

'Lovely Literature': Teacher Subjectivity and Curriculum Change

Catherine Beavis

Deakin University

Teachers, subjects and curriculum change

In the growing body of literature dealing with curriculum change, the central concern is generally with change across institutions, with its implications for 'stakeholders' - principals, teachers, parents, students, consultants and so on, and with the factors contributing to the success or failure of school or system-wide reforms. Within such studies, limited attention is paid to the implications of such reforms for teachers' perceptions of the subject and of themselves, and to how these things in turn contribute to the shape and nature of curriculum change. Even less attention is paid to emotion, satisfaction and pleasure. Thus, studies such as Fullan & Stiegelbauer's (1991), while acknowledging the central importance of teachers' 'beliefs' and of 'the subjective meaning' of educational change, reveal a too global and institutional concern with the implementation and management of change, and in this fail to take account of the role and effect of teachers' subjectivities or emotions in any detailed way.

Curriculum change is not a simple matter of the translation of policy documents into classroom practice. Rather, it is lived out at particular sites, implemented and enacted by teachers acting

individually or collectively, within a network of pedagogical, institutional, personal and practical considerations and constraints. Curriculum change entails more than a reformation of the subject and its constituent elements. Teachers too are required to change, in the ways they conceive of the subject, how they position themselves and are positioned in relation to it. For curriculum change to be successful, new formations of the subject, its pedagogies and principles, are only the first step. Change must also be effected in the ways teachers see their subject and in the positions they take up in relation to it themselves. Not just the formation of curriculum subjects but also constructions of the subject and of teacher subjectivity are involved.

As studies in curriculum history show (Goodson 1988, 1994, Goodson and Ball 1984, Kliebard 1986; Seddon 1989 et al.), school subjects have always been contested. Historical perspectives offered by Mathieson (1975), Ball, Kenny and Gardiner (1990) or Morgan (1990), for example, or in Australia by Green, Hodgens and Luke (1994), Green and Beavis (1996) et al., show that from the earliest times English, like other subjects, has been laced with social and political agendas, with institutional struggles over meaning and resources (Goodson 1988) differentially framing the shape the subject takes and the way it is taught. In the case of English, the pivotal role Literature and literary texts have been seen to play in defining and maintaining national and cultural identity, together with societal expectations about literacy and perennial crises about 'standards', structure the external interferences and pressures that subject English inherits, and

contribute to the form the subject takes in specific times and in individual schools.

This paper takes the introduction of a new final year subject, VCE Literature, as an example of the ways in which curriculum change entails not just a reformulation of the subject, but also teachers' reconstruction of the subject and themselves as teachers of it.

English, Literature and the Victorian Certificate of Education

In 1991-92, a new curriculum structure for the last two years of schooling was introduced into Victoria: the Victorian Certificate of Education - the 'VCE'. It was developed in response to a government commissioned study, The Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education, ('the Blackburn Report', Blackburn, 1985), whose brief was to 'transform the post compulsory level of schooling into a stage in which the great majority of young people can participate.' (Blackburn 1985: 2) In introducing the concept of a common study structure for subjects, the VCE replaced what had been a diversity of offerings in many areas with one common framework, designed to meet the needs of all students, whether University-oriented or not. The need to devise new courses provided the opportunity to reconceptualise curriculum subjects in the light of changing views of teaching and assessment, and in relation to theoretical developments within the disciplines.

In the case of the compulsory subject English, as distinct from the separate subject Literature, this led to wider use and acceptance of

the term 'text' in place of 'books' or 'literature', and to the validation and acceptance of a number of practices already in place at more junior levels in the school, such as 'creative' response to texts, the ability to read and critically analyse representations in print and non-print media, and an increased emphasis on oral work. The changes in English, while highly controversial in the public sphere (Gill 1994) and continually modified in a conservative direction in the light of public pressures, were largely accepted by the English teaching profession after the first year (Northfield and Winter 1993). This was in part due to the extensive program of consultation and professional development that accompanied the subject's introduction, and in part to English teachers' familiarity with, and approval of, most of the curriculum practices it brought with it.

