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Crossing the Boundaries of the Discipline: A Post-colonial Approach to Teaching Creative Writing in the University

While teaching creative writing in the English department of a university in Sydney informal discussion with colleagues about the subject highlighted for me the perception that teaching creative writing was a somewhat risky business, because one would have to deal with students' 'dark side' in their writing. This perception, with its echoes of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, brought my attention to the positioning of the teaching of creative writing as 'other' to the 'main' teaching of Literature, within the boundaries of the discipline. I realised that I was in a post-colonial situation. This is not surprising, given that Australia, as a settler culture, has its institutional roots in colonialism. Institutionalised education and the English discipline, into whose boundaries creative writing has been increasingly inserted, is framed by colonial assumptions. Australian ambivalence towards the 'mother country' Britain is evident in the English discipline, where curricular and pedagogical choices are still largely determined by these assumptions. The growth of creative writing within the discipline regenerates a need to assert the disciplinary boundaries: The perceived unstructured nature of creative writing, its potential for chaos and irrationality - discourses outside the familiar structures and expectations of the English discipline - are seen as a cause for concern, together with the perception that students would bring their own experiences into the classroom. Added to this is the question of the assessment of creativity, which appears unmeasurable and unquantifiable by academic assessment standards. This anxiety about the subject is evident in the classroom as well: initially some students are nervous about the imaginative writing exercises set, wondering whether writing generated in this way constitutes 'real' writing, especially in an English subject.

These anxieties indicate conflict about the introduction of a writing forum that encourages linguistic identity formation, bringing lived experience into the classroom, into the discipline where one studies literary texts created by others, not oneself. Yet although literature, the subject of most English teaching, consists of creative texts which are valued according to particular hierarchies and social formations, their creation, if not their dissemination, can be chaotic, unstructured, irrational, mysterious and disconcerting. For example, in an interview Helen Garner says,

> Strange leaps happen in your imagination - they happen - I don't think we can take the credit for a lot of things that happen in our imagination. After the fact comes the labour. It's taken me years to learn to trust my intuitions and act on them, especially after a university training of the kind we got in the 1960s, when we really believed that artists 'knew' what they were doing when they worked. In the face of that, your own efforts looked pretty puny! (1)

Creative writing students are likely to find themselves at odds with their perceptions of English as a subject for study in the university. They do not associate the chaos and unpredictability of literary creation with the texts on the curriculum. It is also noticeable that creative writing is marginalised within the English department; the perception is that it is 'less important' than the teaching of literature, and the marginalisation of creative arts subjects in universities extends to its function in learning and models of research. (2) Yet paradoxically creativity is something we value in our culture and in the university, awarding the highest grades in recognition of 'particular originality or creativity in student performance'. (3) Increasingly the subject is offered by university English departments where it is part of the English curriculum, although its position in the discipline is rarely interrogated, nor does it appear to be seen as advantageous in ways other than its capacity for increasing enrolments. (4)

This paper aims to expose to closer examination the signs of discomfort with the position of creative writing in the discipline, and to follow the premise that conflict, while indicating 'trouble', also generates transformation. A post-colonial reading of this situation is helpful as it provides a model for an examination of formations of educational discipline and social identity within the context of a multicultural, post-colonial Australia. The term 'post-colonial' is used… 'to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day... [I]t is most appropriate as the term for the new cross-cultural criticism which has emerged in recent years and for the discourse through which this is constituted.' (5) This discussion will therefore consider, within a post-colonial context, the framing of the English discipline; what constitutes creative writing as a subject; and finally, what disruptions are occurring at the intersection of the two discourses.

Framing the English discipline

The introduction of English into British and colonial education systems has always been a means of social control, and the institutionalising of English literature has always assumed a social function. In England Matthew Arnold's highly influential writings, including *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time* (1864) and *The Study of Poetry* (1880), enforced the shift, begun by the Romantics in their poetry and criticism, towards the social function of literature. Arnold privileges literary criticism above other discourses in the formation of high cultural values because it provides a distilled, 'disinterested' knowledge outside politics and ideology. For Arnold the best creative writing can only be produced, and indeed recognised, in a society whose ideas have been allowed to mature. Poetry, as the most superior discourse, provides a corrupted society with a return to truth, its function being to synthesise and explain life - 'we turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us'. (6) Arnold's response to political and social disruption emphasises the moral and a-political role of literature, eschewing new ideas and enforcing the *status quo*. The emphasis on the social function of literature as an antidote to Philistinism continued to the 1930s and '40s in Leavis's undisguised elitism, his focus on the literary minority, and his selection of 'the great tradition' of literature for its capacity for maintaining the social and moral values of this elite minority. (7)

