

Introduction: Current and Future Options: University Language and Literary Studies in South Africa

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At this moment in history, characterised by violence, hope and uncertainty, it seems necessary to begin by commenting on the apparent audacity of what is being offered here: a handful of academics who, with the exception of one, are employed in the traditional English-speaking universities (UCT, Wits, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Rhodes), pronouncing upon the future of language and literary studies in South Africa, and even, in some cases, making certain proposals concerning the future of South Africa.

This special issue was advertised only in the *JLS*, but even given this relatively small readership, there were surprisingly few responses. Many academics, in casual discussion, express strong views on the direction their discipline should take, but perhaps there is a reluctance to assume the kind of authority which making future projections in *writing* implies. Perhaps, too, this issue came too soon after Laurence Wright's *Teaching English Literature in South Africa; Twenty Essays*, although all those papers were written prior to February 1990. The only papers solicited for this issue were those from people whom I knew were already working in the field, or writing on related issues. In a sense then, what emerged was what emerged, and there was no attempt to orchestrate a debate amongst "key figures" from the realms of literature, politics and culture.

The most vital debates about cultural practice and production in South Africa are not, at present, taking place in academic journals, as is evident, for example, if one considers the range of forums in which the debate around the Albie Sachs "Preparing Ourselves for Freedom" paper has been conducted. However this does not negate the role of this particular forum, which is where we theorise our *own* cultural production and practice. Many academics in the field of literary studies appear to be existing in a state of limbo, unable to make the shift from the adversarial stance forced on them by apartheid to the proactive position required in the present, for fear that future directives from the new holders of power will render these futile. The fears of those who had hoped to continue as before, simply without the repressions of apartheid, will probably be fueled by comments such as the following, from Mongane Wally Serote, Head of the ANC's Department of Arts and Culture:¹

My impression is that when I look at the liberal universities, like the University of the Witwatersrand, Natal University, UCT, and all of those, and even Afrikaans universities – Stellenbosch, RAU – I see educationists who are extremely narrow in their vision, who are wearing blinkers and are completely unaware of what is happening, whose horizon really ends in the little researches that they are doing about themselves. One hopes that we will not be put in a position where we will have to force these people to remind them that universities

are for the public and that to a certain extent they are funded by the public, and secondly that universities do have a responsibility to contribute towards peace and stability. No education takes place where there is oppression, where people are struggling for their freedom. I said I am not an educationist, but my common sense tells me that the sooner the liberal universities realize that they have a very definite and positive role to play and accordingly formulate policy, that will be better for all of us. If this is not done I am certain that we will be put into a position where we will have to force them to do so.

While on the one hand this appears to hold a threat of power to be wielded over the “liberal” universities, on the other hand it grants them the power of a positive role to play in formulating policy which will make them more accessible to “the public” and which will contribute towards “peace and stability.” All of the papers in this issue are arguing for a pedagogy which will further one or both of these ends (although there is evidence of contradictions in some respects), and there is a remarkable degree of overlap in the theories and strategies they are proposing.

The topic of the future of literary studies in South Africa implies several questions: the question of the future of literary studies in both a general sense and a specifically South African sense, the question of what this should be in a *future* South Africa, and the question of *what* the future *South Africa* will be, and the role literary studies might play in promoting it. Jonathan Culler’s point that “discussions of the future seek to connect criticism directly to social and political goals, since we need something outside criticism to justify our choice of a future” (1988: 69) is certainly more pertinent in the current South African context than it is in the American institutions which he describes, and several of the contributors to this issue are, indeed, as concerned with constructing a future South Africa as they are with positing a future for literary studies in this context. The difficulty of making future projections is, of course, compounded in a changed and changing context such as this. Wade is the only contributor who explicitly theorises the nature of the change and its implications for literary studies, arguing that “we need to re-think our cultural strategies and priorities as South Africa moves from a ‘coercive’ to a ‘hegemonic’ formation” – although implicit in some of the papers is a sense that a coercive formation might again have to be resisted in the future. Wade makes the largest claims for literary studies, suggesting that “if a vital task is the building of a non-racial, democratic, national and non-sexist *culture*, then Departments of English are ideally placed to play a central role in this process of *cultural transformation*.”