In the case of Literature, however, the changes were far more abrupt, and accompanied by very little consultation or professional development. A course that had remained largely unchanged since the 1940s, based on Leavisite and New Critical principles and grounded in a set of 'certain certainties' about the value both of the subject and of the 'great tradition' of canonical texts whose study it comprised, was replaced by one which drew extensively on more recent literary theory, most notably poststructural views of reading, readers and texts. These theories rendered problematic the very notion of Literature as cultural phenomenon, the titles set for study and the identity and the form this new version of the subject might take. Teachers were faced with the overturning of concepts and principles which had informed their

teaching and thinking for many years. In doing so, the new course challenged their understandings and values about the teaching of literature, and hence, at least potentially, their identity as teachers of it. The strong commitment of many teachers to the subject area, and their longstanding investment in Literature made across their personal as well as professional lives, meant that changes to the subject had implications for the ways they constructed not just the subject but also themselves.

The study

This paper reports on a larger study (Beavis 1997) in which I took the introduction of VCE Literature as an opportunity to explore how school subjects, in this instance Literature, are reconstructed and renewed, and the ways in which subject teachers are affected by and contribute to curriculum change.

Much of the 'data' for the research came from an extended series of interviews with nine VCE Literature teachers, conducted over the first three years of the new course. These teachers were chosen to be inclusive of a wide range of schools and sites (state, private, Catholic, Independent, mixed and single sex, city and country, 'middle' and 'working' class, old and new), and a range of teaching experience. Of the nine teachers, five taught in State schools - two in the country, two in Melbourne's industrial Western suburbs, and one in a middle class area. Four of the teachers worked in Private schools. Of these, two taught in the Catholic system, one in an old and prestigious

Melbourne girls school and one in a recently established mixed school in a country town. The remaining two taught in Melbourne at a similarly old and prestigious Independent ('Public') school. There were four men and five women, all of whom were regarded within the profession as highly committed and interested teachers, and who were chosen either on the basis of my own professional knowledge of the field, or on the basis of recommendation. They ranged in seniority from one teacher who was in his second year of teaching when the study began through to a number who had been teaching for twenty to twenty five years. The teachers were interviewed four times a year (every term) for half an hour about teaching literature and their experience of the new course. My readings of the interview transcripts provided the basis for much of the analysis.

A second and related set of 'data' came from the domain of curriculum history. Utilising views of curriculum as socially constructed and a window on the wider educational and political cultures of a country (Green 1995, 1991; Goodson and Medway 1990; Morgan 1990; Seddon 1989; Ball 1985 et al), together with Foucauldian views of history as the archaeology of the present (Foucault, 1977; Tyler and Johnson 1991), I undertook critical rereadings of a number of definitional histories of English (Mathieson 1975, Ball, Kenny and Gardiner 1990, Doyle 1989, Hunter 1988, Dixon 1991). In the absence of a history of the subject in Victoria, I turned historian myself, and constructed a history of the subject in Victoria, drawing on such textual historical sources as School Readers, the Education Gazette, examination papers and reports,

and Parliamentary debates (Beavis 1996). In both endeavours I sought to identify recurring crises, contestations and themes in the construction of the subject over time. Situating VCE Literature in this way served to foreground elements and debates which had always characterised struggles over the subject's identity, and to make visible some of the discourses shaping Victorian Literature teachers' conceptions of both the subject and their own role as teachers of it.

A further set of 'data' derived from a close analysis of the new subject's study design, in which threads of both old and new discourses of 'Literature', Leavisite/New Critical and 'new' perspectives drawn from critical theory, were intertwined, allowing teachers to 'read' the subject a number of ways.