This ideology of cultural and moral values had informed the introduction of English as a subject in school education in the period of increasing nationalism and political urgency following World War I. The teaching of national literature, according to *The Newbolt Report* (1921), would instigate national pride and 'a bond of union between classes'. (8) Newbolt's highly influential document is informed by Arnoldian idealism ('the best thoughts of the best minds'), (9) an emphasis on poetry, and a belief in the universalism of the English language and its literature - 'The conditions created by the war have spread the knowledge of our language over the five continents of the earth…' (10) In fact, the argument for the importance of English literature had long been supported by the ideological demands of British Imperialism. During the mid-nineteenth century the concept of English as a 'civilizing subject' both inside Britain and in the colonies led to its introduction in the

curriculum, both in training British civil servants for colonial administration in England and in training Indians for this role in India. In 1835 Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education* recommended the teaching of English language and literature to all British subjects. Macaulay is pragmatic in his approach to using education as a means of social control:

> It is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect. (11)

Throughout the British dominions English was to be used as the language of education, and with it curricula of English literary texts deemed essential in enforcing English national values over local language and culture. Hence the teaching of Wordsworth's poetry, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Shakespeare to children in Africa, India and the West Indies, and the settler colonies of Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa. These texts have largely formed the English canon, and although post-colonial responses to the domination of English *have* transformed the canon, introducing local literatures and post-colonial theory, as have the changes brought into the English discipline by feminism, Marxism, critical theory, cultural studies and creative writing, the basic hierarchical infrastructure remains in the perpetuation of traditional reading practices. These subjects continue to be dominated by literary canons which, although reformulated (e.g. the Australian canon, a canon of women's writing), still require the teaching of literature as the interpretation of texts which are selected within paradigms of ideology and social control, even when these paradigms are shifting. The 'minor' subjects are thus marginalised, their relationship to the 'mainstream' subjects rarely examined as each area of the curriculum attains its own categories. (12)

At different historical times different kinds of writing and knowledge are valued, what is included and excluded depending on the framing of knowledge in educational categories. The framing of a discipline or educational category refers to the selection of knowledge, its organization, transmission, and pacing within the student teacher relationship, and the degree of control teacher and student have in these transactions. Educational framing is determined by criteria of socialisation and social control, achievement being the attainment of grades or excellence within the discipline. Framing also determines the way the subject is disseminated; in a hierarchical structure the teacher, as keeper of knowledge, imparts it to the student. At the centre of this teaching within the English discipline is the English literature text, creating a triangular teacher-text-student relation with the teacher at its apex. (13) In the university the predominant use of lectures in teaching enforces this structure, and even with tutorials and workshops, the requirement of the teacher's assessing student work maintains the pedagogical power structure. Moreover, in teaching English, interpretative skills are developed, the mode of engagement with the texts being reading and hermeneutic analysis, and learning is demonstrated, and assessed, in the writing of critical research essays, the requirements of which are determined by the frame. Thus reading and writing functions are prescribed - only particular kinds of reading and writing enter the frame. Traditional reading practices confirm that analytically supported and rational readings are given priority, following models of scholarly academic writing and research. These models are determined by the ideologically informed epistemological frameworks based on a Eurocentric model of knowledge.

It has been pointed out that after 1945 these reading practices in Western cultures were increasingly informed by an anti-ideological attitude, in reaction to the ideologies of World War II and the Cold War. (14) Emphasis became focused on readings that favour the universalism of human feelings and dilemmas in literary texts, reading for the reconciliation of difference and ambiguity into a complex human wholeness that transcends the world of local and temporary ideas and ideologies. In such readings, says John Docker, 'Literature expresses a metaphysical idea of human freedom which is superior to history, the world of division and disharmony'. (15) The concurrent arrival of post-colonial literatures, with their

interest in questions of national identity, community and ethnicity, did not prevent European critics responding to them in these terms of what is universally human, and criticising this literature for its local, cultural and historical questions. These hierarchical and universalising reading practices seeped into education, and appear to have stuck there. Despite the introduction and research in post-colonial literatures, including Australian literature, English literature in Australian universities is frequently privileged pedagogically. Even though other literatures, and indeed theory, exist in the English discipline, they often do so alongside an emphasis on universalism in teaching, particularly in school teaching, and students steeped in High School Certificate English come to university education with prior knowledge of these reading practices. Therefore, when students are asked to produce their own creative writing, they come into conflict with assumptions of their prior knowledge and a disciplinary framework whose reading practices posit standards for literary writing that create a very intimidating context. (16)