It is significant that Departments of *English* are given this role, and that, with the exception of Jenny Clarence, only members of English departments have contributed to this special issue.² “English” would appear to be more deeply imbricated in the issues raised here for reasons to be located in the past, the present, and the future. What Shum refers to as “its complicit roots in the colonial past” is an aspect of English Studies that was raised by the “Butlerism” debate during the 1970s,³ and one which still lingers in such places as the English Academy’s submission to Codesa, which proposes that “the official standard of English in this country should be standard British

English.”⁴ Bergonzi’s definition of “English” as “a mystical fusion of nation, language, and literature” (1990: 32) is still operative here, and perhaps explains the reluctance to give up on the nomenclature of *English* departments, and “English I, II, and III”, even when what is being offered in those departments and courses might be English Literature or Cultural Studies. This is a reluctance to have power over a broad area of study circumscribed, an instance of the institutional power that is discussed by several contributors. In this respect it is significant that the course described by Clarence has been called “Learning, Language and Logic,” and not “Applied English Studies” or “English as a Second Language,” as is the case with most courses of this nature, in what might be read as a gesture of distancing from a recent form of cultural imperialism.

It can be argued that a rejection of cultural imperialism has been responsible for many of the recent changes in English Studies in metropolitan universities: along with the refusal of English as an international and imperial language,⁵ went a rejection of the idea of literature as secular scripture, because of “the loss of faith in the universality of human nature and a corresponding faith in the universal wisdom of the authors of literary texts” (Scholes 1985: 13). While playing a part in initiating changes in Literary Studies in the metropolitan centres, literary studies at the margins are, of course, also affected by changes taking place internationally. Shum points to the mass media and the displacement of the printed word itself by audiovisual media, and also to the growth of literary theory as two crucial factors.

While a specifically South African version of a future Literary Studies is sought, the conditions of postmodernity make a uniquely authentic position impossible. Again Shum makes the point that “it ought to be realised that our context is increasingly a globalised one, and that the charge of ‘Eurocentrism’ often conceals a doctrinaire refusal to recognise our inescapable affiliation with the ‘first’ world. How we manage this affiliation is surely what is at stake, rather than whether it ought to exist or not.” Ian Glenn, too, refers to the fallacy of “the notion that South African culture has some kind of pristine local authenticity rather than being permeated by international capital and global pressures,” but seems to contradict himself by later arguing against the teaching of theory because it is an “imported commodity in a colonial situation” which should therefore “be regarded with the same scepticism reserved for other cultural imports and discourses.”

Moving on from a consideration of past factors in the role of English, to a consideration of its role in the present, it is obvious that current political changes in the country translate into immediate pragmatic concerns within English departments in the form of increasing numbers of students whose mother tongue is not English, whose schooling has left them unprepared for university study, and whose most urgent academic need is perhaps to learn to read and write English effectively. Shum cautions that “it is foolish to imagine that these students can be perpetually quarantined in ‘Academic Support’ until such time as they emerge with a cultural capital commensurate with that of their white counterparts.” The history of English studies is punctuated by attempts to cope with influxes of students with apparently less and less

“cultural capital”, starting with the shift from the study of classical Greek and Latin literature to the study of literary works in the vernacular. Later, the development of practical criticism as a pedagogical technique “to some extent ‘democratised’ the university by moving English literature out of the preserve of philological and historical scholarship and making it fully available to unprepared students” (Doherty 1990: 11), and the New Criticism, “by making literary study an encounter between a student and a text... offered an approach particularly suitable to the post-war university, which took in students from increasingly diverse social and educational backgrounds, who had little knowledge in common” (Culler 1988: 14).

