from 'authoritative monologue' to 'open-ended conversation' with the pupils (Doyle 1989: 126). It was realised in the classroom that intense work rather than 'natural response' was needed in order to read and appreciate literature.

Let us accept the shifting of taste, and let us show our faith in the Great Tradition by teaching as much as possible of the literature we admire, **without worrying too much about canons** and with **attention to variety** rather than moral unity. Let us admit that **good taste and proper judgement have to be worked out slowly and painfully and personally**, and it is each man for himself (Hardy 1973: 35, quoted in Doyle 1989: 127, emphasis added).

‘Slowly and painfully’, it was realised in the classroom that the teaching of language and the practice of reading itself could lead to more adequate ways of teaching Literature and reading:

Tony Davies has said that ‘the real effectivity of ‘literature’ as a practice’ is to be found in the humdrum activity of English teaching. However, he continues, it would be wrong simply to seek an account of actual practices within ‘critical’ work: instead, it is necessary to attend to the ‘disjointed and episodic philosophy’ which is activated in the course of ordinary teaching [Davies (Tony) 1982: 34, quoted in Doyle 1989: 126].

1.1.10 The new movement: a turn towards the classroom with Rosen and Doyle

Reading Literature and its effects were now more evident in the classroom where it was practiced, than in the work of a critic. Thus literary criticism lost its grip on literary teaching when sociological and linguistic/anthropological views connected ‘literature, teaching and politics’. From Bernstein and Labov, concerns about the reading of literature moved to occupy pedagogy through Cultural Studies (Doyle) and pedagogical thought (Rosen).

There is a way in which the present book results from the emergence of a larger movement of critics, teachers, and students which over the past decade or so has been actively concerned with reconsidering and challenging the received wisdom about the actual and desirable relationships between **literature, teaching, and politics** (Doyle 1989: 15-16).

Teaching ‘against the environment’ (Hardy 1973: 33), those critics, teachers and students formed a movement for change ‘from within’ (Belsey 1982). They were later joined by other academic efforts that were in direct correspondence with them, like that taking place in the London Institute of Education and therefore focused on the teaching of English (see Meek & Miller 1984; Batsleer et al. 1985; the *Changing English* journal of the London Institute of Education; Widdowson’s *Re-reading English*).

The particular critique echoed in Rosen and Doyle's work constructed a version of English which was neither nationalist nor traditional, but strongly influenced by work on language, social class, the Cultural Studies critique of English and post-structuralist theory:

I take the view that 'English' should be reconstituted as the study of **how verbal and written fictions** have been produced and used, socially channelled and evaluated, grouped together, given social significance, institutionalised, transformed, repressed, and eliminated. Such studies should be fundamentally relational in that the assumed and projected positions of the individual reader, author, text, and users would all be studied within social semiotic processes, or the making and unmaking of lived meanings. Conceived in this manner, the study of English would no longer primarily serve to produce professional academic masculinised literary critics, or even mature men. Instead, it would be the purpose of such study to develop in students (teachers and taught) a sense of the cultural importance of the ways in which fictions are made, moulded, and channelled, with a view not only to more adequate and active involvement in making use of fictions, but in their production and circulation; and in developing new and more democratic links between modes of consumption, production, and social dissemination (Doyle 1989: 142, emphasis added).

The notion of literary reading implied in the above quote is very different from earlier constructions of what it could or should be. And the following provides an image of teaching that focuses on language and its use as a key step towards reading literature, which can be said to be a reasoned conclusion to the journey through all the previously described research and theory.

In all that I have said I may possibly have given the impression that I believe that working-class speech is as fine an instrument as could be devised for communication and thinking, and that middle-class speech is pretentious verbiage. That would be absurd romanticism. I *am* saying that the relationship between class and speech cannot be described or understood by the usual sociological methods. **Working-class speech has its own strengths** which the normal linguistic terminology has not been able to catch. There is no sharp dividing line between it and any other kind of speech, but infinite variations in the deployment of the resources of language. **I do think there are aspects of language usually acquired through education which, given favourable circumstances, give access to more powerful ways of thinking; but given the conditions of life of many strata of the middle class, the language acquired through education can conceal deserts of ignorance.** Moreover, the middle class have often to pay a price for the

acquisition of certain kinds of transactional language, and that is loss of vitality and expressiveness, and obsession with proprieties (Rosen 1974: 19, emphasis added).

1.2.1 HUNTER AND GREEN: LITERARY PEDAGOGY FROM AN ACADEMIC AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Another current of pedagogical discourse which appeared in the 1980s and 1990s, brought academics like Ian Hunter and Bill Green, via a different route, to the same concerns about educational language and educational practices as those of Rosen. Hunter and Green saw literary reading once more through the lens of pedagogy, but this time dealt with the discourse in a ground that was more theoretically oriented than based on day-to-day school practice – since they were not educationalists, nor was their research based on empirical schooling evidence. Coming from Australia, Hunter and Green's work instead testified to the significant ways that European socio-philosophical thought (mainly led by Foucault) was channelled into the literary pedagogical discourse.

The Marxist approach to literary pedagogy had taken the stance that the established educational practice serves the middle class, and the 'personality' 'taught' is a middle class personality. Hunter suggested instead a more structuralist Foucauldian stance, according to which the techniques of achieving that personality are more important for pedagogical study than their effect, the aesthetic personality, or the class they may have represented – and at any rate he contended that the pedagogical techniques do not represent any one class, nor do they exclude the interests of any other class (Hunter 1991: 59, 62).

According to Hunter, "personal growth' English emerged from a series of pedagogical innovations independent of any particular class ethos' (1991: 61). The political character of the broader 'welfare system' developments that came from working class struggles, was also present in other classes' struggles to sustain their rights. All social institutions and developments were a result of efforts of the whole of society, a result of conflicts and their solutions, rather than a result of the actions of a sole class or stratum. This is not foreign to class interests, but reminiscent of the Gramscian notion of an alliance between classes so that they would temporarily

master 'a particular theatre of struggle' (Hall 1996f: 36; see also for example Gramsci 1999: 269-270, on the 'alliance' of the bourgeois and the old feudal classes).

Hunter contended that 'there is no way that the *means* of political representation can be derived from classes as positions in the relations of production' (Hunter 1991: 62). The means of political representation are for him more powerful than any class, and not identifiable with any class. Thus the means, the 'apparatus for political calculation', the 'instituted forms of political calculation' (Hunter 1991: 63, 62), the 'techniques' themselves 'of political calculation and assessment' (ibid.) are beyond a class, they were a 'class' of their own, since power is in reality concentrated on them rather than on class and class interests.

Concentrating on the techniques, he suggested that English under the reign of the 'self-cultivation of aesthetic personality' is a specific 'ensemble of ethical techniques and pedagogical practices and relationships' (Hunter 1991: 73) which excludes other techniques (not the interests of other classes). The student is not taught the 'technical expertise' (ibid.: 80) for other circumstances in which 'social relations [were] constituted by legal or ethical institutions, political or religious technologies' (ibid.: 73), and thus she is not prepared for them, she hasn't acquired the types of person that she needs to be in social life, outside the educational terrain. For Hunter, self-cultivation doesn't achieve a whole personality, but an aesthetic persona, a type of behaviour, a specific technique:

[that 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 (Hunter 1991: 73).

I would suggest that Hunter related the aesthetic personality, the goal of the pedagogy of self-cultivation, to bourgeois literary criticism the way that it is described in Williams's *Orwell*, even though he contested it in the face of Marxism also, which also addressed literary pedagogy in terms of an ideal, aesthetic personality (Bennett 1985: 47, quoted in Hunter 1991: 65). In Williams's interpretation of bourgeois criticism, the aesthetic personality, the reader, is not supposed to read any reference to

'real' social life in the literary text (Williams 1971b: 37-38); the reader and the text are estranged from society. In the self-cultivation discourse, the aesthetic personality is a persona, a technique that is only useful in school; the reader is estranged from the rest of society since her aesthetic persona cannot be used in legal, ethical or other social instances. Thus Hunter proposed that English teaching should be seen not in political but in structural terms, so that:

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 idea 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** (Hunter 1991: 78, emphasis added).

Nevertheless, he went on to assert that:

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 (Hunter 1991: 79).

Yet:

Outside the status [that the individual occupies] is not the untapped potential of the human subject – temporarily fixated by ideology – but a scatter of other statuses (Hunter 1991: 73).

So English is not a political doctrine, and the aesthetic intellectual is 'a definite, limited and normative exercise' rather than a personality that transgresses boundaries

(Hunter 1991: 80); a specific technique of social behaviour under specific circumstances, the aesthetic personality does not stand for a particular class, but for a particular social role and limited as it is by the boundaries of administrative and normative education, it is only a technical, instituted expertise (Hunter 1991: 80). Thus, in his effort to stress the importance of ‘pedagogical techniques, norms and relationships’ in literary education, Hunter did not avoid the danger of reducing education to only that, of seeing English as merely a set of these (Hunter 1991: 57, 59). He made the mistake to ‘exploit [a] part of this environment [man’s natural environment] in isolation’ (Williams 1993: 336).

The ethical character of English is not a gloss on the true political organisation of society which it misinterprets. Rather, it is a sign of the fact that **English emerged as a support for a machinery of moral training** – supervisory techniques, the teacher-student couple, the organisation of pedagogical space and so on. Here social norms are realised not in a specific set of political ideas, but in **an ethical technology**, susceptible of varying political investments, in which the cultural attributes of populations are constructed through the formation of individual selves. In short, the deployment of literary education obeys **neither the logic of ‘culture’ nor that of its twin, ‘ideology’** (Hunter 1988: 121, emphasis added).

The problem with this view is that it approaches education as contentless, with a disregard for its ideological content and function.

1.2.2 Ideologically empty

Whereas Bennett rejected 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’ (Bennett 1985: 49, quoted in Hunter 1991: 59), Hunter rejected the notion that *any* whole personality might be forged by aesthetic (English literary) education (1991: 59).

For Hunter, the issue that critical pedagogy ought to concentrate on is not the ideal personality that education aims to structure according to the pedagogical discourse of self-growth; the issue to concentrate on is not the effect of education – which at any rate he doesn’t see as a complete personality but as a persona, a type of person – but

the way education tries to structure that type of person (the normative set of practices, *the process* of education). Theorising pedagogy at the level of the process involves a practical aspect, in ways that the generalised and vague notion of the ideal personality does not. Although Hunter rejected the notion that class interests are excluded from literary education, his argument involved other exclusions: he argued that there are other personas, behaviours and technologies of the self that could be structured via literary pedagogy which would enable the student to act satisfactorily in other social instances, outside the educational terrain.

Implying that literary education had been overestimated in that it thought itself capable of creating a whole personality, he put the pedagogical discourse back under a framework of tangible effects rather than broader ones. And although he himself underestimated the broader social effects that the normative process of literary education may have on the pupil, his focus on the process itself was especially enabling for educational change.

The idea of the cultural improvement of whole populations first became thinkable and achievable inside a constructed apparatus of government. Disconnected from this apparatus, the proposal that true education depended on the reconciliation of culture and society was marginal and utopian; and it remains so today (Hunter 1988: 267).

Indeed in the nineteenth century, when criticism and the human sciences were not institutionalised, there were no 'systematic and widely disseminated means for making sure that either or both would be taken up'. (...) 'Each could well have remained a separate and voluntary minority cultural practice' (Hunter 1988: 212), especially since the narrative involved in their practice perceived them as something 'internal' and dependent on intellectual action rather than something ingrained in the external (in the sense of generalised), 'nature' of man.

The only way to achieve change is through the normative apparatus, the process of English education, and the theorisation of that as the most important issue in pedagogical thought makes it easier for renewing proposals to be implemented.

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' (Hunter 1991: 57, emphasis added).

Through adjustive techniques not unlike those which Donzelot (1979: 169-235) has isolated in modern psychology, literary pedagogy permits **social norms to surface as personal desires** to become the stake in social regulation (Hunter 1988: 125, emphasis added).

1.2.3 An unaffected personality?

Although social norms become like personal desires through literary pedagogy, personal desires themselves fade in the background, as does a psychological view of education that involves the student more actively in the process of learning how to read literature. Related to this lack of consideration for 'psycho-emotional investment' (Green 1991: 220) is another significant point about Hunter's view of literary education: his scepticism about the assertion that the pupil's personality is affected by the teacher's judgement of her performance. Opposing Bennett⁶ and Sinfield⁷ in this, he asserted that it is the student's 'performance' that is judged, when the student acts out the normative persona which education is trying to establish in her: 'what we are dealing with is an aesthetico-ethical judgement of the normative persona or sensibility that the student must acquire' (Hunter 1991: 70).

Hunter's method of seeing education as a set of techniques did not take into account that even when the teacher's judgement is not about the pupil's 'potential as a human being', *it can be perceived as such* by the pupil and by the social environment, and thus it can have that effect. 'The forms of calculation and norms of development – the instituted expertise' (Hunter 1991: 80) that education is, is not one-dimensional; it can be socially decisive if it is treated as socially important. At any rate a social attitude that will give social importance to techniques learned through education is not uncommon, and the judgements of the teacher and the school tend to have a social effect that extends beyond the technical expertise that Hunter described as at the centre of English teaching.

⁶ Bennett 1985: 47, 49, in Hunter 1991: 59, 65.

⁷ Sinfield 1985: 136, in Hunter 1991: 59, 65.

Besides its inadequacies though, Hunter's method of approaching literary pedagogy has one very strong point: focusing on the normative character of education and on the techniques learned helps the possibilities for intervention in education, by reducing the excuses of difficulty that imponderable factors like psychology and social attitude may provide the reformers with. Approaching the problems of education through the structures and techniques learned, makes the problems more tangible and practical, and thus more accessible.

1.2.4 Structure combined with agency: Literary pedagogy 'at once enabling and constraining' in Bill Green's work

Whereas Hunter suggested that there is no 'superordinate concept' of the ideal personality, Green contended that there is no such concept of *reading* 'which can be called on as a kind of transcendental signifier' (Green 1991: 211).

Whereas Hunter contextualised the reader, thus cancelling out some of her agency, Green contextualised *the act* of reading. He agreed with Hunter in regard to the normative character of literary education, since for him 'reading pedagogy is recognisably complicit in a general project of social discipline and moral regulation' (Green 1991: 225) and is dependent on governing assumptions that are chiefly due to its institutional support (Green 1991: 213). But he nevertheless stressed that 'it is important to argue for **a view of meaning in English teaching which brings together structure and agency, reconceptualised**, as a new form of open-ended, dynamic unity' (Green 1997: 25, emphasis added).

In connection with this, he sustained that there can be no context either, not in the sense in which 'matters of occasion, place and situation are posited independently and outside human events and activities and as existential 'containers' for them' (Green 1991: 214). Rather than that, he was in favour of a contextualisation that placed text and context 'as intricately and mutually constitutive signifying practices' (Green 1991: 215, also referring to Kress & Threadgold 1988: 237).

'In the pedagogical context', Green used McHoul's work (1991) to state that 'reading is the meeting of grammar and consciousness' (Green 1991: 216). Quoting McHoul, Green suggested that

[reading is] 'knowing how to play with texts strategically. It arises (...) 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 (Green 1991: 219, also quoting McHoul 1991).

When the 'scene of enactment' is education, reading is a social practice. In spite of the fact that both Hunter and Green are theorists rather than educationalists, their work followed on from the work of educationalists, and they both stressed the importance of the role of teaching and of the teacher (see Hunter 1991: 57; Green 1991: 216-217).

Thus, seeing reading through a 'socially-managed pedagogy' (Green 1991: 220) takes reading and learning away from the private and the internal, and makes it a material and public thing, involving the enactments of reading and involving the social environment, the frames that surround reading (Green 1991: 217). Green provided for what Hunter did not: the perception of reading and learning by the teacher and the student, that Hunter ignored as he stressed the process rather than its effects. In fact, moving towards the effects of reading, Green made a useful stop at the psychological traits of the teacher/student relationship:

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. (...) [This requires, in other words] an adequate theory of subjectivity (Green 1991: 220).

What is especially important is that Green rejected psychologism and moved towards curriculum as a social practice, seeing even its psychological impact as something that needs to be treated as a material effect (Green 1991: 221). Still, he cautioned against staying on the surface of things that this aversion to psychological traits of the teaching/learning double nexus might suggest. Committed to 'programmes for social change and cultural mobilisation' (Green 1991: 221), he suggested that to reduce social analysis to appearances would empower conservative appropriations and an anti-humanism that would disable those analyses. The classroom and pedagogic space generally, are not as limited and constricted as one type of discourse would have it (Green 1991: 232). Green invited 'a critical-democratic schooling project' (1991: 230), accepting the constraints of curriculum, but also addressing it in relation with

agency: he professed the existence and need for ‘resistance and struggle and a sense of pedagogic possibility’ (1991: 226).

Seeing context in a semiotic way, echoing Derrida’s approach (1982), Green addressed instead reading pedagogy as a participation in the making of the self (Green 1991: 224) aided by Foucault’s notion of the technologies of the self (1988, quoted in Green 1991: 223): reading is the process of ‘writing’ one’s self into being’ (see Foucault 1988: 18, 27-28).

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. (...) 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** (Green 1991: 223-224, emphasis added).

Reading pedagogy is a social training, which leads the individual to a piecemeal development towards understanding himself as a social being of a certain type, ‘and hence to **participate in his own social construction as subject/individual**’ (Green 1991: 224). This notion of social subjectivity through reading and reading pedagogy deals with ‘a particular production/projection of distinctive forms of sensibility, character, identity and self-understanding’ (Green 1991: 224).

1.3.1 RAYMOND WILLIAMS: CULTURE AS LIVED PERFORMANCE

The reader’s agency was also advocated by another critic, one with a broad and significant influence: Raymond Williams. Although he was ‘first and foremost a literary and cultural critic’ (Higgins 1999: 123), Williams’s work constituted a major contribution to all the disciplinary and critical fields where socialist thought had an input (see Higgins 1999: 1), particularly in relation to the project of Cultural Studies. His work was published in the period extending from the 1940s to the late 1990s, while he was alive but also posthumously, and his influence is clear even today. His view of human agency based it on a collective, community framework, and made it a recurrent theme in his critical endeavours.

Williams was born into a Welsh working class family and moved from grammar school to Cambridge, first as a student and then teaching. Partly owing to his working class background, his work carried the agenda of the working class radicalism of someone who had believed in Marxism and was later disappointed by it (see Williams & Eagleton 1989: 177 on the use of 'disappointed' rather than 'disillusioned'). Thus through his thorough knowledge and understanding of it, he sought to better the Marxist approach to society and to the social being (also in view of his work's correspondence with the work of later Marxists such as Goldmann and Lukács). His proposed way was to take the concepts of culture and society away from a formalist/structuralist point of view to one that accepts their central and constitutive role. For Williams, culture and society form a whole, and human agency and participation in the cultural and social signifying practices is integral to this whole.

1.3.2 Stressing human agency: the critique of functionalist and structuralist approaches and of formalist Marxism

In a 1976 essay that was included in his book of the same year, *Criticism and Ideology* (1998 in this thesis), Eagleton defined Williams's work as 'left-Leavisite' and his intellectual course as one aiming towards a 'genuinely Marxist criticism' (quoted in Higgins 1999: 4). Eagleton's tenet was that the disciplines of English and Marxism had been central and formative to Williams's work. Williams himself, however, maintained that his position towards both Marxism and orthodox literary criticism was oppositional and combative (Higgins 1999: 123-124). In 1977, Williams denied the label 'left-Leavisite', and suggested that

the basic fault of the kind of formalist Marxism which Eagleton is now in is that it assumes that by an act of intellectual abstraction you can place yourself above the lived contradictions both of the society and of any individual you choose to analyse, and that you are not yourself in question (Williams 1977b: 12, quoted in Higgins 1999: 5; see also Williams 1977a: 64, quoted in Higgins 1999: 118).

In particular terms, Williams kept 'an ever-sceptical and ever-critical stance towards the later trends of Althusserian and post-structuralist theory' (Higgins 1999: 2-3, 126;

see also Williams 1977a: 19-20). He considered Althusser's work limiting, because it was based on a formalist Marxist account (Higgins 1999: 99) which saw human agency as constructed *from within the social structure*, as a result of a sort of 'agency' of the structure rather than that of the person.

I see, practically and theoretically, the estranging consequences of the general assumption – as active in modernist literature as in theoretical linguistics and structuralist Marxism – that the systems of human signs are generated within the systems themselves and that to think otherwise is a humanist error (Williams 1991: 223, also quoted in Higgins 1999: 149).

What Williams suggested instead was that the social system is accessible to 'individual acts of will and intelligence' (Williams 1977a: 28), and thus that the two, the social system and the individual, are closely linked, but do not necessarily consume each other.

1.3.3 The educational structure – the educational process

In relation to Hunter and Green's suggestions about the importance of educational structure and the student's agency, Williams is closer to Green's theorisation of reading pedagogy, which stressed agency. His work does not cancel out the importance of the educational structure, nor that of the normative process of education which Hunter stood for, but he doesn't stress these at the expense of agency, as Hunter did. I would like to suggest that Hunter was wrong to link the notion of self-cultivation in Williams with the notions of self-cultivation and the aesthetic personality in bourgeois criticism; Williams did not suggest that 'the process of development should not be interfered with or prescribed by norms or formulas', as Hunter (1991: 77) interpreted him to have suggested. Indeed he saw *culture* as something that cannot be planned (Williams 1993: 335), but he also asserted that 'we have to plan what can be planned, according to our common decision' (ibid.).

1.3.4 Community

That common decision is taken by a community of structures of feeling, which 'the imaginative alternative' to history (Williams 1980e: 25) can create. Now for

Williams, in this instance, this imaginative alternative to history is the creative act of writing literature (ibid.); but as we go on and we see how language for him is its performance, and how reading is a performance too, we will see how reading becomes a creative act too, a performing act, and ‘an imaginative alternative’ to history, that reflects and influences structures of feeling.

1.3.5 The process

Hunter’s emphasis on the normative process of education enables a transparency for that process (Hunter 1991: 79) which means that efforts for social change can be directed where it is needed and where it would be most effective, to the *process* of education. Hunter suggested that Williams sacrificed the public transparency of the process of education in order to employ ‘the ‘whole community’ organically governing its self-development’ (Hunter 1991: 79) in his theorisation. Yet Williams showed that he did not see the community and the structure as two separate things. I would like to suggest instead that, linking agency with the whole community, Williams supported it with a ‘structure’ behind it. For him, when community and agency are met, institutions are created, as the nineteenth century Adult Education Movement illustrated in the field of education (see Williams 1999b: 152-154). Each of those institutions is a structure that is separate, independent from the social structure that abides by the laws of hierarchy, and each can serve as a normative ‘machine’ of resistance and struggle.

All significant social movements of the last thirty years have started outside the organised class interests and institutions. The peace movement, the ecology movement, the women’s movement... (...): all have this character, that they sprang from needs and perceptions which the interest-based organisations had no room or time for, or which they had simply failed to notice. This is the reality which is often misinterpreted as ‘getting beyond class politics’ (Williams 1983b: 172, emphasis added).

Although Williams addressed those ‘structures that encompass collective agency’ as foreign to interest-based organisations related to class, he nevertheless suggested that ‘there is not one of these issues which, followed through, fails to lead us into the central systems of the industrial-capitalist mode of production and among others into

its system of classes' (1983b: 172-173). Although the agency-generated structures are different from the social hierarchy-generated structures, there is a link between them. Thus Williams linked the former with class interests and he even addressed the need for them to co-operate with the 'apparently more important institutions' that are linked with the relations of production:

These movements and the needs and feelings which nourish them are now our major positive resources, **but their whole problem is how they relate or can relate to the apparently more important institutions which derive from the isolation of employment and wage-labour** (Williams 1983b: 172, emphasis added).

Unlike what Hunter thought, in addition to structure in the form of institutions and movements, Williams stressed the importance of process. That can be the social process, the process through which a 'text' is produced, the process of reading a text, the process of education, or the process through which subjects define themselves (1980e: 29). His essay 'Literature and Sociology' (1980e, first published in 1971) is a good example of this. In it he addressed the links between agency and structure once more, by suggesting that the 'collective subject' should be related to the 'structures of the genesis of consciousness' (Williams 1980e: 28-29). But in the same framework, he suggested that we need to research 'the active *processes* through which social groups form and define themselves', via our research of 'all the active *processes* of learning, imagination, creation, performance' (Williams 1980e: 29, emphasis added). He thought research should move 'beyond the particular and isolated product, 'the text'', to the *process* through which the text was actively formed; he believed that through the points of connection between the literary process, the social process and the process of the text's making, we could get a more adequate description of 'our own closest sense of our own living process' (ibid.). This attention to process would illuminate the 'structures of the genesis of consciousness' (ibid.). Thus he saw process as integrally linked with structure, and emphasised all three: structure, process and agency.

1.3.6 Beyond structuralism: a particular relationship between structure and agency

Thus process is linked with structure, but is also linked with agency. Agency is not contained within structure. Williams was against the idea that ‘the systems of human signs are generated within the systems themselves’ (Williams 1991: 223), that structure includes its own subversion, as Foucault would have it (Foucault 1981: 74), and therefore that structure includes agency. He contended instead that structure and agency influence each other, and have power over each other. He proclaimed the importance of an equal relationship between structure and agency already in 1958, the year when *Culture and Society* was first published, where he suggested that both should be emphasised in order for social change to take place (Williams 1993: 337).

Bearing that in mind, and to oppose, once more, Hunter’s interpretation of Williams, I would like to suggest that the notion of unplanned growth in Williams is rather a part of the effort to transform the concept of ‘cultural growth’ from something which is planned, to something which is planned *better*: involving common decisions, and based on equality of being (Williams 1993: 337-338). Therefore cultural growth in Williams is theorised in an environment that involves community, structure and agency, and pays attention to the process of the production of the text as well as to the process ‘through which social groups form and define themselves’, ‘active processes of learning, imagination, creation, performance’ (Williams 1980e: 29). Williams drew a ‘complete picture’ of cultural growth and considered the text (which contains the social consciousness and changes in community and individuals), the reader (agency) and reading (the processes) and transformed literary and cultural criticism, making it relevant to politics and society.

1.3.7 Beyond Cambridge English: social parameters of literary criticism

Reading as a social act

Language as performance

Three of the most prominent Cambridge English literary and cultural critics, Richards, Leavis and Eliot, preceded Williams and influenced his work. The first significant change in the focus and methods of literary criticism had come long before the fifties when Williams worked, with I. A. Richards’s 1929 *Practical Criticism*. With that and with the rest of his work, Richards shifted emphasis to a ‘close and precise and specifically challengeable reading’ of the literary text (Williams 1991: 183) and

steered the examination practices of English away from “a knowledge of history, social background, linguistic origins and Aristotle”.⁸ F. R. Leavis continued to employ this critical view of literary reading in an even more militant way than Richards himself [who later abandoned Cambridge and literary criticism altogether (Baldick 1983: 158-159, 204, 206)]: he advocated the training of ‘natural response’ to literary works, and made a distinction between the correct reading and a *misreading* of literary texts. That meant that he put ‘reading, and dialogue with other readers’ at the core of literary criticism, but that was an ‘imposture of openness’, because it ‘presumed assent’:

...the experiential merging of critic and poem, and of both with the experience of ‘other readers’, was scarcely thinkable without the ‘philosophical’ guarantee of a human essence – something constant, universal, and, like the Arnoldian ‘best self’, potentially decisive (Mulhern 1990: 251).

Thus, although Leavis based his philosophy on the initial trust in close reading that he owed to Richards, he had moved to an exclusive view of literary reading, one which actively discriminated against a large proportion of cultural works and a large proportion of readers. Nevertheless, it was a great advance that he positioned the text at the starting point of criticism in more definite ways than Richards, influencing literary pedagogy towards doing just that, and Williams acknowledged that he owed him that significant move (Williams 1966: ix-x). What Williams disagreed with was Leavis’s claim that ‘the act of critical judgement’ in reading depended on the individual and, in the right individual, it was innate. Williams claimed instead that it was a *social act* (Williams 1966: 29; Higgins 1999: 17); that critical judgement was a result of training, hard work and practice (Williams 1966: 8; Higgins 1999: 18).

Thus in spite of the fact that he appreciated significant points that Leavis brought to the forefront, he rejected Leavis’s type of literary criticism (Williams 1989h: 13, quoted in Higgins 1999: 144) and in that way he also rejected Cambridge English. Significantly, he openly opposed the insistence of Cambridge English upon separation of the formal study of language (Williams 1974, referred to in Higgins 1999: 146; Williams 1977a: 27-28; Williams 1991: 213, 224), and saw as a flaw of Marxism that

⁸ Thompson (Denys) 1973: 299 (an essay entitled ‘Teacher’s debt’). Quoted in Steedman 1999: 47.

it did not have a theory of language (Williams 1977b: 15-16, referred to in Higgins 1999: 119).

1.3.8 Experience and language linked: language as performance

Leavis and his followers had addressed English Literature as universal and interdisciplinary, having an 'almost messianic' role in saving English culture (Ahmad 2000: 46); this view gave language a secondary position. But for Williams language is integrally linked with literature, and is of the same importance: it is material and constitutive of social process (Williams 1977b: 15-16). Thus, experience and language are linked:

In every problem we need hard, detailed inquiry and negotiation. Yet we are coming increasingly to realise that **our vocabulary, the language we use to inquire into and negotiate our actions, is no secondary factor, but a practical and radical element in itself. To take a meaning from experience, and to try to make it active, is in fact our process of growth.** Some of these meanings we receive and re-create. Others we must make for ourselves, and try to communicate. The human crisis is always a crisis of understanding: what we genuinely understand we can do (Williams 1993: 338, emphasis added).

Williams contended that the reason why language was defined and treated by the early structuralists as a system, was because they were themselves colonial subjects, and as a result they could not see the living aspects of language, the conditions that its utterance creates, that render language a performance (Williams 1977a: 27). Structural linguists theoretically reduced 'the living speech of human beings in their specific social relationships in the world (...) to instances and examples of a system which lay beyond them' (Williams 1977a: 27; Higgins 1999: 120). For Williams it is language *performance* which is important, through which language has an active status and is constitutive of social conditions and relations but also dependent on social relationships (Williams 1977a: 36-37; Higgins 1999: 119, 121; see also Scafe 1989: 40-41). He used Volosinov's 1929 (year of its first edition in Russian, 1986 in this bibliography) *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* to demonstrate this dependence; linguistic activity, was for him social activity (Williams 1977a: 35-36). The structuralist view of language as a system that was 'separate from social activity' (Williams 1977a: 35) was complimented by the insistence of bourgeois criticism upon

the separation of the text, its reading and its writing from the social history of the reader or the writer. The bourgeois critical enterprise gave contradictory definitions of the text that isolated the literary work and denied that history intervenes in the process of reading, in the passing of meaning from the writer to the reader. From that point of view, the process of writing too was seen as a kind of 'immaculate conception': the writer was supposed to have conceived the text and created it with no reference to his experience or relation to history. What that isolation meant for the text was that it was denied a concrete status, and its status was instead reduced to what was called a 'spiritual' standing (Bennett 1982: 223; Belsey 1980: 126).

History is practice and experience, and Williams (significantly in his 1971 *Orwell*) contended that those were linked with literature. He described the problem as follows:

There is nothing especially new about social awareness in writers, and indeed in the nineteenth century it had been widespread and growing, especially among the novelists. But near the end of the century, and in England in relation to Henry James, an opposition between the 'social' and the 'aesthetic' was widely attempted. Not only was social experience seen as content and literature as form; also, and more dangerously, social experience was seen as only general and abstract, with the result that the definition of literary content was itself narrowed to an emphasis on abstracted 'personal relationships' (Williams 1971b: 35-36).

Ignoring its historical parameters means to theorise the text as weaker in effect and intention, and reduce it to mere 'theory', distanced from the concreteness of practice (see for example Williams 1971b, 1991, 1975).

Another parameter of the same attitude of isolating the text from the context, was the 'aesthetic attitude towards life', the "art for art's sake" "treaty", part of the bourgeois reduction of art (Williams 1971b: 37). It involved seeing the reading of literature as something that needed to be 'sterilised' in order to go back to a 'pure' form. As the dialogue between social reality and art was questioned, it was thought that a relationship between the two contradicted the notion of 'pure' art. Bourgeois criticism preferred to see literary works as sterilised 'masterpieces' of no social intentions or background. Williams denounced that critical practice and contended that it was about an *attitude* towards reading rather than about reading itself. 'What mattered, in the general consciousness, was *not works but attitudes* – a set of emphases, omissions,

encouragements, discouragements, advice, warnings' (Williams 1971b: 38, emphasis added).

For him, such an attitude that intended to neutralise reading, was in the service of the ruling class: it was convenient for the ruling class to alienate literature from social reality. As the reader is guided by such a literary criticism, she is not conscious of the symbolisms and messages of the text, and thus they are more easily rendered neutral in their effects. 'This suited people who despised literature as impractical but who in any case wanted no independent scrutiny, of any kind of the society they were actively directing and creating' (Williams 1971b: 37-38). His view was even that the attitude of distancing literature from society also found allies in the people who valued literature, and it seemed to him that they too reduced it to 'touching and tasting', defending 'pure' literature. That purity was meant to have the reader remain on the surface of the literary work, admiring it rather than actively reading it and experiencing it. Williams's answer to that was that 'no real art of whatever kind could be reduced in this way' (Williams 1971b: 38).

1.3.9 Lived experience and structures of feeling

Williams tried to reverse that process of reduction and provided a new definition for the literary text, one which was related to the artist's lived experience and his own notion of the structures of feeling:

The distinction between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction' is not a matter of whether the experience happened to the writer, a distinction between 'real' and 'imaginary'. The distinction that matters is always one of range and consciousness. **Written human experience of an unspecialised and primary kind must always be recognised as literature. Particular forms, and the origins of the material, are secondary questions.** Orwell began to write literature, in the true sense, when he found his 'non-fictional' form: that is, when he found a form capable of realising his experience directly. **Realising *his* experience** – not only what had happened to him and what he had observed, but **what he felt about it and what he thought about it**, the self-definition of 'Orwell', the man inside and outside the experience (Williams 1971b: 49-50, emphasis added).

He suggested that the literary works of art dramatized social process. And as such, they were making a fiction, 'in which the constitutive elements, of reading social life

and beliefs, were simultaneously actualized and in an important way differently experienced, the difference residing in the imaginative act, the imaginative method, the specific and genuinely unprecedented imaginative organisation' (Williams 1980e: 25). These literary works of art encompassed the difficulty in grasping the reality of the structures of feeling (Williams 1980e: 24). He suggested that art has better access to the 'constitutive social and intellectual system', to 'an experience of it, and its lived consequence' (Williams 1980e: 25).

Art is one of the primary human activities, and (...) it can succeed in articulating not just the imposed or constitutive social or intellectual system, but at once this and an experience of it, its lived consequence, in ways very close to many other kinds of active response, in new social activity and in what we know as personal life; but of course often more accessibly, just because it is specifically formed and because when it is made it is in its own way complete, even autonomous, and being the kind of work it is can be transmitted and communicated beyond its original situation and circumstances (Williams 1980e: 25).

Thus, literature is a product of experience: 'It would not have been so successful if it had not been so intensely and painfully lived' he asserts about Orwell's work (1971b: 52). But it has better access to both the individual and the social reality, and it can make those realities, more accessible to readers than any other medium.

On the other hand, Williams suggested that, in order to fully grasp a work of art, the reader or/and the critic needs to take hold of 'the usually missing element', the 'structure of feeling' of a period (Williams & Orrom 1954: 21-22). That understanding takes place during 'those specific and definable moments when very new work produces a sudden shock of *recognition*' (Williams 1979: 164, also quoted in Probyn 1993: 23). For that recognition to take place, the reader turns to her own experience (Probyn 1993: 22-24).

1.3.10 Drama: Literature as performance

The importance of the creative work was stressed by another major influence on Williams: Eliot was a literary critic and a poet who stressed the importance of his double role (Baldick 1983: 133, note 28, 113-116; Eliot 1950c: 7, 95), and even thought that the critical work should be underplayed so that the critic would satisfy his 'creative wish' (Eliot 1950c: 7, 95). He saw the poem as autonomous from criticism

(Eliot 1950c: 51; 1989a: 76; see also the above Williams quote, 1980e: 25, on the autonomy of the literary work). And it was Eliot before Leavis, who reconnected criticism with the 'words on the page', the text itself.⁹ At the same time, in *The Function of Criticism* (Eliot 1950b, quoted in Baldick 1983: 116) he was against the notion of an 'unconscious' and uncritical artist.

All those positions of his testify to Higgins being right to disagree with the general belief that the main influence on Williams was Leavis; it was instead Eliot who was closer to Williams's thinking (Higgins 1999: 2, 24).

Eliot's influence on Williams was also responsible for another great idea (Higgins 1999: 31, 24-25): Williams too opposed the separation between text and performance in analysis of drama; he addressed drama as literary language and the text and its performance as a unity (Williams 1972a: see 4-5).

In much contemporary thinking, a separation between literature and theatre is constantly assumed; yet the drama is, or can be, both literature and theatre, not one at the expense of the other, but each *because* of the other. It is because I think the separation is now deeply disabling for the drama, that I am examining, as a formal point of theory, the relation between text and performance (Williams 1972a: 4-5, original emphasis).

Strangely, we have very few examples of the necessary next stage: a consideration of play and performance, literary text and theatrical representation, not as separate entities, but as the unity which they are intended to become (Williams 1972a: 4).

Yet Williams was also independent from Eliot and differentiated himself from him when he suggested that in order to have drama, one needs a 'community of sensibility' rather than a 'community of belief' (related to dramatic conventions). For Williams, dramatic conventions were not only conventions of technique and staging, but 'themselves forms of social consciousness' (Williams & Orrom 1954: 15, 18, quoted in Higgins 1999: 39). 'The condition of a fully serious drama is less the existence of a common faith than the existence of a common language' (Williams 1954: 26, quoted in Higgins 1999: 29). A common language related to 'forms of social consciousness' brought in the forefront also in relation to the dramatic text as it did in relation to other literary texts, his (commonly felt) structures of feeling.

⁹ Lodge 1989: 70; Eliot 1989a: 73, 75; see also Williams 1966: ix-x, and this thesis, p. 40.

1.3.11 Culture and community: Education

Williams's stress on community was naturally linked with education. It was addressed directly in his 1958 *Culture and Society* (1993 in this thesis). In it he undertook to form a new, challenging notion of culture, which broadened its scope beyond bourgeois definitions, and he linked it to community and education. To high culture, imposed as a notion by bourgeois society, he opposed the idea of a *common* culture. He rejected individualism as a political doctrine, and suggested that it was served by the idea that all is well since a man from a working-class position can move to a middle-class one. Yet for him, that notion of the 'ladder' (Williams 1993: 331-332) works instead against 'the making of a common educational provision', and against common resources and solidarity in the community (Williams 1993: 332-333).

Another **alternative to solidarity** is the idea of individual opportunity – of the ladder. (...) Yet the ladder is a perfect symbol of the bourgeois idea of society, because, while undoubtedly it offers the opportunity to climb, it is a device which can only be used individually: you go up the ladder alone. (...) My own view is that the ladder version of society is objectionable in two related aspects: **first, that it weakens the principle of common betterment, which ought to be an absolute value; second, that it sweetens the poison of hierarchy, in particular by offering the hierarchy of merit as a thing different in kind from the hierarchy of money or birth** (Williams 1993 (1958): 331, emphasis added).

The reality described by the concept of the 'ladder' is not a sufficient educational reform. The hierarchy of merit helps a person who is willing and able to play by the rules (im)posed by the ruling class. Common betterment can only come through institutions to which all have access, and with whose rules all have the same familiarity.

There can be no effective participation in the whole culture merely on the basis of the skill which any particular man may acquire. **The participation depends on common resources, and leads a man towards others** (Williams 1993 (1958): 333, emphasis added).

