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Changes in the Subject Centre

When the Subject Centre was established, it was one of the two centres (out of twenty-four) without a Manager. By the New Year, we discovered that this was a significant disadvantage, since the need for intensive and efficient planning, reporting, and day-to-day management of the Centre were demanding tasks taking time away from other activities. It was also clear that the future effectiveness of the Centre would also require high level management skills that were simultaneously sensitive to the needs of the subject. With these needs in mind, the post of Manager was advertised, and we have appointed Jane Gawthrope, currently deputy chief librarian at Brunel University. Jane commences work at the Centre in mid-August, and she is admirably qualified for the task. We look forward to working with Jane.

The Director's Column

Professor Philip Martin, Director, English Subject Centre, Royal Holloway, University of London

The occasion of the Summer Newsletter provides an invitation for reflection on the Subject Centre's inaugural year, and the opportunity to look forward to and outline some of our plans for the future. Undoubtedly, those who work at the Centre have had a busy and fulfilling first stage, and we have been delighted by the warm response from English departments across the country.

The range of activities run by the Centre in the first year has included visits to departments, study days and training days. All of these activities have demonstrated a great willingness among those who teach the subject to exchange ideas and share their experience with colleagues right across the sector. Whether people have come under the title of preparing for academic review, or discussing the nature of the seminar, our evaluations and other forms of feedback strongly suggest that one real enjoyment and value of these sessions is that which centres on the exchange of views and experience. At the very least, colleagues are discovering that others share the problems and difficulties that might sometimes seem to be theirs alone, but frequently the evidence suggests that the teaching of English is accompanied by a great deal of pleasure and a vigorous interest in students' experience of the subject. Thus, the interchange between colleagues is also about success, the discovery of different teaching techniques, and discovering new approaches to the subject. One of the Subject Centre's prime aims is to build a network of exchange among those who teach English, and that can only be built on the development of a sense of solidarity and common purpose. This is emerging strongly, and we will seek to develop it further next year.

Throughout our first year we have established close contacts with a number of departments, and with many of those who have attended our events. We will increase the network next year by continuing our programme of visits to departments. Out of the 120 departments we have on our list, 92 have been represented at Subject Centre events. This high participation has enabled us to gather a substantial amount of information about the priorities of English departments, their needs, and matters of common concern or questions.

We have established a plan of activities and events around these for next year, but it is also the case that we are always anxious to hear more, and take suggestions from departments. The Subject Centre is a resource for the teaching of English in Higher Education: if you wish us to gather information, conduct analyses, or simply run staff development events, you should let us know. We do not necessarily have the expertise in-house to meet such needs, but our philosophy is firmly founded on the belief that the community as a whole is a rich resource, and we can contract expertise from within it. Our prime aim next year will be to produce more material results and outcomes. The headlines in our programme are our Project Development Grants (which entails the devolving of money out to Departments), a national project on the use of IT in English, the production of reports on admissions, the subject's teaching and learning, and (possibly) skills, the development of database resources to enable the rapid discovery of materials and expertise, and the first stage of planning for a major international conference in 2003 provisionally entitled 'The Condition of the Subject'.

This conference will provide a forum for the community to reflect upon its practice and the institutional structures through which it is materialised. It could be argued that we have an ideal notion of our subject constructed largely out of our research practice, and a material practice governed by the increasing demands of corporatism, regulation, central schemes, or by what has become known as the market. It is clear that English has evolved rapidly over the last two decades as a result of the theoretical revolution, but it could also be argued that the transformations wrought by institutional imperatives and national agendas have had equally large effects. At the same time there are other imperatives that will produce material changes that will be, arguably, beneficial (the need, for example, to publish our research to a wider audience than that indicated by decreasing library sales, or the increasing requirements of professionalism). This conference will aim to discuss these and other matters. In addition, the international status of English has changed, and the nature of the subject's relations to other disciplines has had profound effects on the understand-

ing of its intellectual boundaries. English is now a subject, arguably, with no centre and no margins, and while this latitude is widely celebrated as a healthy antidote to canonical prescription, it also presents challenges to the conceptualisation of subject knowledge. We plan to kick the conference off this year with some preliminary events (meetings, symposia

and planning groups). More news of this and other activities in our programme will be included in our Autumn Bulletin, and future mailings. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all colleagues who have worked with the Subject Centre this year, and have brought so much stimulation and ideas to its events and future planning.

What we do with our First Years?

Chris Hopkins, Department of English, Sheffield Hallam University, explores the issues involved in setting 'core' modules for first year students of English Studies.

I am currently very interested in what English departments do with their first year students, especially in their first semester or term. This seems a vital question for the subject (and our students), since presumably those early days and courses are central to the job of advancing – or even transforming – A Level and Access students into degree level English students, and in setting out the fundamental understandings to enable them to progress on our degrees. Though individual departments must have thought through their own approaches to the students who each year begin their courses, there has been no general study of what the range of different approaches is, or of how successful these are. Here I can briefly set out some of the approaches of which I have experience or knowledge by way of illustration of the type and some of the issues.

In as much as I do recall my own first year (at York in 1980), I remember that we all took a specifically introductory course in the first term. My essays from the course show that I hadn't yet acquired the sophistication to write the name of what we would now call the module on them. But I think it must have been a predecessor of York's current 'Approaches to Literature' course, which 'uses a wide range of texts from different periods and genres to provide an introduction to the critical, analytic and descriptive skills needed to study literature at university'. Going on to Warwick as a part-time postgraduate tutor in 1985 I taught on their equivalent module, 'Introduction to Modern Literary Studies' (perhaps the predecessor of the current 'Modes of Reading'?). This also taught a range of texts from different periods and genres, and additionally introduced students to the major literary theories. Finally, acquiring

a full-time post at Sheffield Hallam University (then Sheffield City Polytechnic, 1990), I taught on, and then became unit leader for, 'Skills for English Studies'. This was based on the reading of a variety of literary texts, but it also had the more generic task (required by Sheffield Hallam, as by many other new universities) of introducing students to a productive engagement with the main modes of degree level study: seminars, lectures, presentations, independent research, essays, referencing conventions, and exams. I am still unit leader of the much evolved descendant, 'Introduction to English Studies'.

Clearly there were differences between these introductory courses. No theory at York (in those days), except for theories of tragedy and comedy, but lots of practice in reading texts, whereas Warwick (five years later) covered structuralism to feminism in, I think, the last five weeks of its course. At Sheffield City Polytechnic, the unit had the additional tasks of focusing on methods of learning and of being an introduction to degree level study, as well as to an English degree. I wasn't (in prelapsarian days) party to discussions about the introductory course at York, but I recall considerable debate about the two other introductory courses at Warwick and Sheffield. Some argued that it would be better to do without specifically introductory courses, since they didn't have the content and weight of the central courses (usually period or genre papers), that the best way to learn university English was to be plunged into the full experience. Others agreed with the idea of an introductory course, but thought current arrangements missed the central issues of the discipline: not enough close reading, too much variety of texts, not enough variety of texts, not enough theory, the wrong kind of

theory, the wrong way to teach it etc, etc, etc. One thing that these courses did have in common was that they all concentrated the introductory experience into one unit. This is, I think, the commonest model, but it is not inevitable. Some departments do not seem to have a module which carries out this task particularly. Others feel that there is so much to introduce that a number of courses are needed to support the transition to degree level English; thus Leeds has three first year courses which look as if they fulfill this function: 'Strategies of Reading, 'Language,

Text, Context' and 'Literature, History, Difference'.

What I hope to get back from this article is information, comment and reflection from colleagues on what they do with their first years and on the challenges, issues, successes and problems raised in this kind of important teaching. I would be grateful for basic information in the way of course descriptions, and pleased if anyone would care to discuss their practice or any of the issues raised by this article.

What makes for effective PhD training and supervision in the Arts and Humanities?

Dr Cordelia Beattie, Dr Stephen Hutchinson, Graduate Student Training Officer, and **Dr Stephanie Marshall**, Director of Staff Development, Staff Development Office, Goodricke College, University of York

The question – 'What makes for effective PhD training and supervision in the Arts and Humanities?' – is currently being considered at the University of York in a three-month project, initially funded by the University's Teaching Innovation and Development Committee, and based in the Staff Development Office.

The project, devised and managed by Dr Stephanie Marshall and Dr Steve Hutchinson, and assisted by Dr Cordelia Beattie, has three main objectives:

- 1) To examine the range of literature and materials on offer, nationally and internationally, in order to provide a broad understanding of the rationale for, and examples of best practice in, graduate skills and supervisory programmes, as a context for this local study.
- 2) To audit current practice in the departments of English, History, History of Art and the Centre for Medieval Studies of the University of York, by issuing questionnaires to all MPhil/DPhil students and their supervisors, and conducting follow-up interviews.
- 3) To provide a summary of findings and a set of recommendations which will go to the various departmental Graduate Committees and the Board for Graduate Schools. Agreed recommendations will inform future developments both in the departments and in the work of the Staff Development Office.

Over recent years, there has been concern that skills training for PhD students has

lagged well behind that offered to undergraduates. The Research Councils for Science and Engineering, and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) have addressed this issue by requiring that, for any PhD programme to be eligible for the award of studentships, skills training must be an integral part. The recent formation of a research council for the Arts and Humanities (the AHRB), combined with press releases highlighting concern for unemployed PhD graduates in the arts and humanities (see, for example,), have raised concerns that the needs of this large group of students should be addressed. Similarly, a recent report by the UK Council for Graduate Education argues that 'the character of the humanities should play a central role in shaping the debate over research training' (UKCGE, *Research Training for Humanities Postgraduate Students* [2000]). The AHRB have taken these concerns on board and are currently conducting their own review which will consider, amongst other areas, research training and supervision. In the latter area, supervision, more research has again been undertaken in science and engineering (e.g. by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council in 1996) and the social sciences (see S. Delamont *et al.*, *Supervising the PhD* [1997], which was funded by the ESRC). Research into PhD supervision in the arts and humanities though remains underdeveloped. The York study aims to think about both related areas: training and supervision.