The contemporary form taken by this democratisation process in English departments is Cultural Studies, which does, of course, involve a shift from the focus on “English” (as culture and literature), and also from the focus on literary texts. From a pedagogical perspective, it moves away from the “encounter between a student and a text” – which was always a myth, since even practical criticism requires a certain competence and cultural knowledge – and allows students to “learn the appropriate codes rather than being expected to know them already” (Bergonzi 1990: 193). Cultural Studies involves a non-deficit approach to cultural capital, since students are not seen as being devoid of a culture, but as being in possession of a culture which can be explored and extended. Furthermore, the devolving of power is evident in such strategies as “proceeding from the known to the unknown” and starting with “the students’ everyday knowledge of their social and linguistic environment” (Shum).

The Cultural Studies model is endorsed by five of the seven contributors to this special issue, either as a theoretically motivated proposition (Higgins, Ryan, Wade), or in the form of descriptions of courses already in place (Clarence, Shum). The emphasis varies, and in some cases is even contradictory: for Wade it is an approach which would allow for the reconstructed humanism he sees as essential to the project of English studies, while for Ryan cultural studies has “the tendency not to perpetuate humanism, but to uncover its vested interests”; according to Shum “such courses . . . are not embarked upon with the intent of abolishing the ‘privileging’ of literature or downgrading it to just another province in the Empire of Signs”, while Ryan suggests that “perhaps the only way of breaking the cycle of a series of ideologies of ‘literariness’ is to re-invent the notion of literary studies as a cultural study.” As with any cultural practice, the application and the effects will be local and specific; it is not linked to any particular ideology, but neither is it able to extricate itself from ideology – as Ryan reminds us, “it is not possible to move into an ideology-free, culturally neutral examination of cultural objects – one’s method is of cultural (and therefore ideological) origin.”

The bias towards Cultural Studies amongst these writers is not representative of attitudes in English departments generally. Many teachers of literature are threatened by this approach, assuming that it will encroach upon and swallow up the field of literature which they have identified as their domain. Shum addresses this objection by citing Culler, who argues that this approach

enlarges the domain, as, “instead of reducing literature to a manifestation of something non-literary,” discovers “an essential ‘literariness’ in non-literary phenomena.” And Higgins, in his argument for the *practice* of critical literacy as opposed to literary studies as *content*, proposes that the domain be defined *not* in terms of a content (the canon), but in terms of its techniques, as a discipline training students in particular skills in reading and analysis, and therefore one whose application is potentially unlimited.

The equivalent of critical literacy in the field of language studies is critical linguistics, as is evident from Clarence’s description of this approach as “primarily engaged in the formulation of a principled account of the relationship between language, power and ideology and the way in which texts, through the selection of specific linguistic structures and lexical items, encode these relationships and reflect the interests of particular groups of people, most especially the dominant and powerful.” The similarity in the approaches described and demonstrated by Higgins and Clarence is such that they could be seen to represent aspects of the same discipline, with the emphasis falling on different but not mutually exclusive areas of discourse. And the congruence between descriptions of the role of cultural studies and that of critical linguistics (see Clarence citing Janks, Fowler, Fairclough and Wodak) indicates that critical linguistics does locate itself in the realm of Cultural Studies.⁶

These approaches, then, provide a bridge between “language” and “literary” studies, allowing for a continuum of reading strategies which have common theoretical origins: Clarence points to the value of post-structuralist insights, and French, in a paper given at an HSRC symposium, “Putting the Case for the Humanities,” has named Derrida, Rorty, Giddens and Habermas as helpful influences in research and writing on the question of literacy (1992: 33). On the part of language studies, this rapprochement represents a move away from a failed functionalist approach to language teaching, and away from the models of empirical science: French refers to the lack of “the useful and the beautiful insights which might have been provided by a speculative concern and an ethnographer’s or a novelist’s interest in local struggles, opportunities, constraints and living contexts” (1992: 32). On the part of literary studies, it represents a move away from the atemporal and quasi-mystical discourse of a lingering Leavisite literary criticism to the more precise terms of linguistics, and to the historicised and self-reflexive discourse of the social sciences.