The framing of knowledge in education, by permitting certain functions and excluding others, creates a distinction between the 'commonsense knowledge' of lived experience and disciplinary knowledge. There is a screening out of everyday realities, and educational knowledge is seen as something superior and significant. Privileged, it becomes a measure of achievement and desirability. (17) In this way the frame creates a hierarchy of knowledge between the culture of the student's home and the institution. This split in knowledge is psychologically disturbing; it sets up a disjuncture of values between home and school, reinforcing socialisation to a dominant norm which simultaneously devalues the norm of lived experience. (18)

In both settler and invader cultures in post-colonial societies this effect is especially marked as a means of asserting dominant imperial values, erasing local culture and identity. Education can become a site of resistance and contestation between institutional values and other cultural demands. In African post-colonial culture the assertion of British values over local culture is clearly defined, and is therefore clear example: The Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o writes of the dislocating and fragmenting effect in the split experience between school and home through the increasing imposition of English language education in his country. As a young child Gikyuyu, the language of his home and community, constructed his identity. Then he went to schools which, in 1952, were taken over by the colonial regime:

> The language of my education was no longer the language of my culture. …[O]ne of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikyuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment…or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY… The attitude to English was the exact opposite: any achievement in spoken or written English was highly rewarded; prizes, prestige, applause; the ticket to higher realms… Thus language and literature were taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds. (19)

Ngugi's response to the destructiveness of this 'colonisation of the mind' is to choose ultimately to write solely in the language of his home culture, Gikyuyu. Ngugi's assertion of national identity is justifiable in the post-colonial context, although it discounts the way English language has been appropriated into the post-colonial world, and utilised as a means of resistance and transformation which confronts and disrupts the assumptions and constructions of the dominant imperial discourse.

In settler cultures such as Australia, Canada and New Zealand, whose educational and other institutions are based on British colonial models, the history of settlement and immigration has nevertheless created a diverse population characterised by difference and plurality, and where relationships of power, autonomy, oppression and the constitution of identity, national or otherwise, are extremely complex and ambivalent. In Australia, changing perceptions of

national identity do not do away with the 'cultural cringe' which displays ambivalence towards England, Europe and the US. Although contemporary settler cultures tend to see themselves politically as diverse and pluralistic - Multicultural Australia, the Canadian Mosaic - social and institutional structures of imperial domination remain intact, including racial division and the fact that inherited power is held in these cultures by virtue of the oppression of local indigenous peoples and other marginalised groups. It is this interface between the institutions of power - the British model of tertiary education with its framed disciplines and English language dominance, and the range of linguistic and cultural knowledges of students (and teachers) - that the teaching of creative writing encounters in the university.

Creative writing in the English department

Creative writing is clearly different from the analytical writing valued by the English discipline. In tertiary education, both as English and creative arts, it is an emerging discourse that has existed outside the university as the practice of writers. Within the university, the framing of knowledge in education (as well as the influence of reviewing, which often relies on academic authority) screens out some kinds of writing and admits others, eventually creating the category of Literature. This sets up a 'false' distinction between Literature and creative writing. Within the frame of the English discipline this distinction is markedly disrupted when bringing creative writing into the classroom shifts the focus to literary praxis, so that the student becomes the writer. In this process the hierarchy of teacher-text-student, with the teacher at the apex, is reversed: the text is still central in the relationship, but now the student controls its construction and meaning (or purports to do so); the role of the teacher becomes secondary (giving feedback and guidance to the finished text only) while the student makes choices and decisions about the formations of the text. The process might also be collaborative, including peer and teacher input, but the hierarchy of traditional teaching practice is changed. Creative writing involves far more autonomous learning than the traditional teaching hierarchy allows; the student has more agency, learning through a process of textual production involving problem solving in a given task, feedback, self-reflection, experimentation and rewriting. Students are guided *away* from the emphasis on universalism, being encouraged to draw on their own specific knowledge and perceptions in order to write with subjective authenticity.