York has a very good track record in securing AHRB (formerly the British Academy) studentships. This project thus proposes to build on the strengths of the research schools in English, History, History of Art and the Centre for Medieval Studies, and conduct some small-scale research into the area of how universities can best assist with the academic socialisation of doctoral students in the

arts and humanities. Depending on the findings of this three-month project, it is hoped that a larger scale, collaborative project could be set up with a comparable HE institution.

If you have any comments which you think would be useful to this project please contact Cordelia Beattie, via The Staff Development Office, Goodricke College, University of York, Heslington, YO10 5DD.

Curriculum 2000: The New A/AS Levels in English

Janet White, Principal Officer, English, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, reviews the progress of the new pre-university qualifications.

We are almost at the end of the first year of the new A/AS level courses on which teaching began last September. Not surprisingly, in the first year of the new system, schools have reported a more crowded timetable and some initial difficulties in organising teaching groups and option choices. While it is too early to make a formal assessment of the impact of these changes on an already popular subject such as English, it is timely to review some of the significant points of difference.

All A levels now follow a modular structure, feature a 'synoptic assessment' module at the end of the course, and offer opportunities for the development of Key Skills (Communication, Application of Number and Information Technology). These changes are part of a wider programme of reform of 16-19 provision that aims to increase access to and participation in post-compulsory education. For example, modular courses make it easier in principle for students to mix and match vocational and general qualifications. Likewise, free-standing qualifications at AS levels are in place to encourage students to widen their range of study by taking 4 or even 5 AS courses before settling on their final 2 or 3 'specialist' subjects.

Structural changes. Previously, there was relatively little interest in the AS route in any of the Englishes, teachers generally taking the view that the development of knowledge, skills and understanding needed a full 2 years, in which time aspects of the course could be incrementally revisited and deepened. The option of teaching and examining English Language or English Literature courses in 2 halves raises many questions about what

constitutes an introductory level, sufficient for those likely to discontinue the course after one year, but covering all that is necessary for those aiming to specialise. Plainly the learning programme needs to cover more than set texts or discrete topics – there is a danger that too tight a focus on module examinations leads to an atomistic approach in the first part of the course. A counterbalance to such tendencies is deliberately built in for A2 students, in the form of a compulsory synoptic module, which draws on objectives from the entire course of study. At best, these modules call on candidates' ability to apply their knowledge and skills to a range of texts and issues in their subject. For AS students, such linkage has to be implicit – perhaps this is a possible area for liaison between 6th form and HE tutors given the prevalence of modular courses, usually without a synoptic element, at universities.

The importance of the subject criteria. A/AS level syllabuses are based on an agreed 'subject criteria', the document which sets out at a general level the range of knowledge, skills and understanding required for each part of the course, the assessment objectives which relate to this, and indicative grade descriptions. Thus the subject criteria for English Literature specify the minimum number of texts for study, as well as the range of genre and periods to be covered. In English Language the criteria outline the scope and depth of linguistic analysis required, while the criteria for the combined course make explicit the integration of the 2 disciplines. Each awarding body constructs its own syllabus, but the underlying criteria provide a common point of reference for them all and help ensure

the students are provided with comparable opportunities even if the routes taken through the requirements differ.

In the new A/AS levels for English, greater is prominence given to assessment objectives. These build on those in the current syllabuses, but differentiate between AS and A2 in distinctive areas of each subject. Thus, for English literature, greater emphasis is given to knowledge of a work's context and other readers' views. In English language, the ability to select and apply a particular framework for analysis is expected. For students of the combined course, work should develop an ability to 'read' from either a literary or linguistic point of view. Of course, in the case of all three subjects, the assessment objectives that come into play at A2 have a key role in the construction of the synoptic modules.

Key Skills. An important innovation in curriculum 2000 is the addition of 'Key Skill' qualifications that cover Communication, Information Technology and Application of Number. These qualifications are gained through a mixture of external test and portfolio work, which may be put together from a range of different subjects. Key skills provide

another marker of progression while at the same time helping candidates to extend some of the skills gained in academic study to different contexts. It is notable, for example, that Key Skill Communication covers speaking and listening as well as reading and writing. This aspect of the qualification should make it attractive to both employers and HE tutors, many of whom have often expressed concern about the marginal status of oral work in some traditional sixth form study. The potential importance of key skills for entry to higher education is signalled by the UCAS tariff of up to 30 points for each key skill at level 4. To date, it is not clear that all universities are asking for this evidence. Nevertheless, there seems to have been a tendency for centres to enter students early for key skills this year – a factor perhaps contributing to the recent press coverage of candidates 'failing' to gain the anticipated level 3 after only one or two terms' study.

QCA monitoring. As part of its overall monitoring programme of the new A/AS levels, QCA is evaluating the first year of the Key Skills Qualification. In the meantime, the subject teams at QCA would be pleased to receive any feedback from readers on this year's experiences of curriculum 2000.

Postgraduate English: A Journal and Forum for Postgraduates in English

Postgraduate English is an e-journal specifically designed for postgraduate students in English Studies in the UK and in Europe generally. The journal is biannual, appearing in March and September of each year. The current issue contains, in addition to four new academic papers, a paper on postgraduate teaching in the UK and the Association of University Teachers, accounts of the second highly successful Postgraduate Futures conference held at the Anglia Polytechnic University in July 2000, and additional information on degree structures across Europe. It also contains a section in which postgraduates provide tips or anecdotes of their own experiences of teaching.

There are three major sections to the journal: 'Articles' publishes refereed submissions from postgraduate students in the UK and the EU; 'PG-Tips' is a compendium of useful internet links; and 'Forum' is a site for essays and pieces of academic journalism on matters related to postgraduate life. 'Articles' will be updated with new material every March and September, while the other two sites will be updated when the need or opportunity arises. For further details, visit <http://www.dur.ac.uk/~dng0zz5/journal1.htm> or e-mail Brian Burton (editor) or Timothy Clark (advisory editor) at Postgraduate.English@durham.ac.uk

Poetry, Please

Dr Stephen Regan, Department of English, Royal Holloway, University of London, argues that the apparent rise in poetry's public profile is not matched by students' experience at school and at university.

Why worry about poetry? If the buoyant national interest in writing it and reading it is anything to go by, poetry would seem to be enjoying an unprecedented phase of public enthusiasm and approval. There are poetry festivals, poetry workshops, poetry competitions and even Poetry Proms. Much of this is to be welcomed. The Poetry Proms are not just casual entertainment for the well-heeled on their way across the park to hear Mahler's Fifth at the Albert Hall. These Hyde Park poetry readings, launched last year as a summer accompaniment to the music Proms, are free to anyone who can be bothered to go (and they can be heard on BBC Radio 3 during concert intervals). The Poetry Proms are showcases for some excellent new work by poets such as Maura Dooley, Paul Farley, Liz Lochhead, Michael Donaghy and Fred D'Aguiar.

Radio continues to stimulate a lively national interest in poetry, with successful poetry programmes and occasional series like Radio 4's 'Adventures in Poetry'. A new experience in configuring words and images has been made possible through the Internet, and there are dozens of poetry sites on the World Wide Web, promoting both traditional lyric poetry and new ideas of poetry as performance and electronic event. 'Poetry, please' is what listeners and viewers, as well as readers, are saying, and the big publishing companies have responded by giving us shelf loads of anthologies to satisfy a craving for every conceivable kind of poetry: long poems, short poems, love poems, war poems, underground poems, poems for the day and poems for the week. *The Nation's Favourite Poems*, the product of a survey conducted by the BBC, has spawned a whole family of favourite poems, including *The Nation's Favourite Animal Poems* and *The Nation's Favourite Comic Poems* (and no doubt others are on the way).

The worry is that the spectacle of a poetry-loving nation is a superficial and misleading indication of the value and purpose of poetry in contemporary culture. In fundamental ways, in schools and colleges and universities

where poetry once occupied a much more substantial part of the English literary syllabus than it currently does, we might be ceasing to care very much at all about its value and function. The perception of poetry as popular versifying, light entertainment and public performance sits uncomfortably alongside another perception of poetry as embattled and marginalised, unpopular as a subject of study and increasingly irrelevant in a new social formation obsessively concerned with measurements and targets, and only narrowly and pragmatically interested in literacy.

The sharp disparity between poetry as a thriving national past-time and poetry as part of an education in English is such that, while the poetry festivals flourish, some undergraduate students are likely to arrive at university with little or no interest in poetry, confessing that they don't know how to read it and therefore can't be expected to understand or appreciate it. Part of the problem is that there has been little sustained effort to co-ordinate the teaching of poetry in schools and universities, to think comprehensively about the purpose of teaching poetry in primary, secondary and higher education, or to establish a convincing set of arguments about the far-reaching cultural value and significance of poetry. In the anxious debates over English and the national curriculum, not enough attention was given to poetry as a distinctive literary genre, and in some schools it has since been displaced by a more overt emphasis on fiction and drama or else subsumed within a heavily generalised English literature curriculum.