This range of 'data' implied a view both of history and of language and meaning - a view of discourse, texts and subjectivity. These perspectives had implications in turn for how I viewed the teachers who in some sense are the 'subjects' of this study, how I viewed curriculum, the texts I read, the methodology I employed and the ways I thought about my own role in the research. With both the 'histories' and the interviews, I worked self consciously regarding both as text, and foregrounding the situated 'subjectivity' of meaning in the readings that I made of them. The views of text and reading which were at the core of the new syllabus were also at the core of the analytic approach taken in the course of the research.

Discourse and Discursive construction.

An important feature of the conceptual framework of the analysis was the notion of discourse and discursive fields, and their role in the ways in which school subjects continue to be contested and defined (Walkerdine 1990, Brodkey 1989, 1992; Ball 1994; Donald 1985; Lee 1996). Discursive fields, such as education, 'consist of competing ways of giving meaning to the world and of organising social institutions and processes' (Weedon 1987: 35), with discourses within these fields organising meaning and experience differently, serving different interests, promoting particular power relationships and constructing a range of subject positions which individuals within the field are required or invited to take up. The concept of discursive field helped illuminate the ways in which Literature teachers, including the teachers in the study, were already positioned and constructed historically, within the school as well as with regard to secondary teaching and the subject Literature.

This view of discourse also provided a way of thinking about subjectivity. Once one takes the view that 'language, far from reflecting an already given social reality, constitutes social reality for us' (Weedon 1987:22), the notion of 'discourse' becomes a particularly powerful analytic tool. In such a view, the world is not 'fixed' outside language, with set and stable meanings or universal concepts which language renders visible. Nor does language 'mean' in precisely the same ways in different contexts, as if it were merely expressing or giving voice to external and intrinsic realities.

Patterns of usage and association in each discourse construct ways of being and meaning subtly different from each other, ways and meanings which 'cannot be reduced to each other through translation or by an appeal to universally shared concepts reflecting a fixed reality.'

(Weedon 1987: 22)

In perspectives such as those offered by feminist poststructuralist like Weedon, how we see ourselves is intimately linked to the language practices or discourses in which we participate, so that our sense of self, our subjectivity, is also (largely) constructed via language.

Subjectivity is seen as socially produced, with competing discourses jostling for dominance in framing the way we see ourselves and the world at any given place and time. Kamler's description of the schoolgirl as 'a changing, multiply-constituted and contradictory effect of the discourses and practices in place at particular social sites' (Kamler 1994: 1-2) has relevance also for how teachers might be seen, in the context of curriculum change. A view of the teacher, like the schoolgirl, as produced as a nexus of shifting subjectivities at the institutional site (Kamler 1994, Walkerdine 1990), helps 'unpack' the contradictions and multiple frameworks out of which words are spoken, actions taken and decisions made.

Following Walkerdine, Kamler and others, interview transcripts were read and reread for traces of key discourses identified as formative in the construction of the subject in different contexts across time, and central to the teaching of English/Literature in Victorian secondary schools. I looked at the ways in which different configurations of

these discourses worked themselves out within individual teachers at particular times; at the ways in which teachers were positioned within them and influenced by them, and how this positioning in turn contributed to the ways they did and didn't contribute to curriculum change. I looked for the implications of this discursive positioning for the teachers' construction of both the subject and themselves. Taking five of the nine teachers, I read excerpts from the interviews for traces of these discourses, teasing out the ways in which their interplay shapes the way these teachers understand the new course, remake it and position themselves in relation to it.

Dominant Discourses

The teachers in the study, like most Literature teachers, were strongly committed to the subject, and had become Literature teachers because of their own 'love' of literature, their expertise, and their belief that the subject contributed greatly to students' lives. In their daily enactment of teaching Literature they lived out, and lived out of, dominant discourses in their inheritance as Literature teachers. In doing so, they adapted and remade them, shifting within them and taking up or resisting the subject positions they offered. The teachers' situatedness within these discourses, and the ways in which they were constituted as Literature teachers by them, had implications for the ways they taught, the stances they took up towards the new course, and the ways in which the discourses framed and organised their sense of themselves and the world. Their interviews revealed both their inheritance of the legacy of the 'grand' discourses and debates charted

through the curriculum histories, and the continuation of these into the present day, whether contested, modified, unchanged or transformed.