While creative texts are finally quite structured, the chaotic, circular, fragmented and irrational creative process, elicits a sense of openness and possibility, of accessing the 'unknowable'. What enters the classroom is an impulse to write that is driven by desire - that conflict between the need to construct a subjectivity in language, and the encounter with the difference and deferral of signification which undermines the quest for subjectivity. (20) But desire, conflict, deferral and the 'unknowable' are outside the frame of the English discipline and its criteria of reading and writing as coherent, measurable skills. Moreover, creative process is at odds with the hierarchical achievement and socialising agenda of education. Its practice works against the forces of social control in education as it encourages individualism rather than social conformity, process rather than product. (21)

Although creative writing is a recent arrival in universities (the past fifteen years), it is not new to the teaching of writing in school curricula and has recently been introduced into the New South Wales HSC syllabus as an extension topic. In school curricula it has come into conflict with the teaching of genre-based writing, a debate over the suitability of genre-based *vs* creative writing which highlights some of the difficulties in admitting the unmeasurable element of creativity into the curriculum. As part of liberal education creative writing has been encouraged in schools. It has been used in English teaching to generate creative responses to literature, as well as taking priority over genre-based factual writing when included as 'process writing', where pupils write spontaneously, copiously and without structure, then 'conference' their work with peers and teachers. J.R. Martin has argued that the dominance of 'free' creative writing in schools perpetuates the myths of childhood,

promotes individualistic (i.e. non-social) responses, preventing socialisation, and that it encourages non-intervention in teaching which reinforces the 'the success of ruling class children'. (22) It gives priority to writing which is unencumbered by generic considerations, in fact masking the encouragement of a restrictive and limiting agenda, especially for females, Aboriginal children, migrants, working class students. In a reactive move against the process writing of the 1980s, writing in Australian schools tends to be genre-based, although the introduction of creative writing into senior curricula is likely to force a reassessment of its parameters. While Martin's argument should be heeded, the reaction against process writing appears prescriptive: There is no reason why creative writing, while encouraging experimentation, cannot also promote structure and discipline in writing. These structures and disciplines ideally arise out of the writing process and its language formations, and need not be imposed by generic assumptions and social and institutional criteria.

The conflict between identity formation and conformity raises important questions. In the culturally diverse classroom, there is frequently a need for the assertion of identity through language, especially as it finds itself in conflict with the demands of conforming to codes of cultural dominance. This assertion is made urgent by experiences of social alienation, displacement and pressures to assimilate. Even in societies where assimilation is not official policy, these social pressures are experienced, and degrees of assimilation are required, such as the learning of English language. The introduction of creative writing into the university classroom encourages a learning process that may defy social control, but it also offers new challenges. One of these challenges is to narrow the gap between prior knowledge and received knowledge; the other is to integrate the subject into the intellectual and critical rigours of academic assessment and social critique which is the hallmark of the humanities.

Creative writing *is* an academic subject. It is not difficult to argue against the perception (by students and academics) that creative writing is a 'soft option' in the English discipline and that it lacks critical rigour. Such perceptions promote its marginalisation. Yet contrary to being discouraged by the process of creative writing, criticism is an acknowledged part of the creative process itself. T.S. Eliot went so far as to use this observation to insist, in his essay 'The Function of Criticism', that creative artists make superior critics:

> Matthew Arnold distinguishes far too bluntly, it seems to me, between the two activities: he overlooks the capital importance of criticism in the work of creation itself. Probably, indeed, the larger part of the labour of an author in composing his work is critical labour; the labour of sifting, combining, constructing, expunging, correcting, testing: this frightful toil is as much critical as creative. I maintain even that the criticism employed by a trained and skilled writer on his own work is the most vital, the highest kind of criticism… (23)

While Eliot's argument here is with Arnold's temporal and spatial separation of creativity and criticism, and while Eliot later in the same essay makes a case for objectivity in criticism ('a critic must have a very highly developed sense of fact'), (24) coming closer again to Arnold's position on a 'disinterested' criticism, his statement about the critical labour involved in creativity remains both pragmatic and pertinent to the process and its craft. Creative writing involves re-reading and rewriting which develops critical ability in an acutely practical, and experiential, context. Developing this critical-reading faculty is a vital part of the teaching of writing. Criticism can be further incorporated into the subject as self-reflexive analysis and commentary.