The consequences for the teaching of poetry in higher education are troubling. While clearly there are students who excel in poetry classes, who can speak persuasively about Emily Dickinson's punctuation or Wilfred Owen's use of pararhyme, there are others who painfully lack even the most basic critical skills in the analysis of poetry. Do we then blithely disregard the problem and confine the study of poetry to a few optional modules scattered across the three or four years of a degree course, or do we set about building a

strong foundation in poetry that all students might benefit from? Given that students' knowledge of poetry and their skills in criticism are likely to vary extensively, what kind of introduction to poetry might be appropriate at undergraduate level? Should the priority be formal analysis or historical coverage? How can we encourage technical proficiency in the reading of poetry and a sophisticated awareness of its social and political significance?

The pressing nature of these questions informs a number of useful introductory textbooks designed for both teachers and students of poetry. *An Introduction to Poetry* by Dana Gioia and X.J. Kennedy (Longman, 1998) is impressive in its range, combining a thoughtful selection of over 500 poems (from early English ballads to contemporary world poetry) with extensive exercises and discussion sections. Formal analysis is helpfully complemented by a judicious arrangement of critical and contextual materials. *Reading Poetry: An Introduction* by Tom Furniss and Michael Bath (Prentice Hall, 1996) candidly addresses those readers 'who have not read much poetry'. At the same time, the book ambitiously (and effectively) combines a detailed technical criticism of poetry with an exemplary range of historical and theoretical insights, and it carefully pitches its questions and exercises for the benefit of undergraduates.

The Poetry Handbook by John Lennard (Oxford University Press, 1996) has obviously been distilled from many years of classroom experience in practical criticism, but it shows how rigorous formal analysis can be expanded and complemented by other critical interests and endeavours. One of its distinguishing features is that it concentrates on the cumulative reading of a single poem ('Nearing Forty' by Derek Walcott). *Studying Poetry* by Stephen Matterson and Darryl Jones (Arnold, 2000) very deftly introduces students to both formal analysis and critical theory, opening with a chapter on poetic form and working its way through to more challenging propositions on the poem in history and the limits of poetry. Whether writing about Bob Dylan's 'Highway 61 Revisited' or W.B. Yeats's 'Easter 1916', Matterson and Jones are companionable and engaging critics of poetry.

After all this illuminating reading, we still need to design our own poetry courses and

we have to do so within the constraints of our own institutional frameworks. Even if we have the opportunity of running an introductory poetry course across an entire academic year, there are constraints to do with chronology and nationality. Where do we begin and where do we end? Should it be 'English Poetry' or 'British Poetry'?, 'British and Irish Poetry' or 'British and American Poetry'? Perhaps we should teach 'Poetry' and choose freely from the richly abundant work of poets from Australia, Canada, the Caribbean and elsewhere.

Where constraints of time or constraints of structure restrict the scope of poetry courses, a great deal can be achieved through a sustained concentration on poetic forms such as the sonnet or the elegy. Far from limiting attention to formal and stylistic matters, courses with a strong generic emphasis can be powerfully effective in opening up discussion of the poem in history. A carefully structured course on the sonnet can amply demonstrate the close relationship between eloquence and power, between the structural and thematic concerns of the Renaissance sonnet and the social and political interests of the court; and it can also show how the sonnet flexibly accommodates a range of very different voices over several centuries: the radical, republican voices of John Milton and Tony Harrison, the anguished, confessional voices of George Herbert and Gerard Manley Hopkins, the intimate, amatory voices of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christina Rossetti. A short course on the elegy can be equally effective in both formal and historical terms, juxtaposing 'Lycidas' with later works such as Auden's elegy 'In Memory of W.B. Yeats' and Heaney's 'The Strand at Lough Beg'.

Beyond all this, does poetry matter? Auden's famous pronouncement that 'poetry makes nothing happen' is too often quoted out of context, as if that great tribute to Yeats renders poetry impotent or merely ascribes to it some self-regarding aestheticism. Of course, the lines that immediately follow suggest something else: something closer to the specialised autonomy that Theodor Adorno approved of in modern art. Poetry retains a capacity to operate at a critical remove from the society of which it is part: 'it survives / In the valley of its making where executives / Would never want to tamper...it survives, / A way of happening, a mouth'.

Matthew Arnold was edging towards this kind of realisation in his essays on poetry at the end of the nineteenth century, and while we might find Arnold's pontifications wearying, and some of his moral and political formulations objectionable, we have without doubt lost the force of his central conviction that poetry is a criticism of life. That poetry can have such a function lends credence to some of the most memorable defences of poetry by modern poets themselves, in the essays and letters of Yeats and Frost and Stevens and others. In its intense and vivid imaginings, poetry can take the measure of just how drastically life falls short of what it might have been, and with that realisation some fundamental politics of poetry begins. Yeats and Auden 'sing of human unsuccess /

In a rapture of distress', neither poet confining unsuccess and distress to some putatively personal realm.

We sell poetry short when we collapse its reach and possibility into a few half-hearted learning outcomes on some hurriedly written course description. We need, at every level of teaching, to remind ourselves of the insights and incitements that poetry can generate. To do that adequately, we have to rethink the way that poetry is currently being taught, and we have to argue persuasively for its relevance all the way across the school and university curriculum, so that we might 'In the prison of his days / Teach the free man how to praise'.

Literary Studies and the Humbul Humanities Hub

A service of the national Resource Discovery Network, Humbul receives funding from the Joint Information Systems Committee and the Arts and Humanities Research Board to describe online resources for subjects across the humanities, including English Language and Literature.

Humbul and the English Subject Centre are currently discussing the ways in which they might effectively work together, including sharing records about learning resources between services. If you regularly bookmark useful resources for research or include websites on reading lists for your students, we would be keen to know about them. There is the possibility of a nominal payment per description for contributors who would be willing to send Humbul descriptions of resources on a regular basis.

Humbul is currently developing 'My Humbul' which will allow you to save searches and be alerted by e-mail to new resources which fit your search criteria; or enable you to dynamically include resource descriptions, including your own annotations, within a web page (which might, for example, be an online reading list).

For further information or to register an interest in submitting descriptions of online resources, contact Dr Michael Fraser, Head of Humbul, Humanities Computing Unit, University of Oxford, 13 Banbury Road, Oxford. OX2 6NN. E-mail: info@humbul.ac.uk

In the meantime, sample descriptions of resources taken from the English section are reproduced below (full records, including information about authors and publishers, are available via the Hub's own database at <http://www.humbul.ac.uk/>).

Dickinson Electronic Archives <http://www.iath.virginia.edu/dickinson/>

The Dickinson Electronic Archives is creating new electronic editions of the works of the Dickinson family. Access to the works of Emily Dickinson is restricted. However, an extensive range of resources for the study of Emily, Susan and Edward Dickinson is available, including poems, reviews, stories, correspondence, and bibliographies. Also accessible are the Classroom Electric, which seeks to make best use of primary literary resources in undergraduate teaching (with a focus on Dickinson and Whitman), and the Titanic Operas, containing a collection of responses (in verse with descriptive prose) by notable contemporary poets to Emily Dickinson.

Dr Michael Fraser, Head of Humbul, Humanities Computing Unit, University of Oxford

Schrödinger's Cat (The bringing in of creativity – dead or alive?)

Dr. Mario Petrucci, Royal Literary Fund Fellow at Oxford Brookes University, explores whether or not creativity can be observed, either through theory or praxis, in some kind of original state.

Only a physicist, perhaps, would decide to put a cat in a box with no more company than a radioactive atom, a Geiger counter, a hammer and a vial of Prussic Acid. Not in real life, of course. The idea was a 'thought experiment' designed to illustrate a Quantum Mechanical paradox. The set-up is that if the atom decays, it activates the Geiger counter which then causes the hammer to strike the vial and release the cyanide, killing the cat. The question then is, quite simply, can you say whether the cat is alive or dead *before* the lid of the box is opened to observe it?

For the physicist, this 'experiment' neatly links the fate of the cat to the statistical existence of the radioactive atom. For the layperson, it serves to illustrate the fundamental Quantum-Mechanical idea that no system can be known as a verifiable fact without having observed it, and – by extension – that the system is always altered at a fundamental level through the mere enactment of that observation. So, as far as the observer outside the box is concerned, the cat exists in a state of limbo which is neither dead *nor* alive, but a mathematical blending, or admixture, of both 'states'. Now, before I get carried away with the analogy, I should return myself rapidly to the question which I, as a lapsed physicist, am asking. Is creativity like the cat? Can the thing itself be *observed* or *analysed*? In many ways, Literary Theory has pussy-footed around this question for decades.

Perhaps my analogy has already broken down. Observation (which implies a reporting back of facts or characteristics) is a different matter to understanding. The cat can be observed without having to understand it. This distinction is crucial. It is equivalent to what we mean by 'understanding' a person, a relationship, or a piece of literature, as opposed to having analysed any of these into the sum of its parts. If understanding is akin to daylight, analysis is (all too often) dissection under a spotlight. The intense and constant light-source required for the close and rigorous analysis of a snowflake, for instance, ends up melting it.