Elaborating on such common resources, Williams (in *Orwell*, 1971b) testified that Orwell, a member of the ruling class of the time, felt he was being used by that class rather than that he was being given privileges by it. Orwell saw that there are 'grades' in being a member of the ruling class, and tried to address that through his work. His experience was that he was entrapped in a class system which demands very specific things of you and does not allow you room for diversity (Williams 1971b: especially 18-19). '[He] tried hard and seriously to reject the thinking of the social class in which he was educated' (Williams 1971b: 37).

He [Orwell] became unemployed and penniless: partly because of the early difficulties of being a writer, but also deliberately, as a way of cutting his connections with an established and unacceptable social position (Williams 1971b: 34).

1.3.12 Culture

Williams also protested against an imposed social hierarchy and against a given social position that one cannot change through institutions that offer common access. His definition of culture, one of the most seminal of his contributions, assumed common access. Thus, for him, culture is not bourgeois or working-class, but rather *a process*, and as such it allows and requires the participation of the whole community. Within culture, the person ceases to be an individual, and needs to act as part of this community, recognising the skills of others and defining her own skill under this acknowledgement.

Importantly, community for Williams is distanced from the notion of the masses; it is rather an important component of culture, and through that the experience of the individual is linked with the social and the historical.

I don't believe that ordinary people in fact resemble the normal description of the masses, low and trivial in taste and habit. I put it another way: that there are in fact no masses, but only ways of seeing people as masses (...) The bad new commercial culture came out of the social chaos of industrialism, and out of the success, in this chaos, of the 'masses' formula, not out of popular education (Williams 1997: 12).

Believing in popular education, Williams professed the need for a 'culture in common' (Williams 1993: 337). On these terms, he positioned culture in clear

connection with history and social action, and related it to performance (Williams 1977a: 19-20). He attacked the idealisation of culture above the level of historical and social practice, and was against critical views that addressed ‘the human process itself’ in an alternative manner, ignoring its social and cultural context (Williams 1977a: 19-20). Culture for him is a social process and, because it has a constitutive power in relation to the social order and social relationships (Higgins 1999 on Williams: 147; Williams 1977a: 185), it creates ‘specific and different ways of life’ (Williams 1977a: 19). The community participates, influences and is influenced by it, and is actively conscious of it and of social and historical reality (see Williams 1980e: 25, referring to the term used in Lukács and Goldmann); an active consciousness that is not determined by structure, but is linked with *the process* of culture.

1.3.13 Creating a new discipline: cultural materialism and the constitutive features of cultural practices

Williams’s ‘attention to the politics of culture and to the primacy of culture in politics’ was to be named cultural materialism (Higgins 1999: 6). The main argument of cultural materialism is that ‘device, expression and the substance of expression are in the end inseparable’ (Williams 1977a: 172), thus bringing together as one whole the textual, the theoretical and the historical dimension in analysis (Higgins 1999: 134). The social process, social structures, individual and communal agency are linked within society, and their relationship, along with the lived feeling, the structures of feeling that this relationship brings forth, are best indicated in art works like literary works (Williams 1980e: particularly 24-25). ‘Cultural materialism (...) emphasises the role of the arts in any shifts in social relationships’ (Higgins 1999: 147) – genre itself is a social relationship (Williams 1977a: 185).

Cultural materialism marked for Williams a desire to form a new discipline [pointed out in Higgins 1999: 141, 143, and lastly 126 referring to such an attempt in *Marxism and Literature* (Williams 1977a); see also Williams 1983a: 233; Williams 1991: 211]. According to Higgins, Williams developed cultural materialism as a response and a correction against two other options: orthodox Marxism and orthodox English (Higgins 1999: 125). The new discipline would be based on the use of cultural

materialism. His wish and intentions were realised to a great extent after the emergence of Cultural Studies.

1.4.1 CULTURAL STUDIES: A NEW DISCIPLINE

Williams's work, and particularly his theorisation of cultural materialism, was a major influence for the project of Cultural Studies, an intellectual and scholarly movement that acquired all the credentials of a discipline. The central argument of cultural materialism, that 'device, expression and the substance of expression are in the end inseparable' (Williams 1977a: 172), was given early on in the Williams *Long Revolution* stance that culture is a whole process (Williams 1971a: 57ff; Hall 1996f: 19).

Initiating a theorisation of the links between society, culture and ideology, Williams's *Culture and Society* and *The Long Revolution*, together with *The Uses of Literacy* and *The Making of the English Working Class*, by Hoggart and Thompson respectively, signalled the beginning of Cultural Studies' considerations (Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg 1992: 9; Hall 1986a: 33-34). Based to a large extent on the concerns of the 1930s 'Western Marxism'¹⁰ and the 1950s New Left, Cultural Studies focused on culture and ideology rather than reducing both to economism (Hall 1996f: 17, 25; 1992: 279). It was a project that undertook to intervene in society in 'what might loosely be called 'political' [ways]' (Hall 1996f: 17).¹¹ It became part of the 'post-war cultural debate' (Hall 1996f: 17), responding to the period after the war, an era when there was the feeling that a new structure, a new society was emerging (Williams 1999b: 158; see also Gramsci 1999: 325, Goldmann 1976b: 93, 95-96). Together with this new society, a new way of seeing things was emerging, and Cultural Studies marked significant breaks with older views and visions of society (Hall 1986a: 33) like that of mainstream sociology, in particular the structural-

¹⁰ Whereas Hall (1996f: 25) suggested that 'Western Marxism' of the Frankfurt School, Sartre, Goldmann and Lukács had not come to Britain in the 1930s, (referring to a lot of those not being translated) there is a notion of those concerns having come to Britain of the 1930s via Adult Education, echoed in Williams (1999b: 154). Kellner (1997: 13) on the other hand, suggested that the 1930s Frankfurt School was an earlier version of Cultural Studies.

¹¹ See also Williams 1999b: 158; McRobbie 1992: 721; Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg 1992: 3, 5; Bennett 1992: 23).

functionalist school (Hall 1996f: 20-24) that was dominant at the time, and that of the old reductionist Marxism (Hall 1996f: 25-26).

1.4.2 The break with sociology, and the break with old Marxism

Still, Cultural Studies had a character of transdisciplinarity in all its accounts (see for instance Kellner 1997: 19 referring to Johnson 1996b and Hall 1996e), and both sociology and Marxism had an important influence on it. Structural-functionalist sociology, trapped in a logic of empiricism and quantitative research, could not visualise society as a whole, and was unable to articulate that ‘totality’ or culture (Robbins 1995: viii, quoting Perry Anderson 1992: 56; Hall 1996f: 21, 23; see also Johnson 1996b: 575). Other, older traditions of sociology (German idealist, Weberian), along with ‘a ‘new’ social history, anthropology and literary criticism’ converged in the ‘intellectual space’ of Cultural Studies and counteracted that weakness (Hall 1996f: 21; Robbins 1995: viii). They led to an examination of culture ‘from texts and representations to lived practices, belief systems and institutions’, emphasising ‘lived cultures’ and ‘lived practices’ (Hall 1996f: 23, 22). Those traditions ‘*did* attempt to deal with social action and institutions as ‘objectivated structures of meaning’ (Hall 1996f: 23) – and eventually they also challenged functionalist sociology from within.

Another failure of structural functionalism was that it had failed to address the contextualisation of the lived accounts of culture and society (history, conditions, determination), and thus it had failed to address the concepts of conditions and agency (Hall 1996f: 24). Cultural Studies moved towards the problems of agency and conditions through historical sociology and an ethnographic tradition of ‘empirical social science’ (Hall 1996f: 24-25).

The theorisation of agency, conditions/historicisation, classes, culture and ideologies, was also aided by the second ‘break’ of Cultural Studies, that into a complex Marxism (Hall 1996f: 24-25, 33-34). This ‘new’ Marxism brought back into the forefront the issue of ideologies and determinations, ‘the material, social and historical conditions of existence’ of culture and ideologies (Hall 1996f: 25). A materialist theory of culture ignited intense theoretical work, and the realisation that ‘terms and concepts cannot be treated or changed in isolation’ (Hall 1996f: 25, 26). Williams’s *The Long*

Revolution provided a model of the conception of culture that was going to be dominant in Cultural Studies: 'it said, in effect, all the practices – economic, political, ideological, cultural – interact with effect on each other'. Culture is not *a* practice but runs through all practices and 'is the sum of their interrelationship' (Hall 1996f: 28; 1986a: 36). This meant seeing culture as a totality, and moving it away from the obscurity of a residual status that it used to have when it was viewed 'as the mere expression of other forces' (Hall 1996f: 28).

1.4.3 An independent intellectual ground

The move towards utilising another sociology and another Marxism, marked for Cultural Studies the time when it became an independent intellectual field. Its field was charted in the 1950s, with the works of Williams, Thompson and Hoggart, and it had already been established in an institution, Birmingham University, with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, founded in 1963/64 by Hoggart and Hall (Hall 1996f: 16; see also Kellner 1997: 16).¹² Now it drew its own direction with new ways to define culture, via an anthropological point of view (culture as cultural practices and not as something abstract), and via a historical point of view (culture as a contextualised thing, determined by social formations, power and resistance and struggle) (Hall 1996f: 26-27). Encompassing the objective of a political inclusion, culture was no longer addressed as the 'best that was ever thought and done', but was socially and historically contextualised (Hall 1996f: 27). In that spirit, cultural research embraced the contemporary popular culture (Hall 1996f: 17, 30). What was important was that culture was now seen not as an abstract issue, devoted to the higher classes, but was 'democratised and socialised', thought of as a complex of practices. This was culturalism.

1.4.4 Structuralisms and Marxism

In as much as the notion of cultural totality meant that the issue of determination was neglected, the structuralisms and the new complex Marxism solved that problem (Hall

¹² See also the discussion in Hall 1992, as well as in Bennett 1998a, particularly pages 214-231, on the Open University Cultural Studies undergraduate course.

1996f: 28-30; 1986a: 39, 43). Structuralism came to the Cultural Studies scene via the linguistics paradigm, semiotics and Levi-Strauss (along with Barthes, see Barthes 1977a), attempting to give a 'scientific' gloss to the 'human sciences of culture' (Hall 1986a: 40). But this structuralism, in spite of its importance, was centred around the 'discourse' and the 'subject'. Yet this was a subject that was not unified, as was the one in culturalism, but linked with the psychoanalytically produced 'unconscious processes' that also rendered it 'trans-historical and universal' (Hall 1986a: 46). This conception eliminated the major strength of structuralism, which was the attention to social formations.

As structuralism moved from Levi-Strauss, keeping the sense of language as a system, to Althusser, it added to culturalism the realisation that social and cultural practices that were united into one were united-in-difference, and that each one of these enjoyed its own relative autonomy (Hall 1996f: 29; 1986a: 44). It made culture specific again, rather than allowing it to fade away into the background of society and history. For it, man and his experience was no longer the centre around which the universe of culture revolved; the cultural process itself took precedence (Hall 1996f: 30-31; 1986a: 42).

Marxism, on the other hand, added the historical dimension, opposing the tendency to focus on synchronic analysis for which structuralism was responsible (Hall 1986a: 44-45; 1996f: 28-29, 31). But the 'base and superstructure' model was refigured, so that its components were reconciled, and the practices that they separated were united in the concept of culture and the general praxis that is the historical process (Hall 1996f: 28).

Yet both Marxism and structuralism put man and experience in the background, and made central the notion of ideology (Hall 1986a: 45), which culturalism had neglected in order to favour agency and experience.

Structuralism and culturalism together attempted to describe a more complete view of society, that saw all social expressions linked with each other, severely questioned high-brow superiority and addressed culture as linked with everyday life. Through them, Cultural Studies included the social, the historical and the political in the list of decisive factors of social and cultural change or stillness. The political effect of that was a political agenda for Cultural Studies (see Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg 1992: 5; McRobbie 1992: 721); the cultural effect was an attention to the effects of cultural practices.

Cultural Studies has a chance, through cultural institutions, to affect the people's 'understanding of the pressures on them, pressures of every kind, from the most personal to the most broadly political' (Williams 1999b: 162).

1.4.5 Althusser and Gramsci: ISAs and hegemony

'Cultural institutions' and the 'pressures' on people were addressed within the field of Cultural Studies particularly in relation to the influence of two Marxists, Althusser and Gramsci. From the 1960s until the 1980s, Cultural Studies revolved around Marxian perspectives (Hall 1992: 279) and was intensely influenced by Althusser and Gramsci (Turner 1996: for instance 22-25; Hall 1992: 280; see also Bennett 1986b). Whereas culturalism focused on experience at the expense of ideology, structuralism reversed that hierarchy, seeing ideology as primary (Hall 1986a: 45). Ideology explained how culture was effective in reproducing 'a particular mode of production' (Hall 1986a: 45). 'Presented in the form of distinct and specialised institutions' (Althusser 1997: 53-54), Althusser's Ideological State Apparatuses like Education and Culture (Althusser positioned literature as a part of the cultural ISA), were perceived as the sites where ideologies resided (Hall 1996f: 33; Althusser 1971a: 166, 186). What is also important was that Althusser saw 'ideologies as practices rather than as systems of ideas' (Hall 1996f: 32). These practices provided the frameworks within which people understood and lived their experiences, and even constituted people and their subjectivities (Hall 1996f: 32-33).

Yet Althusser did not sufficiently account for the subject, although he was the first to address the void in Marxist theory (Barrett 1993: 178-179). What he did account for, and in this I would like to agree with Michèle Barrett and disagree with Stuart Hall, was class struggle (Althusser 1971a: 145, 147, 155, 157, 184-185; Barrett 1993: 171; Hall 1986a: 45).

Gramsci and Laclau also connected ideology with struggle (Hall 1986a: 45). Gramsci moved within both culturalism and structuralism (Hall 1986a: 45-46), and he articulated social struggle and agency in the form of collective action, importantly replacing the notion of domination with that of hegemony. Through hegemony, he saw the relationship between the dominant and the subordinate as continuously negotiated. He contended that the dominant class or class alliance accommodates some of the cultures and values of the subordinates, so as to achieve their conscious

and unconscious consent (Bennett 1986b: xiv-xvi; Gramsci 1999: 182, 269-270; see also Turner 1996: 191). The dominant group flatters the subordinates' 'common sense', where common sense is defined as 'the uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world that has become common in any given epoch' (Gramsci 1999: 322), in order to achieve an intellectual and moral unity, as much as 'a unison of economic and political aims' (Gramsci 1999: 181).

Accused of being too accommodating and expansive (Bennett 1986b: xvii), what is especially important in this constant negotiation of agreement¹³ is that it makes it possible to see some of the interests (and their political and ideological articulations) that belong to different classes as related and even overlapping; this enables a strategy of cultural politics and political struggle that frees different 'subordinate' groups from the fear of being threatened by each other (Bennett 1986b: xvi), particularly in conditions that would otherwise make them succumb to a 'divide and rule' strategy.

1.4.6 Literary Studies transformed

The political cause of inclusion and common struggle was also incorporated, within Cultural Studies, in the study of literary works and their reading. Cultural Studies transformed literary study: it abandoned the high-brow text which had put academic literary criticism on a pedestal, and took into consideration other literary forms, like popular fiction. It was especially important to see that there are literary texts which defy simple value classifications, such as Poe's work (Harris 1990: 410).¹⁴

But Cultural Studies also addressed and analysed texts of a clearly popular character – since popular literature was seen as part of society, affecting and affected by it. Echoed in Colin Mercer's essay on popular literature (1986), this view suggested that literary forms are

in society, (...) actively contributing to the shaping of social relations through the ways in which they organise relations of class, community, nation and history – and one might add, gender – and inscribe their readers in those relations (quoted in Bennett 1990b: 4, original emphasis).

¹³ Gramsci 1999: 182; Probyn 1993: 11; Williams 1977a: 112; 1980d: 37-38.

¹⁴ Poe's appearance in popular journals and newspapers satisfied a reading public that would be called a mass audience, yet his work was and is critically acclaimed.

Popular fictions in particular, because of their ubiquitous presence and their many forms in cinema, television and publishing, were seen as ‘helping to define our sense of ourselves, shaping our desires, fantasies, imagined pasts and projected futures’ (Bennett & Martin 1990: ix).

Janice Radway’s *Reading the Romance* is an appropriate example. Focused on readership in relation to the rest of the readers’ environment and in relation to the text read itself, her analysis of romance reading approached reading as a social activity (Radway 1991b: 1, 9). Radway herself, in her 1991 introduction (1991b) drew parallels between her work and that of the British Cultural Studies ‘tradition’, particularly as she saw it inscribed in the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies.

As reading was approached as a social activity by Williams too (for example 1971a: 324)¹⁵ as in the work of others, the concept of the text and the notion of the validity of the text also changed and was also modified by considerations of feminism. Reading as an activity with a social use and a social purpose, as well as with social effects/implications meant that when Cultural Studies came back to critically acclaimed literature, the audience and its social conventions, implications and uses, would be considered together with the text, the author, and the reader (Stallybrass 1992).

In Hall and Whannel’s *The Popular Arts* (1964), the authors distinguished between the valuable and the invaluable *within* popular culture, breaking with Leavisism, whose distinctions were between popular and high culture (Storey 1997: 64, 66, 69-70). Gramsci’s conception of popular culture as a field of negotiation between the dominant – or rather, hegemonic – and the lower classes (Gledhill 1997: 348; Gramsci 1999: 181-182), helped towards that direction, of stressing the agency of the consumers of popular culture, and against a view of them as helpless.

The traditional literary canon was reconsidered, and literary reading, the canon’s reception, took primary position along with the text. The audience and the social implications of the reception of works of art were now as significant and worthy of researching as the works of art themselves, perceived as cultural practices and cultural works. Thus, the interpretation, the decoding, and the social conditions in which it took place, became as significant as the code itself.

¹⁵ See also Hall 1996f: 19 on *The Long Revolution* presenting a notion of literature as a form of social communication.

1.4.7 Poststructuralism and postmodernism

Postmodernism moved away from the code, and privileged the interpretation alone. In alliance with poststructuralism (deconstruction), it agreed with the latter's insistence to question the truth, and render it relative (Rice & Waugh 1989: 260; Eagleton 1983: 143). But postmodernism went further in that it generalised those theories to address everything social and cultural. In view of issues like the 'embourgeoisement' of radicalism itself (Ahmad 2000: 64-65), the weakness of radical politics to produce results when it mattered (as in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, see Morris 1988: 186), and the use of the same vocabulary that was used against racism, to defend that very attitude (Mercer 1992: 436), postmodernism theorised the emptiness of the signifier, and the non-existence of the signified. In many ways being part of a response to disappointment in regard to the political practice that led to opposite results than the desired ones in previous eras, it believed that the surface phenomena are the primary reality (Rice & Waugh 1997: 290), or, rather, the only reality there is. It thus contended that 'the real is no longer real' (Baudrillard 1998: 205) and that, where there is a 'simulacrum' – an image of – there is no represented reality to account for it (Storey 1997: 181 on Baudrillard). Rather, the real is produced from an infinity of 'miniaturised units' (Baudrillard 1998: 204), forming a 'pastiche' (Jameson 1998: 196). Thus, there is no history, but only a 'pastiche', a collage of different times, and different identities (Jameson 1998: 196, 202), in effect a 'simulacrum of pluralism' (Deane 1996: 440), a pretence of pluralism to disguise the denial of the subject, and of identity. It saw the fragmentation and the fragments, but not their previous or future unity, and via figures like Foucault, Jameson, Lyotard and Baudrillard, postmodernism theorised against the existence of a totality of social praxis (Hall 1986a: 47 on Foucault; see also Easthope & McGowan 1998: 181-205). Instead it saw society and culture as a line of simulacra, where there are in fact no referents, no origins, no original realities (see for example Baudrillard 1998: 203), even no real connection between these fragments.

A lack of meaning, a lack of unity, a lack of connections between the fragments that society had become and a lack of individuality, as everything was simply a simulacrum and not an original, mimicking rather than creating anew, were the

characteristics that postmodernism saw in society. But far from being a nihilist approach that would suggest that things are like that and will always be like that, I would like to suggest that it was an array of accusations as part of a process of trying to change things. Postmodernism saw the dangers of pluralism and radicalism as they developed, and warned that if things were to go on like that, there would be neither a real identity, individualism, nor agency left to the subject, and thus 'no real possibility for struggle' (Grossberg 1988: 175, on Baudrillard). But although postmodernism described a bleak picture, its description was a warning rather than a nihilist approach about how things are and how they will always be. Seeing, through the lack of individualism, 'no real possibility for struggle' (ibid.), it showed that political struggle needed individuality, as Mill had attested to in 1859 (see Mill 2002 (1859): 59).

Political struggle, and the continuously unstable and (re-)constructed identity, are the issues for Hall's seminal essay 'Minimal Selves' (Hall 1997a), which was written as a response to postmodernist considerations 'of identity, the subject and difference' (see Munns & Rajan 1996: 195). Hall connected the notion of the endless construction of identity to his own 'state of being a migrant' (Hall 1997a: 134-136), and contested it in practice, rather than in principle. He insisted on the need to put an end to identity, and he also insisted that there is a need to articulate a position. Such moves would provide not *the* end, but an end, so that commitment to a cause, and political action, will not be undermined or nullified (Hall 1997a: 137). In effect, he thought it necessary that one has to stop speaking, so that the other will speak too. Against a postmodern a-political view of society, and against the postmodern pressures to see representation as impossible (i.e., representation as speaking for someone, see Probyn 1992: 502), Hall contended that in order for political action to exist, it has to accept and work *with* unity-in-difference, bringing forth new political identities (Hall 1997a: 137).¹⁶ In the end, 'despite its fragmentations and displacements, then, 'the self' does relate to a real set of histories' (Hall 1997a: 136).

Beyond Hall's critique and articulation of postmodernist negations of reality, Meaghan Morris addressed the contributions that postmodernism can make within politics. Thus for her, the value of postmodernism lies in the ways that it can open

¹⁶ See also Probyn 1993: 23, on accepting and being aided in research and in understanding, by the experience of others.

politics, and make intellectuals less certain about things they used to be certain about, more imaginative (Morris 1988: 186). Postmodernism is part of the hope that through the continuous questioning of the self and its position, and thus through self-reflexivity and the 'abolition of critical distance', 'the old tools of ideology-critique, and the moral denunciation of the other' can be made 'completely ineffective' (Morris 1988: 185, referring particularly to Jameson); once I accept that I cannot possibly be objective, I also understand that my negative critique of the other is also questionable.

1.4.8 Postmodernism and the literary text

Shedding light to how Baudrillard viewed both the subject and the object,¹⁷ Meaghan Morris separated his postmodernism from that of those who later used it in their own work ('his clones') (Morris 1988: 190). Thus according to her, via an attention to simulacra, notions of mirror images that make reality, their own origins, redundant, Baudrillard's view marked 'the return of the object' (see for example Morris 1988: 207). It is true that for him, reality itself, the origins of the mirror image/object/text, does not exist, it is itself a simulation (see Baudrillard 1998: 205) – but Morris contended that his respect for the simulacrum derived from his 'humility and resignation' in front of the object (Morris 1988: 190), rather than from a brutal opposition to the subject, 'although his clones might make it so' (ibid.). As his view of the world was full of 'paradoxes that his strategies quite calmly sustain' (Morris 1988: 202), and he used terms like 'the real' and 'denotation' too broadly and too vaguely (Morris 1988: 197, 195), it was easy to misrepresent his work.

Yet his postmodernism offers the opportunity to see the literary text in a different way since the object/simulacrum can also be a literary text – both when the literary work of art is 'realistic', or even when it makes no such claims. The Marxists Balibar and Macherey theorised the neutralisation of the social via fiction. They saw the literary text, and generally the institution of Literature as something that contains the conflicts that exist but are dormant in society, in order to prevent them from happening in real life (Balibar & Macherey 1978: 8-9). For Baudrillard, institutions, based on 'abstract instances which are laid down one after the other on the ruins of the symbolic and

¹⁷ Particularly through his *Les Stratégies fatales* (1983a), *De la séduction* (1979), *Simulations* (1983b), and *Simulacres et simulation* (1981).

ceremonial edifice of former societies', both produce more social instances, and make society into something so abstract, that in the end they undermine and neutralise the social (Baudrillard 1995: 90). And the simulacrum functions in a similar way:

It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself, that is, an operation to deter every real process by its operational double (...) Never again will the real have to be produced (Baudrillard 1998: 204).

Whereas Balibar and Macherey addressed the institution of Literature, Baudrillard addressed institutions in general. The notion of the simulacrum as well, since it also refers to institutions, could be applied to the institution of Literature. In spite of the fact that the simulacrum is not connected to language [realism's desire to describe everything with language and its faith in it were abandoned at the point when the media produced descriptions that were 'more real than the real' (Morris 1988: 207-208)] but to the media, all institutions, Literature and the mass media included, may be said to produce more and more objects, which take the place of the real and make meaning mirrored, reproduced, and lost. They may be said to produce an excess of objects that take the place and the functions of reality, of their origins, until reality no longer exists.

1.4.9 Discrimination and effects

Thus sign comes before sense, and sense does not follow; but what does follow, is discrimination. In an arbitrary and cruel order, an order that has no reason for existing, discrimination is a way to mark the objects, in a rigorous, definite and decisive, unchangeable way, in a violent ceremony (Morris 1988: 206; see also Baudrillard 1983a: 240-241). Ruled by discrimination, the excess of objects in Baudrillard is senseless, but strictly ordered and over controlled (Morris 1988: 204, 206). This notion of discrimination comes to the area of literary reading at the stage of the dependent reader, when the literary texts are being pre-judged by literary criticism in ways that the dependent reader is not allowed to examine. Discrimination is a prevalent condition when the literary text that is taught and thought as worthy of being read becomes void of content and thus of sense, a mere title attributed to a reputed author. It is when the media hype around a literary text becomes more

important in literary reading than the reading of the text itself, and the text is being read because of the hype, not because of itself.

The sense is gone, but the object/text that is empty of sense is not empty of effects. The effect is linked with the sign, and ‘the effect precedes the cause, and in our ends are our beginnings’ (Morris 1988: 207). Even without cause and without sense, effects are still there. Even a simulacrum, an object, has real effects. That verification eliminates the possible political problem of seeing for example (an image of) racism as ‘simply a simulacrum’ and not seeing a corresponding reality (see for example Wallace 1992: 662) – reality exists, as long as its effects are tangible.

1.4.10 The simulacrum and the literary text

It remains to tackle the issue of whether the simulacrum can be the literary text. In Balibar and Macherey’s account, the literary text is not void of sense.¹⁸ In Baudrillard, the simulacrum is senseless. Language is abolished, and what used to be realism’s desire to describe all in language – and its faith in language – was replaced by the image offered by the media (as above, Morris 1988: 207-208). But abandoning language, contemporary culture had to give up ‘those illusions that only language might invent’ (Morris 1988: 208). It was replaced by hype, the model of inflated description, which ‘dreams that its dream might be fiction’ (ibid.: 210), which strives to attain fiction, and never accomplishes it. Instead of accomplishing fiction, hype ‘is ever pursuing itself’ (Morris 1988: 210). Since reality doesn’t exist any more, and thus it cannot be the one to feed the images/simulacra/objects, hype goes through self-perpetuation, seducing the subject with its own repetition, without sense, like a mantra (Morris 1988: 200-201). In the end, there is a reproduction of the reproduction, a ‘re-telling of fables, anecdotes and stories’, ‘told and retold as an instance (...) of the principle of seduction’ (Morris 1988: 201).

If we accept Morris’s interpretation of Baudrillard’s postmodernism, his attempt to bring back language leads him to theory, not fiction. This is a theory that strives to attain the condition of narrative (Morris 1988: 210).

¹⁸ The function, the effect that they theorised the text has – when the text is full of sense – will be argued against later in the thesis, in the second chapter of the Greek part, before the findings are presented.

Language and its needed illusions do not come to Baudrillard's postmodernism via fiction – rather, **fiction is an unattainable dream** – but the effort is for them to come via Theory. And in the end, Morris is horrified that instead of something else, something more, what began 'as the most sustained meditation attempted on the conditions of contemporary culture should, after all, *end there*': with the absence of Things, of the object, 'back in the prison-house of language' (Morris 1988: 210-211), when language is linked with Theory, and not with fiction or the literary text; horrified that this meditation on contemporary culture ends up congratulating itself, perpetuating itself rather than going beyond that. She is horrified that the postmodern description will remain in the field of the description of a condition that should be changed and remain there congratulating itself that it saw through it, but without offering a solution.

The literary text, unattained in this postmodernism as fiction and narrative are unattained (Morris 1988: 210, 208), remains a realm of language and illusion. It can have a relationship to the postmodern condition at the point when it becomes self-perpetuating, empty of sense, and when its many instances are ordered in an arbitrary and imposing manner. In effect, it can only correspond with this interpretation of postmodernism when it gives up fiction and narrative (which it cannot do), or when it is used in discrimination (which it can do) because in discrimination the literary text becomes an arbitrary pre-determined value, giving up its meaning, its sense (see Morris 1988: 206) – and giving up the act of being read.

I think that postmodernism presents a voice of caution, a warning of what can be, if one does not guard against 'the nightmare absence of Things' (Morris 1988: 211), the absence of objects and of texts. If one does not guard against the reign of a 'seductive and senseless' Theory (Morris 1988: 210), a Theory characterised by an absence of narrative and fiction – a Theory foreign to Literature. Theory and the Literary text are thus related in this aphorism. But it can also be that postmodernism offers a description of an 'interregnum':

The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear (Gramsci 1999: 276).

CHAPTER 2

THE EFFECTS OF CULTURAL THEORY ON THE THEORISATION OF LITERARY READING AND ITS TEACHING

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2.1 From postmodernism to the Third Space of negotiation and from the dependent to the performing reader: Literary reading as a social practice

The ‘morbid symptom’ of words being seen as empty of meaning is a phenomenon that is more intense nowadays. A telling example can be found in political language: while all political parties talk about taking care of ‘the people’, about ‘democracy’, or about ‘people’s rights’, they attach multiple and contradictory meanings to such words that used to carry clear, concrete and undisputed connotations. This pluralism of interpretations often creates a void,¹⁹ perhaps more today than it had hitherto.

Lived as a metaphor rather than as nihilism (Hall 1996d: 134), postmodernism can be seen as a well-deserved scepticism towards old discourses about right and wrong, and can mark a transitional period towards ‘truths’ that are continuously contested rather than for ever decided. This tension and contestation, an intellectual and social end for Stuart Hall reached through his notions of *arbitrary closure*, *positionality* and *articulation* that we will later deal with in this chapter, can take place in a space of negotiation, a space in-between in which old positions can be re-evaluated.

Cultural Studies itself was to many a response to the feeling that a new society was emerging as the old was left behind²⁰ and its role was seen to be, and can still be, to contest traditional roles and boundaries (Hall 1996h: 408). In Hall’s view it can provide a ‘language’ for the current processes of contestation, a language of negotiation (ibid.).

Under the broad banner of Cultural Studies and literary theory and having postmodernism as its point of departure, the post-colonialism that Homi Bhabha appropriated provided a theorisation of an in-between space of negotiation. He called it a ‘Third Space’ (see Bhabha 1998: particularly 211). Post-colonialism is not my

¹⁹ See Hall 1992: 292, as well as Morris’s input in the discussion of his article, Hall 1992: 291-292; see also Bhabha 1992: 57; hooks 1992: 345; Bhabha 1998: 208-209 addressing the weaknesses of the pluralism that multiculturalism is; McLaren 1994: 203 on containing rather than respecting cultural difference via pluralism.

²⁰ Williams 1999b: 158; see also Gramsci 1999: 325, Goldmann 1976b: 93, 95-96.

immediate concern here, but I would like to refer to this particular theorisation because it is especially fitting for my view of a space for the reader, and the way that it is constructed. Besides, this theorisation seems to correspond with theoretical approaches of others,²¹ who cannot be pinpointed as postcolonial thinkers.

In Bhabha's theorisation, the Third Space is an in-between space of negotiation (Bhabha 2000: 25) where meaning and representation are negotiated (Bhabha 1998: 211). It is also a space of culture (Bhabha 2000: 7), a communal space (Bhabha 2000: 17), a space of meaning (Bhabha 2000: 36) and understanding:

The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilised in the passage through a Third Space (Bhabha 2000: 36).

It is not a void in the way that Baudrillard described an in-between space:

If there is a part of nothing, of zero, a fatal strategy of the void which is perceived, as in some Chinese intellectuals, as an in-between space that allows you to circulate in-between the data and to find the line of thinking, if this is what they call zero, void, all those who accuse me of being a nihilist, then yes, in that sense I am a nihilist! (Baudrillard 2005, quoted in Xenaki 2005: 8).²²

Far from being a space from which to 'view things from afar', or view things 'from above',²³ Bhabha's Third Space is not at all void and not at all neutral; it is full of meaning and intensely political (Bhabha 2000: 23), and corresponds to Kobena Mercer's following description:

Contrary to the impression given by academic deconstructionists, the moment of indeterminacy, undecidability and ambivalence is never a neutral or purely textual affair – it is when politics is experienced at its most intense (Mercer 1998: 62).

²¹ Stuart Hall in particular, referred to Cultural Studies intellectuals who occupy a 'double space' of translation/transition (Hall 1996h: 399).

²² See also McLaren 1994: 193, on 'the spectatorial detachment of those postmodern free-floating intellectuals who, despite their claim to be part of a collective deconstructive project, often fail to mobilise intellectual work in the interest of a liberatory praxis'.

²³ Hall accused Baudrillard of this. And he went on to suggest: 'I think Baudrillard needs to join the masses for a while, to be silent for two-thirds of a century, just to see what it feels like. So, it is precisely at the site of the political possibilities of the masses that my political objections to, and contestations with, postmodernism come through most sharply' (Hall 1996d: 141).

2.2 What this space can accomplish: theory and politics, theory and practice, together in the third space

Hall insisted that 'movements provoke theoretical moments. And historical conjunctures insist on theories: they are real moments in the evolution of theory' (Hall 1992: 283; see also Grossberg 1996b: 153 on Hall), as Bhabha did (Bhabha 1998: 220; 2000: 19-20, 30). The third space involves a combination of theory and politics. It is a space for continuous tension.²⁴ In Mercer's words:

Solidarity does not mean that everyone thinks in the same way, it begins when people have the confidence to disagree over issues of fundamental importance precisely because they 'care' about constructing common ground (Mercer 1998: 68).

Bhabha theorised the same tension taking place in the Third Space, as a constant re-valuing (Bhabha 1992: 58). He used Mill's words to say that 'if opponents of all important truths do not exist, it is indispensable to imagine them' (Mill 1972: 93-94, quoted in Bhabha 2000: 23). Continuous tension eliminates the discourse on the value of pluralism. Pluralism does not provide respect for different, opposite opinions, but containment of them; it does not make room for the subjective (Hall 1996d: 145 for the importance of subjectivity),²⁵ and as it has been described as a cure for social inequalities, it makes it more difficult to try and involve the opposite opinions in the debate. As far as the pluralist cure is concerned, the opposite opinion will be heard, even encouraged, but not listened to and considered. No tension takes place, no argument, all is 'accepted'. Pluralism is not politics, it is the abjuration of politics, as it does not see politics as a process of continuous negotiation, but as the mere existence, (not negotiation between) of many voices.

As opposed to this, Hall's view is that 'politics does not reflect majorities, it constructs them' (Hall 1987: 35). Equally, for Bhabha's attempt to develop a postcolonial theory, within the Third Space, negotiation does not lead to a reconciliation/containment, but to a continuous expression of the antagonistic opinion,

²⁴ See Hall 1992: 290-291 endorsing continuous tension as a way to making a difference in society (see also Hall 1992: 278, 284).

²⁵ 'Often [white students'] rage erupts because they believe that all ways of looking that highlight difference subvert the liberal conviction that it is the assertion of universal subjectivity (we are all just people) that will make racism disappear. They have a deep emotional investment in the myth of 'sameness' even as their actions reflect the primacy of whiteness as a sign informing who they are and how they think' (hooks 1992: 339).

an expression which (Mill also argued) makes us aware of our own opinion (Bhabha 2000: 24, referring to Mill). This is the chance we have to compare it with its opposite, to measure it against its opponents. And it is a condition that allows a closure, be it arbitrary and temporary, a condition that allows a 'winner' of the argument.

2.3 Arbitrary closure

Considering the opposite view, and considering one's own view in the light of the opposite one, means that in the third space meaning is recovered from the situation of a general pluralism that pays no attention to particular meanings. The way each of the opposing positions interprets reality, the sense they each make of it, their individual, subjective meaning is taken into account (see Hall 1996d: 145). In that way meaning is not a general concept but a particular one, with a set of arguments supporting it.

The consideration of the opposite gets rid of the anger involved and encoded in social problems and inequalities when they are elaborated in social discourse; especially since even justified anger may jeopardise the chances for positive change, provoking paralysing guilt and denial to the 'guilty', a handicap to forming alliances (see Mercer 1998: 67-68; hooks 1992: 346). Considering the opposite also eliminates a stale inversion of the High/Low–Ours/Theirs hierarchy (Bhabha 2000: 19; 1992: 57).²⁶

McLaren concentrated that logic in pedagogy:

We need to move beyond pedagogies of protest, which Houston Baker reminds us only reinforces the dualism of 'self' and 'other' and reinstates the basis of dominant racist evaluations, and preserves the 'always ready' arrangements of white patriarchal hegemony (McLaren 1994: 218, also referring to Baker 1985: 388).

²⁶ See also Hall 1996c: 449, on how black cinema directors are required to say the preposterous lie that *all* blacks are nice people, and on how such reversals of the hierarchies of racism operate in an inhibiting manner for the artists themselves; white directors are allowed to make any film they want, black directors are only allowed to 'celebrate' resistance to racism. See also Stuart 1998: 32-33 on 'a morally authoritarian, feminist hegemony'; van Zoonen 1994: 4, also quoting Mouffe 1992: 372, on how 'one can be subordinated in one relation (of woman vs man) and dominant in another (of white woman vs black woman)'.

The Third Space of negotiation and tension allows the possibility of a 're-positioning' of those who used to be the opposition (Hall 1996c: 449; hooks 1992: 346), making alliance possible, making 'changing one's mind' possible.

This type of resolution of the tension, and any other, was theorised by Hall in the notion of 'arbitrary closures'. An arbitrary closure is a closure that is not final or absolute, but instead always open and subject to re-negotiation.²⁷ These closures are positions that need to be enunciated, positions that are different and distinct from others. They are not to remain unchanged, and they most probably will be translated and moved, but they are differences that 'really matter' and need to be enunciated (Hall 1992: 278).

I don't believe knowledge is closed, but I do believe that politics is impossible without what I have called 'the arbitrary closure'; without what Homi Bhabha called social agency as an arbitrary closure. That is to say, I don't understand a practice which aims to make a difference in the world, which doesn't have some points of difference or distinction which it has to stake out, which really matter (Hall 1992: 278).

2.4 Enunciation, resistance, insurgency and the performing reader

The interconnection of theory and politics that Hall and Bhabha insisted upon is based on the assumption that theory can intervene in society (Hall 1992: 282, 286), on the assumption that what needs to be done is to develop 'intellectual and theoretical work as a political practice' (Hall 1992: 281). Theoretical practice should not be seen as a substitute for politics (Hall 1992: 286); but it should be a *necessary delay* (Hall 1992: 283, 284), as politics have to pass through theory. On the other hand, serious theoretical work should be characterised by a modesty (Hall 1992: 286, 288) that acknowledges the value of politics (Hall 1992: 286). Intervening in society, making a difference, is achieved with both theory and politics.

Not theory as the will to truth, but theory as a set of contested, localised, conjunctural knowledges, which have to be debated in a dialogical way. But also as a practice which always thinks about its

²⁷ Hall 1992: 278, 283; Morris in the discussion of the same paper/conference presentation, Hall 1992: 291-292; Bhabha 1992: 58-59.

intervention in a world in which it would make some difference, in which it would have some effect. Finally, a practice which understands the need for intellectual modesty. I do think there is all the difference in the world between understanding the politics of intellectual work and substituting intellectual work for politics (Hall 1992: 286).