Four discourses seemed to be particularly influential in shaping the teacher's reading of the new version of Literature, the stance they took towards it, and the ways they reconstructed the subject and themselves. The first three were much in evidence throughout the histories of English, as through the substance of the interviews. The fourth was the new element introduced by VCE Literature, which in most cases challenged the older discourses of teaching Literature, and in doing so challenged also the teachers' positioning within the mix of older discourses, her construction of the subject, and even her in and out of school teaching identity.

These four discourses provided the organising framework for the analysis of the teacher interviews.

¥ the traditions and culture of the school (configured differently for different teachers in the study)

¥ Leavisite and New Critical formations of the subject Literature

¥ Charismatic pedagogy (a teaching style stereotypically embodied by Mr. Keating in the film *Dead Poet's Society*, as a 'typical' passionate Literature teacher)

¥ The 'new' discourse of critical theory, as represented in the VCE

Literature Study Design.

1] The traditions and culture of the School

Teachers are responsive to and situated within a whole set of discourses other than those of the subject(s) in which they specialise.

One of the most powerful of these is the culture and traditions of the school of school system or community within which they find themselves. The schools represented in this study encompassed a wide range of cultures and traditions, which significantly shaped the ways the teachers thought about the subject, their students and themselves.

Each had its own characteristic ethos, which influenced the way the subject Literature was traditionally viewed and the way the teachers saw themselves and their role. School cultures and traditions varied locally, even when they were organisationally similar, as with Catholic, State or Independent school systems, but they shared certain common defining features. These features included the composition of the student population, whether schools were run by the government or private sector, the school's location, literacy levels, parental attitudes and expectations, outcomes at Year 12 and expectations or otherwise of tertiary entrance, curriculum values and priorities, resources and facilities, the influence of the teachers union or teachers' professional associations, orientations to curriculum and students, the place of the English faculty.

2] Leavisite/New Critical formations of the subject Literature

Discourses defining 'Literature' dominated debates about formations of

the subject from the earliest times. Profoundly influential in the Victorian context, as elsewhere in Australia, in England, and in other British settler colonies, were Arnoldian or 'Leavisite' models that had characterised senior Literature syllabi and examinations, almost from their inception. (The American counterpart for much of the Twentieth century was New Criticism, philosophical basis of the one American teacher in this study) This view of Literature emphasised (English) cultural heritage, nationally and historically, as embedded in and passed on through the study of canonical texts. Certain genres are privileged as more central or fundamental than others, with literary imaginative writings, particularly poetry, regarded as the 'stuff' of literary studies. Close engagement with 'great' texts not only develops aesthetic sensibilities in the reader, but also inculcates values and morality. The teacher's task, in such a view, is to develop sensibility and response in students, through his mentoring and individual example and care. This dimension is taken up explicitly within the discourse of charismatic pedagogy.

3] Charismatic pedagogy: the passionate Literature teacher

The discourse of charismatic pedagogy is particularly familiar in English teaching. The passionate English teacher is much in evidence in Victorian schools. Discourses associated with the role and nature of the Literature teacher in this line trace back to Arnoldian conceptions of English teachers as 'Preachers of Culture'. Literature teachers are in many respects a specialist subset of this group. The dramatic, passionate English teacher, with 'his' elevated view of the subject is

regarded more or less kindly in different traditions, as evident in the 'histories'. For some, s/he is a figure worthy almost of adulation (Dixon 1991; Protherough and Atkinson 1991) for others, s/he warrants rather scepticism, suspicion and mistrust (Hunter 1988; Patterson 1993, 1995)

The characteristics of such teachers include a deep knowledge and love of the canon, a passionate commitment to the subject, and a flamboyant and idiosyncratic personal and teaching style (Inglis 1975; Holbrook 1961; Abbs 1976) et al). Accompanying this emphasis on personality is a view of themselves and their subject as occupying a particular status, singled out from other subjects by virtue of its centrality to the culture. Literature is seen as having special significance in dealing with matters of great sensitivity and importance: the texts that are studied, the skills developed by their study, and in the subject matter with which they deal. Close bonds often develop between teacher and students, as they unite in their shared enthusiasm and love for the subject. Literature teachers claim to know their subject 'inside out', know what is best for their students and hold to these views often in opposition to more pragmatic concerns that characterise other subjects and the bureaucracy and administration of schools.