Moreover, creative responses allow students to explore popular fictional narrative genres such as crime fiction, science fiction and romance, and the academic discipline also provides an arena for a creative and critical engagement with the social construction of genre. Writing 'with' the genre encourages social conformity, while writing 'against' genres enables a self-reflexive engagement and critique of the social structuring of genre, challenging its ideological assumptions. The creative 'playing with genres' generates social

critique at the level of textual production. Students are given the opportunity to make informed choices about how they use genre, and to recognise that whether they write with or against genre, they are participating in social formations through their textual productions, choosing either to conform or to challenge through creative critical forms such as irony, parody and satire. Importantly, this critical engagement occurs at the level of writing, and its critical engagement is creative as well as intellectual. As the process is reflected upon, an effect of Brechtian alienation occurs, and the naturalization of genre is dismantled.

Creative writing as transformation

Creative writing transcends distinctions of genre, and it provides a way of breaking through traditional reading practices and generic structures. Its practice brings into being, and makes possible, new realities. That language is the basis of identity formation and constructs the boundaries of our reality has been widely considered. Lacan's 'symbolic order' is known only through language and as Wittgenstein says '*the limits of my language* mean the limits of my world'. (25) If education aims to enable students to question their own and others' constructions of reality, then, in order to do this, alternative forms and language use should be encouraged. Student writers ought to be encouraged to use language imaginatively, experimentally and intuitively, thus extending their conceptual horizons. Accessing the knowledge of experience, re-calling individual and collective cultural histories, remembering ancient stories outside particular institutional and socialising structures, is part of this challenge. Post-colonial literature has engaged with this need to challenge and transform the assumptions of imperial languages and concepts. Guyanean writer, Wilson Harris, in exploring the transformative power of creativity in writing, points out that

> the notion that a truly creative alchemical response to crisis and conflict and deprivation...may well come from the other side of a centralised or dominant civilization, from extremities, from apparently irrelevant imaginations and resources. The complacencies of centralised, ruling powers - where language tends sometimes to become a tool for hypocrisies and false clarities - begin to wear thin at the deep margins of being with a multi-levelled quest for the nature of value and spirit. That quest becomes more and more imperative within endangered environments and species and communities. (26)

Creative writing admits into learning the 'marginalised' and 'irrelevant' traces of the cultures of student writers which dominant discourses and traditional reading practices render invisible. The act of writing in appropriated english might include non-generic language use and experimentation with language structures. This appropriation dismantles the discourse of power in English, facilitating the introduction of other language formations, both non-english and colloquial, and thus recasts the reality of the assumed unified subject and voice which is not the *experience* of the individual. In teaching creative writing it is not difficult to set tasks and strategies which facilitate these processes: Working with memory and the concrete details of memory allows the reconstruction of discrete cultural and personal subjectivities which are fragmented and disrupted historically, linguistically and spatially. Narratives of history and memory can be constructed in fragments, without the generic constraints of wholeness and sequence. Students are thus encouraged to write in ways that challenge the language and forms which perpetuate these demands. They write against the social construction of their own identities, parodying stereotypes, using multiple voices, splitting received constructions by inserting other disruptive language forms.

By performing writing tasks that ask students to challenge the way they use language, and through the encouragement of individual constructions, students engage actively with the demands of socialisation, questioning these demands, and developing alternative responses. In cases where social and institutional expectations are in conflict with students' cultural and linguistic experience, the process enables them to confront and transform the split

subjectivity engendered by these experiences. In a process which combines textual production based on both experiential and framed knowledge, codes outside the frame of the English discipline are brought into play with codes of knowledge within the frame (other creative and theoretical texts, critical analysis, hermeneutic reading). Hence there is an integration of knowledge imparted by the teacher and the experiential (and autonomous) learning of a self-conscious engagement with writing at the level of its creation. Students write and theorise the process of writing, considering it in social, cultural intellectual and linguistic terms. This integration through engagement encourages a deep approach rather than a surface approach to learning. In terms of learning principles, deep learning generates knowledge acquired through 'integrated codes' which are less carefully screened and framed by outer demands and are more self-regulated and autonomous than the didactic learning of 'collection codes', allowing the creation of new conceptions of reality. (27)