Committed to Theory,²⁸ Bhabha suggested that ‘history is *happening* – within the pages of theory, within the systems and structures we construct to figure the passage of the historical’ (Bhabha 2000: 25; also Grossberg 1996b: 153, on Hall). So politics and theory are taking place the one alongside the other, have the same value, and theory is indispensable to politics (Bhabha 1998: 220; 2000: 19-20, 30).

The unity of theory and practice is not just a matter of mechanical fact, but a part of the historical process, whose elementary and primitive phase is to be found in the sense of being ‘different’ and ‘apart’, in an instinctive feeling of independence, and which progresses to the level of real possession of a single and coherent conception of the world (Gramsci 1999: 333).

The theorisation of tension allows enunciation as a social process and eliminates binarism (Bhabha 1992: 57), which is based on the logic that there is no process involved, that all has already been decided.

[**The social process of enunciation**, which replaced the logic of cultural binarism is] a more *dialogic* process that attempts to track the processes of displacement and realignment that are already at work, **constructing** something different and hybrid from the encounter: a **third space** that does not simply revise or invert the dualities, but *revalues* the ideological bases of division and difference (Bhabha 1992: 58, italics author's own, other emphasis added).

Bhabha also protested against the postmodernist notion of opposition, of resistance as something inherent in power (contained in, rather than by, power). Whereas postmodernism would see the political moment of enunciation as a response to the subject being marginalised, and therefore initiated by the exercise of power itself, Bhabha’s attempt to develop a postcolonial theory saw this enunciation/resistance as coming from outside and beyond the hierarchies and structures of power (Bhabha 1992: 56-57).

²⁸ Reference to his chapter ‘Commitment to Theory’, in *The Location of Culture*

To say that struggle, agency and the questioning of the sententious will necessarily come from those who have been suppressed *because* they have been suppressed (Bhabha 1992: 56 referring to postmodernism), is to diminish the importance and the impact of an act of insurgency; it is to suggest that ‘all that effort’ is not needed after all, since power has that result *anyway*.

Insurgency is impeded once we regularise it, since this attitude involves another danger: to say that resistance to power is inherent in power, that power includes resistance against itself, is also to rest assured that we need not do anything to encourage that resistance. It is close to saying that no social policies, no institutions are needed to support the positions that oppose the ruling positionalities.

A theorisation of the reading of literature that would suggest that no matter what types of strategy the institution of education used, the reader will be able to understand and be critical of the text, would underestimate the effort involved in becoming a performing reader. It would also underestimate the ways in which certain educational strategies and social conditions can operate so as to maintain dependent readers at their status of dependency.

2.5 Articulation: the outcome of the tension in the third space

Hall theorised articulation as the enunciation, as well as the way that different elements are combined at a particular time to form a specific, not random but temporary, complex structure (Hall 1980: 325, 1996d: 141-142). Articulation is a moment of enunciation, a moment of arbitrary closure (Slack 1996: 115). It is a combination that is linked with the specific place and time (Hall 1996d: 141; Bhabha 1992: 57; Williams 1971a: 69), and thus is not necessary but only possible. It is a unity-in-difference, a structure in spite of differences and in spite of contradictions, which also, being a structure, involves a structuring of the relations between the elements that is hierarchical, ‘relations of dominance and subordination’ (Hall 1980: 325; Larrain 1996: 48-49, also quoting Hall 1986a: 44). The self itself is a contradictory unity, ‘constituted out of and by difference’ (Hall 1996d: 145), and so are cultural forms, ‘never whole, never fully closed or sutured’ (Hall 1996d: 145).

Via this view, the contestation between the (theoretical) text and the (practical, in view of her experience, her *history*) reader also becomes less of a distanced relationship. Reading is the third space where a theoretical contestation between the

performing reader and the text is taking place. As a theoretical contestation, reading is the ‘necessary delay’ before social action, before the reader constructs an opinion of the world via the text and her relationship with it, and acts accordingly, before she moves to social action via the kind of position her tension with the text articulated. The performing reader achieves an arbitrary closure, an articulation of the tension between her and the text, rather than relying on a ‘pre-packaged’ pluralism – like that that the literary criticism of Richards promoted through the theorising of individual response, a response that was not based on reading as a process, but reading as a set way of understanding set messages. The arbitrary closure of the *performing reader* can thus be a ‘re-articulation’, it can result in a re-positioning of the reader; it can result in changing her mind.

2.6 Ideology and positioning

The position of the reader is to a great extent decided by ideology, if we accept that ideology is how people are enabled ‘to make some sense or intelligibility of their historical situation’ (Hall 1996d: 142), and thus of their relation to their conditions of existence (Althusser 1971a: 164; see also Barrett 1993: 173 on Althusser). Material interests, although they count, have to be ‘ideologically defined’ (Hall 1987: 33) in order to weigh upon the person’s choices. That means that *symbolic inclusion* can under certain conditions overcome material interests (ibid.), and thus it can overcome actual exclusion. Therefore working class people may vote for a conservative party, based on images that enable them to imagine themselves moving upwards in the social scale and ignoring real conditions that are not referred to their imagination (Hall 1987). Fitzgerald addressed ethnic identity in the same way that Hall addressed social identity:

Modern ethnic identifications work more by ‘external symbols’ (symbolic identities) than any actual cultural ability, knowledge or performance [(Sollors 1986: 35)]. The emotional significance of such attachments persists while the actual cultural content has dramatically changed (Fitzgerald 1994: 116).

Based on symbols and imagination, affiliation is thus even stronger than it is when based on material, ‘concrete’ interests. A stronger ‘we’ is constructed via imagination

and emotions than via logic (see also Aristotle 1206b 18-29) – and that ‘we’ could even be illogical, but it would be ideologically structured.

2.7 Ideology affects people’s lives

Althusser contended that ideology is the way people represent the imaginary relation that they have to their conditions of life (Althusser 1971a: 165); it has an allusion to reality, but it is also an illusion (Althusser 1971a: 162).

While admitting that they [ideologies] do not correspond to reality, i.e. that they constitute an illusion, we admit that they do make an allusion to reality, and that they need only be ‘interpreted’ to discover the reality of the world behind their imaginary representation of that world (ideology = illusion/allusion) (Althusser 1971a: 162).

Although ‘ideology [for Marx] is the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group’ (Althusser 1971a: 158), it is also the way those ideas and representations are ‘lived’ by the person or persons. Indeed ‘the ‘ideas’ of a human subject exist in his actions’ (Althusser 1971a: 168, 170).

We now use [ideology] to refer to *all* organised forms of social thinking. (...) We mean the practical as well as the theoretical knowledges which enable people to ‘figure out’ society, and within whose categories and discourses we ‘live out’ and ‘experience’ our objective positioning in social relations (Hall 1996g: 27, original emphasis).

What Hall called categories of ideology, Althusser theorised as the seminal Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs).

2.8 Ideological State Apparatuses: Literature and education

Based on a Marxist model of ideology, the ISAs are institutional formations that support the oppressive State, and act as vessels of the ruling ideology.

I shall call Ideological State Apparatuses a certain number of **realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of**

distinct and specialised institutions. I propose an empirical list of these (...) (the order in which I have listed them has no particular significance): - the religious ISA (the system of different Churches), - the **educational** ISA (the system of the different public and private 'Schools'), - the family ISA, - the legal ISA (belonging both to the repressive State apparatus, and to the system of ISAs), - the political ISA (the political system, including the different Parties), - the trade-union ISA, - the communications ISA (press, radio and television, etc.), - the **cultural** ISA (**Literature**, the Arts, sports, etc.) (Althusser 1997: 53-54 and/or Althusser 1971a: 143, emphasis added).

Importantly, Althusser's ISAs essay stressed the relation of practices to ideology instead of just ideas (Hall 1996f: 34; see also 32; Althusser 1971a: 166-168, 170) and defined ideology in broader ways, ways that included definitions that had come to describe culture (Hall 1996f: 34) (and notably that Literature and education belong to the ISAs). All the ISAs are the site of ideologies (Althusser 1971a: 184-185) and their material existence, the site where the rituals of ideologies take place (Althusser 1971a: 168).

2.9 Education and rituals: playing with the imaginary

Rituals have a prominent place in the ISAs, and govern ideological practices, making them more powerful in their effect. Liesbet van Zoonen (1994: particularly 37) referred to two models of communication that can be applied to literary education: the transmission and ritual models. In the transmission model the interest is in the text which is transmitted and in its interpretation by the receiver, while in the ritual model the ceremony is more important. Both the ritualised practices and the ideas transmitted are important in forming the ideology promoted in the ISA of education (Althusser 1971a: 185-186). Thus both what is said, the content of the teachings, as well as the gathering and arrangement of the students in the classroom or in other instances of school life²⁹ play a role in the transmission, production and reproduction of ideology. Praise and punishment are also rituals, as is the sitting arrangement for the teacher and the pupils in the classroom, aimed to elicit some sort of respect for the teacher. Education rituals are present in everything that brings order to the process of

²⁹ Greek schoolchildren for example are arranged by twos in lines in the schoolyard according to height in the morning, before going inside the classroom. Part of the morning ritual is to say a prayer, announced by one child who stands out, and listened to by all classes, that have been organised in lines.

teaching and learning: manifest rituals that demonstrate hierarchies and expectations, the rituals of the exams, the rituals that govern the processes of making questions and providing answers. Those rituals strengthen the rules through respect and habit, and often **render the manifestation more important than what is manifested** (which means for example that even a teacher who is not generally respected by the schoolchildren, is respected within the ritual).

Supported by rituals governing time, space and even the contents of teaching, the teacher and her teaching material come to have a more powerful effect than they would otherwise. The ritual makes authority into something imaginary, 'greater than real'. With its help, the imaginary that is included in the understanding of school reality is accentuated, because of the use of the symbolic.³⁰

With reference to the 1987 elections in Britain, Hall described the power of the symbolic and of imagination in identifying with a political party ideologically: 'Elections are won or lost not just on so-called 'real' majorities, but on (equally real) 'symbolic majorities'' (Hall 1987: 33). The political imagination of the electorate made it identify ideologically with the winning party, through a future that was 'imagined – 'imaged', to coin a word' (ibid.).

2.10 The Third Space of education and literary reading

But as imagination and the symbolic interfere with ideology, it becomes clear that there can be no real control of it (see also Clarke et. al. 1982: 67). Both these, imagination and the symbolic, are inscribed in culture and art, which justifies the fact that Althusser extended ideology to include definitions of what used to be considered the realm of culture (Hall 1996f: 34).

The symbolism inscribed in the literary text and the imagination of the reader are elements of the negotiation between the ideology inscribed in the text and the ideology of the reader, that takes place during reading. While a work does not have an indefinite amount of meanings (Macherey 1980: 80), there can be an indefinite amount of negotiations between the two ideologies in reading – and no necessary articulation between the two. Through reading, the ideology of the text can

³⁰ See Hall 1996j: 294, linking the ritual with the symbolic referring to the book *Resistance Through Rituals*; see also Hall 1996h: 403 on Cultural Studies being dependent on the symbolic.

interpellate the reader as a subject (Althusser 1971a: 170, 181), it can 'discover its subject' (Hall 1996d: 142; see also Larrain 1996: 48). It can re-articulate one's ideology; it can symbolically include (Hall 1987: 33) the reader as part of what it describes, alluding to her perception of her reality, based on the ideology that she already has. It can also offer her an illusion through its fiction.

Thus 'contradictory' and 'never fully closed or sutured' (Hall 1996d: 145), cultural forms as ISAs are sites of struggle:

The Ideological State Apparatuses may be not only the *stake*, but also the *site* of class struggle, and often of bitter forms of class struggle. The class (or class alliance) in power cannot lay down the law in the ISAs as easily as it can in the (repressive) State apparatus, not only because the former ruling classes are able to retain strong positions there for a long time, but also because the resistance of the exploited classes is able to find means and occasions to express itself there, either by the utilisation of their contradictions, or by conquering combat positions in them in struggle (Althusser 1971a: 147, see also 149, original emphasis).

Althusser's theorisation sees the ISAs as a space of negotiation. This means that it's not only the text that can interpellate, the reader through the ideology inscribed in it, but also that this is a space for the reader to re-negotiate her relationship with her conditions of existence, for the reader to re-position herself. It is also a theorisation of the ISAs as a space that allows room for resistance (Althusser 1971a: 147, 149; see also Corrigan & Frith 1982: 235). As Literature and education are ISAs, they can be a space for that resistance, a Third in-between Space corresponding to Bhabha's theorisation. Bhabha attested to the importance of this:

Forms of popular rebellion and mobilisation are often most subversive and transgressive when they are created through oppositional *cultural* practices (Bhabha 2000: 20, original emphasis).

Whereas his view of cinematic art can be extended to the art of literature:

The specific value of a politics of cultural production [is that], because it makes the surfaces of cinematic signification the grounds of political intervention, it gives depth to the language of social criticism and **extends the domain of 'politics'** in a direction that will not be entirely dominated by the forces of economic or social control (Bhabha 2000: 20, emphasis added).

It is important to see that the ISAs are both the Third Space, the space where the negotiation occurs, and the result of the negotiation, the (end but not final) articulation of the ideological and political elements that form an institution. They are the site of struggle, and the stake (see above, Althusser 1971a: 147): the prize of the ‘winner’ of the negotiation will be to rule over it, to result in an articulation that is based on her own ideology – which can be formed and re-formed during the negotiation. This negotiation, this ideological struggle, Althusser saw as a class struggle (Althusser 1971a: 147, 149, 184; see also Barrett 1993: 171). This is especially clear if we bear in mind that class is not defined on a purely economic basis (Hall 1987: 33; Mercer 1998: 57), nor is it an a priori social formation.³¹ Neither class, nor gender or race are primordial, natural existences, and they would not be contested the way they have been if the discourse about them had not been oriented in the manner it had (see Mercer 1998: 59; Bhabha 2000: 26; Hall 1996d: 147, also referring to Laclau; Hall 1996c: 443). Even more importantly, classes do not have an a priori ideology ‘already prescribed and prearranged like number plates on their backs’.³² Their unity-in-difference is ‘politically constructed’, i.e. constructed through struggle. It is re-negotiated continually, and can be re-articulated and so a new articulation can be reached at any point.

Having a class formation at its heart (Hall 1996d: 144), as it originates in classes and their experience of class struggle (Althusser 1971a: 186), ideology can be ‘articulated to a social movement, a movement of people’ (Hall 1996d: 144) and thus intervene in society. It can do that if ‘it begins to have forms of intelligibility which explain a shared collective situation’ (ibid.). Ideology discovers its subject (Hall 1996d: 142, 144) and if it can constitute people as a ‘collective subject’, it can become ‘a historical, or political force’ (Hall 1996d: 144).

2.11 Recognition

The prerequisite of the collective subject and the shared collective situation is also evident in Bhabha’s theorisation of the Third Space. For him, the Third Space satisfies ‘a profound desire for social solidarity’ (Bhabha 2000: 18), a desire to recognise oneself in the Other. For the first time including the subject in the (Marxist)

³¹ See Hall 1996d: 147, referring to Laclau; Hall 1996c: 443; Bhabha 2000: 26; Mercer 1998: 59.

³² Hall 1996f: 34 referring to Althusser, using Poulantzas’s words; Althusser 1971a: 165-166.

theorisation of ideology (Barrett 1993: 178-179), Althusser theorised the same need for recognition: for him, the subject that is interpellated by ideology, is called to recognise herself in the mirror structure that the ideology has constructed as ideal. She has to want to be like the ultimate Subject, someone who is seen as the creator of that ideology; even more, she is called to behave in a manner that would allow that Subject to recognise herself in the interpellated (Althusser 1971a: 178-182). In the religious ideology the ultimate Subject is God, in the educational ideology of literary reading the ultimate Subject can be the teacher or the literary critic, or the author. But this is not enough. The subject that is interpellated should also be in a position to recognise herself in that ideology (Althusser 1971a: 181), find common ground with that ideology and her experience of her relations with her conditions of existence. Hall agrees:

One has to see the way in which a variety of different social groups enter into and constitute for a time a kind of political and social force, in part by seeing themselves **reflected** as a unified force in the ideology which constitutes them (Hall 1996d: 144, emphasis added).

This mutual recognition of the self in ideology is a desire shared by both holders of ideology in the Third Space of literary reading. One way that this has been articulated from the perspective of the reader is mimicry.

2.12 Mimicry: the dependent reader mimicking the literary critic

This recognition can be extorted: Hall commented on what Spivak called epistemic violence: ‘splitting on both sides of the division’ (Hall 1996c: 445). The hierarchical division is not only between the teacher/literary critic and the pupil, but also between pupils. A dichotomy is articulated between those who are represented as good pupils and those who are represented as bad ones. In wanting to recognise herself in the pupil, the educator may demand mimicry and repetition of her own views.

But this involves the postmodernist danger of the lack of meaning. It also involves the very probable outcome of the mimic becoming only a partial prototype. And in that way it brings forth the threat of defacing the original.

2.13 Mimicry as a threat to the model

Another significant way to view mimicry is in its reverse action: mimicry may also be a way to resist dominance and elude control (Loomba 2000: 89, referring to Bhabha 1994). Firstly, by being a way of defeating the ‘conqueror’ at his own game, with the threat of depreciation, of defacing; in a simple sentence, using the word ‘sentence’ in both meanings, the *dependent* reader would say: ‘– I am like you, therefore you are like me: like me, whom you consider inferior’. Secondly, by the fact that a part of the mimicking subject is left ‘unmimicking’, but also concealed from the model, by her effort to change a lot of herself so as to be like the dominant subject. In a simple sentence: ‘– I am still not like you, there are still parts of me that are not like you, but I’m hiding it, so you don’t know when and how it’ll come out and threaten you’. Denying herself, the mimic becomes an enemy who does not have a face: a camouflaged, pretending to be you, enemy – even worse, being partially you, having acquired some characteristics that strongly remind you of yourself. Finally, a third way of threatening the model in the image of which the mimic constructs herself is that by mimicry she resists being signified as Other. She therefore renders invalid the effort of the model to separate herself from her. In a simple sentence: ‘ – You said I am inferior, but look: I read the same literature as you, and interpret it the same way as you do’. In the instance of successful mimicry, the ideological construction of the model’s superiority is destabilised. Fighting to be identified as equal, the reader refuses to represent difference and thus challenges authority (see Bhabha 2001: 384). Thus the lack of ‘continuous tension’, the docile behaviour of a dependent reader, brings a continuous tension of another kind. A hidden tension, a hidden challenge to authority, which, without the arguments negotiated, does not lead to new articulations, does not respect any arbitrary closure, and does not make any difference; no new results come from reading.

2.14 Mimicry as a threat to the mimic

The mimic herself, mimicking the ‘prototype’ even with partial success, forsakes her own essence (Bhabha 2000: 90). She becomes the one without an identity: losing the previous one is a prerequisite, and yet it seems difficult to hold on to the ‘desired’,

constantly challenged by the 'legitimate' holders of it, constantly needing to prove and verify her 'equality' to her 'equals'.

Under specific conditions the *adequate* reader may have access to the positionality of the *dependent reader*, but how alienated from its 'source' is the story of a working class boy or girl who becomes a literary critic? 'Mimics' like Carolyn Steedman, Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams have moved from a working class starting point to a middle class social position, in some ways by mimicking cultural practices of another social class. Writing for example, was one way that took them away from the 'structures of deprivation' (Steedman 1994: 17) and moved them to middle class structures. Yet the new social frames do not provide a solid support and demand to be renewed with 'fresh effort and commitment' each time (Ehrenreich 1990: 15). The middle class title needs to be constantly verified with work, whereas on the other hand it is also constantly threatened by 'a fear of inner weakness, of growing soft, of failing to strive, of losing discipline and will' (Ehrenreich 1990: 15). Richard Hoggart described it well: 'I often feel insecure and anxious to justify myself. I always feel guilty if I haven't 'done my homework', so to speak. I find it hard to relax sufficiently' (Hoggart 1970: 27). Under constant threat, the reader is constantly afraid of sliding into the condition of the merely adequate, common reader – and perhaps subsequently the merely adequate life conditions of the lower classes. That can lead to the reader 'trying too hard' to be accepted as middle class by agreeing with middle class viewpoints and 'flattering the superior', even when she does not believe those views; or it can lead to her overwhelmingly insisting on working class views in her effort to protect that background, weakening her current social positionality to a degree that annuls it, if she cannot see the arguments behind her re-positioning.

2.15 An in – between reader

Yet the experience of two positionalities may prove privileged exactly because it has offered 'residence' in two social places rather than one. The scholarship girl who turned into a middle class adult has the experience of two social realities, the experience of both classes. And she has the chance to play the game from within, being determined by the working class subjectivity that has partly shaped her own, and having the opportunities of a middle class subjectivity. Belsey (1982) contended

that education needs to work from within. At any rate, in a society where everything and everyone is interrelated, where one influences and is being influenced, as Castoriadis (1997c: 154-155) and Giddens (1996) have shown, it is more than ever before the case that more identities and subjectivities are being crowded inside one person. Besides, there can be no 'true and undistorted' being. Such perceptions are highly problematic, as was the nineteenth century notion of 'pure' literature, cleaned from the social experience of the writer and of the reader (Williams 1971b).

'Experience [can be drawn on], through different modes, to generate alternative accounts of reality in order to question existing accounts and itself unsettles many of the 'certainties' of intellectual practice' (Gray 1997: 89). Culture and subjectivity are in process, and so should be 'many of the certainties of intellectual practice'.

The mimic, the *dependent reader* can be of help in that process, since she exists more than others in the 'halfway between...not defined world', as minorities do (Bhabha 2000: 13, 14). The reason for that is that her identity, her positionality, is not (at least yet) defined. Her subjectivity too is 'halfway there', and characterised by an undecidability. Like a member of a minority who tries to mimic the colonial self, the mimic reader 'represents a hybridity, a *difference 'within'*, a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality' (Bhabha 2000: 13, emphasis added). This internal difference, this internal conflict can be the space in which the two positionalities are negotiated. It can be a Third Space, and from that the *performing reader* may emerge. The *dependent reader/mimic* can be one stage on the way to becoming a performing reader. As 'the self is contradictory' (Hall 1996d: 145; Weedon 1997d: 23), the Third Space can exist within but also 'outside' the person: in the conception of the reading act, seeing reading as a process of negotiation, where the position of the reader at the time of reading, and the position of the reading act itself (the position of the text as the reader understands it at the given moment when the reading is taking place) are negotiated.

Literary reading is itself the site where 'the ambivalences and ambiguities' of the 'unhomely', of the strange, the opposing, are enacted (Bhabha 2000: 18), even though the reader is 'looking for the join', looking for something to recognise, looking for social solidarity (ibid.). The *performing reader* is the reader who achieves that recognition via a negotiation with 'the ambivalences and ambiguities'. This is possible and more probable than in other 'Third Spaces' because the literary text itself

is not characterised by rigid certainties. Symbolism and imagination make sure that there are ambiguities inscribed in it, they make sure that there is a negotiation inscribed in it already, inherent in it.

2.16 The certainties before the ambiguities

On the way to negotiating with the ambiguities of the literary text and of its reading, the *performing reader*, passing from the stage of the *dependent reader*, came across some strong convictions. She came across certainties that literary criticism professes about the text and about reading, in the framework of education, certainties that can be useful. Having been a *dependent reader*, she benefited from past knowledge about what should be read, even though that depended on place and time, and thus is to a large extent arbitrary (Bhabha 1992: 57; Williams 1971a: 69); she benefited because she was more attentive to texts that were recommended, especially through education – she could not have found out the best literary texts on her own soon enough. [Besides, ‘how things are represented and the machineries and regimes of representation in a culture do play a *constitutive*, and not merely a reflexive, after-the-event, role’ (Hall 1996c: 443, original emphasis; see also Hall 1987: 31, 33; 1996i: 235)]. The trust of others in the relevance and ‘qualifications’ of the reading material had already formed an ideology around that text.

The student-reader/mimic preferred to read the broadly-read, well-disputed, well-respected text, so that she would in turn understand it more easily, since there would be more interpretations available. She could thus analyse and even apply it in research which would aspire to be read, understood and respected in turn. It is even possible that the reader’s attention to detail and belief in the virtues of what she read would suffice on their own to make even a text of minimal value ‘bear fruit’ and provide insights.

The stage of the *dependent reader* channelled the reader towards becoming a *performing reader*: if you want to move an ideology, ‘to re-articulate it in another way, you are going to come across all the grooves that have articulated it already’ (Hall 1996d: 143, referring to religious ideology). And before Cultural Studies, past articulations of literary reading and constructions of the *dependent reader* can be traced in the *British Reports on Education*.

CHAPTER 3

CONSTRUCTING THE DEPENDENT READER: THE REPORTS ON ENGLISH LITERARY EDUCATION

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3.1 The Reports and the state

The Reports that this present examination deals with spanned almost the whole of the twentieth century, and reflected the ways in which historical and social circumstances marked issues of English teaching and reading. Heavily dependent on the state and on government decisions, they marked a 'state-sponsored' construction of the reader.

As the state had proven itself 'better than private initiatives and individual entrepreneurs' at ensuring the social conditions of production (Hall 1981: 14), capitalist society had given it that role. And since education is a major component in the construction of social conditions, it too was handed to the state's jurisdiction. Forms of education that were not controlled by the state had been fought against and eliminated,³³ so that in the end only the state was allowed to form educational policy. Yet it was wrongly perceived as neutral.³⁴

The state had the principal say in the Reports, which were researched and presented by government appointed committees with the declared intention to inform about established educational policy and advise about needed reform (see for example the Hadow Report 1931: iv). These committees' members were considered an élite of pedagogical and literary critical thought, yet in reality it often happened that the committees only included what remained of that élite after it had gone through the government's political filter. The government could select its own advisors and the Reports were written under the auspices and direction of the state, often making the authors' advisory role potential rather than real. As the Reports would be read by a

³³ Corrigan and Frith 1982: 233-234; see also for example Steedman 1990: 180, on the Workers' Educational Association (WEA); for the social developments that led to education being available to all social classes, see also Steedman 1990: 179-181, on the Worker's Educational Association, and *ibid.*: 174, on the Socialist Sunday School movement, which 'originated in the West of Scotland in 1895'; see also Batsleer et. al. 1985: 52ff, on the WEA, the Plebs League and the National Council of Labour Colleges, 'the WEA's main rivals in the field of adult education'.

³⁴ Hall 1981: 9; see also Aronowitz & Giroux (1986: 205), who suggested that the state ought to be 'an object of critical inquiry rather than veneration' (pointing to the fact that in many cases it is an object of veneration).

broad segment of the public, this made it necessary for the bond between government and educators to appear a strong one.

Evidence that this was not the case was suppressed, as the case of the project *Language in the National Curriculum* demonstrates. Following the Cox Report (1989), this Report-like project concentrated on language; yet its findings never got to be published, because they did not correspond with government expectations. It seems that not only was the government not prepared to integrate the suggested reforms, but it was even unwilling to acknowledge the need for them. The publication was 'vetoed', and the project was not even discussed or contested. It never entered a debate about language. *The Oxford Companion to the English Language* gives a detailed account:

Because of concern about the level of knowledge of language on the part of the teachers (who, at the secondary level, had mostly qualified with degrees in literature), the Cox Report's recommendations were followed by a government-funded in-service training project known as *Language in the National Curriculum* or *LINC*, directed by Professor Ronald Carter of Nottingham University. However, the materials, due to be published by HMSO (Her Majesty's Stationery Office), were withdrawn in 1991 by ministerial order, and copyright was withheld for their commercial publication. Although precise reasons for these actions were not given, in the general view of the press they were a response to attempts by the writers of materials to situate language in social and political settings, and to 'downgrade' Standard English in relation to the use of dialect. The writers also rejected phonics as a technique for teaching spelling. In the opinion of many observers, the long-standing conflict between the views of Conservative politicians on the role of language and those of linguists and educationalists reached a new stage with an act of direct official censorship.³⁵

It seems that the nature of the research the committees undertook in writing most of the Reports could provoke findings that would not be liked by the government of the time, as they used 'witnesses'³⁶ and their inquiry spanned an average of two years.³⁷ But there was also internal censorship, within the committees.

³⁵ <http://www.xrefer.com/entry.jsp?xrefid=441647>, from Xrefer, 'the web's reference engine providing free access to an online collection of encyclopaedias, dictionaries, thesauri and quotations'. Entry: *Cox Report*. 'Xrefer' states at that webpage that the text is taken from *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*. The webpage was accessed on 15/12/2002.

³⁶ Newbolt Report 1921: 3; Hadow Report 1931: xii; Bullock Report 1975: xxxiii.

3.2 The committees

The members often addressed the demands of the Reports from the point of view of a civil servant rather than from that of the educationalist, Baldick contends:

Most of the committees' members were in fact 'professors of English literature' with the small 'p' appropriate to their religious terminology. And it is this (...) which gives rise to the unsteadiness of their rhetoric of Culture, in which a vocabulary of sanctification and worship jostles with the everyday professional 'staff', 'colleagues', 'degrees'. These overlaid religious references (...) Arnold could afford not only to do without, but to dismiss as ugly committee-room Philistinism (Baldick 1983: 98).

Yet, in spite of self-control due to these factors and of having to comply with omitting important issues, the committees did manage to include important issues. Significant inclusions were made possible and even necessary, partly due to the established authority of institutions that supported educational causes, institutions which were strengthened during the war.

Central among these, the National Board of Education and the English Association were founded in 1899 and 1907 respectively (Doyle 1989: 21, 23, 25, 31-32).³⁷ They put English at the centre of the educational debate, as 'an essential element in the national education',³⁸ thus, their formation was an important step towards fortifying institutionalisation. Poignantly, many of the members of the committees that drew up the Reports were also members of these two institutions.

There had also been Reports before the Board and the Association before the War, but their standing regarding English literary culture was of no real consequence; to a great extent this was because of the lack of institutionalised support (like that of the Board and the Association), but also because of the lack of a powerful impetus that a force like propaganda, together with the conditions that compelled it (the war), offered. An

³⁷ Newbolt Report 1921: 3; Hadow Report 1926: xvii; Hadow Report 1931: xii; Newsom Report 1963: vii; Bullock Report 1975: v.

³⁸ According to Baldick, the Association was founded a year earlier, in 1906 (1983: 93).

³⁹ Baldick 1983: 93, quoting the Constitution of the English Association, cited in Smith (Nowell) 1942: 5.

immature movement towards a ‘professionalisation’ of English *had* been starting to develop, but war propaganda overturned it – yet at the same time, in significant ways, verified it and took it to another level (see Baldick 1983: 86, 90).

Hence, the present examination begins with the *Newbolt Report*, entitled *The teaching of English in England*. Published in 1921, after the First World War, it was particularly seminal. As the war had created a different environment for English Literature and its reading, when peace was restored the state sought to respond so as regulate that environment. Together with the other issues it stressed, the Newbolt Report carried the state’s response to Literature’s war status.

3.3 English Literature and the war

The exceptional circumstances of the war had rendered Literature one of the most important cultural ‘representatives’ of the Nation. It was realised that in order to have all classes fighting against the enemy in the field, a strong sense of social unity had to be achieved. Mainly targeting the classes that were previously socially isolated from the rest of British society, war propaganda allowed the people to assume that the social equality that was an inevitable reality in the field of war would also be the norm in the society that would come after it. ‘To win the war, people were encouraged to believe that there would not be a return to widespread injustice and poverty’ (Sinfield 1989: 1, also for example 14). The soldiers were convinced that this better society was what they were fighting for in the field. The same soldiers came back from the war really keen on education, which propaganda had taught them to regard as ‘national education’ (Baldick 1983: 94).

Propaganda had utilised English Literature in the guise of the cultural representative of the whole of Britain. Based on a rhetoric of the unified and sacred Nation, Literature as the instrument of cultural unity was meant to inspire social unity. Ironically, the term *National Literature* (*Nationalliteratur*) itself had originated in Germany in the 1780s (Williams 1991: 195).⁴⁰ [Following another German example, that of the ‘hoch Deutsch’ (‘high’ German), the discourse around English National

⁴⁰ Around the 1800s, the concept of National Literature unified society under the rule of ‘cultured’ or ‘polite’ society, occupying the space once occupied by religious ritual and patronage as society’s unifying forces [Doyle 1989: 10-11; see also Davies (Tony) 1987: 255].

Literature recognised only one language, and only one language type within that, as the Nation's worthy representative, as literary language – no dialects, and no other languages that were used in the British Isles].

'The idea of a 'National Literature' had been growing strongly since the Renaissance' (Williams 1977a: 51) and was much strengthened in the nineteenth century. But now there was also something called the British War Propaganda Bureau, with its own Literature and Art Department (Baldick 1983: 87), which was ready to take advantage of this already established notion. Some important elements of the Bureau's construction of the role of English Literature and its reading were expressed in that a 'declaration' of the reasons for war and the government's aims, under the title 'Britain's Destiny and Duty', published in *The Times* on 18th September 1914, was signed by fifty-two respected authors (Baldick 1983: 87).

The fact that those authors' signatures added legitimacy to the published text indicates that English Literature already enjoyed a high status in public opinion – but the stress on the links with Britain, its 'destiny' and its 'duty', extended that cultural status to political issues; and vice versa, this stress gave literature a significant political status.

3.4 Literary criticism and English teaching

This positively viewed entrance of Literature into the political sphere supported it in new and significant ways, and encouraged literary criticism to grow too (Baldick 1983: 86). Thus, the war paved the way for the appearance of literary critics like Eliot and Richards.⁴¹ Before their criticism, English was suspected as a 'soft option' (Baldick 1983: 197).

Until the early nineteenth century, literary teaching in the United Kingdom meant the Classics – even 'Literature' was a term that was reserved for classical Latin and Greek works (Doyle 1989: 24). The lower classes were excluded from official education anyway, and women of any class were blocked from higher education: the reader of classical Literature was thus the gentlemen of the higher classes.

Nonetheless, English Literature appeared in British schooling as late as the second half of nineteenth century. Legitimation started from the Adult Education classes,

⁴¹ Eliot's critical production spanned in the years 1917-24, and Richards's in the years 1924-1929 (Baldick 1983: 197; see also Lodge 1989: 69 on Eliot) (World War I: 1914-1918).

where the working class and women first claimed the right to be taught English Literature. It aimed to educate the lower classes in language, though still leaving Greek and Latin classics for the higher classes. 'It is important, if its subsequent history is to make sense, to recognise that state education in England has been from the outset not 'classical' or historical or scientific or technical, but *literary*' (Batsleer et al. 1985: 19). The scheme was, 'Literature (Latin and Greek) for the upper classes and science for the middle class' (Doyle 1989: 23), and English Literature for the lower classes.

As a new subject, English was seen as 'not an adequate instrument of culture', and at first it would only appear in the curriculum of utilitarian colleges (Doyle 1989: 11). In the 1820s it was incorporated in the curriculum of the first utilitarian college, University College London. When King's College London was founded in the 1830s, moral attributes were attached to the 'English subjects', which were seen until then as anti-religious because of their relation with the enlightenment's rationality. But now English Literature was constructed as the carrier of ritual and moral value, substituting for the Church (Doyle 1989: 11).

At the end of the nineteenth century Oxbridge introduced a new Tripos for the subject of English Literature, Language and History. Other major institutions embraced English vernacular Literature in the same century, while the foundation of the National Board of Education in 1899 signalled co-ordinated efforts for a new direction in educational policies, which now aspired to implement an efficient and fully *national* system of education (Doyle 1989: 23, 25). A few years later, in 1907, the English Association was founded, and in 1910 the two bodies announced their intention to work together (Doyle 1989: 21, 31-32). The Association was representative of civil society, and the Board of Education of the state (Doyle 1989: 42). Members of the Association included professors of English Literature, as well as 'like-minded politicians, administrators and "men of letters"': it was thus a 'class-based mobilisation' (Doyle 1989: 32, 41).

The English Association's declarations were saturated with a moral attitude that reappeared in literary criticism and in the rest of the Reports: apparently, it set out to 'arrest cultural degeneration and preserve the national heritage'. Morality was to be made a conscious aim of the teacher, but an aim concealed from the pupils – which also indicates that these were to a certain extent the roots of the later Leavisite 'secret'

operation of the teacher/literary critic, who should be trusted dogmatically (Doyle 1989: 38-39).

This was a highly experimental era for the authorities, as well as for attempts to form a basic theoretical structure for the new discipline of English. Even at a governmental level, the 1904 School Regulations included English Language and Literature, as well as Geography and History under the title of 'English'; yet, by 1920, a circular from the Board suggested that only English Literature and Composition should be understood as 'English' (Doyle 1989: 25).

Economic factors were added to institutional support, verifying, as in the case of the critic, that literary criticism and educational practices were all affected by a constant interaction with economic, political and judicial discourses (Baldick 1983: 9). The turn towards the teaching of English meant that there was no need for specialist training in different linguistic practices, providing a cheap alternative to teaching Latin and Greek (Baldick 1983; Doyle 1989; Steedman 1992a: 618-619). English Literature and Composition were using a language that people were more or less all familiar with, at every level of education. Thus, developments like the availability of 'fictions from the past' (Steedman 1992a: 618) in mass-produced paperbacks that were included in the reading lists, and the spread of the English language, helped the growth of the national educational system.

Diverting, but also verifying, the work of bodies like the English Association, the war's cultural discourse developed very closely with the Association's discourse on the Nation, and put Literature at the centre of 'national culture' and 'national education', affecting the institutionalisation of English; in the end, at least in Cambridge, English was established 'as a truly 'central' subject' (Baldick 1983: 196-197).

3.5 The public

Thus, in its effort to direct society towards a convenient type of social unity, war propaganda also induced other significant social changes: it had a significant input in both education and Literature – as 'national education' and as 'national Literature' – being eventually established in the minds and consciousnesses of the people as a civic right.

As public opinion was convinced that education was a promised right, and people had proven they were prepared to fight for it [and new developments like the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain testified to this willingness to fight for rights (Baldick 1983: 98)], the government could not ignore the new social status of education and Literature. Earlier military failures were blamed on the illiteracy in the British forces, and it was thought that the Germans were better opponents because they were educated (Baldick 1983: 92-93). By 1918, Lloyd George contended that ‘an educated man is a better worker, a more formidable warrior, and a better citizen’.⁴² The state and government therefore supported national education like never before (Baldick 1983: 94) – although, besides public opinion, this was also due to the view (and to some extent the realisation) that education could be controlled by the state, that it was possible to achieve ‘discipline and adaptability’.⁴³ The Reports were an important aspect of this attempt of the state to control education, and at the same time they implied the state’s intentions to maintain an influence on public opinion. The public was used to state interventions regarding the relationship of English and national culture because of the war propaganda, and a keen interest was shown in the Reports too. For instance, from 1921, the Newbolt Report in particular was reprinted until 1938, after letters to *The Times* had repeatedly requested it (King 1985: 1-2).

3.6 The discourse on the Nation: National Culture, National Education, National Literature

Such success was partly due to the fact that what the Reports described as true was not at odds with some of the basic ideas of war propaganda, which the public had already learnt to regard as correct. The Reports that came after the war repeated the powerful propagandistic discourse on the Nation. The chairman of the 1921 *Newbolt Report*, published in 1921, Henry Newbolt, was both the president of the English Association and a patriotic poet (Baldick 1983: 93). The patriotic language of the Report glorified English Literature:

⁴² Cited in Mathieson 1975: 70, and quoted in Baldick 1983: 93.

⁴³ Wilson 1969: 58, quoted in Baldick 1983: 95; see also Hall 1981: 16, 19.

No Englishman competent to judge doubts that **our literature ranks among the two or three greatest in the world; or that it is quite arguable that, if not perhaps the finest, it is the richest of all** (Newbolt Report 1921: 200, emphasis added).

If a boy cannot read English intelligently **he** cannot learn, and if he cannot write clearly he cannot use what he has learnt. It is roughly certain that what cannot be clearly expressed is not clearly thought. This **universal importance of English** is not confined to the school age. In understanding and in expression, as in all else, it is the business of the University to crown and complete the effort of the school (Newbolt Report 1921: 199, emphasis added).