I know this is beginning to sound like a manifesto for creative mysticism or the

abolition of critical-creative analysis. Far from it! My own experience of creative writing, particularly of poetry, is that understanding the process can allow me to recreate the conditions under which the Muse might (or then again, might not) be persuaded to visit. Looking further afield than one's individual creativity, our culture's current infatuation with analysis (and its assumed high value) may have more to do with its (apparent) soullessness than with any attempt to eliminate spurious data from its categorising enquiry. Yes, I have uttered that dirty word. 'Soul'. Which means, to me, whatever it is in humanity which resists the hegemony of mechanisation and materialism; it is, at least in part, that set of human qualities probably forever beyond the reach of genetics, genetic modification, neuroscience – and English Studies. I am not advocating here a voyage into pseudo-religious terrain; equally, however, I do not wish to exclude any artist's sense of some sacred element in what they do, which underpins their creativity or makes it meaningful to them. Having said this, if 'Soul' confuses the issue for you, call it something else.

A further assumption I take issue with is the type of self-fulfilling post-rationalisations of 'socio-historical archaeologists' who impose modern criteria upon a past culture and then judge it deficient or inferior by virtue of, say, its low per capita income or absence of health care and educational opportunities. This also applies to creativity. I often wonder how my grandparents would have viewed the types of creativity our society deploys, or those I have adapted for my teaching work, against their own desire and ability to generate jokes, stories and beliefs? I suspect that, confronted with Schrödinger's Cat, they would have been more concerned with the fate of its spirit, or Soul. Or with Schrödinger's.

Some considerable care is needed, then, to ensure that the historical or psychological processes we observe as part of creativity (or anything else for that matter) are not overly distorted by any prejudicial means of observation, or are not reduced – through some process of scientific analogy – to a mere function of our observation. Who is to say that

my grandparents' (and to a lesser extent, parents') understanding of life through myth, folklore and religious symbols was any less valid for them than that held by a contemporary of ours based, say, on the scientific method or cognitive psychology? Naturally, just because knowledge, rationality and logic might best be avoided as, in themselves, objects of worship does not mean they should be scrapped; I am saying that they can be recognised, if we choose, as possible tools among many.

But am I guilty here of analysing analysis, rather than trying to understand it? Are my observations relevant to creative writing teaching – or is my mixing of analogies (family trees, the archaeology of values, and other metaphors) a kind of red herring? Either way, and as far as I know, there is hardly a surfeit of concerted and *applied* research concerning the ways in which creativity functions at its root, or looking (for example) at the processes and types of creativity which occur across disciplines, cultures and histories. Some warm-blooded attention in this area (rather than icy analysis) would be fascinating and fruitful.

An experiential, participative, empirical approach would do well as one possible starting point in this enterprise. We need to develop modes of analysis (or rather, engagement) which take into account the heuristic nature of creativity, and which themselves embrace its experimentation and play. Pinning down the final 'product' is only half the story and often less than half its history. Relevant biography and allusional/intertextual analysis of such texts, where it is known, can be helpful; but perhaps the mediaevals were closer to the mark in their desire to 'digest' the text. T. S. Eliot understood the need for surrendering oneself to a text in ways which, at least initially, have far more to do with limbic excitement than cerebral cognisance.

There is also a key issue here regarding the assessment of creativity, something that is beginning to accelerate in creative writing courses across the universities. I am made to think, in this context, of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of public works, where measurable quantities (profit/loss) are made to compete with 'Intangibles' (such as biodiversity and scenic beauty) which cannot be measured in the same way, if at all. On too many occasions, particularly in the early years of EIAs, the Intangibles have lost out, at least

in part because they do not (and some say, cannot) 'score' on a measurable scale that is directly relevant to the economics of the project. More recently, this very immeasurability of Intangibles has become a site of ethical debate and conflict concerning the validity of EIAs and the values which govern and bias them.

It is hardly a quantum leap of imagination to see potential kinship here between what has happened in EIAs and what may emerge as universities attempt to 'observe' and 'measure' the creativity cat. Society is repeating the same mistake, discipline by discipline. I suspect that creativity will never be prised from its Intangible regime, and that – like EIAs – assessments of creativity may eventually be led to ethical questions concerning what drives assessment and how and why we are doing it. Certainly, such assessments will be doing extremely well if they can avoid merely over-emphasising creativity's more 'measurable' features, and one suspects the focus will tend to remain on the opened box of the product or on superficial rather than deep process, the latter being largely (if not wholly) inscrutable.

Having said this, I wonder if such problems might be eased a little if there were greater research involvement in universities from practitioners. I know that my own writing raises all kinds of issues around lifestyle and workstyle. I find, for instance, that tutorial preparation, writing poems, and the researching of technical articles can *equally* exhaust one of the core sources in me from which poems spring. At other times, pieces of text feed one another: a newspaper headline, or family photograph, can prompt a poem; a poem unexpectedly interrupts itself during composition, pointing to a new article on some apparently unrelated theme. I am currently compiling an empirical study of my poems' creative progenesis (an extension of some informal work I did in Aberystwyth) and as far as I know, the approach I adopt is unique. It would be heart-warming to discover that having professional writers on campus (alongside the professional writer-teachers) might draw on such work, or at least achieve more than simply legitimising the cat-counting.

Most of literary theory has not been concerned with the cat-in-the-box. It prefers to deal with the intertextual-cat-on-TV, or with detailed descriptions of the type of matting the cat sits upon, or the known traumatisations of

the kitten, or the cat's use as a sentimental sound-effect on *The Archers*, or with deconstructions of the stock image of the cat purring in its basket by the fireplace – which is, not without justification, the rightful place for cats, at least of the domesticated kind. A thought should be spared, however, for that box. A novel or poem does not come spontaneously or randomly into being, in the manner of a dice-throw – it has some proto- or pre-existence in the mind, or is at least propelled by a directional tension of some kind. It is its own purposeful organism composed of

thoughts, texts, memories, ideas, impulses, emotions. The written work is simply not the same animal. Being a practitioner of poetry has revealed to me, time and again, that creativity is not something which is alive or dead on some particular day, but a creature having at least nine lives. I suspect too structured or mechanical an analysis of it might only serve to insert that vial of poison into our brainboxes. These types of untempered approach are more than likely – when we prise the lid – to yield up little more than a dead cat.

Re-Writing Problem-based Learning for Literary Studies

Dr Bill Hutchings, a National Teaching Fellow, and his research assistant, **Karen O'Rourke**, introduce the problem-based learning project they are running in the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Manchester.

The significance of the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme is that it has made a clear, public statement of the importance of a professional attitude to learning and teaching in Higher Education. Naturally, all of the twenty successful nominees – and our colleagues nominated by other institutions in 2000 who were equally deserving of the award – feel highly honoured. The principal honour, however, is not personal, but being part of the movement to raise the status of teaching within our sector.

Like all good learning and teaching, the scheme is founded on co-operation – between colleagues, between institutions, between teachers and the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT), the Subject Centres and all other supporting agencies. The stimulus to develop one's teaching comes from all such means of help and guidance; but above all it derives from students themselves. The most touching result of my own nomination has been the number of past and present students who have taken the trouble to contact me with their congratulations. The congratulations are really due to them, for it is their efforts and achievements that represent the value of our profession.

When I came to consider my own project for the award, I therefore wanted to make it something that went to the heart of learning and teaching as a co-operative enterprise. I wanted it also to be something that located the teaching of Literary Studies within the

wider educational experience, as well as recognising the inherent and essential nature of Literary Studies as a discipline.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is already well established in Manchester University's Medical and Dental Schools and in Biomolecular Sciences at UMIST. PBL is a student-centred approach to learning and teaching which uses student groups as the key vehicle to achieve co-operative or collaborative learning. Actively identifying and managing their workload through carefully designed, subject-specific problems, tasks or case-studies, students are motivated to identify, retrieve, organise and disseminate their findings in written or oral format to an audience which may consist of their immediate team-mates, their peers, tutors or examiners. It is through research and debate triggered by challenging features within the problem design (sensitively guided and monitored by tutor/facilitator) that the students' existing subject knowledge base is integrated and expanded, leading to deeper subject understanding and developing their ability to apply that knowledge in potential 'real-life' situations.

Arts programmes already place emphasis on such core skills as research and communication. An increasing number of our programmes do include a strong oral component as well as the more traditional written element of communication skills. Self-directed learning through dissertation and

project work is common practice. This, however, tends to be individual, with the key dynamic being that between an individual supervisor and an individual student. The supervisor acts as a source of advice, as a sounding board for ideas, as a supplier of references and as a checker of draft material. The PBL model, which encourages co-operative learning, offers a broader application of core skills and the development of inter-active learning.

As a self-directed approach to learning that prioritises co-operative learning and group management of tasks as a key vehicle of delivery, PBL seems ideally suited to a discipline such as Literary Studies that works so much through discussion and debate, with a relative lack of clear target responses to questions. It might even be argued that the current dominance of tutor-directed models within Literary Studies actually runs counter to the real nature of the subject. A literary text seldom, if ever, has a single issue or problem as its concern, even when a critic or even the author claims that it does. There will always be a diversity of potential response generated among diverse readers. It is arguably in the apprehension of this diversity that the true creativity of the subject lies. A PBL method, in which it is the group itself that defines the learning objectives, tasks and methods of inquiry, seems particularly appropriate.

Arts disciplines generally, and Literary Studies in particular, would seem therefore to offer fruitful ground for the investigation of the applicability of PBL models. My National Teaching Fellowship Award has facilitated a two-year project (commenced October 2000) which aims to implement a pilot PBL programme in the Department of English and American Studies at Manchester.

The main aims and objectives of the project are as follows:

- To produce PBL learning packages for a variety of Literary Studies modules;
- To pilot PBL systems in selected course modules from September 2001;
- To move towards implementation of a PBL programme in further selected modules;
- To assess and to evaluate the

outcomes of PBL systems in comparison with conventional teaching patterns;

- To develop materials for the delivery of PBL systems in a variety of literary studies modules;
- To examine the student experience of PBL;
- To disseminate project outcomes.