Admitting creative writing into the frame of English allows the re-formulation of boundaries, which will disrupt and transform, from within, the framed discipline, its expectations and transmission of knowledge. In the performance of creative writing tasks and engaging with text at the level of its creation and production lies the potential to shift literature teaching from the exclusively hermeneutic reading function, the criteria for which are determined by subject framing (i.e. reading informed by prevailing methods of critical analysis), to a wider engagement with literary texts as *writing*. The reader who is also a creative writer will engage with a text in a different way to the reader who is only a reader. (28) Learning creative writing within the English discipline trains students to be much more active and self-reflexive in both their reading and writing responses. In addition, the writer function of reading, which is part of the process of the social construction of the text, the 'activity of the mind in knowing' is exposed and articulated by creative writing processes. (29) Reading becomes an actively creative process rather than the passive reader-text relationship which traditional pedagogical hierarchies tend to reinstate. This is despite post-structuralist theory's articulation of the role of the reader, for as I have asserted, models of pedagogical practice do not necessarily fall into line with the theoretical research done in the discipline.

It is not surprising that despite its potential for transforming the pedagogy of literature teaching and its visibility as a university subject, the subversive qualities of creative writing in the discipline are suppressed or rendered invisible. It is worth considering some of the implications of this suppression. It can be argued that creative writing is political; it recasts prevailing social, historical and political structures. As such it is potentially disruptive, as is the most powerful literature both inside and outside the canon at any given time. Salman Rushdie points out that

> …redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it.
> And particularly at times when the State takes reality into its own hands,
> and sets about distorting it, altering the past to fit its present needs, then
> the making of the alternative realities of art...become politicised…
> Writers and politicians are natural rivals. Both groups try to make the
> world in their in their own images; they fight for the same territory. (30)

If our aim is to produce socialised and compliant students, then encouraging the kind of writing which questions the *status quo* begins to look threatening and dangerous. There is a sense that things could get out of control if writers are encouraged to engage *directly* with their own perceptions in their writing, because to deal directly with these perceptions and judgements outside the prescriptions of genre is to explore the impact of that experience in all its fullness. This kind of writing is also likely to give the lie to official or received notions of reality, to contradict conventional notions of 'the way things are'. Education appears to value the split created by framing between socially valued knowledge and experiential knowledge. In admitting the disruption of this split in creative writing, the subject threatens to undermine knowledge criteria for literature teaching, but it also offers to transform the way in which literature subjects are taught.

Notes

1. Sue Woolfe and Kate Grenville (1993) *Making Stories: How Ten Australian Novels Were Written*, p 71. Also Peter Carey: 'I think that the one false signal that this discussion might give is that the whole journey was more straightforward than it really was... The process is muddier than even this indicates, and I know this is muddy. The confusions and the darkness...' (41) Return to article

2. Kevin Brophy (1998) argues for a reassessment of models for academic research, especially in the case of funding for creative arts projects. *Creativity: Psychoanalysis, Surrealism and Creative Writing*, pp 204-224. Brophy points out, creative processes and non-linear thinking is part of the research process anyway. Return to article

3. *Macquarie University Academic Manual*, 2000, p 38. Return to article

4. To deal with the problem of academic assessment of a creative subject some institutions place creative writing in other disciplines, such as Creative Arts (University of Wollongong). There are, however, convincing arguments against distancing writing subjects from the teaching of English, of separating the writing from the reading function of learning. Return to article

5. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989) *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, p 2. Return to article

6. Matthew Arnold *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. R.H. Super, Vol IX, p 161-2. Cited in Chris Baldick (1987) *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932*, p 18. See Baldick (1987): 18-58 on Matthew Arnold. Return to article

7. F.R. Leavis (1933) *For Continuity,* p 14-15, cited in Baldick (1987) p 165, and F.R. Leavis (1948) *The Great Tradition*. Return to article

8. Sir Henry Newbolt (1912) *The Teaching of English in England* (The Newbolt Report), p 22. Cited by Batsleer et al (1985) *Rewriting English: Cultural Politics of Gender and Class*, p 20 Return to article

9. Newbolt (1921), p 252-3, cited in Baldick (1987), p 97. Return to article

10. Newbolt (1921), p 200, cited in Baldick (1987), p 90. Return to article

11. From Speeches of Lord Macaulay with his *Minute on Indian Education* (1835) selected with and introduction and notes by G.M. Young (1935) in *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, eds. Ashcroft et al (1995), p 428. Return to article