While English departments have recognised the need for language studies – reflected here in the arguments by both Glenn and Ryan – they are, for the most part, being introduced in an ad hoc way, and, as Ryan indicates, are very often taught by staff whose own training has been in “pure” literary studies. Giving an overview of what was being taught in English departments a couple of years ago, Michael Chapman pointed out that “there is no clear understanding of what we mean by the study of language, and courses range from mechanical drills to the study of history of the English language” (1990: 20). My own research into first year English courses supports this observation: much language work becomes either a further “content” to be studied (e.g.

variations in South African English), or an attempt to teach correct grammar. While in many cases language studies are handled by other departments (Linguistics or Applied English or English Second Language), it seems a pity that there is little attempt at a liaison between these and English departments, and that work in the former is done only on what we designate as “non-literary” texts, while in the latter the focus is on texts designated as “literary.” Students are thus not led to recognise the connectedness of reading strategies applied to the entire range of discourses. Critical linguistics and critical literacy do allow for this necessary sense of continuity.

A further instance of the “democratising” impetus that informs the Cultural Studies model is its self-reflexive approach, which draws attention to the way in which “language encodes power relationships” (Clarence), and scrutinises the forms of power vested in the university as institution. Several contributors to this issue refer to the question of institutional power, and the focus of Ryan’s paper is the relation between institutional power and what he refers to as “literary knowledge production” in South Africa. The relation between particular approaches to literature and power is, however, a complex one, and it is not possible to simply extricate oneself from its workings by adopting the “correct” theoretical approach, or even by studying the processes of knowledge production rather than producing more readings of *Hamlet*, as Ryan, tongue-in-cheek, advocates.

Ryan’s use of the religious metaphor in examining the institution of literary criticism, and particularly his reference to the function of the high priests in the literary establishment, risks articulating a version of the “repressive hypothesis,” rejected by Foucault as a false analysis of power as exercised from above. Culler refers to the way in which “the strange use of Foucault for a politically engaged criticism seems to avoid the problem that his work ought to make us face: about the roles and effects of discourses, such as literature and criticism, which belong to the network of power they seek to oppose or resist” (1988: 67). In Foucault’s analysis, power comes from everywhere, and if university courses in critical linguistics and critical literacy are to be truly self-reflexive, they should ask questions about the effect of institutionalising the critical function, and about the possible taming and neutralising of *real* resistance to various forms of dominance by *teaching* students certain strategies of resistance. In Foucault’s formulation, resistance is local and specific, but also unpredictable, and therefore “necessarily ad hoc” (Culler 1988: 66). Clearly, this kind of theorising can function as a cautionary reminder, not as the informing principle of course construction.

As Head of the English Department at Vista University, Ryan is himself one of the “high priests” of the discipline, although he has chosen not to write from that position. Glenn *does* refer to his own position, writing, as he says, in schizophrenic mode, “at once as analyst of symbolic capital and educational reproduction influenced by Pierre Bourdieu, and as the current Head of the English Department at the University of Cape Town and, necessarily, an institutional player.” Glenn maintains that the problems facing literary studies in South Africa now are “not remediable by any adoption of faith, political belief, theoretical position, or teaching method” – a claim which

could be construed as letting himself off the hook as an institutional policy maker. His focus is essentially pragmatic, but the five issues he chooses to discuss clearly do involve making decisions of a political and theoretical nature, and which do have a strong bearing on teaching methods. Teaching methods which are informed by theory and by an awareness of the workings of power might not offer *ultimate* remedies to the problems of literary studies in South Africa, but we clearly do have to continue in the belief that the strategies we adopt will make a difference.