English is nearer than ever before to becoming a **universally known language**. The conditions created by the war have spread the knowledge of our language over the five continents of the earth... Most of this extension of English may be due to political or commercial reasons. But there are **higher reasons** too. The **intrinsic value of our literature is increasingly recognised** (Newbolt Report 1921: 200, emphasis added; also cited and commented on in Baldick 1983: 89-90).

Propaganda even appeared clearly:

The fulfilment of these obligations [the obligations of a missionary, of a University Professor of Literature] means propaganda work, organisation and the building up of a staff of assistant missionaries (Newbolt Report 1921: 259).

And patriotic tones were not missing from future Reports either:

English primary education has long had a high reputation. We heard repeatedly that English infant schools are **the admiration of the world**. Were they resting on past laurels? Ought we to be learning by the experiments other countries were trying? (Plowden Report 1967: 2-3, emphasis added).

The teachers of English tend to think of their subject from three different but related points of view: as a medium of communication, as a means of creative expression, and as a **literature embodying the vision of greatness** (Newsom Report 1963: 152).

There is a general agreement that no course of English is complete which does not introduce pupils to the richness and beauty of the literature which is **our proudest heritage**. Love of reading, joy in the discovery of literary beauty, enlargement of imaginative experience, these are among the most treasured fruits of a sound English education (Spens Report 1938: 219, emphasis added).

This was one way in which the Reports attempted to direct public opinion using populist ways which did not add anything, but were nevertheless rousing.⁴⁴

3.7 The working class threat to the new nation that emerged from the war, to the new society – and to Literature

So Literature continued to be an important symbolic reference for the Nation that emerged after the war, and the educational discourse that appeared in the Reports addressed it as something of continuous and sustained value.

Social unity was also sustained as a value, but whereas war propaganda had preached that social unity was necessary to defend the nation against the external threat of the Germans, the early peace-time Reports contended that social unity defended the nation against *internal* 'threats'. These were threats to the status quo, and it was thought that they could be eliminated as society would be united under one cultural banner, that of English Literature. If culture was theorised as belonging to all, and efforts were made for wider access to cultural products like literary works, then the conscience of a common reference would be able to eliminate separatist forces.

The same segments of society that preached separatism had posed a threat to the social status quo back in the nineteenth century, when Arnold stressed the unifying effects of literature and described the working classes as the image of our 'worst self'.⁴⁵ But now this worst self was better organised, and had founded significant new institutions like the Communist Party of Great Britain (Baldick 1983: 98).

As social struggle intensified, the Reports' talk about cultural unity and about 'national' education would have to be backed by concrete actions that would make sure that the whole nation would actually have access to education – whereas for Arnold, there was no urgency: 'innocent language', about cultural plans that would be implemented at some vague point in the future, had been sufficient (Baldick 1983: 97).

The new urgent demands for reform also set in place a counter-effort to render this social reform as discreet as possible and avoid the production of more social effects.

⁴⁴ See for instance Hall 1992: 289 on 'rousing populist work that doesn't tell us anything'.

⁴⁵ If one were to interpret his words reversing his depictions of our 'best self' [Arnold 1965 (1869): 144-145. See also other works by Arnold, quoted in Baldick 1983: 34-35].

By appealing to social unity at the expense of social equality, the Reports that appeared until the 1960s played an important role in this counter-effort. In order to support that appeal, they based their arguments on two social conceptions of literary reading and of the reader that already existed, and reproduced these. In effect, they attempted to go back in time and reassert older views about these issues, views that had been set before the war. This would bypass views that had been set during war-time, without having to openly deny their validity.

3.8 The two constructions, via the repetition of which the Reports attempted to go back in time

3.8.1 Personalising a social problem – the reader as a threat

The first conception assumed that literary reading is an undertaking that is best performed by the socially privileged. This entailed the idea that the working classes *could not* perform the act of reading in the proper way – it even went so far as to imply that the reasons for this were almost biological. Surprisingly, as late as in 1963, the Newsom Report addressed biological traits:

There is a slight, but definite, tendency for the less able pupils to be smaller and to weigh less than the brighter pupils – the puny-looking child, as it turns out, is not so likely to be the studious bookworm. It may well be that there is a comparable development in physical and in mental growth in the years of adolescence – a good deal of medical research suggests that there is (Newsom Report 1963: 11).

It seems that the **less able** the pupils, the more likely they are to be away from school, for longer periods, and more often without adequate excuse (Newsom Report 1963: 11).

Contrary, perhaps, to what might be expected, there was no evidence, at least as far as the test score was concerned, that school work is adversely affected by pupils doing a part-time job (*ibid.*).

It is a paradox that, whereas working class readers were assumed to be inadequate on grounds of their common membership of a specific class, this was the route via which they were recognised and categorised as inadequate readers, this construction of reading went further and contended that it was also the reader's *personal* inadequacies that negatively affected her reading. That was perhaps because biological undertones could only be implied thus – otherwise they would deploy great propaganda to support them. Inefficient, with an inadequate personality, isolated from her own class,

the working class reader took the whole weight of the social problem of reading access and of learning how to read on her own, and carried it as though it was a character trait, a personality issue, rather than a problem for the wider society.

The writing of English is **essentially an art**, and the effect of English literature in education is the effect of **an art upon the development of human character** (Newbolt Report 1921: 20, emphasis added).

Poetry (...) endows the mind with **power and sanity**; (...) in a word, it **enriches personality** (Newbolt Report 1921: 255, emphasis added).

The **reading of literature** is a kind of creative reception. It is almost **sacramental**. In the ordinary sense of words, literature **cannot be taught** [Sampson⁴⁶ 1970 (1921): 105, emphasis added].

Part of this conception of literary reading, linked with the practice of turning a social problem into something that refers to the individual and her personality, was the belief that (the members of) the working classes disliked and rejected Literature, either because they saw it as a cultural form which represented their oppressors – or by ‘nature’.

The English people might learn **as a whole**, to regard their own language, first with respect, and then with a genuine feeling of **pride and affection**. More than any symbol it is actually a part of England. (...) Even more certainly should **pride and joy in the national literature** serve as a **bond** (Newbolt Report 1921: 22, emphasis added).

In its later section entitled ‘Literature and the Nation’, (...) the *Newbolt Report* warned the government that ‘this potential bond of unity between classes is currently too much loosened at the lower end’ (Baldick 1983: 95, 96):

The situation, as it was presented to us, is gloomy, though not entirely without the elements of hope. **We were told that the working classes, especially those belonging to organised labour movements, were antagonistic to, and contemptuous of, literature**, that they regarded it ‘merely as an ornament, a polite accomplishment, a subject to be despised by really virile men’.⁴⁷

We find that the nature of **art and its relation to human life and welfare** is not sufficiently understood or appreciated in this country. The relevance of a **low view** of art, and especially of the art of

⁴⁶ According to Baldick, Sampson’s 1921 book *English for the English* was the Newbolt Report ‘companion’ (Baldick 1983: 100). This thesis refers to both a 1925 edition of the book, used by Baldick, and to a 1970 edition, used by this thesis.

⁴⁷ An account of the proceedings of the Newbolt Committee in J. Dover Wilson’s autobiography, Wilson 1969: 252-3, quoted in Baldick 1983: 96, emphasis added.

literature, has been the main cause of our defective conception of national education. Hitherto **literature has, even more than science, suffered in the public mind both misunderstanding and degradation** (Newbolt Report 1921: 20-21, emphasis added).

There has been a failure to conceive the **full meaning and possibilities of national education** as a whole, and that failure again is due to a misunderstanding of the educational values to be found in the different regions of mental activity, and especially to an **underestimate of the importance of English language and literature** (Newbolt Report 1921: 4-5).

What hinders the recognition of poetry as enriching personality, is a wrongful presentation of it. Coming from one of the committee's witnesses, 'Literature is seen as the point of view, for the most part, of the middle and upper classes, and working men felt that any attempt to teach literature or art was an attempt to impose upon them the culture of another class' (Newbolt Report 1921: 255).

It is highly probable that such a view of Literature did exist in the working classes, and indeed that it exists nowadays, as even more recent works testify to this.⁴⁸ The Reports and the commentaries accompanying them were not 'wrong'. Yet these views were not and are not the cause of the problem, but the result of it. Presenting them as causes, and thus putting them at the opposite end of the dispute, the Reports confused the efforts to correct the problem. They made it seem as though the working classes were what education had to defend Literature from, instead of concentrating on the social conditions that led to the alienation of working class readers.

The Newbolt Report for its part, addressed the issue with wishes and hopes:

If there were **any common fundamental idea of education**, any great curriculum, which would stand out in such a way as to **obliterate, or even to soften, the lines of separation between the young of different classes**, we might hope to find more easily the way to **bridge the social chasms which divide us** (Newbolt Report 1921: 6, emphasis added).

The answer to those hopes of course was English:

We believe that such an **education based upon the English language and literature** would have important social, as well as personal, results; it would have a **unifying tendency** (Newbolt Report 1921: 21, emphasis added).

... an appreciation and love of literature ... can create a bond between all who speak the same language, **whatever their circumstances may be;**

⁴⁸ Radway 1991a (1984); McRobbie 1987: for example 116; Willis 1987: for example 101.

it is part of the **common inheritance** which helps to build up a **national consciousness** and to forge **invisible links of union** between those who at first meeting may think they have little in common (Spens Report 1938: 226, emphasis added).

Matthew Arnold, using the word in its true sense, claimed that 'Culture unites classes'. He might have added that a system of education which disunites classes cannot be held worthy of the name of a national culture (Newbolt Report 1921: 6).

The Report misquoted Arnold: he had in fact talked about culture 'seeking to do away with classes' (Arnold 1965: 113, quoted in Baldick 1983: 95). Another 'misquotation' was that the discourse of these early Reports suggested that, along with defending the nation, social unity also defended Literature; and Literature was theorised as being under threat by the same separatist social forces. Social unity would save it from the degradation that working class segments of British society apparently sought to bring about.

3.8.2 The act of reading as a threat

Thus the second conception of literary reading and of the reader involved yet another threat: it too blamed the working classes for jeopardising social unity but not because they rejected Literature, but because they did not read it correctly. It saw reading as something that *could* (potentially) be performed by the working classes (no 'biological' handicap was involved), but was performed wrongly.

Perhaps if we can teach them [the working classes] how to get fact from print we may be teaching them not to draw opinions from print [Sampson 1970 (1921): 103].

This involved both 'bad intentions' on behalf of the writers of some type of reading material, and the 'bad intentions' of some working class readers. Thus the view was that working class readers could either be influenced 'wrongly' by others, so as to interpret literary texts socially, or that those readers with a radical agenda themselves, would interpret the text socially. And as the literary text only had aesthetic value, any social interpretation of it would be wrong. Thus there was the threat that the working class reader would 'corrupt' the meaning of the text.

Corruption talk apart, saying that misinterpretation could take place was not a false claim;⁴⁹ a reader who has an agenda, moved by emotions that are not always endorsed with a critical effort, may misinterpret a text. But this does not attest to the text being void of opinion and social relevance, nor to the reader who misinterprets the text being only a working class one.

In effect, although openly opposing the view that saw a relevance between the text and society, the Reports published until 1963 concentrated on conceptions that looked to frame and harness reading *socially* – which testifies to the fact that in reality they considered reading a social act.

3.9 Emotionally charged

It is significant that the Reports after the war appealed to an intense negative emotion, which, even more importantly, was the same emotion that was provoked during the war: that of being threatened. This practice invoked an emotionally charged response – and kept at a distance the potential for a response that would be composed and dispassionate, and would deal with the facts and have a better chance to reach solutions (see also Mercer 1998: 67; hooks 1992: 346).

Besides the emotional response to being nationally and culturally threatened, the Reports also evoked (positive) emotion as an essential part of literary reading. It is noteworthy that the word ‘emotion’ was used, signifying something more intense than ‘feeling’:

The study of great creative work, more particularly poetry, (...) being deeply tinged with **emotion**, cannot be fully appreciated without a certain **emotional response** on the part of the pupil (Hadow Report 1926: 192, emphasis added).

⁴⁹ For a reversed ‘misinterpretation’, see also Hall 1987, on the 1987 British election campaign strategy of the Tories. Hall suggested that their strategy was not based on outright lies, but on things that could actually happen – it was just that they would only be possible at an individual level, and the voters were not informed of this detail, nor of its complications at the level of institutions.

The campaign created images that would arouse the imagination of the voters. It was enough for these images to appear plausible, they did not need to be correct. It appealed to emotions, to the feeling that one cannot really choose his or her life that an intensely bureaucratic society had brought about, and it talked about ‘choice’. The concept of choice was received by the voters without realising that not all of them could have it – in the hope that they would at some point in the future.



The **chief object** in the teaching of literature is the **communication of zest**, and this is possible only if the pieces selected are those which the teacher can read with full enjoyment (Hadow Report 1926: 193, emphasis added).

But the appeal to the emotions makes it possible for the language of one discourse to be used to support another. Sampson provided the first example in the Reports examined here: he used the same language that radicalism used, to argue against it (Baldick 1983: 102). A member of the Cambridge Advisory Council on Religious Instruction (Baldick 1983: 108, note 38), Sampson combined with it the language of religion. An overarching and idealised, religiously tainted conception of Literature made the discourse about it dominated by the notion of the pre-ordained, of a higher force, that makes redundant any contemplation of the social and the political (Giroux 1994: 46). Thus he could put everything in the hands of a higher power, so that no social responsibility would have to be taken by society or the state:

Something called ‘communism’ (of the material kind) is the most feared or the most fancied of present-day panaceas; but few people seem to bother about the communism that, by a divine paradox, is real because it is immaterial. **For just as the sun rises alike on the evil and the good, so joy and hope and affection and the other movements of the spirit come alike to the rich and the poor if we do not impede them** [Sampson 1921 (1925 edn): xiv, quoted in Baldick 1983: 102, emphasis added].

I believe that attempts to banish **humanising and civilising elements** from schools for working class children are vitally evil; and I also believe that those who declare that boys and girls going into ‘labour’ have no need for education, are more **dangerous preachers of social disorder, and more insidious enemies of their country**, than any **deluded** Hyde Park orator spouting under a red flag [Sampson 1921 (1925 edn): xiv, quoted in Baldick 1983: 102, emphasis added].

The **reading of literature** is a kind of creative reception. It is almost **sacramental** [Sampson 1970 (1921): 105, emphasis added].

But the Newbolt Report was also close to that language:

The Professor of Literature in a University should be – and sometimes is, as we gladly recognise – a **missionary** in a more real and active sense than any of his colleagues. He has obligations not merely to the students who come to him to read for a degree, but still more towards the teeming population outside the University walls, most of whom have not so much as ‘heard whether there be any **Holy Ghost**’. (...) But

first, and above all, it means a right attitude of mind, a conviction that literature and life are in fact inseparable, that literature is not just a subject for academic study, but one of the chief **temples** of the human spirit, in which all should **worship** (Newbolt Report 1921: 259).

It is very generally recognised that reading may be harmful as well as beneficial – that while good literature may be good for the young, bad literature may have a ‘demoralising’ effect (Newbolt Report 1921: 335).

The sphere of morals in school life is limited by practical considerations with which we cannot here deal, but it is evident that if science and literature can be ably and enthusiastically taught, **the child’s natural love of goodness will be strongly encouraged** (Newbolt Report 1921: 9, emphasis added).

Cultural Studies later addressed this practice of using the language developed by one argument to argue differently and even against it, pointing out for example that the same languages that anti-racism and feminism had used were later used by their opposition to counteract them. In many ways verifying postmodernism’s accusations of words being ‘empty’ of meaning, Kobena Mercer described how the Right used the discourse of the Left and of immigrants to argue for exactly the opposite of the discourses’ initial users.⁵⁰

Without an analysis of what takes place in those instances, it would seem that it would be generally dangerous to argue, since our own words could be used against us. But the difference lies in the use of emotional language. When certainty about hierarchies and emotional undertones take pride of place in an argument, then it is made much easier for those hierarchies to be reversed.

Talking of the ‘feminine/masculine’ reversal of the dualism’s order (putting feminine first), Threadgold discussed such inversions:

We also did something counterproductive. We merely reversed the terms, leaving the dichotomy, the opposition, potentially intact: we did not necessarily redefine the two terms in their specificity and their difference, their autonomy. Nor did we suggest that there might be more than two terms to be considered, that this binarism might be a quite arbitrary division into two of what is actually a continuum. Such are the dangers of speaking, meaning, writing, inside phallogentrism. (...) **we remained inside the relationship the dichotomy implies** (Threadgold 1990: 1-2 emphasis added; see also Woolf 2000b: 67).

⁵⁰ For an interesting example that demonstrates a somewhat ‘reverse’ case, see also Hall 1987: 34, on how the labour party used in their favour the language that the Tories had created to denigrate them in the elections of 1987.

As a hierarchy-ridden discourse can be used to argue for its opposite, then it would make sense to try and create discourses that are not anger-derived or at any rate absolute; it would make sense to create discourses that can have an arbitrary rather than an imposed closure on them.⁵¹ A discourse *is* part of a tension, by virtue of being one argument, one point of view in-between many points of view, among which points of view things are not pre-decided as right or wrong. In effect this is a supportive argument to a call for tensions to be arbitrarily and continuously decided and re-decided, without a definite ending, and discourses being relative, not absolute in their assertions.

3.10 Moral training to acquiescence

Imposing and with a definite, determined closure were the demands of the Reports regarding moral training of the pupils pertaining to literary reading. Using the word experience, in the context of ‘guided experience’, they admitted a relevance between it and literary reading – but this was presented as remote from social issues. It had instead the character of a training of compliance, a learning of manners and social conduct, and a sense of acquiescence in the social status quo:

Education proceeds, not by the presentation of lifeless facts, but by teaching the student to follow the different lines on which life may be explored and proficiency in living may be obtained. **It is, in a word, guidance in the acquiring of experience** (Newbolt Report 1921: 8, emphasis added).

Literature, the form of art most readily available, must be handled from the first as the most direct and lasting **communication of experience** by man to man. It must never be thought of or represented as an ornament, an excrescence, a mere pastime or an accomplishment; above all, it must never be treated as a field of mental exercise remote from ordinary life. The sphere of morals in school life is limited by practical considerations with which we cannot here deal, but it is evident that if science and literature can be ably and enthusiastically taught, **the child’s natural love of goodness** will be strongly encouraged and great progress may be made in the strengthening of the will. The vast importance to a nation of **moral training** would alone make it imperative that education shall be regarded as experience and shall be

⁵¹ See Hall 1992: 278, 283; Morris in the discussion part of the same paper/conference presentation, Hall 1992: 291-292; Bhabha 1992: 58-59; this thesis p. 67.

kept in the closest contact with life and personal relations (Newbolt Report 1921: 9, emphasis added).

Another significant way in which this type of social training was attempted was in regard to expectations. As education had become 'national', and the value of Literature was verified in a propagandistic way – it was no longer a 'soft option' – many working class pupils believed that education and literary education in particular could help them with their aspirations to social and economic privileges. Such expectations, even as they proceed through the individualist 'ladder' of Williams (1993: 331-333),⁵² existed rightfully. Yet literary criticism, educational policies and the Reports made continuous efforts to describe the reading of literature discouraging any thoughts about links between their *dependent reader*, their student of Literature, no matter how good or obedient, and social and economic advancement. It was made clear that the 'cultural advancement' of the 'grammar school scholarship boys and girls' had to be seen as independent of any economic or social changes, both common and individual:

We believe that, **if rightly presented**, poetry will be recognised **by the most ardent social reformers** as of value, because **while it contributes no specific solution of the social problem** it endows the mind with power and sanity (Newbolt Report 1921: 255, emphasis added).

The 'companion' of the Report⁵³ presented the same assertions as the Report, in more detail:

Humanism is a matter of life, *not of a living*. We pretend to believe this, but our practice betrays us [Sampson 1970 (first 1921): 137].

To suggest to boys that a clerk is something better than a carpenter, an insurance-agent better than a bricklayer is entirely wrong. **It is not the extension of education to all that is socially dangerous, but the belief that education ought to mean a black-coated calling** [Sampson 1970 (1921): 137, emphasis added].

A humane education has **no material end** in view. It aims at making **men, not machines**; it aims at giving every human creature the fullest

⁵² Referred to on p.46 of this thesis.

⁵³ It was referred to above that Sampson's 1921 book *English for the English* was the Newbolt Report 'companion' according to Baldick (1983: 100). This is a practice that was going on throughout the twentieth century – see for example Peters [1972 (1969)] *Perspectives on Plowden*, Marland [1982 (1977)] *Language Across the Curriculum*, *The implementation of the Bullock Report in the Secondary School*, Cox (1991) *Cox on Cox, An English Curriculum for the 1990's*.

development possible to it. Its cardinal doctrine is ‘the right of every human soul to enter, unhindered except by the limitation of its own powers and desires, into the full **spiritual** heritage of the race’ [Sampson 1970 (1921): 137, emphasis added].

A humane education is a possession in which **rich and poor can be equal without disturbance to their material possessions**. In a sense it means the abolition of poverty, for **can a man be poor who possesses so much?** [Sampson 1970 (1921): 138-139, emphasis added].

University qualifications are a safe enough guide when you are looking for acquirements - when you want a science master or a history master; but not when you are choosing someone to be a medium for the **transmission of the spirit** [Sampson 1970 (1921): 106, emphasis added].

A wide and generous course of English should do much to prepare these pupils for life in an adult society; it is vocational in the best possible way’ (Newsom Report 1963: 159).

It is a paradox that, although all these articulations of an ideological discourse (see Hall 1996d: 141-142) about literary reading were based on an attitude that separated literary reading from any attention to the social, the same discourses professed that literature and literary reading ought to have a unifying effect in the social field.

3.11 Separating social practice from literature: the role of grammar Separating the teaching of language and grammar from the teaching of literary reading

One particular guise that the effort to separate the social from the literary had taken had some serious effects in prolonging social access problems regarding literary reading. This was the separating of grammar from literature.

3.11.1 In favour of aestheticism

The rhetoric of the Nation and of the ‘visions of greatness’ that the Reports reproduced, following propaganda, included a ‘trust’ in the superior aesthetic value of English Literature.

Yet acknowledging the aesthetic value of the literary text was not inaccurate, neither in terms of what war propaganda had preached nor in terms of a general, Aristotelian

view.⁵⁴ What distorted the description of reading that the Reports affected was that they stressed this aspect of the reading process at the expense of others, trying to veil a text's social links, but in effect veiling all that had to do with the text being experienced by the reader.

Commentary should be used solely as a means of heightening the **pleasure** of great literature, of explaining its content where examination is needed, and particularly of tactfully drawing attention to the **beauty and appropriateness of its form** (Hadow Report 1926: 193, emphasis added).

In their recommendations, the teaching of Literature should not be supported by the teaching of reading, i.e. it excluded the teaching of language, grammar and syntax.⁵⁵

Formal **grammar** and philology should be recognised as scientific studies and **kept apart (so far as that is possible) from the lessons in which English is treated as an art**, a means of creative expression, a record of human experience (Newbolt Report 1921: 11, emphasis added).

In order to inculcate and develop a love of literature in his pupils the teacher should **treat it as a form of art** in which life has been interpreted. **The grammatical and linguistic sides of the study of literature, though important, should be kept in a secondary place** in post-primary schools (Hadow Report 1926: 192, emphasis added).

Even as it was spelled out, it was not realised that this was separating reading from literature:

When the recognition and use of symbols have been mastered, the lesson should be called "Literature" rather than "Reading" (Newbolt Report 1921: 349).

Yet calling the lesson Literature rather than reading (Newbolt Report 1921: 349), resulted in an attitude that was at some level an attitude of treating words as empty of meaning (close to a postmodernist criticism of texts). A view of reading that stressed the aesthetic part of the literary text and of reading, and saw the social content and

⁵⁴ Sykoutris 1991: 56, 92; Aristotle 1448b, 4-7.

⁵⁵ See also Green 1991: 216, p.32 of this thesis: 'reading is the meeting of grammar and consciousness'.

relevance of the text as something to be purified from, suggested an art that was 'purified' from meaning itself.

Grammar is a description of structure, nothing more (Newbolt Report 1921: 284).

In other instances, grammar was merely a matter of meaning – which indicated that the grounds on which grammar was theorised as an unnecessary lesson were unstable.

The grammatical side should not be neglected, and it devolves **on the teacher** to ensure that so far as possible every pupil in the class has thoroughly mastered **the meaning** of the passages which are being studied (Hadow Report 1926: 192-193, emphasis added).

The child who could recognise the connotative change in 'plump' and 'comfortable' in these two contexts would have learnt something of much greater value than a label (Bullock Report 1975: 173).

It is indicative that a disagreement with the Bullock Report's conclusions about grammar was even included in the Report itself in the form of a 'note of dissent', by Mr. Stuart Froome, a member of the committee:

It could have been stated with greater force that the more competent children are in the trained accomplishments of spelling, punctuation and the grammatical arrangement of words, the more likely are they to write vividly, gracefully and tellingly, or in short – creatively (Froome in Bullock Report 1975: 556).

The Committee has heard of schools where in the desire to foster creativity, it is held that children will develop the power to use language simply by being encouraged to speak and write, and that any critical intervention will stem the flow. Sometimes work of very poor quality is displayed in such schools, because it is believed that the child's spontaneous effort is sacrosanct and to ask him to improve it is to stifle his creativity (Froome in Bullock Report 1975: 556).

An analogous 'dissent' appeared in the 1988 *Kingman Report*, a Report that 'insisted' on the sound knowledge of language, but at the same time verified the separation of language from literature and criticised language teaching.

Some teachers of literature whom we saw at work told us that they were **sceptical of 'knowledge about language' in the English lesson**, though often, in fact, they were making use of such knowledge. Their opposition was based partly on uncertainties of definition and partly on

memories of past bad practices. **They feared that literature might be used merely as a means of 'teaching language'**, that literature might be used as material for exercises, comprehension questions about word functions, or banal memory tests. They foresaw the **mechanical application** of lists or learnt technical terms to texts, a practice which they rejected. The Committee, too, rejects such practices, while insisting that a sound application of knowledge about language to texts read in school increases understanding and pleasure (Kingman Report 1988: 37-38, emphasis added).

This 'dissent' was of Professor Henry Widdowson, a member of the committee, who distanced himself from the published conclusions in a note at the end of the publication, asking for a more detailed model to be used in the teaching of language than the one offered by the Report.

3.11.2 Against grammar and against any support for it by the state

It is surprising that the Kingman Report appears certain that grammar was formally taught in schools before the 1960s, which was not the case – something which all the Reports, starting from the Newbolt, discouraged.

Many people believe that standards in our use of English would rise dramatically if we returned to **the formal teaching of grammar which was the normal practice in most classrooms before 1960**. Others believe that explicit teaching of learning of language structure is unnecessary. We believe that both these extreme viewpoints are misguided. (...) However, we believe that for children not to be taught anything about language is seriously to their disadvantage (Kingman Report 1988: 12, see also p.13).

The Kingman Report struggled with both rejecting and reinstating grammar at the same time:

We take it as axiomatic that a primary objective of the educational system must be to enable and encourage every child to use the English language to the fullest effect in speaking, writing, listening and reading. (...) It is arguable that such mastery might be achieved without explicit knowledge of the structure of the language or the ways it is used in society. But there is no positive advantage in such ignorance (Kingman Report 1988: 4).

People need expertise in language to be able to participate effectively in a democracy. (...) A democratic society needs people who have the linguistic abilities which will enable them to discuss, evaluate and make

sense of what they are told, as well as to take effective action on the basis of their understanding (Kingman Report 1988: 7).

It is also surprising that almost all the Reports repeat the example of the teaching of the Latin grammar as an example to be avoided, even in the 1980s (Newbolt Report 1921: 278, 284, 285; Bullock Report 1975: 169; Kingman Report 1988: 3). Only Mr. Froome, in his Bullock Report note of dissent, stated about language tests that already existed: 'the tests may be inadequate but they are the only ones we have' (Froome in Bullock Report 1975: 556).

This doing away with tests and text-books was the first move towards pushing grammar teaching aside. Following from that, grammar teaching was recommended to depend on the teacher's good will, rather than being a part of an educational effort that would be co-ordinated by the state.

There can be no doubt that **too much** time and attention were **formerly devoted to the study of formal grammar** in elementary schools, and in consequence a natural reaction set in. (...) In many instances **there would probably be no need to have a text-book in grammar**, but the pupils should, of course, know the parts of speech and their functions in the sentence. In order to secure these results in a systematic way, a course of instruction should be arranged which would fulfil the practical purposes in each individual school. It should be **drawn up by the teacher** in the light of his own knowledge of the power of expression and understanding of language shewn [sic] by his scholars (Hadow Report 1926: 194-195, emphasis added).

What has been shown is that the teaching of traditional analytic grammar does **not** appear to improve performance in writing. This is not to suggest that there is no place for any kind of exercises at any time and in any form. It may well be that a **teacher** will find this a valuable means of helping an **individual child** reinforce something he has learned. What *is* questionable is the practice of setting exercises for the whole class, irrespective of need, and assuming that this will improve every pupil's ability to handle English (Bullock Report 1975: 171, emphasis added).

An indication of how alone the teacher was left in that matter is the Newbolt Report's contention that 'The ideal teacher is born, not made; and we have no wish to prescribe any one kind of preliminary training as essential' (Newbolt Report 1921: 125).

Without the official support of textbooks, gradually grammar was taught less and less. By 2000, such educational policies and practices had resulted in English teachers being uncomfortable with teaching grammar, as their own knowledge of it was inadequate (Burgess, Turvey & Quarshie 2000).

3.11.3 Political implications: invalidating reading as a *practice*

One way to interpret the cancellation of the value of grammar teaching – and the putting aside of grammar teaching that followed – is to see it as a refusal to allow proper understanding.

Grammar is integrally connected with the meaning and content of the text. And even aesthetic beauty comes out of the structure and the meaning of the text. As grammar is the way to combine elements into a meaningful whole (Kress & van Leeuwen 2000: 1), it is impossible to separate meaning from its articulation, as is to separate language from experience (Stedman Jones 1995: 152-153, Scafe 1989: 40-41). Literature is integrally linked with the language used to write it.

Grammar goes beyond formal rules of correctness. It is a means of representing patterns of experience... It enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them (Halliday 1985: 101, quoted in Kress & van Leeuwen 2000: 2, emphasis added).

Grammar has been and still is formal. It has generally been studied in isolation from meaning. However, the linguists and the school of linguistic thought from which we draw part of our inspiration have taken issue with this view, and see **grammatical forms as resources for encoding interpretations of experience and forms of social (inter)action** (Kress & van Leeuwen 2000: 1).

Related to aestheticism, the denial of the importance of grammar rendered literary reading an abstract reception of art and deprived the text of its concreteness. It also discouraged the active participation of the reader in the act of reading, being thus more a political decision than a cultural one, certainly in its effects, resulting in a social and political exclusion from access to reading.

3.12 The excluded: a shared identity between the working classes, women and immigrants

The men, **and especially the women**, who are the products of the elementary schools are generally a race without books. Their reading matter is current fiction in its **cheaper** forms, and even this is usually borrowed. Books other than cheap novels are to them a kind of furniture, like pictures - the sort of thing it is respectable to have in the parlour, but no more to be read than the Family Bible [Sampson 1970 (1921): 103, emphasis added].

Literature, the form of art most readily available, must be handled from the first as the most direct and lasting communication of experience **by man to man** (Newbolt Report 1921: 9, emphasis added).

Education in English is, for all Englishmen, a matter of the most vital concern, and one which must, by its very nature, take precedence of all other branches of learning (Newbolt Report 1921: 10, emphasis added).

Certainly our working classes (the product of the elementary schools) appear unable to use books either for pleasure or profit, and have no delight in possessing them.

Above all things, (...) as a child, a **man** should have tumbled about in a library. All men are afraid of books, who have not handled them from infancy [Sampson 1970 (1921): 103, emphasis added].

In the Reports of the 1960s we find the first changes in the social view of literary reading. Over-optimistic, the Plowden Report addressed socio-educational problems – only it addressed them largely as already solved.

Women had been playing an integral role in the history of teaching in English society (Steedman 1992b: 13-14), especially the teaching of English (as opposed to the teaching of sciences). It was socially permissible to women since the nineteenth century; primary education especially had been the territory of women, since the more socially acclaimed positions of teaching English at an advanced level were men's (Doyle 1989: 11-12).

The effect of the planned increase in the number of men students in colleges of education would be to increase to 52 per cent the proportion of men teachers in junior school by 1980. (...) Yet we hope that authorities will employ enough women heads and deputies for the **characteristic contribution of women to primary** education to be maintained. The National Survey shows that it is in danger of being lost (Plowden Report 1967: 324, emphasis added).

The Plowden Report argued that women do not accept promotion, and there is therefore a need for recruitment of men in primary schools and of women as heads and deputies of these schools. In recruiting nursery assistants and teachers' aides, the authors of the Report 'hoped' 'to recruit the equivalent of 10,000 older women a year' (Plowden Report 1967: 455). There was no mention of the social structures that prevented women from accepting promotions, and there was no mention of a proposal to replace these social structures. On the contrary, it made it seem as though it was women's fault that they were not recruited in higher posts.

Concerns about immigrants and differences in language were strongly taken into account in the Plowden Report, answering to growing demographic changes in the country, and to the anti-racist discourses that were emerging in that era. But immigrants' issues were seen as echoing past conditions of the British working class, thus bringing the problem closer to home, and making it less intense – this was a problem that had already been solved, in the case of the working class. Significantly, referring to the condition of working class people before the war, it distanced their contemporary situation from the analogy; also, it addressed the practical issue of health, rather than the 'secondary' ones of education and/ or overall access to social privileges.

When their health is poor [the immigrants'] this is usually due to complaints which were common among working class people before the last war. Some special problems face local education authorities and others in areas with a high concentration of immigrants (Plowden Report 1967: 70).

Additionally, the Report insisted on the over-optimistic view that racial discrimination was not really part of the educational system, but only existed outside of it.

Most experienced primary school teachers do not think that colour prejudice causes much difficulty. Children readily accept each other and set store by other qualities in their classmates than the colour of their skin (Plowden Report 1967: 69).

Some echoes of adult values and prejudices inevitably invade the classroom but **they seldom survive for long among children**. It is among the neighbours at home and when he begins to enquire about jobs **that the coloured child faces the realities of the society into**

which his parents have brought him (Plowden Report 1967: 69, emphasis added).

Referring to the conditions of the immigrant children as the ‘reality of the country where their parents have brought them’, the Report accomplished more than just veiling poor conditions. There is a sense of the uncontested in asserting that ‘that is reality’, and reality is hard; also, a sense in which the parents are blamed instead of ‘reality’. The Report echoed some interpretations of Bernstein’s work in which he is thought to assert that working class families ‘bring up their children in an unsatisfactory manner’ (see below, Rosen 1974: 1).

It is significant that it acknowledged racial discrimination everywhere else but in schools, refusing to see the school as a social construction, but seeing it instead as foreign to other spaces of social interaction, immune to the influence of the rest of society. Another sign of its over-optimistic view is that it praised ‘the devoted work that is being done in many schools’ referring to issues caused by the concentration of immigrant families in industrial cities (Plowden Report 1967: 69).

This was a time when ‘the Secretary of Education and Science advised local authorities to avoid heavy concentration of immigrants in particular schools’ (Circular 7/65, June 1965, quoted in the Plowden Report 1967: 72). Such views, although not implemented by all local authorities, were ‘shared by many teachers and were reached only after the most serious study of the implications’ (Plowden Report 1967: 72). Yet to have a low concentration of immigrant children in class means to have more classes and more funds to support their operation, at a time when even teachers who are in place ‘have generally not been trained during their courses at colleges of education to teach immigrant children’ (Plowden Report 1967: 70).

Those system inadequacies were no longer in place in the 1970s, as the population of immigrants expanded. Both the 1975 Bullock Report and its ‘companion’, Marland’s *Language Across the Curriculum, The implementation of the Bullock Report in the Secondary School* (1977), addressed the problem of language learning and reading facing the reality of an expanding population that included children from the Commonwealth and third world countries. Newly-founded organisations were established specifically to tackle these problems.

A survey of children's books revealed much inaccurate, thoughtless and downright **offensive** writing about people from other countries. We strongly recommend the report of this survey, published by **The Institute of Race Relations**, to all who have responsibility for book selection in multiracial schools (Bullock Report 1975: 286, emphasis added).

Immigrant children's attainment in tests and at school in general is related not only to language but to several other issues, particularly those of **cultural identity and cultural knowledge**. No child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold, nor to live and act as though school and home represent two totally separate and different cultures which have to be kept firmly apart (Bullock Report 1975: 286, emphasis added).

The seed of Basil Bernstein's theories was evident, as was that of Labov's work, in anticipation of further research.

The Schools Council project carried out tests which showed that **dialect impeded the children's learning of English** in the areas of oral comprehension, spoken intelligibility, reading, writing and spelling. (...) The main effort, however, was directed to materials for promoting communication skills in the **multiracial class**, and neither this project nor any other as far as we know has studied the specific problems experienced by West Indian children in learning to read. (...) There is urgent need for this work to be carried out (Bullock Report 1975: 288, emphasis added).

There is a general agreement that at first sight the language problems of non-English speaking children are easier to deal with than those of the **dialect** or Creole speakers. They have to learn English as a second or even a third language, **but what they know, namely their original language, and what they need to learn, are clearly distinguished in the teacher's mind** (Bullock Report 1975: 289, emphasis added).

3.13 Language in relation to reading

At this time, and in spite of the Reports' afore-mentioned shortcomings in relation to the teaching of language and grammar, language was reinstated theoretically in its proper place in regard to reading.

In this country reading has been thought of as something taught only to the young or the backward. (...) In America, (...) the 'Reading Consultant' has school-wide responsibilities, and the theoretical understanding of the reading process has been developed widely [Marland 1982 (1977): 5, emphasis added].

This dependence of schooling on language is no mere useless stumbling block put in the way of the young as self-protection by the middle-class, middle-aged, formally educated. It can be shown, (...) that **the process of thought itself is dependent on language**, and growth in the first depends on growth in the second (Marland 1982: 17-18, emphasis added).

The Report sees language not merely as a dressing for thought, a way of making previously achieved knowledge clear. **It sees the process of thinking as part of the process of developing language**, and, again, the virtuous circle needs to be set up by the teacher so that the one helps the other (Marland 1982: 18, emphasis added).

Thus language helps learning and learning helps language, and the more closely the two are related the more effective the total process (Marland 1982: 18, emphasis added).

On the one hand, **ability to read depends on and grows out of language ability**. (...) As reading is not simply a matter of decoding word by word in left-to-right sequence, but of a continuous speculation and checking, if a reader has to spend too long on an individual word, he loses the overall sense. (...) On the other hand, writing and talking skill grow out of reading (Marland 1982: 19, emphasis added).

And together with its relationship to reading, language was given back its relationship with the reader's social experience:

Reading is more than a reconstruction of the author's meanings. It is the perception of those meanings within the total **context of the relevant experiences of the reader** – a much more active and demanding process (Bullock Report 1975: 79, emphasis added).

As Bullock had done before, the Kingman Report connects language and thought: in order to conceptualise the world, you need language.

Language is the instrument of intellectual development. Learning to direct one's own mental processes with the aid of words or signs is an integral part of the process of concept formation (Kingman Report 1975: 8, quoting Vygotsky,⁵⁶ emphasis added).

Language expresses identity, enables co-operation and confers freedom. It offers a symbolic model of the world. (...) People need **expertise in language** to be able to **participate effectively in a democracy** (...) The working of a **democracy** depends on the discriminating use of language on the part of its people (Kingman Report 1988: 7, emphasis added).

⁵⁶ No reference is given.

We would argue then that this shaping of personality and the exploration of self are inextricably bound up with language development (Kingman Report 1988: 10).

As children read more, write more, discuss what they have read and move through the range of writing English, they amass a store of images from half - remembered poems, of lines from plays, of phrases, rhythms and ideas. **Such a reception of language allows the individual greater possibilities of production of language** (Kingman Report 1988: 11, emphasis added).

The importance of the **relationship between reading and writing** is most evident when we come to literature (Kingman Report 1988: 37, emphasis added).

Precise knowledge about language can increase the interest, understanding and pleasure of **reading** in many ways (Kingman Report 1988: 39, emphasis added).