One of the most important outcomes of the project to date has been the realisation that our initial PBL model will without doubt follow what has been dubbed the 'hybrid' approach. By hybrid, we mean that the PBL sessions will be supported by a 'spine' of tutor-led seminars. The aim of these seminars will, of course, not be to provide or hint at 'answers' to the problems. To do so would be to run counter to the entire concept of student-centred learning, to confuse PBL with straightforward 'problem-solving', and to falsify the nature of the discipline. However, we think that – at this stage in the project at least – to subject students to 'pure' PBL as a trial study would be too close to playing dangerously with their degrees. The intention of tutor-led sessions (which will nonetheless be interactive in method) is to provide reassurance and to be part of the process by incorporating seminar-engendered ideas in the research and critical methods. It may be, indeed, that such seminars can be a legitimate part of a functioning PBL model, taking their place as one – but only one – area of student enquiry and investigation. Purist PBL practitioners will throw up their hands up in horror; but let us see.

So our (allegedly!) innovative project is now well under way and has already aroused interest within the Faculty of Arts at Manchester and in institutions outside Manchester. We hope to be able to report to you further in 2002 with a summary of project outcomes and evaluative data. However, if you feel you would like interim bulletins on progress or expansion of our approach to any of the categories outlined above, then please let us know. We welcome further enquiries, exchanges of experience, expressions of interest, offers of lunch, support or sympathy!

Please contact Dr Bill Hutchings or Karen O'Rourke, Department of English and American Studies, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

The Christianity in the Humanities Project

Dr Helen Phillips, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Liverpool, introduces the Christianity in the Humanities Project and describes its efforts to develop and promote teaching materials for students of medieval culture.

This project began in 1999 as a three-year research project, funded by the University of Glamorgan and some external funding. From 2002 it will be based dually at the University of York Centre for Medieval Studies and St John's College, Nottingham. It has become an inter-institutional project, with wide international participation. Designated partner universities include the Heinrich Heine University, Düsseldorf, SUNY, Baylor University, and the University of Missouri. In 2000 we created the Society for the Study of Medieval Christianity and Culture, with an international board. The Project's own UK-based board also has a panel of international consultants and an American steering group. I am the present Director of the Project and Chair of the Society and from summer 2001 Dr Dee Dyas becomes the Director of the Project. We have a two-fold aim, research and pedagogy. Our conference series, 1999-2003, in the UK and USA, combines (on the research side) invited speakers in the forefront of developments in their area, together with (on the pedagogic side) panels, demonstrations and meetings to communicate and share teaching methods and materials. Conference topics include Anglo-Saxon Culture; Mystics and Anchorites; Saints, Sin and Penance; and Chaucer. Further topics are under discussion, including using art in teaching, medieval women, and drama. The Project aims to produce teaching materials in a variety of modes, including books and CD-ROMs. Boydell and Brewer, for example, will be publishing a series of books based on the conferences. The meetings, discussions and sessions we hold at other conferences have proved immeasurably illuminating in defining the issues, as well as offering a wealth of good practice to learn from. Up to now, pedagogic issues have not had the place in UK conferences they have in the USA and it is perhaps fair to say that teaching in the UK often still lags behind some other countries, especially the USA, in creative and realistic, student-centred, approaches to teaching.

The Project was born from what seemed an obvious problem: modern students' lack of relevant religious background for the study of art history, literature and history. This applies

as much to the English Civil War, or Milton and *Mansfield Park* as to medieval studies, but the current Project concentrates on the medieval area. Actually, though universally acknowledged, our seemingly obvious problem is a complex one, culturally, pedagogically and ethically. Some of our key ideas and principles are these. First, we are an academic and pedagogic project, not an evangelising one. This is a project for teaching religious background in a multi-cultural, largely secular (in Britain) society. 'Religious literacy' is a term the American critic Julian Wasserman used for it. Another key term, raised early on by a Japanese professor, is 'distance': medieval Christian culture is another world. And as she pointed out, academics in Asia already have experience in methods of teaching western Christian culture to students who do not come themselves from a Christian background. Moreover, the modern Methodist student feels little common culture with Chaucer's Pardoner or Milton's Adam. The presence of students with strong religious beliefs in a class does not make any difference to the pedagogic challenge and by invoking their own knowledge, we may end up making both them and the non-Christian members of the group feel uncomfortable and marginalised. In a sense we are anthropologists, looking for ways of introducing an unfamiliar society. In fact, despite its traditional aura of difficulty, the medieval area of a syllabus offers all students a level playing field: we all enter equally into an alien culture. We have to avoid teaching the illusion of a unified, discrete, medieval culture: one of the aims of Humanities teaching, after all, is to interrogate past and present cultures.

A central reason for teaching medieval literature or history is, precisely, to explore how our own world comes to be as it is. We have found that, far from teaching a dead, closed society ('background') remote from the contemporary student's position, the best teaching offers students not only the skills to read a past culture with understanding but to investigate their own cultural and even psychological assumptions and structures. A practical example might be, for example, for students to

explore differences between Jewish, medieval Christian, and modern categorisations and conceptualisations of evil, guilt and personal ethical priorities. Two other key terms for the Project, in communicating teaching methods and producing teaching materials, are time and practicality: we are all busy, our modules have little space for teaching context; departmental funds are limited and so often is enough accessible technology for students. The priority is for a variety of easily available and eminently usable teaching materials: a short well-produced video may in some situations be as useful as a more elaborate electronic package. The Project developed from work several people, including Dee Dyas and Rosalind Field, had been doing for several years beforehand on these problems, for example, on the use of visual imagery in teaching. We recognised from the beginning we were not the only people working on these issues, hence the firmly inter-institutional, multi-centred, international structures for our operations.

We are all interdisciplinary these days. Knowledge of Christian medieval culture comes into many areas of the English syllabus outside specialist medieval modules; two immediately obvious ones are Gay Studies and courses on women writers: when medieval female authors appear on Women's Writing modules, what sorts of entry into ways of reading and understanding do we offer? How do we present them not just as baffling progenitors to a tradition (*ur*-women writers), but women writers situated in a particular culture trying to solve problems that are both familiar and unfamiliar? The attitudes of the medieval Church and assumptions of medieval cultures underlie many present issues, from attitudes to gender and sex through to western relations with Islam. My personal entry into the subject of the Project came not just from the

classic hand-wringing awareness of how little modern students knew of the Bible or Christian doctrines, but rather from a moment about fifteen years ago, teaching the *Faerie Queen* in a seminar with several Muslim students: suddenly those villain Saracens, as well as the theological, biblical and Reformation assumptions of the text, sprang out from the page posing a teaching challenge hitherto unrecognised. The legacy from the past includes xenophobia, prejudice, and oppression, as well as spirituality, morality (in structures familiar and unfamiliar to the modern western student), art and a language of images, belief and biblical narrative. Without some ways of giving students access to Christian background, many texts will either silently be dropped from student choice or from the syllabus, or we find ourselves teaching them through perspectives that avoid their religious elements. At the same time, the spirit of this project is that, while gaining ways to read the religious elements and structures of past literature and culture, students may also be enabled, as adults situated in their own culture, whatever their own religious or non-religious background, both to gain insights and to ask questions, modern questions, about the past and present. 'Christian background' isn't the only area in which students urgently need help with ways of reading past literature: classical background and the general history of ideas are two others. One of the welcome aspects of the current Academic Review is that it asks departments to assess what needs their students have when they enter higher education, and this is akin to the purposes of the Project.

For further information about the Project and its activities and events, please contact Dr Dee Dyas, School of Humanities, the University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd, CF 37 1DL; dyas@hotmail.co.uk.

Medieval Resources at Humber

The Medieval Review: <http://www.hti.umich.edu/t/tmr/>

The Medieval Review publishes reviews of books and other research resources within medieval studies. Reviews are distributed via a moderated email list and archived on the website. The website provides details about subscribing to the email list as well as accessing the archive of reviews dating from 1993 to the present. Reviews may be browsed by year or searched. Reviews cover a range of subject areas: including Chaucer, Heloise and Abelard, witches in the early modern age, Joan of Arc, scribal practice, early English drama, Foucault and Scholastic thought. An average of 100 new reviews are published annually.

Open Learning in English 2001

Dr Chris Walsh, Head of the Department of English and Deputy Dean of Arts & Humanities at Chester College of Higher Education, discusses the Open Learning in English 2001 project.

Open Learning in English 2001 began as a project financed by HEFCE under the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning scheme (FDTL) in 1997. Based in the Department of English at Chester College, the project set out to develop interactive multimedia open-learning materials in English literature on CD-ROM. Members of the Department had, between them, a fair amount of experience in the design and writing of distance-learning and resource-based learning materials, but using the well-established formats of print-and-paper, and audio and video tapes. We wanted to explore the possibilities of more recent technologies to see what the pedagogical advantages might be of exploiting electronic multimedia formats. We set out to design and produce two study-guides on CD-ROM in house – on George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and on the poetry of Thomas Hardy. (We also partnered the Open University in their Shakespeare multimedia project on adaptations and appropriations of *King Lear*.) As we slowly came to grips with the nature of the CD format (the learning curve we followed was steep), we came to appreciate what CDs could and couldn't do well. Not a few mistakes were made along the way, but we're pleased with the results. The Eliot and Hardy CDs are both now available for wider use.