12. See G. Deleuze and F. Guattari (1986) *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* on the capacity for minor literatures to disrupt and revolutionise major literatures, a model which supports the position of the writing produced in creative writing courses and workshops. Return to article

13. This relation exists within the 'larger system of moral training', as in the Newbolt report, where the teacher is the 'ethical' guide to the treasures of the text, an assumption from which secondary and tertiary English teaching practice has not escaped. See Noel King (1988) 'The Teacher Must Exist Before the Pupil: The Newbolt Report on the Teaching of English in England, 1921' in *Literature and National Cultures*, ed. Brian Edwards (Typereader Publications No.3, Centre for Studies in Literary Education Deakin University, 1988), p 42. Return to article

14. John Docker (1978) 'The Neocolonial Assumption in University Teaching of English' in Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1995) *The Post-colonial Studies Reader,* p 443-6. From Chris Tiffin (ed) (1978) *South Pacific Images*, St.Lucia, Queensland, SPACLALS. Return to article

15. Docker (1978), in Ashcroft, et al (1995), p 445. Return to article

16. To bring this up to date, since 2001 in New South Wales these traditional reading practices have come into conflict with the Stage 6 syllabus, which does, in fact, require a more reader-centred and contextual approach to textual meaning. Nevertheless old attitudes retain their stronghold. Return to article

17. Basil Bernstein (1978) 'On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge', in Michael F.D. Young (ed) *Knowledge and Control*, p 58. Return to article

18. Hence the admission that literacy did not automatically generate high cultural values in British (working class) students (Batsleer et al, p 31 citing Abbs 1969). More recently concessions in making school curricula more 'relevant' to students are evident, as changes in the Australian High School Certificate curriculum to include a range of textual forms. Return to article

19. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) 'The language of African Literature', in *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, p 11-12. Return to article

20. See Catherine Belsey (1986) 'The Romantic construction of the unconscious' in Terence Hawkes (ed) *Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference 1976-84*, p 57-76. Return to article

21. Not surprisingly, this makes creative writing extremely difficult to fit into criteria-based assessment models. Return to article

22. J. R. Martin (1985) *Factual writing: exploring and challenging social reality*, p 61. Return to article

23. T. S. Eliot (1923) 'The Function of Criticism'. *T.S.Eliot, Selected Essays* (1969), p 30. Return to article

24. Eliot (1969), p 31. Return to article

25. Wittgenstein, L. (1976) *Tractatus 5.6, Tractatus Logico Philosophicas*, 1921, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuiness, [no page number]. Return to article

26. Wilson Harris (1989) 'Literacy and the Imagination' in Michael Gilkes (ed) *The literate imagination: Essays on the Novels of Wilson Harris*, p 31. Return to article

27. Bernstein (1978), p 58-61. Bernstein distinguishes between integrated and collection codes: collection codes being carefully screened, classified and hierarchically organised; integrated codes having very weak classification and frames. He suggests that pedagogy is likely to proceed from the deep to surface structures in integrated codes, and from surface to deep structures in collection codes. 'Such emphasis upon various *ways* of knowing, rather than upon the attaining of *states* of knowledge, is likely to affect, not only the emphasis of the pedagogy, but an underlying theory of learning. The underlying theory of learning of collection is likely to be didactic whilst the underlying theory of learning of integrated codes may well be more group or self-regulated' (61). Return to article

28. This is illustrated by a student's comment: 'Creative writing has brought a whole new dimension to my reading. I seem to see the way is structured more clearly now. Now when I read a book I like, I look much more closely at what the author has done to achieve the effects they have, to see if I can do the same.' B. Nolan, Fourth year student, Creative Writing, 1998. Return to article

29. This concept lends itself to further work in this area. Its implications for the way in which we teach and distinguish reading and writing suggests further possibilities for using creative writing in the teaching of literature. My thanks to Bill Ashcroft for alerting me to his article which opens up this topic, 'Constitutive Graphonomy: A Post-colonial Theory of Literary Writing', *Kunapipi* Vol XI, No.1 (1989), pp 58-73. Return to article

30. Salman Rushdie (1991) 'Imaginary homelands' in I*maginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism* 1981-1991, p 14. Return to article

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