Language is the instrument of intellectual development: **it permits children to go beyond their own limited experience** and to encounter the thoughts, hypotheses, explanations and **analyses of the greatest human minds**. The Bullock Report deals with the relations between language and thought persuasively and at some length in its chapter 4 (Kingman Report 1988: 8, emphasis added).

Yet in spite of the new interest in the importance of language, the Report under the chairmanship of Kingman, as the one under Cox, implied a passive survey of language, 'whilst preserving the social order: they do not ask pupils to look critically at the sources of *language inequality* in our society, nor to challenge them' (Fairclough 1992 quoted in Daly 1996: 183, emphasis added).

3.14 The 1990s: beyond a common and unifying culture

By the 1990s, social unity was transformed into equality, and cultural concerns were seen through the lens of a multiracial society; what survived, but this time with a conscience, was the nation:

The *Robbins Report* of 1963 identified four aims and objectives of higher education which can be summarised as:

- instruction in skills for employment;
- promoting the general powers of the mind
- advancing learning

- **transmitting a common culture and common standards of citizenship** (Robbins Report 1963, quoted in the Dearing Report 1997: 71, emphasis added).

In the early 1960s, universities were seen as the highest manifestation of a cultured and civilised society and their standing was unquestioned. Robbins saw the **transmission of a common culture as a purpose of higher education**. This rested on the **largely untested view that there was a common culture**, that universities possessed it and were its guardians, and that it could be transmitted (Dearing Report 1997: 64, emphasis added).

The Robbins Committee saw higher education as an important compensator for social disadvantage but the expansion of higher education which followed its report did not lead, to the extent it hoped, to significant **broadening of the social class composition of higher education**. (...) We, like Robbins, believe that **higher education should promote greater equality of social and economic opportunity, although we recognise that much depends on the earlier stages of education** (Dearing Report 1997: 79, emphasis added).

It was put to us at one of our consultation conferences that higher education should see itself as having a distinctive responsibility to act as the **conscience of the nation**. Others will legitimately claim that they have such a **responsibility**, but we agree that higher education should see itself as sharing it (Dearing Report 1997: 79, emphasis added).

The Dearing Report saw the role of Universities no longer as a guardian of a common culture, but as a defender of the variety of cultures: 'To play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilised, *inclusive* society' (Dearing Report 1997: 72, emphasis added).

3.15 Conclusion

If there were no power within English and classrooms there would be no need to talk about them at intervals of fifty years [Burgess (Tony) 1984: 24].

Trying to control this power and exercise theirs, the Reports perceived literary reading in two different ways, which appeared at different times: first, literary reading as something far from the reader, idealistic and mythologised; second, literary reading as something close to the reader, as experience of language (through the knowledge of grammar) and experience of the content (through the text's social relevance). As

English was finally seen in the context of a diverse British society, the latter conception overcame the former.

The value of the Reports lies in their correspondence with the socio-political reality that surrounded English and its teaching during the whole era that was examined. But also, and perhaps more importantly, it lies in that, in spite of the ways in which they did it, they created the field of discussion around the teaching of vernacular Literature. Even though they often tried to maintain conservative or misguided views about how the *dependent reader* would have to be trained, they generated the necessary tension, and affected the necessary arbitrary closures to the issues debated.

My own view is that **events, relations, structures** do have conditions of existence and real effects, outside the sphere of the discursive; but that it is **only within the discursive, and subject to its specific conditions, limits and modalities, do they have or can they be constructed within meaning**. Thus, while not wanting to expand the territorial claims of the discursive infinitely, how things are represented and the 'machineries' and regimes of representation in a culture do play a *constitutive*, and not merely a reflexive, after-the-event, role (Hall 1996c: 443, italics author's own, other emphasis added).

Constitutive and contextualised, the Reports are an important part of the whole picture that framed and freed the teaching of English and its construction of literary reading.

PART II

**READING GREEK LITERATURE:
HISTORY, POLITICS AND CULTURE**

INTRODUCTION TO PART II:

THE VALUE OF A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE GREEK AND THE ENGLISH

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READING GREEK LITERATURE: HISTORY, POLITICS AND CULTURE

INTRODUCTION:
THE VALUE OF A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE GREEK AND THE ENGLISH

In both the British and the Greek cases twentieth century educational discourse on literature started out from an elitist point of view that was disempowering to the reader, but moved towards democratisation.⁵⁷ The issues being interestingly similar, they can be compared to draw important general conclusions, even though the routes taken were different, as the historical conditions that demanded democratisation were different in the two countries.

The early arguments used by both the British and the Greeks to justify the ruling class attempts to control literary reading of the vernacular, and to control its validation, were also similar: both talked about a debased society and the fall of educational standards.⁵⁸ More importantly, they were also based on arguments in favour of a separation of the 'cultural' from the everyday, of literature from social experience, of reading from social practice – which was eventually affected by a separation of literature from language.

The problem of recognising, and integrating in education, the links between language and literature was the reigning issue about literature and reading education in both countries. It appeared in different ways. In Britain, as we saw in the examination of the English Reports on Education, a conservative critical practice 'attacked' dialects and elevated Literature to the extreme at the expense of language and grammar; this awarded Literature a status of being idealised and not concrete, and thus created obstacles to reading as a concrete act, as language and grammar were addressed as of lesser value and were very little taught. In Greece, Literature written in ancient Greek was idealised although it was not widely understood (perhaps because of that); vernacular language, vernacular literature and its reading were scorned as of minimal

⁵⁷ As Latin and classical Greek were taught in the British case, classical Greek was taught in the Greek case throughout the 18th century, a practice that put aside the vernacular language.

⁵⁸ See Boustead 2002 on the Cambridge School of educationalists, and George Mistriotis cited in Dimaras 1999b: 267, on how unworthy of the ancestors of the Greeks the demotic language type was, and how it represented immorality (pages not indicated).

value and the fight to establish the demotic, supported by grammar, resolved in favour of it as late as in 1974.⁵⁹

The argument against vernacular literature and its reading was strengthened by the fact that none of the grammars of the vernacular language⁶⁰ were endorsed by the state. Thus the claims that the vernacular was not a fully structured linguistic system were not seriously challenged until the *Small Grammar of the New Greek* appeared, compiled under the auspices of the state and published for school use in 1974.

The opposite approach to Greek language and literature that was in favour of Modern Greek use verifies the validity of Williams's definition of language; in light also of the lack of an officially endorsed grammar, it is made clear that language is not merely a system but is a complete performance (see Williams 1977a: 27). The demotic language type, in spite of the fact that it was emphasised in oral use, was performed for centuries. Thus there was also a structure behind it, supporting it, even if that structure was not registered by linguistic science.

A more complete description of diglossia will demonstrate why the social and political history of Greece is needed more in this case than in the description of the British situation, and it will show the social and political character that language and literature took in Greece.

⁵⁹ Laws asserting that the Modern Greek language should be taught in primary schools at least, were voted in before that year, but their effect only lasted a year or two before another law would remove the demotic from school teaching.

⁶⁰ Which were indeed published in the past centuries.

CHRONOLOGY

1821

The beginning of the Greek War of Independence against a declining Ottoman Empire.

1827

The emergence of an independent Greek state.

1897

The year of 'national humiliation': the Cretan revolt, demanding that the island would be annexed to Greece, turned into a military disaster for Greeks. However, they were saved from complete disaster by the powers, who stepped in to make sure territories already gained would not be given back to the Empire (Pavlowitch 1999: 145-146, 151).

1912-13

The Balkan Wars, also known in Greek as the Macedonian Fight.

1914-18

World War I marked intense political and polity problems because of conflicts between the king and the oft-elected Prime Minister Venizelos. The Prime Minister intended that the country be brought into the war on the side of the Allied powers. That meant that he had to oppose the king, who had strong German affiliations. The crisis was resolved in favour of Venizelos's choice of alliance.

1920-22

Greece came out of the First World War victorious, but its plans to annex Asia Minor were successfully counteracted by Kemal Ataturk's (the Turkish leader) troops. After the 'Asia Minor catastrophe', an enormous mass of Greek refugees (around 1.3 million) fled to what had become metropolitan Greece (see Pavlowitch 1999: 237-239).

1925-26

The dictatorship of General Theodoros Pangalos (Pavlowitch 1999: 240).

1936-1941

The dictatorship of General Metaxas (Pavlowitch 1999: 292, 309-310).

1941-1944

World War II

1944-1945

The Greek Civil War, seen as being between the communists and the right wingers (Pavlowitch 1999: 328-329).

1945-1967

Continuous political unrest.

The communist party was outlawed in Greece, but it retained a strong public appeal. The people were conscious of the intense political corruption that existed. The illegal operation of extreme right wing groups was common knowledge and the official government/state, unable to control them, gave the impression that it did not discourage them. Groups of militant right-wingers often took the law into their own hands.

There were even continuous socialist accusations that the state had rigged the elections so that the right wing won through the use of unclear procedures. In the 1960s a socialist prime minister was elected, yet right away there was repeated conflict between the views of the elected socialist prime-minister and those of the young King Constantine, who repeatedly rejected and removed the one elected by the people and appointed a prime-minister of his choice instead. In the end, the last resignation of the elected George Papandreu and frequent demonstrations against such royal interventionist politics offered a pretext of 'political unrest' for the colonels to take over after a military coup d'etat (see Pavlowitch 1999).

1967-1974

The 'dictatorship of the colonels', led by George Papadopoulos.

1974

In November 1973 students at Athens's 'Polytechnio' (the part of the University of Athens that houses the school of architecture and the schools of new technologies, not identical to the British 'Polytechnic') barricaded themselves inside the buildings of the foundation, which formed a restricted area. Sustained by food and other supplies from the civilian population, on the 17th of the same month, after the students used a radio transmitter to address the Greek public against the military government, they were attacked by tanks which demolished the iron gates and killed many. In Salonika similar scenes took place in the Law School, creating public uproar. The generals of the Greek military government tried to 'save' their regime by attacking Cyprus, hoping that their 'national' service of annexing the island would turn public opinion around. The Turkish side responded and Greek military defeat in Cyprus was followed by the Turkish occupation of the northern part of the island. Under the weight of these developments, the regime fell, and in July 1974 democracy was restored in Greece (Zafeiropoulos n.d: 1128).

GLOSSARY

Ancient Greek:

The ancient Attican dialect, prominent in Athens during the fifth century B.C., idealised and used by the archaists, one of the two sides in the Greek Language Question that culminated during the twentieth century.

Archaic:

Used as an adjective, refers to the 'purist Greek' (katharevousa) as much as to a previous language type that users tried to be as close as possible to ancient Greek.

Archaism:

The early movement comprised by intellectuals and scholars writing and promoting a language that was as close as possible to ancient Greek.

Archaists:

The intellectuals and scholars who were in favour of using the archaic language.

Attican dialect:

The dialect spoken during the fifth century B.C. in the region of Attica, where the city-state of Athens was based. Used to defend the idealisation of the ancient Greek past, and the defence of conservatism in education and language and literature teaching. Yet the Attican dialect is also the ancient Greek dialect that, according to Browning (1983: 119), survived the Hellenistic times and became the hellenistic 'koine' (common), from which the demotic Greek language type eventually developed.

Demotic:

The 'people's' language, since demos means people. The oral language of Greek populations in the Ottoman Empire, which developed into what is called New Greek or Modern Greek.

Demoticism:

The movement, lead by literary writers, scholars and politicians, in favour of the use of Modern Greek as language of the state and thus of education, replacing at first the archaic and then the 'katharevousa' language type.

Demoticists:

The proponents of the spoken Greek language and its use in all aspects of cultural and state life, and mainly in education, considering it a fully structured linguistic system.

Katharevousa:

The term originates in the word 'katharos', which in Greek means clean. It stands for the purist language that was constructed as a result of combining contemporary spoken Greek with ancient Greek, in effect subduing the former to grammar and syntax of the latter. It is evidence of an effort to reconcile the two sides of the Language Question, and thus to dissolve the diglossia. Yet in effect it perpetuated the dispute.

It was the official language of the Greek state since it was founded in 1827 and until 1976. It was constructed by the literary critic Adamantios Korais and his followers in

the early nineteenth century. In time the 'corrections' of the contemporary language changed into more and more archaic forms, and the hybrid became more and more faithful to the ancient tongue, since, socially, the more one's writing resembled ancient Greek, the better writer he was considered.

The Language Question or Language Issue:

Greek diglossia, the use of two different language types in Greek society.

The two language types were the archaic katharevousa/purist language and the demotic, contemporary spoken language. The former was used by the majority of the intelligentsia and by the majority of a social, political and cultural ruling class, whereas the latter was spoken and understood by everyone. Education and the affairs of the state used the archaic.

Even during the second half of the twentieth century, literature had not made a clear choice. There were authors using the katharevousa as much as there were literary authors using the demotic language type. It is by now accepted though, that the users of the katharevousa were largely thus suffocating any talent they had, in the name of social status at a time when the demotic was fiercely fought against by the state. On the other hand, the prolific literary production of the demoticist authors showed the way to the linguistic solution before official institutions accepted it. Very few literary authors who did not write in a clear demotic are nowadays considered of value.

Monotoniko:

The new system of accents, a one-accent-system which was introduced in education and applied to Modern Greek in the 1980s, by means of a parliamentary law. It meant the abolition of the various accents that the Greek language carried from the Hellenistic period, and their replacement by only one. The argument was essentially that the accents were a scholarly addition of the Hellenistic period that aimed to preserve the musical pronunciation of words from the capital letter-writing era to the era of lowercase writing. Since this musical pronunciation is not used in Modern Greek, the accents were abolished.

Paideia:

Greek word, pronounced *pe'dia*, written 'παιδεία'. Paideia means all the learning processes that a person goes through in her or his life, including education, entertainment, family, and all the influences of a social existence. In the Oxford Greek English Learner's Dictionary [ed. G.N. Stavropoulos, Oxford University Press 1996 (1988)] it is explained as all three: *education, learning, culture*. [The Greek word for 'education', *εκπαίδευση* (phonetically ek-ped-efsi) has the same word as a root].

The word also means the 'performance', the practice of the learned culture of the person, the way all she has learnt is expressed through her social and cultural choices and behaviour.

Purism:

The movement that supported the prevalence of katharevousa in the Greek state. It was initially based on an argument about katharevousa being a pure language, free from the influences of other languages over history. Any deviations from the 'pure'

archaic linguistic forms were seen as a threat to a deified importance of purity, which was also linked with the user's social class.

Purists:

The proponents of the use of ancient Greek and later of the archaic katharevousa.

CHAPTER 4

GREEK POLITICAL AND CULTURAL LIFE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: THE QUESTION OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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Having won its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1827, the Greece of the twentieth century was relatively a newly established state. Its cultural identity was based to a great extent on a narrative, as much constructed as it was real, of Greeks being the heirs to a glorious ancient Greece. Writing, reading and teaching Greek literature in the twentieth century was affected in a formative way by what was in effect a ‘disagreement’ on which of two language types was best to verify the rights of Greeks to self-determination – so as to ‘prove’ the difference from the Ottoman Empire and affirm political independence in the light of a cultural one.

‘Disagreement’ on language and identity developed into a discourse around conflicting arguments about which language type could best aid a ‘revival’ of Greek science and letters, and of the Greek cultural and socio-political life. Conservatives theorised that ‘revival’ as something that needed to be done with the use and teaching of ancient Greek, in order to confirm the intellectual relation of contemporary Greeks with the ancient Greek world. The more progressive scholars that supported the establishment of the demotic in state affairs and education, saw that revival as a revival of the people’s participation in politics, society, and the cultural life of the country; one that would begin from communication between the state and the citizens which both parties would fully comprehend, and included such a communication between the teacher and the student.

Thus the term ‘*Language Question*’ refers to the problematic use of two language types by Greek writers, readers and speakers seen since the late first century B.C. (see next page, Browning 1982: 50) until the final state decisions about language in the second half of the twentieth, in 1974. This use of two languages, one meant for the official and highly acclaimed, and one meant for the less important issues in the life of a society is not only a Greek phenomenon. Ferguson first called the situation diglossia, and described it as follows:

DIGLOSSIA is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (Ferguson 1959: 336).

In the Greek case one of these language types was ancient Greek, in particular the Attican dialect of Athens of the fifth century B.C. later developed into 'katharevousa', (cleansed), and the other was the spoken vernacular Greek, called 'Demotic'. Browning gave a vivid account of the condition:

The whole public communication of the state, from speeches in the Chamber of Deputies to instructions for filling in a form in the post office, followed the pattern set by literature and became more and more unintelligible to the mass of Greeks, and more and more imprecise. And in every school in the country children were taught that the language they had learned at their mother's knee, and which everyone used, was unworthy and antinational. It was a recipe for national schizophrenia (Browning 1982: 54).

4.1 The use of the ancient tongue

The beginnings of the so-called classicising movement (the movement professing the need to use ancient Greek instead of the spoken tongue) can be traced to the end of the first century B.C. (Browning 1982: 50).

Whereas already by the end of the fifteenth century we find literary works written in a type of the demotic language (Panagiotakis 1999: 213; Karantzola 1999a: 164;⁶¹ see also Browning 1982: 51-52; Mackridge 1987: 3) (which means that at some level ancient Greek and modern Greek co-existed in writing) the beginnings of the Language Question in the form of a dispute that is socially and culturally important in the modern era are traced to the mid-eighteenth century (Simeonidis 1999: 185). An initial functional dichotomy which meant that ancient Greek would be used in the sciences and philosophy and modern demotic would be used in the writing of

⁶¹ 'The demotic language type has some representation in literature already since the twelfth century, yet it only acquires a steady position in literary production after Byzantium (end of thirteenth to mid-fifteenth century)'.

literature did not last: literature was soon also written in the ancient tongue, especially in order to gain social status. To use the learned language had a legitimising effect on the work and the author – because it was the one of the two language types that had a high social status. That practice meant that attention was given to the form rather than to the content of the work. How well the author was writing ancient Greek, in the sense of how faithful his language was to the ancient tongue, was more important than what he was writing (it was mostly, if not only, a ‘he’ at that time).

Thus, there are cases of literary authors who produced significant works writing in the demotic, but who later chose the route of ‘public acceptance’ and who wrote in katharevousa – perhaps because their work did not have the proper acknowledgment until then), thus suffocating their own talent (Politis 1993: see for instance 174). ‘Needless to say, nothing which could be called literature resulted from this [pro-katharevousa] movement’ (Browning 1983: 102).

4.2 National identity in need of a national language

That was the social background of writing and reading Greek literature; as far as the political background is concerned, from 1453 and until 1830 there was no official political entity that could be perceived as an independent Greek State. Greek territory was only a ‘naming’, and although at one level that constitutes reality (see Belsey 1988, introduction), Greece as is now geographically known was part of the Ottoman Empire, as were Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Iraq and Hungary at one point.⁶²

Yet the main reason why it lasted for four centuries was that the Ottoman Empire was tolerant of difference, whether that expressed itself as religion or as language. The problem was that that right to be different had to be addressed in light of the need for administration, for a way in which the state in turn organised the life of its subjects; thus it gave too many prerogatives to the organised Greek Church, which was in turn to organise the life of the Greeks, and was answerable to the Ottoman state. Administrative and social and political power, handed to the Church, meant that schools were organised and staffed by the Church, and it also meant that they taught ancient Greek (see Evaggelides 1936a: CXII on the Church sanctions on teachers who

⁶² ‘When Suleyman died in 1566 the Ottoman Empire stretched from the borders of Poland in the North to Yemen in the South and from near Venice in the West to Iran in the East’:
<http://www.globaled.org/nyworld/materials/ottoman/whoare.html>, accessed 7/3/2003.

would teach in the demotic). Before the 'liberation', Greek schools in the Ottoman Empire were orchestrated by the Church, even when financed by rich Greeks of the diaspora (Evangelides 1936a: XXIV, CXII).

The Church was a major conservative power; as it had power during the Ottoman rule and as a new state would mean a new distribution of power, it was a focus of opposition to the movement for Greek political independence. And to the extent to which reading and writing in the demotic language type was a form of cultural independence, the Church was going to be an obstacle to that too.

4.3 The merchants and the intelligentsia

To the disillusionment of Church interests, from the late seventeenth century till the late eighteenth, Greek society had been in the process of a transformation that would render it economically prosperous, culturally aware and politically strong, to a degree 'unmatched by any of the non-Muslim peoples of the Ottoman Empire' (Clogg 1981b: 9). One reason for this emancipation was the decline of the Empire, which made necessary the political need for diplomacy: the Porte (Ottoman administration) found its skilled diplomats from among the Greeks (see also Browning 1982: 53 on the Phanariot society and the Church).

Together with the Church, the Phanariots were a part of the ruling class of Turkish society (Browning 1982: 52-53). Politically conservative, they were also conservative in language choice. They defended the use of the 'learned' language type in schools, because 'its study was preferable to that of natural philosophy and science which were associated with atheism and opposition to the established order of society' (Browning 1982: 53; 1983: 101).

An economically prosperous Greek diaspora, comprising rich merchants as well as intellectuals had a different opinion about whether 'the established order of society' should remain the same. Besides financing publications, as intimated, rich Greeks had funded Greek schools in the Danubian Principalities and in Western Europe since the latter part of the eighteenth century (Evangelides 1936a: CVIII; Browning 1982: 52; Pavlowitch 1999: 24). Their interests lay with a redistribution of power in Greek society. Affected by the French Revolution and the Enlightenment ideals, they saw

the teaching of the demotic language type as a way of ensuring a broader political and social representation that would benefit what they would later call the Greek Nation.

Thus the thriving Greek communities in the major trading centres of Europe and the Mediterranean (Vienna, Alexandria, Istanbul to name but a few), and rich Greek families that lived in Europe or were based in the Ottoman Empire, comprised a third ruling class. They educated their children in universities of international reputation and it is significant that they financed Greek schools not only within the Ottoman Empire (which would have to be organised by the Church as we saw above), but also in Europe, where they could retain control and include the demotic in their curricula. Browning described the era giving an account of the prevalent confusion about which language to use:

Many Greeks became drawn into the expanding economy of western Europe, either as agents of foreign firms in the Ottoman empire, or as members of the growing Greek communities in Russian and western European cities who were engaged in import and export trade with the east. All these factors stimulated the spread of ideas and the multiplication of books. More and more was being translated into Greek or written in Greek on every topic from metaphysics and politics to science and technology. These books were written in various mixtures of spoken Greek and the literary language, without any marked dialect features, but with little unity of form (Browning 1983: 101).

It was predictable that by the eighteenth century the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution that came from Europe would bring with them the concepts of nationalism and of the right to self-determination to the subject peoples of the empire, including the Greeks (Browning 1982: 52). The National Language and Literature could be a cultural support, endorsing social power for either the conservative Phanariots and the Church, or for the merchants and the intelligentsia that were closer to them, representing an emerging middle class. The issue was, which language and which literature, which reading and which writing, would be awarded the name – and the status – of the ‘National’ language and literature.

4.4 The Language Question

Three excesses, one point of reconciliation

Addressed from the viewpoint of early nation-centred considerations, the Language Question was contested by four groups of scholarly discourse, each arguing for a different language type (see also Browning 1983: 100-103). The first three were: the archaists, whose argument was in favour of a strictly ancient language which would, according to them, 'prove' modern Greece was a descendant of the glorious ancient Greece. They claimed vernacular Greek was corrupted by foreign words and by 'centuries of slavery' (Browning 1983: 101; see also Zoras 1999: 210 and Panagiotakis 1999: 212 about the Byzantine era). Then there were the followers of the linguist and scholar Korais, who were arguing for a 'purification' of the demotic language type, and 'corrected' it applying the grammatical rules of the ancient on modern Greek words. Although they started out from a point that respected the spoken tongue, their practice resulted in seeing the vernacular as a lesser, not systematised language, and in the fabrication of the purified katharevousa, a constructed hybrid tongue. Thirdly, the demoticists, a group convinced that the spoken language type was more than adequate for all the cultural and state functions, and that it was imperative to use it in education and everywhere else. A very strict and fanatical way of endorsing the demotic came from people like the linguist Yiannis Psycharis. For him and his (few) followers, words needed to be modified according to the vernacular's rules, even when they did not belong to the vernacular (Mackridge 1999: 236; see also Browning 1983: 104-106; Babiniotis 1994: 103). Ferguson's description of instances of both language 'corrections', of Korais and of Psycharis, is accurate:

The proponents of both sides or even of the mixed language seem to show the conviction – although this may not be explicitly stated – that a standard language can simply be **legislated into place** in a community. Often the trends which will be decisive in the development of a standard language are already at work and have little to do with the argumentation of the spokesmen for the various viewpoints (Ferguson 1959: 339, emphasis added).

The fourth and last group of the language discourse represented the more moderate and eventually successful approach to demoticism. It consisted of demoticists who were moderate in their assertions about the abolition of the purist language type, and

could envisage a reconciliation that would respect the ways in which both language types were used and 'lived' (in Williams's terms of a lived culture) through the centuries. Influenced by western historical experience, as the militant demoticists were, they agreed that 'it was upon the basis of the 'unpurified' vernacular speech that most western European national languages had been built' (Browning 1983: 102).

Yet their view of language was more complete, and they did not hesitate to integrate linguistic types of katharevousa into the demotic, linguistic types that had become 'natural' to the modern tongue. Many literary authors such as Solomos and the Eptanisian School already in the nineteenth century, or the revered Alexandrine Cavafys and the scholars Triantaphyllides and Chatzidakis in the twentieth were such demoticists.

4.5 'Freedom and language': Solomos and the literary language

Literature had applied the right solution to the Language Question long before literary criticism, linguistics or the state 'found' it. Greek literary authors who lived in the (not yet Greek) Ionian Islands used the vernacular. Away from the influence of Greek society and its social and political turmoil, and because the Ionian Islands were 'for centuries Venetian possessions and until 1864 a British protectorate' (Browning 1982: 54), Greek authors living and writing there were deeply influenced by the French Enlightenment and the Romantics.

Thus, in the 1800s, before the start of the Greek fight for Independence in 1821, in Zante, Dionysios Solomos, a major representative of the Romantic movement (Jenkins 1940: 1), saw political freedom as integrally linked with language. In his 1824 *Dialogue* he argued against two 'enemies': the political enemy of the Turks and the cultural enemy of the pedantic Greek teacher/scholar who looks down on the language that is spoken by the people in everyday life. 'And do you think that I have anything else in my mind, apart from freedom and language?' [Solomos's *Dialogue* (in Greek), in *The Complete Works*, vol. 2: 12, quoted in Politis 1993: 142 and Kechagioglou 1999: 253; see also Jenkins 1940: 82-83].

Solomos was the most prominent figure of a school of literary authors who were celebrated in later Greece, in spite of the fact that they were criticised for their 'incorrectness of Greek' in their lifetimes (Browning 1983: 54). An example of the

acceptance and acclaim he later enjoyed was that the first two verses of his epic poem *Hymn to Freedom* (1823) became the future Greek National Anthem.

The Romantics in general are linked with the scholars' focus on their own national literature (Jenkins 1940: 1, 82-83; see also During 1990: 138, 139) and with the eventual decline of the teaching of Latin and ancient Greek in the West in favour of the national literatures.

Another extremely influential figure in the literary world, is Constantinos Cavafys, perhaps the single most important poet of Modern Greece. He too lived and wrote away from the Metropolis and the social and political pressures that suffocated many poets and literary authors. He was born in Alexandria⁶³ in 1863, and like many more expatriates, he wrote in Greek (Politis 1993: 227). A poet of international reputation whose work proved seminal for Greek literary production, Cavafys used a language of his own, combining elements of the archaic and the demotic at his own poetic will, licence and feeling. This was a language type that is remarkably close to today's Standard Modern Greek, the type attained after the Language Issue had been resolved (Kostiou 2000: 9). 'He tried to save and combine all the live elements of our language: ancient, the type of middle-ages, modern – of the church, of literature, of idioms and of everyday life (...) daring, with devotion, simplicity, and with a feeling of history' (ibid.).

Cavafys's poetry combines the everyday with the historical, the ancient with the contemporary, not only in language, but also in content, thus demonstrating the links that can be forged between language and literature as parallel social forms; the bridges that he formed between the different linguistic tools, the different language forms, he also formed between the different eras and societies that he described aligned with each other.

4.6 The scholarly steps towards that literary language (the demotic)

4.6.1 Korais

The realisations of literary production were not enough, however; influenced by literature or not, scholarly output had to trace the solution of the dispute in its own terms.

⁶³ The largest Greek communities were established in Asia Minor, Istanbul and Alexandria of Egypt.

The work of the first most influential figure in the Language Question as it was formed and channelled in the modern era, was driven by belief in the spoken tongue: Adamantios Korais (1748-1833) was the first Greek literary critic to achieve a European reputation. Born in Smyrni ('Izmir' in Turkish) in 1748, his work brought him to Amsterdam and his studies to Montpellier, France. From 1788 he lived permanently in Paris, and was no doubt affected by the ideals of the French Revolution (see Clogg 1981b: 11; Christodoulou 1999b: 231). His contribution to the language dispute was made in the early nineteenth century (he presented his theory about the language type that Greeks ought to use in his introductions to ancient Greek texts, published in 1804, 1805 and 1809-1814) (Christodoulou 1999b: 230; Politis 1993: 98-99). His ideas had a dramatic influence upon the linguistic confusion that followed. As mentioned before, his stance was in favour of using the vernacular demotic Greek, but he believed that this vernacular should be 'purified'. As a result of this, foreign words and morphological, syntactic and phonological features that did not resemble the ancient tongue were exorcised. The outcome was a new, invented language type (see also Mackridge 1999: 236). The purified katharevousa (from 'katharos' which means 'clean', 'pure') 'aged new words' 'by adding ancient inflections and other features to neologisms' (Mirambel 1964: 415 and Mackridge 1987: 8 respectively).

His conception was detrimental in that it produced the impression that the vernacular was an inadequate, not fully structured system, which is why it needed the intervention of the structured ancient Greek. Korais had many followers and at one point the majority of archaists 'corrected' the vernacular language (Christodoulou 1999b: 230). Yet the product of that correction, katharevousa, was a hybrid, and did not resolve the dispute but merely shifted it: from then on, the debate was between the katharevousa and the demotic. Slowly, the katharevousa itself became more and more archaic and included more and more ancient Greek linguistic types, according to the knowledge and style of the writer (Mackridge 1999: particularly 237). The Language Question, instead of being resolved, was thus perpetuated.

4.6.2 Psycharis's contribution to(wards) standardisation

Greek scholars who were educated in France and Germany were on the receiving end of news about the twists and turns of the Language Question. Influenced by

developments in Europe that brought linguistics to the forefront, *they* were interested in the history of the Greek language; they were bound to turn to the demotic, since ‘katharevousa had no history’ (Browning 1983: 107) being as it was a language constructed by scholars rather than developed by the people. Yet what made the demotic unstable was the lack of standardisation. The important linguist Yiannis Psycharis (1854-1929) tried to provide for this.

Psycharis’s family came from the Greek island of Chios, but was born in Odessa and raised in Istanbul at a time when both cities had a significant Greek population. When he was fifteen years old he settled in Paris, after being educated there and in Germany (Politis 1993: 209). He had French citizenship, but the greater part of his literary and critical production would be in Greek.

A student and later a colleague of Saussure, by 1904 he had a permanent position in the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes* and in the School of Eastern Languages in Paris. He taught the historical grammar of the Greek language, phonetics, dialectology, history of language, etymology, the Language Question and the language of the medieval and modern Greek texts (Babiniotis 1994: 83-84). One of his most important works was a *Great Greek Scientific Grammar* (vol. 1 in 1929, vol. 2 in 1935) – but several of his assertions were intensely criticised as unproven, scientifically or methodologically (Babiniotis 1994: 83-84).

His grammar was part of his striving to proclaim the need for a *system*. As opposed to the linguistic contribution of Chatzidakis that will be examined later and came later chronologically, Psycharis moved beyond describing what existed. He asked for a linguistic plan, embodied in legislation that would enable a smooth process towards the establishing of the demotic language as the official language of the State and of education (see Babiniotis 1994: 87-88, 89, 95). But the fact that he did not live in the Greek linguistic reality but in the French, in Paris, and thus he did not have an experience of Greek conditions, contributed to the fact that his demand for a linguistic plan was set in unrealistic terms. His knowledge and experience of the Greek vernacular itself was minimal, and that was evident in his efforts to register Modern Greek as a system: instead of recording it, he too was ‘correcting’ it. He modified ancient words according to what he *perceived* the vernacular system to be, doing in effect what Korais had done, but reversed.

Still, there is a sense in which there was a need for the opposite extreme to be stressed for a period of time, so that the archaists’ reign in Greek society and literature writing

and reading would be successfully combated later. There was a need for an in-between period of testing, of showing the archaists that an extreme decision could be taken from the other end of the language choice too, so that both sides would be ready to consider the interchange between them.

Psycharis's *My Journey*, the literary description of a journey in Greece using only and 'extreme' form of the vernacular, tainted with dialect forms, was published in Paris in 1888. It was a manifesto for Modern Greek. With its strength, derived also from the status of the author as an internationally respected linguist, that 'declaration' affected Greek scholarly output both inside and outside the country. It also affected Greek literary output: it was as a result of this, either directly or indirectly, that leading Greek writers decided to turn to using the demotic in all instances, and broadened their reading audience from an elitist group to the whole of the Greek speaking population. That great change in the arena of literary writing was a clear victory for the demotic, even though in the government, courts, in scientific and technical discourse, in politics and journalism, and in education (Browning 1982: 55), the purists retained their strong hold.

Without underestimating his immense contribution, it needs to be acknowledged that Psycharis ignored the historicity of the Greek language, and stressed only the oral reality of it as part of 'fieldwork' that included only brief visits to Greece, to examine the language spoken in the countryside. Thus, in spite of his contribution to the demoticists' cause, Psycharis was strongly criticised by both opposing discourses of the Language Question for being too rigid in his linguistic call to replace the ancient with the modern, too fanatical about the value of vernacular oral Greek over the ancient language type. Some of the demoticists even believed that his rigid linguistic view delayed the recognition of the demotic (Babiniotis 1994: 77, 84, 86).

Indeed, he recognised no exceptions to the grammatical rules he promoted – but it is a valid explanation that, as a linguist, Psycharis saw rigidity in grammatical rules as essential to demonstrate a scientific coherence. This was the spirit of linguistics at the time (Babiniotis 1994: 87, 88), especially as he needed to counteract fierce moralistic arguments coming from the archaists in an equally strong way. (The threefold sacred idea of 'Homeland-Religion-Family' was, according to archaists, threatened by the demotic, and the oral language should be combated at any cost). The issue needed to proceed in this way, in order to allow for the view of more moderate figures like Triantaphyllides to be heard later.

Indeed, his extreme views were soon abandoned by the majority of the demoticists. A more moderate demoticism was instead expressed in the publications of the Educational Association and led by Triantaphyllides, the future author of the widely acclaimed Modern Greek Grammar.

4.6.3 Describing the conditions: immigration

In spite of the fact that Psycharis avoided or could not describe the conditions of the Language Question as it developed in Greece, this description should be made here. Early twentieth century Greek education was a complicated matter. International eruptions were causing the urgent immigration of Greeks fleeing from the Ottoman Empire to the territories that now formed Metropolitan Greece, and the end of the First World War was marked in Greece by a violent exchange of populations. A movement for the autonomy of regions of Asia Minor that were populated by a majority of Greeks met with a violent Turkish response, when Ataturk's *Young Turks*⁶⁴ repeatedly attacked the Greeks and their expansive intentions. In the period starting in 1920 and ending with violent episodes in August 1922, when tens of thousands of Greeks and Armenians were massacred (see Pavlowitch 1999: 238), the great majority of the Greek population of Asia Minor fled to metropolitan Greece. They were a million or more, to be added to 'the Greeks of Southern Russia fleeing the Revolution, and those of Bulgaria coming under a voluntary exchange – some 1.3 million to be integrated into a pre-1914 population of 4.3 million' (Pavlowitch 1999: 239).

For the majority of those Greeks their first language was not Greek, but the administrative and education language of the state they had been living in. In their dealings with Greek education once they were 'back' to the metropolis, the lack of a demotic grammar was only another obstacle that they had to confront.

Additionally, Asia Minor Greeks had been in contact with democratic ideals of political representation more than the peasant-like population of metropolitan Greece had the chance to be (see Hirschon 1989: 51). 'Many who came from large Ottoman cities that were economically cosmopolitan, looked down on the 'provincialism' of Greece. They encountered much prejudice' (Pavlowitch 1999: 239). They were also

⁶⁴ Turkish nationalist movement, 'The adherents of the Committee for Union and Progress', (Pavlowitch 1999: 349), of which Kemal Ataturk was the inspiration.

progressive in regard to their language choice, and generally took the side of the Demotic.

Western scrutiny regarding Greek continuity, heritage and identity had affected the self-image of Greeks who lived in what was then Greece – whose symbols of heritage, the great monuments, represented ancestors who were further in the past of the land (Acropolis of Athens). But Greek ethnic identity was in a better position in Asia Minor, symbolised by remnants of classical Greece, but also of Byzantium (a great example being the temple of Saint Sophia in Istanbul), representing a past closer to the people's contemporary life. The past that Greeks living in that area felt heirs to was closer than the past that the Greeks of metropolitan Greece had around them in the form of great symbols, and that offered Asia Minor Greeks a confidence for their Greek identity that was not vulnerable to western scrutiny and challenge.

The Greek they spoke, however, was not as confident – nor as useful for their return to Greek social reality. It was either taught and read in its purified archaic form, in the form of a literary language taught in schools, or spoken in an ancient but hybrid form⁶⁵ (Pavlowitch 1999: 239) developed due to the geographical and other isolating factors affecting some of their communities.

The massive wave of immigrants flooding Greece provided cheap labour and was chiefly responsible for the economic growth of the land, but Greece proved largely incapable of developing social institutions that would embrace immigrants and channel their work in the best ways (Clogg 1981b: 6).

In terms of pedagogy, neither the demotic spoken language nor the language spoken by the refugees when that was different to the demotic,⁶⁶ were recognised at an institutional level. No lasting incorporation of the demotic in schools was achieved, nor of a simpler language to help the refugees with linguistic and communication problems – and no entrance schools for their needs were established.

In the name of an archaic language type that was meant to represent social and national 'order', the Greek state did not cater for the needs of its distant citizens, nor

⁶⁵ A Greek dialect – a hybrid of ancient Greek – is still spoken by Greeks that fled the dissolving Soviet Union in the 1980s and 1990s (and came to Greece) and is called Pontika. It was developed in the area around the Black Sea, which was inhabited by Greek populations for centuries. The outcome of geographic and cultural isolation and the passing of time, it developed close with Russian but was not especially affected by it. It takes its name from the area where it was developed, called Pontos in Greek.

⁶⁶ See previous footnote.

for the needs of its 'natives'. Instead, seven successive changes of the official language took place from 1917 to 1938 – shifts from the katharevousa to the demotic and vice versa. When the demotic did enter into the school system it was limited to primary school teaching, involving more or fewer school years at each reform. Each political change initiated another reform and each reform was only valid for two or three years. Thus continuous shifts took place in the periods 1917-1920, 1921-1923, 1923-1925, 1926, 1926-1933, 1933-1935, 1935-1937 (see Triantaphyllides 1993: 585-586). Any coherence in educational practice and in literary education was impossible: political imbalance had consuming effects on education, and complemented linguistic ambivalence.

4.6.4 Describing the conditions: Diglossia as a problem

Political, educational and linguistic instability were perpetuated until the right conditions for change appeared. Ferguson suggested that diglossia becomes a problem when specific social and political conditions appear, conditions which he called 'trends' (1959: 338): 'more widespread literacy, (...) broader communication among different regional and social segments of the community (...), [and] desire for a full-fledged standard 'national' language as an attribute of autonomy or sovereignty' (ibid.; see also Gellner 1992).