The interconnectedness of the structure and concerns of *Middlemarch*, together with George Eliot's analogical habits of mind, make this novel peculiarly suited to study through an electronic hypermedium. The aim of Dr Josie Billington in this study-guide was to encourage students to explore the complex interrelations of the novel's myriad levels and concerns by offering to them a simplified model or version of the movement and formal structure of the novel itself. The guiding image of the CD-ROM is a menu 'web', which offers a rich variety of encounters with aspects of the text – character, scene, image, narrative voice – all of which are interlinked. Whichever 'thread' a reader/user picks up will always lead to further possible encounters which themselves will lead to others and so on. It is a principle of the study-guide that the application of technology should be

sanctioned by the form and vision of the novel itself and it is intended that use of the study-guide should faithfully mimic, however approximately, the experience of reading the novel itself. This CD also distinguishes itself from more conventional critical or pedagogical texts and situations in other important ways. The very capacity of the CD-ROM means that this study-guide, in terms both of approach to and extent of material, can uniquely begin to match the expansiveness and leisureliness of the nineteenth-century realist mode in which the novel is written. In addition, the greater opportunities for close and sustained engagement with the text of the novel, together with the audio-visual options, means that more of the novel can 'live' than is possible in an ordinary study-guide or in a normal one/two-hour seminar or lecture. Finally, this study-guide has the advantage over more linear packages of providing easy hyperlinked access to critical, contextual, and bio/bibliographical support.

A thematic guiding premise operates throughout the CD-ROM on Hardy's poetry (designed and written by Dr Sara Haslam, with Dr Glyn Turton): that of conjunction. Hardy's poetry is so focused on the personal and historical past that conjunction can be seen to be its key. No poem of Hardy's is free of the distinct resonances that occur – often frequently – elsewhere in his work. Clearly, to an extent, this is true of all poets. But in Hardy it is the case to an exceptional degree. Using this CD-ROM to encourage movement from aspect to aspect, theme to theme, we aim to have given its users the facility to move as easily and associatively across Hardy's poetic work as he himself did across his own deeply felt and powerfully articulated experience. This CD, then, is not a way of utilising technology for technology's sake. Its portable, high-capacity format is beneficial in demonstrable ways. As well as making it possible to incorporate diverse forms of primary and secondary material (and thus encourage wider research), this flexible format has clear conceptual benefits too. In crucial ways a CD-ROM can work like the human mind, which often moves laterally as it encounters new ideas. Such lateral movement

in the mind is modified by the way in which it also moves back and forth in time: reflecting and understanding and re-considering. This CD enables and encourages this movement. As a writer, as those who know his work will agree, and as suggested above, Hardy is strikingly suitable for this kind of approach. Layers of time are made manifest in his poems; he continually evokes and reinvestigates time past. So this CD is intended not to replace the reading of Hardy's poetry, but to foster the most rewarding, challenging and productive engagement with it.

The CD-ROMs are designed for undergraduate and postgraduate students and teachers of literature, and can be used to replace or to support lectures and seminars as appropriate. We are confident that degree-level students of literature will benefit in many important ways from using these CD-ROMs. We hope that once colleagues have explored it for themselves, they will agree on the high potential for using it in their own teaching. Please contact us if you would like further copies of the CD-ROMs, or an informal discussion about their design/development and use.

Americanisation and the Teaching of American Studies (AMATAS)

Dr. Alan J. Rice, Principal Lecturer in American Studies and Cultural Theory, Department of Cultural Studies, University of Central Lancashire, introduces the AMATAS Project.

Elvis look-alike contests in Australia and Britain, Disney's theme-park Empire expanding to France and Japan, and the worldwide phenomenon of sports stars like golfer Tiger Woods with the ubiquity of the Nike symbol attached to every item of their attire: all these cultural images suggest that America's presence in the world is multi-layered and seemingly all-pervasive. The Americanisation Project (AMATAS) has been set up to interrogate these and other transnational phenomena and to analyse the positive and negative effects of Americanisation. It will interrogate relations between America and the world while documenting resistance to American commercial and political power from those unwilling to live under the sign of the mighty golden arches.

Although the project focuses on cultural interactions it does so while paying attention to socio-political phenomena such as globalisation and first world imperialism. British/American relations are a very lively debate in the culture at the moment. In the wake of the American spy plane incident in Spring this year, British commentators such as Polly Toynbee in the *Guardian* and Anne McElvoy in the *Independent* have written contrastive accounts of America as either evil Empire or liberating ally. The project aims to provide the academic context for such debates in the culture at large.

The project is avowedly cultural and will be of interest to many English Departments. It is

a curriculum project and aims to promote the critical teaching of Americanisation to providers in the higher education sector. The project has set up a website <http://www.amatas.org> to house materials of interest on the subject (such as a media log and academic articles on Anti-Americanism). Apart from materials, the project is also developing workshops that will be available to English and other Departments from September. These workshops aim to disseminate good practice in the teaching of Americanisation and can be accessed to fit into your department's curriculum or as a special one-off session to highlight the issues of Americanisation and cultural interaction. Some workshops already devised have a literary/cultural studies focus and would be especially pertinent to English providers. They range from Images from the Black Atlantic in British Collections (Ms. Carol Smith – King Alfred's) to Disney and the European Fairy Tale (Dr. Jane Darcy – University of Central Lancashire) to The Royal Family and the USA (Dr. Jude Davies – King Alfred's).

For providers in England there is no cost for the workshops. Elsewhere in the United Kingdom, the cost will be travel expenses only. A full syllabus pack including details of all workshops and some specimen syllabi on Americanisation from Britain and elsewhere will be available by the end of August. If you would like a copy e-mail mataylor@uclan.ac.uk. We hope you will want to use our resources and access our workshops. We see

the project as contributing to a dynamic questioning of national boundaries in all our teaching across the humanities.

In Autumn 2002, the project will culminate in an international conference at the University of Central Lancashire on "Teaching Americanisation in the Twenty-first Century". We will update material on this and other events associated with the project on the website and through a bi-monthly e-mail bulletin. To subscribe to the bulletin e-mail

mataylor@uclan.ac.uk.

AMATAS is the first funded teaching and learning project in Area Studies. Housed in the Cultural Studies Department at the University of Central Lancashire with consortium partners at the University of Derby and King Alfred's College, Winchester, we aim to spread dynamic curriculum ideas on Americanisation throughout the American Studies community and beyond.

Teaching English Language in HE

Dr Lesley Jeffries, University of Huddersfield, discusses students' changing attitudes to the study of English language and the impact of these changes on curriculum design.

I will take it as read that there is some interest amongst English lecturers in the issue of whether, how and how much to teach language to English undergraduates. It is certainly a growing market, and those of us teaching in the new University sector know all about the importance of strong recruitment.

We have been teaching language at Huddersfield as part of the main English degree (formerly Humanities, then Communication Arts, now English Studies) for more than 12 years. It has always been part of our outlook that however much some students might fight it, they will thank us in due course for making sure that they had at least a basic descriptive knowledge of the English language. I suppose I am quite stubborn in my belief that a little difficult grammar (and other things) won't do the undergraduates any harm, though I also know that they learn how to do it much better when they are neither afraid nor bored. A combination of keeping everyone on board (i.e. not giving up on those who go blank when faced with a clause to decipher) and using lively ways of practising the analytical techniques seems to get most of the students through the first year.

I'm sure that the increasing numbers of students coming to us with an A level in English Language or combined Language and Literature will help in what sometimes seems like a remedial task; teaching the basics of linguistic description. However, the A levels often seem to skirt round the more technical aspects of the subject, and we feel that we cannot do likewise without disadvantaging the students

in their advanced language studies. There is only so far you can go unless you understand basic grammar, phonology, semantics and pragmatics. The most hard-working students cannot fulfil their potential by producing a strong sociolinguistics project in the second year unless they are able to use detailed analysis of the examples they collect from their informants. The most interesting projects produced by Child Language Acquisition students are those which describe the progress a child is making with reference to the phonology, morphology or grammar of their utterances. Third year Language and Power students need to be able to identify the main elements of a clause to carry out any kind of Critical Discourse Analysis. Those taking modules in Conversation Analysis and Pragmatics need to understand the 'levels' model of language and where their investigations fit into it – or don't. Students of stylistics can get no further than impressionistic comments about the language of literature or other texts without the technical aspects of description. And for those students who avoid all contact with language modules beyond the compulsory ones (*I came here to read novels and learn about 'Literature'*), you would be surprised how many proudly tell me at graduation in November that they are the only one on their PGCE course that understands the language component of their course!

This is turning into a hard-sell for hard linguistics, but I am unrepentant. There is nothing more irritating than halfbaked generalisations about language, given by those who may be experts in other fields (e.g. literary or

media studies) but who assume that language is somehow transparent. We linguists have an important role to play in the theorising and analysis of texts, and sometimes that theorising requires difficult linguistics. The more there are graduates out there who understand some of the subtleties of language study, the better understanding 'we' (i.e. academics or even society generally) will have about how human communication works, doesn't work, is manipulated, or manipulates us for good or ill.

This brings me to some good news. I have perceived a gradual reduction in the reluctance of students to engage with language study. This may be the result of school-based teaching by graduate teachers who are not afraid of language. It may be just a sea-change that relates to other social or political phenomena. Whatever the reason, our students are choosing language modules in ever greater numbers. We are almost at the position where, given a free choice between language and literature modules, the choices are equally divided between the two strands. Although these figures include large numbers of students who 'only' want to study literature, they inevitably also include increasing numbers of language 'specialists', as well as many who choose to study a combination. We have even thought it worthwhile this year to validate a new English Language degree for those who know from the outset that language is

their 'thing'. This degree will have a first year that overlaps broadly with the English Studies students' programme, and will then simply follow all the language modules currently available. In addition, there will be core courses for the specialist language students to introduce them to some of the theoretical and methodological issues that underlie the descriptive work they are doing in the shared modules. They will thus be prepared for higher level work in language, should they wish to study further, as well as understanding theory and model-building in general.