There also seems to be some contradiction between Glenn's recommendations in favour of closer links with school teachers and greater responsibility with respect to teacher training, and in favour of "survey and general reading courses" on the one hand, and his argument for specialisation on the other hand. This echoes a contradiction in the history of English studies generally, which, as I have suggested, has been characterised by a series of attempts to democratise its pedagogy, but, on the other hand, has been characterised by increasing specialisation and professionalism.⁷ This has resulted in that other form of academic schizophrenia (cf. Glenn's description of his own situation): the division between research and pedagogical activities.⁸

In Gerald Graff's analysis, it is not professionalism itself, but the specific form it has taken in the institution that is to blame for the failure to theorise pedagogical practices in English departments. He argues that the field-coverage principle "created a system in which the job of instruction could proceed as if on automatic pilot, without the need for instructors to debate aims and methods" (1987: 7), and that "the presence of fully staffed fields made it unnecessary for anybody to have a theoretical idea of the department's goals in order for it to get on with its work" (1987: 8). Supported at the level of ideology by what Graff calls the "humanist myth" – the assumption that literature is an expression of humanism – the field coverage principle has been responsible for the attitude that "*literature teaches itself*" (1987: 9). It is clear that, while literary studies has been characterised by a growth in specialisation and a concomitant growth in professionalism, it has *not* been accompanied by an increasingly professional attitude towards its own teaching practices. David Punter begins his paper on University English Teaching with the following comment:

My no doubt contentious claim for this article is that it represents research into the teaching of English in universities. A stress on this claim is necessary because such research, in the sense of work that asserts a basis in empirical evidence, is very rare. . . . (4) There is, of course, plenty of research into education, and even into tertiary education; but it rarely permeates academic disciplines. There is a certain amount of research into the nature of universities as organizational systems, but it is widely disparaged by the members of those institutions. And there is a concept of "research" within English, although it is now being increasingly disclosed as a fiction, built around an obsolete system of higher degrees, tending to reinforce the individualist and amateur ideology that is the site of most pedagogic activity in English, and now being in any case rendered irrelevant by economic constraints.

(Punter 1986: 215)

The papers in this issue do demonstrate a strong emphasis on pedagogy, and to a greater or lesser extent, the writers are concerned to theorise their practice as teachers and/or critics of English literature and language. This is a frequently-overlooked aspect of theory, which is most often seen as a “content” – narratology, structuralism, poststructuralism, etc. – to be grasped and then applied to a range of texts (and which is the view taken by Glenn in his argument against the introduction of theory into undergraduate courses). Culler is again useful in providing a working definition of theory when he points out that

theory should be understood not as a prescription of methods of interpretation but as the discourse that results when conceptions of the nature and meaning of texts and their relations to other discourses, social practices and human subjects become objects of general reflection.

(Culler 1988: 22)

Apart from the fact that current conditions in South African universities make a carefully theorised pedagogy essential, the theorising of teaching practice can go at least part of the way in creating a bridge between the goals of professionalism and pedagogy. Unless we continue to theorise our own pedagogical practice and our own institutional role in this way, our endeavours run the risk of stagnation and failure, no matter how sound their originating principles. It is interesting to note that the last cohesively orchestrated attempt to change the nature of English studies in South Africa has had its failure to make a significant impact located in the absence of these two factors. Tracing the history of what he refers to as the “radical critique”, Christo Doherty says that “the radical polemics of the 70s, although they stressed the importance of socially committed academic endeavour, could not offer an alternative pedagogy of equal effectiveness” (1990: 63). And Wade, tracing the points of intervention of Marxist critics in South African English Studies, argues that

we can see the Left struggle against the Academy as incomplete: while it won a space for itself where alternative texts and critical theories could be read, it stopped short of producing a radical critique of the Academy itself, particularly regarding its extreme isolation from broader sociocultural struggles to which it had no structured relationship, in contrast, for example, to the eighteenth-century “cultural” critic in England.

Wade’s own proposed intervention is strongly cultural in its orientation, and seeks to end this isolation of the academy by involving universities in the production of “‘organic intellectuals’ (a wide-ranging term including journalists, teachers and cultural workers)” who would enter “the SABC, newspapers, provincial Arts Councils, publishing houses, educational bodies, film companies, and so on. . . in order to transform them from within.”