In the Greek context, diglossia had been a problem even before the emergence of the state in the 1830s, since those conditions were present long before that: the spread of literacy had been due to Greek schools appearing in Ottoman territories (founded and operated by the Church, see Evaggelides 1936a: CXII), the Danubian principalities and western Europe (Browning 1982: 52; Camariano-Cioran 1974a, 1974b; Evaggelides 1936a: CXIII; CVIII); broader communication was due to the growth of commerce; and the desire for a national language, that would 'inspire' and 'verify' a new independent Greek state was a response to the Enlightenment. The Language Question affected and was affected by the political struggle for independence (Browning 1982: 52-53), since the issue of deciding about the national language was closely related to the foundation of the new sovereign state.

4.6.5 Describing the conditions: Language choice as part of identifying the Other, and as a linguistic parameter of social hegemony

When the problem of diglossia became enmeshed with issues affecting the new state, its social implications came with it. The choice of language type became a 'reason' for social division that prevailed in the twentieth century.

The vulgar language [he means the demotic] is capable of being used as the **international language of the idiots and the stupid persons, and not of the descendants of Pericles and Plato, of Aristotle and of the Son of Olympiad (...)** If the Greek nation is condemned to say 'the man' and 'the woman', to abolish the linguistic features of the ancient language, it would be to the best interest of the state to demolish all the schools and to send the Greek children to the pubs, to be taught such vulgarities (George Mistriotis 1911: 112, 239 quoted in Dimaras 1999b: 267).

That fierce opposition to the demotic that attached intensely negative characteristics to the Other language and to its users, assumed that the accuser could claim the opposite, positive characteristics for herself; if the Other was stupid, the accuser was intelligent, if the Other was savage the accuser was civilised (Loomba 2000: for instance 152-156, also referring to Bhabha and Fanon). 'The power of all forms of subjectivity relies on the marginalisation and repression of historically specific alternatives' (Weedon 1997a: 87). Power is maintained by marginalizing what and who is or might be challenging it, and by transforming the challenger into the Other [see Weedon 1997a: 87-88 on the marginalisation of the Greenham peace movement against nuclear weapons by the press; also Threadgold 1988 and 1997, where she refers to a murder story where the murdered person is pronounced by the media to be a native Australian – an Other. In both instances negative characteristics are attached in the first case to people with a different opinion (and sex), in the second to people with a different skin colour. In the instance of Greek diglossia, it is attached to people with a different language choice and/or knowledge].

The archaists were 'protesting too much', concentrating their arguments on language use when in reality they were defending their economic and social (and not cultural) exclusive rights. Political and social symbolism made educational language choice stricter and more forceful each time it shifted, since language struggles were standing in for power struggles.

4.6.6 Alexandros Delmouzos

Delmouzos, a major pedagogic figure, publicly denounced the involvement of education in political disputes as something that stopped the progress of schools and confused young people: ‘... whatever one government would build, the other would bring down, indifferent to the fact that thus, not only was education in constant confusion, but also the whole intellectual life of the land was in turmoil and decline’ (quoted in Papanoutsos 1984: 124). Educated first in the Philosophy School of Athens University and then in Germany, the educationalist Alexandros Delmouzos was a strong advocate for the establishment of the demotic language in education. Early on, in 1897, he had lived through the humiliating war of Greece against Turkey (Papanoutsos 1984: 37; Pavlowitch 1999: 151). The catastrophic defeat of Greece in its effort to acquire Crete shook the foundations of the Greek conscience and showed that change was urgently required: a shift in the orientation ‘not only of its political aspirations, but also a shift in the orientation of the life of the Nation’ (Delmouzos 1950: 15-16 and Papanoutsos 1984: 37-38). ‘The humiliating defeat had highlighted the gulf between Greece’s irredentist aspirations and her modest military capabilities’ (Pavlowitch 1999: 151). Until then, the Greek state was orientated towards the reification of what they called the Great Idea, which meant annexing all territories of the Ottoman Empire it considered Greek. Consequently it ignored internal problems, not least of which was the educational and linguistic problem, and the problem of educating the people that were already established or in the process of establishing themselves in Metropolitan Greece.

In 1908, Dr. Demetrios Saratris recommended to the Town Council of Volos⁶⁷ the founding of a Higher Municipal Girls’ School⁶⁸ of a special kind, and having three classes/age groups. The school aspired to ‘provide the land’ with young women ‘who would have a positive and enlightened mind, (...) able to later educate their children as they ought to’ (Delmouzos 1950: 22-23, quoted in Papanoutsos 1984: 41). It was some sort of an academy for young women who had already been through state education and would attend that school as a preliminary to their getting married (the

⁶⁷ A town in central Greece.

⁶⁸ The translation in Greek is *Parthenagogeio*: a translation to the letter would be ‘a place where instruction is given to virgins’.

Greek term that corresponds to this type of school translates as ‘a school for the pedagogy of the virgins’, ‘parthenagogeio’).

The girls were to be taught practical courses (cooking and gardening), French, Modern Greek language and literature, even ancient Greek writers in good translations. The Council’s decision enabled Saratris to search for a pedagogue who would be able to take up the task. At the time, Delmouzos had published a study insisting on the pedagogic significance of Demoticism in the Athenian newspaper *Acropolis*. This brought the doctor to ask for Delmouzos’s help for the project, offering him the directorship. The latter saw the offer as a ‘blessed chance’ to try out a first attempt to incorporate Demoticism in education (see Papanoutsos 1984: 41-42). But the Greek society of 1908, especially that of a provincial town, had been for years saturated with the scholasticism and rigidity of the proponents of the purist ancient language type (Papanoutsos 1984: 42-43). Insistence on katharevousa had become part and parcel of an educational attitude that ‘had sworn’ to ‘safeguard’ the fortresses of ‘homeland, religion, and family’. This was the attitude that fostered the resistance Delmouzos encountered in his students when he started working in the School: ‘Stillness, poverty [of spirit], false romanticism, nonsensical gibberish of parrots, all of these were the general characteristics of the material. But these faults were coming from school, they were brought on only by the [state] school’ (Delmouzos 1950: 111, quoted in Papanoutsos 1984: 43-44).

By 1910, two years after the School was founded, the local religious and political élite had made a first unsuccessful attempt to close the school. This time aided by a journalist, they launched a trial case against Delmouzos. They accused him of insulting Religion and the Homeland, and teaching in demotic. Only the last accusation was true. He responded to the fabricated accusations in a remarkable way during the trial, and was acquitted in 1914 – but the school had closed in 1911.⁶⁹

Since Greek society was patriarchal, it was less observant of the ‘breakthroughs’ that women might be involved with, convinced it could suppress them easily. The fact that the experiment of using the language that the students spoke to teach them started in a girls’ school (supported by local and private funding), and that even there it was

⁶⁹ See also <http://www.fhw.gr/chronos/13/en/civilization/institutions/02.html>, accessed 16/09/2004.

confronted with intense reactions, is indicative of the background position the demotic had in Greek society – and of the intense resistance that Greek society was capable of. Delmouzos was to repeat his efforts for the establishment of the demotic in *Marasleio* in Athens in 1923-25, a school for the further education of school teachers which was run by the state, and then in the University of Thessaloniki from 1928 to 1937 (see Politis 1993: 253-254, Papanoutsos 1984: 109, 117). He was persecuted in the same manner. Reactionary purists in high places were determined to libel him in newspapers, and attempted to influence public opinion against him. They would always end by putting him under trial with accusations of immorality, lack of respect for ‘religion and the Holy Church’ and, even of being a ‘mason’⁷⁰ and an anarchist, all because he was teaching in the demotic (Papanoutsos 1984: 86-93, Dimaras 1999b: 266).

Thus, in Metropolitan Greece the archaic language type had become politically and nationally theorised as representing patriotism, and writers were obliged to abide by this or face sanctions. For instance, the poet who dominated the cultural scene of early twentieth century Greece, Palamas, was also punished for a pro-demotic article with a month’s dismissal from his position in the secretariat of Athens University (see Dimaras 1999b: 267).

The extent of the power of conservative political and cultural forces at the time in Greece is also shown in how prime minister Venizelos, whose centre-left government had repeatedly, directly and indirectly, supported the demotic language type, allowed articles that rendered the demotic illegal to be introduced into the Constitution, so that he would not endanger the rest of his policies (Dimaras 1999b: 267; Mackridge 1987: 9) at a crucial time at the beginning of the century (1911).

4.6.7 George Chatzidakis

Another important linguist who became part of the solution to the Language Question also had an ambiguous relationship with the state’s sanctions about language use. The linguist George Chatzidakis, educated in Germany, abided by the Greek state

⁷⁰ For a public of moderate to minimum economic capacity and educational access, still nowadays these words, ‘mason’ and ‘anarchist’, connote qualities of an almost mythical threatening evil, most likely exactly because they are not clearly defined. A populist rhetoric can thus use them arbitrarily to mean whatever the prosecutor wishes to exorcise.

language choice in his work that was published in Greek, but also proved that choice's irrelevance for the future. His work legitimised the Greek vernacular and showed that it was a continuation of the Byzantine language. Byzantine had developed from an ancient Greek dialect, the Alexandrine (Hellenistic) common language, which existed before the Attican dialect (the fifth century B.C. Athens dialect, used as a basis for katharevousa). Chatzidakis was also the first to introduce linguistic science into Greece, and determined the foundations and appropriate methodologies to research the demotic (Babiniotis 1994: 58-59).

His *Einleitung in die neugriechische Grammatik (Introduction to Modern Greek Grammar)* was published in 1892 in Leibnitz, in German, as part of a famous series on grammars of the Indo-European languages. This work established for the first time the theoretical principles of studying Modern Greek and addressed the main problems of the language (Babiniotis 1994: 62). Even though today it would seem the obvious method, this was the first time that research into Modern Greek used both the oral and written traditions. Until then, researchers claimed that only oral sources should be advised when researching Modern Greek (Babiniotis 1994: 63).

However, Chatzidakis used katharevousa in his linguistic analyses and examination of the demotic when he wrote in Greek. It was because of this that he was accused of being partly responsible for the delay in the recognition of the demotic and its establishment as the language of the State. Nonetheless, he had a significant social status, and his influence was great so that his practice would accordingly be followed – but the decision between the two language types, the katharevousa and the demotic, was not an easy one. It was legitimate to believe that the oral language extensively spoken at the time was not yet the most appropriate system for use in education and the administration of the new state (Babiniotis 1994: 69-70), since there was no officially endorsed contemporary account of its research into grammar or syntax published, that would be able to support the teaching of the contemporary language type (see also Venezis 1959: 1400).

Thus it was in the content rather than the form of his work that Chatzidakis called for a middle route to be taken in the Language Question and asked to award status to the 'new' language (Babiniotis 1994: 67-68); he wrote in katharevousa but actively proposed the use of the demotic. Thus, in different ways he concomitantly provided

the most significant support for and the clear undermining of the purist ancient language (Triantaphyllides 1993: 599). 'It is characteristic that purists, who until then did not accept the existence of the demotic language, now started using it themselves – in poetry' (Triantaphyllides 1993: 600).

4.6.8 Describing the conditions: The Educational Association

Bringing together scholars and literary writers, the *Educational Association* was founded in 1910. It was a society that channelled the demoticists' work into the public sphere with a journal and publications that promoted the demotic as a legitimate writing language (Politis 1993:14; Dimaras 1999b: 267; Papanoutsos 1984: 40). The result of the private initiative of a few scholars, it did not have links with the state's administration, or any support from it. Accordingly, although its influence in society and in literary writing was considerable, it did not manage to have its conclusions integrated in educational policy in any lasting manner, at least until the final settlement of the Language Question. Its contribution was, however, significant, as its work made the public conscious of the superiority of the demotic to a greater extent than ever before.

Its Articles of Association were signed in May 1910, and determined that its aim would be to found a new school in Athens and to help in time to reform Greek education. It also promised the publication of books, a newsletter and a newspaper. The three main figures inspiring and working for the Association were Delmouzos, Glinos and Triantaphyllides (Politis 1993: 253-254).

The Association did not achieve the foundation of a school, but it did fight its cause with publications and with the separate political and social action of its founding members [amongst them were the politician and literary author Ion Dragoumis and the literary author Nikos Kazantzakis (see Politis 1993: 255, 271)].

However, the 1920 electoral defeat of the liberals, who were led by Venizelos, brought new disappointment about the possibility of integrating some of their efforts within educational policies. Venizelos's reforms had been pro-demotocist. After

Delmouzos's unsuccessful efforts in Marasleio,⁷¹ disappointment dictated that the change would not come from the schools, since there was an 'unrepentant, reactionary class' that was in effect ruling Greek society and politics, and therefore educational life (see Papanoutsos 1984: 94-95).

In the 1927 Assembly, long and turbulent discussions concerning the direction that ought to be taken dissolved the Association: Glinos and his supporters argued it ought to take a class initiative and support the communist left, Delmouzos and Triantaphyllides argued it should remain politically neutral (see Papanoutsos 1984: 97-104).

4.6.9 A debate between two ruling classes

There is a sense in which the Language Question was to a great extent a debate between two 'ruling classes' rather than between a ruling class and a working class (the peasant class in the Greek case). The first ruling class comprised scholars with power-related positions, linked with the Church or the State, with conservative views on language. The second comprised of scholars who saw the demotic as a chance for a national identity to be formed and sustained, and who were influenced by the Enlightenment and educational ideals of Western Europe.

Thus, in political terms this was a struggle for the re-distribution of power in society, even if and when it was done at an unconscious level. Social developments required that the old ruling class would be replaced with a new class who were earning money and social position with their work rather than with their inherited property, rented or cultivated, or through their alliance with the Church (see also Ehrenreich 1990 on the new categorisation of classes, and the emergence of what she calls the professional middle class).

At this time, it happened that the interests, cultural and social, of that second ruling class coincided with those of the peasants. As Gramsci showed, the ruling class of a certain time in history is usually formed by alliances of class strata (Hall 1996f: 35).

A British equivalent is the working class intellectuals who challenged the social privileges of the ruling class. People like Williams and Steedman had multiple

⁷¹ A school for the further education of school teachers which was run by the state, where Delmouzos's efforts to establish the demotic also met with intense reactions against him, in 1923-25 (see before, p.133).

positions: they had come from the working classes to end up in the middle class, and thus they were interested in working class rights. They climbed ‘the ladder’ (Williams 1993: 331-333) but that was not enough to inspire them to a complete affiliation with the ladder’s destination, the middle class. Something that strengthens this argument is Williams’s testimony (in *Orwell*, 1971b) about the feelings of Orwell towards his own membership of the ruling class of the time: the feelings of being used by that class rather than being given privileges by it.

4.6.10 Manolis Triantaphyllides

A figure that formed a political ‘alliance’ for which he was repeatedly and severely criticised was another linguist, Manolis Triantaphyllides. Acting on a genuine intention to move beyond political expediencies, Triantaphyllides is perhaps the most important figure for demoticism in the twentieth century. He put considerable effort into trying to remain politically neutral, in order to promote the solution of the cultural and pedagogical problems Greece was encountering that were directly linked to language. A linguist, he was one of the founders of the Educational Association and a proponent of a moderate pro-demotic solution to the Language Question. His demoticism promoted a linguistic reconciliation between the intransigent ideas of Psycharis and the written forms the demotic had taken, integrating katharevousa types. He suggested that the katharevousa had influenced the speaking and reading practice of modern Greeks in ways that could not – and need not – be reversed. His views took the linguistic reality of Greece into consideration [the Psycharis manifesto was written in Paris, away from that reality (Papanoutsos 1984: 74, Dimaras 1999a: 264, Moros 1999a: 310)]. A significant part of Triantaphyllides’s scientific contribution and work is that he studied not only the linguistic but also the social effects and parameters of the demotic use (Moros 1999a: 310).

In 1925 he was given a position in the newly created University of Thessaloniki, and took the opportunity to conduct his classes in the demotic. Only two more of the University staff did the same, while the rest taught in the katharevousa (Papanoutsos 1984: 106-112).

The most significant turn in his career and in the history of the Language Question happened a few years later. In 1931, at a time of the liberal (centre-left) government of Venizelos, the Minister of Education George Papandreou asked him to chair the

committee that would write the *Modern Greek Grammar* (Moros 1999a: 310). The minister's letter asking for Triantaphyllides's services is dated 6 June 1931. But in 1932 Venizelos's government lost the elections and the political turmoil that followed resulted in the establishment of a government of Tsaldaris (the leader of the populist party) formed as late as 1933. The King was restored to the throne and Venizelos fled to France until his death in 1936 (a death before which two unsuccessful coups d' état by the army took place, and an attempt on Venizelos's life as well as retributions by the Tsaldaris government) (see Pavlowitch 1999: 290-291).

Such political turmoil suspended Triantaphyllides's work on the *Grammar*. The evenly divided electoral opinion of 1932 and the appointment by the King of General Metaxas as Prime Minister when the caretaker minister died in 1936, resulted in a dictatorship. On 4 August 1936 he had the King's authorisation to suspend key articles of the constitution, because of a threatened 24-hour strike called by the communists. Metaxas claimed the measures were temporary – still, they marked the dissolution of parliament for ten years (Clogg 1981b: 27-28). He took over foreign affairs, the armed forces, and, finally and importantly, education (Pavlowitch 1999: 292).

It was this military government that, in 1937, asked Triantaphyllides again to chair the committee that would compile the *Grammar* (Moros 1999a: 311). Triantaphyllides did not accept the 'honour' of being appointed to the University of Athens that the dictator offered him, but he resumed work on the *Grammar*, which he considered of national importance (Tsopanakis 1979: 23), even though in effect it meant that he gave up a linguistic/academic career that would most likely give him an international reputation (Tsopanakis 1979: 22).

The dictatorship of Metaxas lasted four years, (1936-1940) and thankfully its populist ideology (Pavlowitch 1999: 292) was well served by a political stance in favour of the demotic language. (The use of the demotic language type by the Metaxas dictatorship is indicative of the different available political uses of education, language and Literature; the following, 1967 dictatorship of the colonels chose katharevousa as being representative of its 'values', looking to the 'glorious past' of ancient Greece).

The *Grammar* was published in 1941; in 1946 Triantaphyllides published his own shorter version, the *Small Modern Greek Grammar*, which would finally be used in schools in 1976, having the appropriate length, since the first edition was too big to be distributed and taught in schools (Moros 1999a: 311).

4.7 World War and Civil War

World War II had started for Greece on 28 October 1940, with an ultimatum and an attack from Albania, launched by Benito Mussolini. General Metaxas, the Prime Minister/dictator, ‘made himself popular overnight in his own country’, by answering ‘No’ to Mussolini’s demand for Greece to be peacefully annexed to Italy (Smith 1988: 21).

But it ended for Greece with an even more devastating war: officially, the civil war was supposed to prevent the take-over of the country by communists (Smith 1988: 18), which had happened in all the rest of the Balkan countries. Unfortunately it also became an outlet for personal and political rivalries that would continue to exist in the public life of the country for much longer. The civil war ended in 1949, but the dictatorship of the colonels that took power in 1967 for seven years, capitalised on those rivalries and nurtured the ideological remains of the civil war (Tsoucalas 1981: 319).

4.8 The George Papandreou educational reform of 1964 and its fate

The minister of education who in 1936 had asked Triantaphyllides to lead the scientific committee that would compile the *Grammar of Modern Greek* was George Papandreou. By the 1960s he was the leader of ‘Centre Union’, a new political party orientated to the centre-left. Standing in-between conservative forces that served the King on the one hand, and communist intensities on the other, the election of Papandreou as Prime Minister expressed the people’s wish for an alternative to both those extremes – communists and conservatives were at the time viewed, with good historical reason, as extreme ends (see also Castoriadis 1997b: 1). The Greek civil war of 1944-1949 that preceded that election had devastating effects in that institutions continued to harbour the ideologies of that war long after it had officially ended. The conservatives had won, but political polarisation was perpetuated, institutionally, in spite of democratic appearances (see Tsoucalas 1981: 319).

In 1964, George Papandreou, as the newly elected Prime Minister who had appointed himself Minister of Education as well, introduced to Parliament three basic

educational Bills. Free education at all educational levels was established, as any kind of fees, taxes or book buying, which the majority of post-war(s) Greeks could not afford, were abolished. The demotic was established as of equal value to the katharevousa in secondary and higher education, whereas in primary education it became the only language taught. Furthermore, compulsory education was extended from 6 to 9 years, and was to be adjusted gradually (Evangelopoulos 1998b: 88-89). The state funds for education rose to 15% of the budget, from a mere 7%.

This most significant reform did not, however, get the chance to unravel itself. In a climate where conservative religious and political groups were protesting to achieve the withdrawal of the books which signified the reform in schools, came the political crisis of 1965, culminating in the resignation of George Papandreou and the dictatorship of 1967 (Evangelopoulos 1998b: 91-92).

On 21 April 1967 a military man, Colonel Papadopoulos, organised and carried out, under his leadership, a coup d' état, and thus established the so-called dictatorship of the colonels (Clogg 1981b: 32-33; Zafeiropoulos n.d.: 1004-1007, 1010). The king accepted appointment as head of cabinet under the colonels' dictatorship on 30 April 1967 (Zafeiropoulos n.d.: 1028; see also Clogg 1979: 188). He expected to have an influence on the new regime, but on the 10th of May the colonels announced their intention to establish a new constitution, which would not recognise any authority of the king. After that the king tried to organise a military coup himself, with army officers who were loyal to him, but this was loosely organised and almost a farce (Zafeiropoulos n.d.: 1037). After its failure, he left the country (Clogg 1979: 188-189).

The dictatorship kept the regulations about free education (not about language or the rest of the reforms) that Papandreou had established, as part of their populist politics. But it was still a very strict regime, and lack of freedom was felt throughout education. The Junta's military reaction to students' protests were responsible for the colonels' eventual overthrow. In March 1973 students protested against the military government and occupied the Law Faculty of Athens University. Their attempt was brutally suppressed. In November 1973 a memorial service for George Papandreou provided another opportunity for protest, and the people clashed with the police. Some days later students occupied the Athens Polytechnic (the School of Architecture and Technological Sciences, not equivalent to the status British Polytechnics used to have) and university buildings in Salonika and Patras. The students entrenched

themselves behind the great iron gates of the institution, and movingly announced on the radio, 'our brothers, soldiers, you will not kill us'. The widespread popular support and the Junta killings around and inside the institution on 15 till 17 November with the use of military tanks, in spite of the territory being considered an asylum, eventually exposed the violent cruelty of the regime as never before.

As a response to the pan-Hellenic outcry against the killings, the colonels sought to mollify these by addressing the nationalistic feelings of the people with a military coup in Cyprus, trying to force the unification with metropolitan Greece. This coup of July 1974 provided the pretext for the Turkish invasion of the island in the same year (see Clogg 1981b: 33; 1979: 197; Zafeiropoulos n.d.: 1118, 1126-28). On 24 July the Junta was no longer in power in Greece.

Karamanlis, the right wing adversary of Papandreou in the 1960s was brought back from exile in the same year, and legalised the Greek communist party (after 27 years of it being illegal). He won the November elections and organised a referendum in December 1974, in which 69.2% of the people voted against the monarchy and in favour of a parliamentary democracy. The king, from exile, did not recognise the referendum (Zafeiropoulos n.d.: 1133-5, Clogg 1981b: 33).

Education, language and the media had an active role in all this (the radio broadcasts of the students, perhaps predictably in the demotic, secured a broad public support for the entrenched students). As Metaxas had done before him, Colonel Papadopoulos had made a point of assuming command of both the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Education (Clogg 1979: 189; 1987: 208). The regime cancelled all aspects of the 1964 educational reforms – except one. The one maintained was free education, which was useful also in that it meant that the government provided the pupil's books – new and 'improved' ones. With the forced Law 129/1967, the katharevousa was once again the official language, limiting the demotic to only the first three years of compulsory education. Compulsory schooling was reduced to only six years, and educationalists of all levels were prosecuted for 'not having the appropriate morals' to serve under the dictatorship (Evangelopoulos 1998b: 93).

With the end of the seven years' regime the use of katharevousa became a symbol of the lack of political freedom and, as such, it was ostracised by all. The political, social and cultural climate the regime had established, the Junta's 'tenure of office', ironically afforded an important service: the fall of the colonels meant that in

Greece's intellectual life whoever was in favour of katharevousa would now be seen as in favour of the Junta regime (Philippaki – Warburton 1999: 322, Kopidakis 1999b: 341), and thus would be reluctant to take such a stance. The official shift towards the demotic language was thus eased, and the reaction against it was minimal. This cost some linguistic forms within the katharevousa that could be useful [like the infinitive, (see Kopidakis 1999b: 341 about Castoriadis) but which after all this time are nowadays reclaimed], but the gains were immense.

It was finally acknowledged that Standard Modern Greek *is* a descendant of ancient Greek (the sole descendant according to Mackridge 1987: 2; see also *ibid.*: 8; Browning 1983: back cover), and 'used unselfconsciously and for its own worth', it is a language of its own, not the result of a conscious combination of two language types that goes on incessantly (for the debate that regards SMG with distrust see Browning 1982: particularly 58). An independent language system (Browning 1982: 58) SMG is a language in its own right, taking from both katharevousa and the demotic (Mackridge 1987: particularly 14).

4.9 A new educational reform in the wake of democracy: 1976 (Browning 1982: 55; Mackridge 1987: 10-11; Horrocks 1997: 361-362)

With democracy reinstated after the political changeover of 1974, a new constitution was voted for in 1975, which in effect reinstated the educational reforms of 1964 and added to them: now the demotic language was established as the teaching and taught language at all school levels. It was also the language of the schoolbooks, which were given free of charge. The books for grammar and syntax of Modern Greek that had been written in the 1940s were now used, and new seminars for the education of teachers were organised (Evangelopoulos 1998b: 94-97; see also Clogg 1979: 222).

Early on, an anthology of Greek literary texts was published as a schoolbook. The right wing government (the right wing Minister of Education, G. Rallis) supervised it, yet in accordance with the legalisation of the Communist Party of Greece, 'KKE', and for the first time since 1947 (the last time they had participated in elections being as far back as 1936) (Clogg 1981b: 33; 1979: 204), there was a remarkable balance in the book, since writers of all political affiliations were selected by the editors. The overwhelming majority of the selected texts were in the demotic.

In our June 1999 interview, Nikos Grigoriadis, one of the book's editors, remembered that some officials informed the right wing minister of education, George Rallis, that those who were compiling the book were also using literary pieces by communists. His answer was 'Just as long as they don't make the book red...' – and he allowed all the selections of the committee. For the first time, literary reading was going to be integrally linked with the social and political life of the students, and it was going to be taught as such.

4.10 The losing of accents in Modern Greek: 1982

The last educational reform that affected the official language of the state, this time the demotic, was the 1982 reform. It involved the abolition of accents that had been inserted into the Greek language by scholars of the Hellenistic period. The accents represented an attempt to revive the musical pronunciation of the language from the era of capital writing (Ancient Greek) to their contemporary lower case writing. In 1982, the centre-left P.A.S.O.K.⁷² government, elected the year before, voted in a Bill to expunge the accents (Evaggelopoulos 1998b: 99, Moros 1999c).

Monotoniko (the system of using only one accent and only in words with more than one syllable, where the stress is put) was an issue that was argued as an addition to demotic 'demands' – although there were demoticists who were against it (Kopidakis 1999b). It was a further step in simplifying the language, arguably too radical and hasty to prove its progressiveness. Unadorned, the written word was going through its last changes – but many literary writers continued to write and publish using the accents.

The losing of these accents was supported by many demoticists as a further step towards simplification, also in light of similar developments in other European languages (see Kriaras 1998: 251, on simplifications of German). But perhaps its most significant support was the fact that it made the teaching of language easier. The demotic had an important status in terms of combating illiteracy in Greece (Panagiotakis 1999: 213).

⁷² The 'Panhellenic Socialist Movement'.

Illiteracy was still a major problem for Greece at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it was intensified by the insistence on using katharevousa in education. The extreme elevation of katharevousa, a language type that had not been fully understood by the mass of Greeks [‘more and more unintelligible to the mass of Greeks, and more and more imprecise’ (Browning 1982: 54)], at a significant social level was about forbidding access to reading to social groups whose access to education was already limited by economic factors. Idealising and mythologising the ancient-like katharevousa mystified the peasant reader into acceptance of her own lesser status as someone who could not understand what was said and written. Reading was denied. Williams’s description of the British case of ‘denial of readership’ is accurate in relation to Greece too:

On the one hand there is the fear that as the circle of readers extends, standards will decline, and literature be threatened by ‘blotterature’. Related to this, but involving other prejudices, has been an essentially political fear that, if the common man reads, both quality and order (sometimes one standing for the other) will be threatened (Williams 1971a: 179).

In many ways, the vote for the Bill for the losing of accents indicated more a social need than a linguistic or a cultural need. The demotic had already been established, and in the form that included the accents it was accepted and proper, in a scientific, cultural and educational way. Abandoning the accents was legislated into place, and was not a development that occurred naturally in the language community. But as a political reaction, it was an indication of the extent to which the demotic had been suppressed in the past decades, and of the frustration that the lower classes’ lack of access to education had produced in society.⁷³

4.11 Towards a theorisation of literary reading

To a certain extent, Greek twentieth century theorisation of literature and literary reading in a pedagogy and cultural studies context tried to follow British and western European problematics. But this practice was in many ways an effort to accommodate

⁷³ See Kriaras 1998: 253 on how the linguistic turmoil Greece was put through meant that the accents could be seen as yet another complication.

the problems of others into the Greek context, and therefore limiting. Although the problem of the outdated literary canon was prominent in Britain, many were not convinced it was a real one for Greece (in spite of the fact that it was posed, for example in Pashalidis 1999), at least not when it meant rejecting the canon which was compiled under the social and political circumstances that we saw above (see Spiropoulos 1991: particularly 42).

The theorisation of the reading of literature in Greece was approached in connection either with pedagogy or with literary criticism. The social implications of literary reading, as well as those of pedagogy and literary criticism in connection with literary reading were underplayed too, and the stress was all given to language as a result of diglossia.

In spite of the fact that figures like Williams, Balibar, Bernstein and Bennett were read and used (see for example Pashalidis 1999, Apostolidou 1999) the scope of the work they were used in was often limited to the analysis of classroom practice, not the teaching of Literature and its reading. Perhaps this was so because of the special circumstances of Greece, which is a country that did not go through an industrial revolution, and therefore did not go through a time of rigid, acute divisions between middle class and working class.⁷⁴

Whatever the reason, this limiting condition is present – and given this, it is arguably necessary to attempt an integration of these theorists' work about the reading of literature in broader social terms. A broadly perceived Marxist literary theory has moved beyond the problem of the imposed canon, and beyond the confines of classroom reading towards a social view of literary reading. This social view touches on all practices related to reading literature, and incorporates concerns about institutions – not merely concerns about how literature is taught. As Orwell (referred to in Williams 1989g: 69) would put it, there is a need for new institutions that would deal better with social inequalities: once we get rid of the 'wrong members of the family' who are in charge now, we could get rid of outdated institutions too.

⁷⁴ No real working class was developed in Greece, but what acted as and was perceived as the masses, the people, was the peasant class, and perhaps also the class represented by shopkeepers of very little economic capacity.

The case of Greece during the twentieth century is a good example of the connections between institutions and groups where power is concentrated. The institution of education showed its great weaknesses regarding its independence from political expediencies, and from other institutions like the church and the state.

Social pressure ensured that the cultural institution of literature could be manipulated by centres of social power, especially as it influenced the language choice of authors. But literature itself also managed to put pressure on outdated institutions, when it avoided their control. It was first in literature, and in reading literature, that the citizen could be convinced of her right to use her mother tongue, since the overwhelming majority of great literary works used the correct language type: understood and felt, 'lived', in Williams's terms, by all social classes. The solution to the social and political problem that the Language Question stood for was there from the beginning, in the literary works of great authors.

If we accept the theorisation of Balibar and Macherey (1978), the solution that literature provided was partly responsible for the delay in the official establishment of the demotic in education. For Balibar and Macherey, education and literature inherently contain class conflicts, yet literature offers an *imaginary solution* to ideological class conflicts; it is 'realising in advance the fiction of a forthcoming conciliation' (Balibar & Macherey 1978: 8) between conflicting positions that ideology failed to reconcile. Through the process of identification (ibid.: 9), the reader receives that reconciliation, so as to minimise her reaction to the social conflict itself.

So, if the way things are, literature can and must be used in secondary education both to fabricate and simultaneously dominate, isolate and repress the 'basic' language of the dominated classes, it is only on condition that that same basic language should be present in literature, as one of the terms of its constitutive contradiction – disguised and masked, but also necessarily given away and exhibited in the fictive reconstructions (Balibar & Macherey 1978: 12).

The use of the demotic by the literary authors was a way to 'give the demotic away', a way of betrayal. There is, however, a contrary way to see this advancement of literature: to use Homi Bhabha's (2000: 21) comment on the radical use of cinematic art, I would like to suggest that the use of *literary art* too 'gives depth to the language of social criticism and extends the domain of 'politics' in a direction that will not be

entirely dominated by the forces of economic or social control'. As opposed to a militant Marxist view, we thus see literature as a space for social criticism – an institution where social criticism may be effectively channelled in order to find its way to other social institutions. In other words, the imaginary solution offered by literature can be a solution for the benefit of the lower class through performative reading and through the foundation of new institutions and the reform of old ones.

I would like to address education and literature as two institutions that are of value, exactly because they 'fail': they fail to instigate in the reader an identity that is pre-formed, 'ready-made' for them (Williams 1989f: 94). They fail to make the author and the reader use those ready-made words (ibid.) without hesitation.

The reason why Balibar and Macherey's Marxist view of literature *is* useful, both for Greece and Britain, even though it doesn't allow much space for the reader's agency, is because it shows 'the material function of literature' (Balibar & Macherey 1978: 7, 10):

Literature is not fiction, a fictive image of the real, because it cannot define itself simply as a figuration, an appearance of reality. By a complex process, **literature is the production of a certain reality**, not indeed (one cannot overemphasise this) an autonomous reality [Macherey had in the past suggested that it is autonomous but not independent (Macherey 1980/1966: 52)], **but a material reality, and of a certain social effect** (Balibar & Macherey 1978: 10, emphasis added).

As for their suggestion that literature offers an imaginary solution to social conflict, I would like to suggest that literature can also lead to a solution of the conflict that would not perpetuate the problem, and/or a solution that would maintain the conflict, but contribute to some sort of power redistribution within it. It can end with the formation of institutions that would support the dominated class [as with, for instance, the institutionalisation of the teaching of the demotic language and literature in Greece – including the influence of the *katharevousa*, therefore not eliminating the contribution of the ruling class, politically (see comprehensive education in the British case)]; it can even affect the hierarchy of power in society.

Balibar and Macherey's view is that reading functions as though someone (literature) other than the reader, who (pretends to) 'speak up' for the reader's rights, for the solution to social problems, disempowers her. I would like to argue that this speaking

up on our behalf is conversely, a proposal. This 'representation' of the reader envisages a solution to conflict. Yet the reader could accept or reject that solution, as it is not necessary that the opinion of the literary author about social reality will correspond with her own structures of feeling (Williams 1979: 138, 167, quoted in Probyn 1993: 21, 23). At the same time, reading can make the reader see and accept the value of the experience of others. It can be a *third space* where the structures of feeling of the reader and those of the author converse and are negotiated, one in the light of the other – even more accurately, a *third space* where the structures conveyed in the text and those of the reader converse, as the text has a life of its own, it is 'a reality complete in itself' (Macherey 1980: 53, see also 52) and may escape the intentions of the author. Williams addressed the issue of the 'structures and processes' that exist within literature, as being a transformation of real social life and beliefs, in that they are differently and imaginatively organised in the literary text, but also as being an actualisation and an experience:

Indeed, that constituted, for me, the specific literary phenomenon: the dramatisation of a process, the making of a fiction, in which the **constituting elements, of real social life and beliefs, were simultaneously actualised and in an important way differently experienced, the difference residing in the imaginative act, the imaginative method, in the specific and genuinely unprecedented imaginative organisation** (Williams 1980e: 24-25, emphasis added).

Williams's view of these imaginary structures of the literary work went even further:

And what seems to me especially important in these changing structures of feeling [that are depicted in literature] is that they often **precede** those more recognisable changes of formal idea and belief which make up the ordinary history of consciousness, and that while they correspond very closely to a real social history, of men living in actual and changing social relations, they again often **precede** the more recognisable changes of formal institution and relationship, which are the more accessible, indeed the more normal, history (Williams 1980e: 25, emphasis added).

So Balibar and Macherey contended that the imaginary structures in literature take away the power of the reader to respond (for instance) to social injustice in what is conceived as 'real life', that they 'take off the steam' so to speak, of her reaction; they contended that literary structures imagine a solution to the social problem, preventing

a real solution. Yet if we also consider Williams's notion of literature (1980e: 25), we see that the solution enacted in the literary text does not negate a historical development that solves the problem, it only precedes it. The literary text does not prevent the solution from happening, but rather it offers an early feeling of it, a suspicion and a 'certainty' that it will come.

The relationship that this thesis can see between the point of view of Balibar and Macherey and that of Williams is also present in the work of bell hooks:

Often in radical circles, the imaginative mind is perceived as threatening, as though it will obstruct and disrupt progressive action. Certainly it is useful in a culture of domination to project the sense that the imagination is primarily useful as a means to produce fantasy. (...) [On the contrary], for the colonised mind to think of the imagination as the instrument that does not estrange us from reality, but returns us to the real more fully, in ways that help us to confront and cope, is a liberatory gesture (hooks 1991: 55).

In the same essay, hooks quoted Garcia Marquez contending that 'imagination is just an instrument for producing reality' (ibid.: 55). Agreeing with Williams, hooks suggested that

Without reducing artistic practice to mere propagandistic function, in a manner that censors and represses the imagination, revolutionary critical fictions prophetically construct and name the transformed future (hooks 1991: 60).

So according to this view the literary text not only precedes, but can in some ways also *cause* historical change.

The argument against Balibar and Macherey's view of literary reading as something disempowering can also take another route. If, as it was said above (p. 152), a literary work is 'a reality complete in itself' (Macherey 1980: 53, see also 52), or if the reader at any rate

... is guided by instinct to create for himself, out of whatever odds and ends he can come by, **some kind of whole** – a portrait of a man, a sketch of an age, a theory of the art of writing (Woolf 1984: 1, emphasis added),

then this whole, this complete picture of a reality, could enable us to see issues we hadn't considered before, before we read them. Drawing a fuller picture of the situation can cure one of her emotional response to inequality and discrimination (hooks 1991: 54), which could cloud her judgement and make her critical ability less incisive, and even paralyse it (ibid.).

A good example of emotion used to cloud the view of a situation in the socio-historical context of Greece is the persecution of Delmouzos for teaching using the demotic; his repeated persecutors appealed to the emotional connotations that accusations like 'anarchist' or 'mason' carried for the Greeks (see this thesis, p.133), namely fear.

Bell hooks also drew a way in which reading can balance emotion:

Poetry and novels brought me close to myself, helped me to overcome the estrangement that domination breeds between psyche and self. Reading, I could vicariously experience, dare to know and feel, **without threat** of repression, retaliation, silencing. (...) I chose to be a writer in my girlhood because books **rescued me**. They were the places where I could bring the broken bits and pieces of myself and put them together again, the places where I could dream about alternative realities, possible futures (hooks 1991: 54-55, emphasis added).

This 'shelter' of rescue that the space of reading provides has the power to feed a later reaction, of the mature reader, a reaction which will be informed and calculated to avoid danger and effect better and more lasting results against it: the emancipated and creative reaction of the *performing reader*. Hall referred to a similar function, when he talked about *the necessary delay through theory* (Hall 1992: 283). Seeing theoretical work as a political practice in its own right (ibid.: 281), Hall's work opened the way to seeing reading as a space where any possible reaction to reality can be assessed avoiding peaks of paralysing emotion, and negotiated, so that it will be nourished appropriately in order to produce better and more lasting effects. Reading literature is such a *third space* of negotiation (see also pp.63ff of this thesis, and particularly pages 67 and 146-147 in this introduction).