Writing about English language with such enthusiasm is bound to make me sound a little bit anti-literature. Nothing could be more wrong (much of my work is concerned with the stylistics of poetry), and I am depressed by stories I hear of misunderstanding, mutual suspicion and mistrust between language and literature 'factions' in some institutions. More understanding between the two 'sides' of the subject is needed, and in my experience it is the lack of knowledge that leads to much of the suspicion. Literature teachers might not be thrilled to learn that language is on the way up in students' evaluation if they think jobs are threatened. But if language is one of the attractions that keeps students studying English at all, they may yet have us to thank for the boost to application numbers!

Behind the Acronym: ELF

The English Language Forum is a recent grouping of people teaching and researching in English Language, usually but not always in university English Departments. Its formation is a response to the perception that the group of specialities identified with 'English Language' have tended to be overlooked or marginalised, especially by government funding bodies dealing with English as a subject. The aim of the Forum is to raise the profile of English Language in the eyes of bodies such as the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB), the English Subject Centre, and the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) committee, to ensure a fair representation of the interests and activities of all those involved in English Language. At the moment, ELF is working with the Council for College and University English (CCUE), the main professional body representing English, to make sure that Language has a clear voice within that organisation.

ELF is not convened as an official association. It has no membership, no organising committee or officials, preferring to work within bodies such as CCUE than to be in competition with them. It does, however, have an e-mail list, TRELLIS (Teaching and Research in English Language: Liaison, Information and Support). To join the list, send an e-mail to the address: jiscmail@jiscmail.ac.uk.

The text of your message should contain the words – JOIN TRELLIS – followed by your first and last names separated by a space (e.g. JOIN TRELLIS Noam Chomsky).

—*Susan Hunston*, Head of English Language Research, University of Birmingham

Seminars: Theory in Practice, London 27 April 2001

Dr. Aidan Arrowsmith, Staffordshire University, provides his perspective on the Subject Centre's study day on seminars which focused on literary theory.

With 'key skills' topping the higher education agenda, English is having to work increasingly hard to sell itself. The apparently more abstract aspects of contemporary literary studies – particularly 'theory' – might seem to be especially at odds with the drive towards transferable skills and vocationality. 'How,' the prospective undergraduate might ask, 'will theory help me to get a job and pay off my student debts?'

The dichotomy between theory and skills is a false one. The English benchmarking document provides a useful checklist of some of the subject's fundamental transferable skills, and theory involves perhaps the most concentrated practice of such skills as critical thinking, close reading, social/cultural/political analysis, argumentation, and the ability to comprehend and develop intricate concepts.

Whilst it is with good reason that most English departments now include theory at an overt level in their core programmes at level 1, it is also the case that there is often a need to communicate these good reasons more clearly to students. We need, in short, to teach theory better, to link it more closely to students' lives.

So, running for a moment with the assumption that theory can be 'taught', *how* should we teach theory better? Should we begin 'theory' at Level 1? Which theorists? Primary theory, or secondary introductions? (How) is theory best linked to the practice of analysing literary texts? Moreover, what learning and teaching strategies can be employed to overcome the undoubted difficulties which theory presents?

The Subject Centre's event in April 2001 offered a forum to exchange ideas on questions such as these. Siobhán Holland organised the event and chaired two lively and informative roundtable discussions involving representatives from institutions nation-wide (Bath Spa, Hertfordshire, London Guildhall, Portsmouth, Queens Belfast, and Sunderland).

With a variety of different experiences being brought to the table, the morning session of-

ferred a space to air a large range of issues: from the problems associated with 'team taught' theory modules to the pros and cons of deconstruction. The sheer difficulty which students (and tutors) find in reading theory was predictably high on the agenda. As several delegates were keen to point out, however, it is easy to forget the comparable difficulties which students encounter with such canonical writers as Shakespeare or Joyce. Too often, perhaps, anxiety about teaching theory drives a defensiveness and negativity about so doing.

This anxiety can also generate some valuable reflection on our teaching practice. The group was agreed about the importance of the seminar as a space in which students might 'practise' theory and gain confidence in their use of that specific vocabulary. In the well-structured and well-chaired seminar, students can actually begin to develop their own critical voice. And the afternoon discussions threw up a variety of useful strategies towards that well-structured and well-chaired seminar – from suggestions about how best to go about dealing with the difficulty of the material, to ideas about designing assessments, using group-work and I.T.

One of the key distinctions which emerged from this event centred around the difference between a 'Black & Decker' approach, in which theory is used simply as a tool to read literary texts; and a 'Cultural Theory' approach, in which theory becomes a way of reading the world and the texts which are part of that world. My own preference for the latter approach is cemented as I recall those various students whose lives have literally been changed through their engagement with, and practice of, theory – whether it be Frantz Fanon seeming to articulate the precise difficulties of living as a Kenyan-Sikh-Yorkshireman in Leeds, or Louis Althusser casting some light on a working class woman's experience of working in Stoke-on-Trent. This event has reinforced my belief that theory not only encourages a variety of key transferable skills, but can equip us to read the world, its cultures and our own lives in truly enabling ways.

Activities of the English Subject Centre

Dr Siobhán Holland, English Subject Centre, Royal Holloway, University of London

The English Subject Centre has run several series of events on topics of interest to the English subject community. To date, we have initiated discussions on seminars, assessment and creative writing, and reports from previous events are available through the Subject Centre website.

The reports to date are written on the chaired discussions at each event. Everyone who attends an event has the opportunity to present their own points of view, and to discuss the particular circumstances which are affecting their own, or their department's, choice of action on a topic such as oral assessment. In some universities, for example, there is pressure to include varied forms of assessment which include oral assessment; in others, there is a push towards the use of the traditional examination. Delegates at the event on 'Oral Assessment in a Discursive Discipline' were able to discuss the relative merits of oral assessment in the context of teaching English, before moving on to discuss their own experiences of it or their plans for using, or not using, it in the future. At the end of each event, delegates agree on a set of guidelines and observations which were then used to structure the reports published on our website.

We hope that the reports will prove useful to departments who are reviewing their practice and want to establish their position in relation to broader debates within the subject. Each department will argue about assessment after its own fashion, but it will nevertheless be helpful, we hope, for departments to be able to refer to arguments being conducted in other institutions.

Although the discussions we have organised

to date on the topics of oral assessment and seminars have a generic element to them, we have conducted the discussions in the context of our experience as practitioners in the English subject community. The second event on seminars, for example, focused on the power relations of seminars, and the balance of learning and teaching in seminars but did so through an explicit focus on the issues involved in classes which focused on literary theory. We intend to develop subject-, genre- and even text-specific events in the future, and we already have plans in place to run future events on Creative Writing and the role of English Language in Literature programmes.

Many lecturers in English departments identify their work as interdisciplinary, and while the framework of 24 Subject Centres has positioned English as a single discipline, we are in the process of planning collaborative events with other centres with cognate interests. The event on seminars and theory will run again in January 2002 in collaboration with the Language, Linguistics and Area Studies Subject Centre, and we hope to set up events in collaboration with the centres which have responsibility for history and for performing arts. If you have any suggestions on the form such events should take or the topics they might cover, please e-mail siobhan.holland@rhul.ac.uk.

Future events will be publicised through the website and through mailshots. Events for next semester range from 'Creative Writing and Professionalism' to be held at Sheffield Hallam University on 13 October 2001 to a one-day conference on plagiarism at the University of Liverpool. Part-time and post-graduate tutors are warmly invited to all events organised by the Centre.

Changes in the Subject Centre

The Centre has a number of reporting lines (CCUE, the host institutions, the LTSN programme) and is anxious to use such lines as a prime source of advice and guidance. Accordingly, we have restructured our committee arrangements to secure a stronger structure. The original Management Committee, re-titled the Advisory Committee, meets three times per annum and advises on strategies and policies. We have established a new Management Committee to provide support and advice on operational issues. This Committee meets six times per annum. The Director is also now invited to attend the CCUE Executive to report on activities and to receive advice.

Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays, and Prose

Dr Derek Alsop, Senior Lecturer, English Language and Literature, St. Mary's College

At a time when the Research Assessment Exercise has too often been interpreted as a showcase for learned monographs, preferably published by Oxford or Cambridge University Press, there is a greater need than ever for course textbooks, creatively conceived, imaginatively written, and pitched at the right level for a range of undergraduate abilities. Fortunately, there are still some outstanding academics who produce such materials. One is Mick Short, whose book *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays, and Prose*, I have been using for a course in 'Stylistics' since its publication in 1996.

This textbook is a model of its kind. Its lucid style introduces and explains the concepts without oversimplification or condescension. Its diagrams and tables are functional rather than cosmetic. It proceeds through its ideas by analysis, example, exercise, and rehearsal (with excellent 'checksheets' at the end of each chapter), offering a structured experience which sees learning as a *process*. But the process is flexible. The organisation of the material allows the tutor easily to intervene, to substitute new material, new examples and exercises, without disturbing the coherence of the approach.