At this point I would like to return briefly to Ryan’s critique of English departments as producers of knowledge. While there is no space here to conduct a debate as to whether English departments are producers of knowledge or transmitters of culture, it needs to be pointed out that there is

a difference between the two functions which the term “cultural knowledge” (used by Ryan) elides. Culler claims that universities as a whole “are structured by the conflict between the model of the production of knowledge and the model of the reproduction of culture” (1988: 36). However, *political* criticism sees its role as a transformer and producer, rather than just a *reproducer of culture*. Bergonzi agrees with E.D. Hirsch’s contention that English is a cultural, not a progressive, intellectual subject, but points out that, with the growth of professionalism, “a scientific, model of knowledge has . . . come to dominate the modern academy, and to affect attitudes to and within humanistic learning. Such knowledge is progressive, rendering earlier versions of itself obsolete” (1990: 166).

If, however, English Studies is *fundamentally* cultural, this gives its practitioners the freedom to return to prior theoretical positions which are not obsolete in the way that earlier scientific theories are. In expressing the reasons for the central role of English studies in the *future*, Wade rescues English from its role in promoting a particular, universalising cultural nationalism, for a role as discourse of de-colonization and *new nation building*: “if the English language is to become the *lingua franca* of a post-apartheid South Africa, a ‘second-order’ national discourse in a context of linguistic and cultural pluralism, then English teachers have an added responsibility to use this privileged space for this purpose.”

There is, of course, a sense in which the Cultural Studies model, too, has been recuperated from an earlier form, and harnessed in the service of popular rather than elitist ends. Higgins, Glenn and Wade all draw attention to the features which, somewhat ironically, it has in common with the *Scrutiny* project, described by Higgins as the desire to promote the ability “to read, and potentially take a critical distance from, the discursive pressures of advertising, sociological jargon – a tendency articulated in the present as the awareness of and distancing from the constitutive or ‘interpellating’ force of race, class, and gender.” It is quite apparent why such an approach could be useful in building, in Wade’s terms, “a non-racial, democratic, national and non-sexist culture.” Cultural Studies has already been described as a means of democratising pedagogy, but here it is being enlisted as a means of promoting democracy in the country. It apparently qualifies for this role on the basis of its ability, on the one hand, to discourage cultural chauvinism, by encouraging students to turn a self-reflexive, critical gaze on their own culture, while, on the other hand, it can allow for a kind of vicarious experiencing, and therefore acceptance, of *other* cultures.

It can be argued that this is what the humanities in general are able to do – as Culler says, “at their best, these subjects make otherness palpable and make it comprehensible without reducing it to an inferior version of the same, as a universalising humanism threatens to do. The dramatization of graspable plurality is one of its major duties” (1988: 48). It is this aspect of English studies that both Wade and Foley seek to revivify in returning to humanism and liberalism and recuperating them for a critical practice in a changed and changing South Africa. Wade rejects the notion of ideologies having a particular class belonging, and wants to move beyond the Marxist “(correct)

'negative' critique of humanism's present class location (which articulates humanism in a specific way) in order to rearticulate this vital discourse. . . as one only achievable through radical social transformation."

Foley offers what he describes as a liberal critique of Marxism and poststructuralism (although he chooses to construct their positions in very narrow terms), claiming that these three approaches are mutually incompatible, "so that the possibilities for reconciliation, synthesis or even eclectic amalgamation are limited." Wade, however, *does* produce such an eclectic amalgamation, deconstructing the aesthetics/politics opposition to demonstrate how "both Liberal humanist and Marxist critics have simplified the issues involved." Foley's argument in favour of a renewed and theorised liberalism translates into practice only in terms of a very broad claim for "free literary activity." Wade, similarly, does not attempt any very specific proposals in the realm of teaching and criticism, other than to advocate the Cultural Studies model, and to propose constructive re-readings of certain moments in South African culture: post-1976 resistance art, the Drum generation of the 1950s, and even "our own Romantic aesthetic tradition from Pringle to Gordimer."