CHAPTER 5

CONSTRUCTING THE PERFORMING READER: GREEK OFFICIAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS

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As Williams suggested in his essay 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', a work of art is not an object, but rather art is a practice, which means that its reception and effects are more complicated than mere consumption would be (1980d: 47). Nowhere should this be more evident than in reading, which seems closer to the notion of a practice than seeing a painting or listening to a piece of music is. Yet all art is active:

The relationship between the making of a work of art and its reception is always active, and subject to conventions, which in themselves are forms of (changing) social organisation and relationship, and this is radically different from the production and consumption of an object. It is indeed an activity and a practice, and in its accessible forms, although it may in some arts have the character of the singular object, it is still only accessible through active perception and interpretation (Williams 1980d: 47).

Bearing those characteristics in mind, in 'the practice of analysis' 'we have to break from the common procedure of isolating the object and then discovering its components. On the contrary we have to discover the nature of a practice and then its conditions' (ibid.).

When we find ourselves looking at a particular work, or group of works (...) we should find ourselves attending first to the reality of their practice and the conditions of the practice as it was then executed (Williams 1980d: 48).

So a good way to view the literary works that embodied the solution to the Language Question through their linguistic and artistic practice, is as practice themselves, and the rules that governed their reception as 'forms of (changing) social organisation and relationship'. Such 'forms of social organisation and relationship', that directly concerned the reception of literary works, were the social processes that regulated decisions on educational policy and their publication.

Insistence on the superiority of the use of the ancient language type at the expense of the modern was expressed in policy as a response to 'the unconscious presence of a

received colonial syntax' (Schwarz 1999: 206) in the Greek case, as in the case of colonial Britain. A past that was almost imperial in that it had a cultural influence that had exceeded Greece, the ancient past was represented as an ideal that lifted and consoled Greek society in spite of its being aware of its current shortcomings.

Presenting that past as an ideal was common practice, and thus it could have a more significant effect on the people, as the ruling class of the time intended. Social segregation was presented as a matter of ethnic purity and the (nationally necessary) continuation of ancient cultural superiority (see Schwarz 1999: particularly 206, on politics of race representing itself as democratic politics). The ruling class of the church and the state capitalised on the desire for that continuation in the light of 'doubts' of western science on the matter whether the Greeks were true descendants of the ancients.

5.1 The context of state publications in Greece

At the time when the Language Question was finally resolved for schools in 1976 and until recently the administrative and political part of the educational institution, the Ministry of Education was officially named 'Ministry of National Paideia⁷⁵ and Religions.⁷⁶ The title is an indication of how the idea of the sovereign nation and the idea of religion (directed by a powerful Church) have been a conscious influence on the character and aims of education in the country. At the same time, the use of a word with a meaning as broad as *paideia* shows that the state is aware, at least at some level, of its regulating influence in all areas of society in matters of culture and learning, including, but also going beyond formal schooling.

Politics, history and cultural development are linked (see Ahmad 2000: for instance 52-55; see also Macherey 1995: 4-5), and education in the broadest sense as well as in the narrow sense of schooling is a politically and socially affected area. In the case of

⁷⁵ Greek word, pronounced *pe'dia*, written 'παιδεία'. Paideia has a broader meaning than education, but includes it; it connotes all the learning processes that a person goes through in her or his life, through education, entertainment, through social existence itself. (For a more detailed description of the word, see the Greek word 'paideia' in glossary, p. 108, as well as its use by Castoriadis 1997a, mainly p. 281. He used the word untranslated).

⁷⁶ Although on the official website of the Ministry (<http://www.ypepth.gr> accessed 8/7/2003) the English translation is 'Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs', I feel that the translation used in this thesis is more accurate.

Greece, twentieth century warfare and political unrest suspended democratic procedures and negatively affected developments in state education, on more than one occasion. The two World Wars that were fought on Greek territory (whereas there were no Italian or German troops on British soil during WWII, both occupied Greece), two military governments, the Greek civil war, and the period called the Balkan wars early in the century (1912-13) were decisive for Greece even in terms of acquiring and/or losing territory. Putting sovereignty itself under threat and destabilising the state, this historical and political turmoil suspended the creation of an educational plan and developing strategies.

Thus, in twentieth century Greece, official bodies that aimed to organise and support education were only formed during the intervals of relative political stability – and their operation was deferred with the next political shift that happened at the expense of democracy. Indeed the first extended period of democracy combined with a strong parliament began in 1974, the year the last Junta lost power.⁷⁷

Corresponding to that reality, the Pedagogical Institute, advisory and executive instrument of the Ministry of National Paideia and Religions was founded in 1964, as part of the educational reform of the Prime Minister and Minister of Education, George Papandreou. In 1967⁷⁸ its operation was suspended and the institution was only re-established in 1985. In 1975,⁷⁹ Education Minister George Rallis founded the Centre for Educational Studies to support the educational reform of 1975 (which introduced *Modern Greek Grammar* in school curricula) (see Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs 2000, and previously in this thesis, p.148). The availability of the documents is analogous to the availability of institutions: if there is no institution to support their publication, no documents are researched or published. The *Recommendations* were published in 1976, the *Directions* also since then and supposedly yearly, but really beginning in the mid-1980s.

⁷⁷ As a Greek I am concerned that this is a description that, although true, makes my country appear to be a 'third world country', a term that has thankfully been criticised. The structures of feeling of Greek citizens about their own country were that it was not a third world country, even when they had to emigrate in order to survive. Additionally, I would like to stress that political instability, together with other intense problems, also meant that the people had an acute political consciousness and were ready to fight for democracy.

⁷⁸ 1967 was the first year of the Dictatorship of the Colonels that lasted until 1974.

⁷⁹ In the aftermath of the fall of the military regime.

Thus, the British Reports on Education do not have a precise equivalent in 20th century Greece, since neither their supporting research nor their frequency are repeated. The *Directions for Teaching* is the only available publication that is periodic. It remains a valuable tool for educational research (see also Hunter 1991: 67). Published every few years and re-issued yearly, the *Directions* are distributed to the teachers by the Ministry of Education. A separate booklet is devoted to each taught subject, and the one on literary education aims to address the methods and objectives that the educational system requires the teachers to follow.

Containing a section devoted to *Directions*, the 1976 *Recommendations* is a detailed record of an historical 1976 conference, organised in the aftermath of the establishment of the demotic as the official state and education language type. It was a seminal meeting of educators aiming to mark out the right ways to incorporate the language shift into society, and to incorporate the correct, educated use of the demotic. Literary teachers and all kinds of professionals (like journalists) enquired about the correct use of Modern Greek, and the articles and essays that the account of the conference includes referred to the social effects of the language change and attempted to make plans for the future.

Before 1976 state educational publications are scarce. (The Educational Association that was mentioned before, was not a state organisation, and therefore its publications cannot be seen as equivalent to the British Reports. Their relation to state educational policy was that they were acting against it).

In the course of the search for the *Directions*, I didn't find anything of a periodical character published by the state before 1976, except school books that were distributed free of charge by the 1967-1974 Junta, in a private library. Such documents, if they exist, would also be in private collections. I think it is reasonable to argue that researching these would have to concentrate on them as archive material and would lead the thesis elsewhere, to a study that would be significant, but probably much more clearly political.

The present research concentrates instead on the 1976 *Recommendations* and on the *Directions* for teaching that seem to start being published in the mid-1980s.⁸⁰ Even

⁸⁰ Two of the *Directions* for teaching Literature found can cast some doubt on that assertion because they are not dated, but in content they are similar to the ones of the 1980s. That problematic practice of

these official documents are less available than the British *Reports on Education* are: for example, it is doubtful that the *Recommendations*, which were found in a particular Athens library would exist anywhere else in Greece, whereas no other Athens library had them. The institution of public local libraries itself has only relatively recently developed in different regions in Greece (in the last ten or twenty years) and this expansion has not been supported by a system that would unproblematically ensure the libraries' livelihood. Even if public libraries operated throughout Greece without problems, holding an educational archive would require a more adequate organisation than the one that exists.

In fact even in the capital city there is no Archive of the *Directions*, and only a few of the *Directions* published are available in specific libraries in Athens. Some of the issues of *Directions* that informed this thesis were found by chance in the hands of teachers who would spare them for me to photocopy, and from the Organisation for the Publication of Teaching Books ('OEDB'), founded in 1964, again in private collections of teachers who happened to work there. Administrators and other officials often presented those found as representative of all the others that could not be traced, in a manner that questioned the need to search for more issues.

5.2 New Greek Language and Letters

The differences between the Greek *Directions for Teaching* and the British *Reports on Education* do not stop at the limited versus the wide availability; an important element that separates them is indicated by the different title of the Literature lesson in Greece. Hence we talk about 'New (Modern) Greek Language and Letters', and that means less stress on the concept of Literature than 'English Literature' suggests.

According to the *Directions* of 1983-84 (p. 25) the teaching of 'New Greek Language and Letters' should be taught in three branches: a) language, i.e. Grammar and Syntax, b) texts of Greek literature, and c) essay writing or composition ('Expression/Presentation'), in which the student is asked to 'critically develop' an essay subject. The Greek curriculum devotes two hours a week to grammar and

not dating the publications has fortunately become rare in recent years, but Greek publishing has altogether followed a challenging historical course (see Tsokopoulos, Passia, & Chrysovergis 1998a).

language teaching (including oral use and syntax), and two hours to the teaching of essay writing (called 'Expression/Presentation' of one's thoughts). Two more hours are devoted to the teaching of reading literary texts from the anthologies provided. One anthology for each three year/class period is published and given free of charge. Although these are called *Texts of New Greek Literature*, they also contain literary texts by authors of international renown in demotic translation. The teacher chooses the texts taught in the classroom from those available in the anthology book, and the understanding is that the rest are really meant to be read by the pupil at home, for her own pleasure and benefit – the teachers encourage this practice but do not use the time in the classroom to examine the students about their reading of the texts that are not taught. It is instead understood that such reading would help the student in her own writing, meaning the writing of compositions, which is required, practiced and examined.

Many recent articles have concentrated on criticising the anthologies, echoing western educational concern about the literary canon (see for example Pashalidis 1999). Yet this demotic Literature canon was formed as late as the 1970s and included authors who were at the time groundbreaking, not only in that they wrote in the demotic when the status language type was another, but also in political terms. In twentieth century Greece, political divisions overshadowed social divisions, and that tolerance meant a broad inclusion rather than an exclusive canon (see also Spiropoulos 1991: 42, on how such depreciating articles that follow the fashionable trends at the time that went against the canon were evidence of 'starting history with ourselves and ignoring with contempt all else that was done' in the case of Greece and the Greek 'canon' that such people had tried to teach).

It is not of less significance that these anthologies were given free of charge to children who rarely had access to a public library, in a country where efforts to establish public libraries have not been followed through.

5.3 The *Directions*' content: concentration on the aims

In principle, the *Directions* treat educational policy choices differently from the British *Reports*. They also treat it differently from the above mentioned depreciating articles. They exist to confirm and work with the policies, not to assess them critically. By their title and character, they provide a context of explanation and justification of the decisions of policy, as well as 'directions for use' for some of them, especially those pertaining to classroom practice. They are meant to direct the use of what the teachers have at their disposal, not to suggest alternatives. Their inclusion of essays of highly acclaimed authors who take a position on literary teaching is meant to underline those 'directions for use'. The essays often do not include references, asserting the authority of the author as self-evident.

Still, the *Directions* do function in a similar way to the *Reports* in that they too present the generally accepted aims of the course on reading Literature. Those objectives demonstrate how policy views the literary reader, both the reader/teacher and the reader/pupil.

And it seems that these policy views are not straightforward and simple, nor can they be easily deduced from the taught material. The Greek *Directions*, as with the British *Reports*, devote a lot of space to the aims of teaching literary reading, and include essays of well-known literary critics on the subject. In the early *Directions* of the 1980s, these essays (which date from the 1960s and 1970s) treat the subject of reading as disconnected from its teaching,⁸¹ whereas the essays treat reading more and more in connection with analytical teaching in the *Directions* of the 1990s.⁸² These choices of the authors of the *Directions* indicate the shifts in pedagogical theory internationally.

5.4 When measuring equals control: measuring that which cannot be measured

As Frank Smith (1988: for example 112, 115-116) suggested, educational thought and policy was deeply (and wrongly) affected by experimental psychology. There is a sense in which it is understood that reading cannot be measured, assessed and/or

⁸¹ See for example the theoretical essay of Papanoutsos (1998), dealing with the moral virtues of a reader, in the 1998-1999 *Directions* (also appearing in the *Directions* of 1984-85).

⁸² See for example the analytical essay of Balaskas (1998, first published 1994), dealing with the structure of the lesson of literary reading in the 1998-1999 *Directions* (pp.321-323) (also appearing in the *Directions* of 1999-2000).

controlled, but nevertheless a method to measure and control it was employed [Smith (Frank) 1988: 112], created out of components that are foreign to it. The branches of psychology that deal with behaviour, like those that deal with emotion, were not taken into account (ibid.: 115-116), because they could not be measured in a laboratory. Thus, stating the aims of the lesson in social terms is linked with perceptions about the social (and emancipating?) effects of reading on the reader/pupil. This insistence on the social could indicate political concerns regarding the ways that reading's effects on the reader could be controlled.

5.5 Preoccupation with language

Language-centred Literature teaching

Emotional language

The aims of teaching Greek literary reading were necessarily linked with the demotic language type because of the broad influence of the Language Question in the twentieth century. Literature, as much as social and educational thought about literary reading and writing, was dominated by the debate over which language should be used and what implications that use would have.

After the issue was finally resolved, it became undeniable that literary reading and the demotic were integrally linked, which had cultural, social and even political implications: literary works written in the vivid and developing demotic were acknowledged as a valuable cultural asset, the social status of the demotic was verified, and owing greatly to the recent 'wrong' political affiliation of katharevousa, the demotic language was aligned with democracy. It became clear that unless the demotic language was established as legitimate, the country's cultural development would be severely hindered. Great literary works had been produced using the demotic – therefore to continue to underestimate the language would be equal to cancelling out a literary production that was extremely significant and responsible for literary works that were putting the Greek language and the Greek authors on the international map.

The 1976 conference that discussed the educational decisions that needed to be made, together with the change in the official language from katharevousa to the demotic, as

well as the 1976 *Directions*, stressed the importance of the final shift in favour of the demotic and the process that led to this, using emotional vocabulary:

And those **fine men** changed the course of their own personal spiritual life. They **leant down** and listened to the **language** of their people; they studied the literature in which the sorrows and the joys and the hopes of the nation had inscribed themselves; they taught the linguistic truth that they had believed in and they brought others to believe their own ideal. In this difficult spiritual path, the fighters for educational demoticism, isolated in the beginning and later structured in groups, on many occasions saw their work being destroyed, and they were themselves libelled and prosecuted. **But their granite faith in truth was giving them new wings.** They would start their work from the beginning, provoking the admiration of the youngsters that came to be fighters for this language themselves (Phoris 1976: 310, emphasis added).

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues, the new school year begins with **a revolution, a real revolution.** The Ministry of Education, after the historic government decisions of January, decided with wise planning and prudence to inaugurate this year the linguistic and educational reform from the first year of the gymnasium (highschool). Please allow an old educationalist who has been teaching in the gymnasium for a long time, and who also now follows from afar the life of the teacher, to be a "**prophet**": seamlessly, on its own, the linguistic reform will spread to the other school years too, the State will need more funds to re-issue the *Grammar*, and things will go beyond what was planned. Foretellings are always dangerous, but the signs show this. Especially when the telephone rings all the time, and the ministry is phoned not by pupils, but by people of any profession: " – When is the new *Grammar* being published?" When journalists, in their great majority, **received the *Grammar* with love and understanding,** and asked for it to be published beyond schools too, "so that we will learn the rules of our language too, and so that we write it correctly". When there is such **thirst**, it cannot be that only one school year will quench that thirst. **From the walls of the halls of teaching – so to speak – the other young Greeks will "steal" the new knowledge** (Phoris 1976: 302, emphasis added).

This [the teaching of New Greek] is **a handsome, fine deed**, a deed which is **sacred**, which is **national** (Phoris 1976: 302, emphasis added).

War and religion weighed heavily on the historical imagination of the people because both severely marked the Greek twentieth century. The interchange between the political, the social and the cultural is also obvious in that language and educational issues were addressed using the same vocabulary as was used in wars: demoticists were *fighters*, not proponents, and their side of the Language dispute was idealised in an almost religious manner while the opposition withered, as it would in conditions of

war. Demoticism was experienced as a *fight for freedom*, even as a *revolution* as one of the following quotes contends. Sensationalist language underlined the passion involved in the ‘fight’ (see also Setatos 1976: 298).

At the time when, from the prime minister of the country to the newly appointed colleague educationalist, we all draw the beginnings to a new page in our cultural history, I want to write on the respected groups of the **fighters** for educational demoticism (Phoris 1976: 301, emphasis added).

War vocabulary was also evident in the nationalistic references to *our* children, humanistic ideals and the ‘sorrows and joys of the nation’.

5.6 National identity: language before Literature

Whereas in the British context it was Literature that carried the weight of national identity (see Drakakis 2002b: 3 on Shakespeare being the ‘Cultural Hero’), in the Greek context it was language that traditionally expressed the national self and continuity, ever since the use of the archaic and then the katharevousa. Language (grammar and syntax) and Literature became two parts of the same course, and essay writing, the active use of the new language, a third branch also connected with the previous two.

Ironically, the insistence on the use of the ancient language type was the one that cast doubts on the claims that the Greeks’ ancestors were the ancient Greeks. Once it was scientifically addressed that the demotic Greek was in fact the continuation of the ancient language, the course of ‘New Greek Language and Letters’ also, verified the historical continuity and unity of the Greek language and its ties with ancient Greek. Those ties of language also made the very significant political point of the historical continuity of the Greek *people*, countering western scientific doubts about the ‘Greekness’ of the Greeks (see also pp.146-147 of this thesis).

The main purpose of teaching the history of the Greek language is to present the characteristic phases in the evolution of our language in a vivid manner, so as to show through the narrative its **uninterrupted continuity and unity** (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 29).

As a result of teaching it, [literature] the pupil comes into the modern Greek world and civilisation the way it was gradually formed since the last Byzantine centuries and it was developed today, **keeping its ties with the ancient Greek tradition**. Yet this civilisation is new, born from the new historical conditions and adjusted to the new circumstances (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions n.d.: 37, emphasis added).

The general aim for the teaching of the Greek Language and Letters is to introduce the pupils to the Greek world and civilisation, in the way that this – **keeping its connections with the ancient Greek tradition** – was formed and developed gradually since the last Byzantine centuries until today, and the way it is expressed in the texts (Greek Ministry of Education 1994-95: 80, emphasis added).

The effort was, however, to make the school language as simple as possible, as opposed to the complexity that reigned during the use of the ancient language type. A uniformity that would exclude idiomatic types, would make the grammatical generalisations easier, and the grammar more generally accessible, even though it would compromise access in local areas where the excluded dialects were the norm.

The basis and object of syntax teaching is through the common New Greek language the way it is spoken today in the big urban centres, and not the idiomatic language of the folk narratives, or the people's 'language of the market' and the like. That obliges us to select the texts or the examples that we will use from the space of the common New Greek language with extra care, (...) that is, without extremities (without idiomatic or archaic uses) (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 28).

5.7 The nation

Within [the course on Literature and language] we find ourselves, our land, our values, our ideals (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions n.d.: 37, emphasis added).

Pride in one's nation and one's religion (or rather one's church) was something that was used by all the political powers, but the absolutist regimes were more inclined to deify those issues. The 1967-1974 dictatorship of the colonels had used '*church and nation*' as legitimising concepts, and it based its ideological structure on an image of the regime defending the sacred trio of 'Homeland – Religion – Family'. Used

extensively in the past centuries, the notions of ‘church and nation’ would now have to be transformed to fit a more democratic vision of society and education:

On 26/4/1975, during the discussion of article 16 of the Constitution in the Parliament, the young MP Mr Protopapadakis phrased his accusations against the State thus:

“What we are **afraid** to introduce in schools is the anti-autocratic education. Our education, the way it is exercised, is strongly autocratic. We are showing to the child what it should like and how it should think. And the child ends up, when grown up, not to have its own will, because it has learned to feel in the way it was taught to feel rather than how itself wishes. **Many people think that this method is good. Because it stands for good Christians and good citizens.** Indeed it teaches children to lower their head, to obey, to go to church and such things. But these are neither good Christians nor good citizens, nor free people. The aim of education ought to be to provide for the child the **freedom of its emotional world...** The small child *is* free, grown ups are not. School instruction should afford pupils the freedom to express their emotional world however they want. We are afraid of this **freedom** and we don’t want to leave it to the children, just in case, as they grow up, they do not **respect the nation and the church...** I assure you that, if we let our children free to feel what they want and to be able to express it, we will have good citizens and all that a child requires to grow” (quoted in Tromvoukis 1976: 463, emphasis added).

5.8 Literary reading and essay writing as a political act

Not only because of the abnormal power of the church and the notion of the nation, but also because of the continuous political upheaval, twentieth century Greek social life involved a necessary stress on politics. That political meaning extended to education and language, since both were used in politics and in social hierarchy issues in the past. It followed that literature and its reading would also be seen in political terms.

In fact the reading of literature was seen as an aid to the purpose of writing more than that was the case in the British context. The *Directions* gave special attention to language, as they did to writing. Writing was seen as important because it was seen as an active intellectual response to the world, both social and political, and literature was not seen as independent from this. Besides, many communist writers’ work had made it into the school anthologies, testifying to the fact that the literary world, the

authors and poets, had strongly opposed the absolutist regimes of the previous years. Even when the students would not become writers and poets, writing presented an opportunity to develop their critical ability, as an active step after the somewhat passive reading. Citizens needed to take matters in their own hands, and essay writing, the lesson entitled 'Expression-Presentation' (of one's views regarding a general theme), was seen as a contribution to democracy and to social development. It was taught in a way that it would have no direct relevance to the literary texts read, and yet was seen as complementary to them.

[Our aim is to] stimulate the child to convey itself in a continuous **democratic dialogue** (free expression of opinion, grounding of opinions, respect for the view of the fellow speaker, tolerance of counter arguments) (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1976a: 486, emphasis added).

Greek education, the way it had been offered, could not keep alive in the minds of the children of the Greek people the **Greek humanistic ideal**; using a dry, soulless linguistic apparatus, foreign to the senses of the modern Greek person, it was not possible for the school to form **citizens that would in various ways serve that humanistic ideal** (Phoris 1976: 301, emphasis added).

I would like to notice here that we should think about approaching the lesson of **literary criticism** firstly with its relative lesson of **essay writing**, and then with the relative lesson that has the negative sounding title "**Instruction of the Citizen**".⁸³ **We should think that these three in reality have the same objective** (Plisis 1976: 406, emphasis added).

The fear of political extremities was justified in the aftermath of a dictatorship, especially since the whole of the twentieth century had become victim to similar political developments. The means that were proposed, in order to avoid a repetition of those political circumstances that allowed the absolutist regimes to take power, were connected with the reading of literature, and with the writing of essays. The lesson of New Greek Language and Letters attempted to teach the students about the Greek cultural heritage. It assumed the role that English assumed during World War I, a defender of national values, but was also meant to demonstrate any negative traits that could and did lead to political regression too many times in the past. For that purpose, it was not a nationalistic view of Greek civilisation that was attempted, but

⁸³ This is the title of a course in which the child learns about the constitution and the rights and duties of Greek citizens.

one that included it in the international terrain, respecting other cultures as well as the Greek one. Thus, the aims of the lesson were seen to be ...

to make the pupils meet and understand the content, the particularities and the values of Modern Greek civilisation (**without concealing its negative aspects**) and so:

to make the pupils develop confidence in their creative strength and the vigour of the Greek people by experiencing their **values**;

to make the pupils **conscious workers of progress**;

to make the pupils **attain self-knowledge** and feel the empowering of modern Greek culture and so to come **to their meeting with ancient Greek civilisation and with the civilisations of other countries with their own sufficient spiritual equipment** (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 25, emphasis added).

Seven years later, those same aims were repeated:

[The teaching aims to enable] the pupils [to acquire] self-knowledge and a feeling of the self-reliance of modern Greek civilisation and so for them to come to it with their own sufficient spiritual equipment to meet the ancient Greek civilisation and the civilisation of other peoples (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1990-91: 21).

The broad-minded attitude registered in the aims was in line with international educational thought in the later twentieth century, as well as being a result of the Greek political reconciliation that was accomplished internally. Nevertheless, Greek society in the nineteen eighties was still more nation-centred than multicultural, just as it had not yet started to see threats to its national language and literature coming from other nationalisms within its territory, since immigration was only then starting to produce problems.

With minimal change, the *Directions* of 1990-91 repeated issues mentioned in those of 1983-84:

The course of 'New Greek Language and Letters', with its two branches (Language teaching and composition and teaching of texts of New Greek Literature) aims to:

[enable the pupils to acquire] confidence in the creative power and the vividness of Modern Greek people, and by **living according to the values** this people created, for them to become **conscious workers of progress** (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1990-91: 21, emphasis added).

5.9 Literary reading as a social act

The *Recommendations* and the *Directions* avoided the mistake of separating language from literature. This was due partly to the special historical conditions of Greece, and perhaps partly to the fact that they were published in the second half of the twentieth century, when international educational thought had reached such conclusions. Western educational thought in particular affected Greek thought on education, although the specific conditions of Greek society channelled Greeks towards different paths too. Thus, in the Greek context, literary reading was significantly theoretically and educationally linked with politics. Unlike Britain, social issues were brought to the forefront not primarily because of class conflict but motivated by political issues and by the need for democracy. The social entered the discussion about literary reading and its teaching via politics, and therefore the aims of literary reading that were socially determined had a political undertone and were linked with the idea of good citizenship:

- d) **to make them face social problems with an inquiring spirit and critical intention** and to put them in a position where they are able to suggest responsible and specific solutions.
- e) to cultivate a spirit of co-operation in them with group essays, so that they acquire **social identity and consciousness** (Greek Ministry of Education 1994-95: 80-81, emphasis added).

In the 1990s, aestheticism came after social importance in the reading of literature:

The specific aims of the teaching are the following:

With the teaching of the texts we aim:

1. To give the students a clear and full view of the beginnings, the development and the current position of Modern Greek Literature, so that:
 - a) they see its singularity, wealth, variety and dynamism;
 - b) they understand the special, particular character and values of the Greek civilisation and they realise its self-reliance;
 - c) they meet the character and ethos of our people and they establish their faith in its vigour and its creativity.

2. To come in contact with the literary creativity of other developed nations and peoples, and to meet and appreciate their civilisations.

3. **To think about the problems of today's society** and of the society of older times, especially Greek society, in the way it is presented in the literary texts

4. To develop their **aesthetic appreciation**, so that they are able to appreciate and **enjoy beauty** in literary works (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1990-91: 21, emphasis added).

It is necessary to **extend the text in life**, the literary life, but also in life in its more general sense (Plisis 1976: 406, emphasis added).

We don't teach for school but for **life** (Fragos 1976: 352, emphasis added).

5.10 Reading

Besides the aims of the teaching process, the *Directions* also referred to the literary text itself. This was approached in relation to society and social life, and in connection with the experiences of the reader.

Also, the teaching of Literature has a directness of **reference to life**. Because language and the works of speech [of 'logos', which means also written works] **express the natural, the social and historical world that composes our environment, our life itself**. And for this reason we are directly interested in it and moved by it (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions n.d.: 37, emphasis added).

If there is a general method of approaching this lesson [Modern Greek Literature], it has to begin from the **experience of the pupil** and it aims to **enrich** and form it. (...) Understanding a text does not only mean to find its meaning and give meaning to it. The pupil has to **feel and experience** the mental disposition that is expressed in the text, and to be **able to conceive** the whole atmosphere of the narrative (Plisis 1976: 405, emphasis added).

Perhaps rather in parallel, the 1970s in Britain marked a time when there was a change from an educational practice that alienated the working class, seeing it as lesser in learning ability, to a time of Rosen and Bernstein and Labov, when the working class was seen as productive and valuable in terms of literary creation, learning abilities and linguistic practice. There seems to be a similar shift in Greece, from a sterile criticism that was merely putting the texts into categories according to their form, i.e. their use of the ancient language type, to a criticism that dealt with the

experience of the author and of the reader, as the popular language shortened the distance between the text and its understanding. As in the case of English, where the distance of literary teaching from language teaching had allowed bourgeois criticism to alienate reading from the reader's relevant social experience, in the case of Greek, that was the effect because of the distance between the teaching of literary reading, and the teaching of the correct language, the demotic.

Greek Education suffers from an incurable, up until now, '**literarism**'. That is, we have been identifying the lesson of Modern Greek with the analysis of **mostly average in their quality** literary texts, that happened to be included in the "Holy Bible" of the book Modern Greek Literary Texts.⁸⁴ We limited the aims of the lesson to given frames, cutting it out from **its natural environment that is life itself**. Naturally, the consequence was that until now we chose texts that would stop at the point when the **idyllic time** ends, outside the contemporary atmosphere and thus having no connection with the **experiences** and the life of today's child of 12 years (Plisis 1976: 404, emphasis added).

We should conceive of **the literary text as a live organism**, and should work on it as such, shedding light to its basic meanings and avoiding the method of the 'anatomy of a corpse' (Plisis 1976: 405, emphasis added).

But we have to be careful not to try to force an answer. If we approach the text with **moulds that are ready-made**, with an easy sagacity and intelligence, the literary text, like some seashells, will close spitefully and will not open to us. We need to approach it without force, with the sincere desire to understand it, and then the reward will come (Politis 1976: 402, emphasis added).

Life and nature were presented as an idealised, alternative reality, as this was the domain of the popular language. Its natural character was for the first time celebrated rather than condemned.

Whereas in Britain working-class autobiography written by pupils was praised (Steedman 1999: 50-53), Rosen being one of the central figures that encouraged that practice in the 1950s and 1960s (ibid.; Bousted 2002), in Greece it was popular language rather than the life of the people that was celebrated. Working class (or, rather peasant class in the Greek case) language and experience was not exposed as a martyr of society as it had been in Britain, but as an heir and a guardian of a language

⁸⁴ It refers to the older anthology, the one including literary works that were written in the katharevousa, taught in schools before the reform.

heritage which was going to lead the advancement of the nation, and take it above and beyond any new dangers of political instability.

Assessing the educational era up until the 1970s, aesthetics and life are seen as interrelated:

Moved by an unexplained aestheticism, **we jealously hold the literary text far from the other expressions of life, as though we were afraid that this excellent creation called the poem might be *contaminated***, if it came in contact with “cheap” human creations. The products of this system are pupils that are atrophied in imagination and observation, weak in creativity, standardised before their time, making ‘literature’ without reason, lovers of empty words (Plisis 1976: 404-405, emphasis added).

We failed completely in making the children love books, even literary books, although for six years we have tried to initiate them into the **beauty** of literature (Plisis 1976: 405, emphasis added).

5.11 Ways of eliminating the social

There is, however, an effort to neutralise one type of connection between literary reading and society. As in the British case, the notion of art for art’s sake was distancing the work of art and its reading from the experience of the reader and the author, in the Greek case this distance is grounded in the sense of education for education’s sake. In the *Directions*, education is considered good, even when it doesn’t lead to financial or work-related benefits. This notion is perhaps a lower class reaction to difficulties in cashing in on one’s qualifications when, after a university education, lower class graduates have had very little or no social capital compared to people with different financial status (see Bourdieu 1997c), when trying to find an appropriate job, whether financially or creatively rewarding.

One way to hide that situation is to belittle effort, by contending that reading and understanding literature is not something that is related to effort, but merely an aesthetic appreciation, an educational practice that was also present in the British context. In this context, beauty is not seen as complementary to the social use of literary reading, but posed as its opponent. Aestheticism eliminates literary reading from another route, concentrating not on the reading act itself, but again on the *aims* of reading literature.

Indirectly, **effortlessly** and in a complex way [the course of New Greek Language and Letters] **offers historical, geographical, psychological, social and other knowledge**, although it is not history, geography, psychology, sociology. And although it has such a broad spectrum of knowledge, its main **aim is not to offer an opinion or develop skills**, but to **move the soul, to please the spirit, to refine the sentiment and the perceptions about life, to heighten the thought, to broaden the interests** (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions n.d.: 37, emphasis added).

The notion of an ‘effortless’ literature reading, neutral in terms of opinion, is reminiscent of bourgeois literary criticism, where social relevance is completely veiled in favour of stressing aesthetic value. This conception of literature neutralised it socially and politically, denying the idea that it could be an Ideological State Apparatus. If the fact that it expresses an opinion and/or a worldview was considered, how could it not have an effect on the reader’s opinion?

It aims to make the pupils meet the **richness and variety of Modern Greek Literature and to realise its general pedagogic value, so that their aesthetic sensitivity** will be developed, to be in a position to appreciate and enjoy **beauty** in speech and in the written word⁸⁵ (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 25-26, emphasis added).

5.12 Literary reading and the demands for democracy

Pleasure in reading literature is perceived as self-evident in the 1999 *Directions* (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1999: 157, 158), where it is stated that the general character of education involves the dismissal of a utilitarian view of what is learnt. In the 1976 *Recommendations*, in the midst of changes, this is stated in stronger terms:

That our education is **authoritarian**, there is no doubt. In every section there is an **authority**, an **autocracy**, the absolute reign of the one. Dialogue and team work are rare. And the products of this education are well-known: candidates for the higher and highest educational foundations are **young people who are looking for a position, hunters of opportunity** (Tromvoukis 1976: 463, emphasis added).

⁸⁵ Original: ‘in *logos*’. The Greek word ‘logos’ implies multiple meanings, the written word and the oral language, but also reason and logic.

The democrats who replaced the military regime of 1967-1974 made severe criticism of authoritarian traits wherever those were found, including in education. At the same time educationalists admitted a collective responsibility for the social reality outside schools as much as for the sheltered school reality, as the following quotes show:

And he [the MP Mr Protopapadakis] asserts: "I insist that the sole reason for the existence of the State is to give to pupils the chance to grow freely according to the internal wishes and abilities of each. If this development leads to a society different to the one we have had until today, this must not frighten us. **We should change society**" (Tromvoukis 1976: 463, emphasis added).

The autocratic system, even if it **ensures the discipline of the teachers and the taught**, even if it renders results at the level of learning, it still cultivates a servile and hypocritical spirit. A spirit that may not only tolerate, **but also make excuses for the imposition of a dictatorship**. Still, not ensuring discipline leads to a dead end, if not to disintegration (Tromvoukis 1976: 464, emphasis added).

Today, when controversy has overrun all schools and the social ground is shaken by the problems that the economic and political developments have given birth to, **the autocratic educational system is unacceptable and dangerous**. And if we insist on maintaining it, education will be disorganised and its influence on youth minimised (Tromvoukis 1976: 464, emphasis added).

Participation allows teenagers to acquire experience that is solid and beneficial for their cognitive instruction and for their spiritual and ethical development and the development of their will power, so that they will develop critical thought. They will learn the way to **wisely and courageously state their opinion, but also to tolerate the opposite opinion**, and consider it before accepting or rejecting it. (...) In that way in school, with creative work, we have the acquisition of knowledge, the development of capabilities, the cultivation of free spirit and the **armouring of democracy** (Tromvoukis 1976: 466, emphasis added).

5.13 Historical imagination in connection with education

The stress on the need to make sure autocracy wouldn't resurface had a political background, not a social one. It did not come as a reaction to social inequality, but was instead a consequence of past political turmoil. For that reason, resistance to democratic developments in schools was easily eliminated after the country managed to subdue its extreme political trends. There was no clear cut social struggle, because

social conflict was masked by the more intense and decisive conflict for political power. Social resistance was an effect of that struggle for power, not a struggle that was developed in parallel to it, and that was because at a symbolic level, the social hierarchy was not strict. At the symbolic level, the social definition of the educated person in Greece surpassed class: she had a higher social status than someone who was socially respected for other reasons like birth or money, and she attracted social respect rather than social antagonism. (The abolition of fees at all levels of education in 1964 by the George Papandreou government allowed the education of the lower classes, and free education strengthened the feeling that education was something acquired with much effort, and depended on merit rather than social circumstances). Scholarship was honorary and honourable.

5.14 Greek Letters

Before the formation of the independent Greek state, Greek mentality was tainted by a collective feeling of superiority related to education: in the later years of the Ottoman Empire, when its power had declined and there was a need for competent diplomacy, the Porte employed educated Greeks in higher diplomatic circles (Hirschon 1989). They occupied diplomatic positions as translators and advisors for generations in the later centuries of the Ottoman rule (see also Evaggelides 1936a: XLIII-XLIV; 1936b: 241), continuing an educational tradition cultivated since the Byzantine Empire (Evaggelides 1936a: XLIII), but their existence was really perceived as part of a tradition that went back to ancient Greece, since this was the past that was glorified in the West. That past bestowed Greek society with an attitude that saw education as an inherently Greek asset, based on a perception of ancient Greeks as the bearers of culture in the 'highest' sense of philosophy and education, a culture superior to other cultures (ibid.).

5.15 The judgement of reading extending to a judgement about the reader herself, referring to her person rather than her specific effort

In a historical course from ancient Greece to Byzantium, and to the later Ottoman Empire, Greek society perceived of education as something inherent to being Greek. All Greeks carried 'effortlessly' the knowledge of their ancestors, or at least were in

their minds credited with it. That was another factor that had the effect of seeing education as a merit of the person, not a result of her means and access. This long-standing attitude encouraged the tendency to extend judgement that could be made about a person's study to judgement about her person, a tendency that existed in the British context too.

At the microcosmic level of the school, extending the judgement of one's effort to one's person meant that when a pupil read 'well', having worked hard, she was also judged as 'particularly gifted'. And accordingly, someone who did not read and interpret literature well was criticised as a lesser person. In that context, failure meant much more than failing at something, failing once. It meant failing many times, at many levels, generally, failing as a person (see also Smith 1981: 100, on how great an importance is given to reading failure, making the pupil wishing to be absent from the effort because of fear). This is a trait that the Greek *Directions for Teaching* have in common with the British *Reports on Education*: in the 1970s, they did not judge the reader's act but the reader herself.

We live in a society that is essentially anti-spiritual. It follows that our pedagogic efforts would be fought against. The conditions and the means of work in our schools, at least in the cities, rate from average to bad. At the gymnasium level⁸⁶ we accept almost all children that finish primary school.⁸⁷ It is therefore understandable that in a class of 40 to 50 children some will be very capable and others **not particularly gifted** (Plisis 1976: 404, emphasis added).

Similarly, we may go back to the politician quoted earlier:

And he [the MP Mr Protopapadakis] asserted: "I insist that the sole reason for the existence of the **State** is to give to pupils the chance to **grow freely** according to the **internal wishes and abilities of each**. If this development leads to a society different to the one we have had until today, this must not frighten us. We should change society" (Tromvoukis 1976: 463, emphasis added).

[Our aim is] to awaken the **inherent** capabilities and the experiences of the pupil, since he is asked not only to creatively assimilate the cultural

⁸⁶ The intermediate level in the Greek school system, comprises three classes for children of the ages 12-13 to 15.

⁸⁷ The first level in the Greek school system is called 'Demotic' (to avoid confusion with the same term that is used for the people's language, in the text it is called primary). It comprises six classes, for children of the ages 5 to 11-12.

Ages are approximate due to the loose regulations regarding school age: the child has to have completed the fifth year by a certain date, and if they haven't by the time the school year starts, they are not accepted in school. So 5 year-olds and six year-olds may both start school at the same time.

advances of his homeland, but also to react in a prolific way to any stimuli of the social reality outside it (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1976a: 486, emphasis added).

[The teaching of Literature] aims at pupils getting meaningful and full language instruction so that a) they understand the structure and function of modern Greek speech and writing,⁸⁸ and they become capable of communicating and expressing themselves correctly and in a **personal** way, both orally and in writing (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 26, emphasis added).

Progress in essay writing is directly linked with **the wider intellectual constitution and mental cultivation** of the pupil. Thus essay writing should be seen as preparation for all other courses as well. And the reverse, it must be understood that generally, all the subjects taught, since they contribute to the knowledge of the pupil, also help him write well (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 33, emphasis added).