One advantage of using good textbooks is that the tutor shares the experience of the students much more specifically than is normally true. Whatever I feel I already 'know' I have to take myself through the discipline of reading as the students read, shadowing the level of their response. The role involves an imaginative participation as the implied (student) reader. I imagine impasse and uncertainty: "I didn't really understand how schema-orientation can be used to indicate point of

view" or "what exactly is the difference between the perlocutionary force of a speech act and its illocutionary force"; or "why is a parenthetic sentence structure more complex than an anticipatory one"? (Fortunately, on most of the terminological detail, Short is immediately helpful, so one has often only to guide the student's return to the passage, or explanation, to answer such questions, should they arise.) But I am not, of course, *primarily* the implied reader. I am also my own reading self. This other role tends rather to complicate than to elucidate. I find myself objecting and resisting, asking, if you like, my own questions: "isn't the concept of foregrounding as something *in the text* rather than *in the reader's response* flawed"; "doesn't the concept of authorial choice return the reader to the level of Frye's 'Little Jack Horner' pulling out the plums?"; "isn't it really intentions that make people do things rather than speech acts?".

It may seem axiomatic (those of us who have completed ILT applications will certainly have held it so) that in the classroom the priority has to be given to the students' reading, learning and thinking experience, but, in practice, it's always difficult not to impose the importance of one's own questions. Of course these questions might genuinely be important to students as well, so there has to be a sense of engagement with the textbook, rather than a simple acceptance of its premises. But the good teacher, to *some* extent, will also have to resist the urgency of her or his own concerns, and attend to the concerns of those students who simply want to understand exactly what the textbook means at any given point. Good textbooks offer the perfect opportunity to consider some of the main issues that perplex the relationship between learning and teaching.

Literary Resources at Humbul

Lexis Complexes: http://www.english.uga.edu/~nhilton/lexis_complexes/title.html

This online reproduction of *Lexis Complexes: Literary Interventions*, a work of literary criticism by Nelson Hilton, combines psychoanalytic and post-structuralist approaches to literature. Hilton examines how clusters of words based on homonymic series of words such as 'mystery', 'mist' and 'missed' can reveal links between a text and the persistent concerns of the authors as expressed in other works. Hilton's claims may at times seem tenuous, but his book provides interesting insights into recurrent homonyms in the works of a range of writers.

In Search of Literary Theory

Dr Tom Furniss, Senior Lecturer, Department of English Studies, University of Strathclyde

I have been teaching a Theories of Literature class in the Department of English Studies at the University of Strathclyde for more than ten years now, and for the bulk of that period I have used David Lodge's two anthologies – *20th Century Literary Criticism* (Longman, 1972) and *Modern Criticism and Theory* (Longman, 1988). In combination, and with no serious rivals at first, these two collections of essays covered most of the important critical and theoretical essays of the twentieth century. The great strength of both books was the organisation and editorial apparatus, which allowed teachers and students to see how theory is organised into different 'schools' that interact with one another. The first collection enabled students to realise that critical and theoretical reflection on literature was not solely a recent phenomenon. Indeed, the inclusion of Abrams' 'Orientation of Critical Theories' demonstrated that literary theory had a history going back to Plato and gave students a framework with which to think about the orientations of more recent theory. Despite its provenance in 1972, there are still essays in *20th Century Literary Criticism* that I would like my students to have encountered: essays on 'New Criticism' by Eliot, Richards, Brooks, Wimsatt and Beardsley, Ransom, Wellek, and Schorer; Trilling's wonderful essay on Freud; Sartre's reader response theory; and the Marxist 'debate' on realism and modernism between Lukács and Williams. All this made the collection a useful companion to *Modern Criticism and Theory*, whose selections of essays on structuralism, post structuralism and reader-response theory enabled me to put together a reasonable course on literary theory. Yet it has to be said that the newer collection was not adequate without its older companion. There were several weaknesses. While it was good to have the essay from Shklovsky, Russian Formalism was too important to be represented by just one essay. The essays chosen for the other sections were idiosyncratic and often pitched too high for undergraduates. It was always difficult to select essays from the sections on 'Deconstruction', 'Psychoanalysis', or 'Politics, Ideology, Cultural History' that served to introduce or represent these theoretical orientations, while the section on 'Feminism' was wholly inadequate. Just as seriously, the combined cost of the

two collections was becoming prohibitive for undergraduates whose financial situation was worsening year by year.

Longman's decision to publish a second edition of *Modern Criticism and Theory* gave them the chance to sort out some of these problems. Ideally, the best essays from Lodge's two collections could have been combined into one anthology, with the weak sections strengthened by more appropriate and representative essays and with the whole collection brought up-to-date with essays representing developments over the last ten years or so. As it is, although the new edition, updated by Nigel Wood (Longman, 2000), does strengthen some of the weaker sections of the first edition, it is largely a disappointment. Those of us who wish students to realise that literary theory has a history prior to structuralism would still need to ask students to buy both anthologies (at a combined cost of £42.00 this is asking too much). In terms of content, the new edition of *Modern Criticism and Theory* does not solve all the problems of the first. Indeed, in some respects it has made matters worse. I cannot understand the decision to replace Shklovsky's 'Art as Technique' with Benjamin's 'The Storyteller' and hence to excise Russian Formalism from the story of modern literary theory. The removal of Genette's 'Structuralism and Literary Criticism' seriously weakens the structuralist section. The loss of essays by Belsey and McCabe from the 'Politics, Ideology, Cultural History' section is less regrettable, especially since the new material – essays by Baudrillard, Irigaray, Schweickart, Sedgwick, Spivak, Greenblatt, and McGann – strengthens the 'Politics, Ideology, Cultural History' and 'Feminism' sections. Furthermore, Schweickart's feminist take on reader-response theory adds a nice twist to the 'Reader-response' section.

And yet, after having used the new edition of *Modern Criticism and Theory* last year, I'm casting around for a new anthology. The question of cost is a decisive factor here, but so too is the fact that the new edition only offers thirty-two essays and extracts and still leaves gaps in the story and history of literary theory. I want my students to encounter Russian Formalism and New Criticism as well as

the theoretical schools represented in *Modern Criticism and Theory*. I also want them to be able to make better sense of deconstructive, psychoanalytic and politically orientated literary theory than is made possible by the selections offered here. I'd like my students to be able to read some Freud and Marx, for a start, along with some essays that serve to introduce Freudian and Marxist literary theory in a way appropriate to undergraduates in English departments. Part of the problem with *Modern Criticism and Theory* is that it is not clear who its readers are. Some sections and extracts are appropriate for undergraduates new to literary theory, while others are at a more advanced level (Wood admits that the additions to the new edition are 'texts that I have enjoyed discussing with postgraduates' [p.xv]). A further problem, for me, is that some of the new material represents a shift away from literary theory towards what is often called 'theory' but might be labelled 'cultural theory'. Even though Spivak's 'Feminism and Critical Theory' does discuss literature, she admits that she is 'less patient with literary texts today' and is clearly more animated by the crimes of international capital in the third world (p.489). I have no objection to this in itself, or to 'theory' in the more general sense. But I am looking for an anthology of literary theory that will stimulate my undergraduate students to think in theoretically informed ways about literature. That is the institutional role of the class I teach, and that is what I want to achieve.

But finding a new, value-for-money, anthology that meets the aims and objectives of my course is not so easy. The most impressive anthology on the market at the moment is Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, eds, *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (Blackwell, 1998). Yet closer examination reveals that this is not really an anthology of literary theory at all. True, it begins with an impressive section on what it calls 'Formalisms' that includes good material from Russian Formalism and New Criticism. Yet from then on literary theory is hardly to be found. There is no section on reader-response theory. The section on structuralism is woefully inadequate – no Barthes, no Genette, indeed, no structuralist literary theory at all. Revealingly, while the section on 'Historicisms' is entirely devoted to literary theory, it is also the shortest section in the anthology. The psychoanalysis section is generous and begins usefully with selections from Freud, but consists entirely of psychoanalytic

theory rather than psychoanalytic literary theory. The Marxism section contains extracts from Marx and ends with an item about worker abuses in Nike's factories in Vietnam, but there is hardly any Marxist literary theory here. Similarly, the post-structuralist section begins with Nietzsche but never gets round to offering any deconstructive literary theory or criticism. Out of thirteen selections in the Feminist section, only three deal with literature. The eleven selections in the Gender and Queer Studies section include just two essays on literature. The percentage is better in the Ethnic and Post-coloniality section, but the anthology ends indicatively with a Cultural Studies section that culminates with an analysis of Madonna. *Literary Theory: An Anthology* consists of a generous selection of essays and extracts that often goes back to the founding figures of various 'schools' and adds up to over a thousand pages. It is also generously priced at £16.99. It thus wins out over the second edition of *Modern Criticism and Theory* in several respects. But it is not an anthology of literary theory. I'd be hard-pressed to construct a coherent course on theories of literature out of it.

I am thus left looking forward to seeing the forthcoming *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, a hugely generous anthology that spans the history of literary theory from Plato to the present and sets literary theory alongside the founding documents of what we might call general theory (Nietzsche, Freud, Marx, etc) and alongside the various cultural and political theories that so dominate Rivkin and Ryan's anthology. With this anthology I could easily construct a Theories of Literature course to suit my aims and objectives, but also know that my students could use it to follow up a wide range of other theoretical and intellectual concerns. Alongside this anthology, we will soon have the *Oxford Anthology of Literary Theory* – an equally ambitious anthology that will begin the stories of literary theory (and theory) in the aesthetic writings of Burke and Hume. Perhaps the search for an ideal anthology of literary theory will soon be over. But this will be so only if the publishers are able to price these forthcoming collections at a cost that will be affordable to today's students.