What is unique in Wade's paper is the emphasis on cultural *construction*, through the re-articulation of various cultural practices into what he refers to as a "national-democratic unity/diversity model." This model will replace the universalising tendency of a colonialist liberal humanism, and, reading between the lines of Wade's paper, it will also pre-empt future attempts to deny cultural difference in the name of a monolithic national culture – what Foley refers to explicitly as a "disquietingly totalitarian conception of culture." In English departments this work of construction is to be achieved, at least in part, through the mobilizing of a politicised version of the aesthetic as this is articulated by Schiller (via Eagleton). While not overlooking the importance of cultural critique, Wade's argument offers an important corrective to an exclusive preoccupation with negative criticism, and, through his deconstruction of the aesthetics/politics division, validates what "literary" qualities in writing have to offer, without endorsing a return to notions of "transcendent literariness". If Higgins offers a reminder that theory has allowed us to see "Literature itself as just as dangerous, just as coercive, just as formative as the mass media themselves," we should not forget what Shum refers to as "the complex and liberatory pleasures that literature releases in the intelligent reader, as well as its ability to renew, in a manner at once sensuous and empirical, our perception of the past."

The challenge at this time is going to be to perform the work of deconstruction and construction, of critique and validation, without lapsing into the old positions of moral and intellectual authority, or assuming the new (veiled) authority of a cultural criticism, which imagines that it can offer its critiques from a position outside culture and ideology. The challenge will be to *accept* the authority which, willy-nilly, the institution confers on us, without attempting to *protect* it by masking its constructedness. That qualified

authority will have to be used to create courses which are concrete and coherent enough to show students how the study of *signifying* practices, literary or non-literary, is a meaningful cultural practice. At the same time these courses should not deny the power of the imagination – not that old God-given, transcendent faculty, but the ability “to discover and travel among other selves, other identities, other varieties of the human adventure” (Said 1991: 80). And finally, the kind of self-reflexive practice that is being advocated here will make departments of language and literature constantly conscious of the need to be accountable to their communities, and will allow them to represent their activities and articulate their role in a way that is both convincing and comprehensible to these communities.⁹ If we cannot achieve unity and coherence without totalisation, and diversity without incoherent fragmentation, in our own discipline, departments and courses, then we cannot hope to promote these things in the world outside the academy.

Notes

1. Mongane Wally Serote interviewed by Jean-Philippe Wade. Forthcoming in *English in Africa* 20(1), May 1993. My thanks are due to the editors of *English in Africa*, who have allowed me to quote from the interview before its publication in that journal.
2. Clarence’s paper was given at an Applied Linguistics conference, and I am grateful to her for agreeing to publish it in this issue of *JLS* rather than in the *Journal of Applied Linguistics*.
3. See Doherty’s summary of this debate (1990: 54–55).
4. I am grateful to Professor Lydia McDermott for bringing to my attention the Submission to CODESA by the English Academy of South Africa (February 1992).
5. Bergonzi cites Matthew Arnold’s claim that all literature in English was part of a larger English Literature, and Colin MacCabe’s “English Literature is dead – long live writing in English,” and comments that “if Arnold’s model is imperialism, MacCabe’s is decolonization” (1990: 73–74).
6. E. French, too, adumbrates this affinity in referring to the empowerment gained by adult literacy workers “from a grounding in the humanities, and specifically from the fresh and critical field of contemporary cultural studies” (1992: 31).
7. Both Graff (1987) and Bergonzi (1990) outline the growth of professionalism in English departments in the United States and Britain respectively, and both see it as having had some unfortunate effects.
8. The research versus criticism debate in English departments of course has a long history, which cannot be explored here. For the sake of simplicity, I have referred to the writing produced by academics in English departments as research.
9. I re-emphasise this point (introduced in my comment on Serote’s statement), at the suggestion of my colleague, Christo Doherty, who brought to my attention the position taken by a community representative at a public debate held on the Rhodes University campus on 2 February 1993: Doherty reports that “she reminded her audience that the communities outside the universities need to be told, in terms that they can understand, what significance issues such as intellectual freedom, pedagogical practice, and academic standards have to their lives.”

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