But the attitude that treated literary reading as something depending entirely on the reader's inherent capabilities was changed by the 1980s:

As for the written compositions [essay writing], the ability to put forward correctly and **aesthetically**, in writing, what one thinks, believes or wants, does not demand a writer's charisma as a prerequisite; it is something that **can be achieved by any pupil, with systematised effort and with the right guidance** (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 33, emphasis added).

By then structuralist studies had influenced Greek educational thought, and were added to the stress on language and grammar that had been necessary in the previous years because of the particular conditions of the Greek context. The essays included in the 1999 *Directions* stressed the need for understanding the literary text at all levels (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1999: 152; see also Balaskas 1999a: 161 on how the pleasure of the text depends on adequate understanding).

Smith (1981: 105) suggested that we read in order to answer questions that are in our head, even unconsciously. For him, it is boredom and fear of failure that prevent learning (Smith 1981: 99-100). Boredom takes place when the pupil does not understand the lesson, when she 'cannot make sense of what she is expected to learn'. The fear of failure, on the other hand, comes when the teacher reproaches a failed

⁸⁸ As above, footnote 86.

attempt to learn and that reproach takes the failure as not merely failing in an effort but failing as a person.

5.16 Historical imagination

The important factor in that exercise of judgement is that it is based on how much the student's reading conforms to what is accepted as 'right' (Bennett 1990a: 184, also quoted in Apostolidou 1999: 339).

The notion of the historical imagination involves defying what is widely accepted as right, since it may oppose the general view of history, and offer an alternative opinion about what happened and what is.

Carolyn Steedman used the term historical imagination referring to a fantasy fabrication that children make up about their past as princes and princesses (1992b: 44). I would like to transform it here and extend the term to mean the popular feeling of what history is: the popular feeling of what 'actually happened' and how, related to Williams's structures of feeling, but involving the collective perception of past and contemporary reality. Since history and literature are intertwined (Balibar & Macherey 1978: 6; see also Kristeva 1980b: 132), *historical imagination* can be part of a theoretical structure that acknowledges literature as an historic and social existence, whose reading has an impact on society and history.

The anthology used for ages 12-15 in Greek schools includes a literary abstract that shows the difference between official historical reality and literary perceptions of it. The text describes an old man who had been in a battle some years ago, attending the celebrations for the anniversary of the battle in the village central square. He listens to the mayor describing how it was, to people giving formal speeches about it, and is present in all the official celebrations. He leaves late, disappointed, thinking, 'It wasn't like that'. On his way home, he sees an old man singing a popular song about that battle, as he sits on a doorstep. And he cries, moved, 'that's how it was!' (Vlachoyiannis 2000).

Greek popular songs are a significant form of the Modern Greek literary heritage, and their literary value has been repeatedly confirmed (an indication of this is that they are included in the school anthologies). The above example shows how literary perception of historical reality is close to historical imagination (with the structures of

feeling of the people, according to Williams 1980e: 25). However, whereas Williams suggested that the works of art precede 'the more recognisable changes of formal institution and relationship', with 'history' at the end (see also p.153 of this thesis), I would like to take that notion of precedence further. I would like to suggest that the work of art precedes formal social change, but may also, at times, give a different account of history, which will not, in a given time frame, make it to the officially accepted history pages. This can have a clear-cut Marxist character if seen through a Lukács perspective (as referred to in Bennett 1989b: 77-78, 80), who 'related texts to history referring them forward to the imminent telos of their soon to be revealed objective historical meaning'; but an alternative view would have it that there may be a parallel history, one that unravels in parallel lines that do not meet, with the formal history, which doesn't agree with the formal registration of what we call historical fact, nor is it going to.

I would like to suggest that historical imagination brings together the listener/reader, the 'author'/reader⁸⁹ of the song, and the singer/performer/reader, and thus it is both individual and collective, a kind of 'collective subject' (a notion of Goldmann, referred to in Williams 1980e: 28), 'a way of seeing a group in and through individual differences', but also of seeing individuals through their socialisation in groups. I think that bringing imagination and history together is appropriate for what I want to describe, because history is generally assumed to be an inherently objective field and imagination is perceived as a field inherently subjective. I am using 'historical' to refer to the contemporary and the past, and 'imagination' to refer both to the personal and the collective.

The literary text, open to the personal and the collective understanding, is a factor in the *historical imagination*. As has been indicated, in late twentieth century Greece, the reader of literature, which was mostly written in the demotic, had a glimpse of the most appropriate solution to the Language Question. Via literary reading, the *historical imagination* inscribed in the literary text verified that of the reader's. The common ground between the historical imagination of the two, the text and the reader, outlined a collective feeling of the reality that had been and the reality that was at the time lived, and made the reader an emotive *performing reader*.

⁸⁹ Macherey (1980: 48) suggested that the first reader of the work is its author.

In the context of Williams's notion of art as practice rather than an object (Williams 1980d: 47), then the reader was a participant, involved in an 'active perception and interpretation' (ibid.) of the literary text. What that entails is that

the recognition of the relation of a collective mode and an individual project – and these are the only categories that we can initially presume – is a recognition of related practices. (...) As we discover the nature of a particular practice, and the nature of the relation between an individual project and a collective mode, we find that we are analysing, **as two forms of the same process**, both its active composition and its conditions of composition, and in either direction this is a complex of extending active relationships (Williams 1980d: 48, emphasis added).

'As two forms of the same process', through literary reading, the reader could realise her own experience and its materiality, and accept the experience of others (Probyn 1993: 23). The collective popular feeling could be realised through reading, and performing readers could become active participants in founding institutions that supported the demotic language type. Institutions like the Educational Association were not connected with the official state, and in fact were acting against its decisions in linguistic and educational policy; nonetheless they had a great social and political influence, and eased the way towards the final solution of the Language Question, eventually incorporated in the policy of the state institutions too.

5.17 A diminished stress on Grammar

Producing new institutions via performing reading and through historical imagination was a practice that was influenced by international developments too. The linguists and educationalists involved in Greek educational developments were educated in other European countries, and influenced by international educational thought.

Thus, in spite of the historical conditions that verified the importance of a grammar and of its teaching in the context of Greek diglossia, the Greek educational terrain was eventually not entirely spared dismissive views of grammar compared to literature. The Greek *Directions* themselves did not completely avoid falling victim to a depreciation of grammar. Echoing western educational thought of the 1980s, grammar was at times addressed as superfluous in Greece too, and literature took precedence over grammar in the teaching of literary reading. Literature was seen as inspiring, as opposed to grammar, which was reduced to a mundane group of rules.

Grammar teaching no longer aims to point out patterns and deduce rules, but mainly to present a **total and complete linguistic image** (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 27, emphasis added).

In no case should we make pupils learn by heart the spelling rules and the tables of grammar at the end of the book. It is enough to have them get used to resort to them each time they feel like finding the solution to their questions (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 27, emphasis added).

An attempt was made to make school time devoted to the teaching of grammar less about grammar and more about the literary text – but it was significant that the book was still distributed in schools, and therefore there was access to it, even if it was just for reference.

Since the **teaching of Grammar does not aim to make pupils acquire new knowledge** but to make them extend and systematise their **linguistic treasure**, the lesson should start from the **oral** speech of the pupils and at a second level we should move to appropriate texts, in which the pupils will seek and detect grammar types related to the lesson (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 27, emphasis added).

The detached approach to grammar was borrowed, and was certainly evidence of a general influence of international educational thought on Greek educational policy – the 2000 *Directions*, for example, included a translated piece from the *English National Programme for the Development of Oral Speech* (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1999-2000: 94) as auxiliary material.

5.18 ‘Working class autobiography’ and the ‘people’s tongue’

The study of language returned, in the 1983-84 *Directions*:

[It aims] ... b) to understand the psyche and the mentality, the theory of life, the civilisation and the ethos, the moral standards of our people, since **language is a creation of the people and it expresses people faithfully**; c) To develop their **mental abilities**, since **thought** is not only expressed with language, but is being born and developed with the

study of language and with linguistic expression (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 26, emphasis added).

The special meaning which was awarded to Literature in the British context of literary reading, in the Greek context was given to language.

In the 1950s and 1960s in Britain, Harold Rosen was teaching literary readers, encouraging them to write in an autobiographical manner (see Steedman 1999). That had the character of training them in using a higher class genre. Literature, as a field, was coming from higher classes and was 'given' to working class readers to use. (In the history of English studies it had been claimed by the working class before, when Adult Education as an institution initiated educational developments that eventually led to comprehensive education through the legitimation of English Literature as a discipline). Now working class readers, Rosen's pupils, used literary autobiography, a higher class genre, as a tool in order to achieve a kind of social reconciliation, through their own 'ascendance' to a higher class literary practice. Literature was a force for unity, not at the level of ideology, as Balibar and Macherey's essay on 'Literature as an Ideological Form' would suggest, but at a distance from it (see also Bennett 1986a: 249-250).

Social unity with the aid of literature was achieved in the Greek context with the reverse move: the higher class intelligentsia claimed the peasant class *language*, the demotic language type of the people. Through the language that all classes understood, literary reading became a force for social unity, since, in that way, literature was at one level accessible to all. The demarcation of class borders was less strict in Greece, and even in politics (with the exception of the communist party) the populist vocabulary did not speak about the working class but about 'the people' (the 'laos' in Greek). In effect Greece did not have a working class the way Britain did, since, because of the lack of an industrial era, the lower classes were the peasants.

5.19 A broader *paideia*, afforded by the media and the reign of the image

Another issue for the policy makers that tried to regulate literary reading in education, and also involved access to all social strata, was the fear towards visual media. Karanikolas referred to the educational contribution of the written media, newspapers

and magazines in an information world that ‘affects teenagers’ (Karanikolas 1976: 452).

If you take notice of today’s teenagers, you will notice that in all their expressions, beginning from the language they speak, they are different than older ones. There is a change in style, in the words used, in the metaphors used, in the teasing, in the implied words. The word, as you know, takes its meaning from the multitude of connotations that it can provoke in our mind. Different connotations come with the words that children use these days. With the same words, we used to connote different things than what they connote. (...) Have you noticed that we no longer understand their jokes? (Papanoutsos 1976: 455).

Today the sources of information are many and have entered every home. Mr Karanikolas earlier pointed to the newspapers and magazines. But there are also **radio and television, the cinema, all the illustrated pictorial press, books, cheap books**, those that a kiosk would sell every day. These provide information not only for the **natural** world, but also for the **social** world. (...) Secondly, the youth of today is brave, with a courage that is almost iconoclastic, catalytic. The teenager does not view authority as a legend any more, any authority, spiritual, economic, political authority. In the older times the teacher, the priest, the minister, the policeman, the general, were people whose authority no one could dispute. Today all these people are demystified, and when they speak to young people, they rise with spirit, difficult to describe and even annoying – I don’t doubt that – and they claim enlightenment, and a discussion as equal towards equals (Papanoutsos 1976: 456, emphasis added).

It seems that the time when the teacher had in **his** class a small number of timid children or teenagers that were passive in taking in **his** wisdom is over. For today’s teenager, **the teacher and the course book are not his sole source of knowledge** (Karanikolas 1976: 451, emphasis added).

But visual media were feared as even more influential and ‘disrupting’:

So during teaching it is **not advisable** to present and analyse many samples of **imagery or visual material in general**, such as pictures of inscriptions in manuscripts, alphabets etc. Because these may be attractive and impress the pupils, yet they **disrupt** the core of the course, which needs to be taught in strictly appointed time limit. That is why the teacher needs to constantly try to keep the teaching within the “centre” of the course, and **not get carried away in comments**, details and other things that do not have an immediate priority (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 29, emphasis added).

An attempt to separate social life from literary reading, ushered out through the door, was coming in through the window: fenced off in the matter of grammar versus literature, it became an issue in the matter of literature versus ‘disrupting comment’.

5.20 The politics of foreignness: immigrants

Another disrupting issue, immigration, was added to the problems regarding the teaching of literary reading. It was not that immigration and its socio-political effects hit Greece much later than Britain – already in the 1920s, a massive wave of immigrants from Asia Minor followed the ‘Catastrophe’ (see also p.117 in glossary); but in the second half of the twentieth century, came immigrants of different national origins than Greek. People from Albania, Poland, Bulgaria and other European countries arrived in droves. But even when their presence and their working in Greece became a common occurrence, it took more than a decade of immigrant presence in Greek life to reassess the *Directions* and include considerations for children with a different mother tongue. In the meantime, immigrant children were admitted to Greek schools unprepared, expected to speak Greek the same way Greek nationals spoke. The new wave of immigrants was accepted in the same ways that Greek immigrants from Turkey were accepted at the beginning of the century.

The government programmes that sought to provide solutions were initially small-scale and of an experimental character – the State was teaching itself what was needed through trial and error. In the 1980s, the *Directions* presupposed that the school child is Greek:

The teaching of syntax aims to extend and systematise the child’s linguistic knowledge. This means that with the teaching of syntax we do not aim to teach the child to speak Modern Greek, because it knows how to do that already **by the fact that the child is Greek**.⁹⁰ The aim of the teaching is to lift the linguistic level of the child with the systemic classification of syntactic phenomena and **to extend those that the child already knows empirically** (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1983-84: 28, emphasis added).

⁹⁰ The word used here is ‘hellinopoulo’, roughly translated as ‘offspring of Greeks’ but a tender word, intensifying the sense that the child needs protection.

It was more than a decade later that it became clear to policy makers that to presuppose Greekness was no longer feasible:

[Our aim is for] those male and female pupils⁹¹ who do not have Greek as their first language (foreigners, or immigrants of Greek origin), to familiarise themselves with the Greek language and its use in real situations within school and out-of-school life. At the same time we want to respect the mother tongue of the pupils within this category (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1999-2000: 81).

In the *Directions* of 1998-1999, the text was exactly the same (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1998-1999: 146) as it is in the 1998 *Directions* /recommendations of the Pedagogical Institute for the General Lyceum⁹² (Ministry of National Paideia and Religions 1998: 51). This latter publication added another requirement on page 20: 'the aim is that the foreign student or the one of Greek origin who does not have Greek as his mother tongue should internalise some difficult structures of the Greek language *effortlessly*, and should 'live' Greek civilisation through language, *adopting a positive attitude towards it*'. The intention was that the immigrant would be integrated into Greek society, not criticise or address it as an equal to Greeks. Significantly, there was also no mention of racism.

5.21 Conclusion

The reading of literature and the understanding of language were thus linked with major educational efforts and inadequacies that had to do with the social and the political sphere, as much as they had to do with culture. The *Directions* did not attempt to depict all social reality that affects education, as is shown by their ignoring major issues, like racism. What they did was indeed to *direct* the teaching of literary reading through a social reality that was not necessarily described, but was felt and had to be accommodated. In the case of racism, for example, the social reality that

⁹¹ In Greek you can deduce the gender of the word by the ending, hence 'female pupils' is one word, but the first category is consistently 'male pupils'.

⁹² The most common school for the 15-18 pupils is the General Lyceum; apart from that there are very few experimental schools, which are again called 'Lyceum', but some have the additional name 'Classic', when the school programme stresses ancient Greek, others the name 'Polykladiko', which indicates that there is more a direction towards Physics, Chemistry and Maths, and others that stress music lessons, 'Music Lyceums'. These latter categories of school accept very few children, who have to make particular application to them.

was accommodated was that which accepted racism as normal and justified. In that view, the *Directions* is a text that incorporated a sort of ‘lived reality’, or rather ‘believed reality’, a reality that changed history, the way historical imagination could. However, the reality described is far from the reality that would be described in the conclusion of a sound and systematic sociological enquiry. Political, social and cultural, ‘*intention*’ (Williams 1980d: 36) transformed that reality and made it subject to hegemony (see Williams 1980d: 37-38).

In the context of that hegemony, an analysis that would only deal with the literary text would have the danger of personal experience veiling the connections between the structures; the stress on the *Directions*, besides drawing the connecting lines between the British and the Greek context, brings together the structures of politics, culture, economics and society. The *Directions* examined in this thesis highlight the effects of these areas’ interconnection because they come as a response to a long historical period of turmoil that is linked with all of them. Sustaining the relationship that exists between these structures in analysis too is important (see Williams 1979: 138).

Even though Greek educational thought did not entirely avoid influences from other countries’ educational theory, the Greek *Directions*’ attention was really focused on language, since that was a central cultural and social and political issue for Greece in the twentieth century, and that focus was inevitably combined with attention to grammar too. Whereas demands for social change and inclusion in relation to English teaching were addressed via access to literary writing,⁹³ in Greece, it was language rather than an idealised notion of literary form that embodied demands for social and political equality. The demotic language expressed the need for literature to be understood by all classes, of any educational background.

Thus literary education in Greece stressed writing – but saw it as having a prevalent socio-political relevance, and not as an object of pure aestheticism. It addressed it via the political need for critique and active participation in the effort to block political extremes from seizing power yet again. The difference with English literary education was that the latter encouraged writing as part of a less urgent social demand for

⁹³ See for example the case of the ‘working-class autobiographies’ encouraged by Harold Rosen on which Carolyn Steedman commented (Steedman 1999). In a sense a high class genre was utilised by a lower class, enabling a symbolic political access – which did not necessarily move beyond that primary level though.

inclusion, and it promoted the writing of literature as a pure aesthetic genre.⁹⁴ Woolf (1998) contended that essay writing demands more concentration than the writing of literature does, and it can be suggested that the political conditions themselves which prevailed in Greece for the larger part of the twentieth century, as they were extreme in character, demanded more concentration from Greek citizens. Thus in Greece the boundaries between critical writing and literature were not definite, and it would even seem that, at the time the *Directions* in question were written (after the mid-seventies) literature was seen as an art of significant critical intention and value. Freed from an idealised representation that would distance it from life and the readers' experience, literature directly and unabashedly referred to political issues and often it was even committed to them.

The past devastating impact of politics on society and on culture – the practices of military (and militant right-wing) governments – made it clear, once the language issue was solved and political stability established, that the impact of political life on literary production and education had to be regulated; even more importantly, it was seen that, for a healthy democracy, society and culture have to have critical access to politics. This realisation led to another one, namely that a third space of negotiation between these three view points of life – the cultural, the political and the social – had to be created, since they were all affected by each other. This new space initiated a reconciliation of opposing views at each of these levels. A first significant indication of this was that after the fall of the 1967-1974 military regime, texts of communist writers were included in the literary anthologies taught in school, even though the elected government was conservative (see also pp.146-147 of this thesis).

⁹⁴ See Woolf 1998 on how the writing of literature demands less concentration than essay writing.

FINDINGS

FINDINGS

Reading as access

Filling the third space: the reader

The 1967-1974 Junta, which came right after a period of intense protest and even daily demonstrations for months by the left political forces of the country, was an example of extreme political developments taking place because of the absence of a third space of negotiation between classes or political forces. Right after a period of lack of political freedom, it was thought that through intense struggle which would not leave room for the opposite political forces (and could not find justifications for doing that, after atrocities had taken place), that things would change. But, as it is clear from this thesis, without a third space, this change was unfeasible. Eventually a third space was created which incorporated the two extreme viewpoints about language and reconciled them in ways that enforced a reconciliation of political opposites – using language as a political medium. This political third space happened through language because that is where some combinations of opposite opinions *had been affected*, with people like Delmouzos, Chatzidakis and Triantaphyllides integrating in their work the views of the purists and Psycharis. This was a third space that showed that both opposing arguments included an important portion of the truth.⁹⁵

Third space

This thesis was developed around the notion of the third space as an in-between space of conflict combined with negotiation; with the full and passionate expression of one's views, which accomplishes a fair idea of their true nature, both positions benefit and change, create a different articulation each time, a different 'arbitrary closure'.

This sense of conflict and negotiation which results in combining an idea with elements of its opposite in order to result in a different articulation, is, according to Mill, 'the amount of certainty attainable by a fallible being', and 'the sole way of attaining it' (Mill 2002: 18).

⁹⁵ See Kopidakis 1999b: 341, on Castoriadis (1980: 32) being against the simplifications of the demotic which impede philosophical writing (the abolition of the infinitive), something that the author of this thesis agrees with; see also John Stuart Mill 2002: 38 on the possibility that two opposing arguments share the truth between them.

The third space from the viewpoint of this thesis is developed in relation to the ways in which the political, the social and the cultural aspects of life meet and affect each other. The act of literary reading in particular is seen as such a third space, where the 'position' of the text is negotiated with the position of the reader, and both are open to the scrutiny of the other, irrespective of whether the text's view agrees with the view held by the reader or not, in an a priori open manner that allows arbitrary closures to take place. These arbitrary closures are the result of the reading, the closing of the interpretation of the reader, which can be different every time even the same reader re-reads the same text, producing a new articulation of the two views, that of the text and that of the reader.

Thus reading creates a third space because by definition it takes place without any a priori dichotomies and scorn which would paralyse negotiation (hooks 1992: 346; Mercer 1998: 67-68; Woolf 1998: 50). If the third space involved only the conflict, only reactions to each other rather than expressions of each other's views and listening, it would only lead to a dead end. That's why the state of the *dependent reader* is needed, because this is the state in which the reader is trained to actually 'hear' the opinion of the other, irrespective of her own opinion. The *dependent reader* does not react to the opinion expressed but listens to it carefully, and with an intention to understand it. And the third space is in danger of such reactions; as in political life, when you simply react to something, whether it be racism or chauvinism, this reaction does not allow you or the other side to see the situation clearly, think and/or give the right solutions; it makes you 'think of something other than the thing itself' (Woolf 2000b: 67; see also Mercer (Kobena) 1998: 67-68).

Accepting and listening to the opposite opinion, and expressing your own, avoiding your own opinion as being just a reaction to the other, can form the ground for a re-positioning of the reader, and achieve an arbitrary closure, an (arbitrary) compromise between the two views that may favour one more than the other but doesn't exclude either from the end 'truth'.

The notion of arbitrary closure comes from Hall (Hall 1997a: 136, 137; 1992: 278, 283; see also Bhabha 1992: 58-59) and shows the ways in which reading involves a communication between two different views which brings forth a decision, a moment when a full stop is affected, as one full sentence is achieved. This full stop is not permanent, but it is important in that it completes something, making it whole. It is

important to reach a closure – just as it is important to realise that this closure will be arbitrary.

This whole reading, this whole interpretation, may lead to a **repositioning** of the performing reader (hooks 1992: 346; see also Hall 1996c: 449, 1996d: 143, 1996h: 401). And as any third space has the potential of changing the social and political environment, as a third space is the only way, the only possibility of changing the social and political environment, even in a small scale, so does literary reading.

Historical imagination

But literary reading as a social and political act involves more than being a site of negotiation and potential repositioning, a third space. It involves another element that makes it even more powerful than any other third space: via speaking to the reader's experience, it may address her emotion. Aristotle contended that passion has a more lasting effect when it motivates a person than if it were motivated by logic (1206b 18-29). Thus emotion is stronger than logic.

Williams contended that the structures of feeling inscribed in literary works of art may precede historical developments (Williams 1980e: 25). As Williams theorised the structures of feeling as 'lived realities', involving both thinking and feeling, realities the way they are lived, 'thought as felt and feeling as thought' (Williams 1977a: 132), this thesis addressed the emotion involved in literary reading as a powerful element that develops the reader's own idea about history itself, via the reader's imagination, and called it *historical imagination*. This *historical imagination* is linked with the reader's experience and emotion, and with the reader's individuality, which needs to be preserved if any progress, personal or social, is to be made (see below, Mill 2002: 59).

In his comment on the 1987 British election, Hall described the role that imagination plays in constructing an image/belief of what the future could be like. He suggested that imagination can overcome one's ideology since it can relate to an image of a possible future that fulfils some urgent needs of the person.

Ideology itself is emotional and imaginary (see Althusser 1971a: 162-163); it is illusion and allusion (to reality) (Althusser 1971a: 162). This correspondence between the two indicates the significance of the role of imagination in ideology and in political life more generally.

People in the third space

There are people too who can occupy a third space; Hall (1996h: 399) addressed the issue of people rather than just arguments existing in a third space – he called it a ‘double space’, as a position in which people *experience* two opposing arguments or viewpoints of life and ‘translate’ each in the other – two individualities. People who have the experience of two different cultures, ethnicities or social statuses are in a position to evaluate both better. It does not mean that they will necessarily evaluate them better, but it does mean that they have a relative advantage in relation to others, which allows them to form a better articulation of reality. Hall (ibid.) referred among others to Tony Bennett, Homi Bhabha and Edward Said as such people, who are ‘deeply embedded in both worlds, both universes’, because of the difference between their social and/or ethnic background and their middle class status as scholars. The point is that these people, having to create a third space within themselves, have better insights into reality.⁹⁶

Raymond Williams also addressed the issue of people who can stand in a third space of ‘ambiguity and contradiction’, describing the Welsh:

This experience of ambiguity and contradiction, hasn’t only equipped us in Wales to understand our own situation better; it’s also equipped us, emotionally and intellectually, to understand the situation of increasing numbers of people – including the once so self-assured, confident English. It’s easier for us, in other words, to put questions to those simple, confident, unitary identities which really belong to an earlier historical period (Williams 1989i: 320).

Against ‘neutrality’ and ‘objectivity’

The ways in which Hall and Williams depicted these possible ‘third spaces’ indicate that the third space is not something that is neutral and unaffected; it is not an empty space in the middle of two opposites, a space which does not touch on either of the two, but a space where both opposing arguments are being weighed, the one against

⁹⁶ See also Bhabha & Parekh 1989: 29, on the importance of immigrants and their experience for the whole of society: ‘listen (...) to those indigenous or native peoples who had to make sense of a foreign system and survive within it and resist it’ (Bhabha).

the other. It involves the two opposites in a situation where the argument opposite to one's own can show one the faults and strengths of one's own opinion, and thus test either and both arguments, and render them understood (Mill 2002: 9, 16-18, and particularly 30-32).⁹⁷

Woolf described reading as the process by which the reader tries to form a whole picture:

The common reader (...) is guided by instinct to create for himself, out of whatever odds and ends he can come by, **some kind of whole** – a portrait of a man, a sketch of an age, a theory of the art of writing (Woolf 1984: 1).

The third space is *not part* of the whole picture, *not* a middle part between two opposites; it involves the *whole* picture and both opposites, with both their individualities allowed to express themselves. Both Aristotle and Woolf contended that art deals with the whole and not the particular [Aristotle 1355b 30, on the art of speech (rhetorics); see also 981a 15,⁹⁸ 1449b 24; Woolf 1998: 52].

The third space is not a space where only reconciliation takes place, or where the opposing views come in order to reconcile; it is a site where the opposing views come to be really expressed and really 'heard'.

Postmodernism

As the opinions that find an opinion fallible are indispensable to understanding it (Mill 2002: 18), it follows that the one case in which 'the meaning of the doctrine itself will be in danger of being lost' is when it is not contested with the vigour and zeal that someone who would believe the contesting opinion would offer (Mill 2002: 43). This corresponds with the postmodernists' description of how meanings are lost in an age of simulacra: when everything tries to become the same as everything else, there is no original. When there is no discussion between opposites, when there is no difference which is respected and kept, but an effort for sameness and repetition of the

⁹⁷ See also Mill 1972: 93-94, quoted in Bhabha 2000: 23, p.65 of this thesis.

⁹⁸ See also Sykoutris 1991: 66.

same without a process of negotiation with its opposite, then along with difference, meaning too is losing its accuracy. Thus this thesis approached postmodernism not as a movement that was against meaning, but as one that pointed out these conditions as existing, described them and protested against them. According to Mill, society has that tendency, to alleviate differences and produce similarity (2002: 59-60). For him this is a sign of decay:

A people, it appears, may be progressive for a certain length of time, and then stop: when does it stop? When it ceases to possess individuality (Mill 2002: 59).

Thus the route through which this lack of meaning is affected in society is via the lack of individuality. Postmodernism suggested that this lack of individuality came after a time when individualities that were expressed too intensely: racism and the reactions against it, male chauvinism and the reactions against it, and other movements in line with these, were cases where both opposing views were strongly put, and none allowed for any expression of the other to be heard in its own 'territory'. Such conflicts undermined the existence of a third space and thus could not lead to any solution [see Mercer (Kobena) 1998: 67-68; hooks 1992: 346].

Reading and individuality

So each of these opposites did not allow the individuality of the other any room for expression. That practice weakened the sense even of their own individuality. The sense of individuality, and the connection of it with progress (see also Woolf 2000c: 229), both individual and generally social, is directly linked, in the act of reading, with the experience of the reader and the connections with it that she can trace in the text. Thus to see reading as a clearly aesthetic endeavour, as the early *Reports* on the teaching of Literature in English and *Directions* for teaching Literature in the Greek purist language did, is equal to undermining the reader's individuality, and thus the use of reading as a third space of negotiation. If reading does not involve a 'conversation' between the experience that the literary text depicts and the experience of the reader, no exchange takes place. Educational policy in regard to both English and Greek in the first half of the twentieth century, encouraged teaching literary reading as a practice during which no exchange was to take place; it encouraged non-

participation in the act of reading. These efforts addressed the teaching of grammar as something foreign to the literary text, too technical to be relevant to a work of art, and this equalled a sort of dissecting the work of art and parting its elements from each other. Based on divisions like the one of seeing a person's body as separated from her soul and separated from her mind, and on all the repressions that that affected in the course of history, moralistic and other, seeing the literary text as separated from its language and the language's grammar, was a practice that ensured control for the educational authorities. Not teaching grammar, and even actively depreciating it – or, in the Greek context, teaching the grammar of a language type that was not spoken – had the effect of disabling the reading act as an experience of the reader – quite simply, understanding was impeded, and the reader could not relate her own individuality with that expressed by the text.

And, since individuality is linked with critical ability (Mill 2002: 59), and in connection with the historical developments of that era, this thesis saw such educational policies as political expediencies, implemented in education by society's conservative forces.

If students are to be empowered by school experiences, one of the key elements of their education must be that they acquire mastery of language as well as the capacity to think conceptually and critically. When presented in the context of these objectives, the canons of the liberal arts provide one basis for that mastery (Aronowitz & Giroux 1986: 158).

The liberal arts are the condition for acquiring critical thinking in a society where the old labour, socialist and radical public institutions that once provided these amenities have all but disappeared (Aronowitz & Giroux 1986: 173).

To combine

The course of the argument of this thesis developed around an effort to explain why emotion, imagination and experience in reading are just as valuable as viewing the text based on reason, and they need to be combined with reason in order to understand and utilise the text. It also suggested that the literary text is more equipped for this

kind of reading, whose the reader the thesis called the performing reader, because it seeks an emotional response by way of style and content.

Experience itself combines emotion and reason, and can be best interpreted and rightly evaluated if a balance between these is achieved.

The Reports on literary education examined here also addressed literary reading as something integrally linked with emotion (see for example Hadow Report 1926: 192, pp.95-96 of this thesis); yet they excluded the links of emotion with experience and reality, and addressed it instead as linked with an idealised aestheticism, depriving it of a particularly significant characteristic.

To achieve the status that Williams called ‘ambiguity and contradiction’, and to satisfy Woolf’s assertions about the need to have the strong and the weak together in our lives in order to achieve personal and social progress⁹⁹ (see Woolf 2000c: for example 204), we need to hold on to both emotion and logic. And as we need to combine poverty with some wealth, the performing reader needs to combine such opposites too, keep a balance between them and include them both in the third space of reading.

Thus emotion and the power it represents can be seen as information (Aristotle 1109b 3-5) which can ‘point us to certain critical directions’ (Probyn 1993: 83). When it is addressed so, it is valuable in developing a fuller view of reality – whereas when inflated, it can mask reality and make the person react wrongly.

A way to describe how emotion would ideally be dealt with as information is through a description of more mundane feelings like physical pain. Our physical senses are important for our survival; when we feel pain we are informed by our body that something threatens our survival – a bad tooth has to be fixed. When we feel full in our stomach in a pleasant way, we are informed by our body that something helps our survival. Aristotle addressed the theory which contended that the soul is another form of body (409b 3-4, 412a 19-20). He contended that in order to see what we are good at, we should check the feelings of pleasure or discontent that we get when we do something – hence we should see our feelings as a source of information (1109b 3-5).

In *Three Guineas*, Woolf argued that combining opposites in one’s life should be striven for, if we are to prevent war:

⁹⁹ In the context of preventing war.

Thus biography, when asked the question we have put to it – how can we enter the professions and yet remain civilised human beings, human beings who discourage war, would seem to reply: If you refuse to be separated from the four great teachers of the daughters of educated men – poverty, chastity, derision and freedom from unreal loyalties – but combine them with some wealth, some knowledge, and some service to real loyalties then you can enter the professions and escape the risks that make them undesirable [Woolf 2000c (1938): 204;¹⁰⁰ see also Probyn 1992: 505].

This striving for the middle way, for the correct measure in our lives, is not a neutral position. Lipowatz (1991: 132, 165) commented on that striving as the acute danger to go on endlessly without actually taking decisions – as the danger of having no closure. Against what is called a ‘pluralist’ way of presenting *facts* as just another opinion, this contention of Lipowatz agreed with Morris (in Hall 1992: 291-292)¹⁰¹ and Hall himself (*ibid.*), as well as with hooks (1992: 345), Mercer (1992: 443)¹⁰² and Grossberg:

Recognising the limitations of our claims – that every map has its angle of projection – does not necessarily vitiate its **value** or its **strategic truth**. (...) Our practices may offer us limited possibilities but if we refuse them, or if we further circumscribe them by our voluntary reflexive self-absorption, we not only exclude ourselves from the everyday world of fans, but we abandon the political possibilities of that world. The problem is not to deconstruct authority, but to rearticulate new forms of authority which allow us to speak as critical fans (Grossberg 1988: 68-69, on television).

What they all argue about is a third space of combining opposites and expressing individualities without reacting to an opposing force or argument but creating one’s own case. It has no meaning to compete about who is more oppressed (Mercer 1992: 443); and once one is oppressed, it doesn’t really matter. To duel on such issues only makes sure that we never reach an articulation, we never reach an arbitrary closure about what to do about them. What is needed instead is a continuous struggle and negotiation, with the balance of power changing, and the opposing arguments not

¹⁰⁰ See also *ibid.*: 155, on ‘the aim of the new college being to combine’.

¹⁰¹ In the discussion of the paper presented in the conference.

¹⁰² ‘What tends to happen in the rhetoric of being ideologically ‘right on’ and ‘politically correct’ is the reproduction of the untheorised assumption, inherited from the mythology of 1968, that all the different fragments will somehow link up around a common agenda’.

contained but heard and expressed and included, not contained in the way of being silenced (Grossberg 1996b: 163 on Hall, see also Bhabha 2000: 31, McLaren 1994: 203).

The fatal tendency of mankind to leave off thinking about a thing when it is no longer doubtful, is the cause of half their errors. A contemporary author has well spoken of 'the deep slumber of decided opinion' (Mill 2002: 35-36).

This idea of a needed continuous discussion, indicates that besides the verification of policies, the *Reports* and *Directions* were important in that they put the issues under discussion, and therefore brought meaning to them (see Hall 1996c: 443, p.113 of this thesis) and affected arbitrary closures.

My own view is that **events, relations, structures** do have conditions of existence and real effects, outside the sphere of the discursive; but that it is **only within the discursive, and subject to its specific conditions, limits and modalities, do they have or can they be constructed within meaning**. Thus, while not wanting to expand the territorial claims of the discursive infinitely, how things are represented and the 'machineries' and regimes of representation in a culture do play a *constitutive*, and not merely a reflexive, after-the-event, role (Hall 1996c: 443, italics author's own, other emphasis added).

Reading literature

Thus this thesis took what Mill suggested is indispensable for progress, the notion of honestly opposing discussion (2002: for example 30, 31, 59), Hall's suggestions about the need for honest and yet not aggressive discussion between theorists (Hall 1992: 291) – which is the 'recognition and embodiment of struggle at every level' (Grossberg 1996b: 163 on Hall), and Kobena Mercer's contentions about how paralysing imposed feelings of guilt are (1998: 67-68), in order to address literary reading as a 'third space' of negotiation and struggle which can lead to changed realities. It took the notion of the third space from Homi Bhabha (see for example 1998), although it addressed it not from his psychoanalytic point of view but from the culturalist view of Hall.

Taking the notion of the third space further, and acknowledging a debt to Virginia Woolf's (*Three Guineas*) notions about the need to combining opposites, combine feeling and logic in understanding and acting, socially and personally, and via Hall's notion of *arbitrary closures* and Steedman's notion of *historical imagination* (*Past Tenses* which the thesis re-theorised), the thesis added imagination and emotion as elements of literary reading which connect the text with the experience of the reader in a more permanent and decisive manner than logic would. It also addressed literary reading as a site which can affect society via the re-positioning of the performing reader and her fuller understanding of reality. Thus the third space of reading was treated as a potential remedy to dead-end socio-political practices of continuous protest which may be reversed and have the opposing view using the same language against it, leading to disillusionment and a static society, with a static political life. The examples of the teaching of English and Greek in the twentieth century, linked with the historical developments that characterised the respective societies, offered insights into the conditions that a third space needs in order to take place so that change will be affected. Drawing from the data that the educational practice of English and Greek Literature offered, the *Reports* and the *Directions* respectively, the thesis addressed the links between the political and the social with the cultural, indicating ways in which literary education used and was used by social forces for purposes other than purely educational.

Thus the three types of reader that the thesis theorised as existent were based on how such possible manipulations may operate or be escaped. *The adequate, the dependent* and *the performing reader* are the one position in a third space of negotiation between two views, the other being the text read. The reader benefits immensely from the state of being dependent: this is a condition during which she puts aside her own possibly strong convictions in order to 'listen' and understand the 'teachings' of the teacher or the text. This is a state of hearing the 'opposite' view, without 'climbing on each other's backs' (Hall 1992: 291). It is a state not only in the process of the development of one's reading abilities, but a state which is continuously necessary, one that needs to be repeated each time a new negotiation needs to take place – i.e. after each arbitrary closure.

Thus by the time the reader becomes a performing reader, it does not become obsolete – rather, *dependency* is included in the third state too, as is *adequacy* in both this and

dependency. (But in the third 'stage', it is dependency on the text rather than being also dependency on the literary critic/teacher of Literature).

The dependent reader is the condition in which the reader is open to the argument of the text, and becomes ready for another opening, another third space, another reading.

The dependent reader, like *the adequate reader*, are conquered states. They are never overcome and put behind, and the *performing reader* uses them in her process of producing social imagination and influencing historical change.

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¹⁰³ In the process of compiling the bibliography, it has not always been possible to track down the pages that a chapter or an article extends to in a book. This has happened in instances where the referred chapter/article is quoted or referred to within another text, whose author has not provided the pages. There has been an attempt to trace the original or information about it, mainly through the Internet, but it hasn't always been successful. Also, in two of Bourdieu's used pieces the translator is not indicated in the source book.

¹⁰⁴ The Greek names are transliterated following the ISO-843 (1997) standards of transliteration (see its complete description in <http://www.biology.uoc.gr/gvd/contents/databases/01c.htm> (accessed 9/11/2004)). However, in instances where I found references of the Greek name that do not seem to have followed that scheme (like in Iatrides's or Castoriadis's case for instance, which may have been the way the writer wanted his name to be written in English, or in that of Chatzidakis's, whose name was, since he studied in Germany, transliterated in a German phonetic way – and was also used by Browning 1983 in this way), I have kept with the way I saw the name already written, transliterated, in latin characters.

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¹⁰⁶ (Greek word, pronounced *pe'dia*): The word connotes all the learning processes that a person goes through in her or his life, through education, entertainment, through social existence itself. In the Oxford Greek English Learner's Dictionary [ed. G.N. Stavropoulos, Oxford University Press 1996 (1988)], it is explained as all three: *education, learning, culture*. A relevant word but not identical is pedagogy.

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¹⁰⁷ The text does originate in 1974, but Curtis, the editor of the 1997a collection, has used both the original version of 1974 of this interview (and for that an original corrected copy of the interview owned by Castoriadis himself) and another translation of it from 1975 – that is why this is a 1997 text.

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¹⁰⁸ He became Sir John Newsom at the time of publication.

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