4] Critical theory

The VCE Literature course was posited on a substantially different body of theory than the one which preceded it. While it retained elements of older expressive humanist discourses, and of Leavisite/New Critical

approaches, its organising principles, around which curriculum and assessment were designed, were drawn from that set of discourses loosely characterised as critical theory. They included an emphasis on readings as multiple and constructed, and as serving particular interests, an interest in the ways in which texts and their readings are context-specific and reflect the values and ideologies of particular groups, an interest in the ways texts work to position subjects, a view of both texts and readings as ideological, and a view of what counts as literature as not a fixed and self-defining body of texts, but rather, varying according to sociocultural values.

Pleasure

In addition to these four discourses, a fifth element emerged as crucial in shaping teachers' construction and acceptance of the new course, and their participation in change. The teachers' preparedness or reluctance to change was not simply the result of an inability to shift their allegiances to familiar discourses. Change to curriculum organisation and subject formations also threatens established pleasures, satisfactions and desires. Desire, Hargreaves (Hargreaves, 1994) notes, - moral, political, and emotional - is fundamental to good teaching. The importance of pleasure in maintaining teachers' commitment to the subject and their continued preparedness to teach it, cannot be underestimated. A study of how teachers experience curriculum change must attend to the ways in which 'purpose, passion and desire' are brought into play in reconceptualising the subject and

themselves as teachers of it. A further dimension of the analysis, then, focuses on the pleasure the teachers took in teaching Literature, on the ways in which this was and was not made possible in the new course, and on its role in the processes of curriculum change.

Subjectivity and the discursive construction of Literature

The teachers took up a range of stances towards the new subject over three years. In different combinations the four discourses reinforced or challenged views of the subject Literature and its purposes, and teachers' perceptions of themselves as teachers of it. For some, the new discourse of critical theory barely troubled their continuing perceptions of what the subject should be. In some instances, the 'new' discourse was experienced as so dissonant with the others as to make teaching Literature unsustainable. Thus, Jim moved from a strong Leavisite position seeing Literature as 'one of those unusual subjects where you get to where students actually feel that they are breaking through to something quite extraordinary' (0192 Jim) to feeling philosophical changes in the new subject were so so far reaching he no longer wanted to be part of them. 'It's not simply ideas about literature that I'm talking about. but I think we're playing a role in parcelling up our ideas of what human beings are in a way that I don't find very recognisable.' (0494 Jim).

For others, the new discourse confirmed them in the direction in which

they wished to go, or opened up new visions of the subject which they found 'empowering' for their students and themselves. Hannah's discussion of her text choices for 1995 provides an example of the ways in which different discourses and their interplay were identified in interview texts, and their significance in exploring constructions of the teachers construction of the subject and themselves:

I always try to get a balance. This year I think there's a reasonably good balance. You know, I mean things like *The Well*, juxtaposed with *Huckleberry Finn*. That went well. So, the juxtapositioning of text, so they sort of have that old fashioned notion of diet. I tend to believe in that. That's one thing. Two, I quite like texts that will speak to each other in some way, without necessarily being comparative. Three, the course, well, there's no order, but will they like them? Almost as important, if not more important, do I think this text is going to be where eighteen year old heads are at? Because I actually do think you can make a few generalisations there. Four I guess is a bit to do with balance, are they going to be looking at things like *Savage Crows* and *Heart of Darkness*. I can never get this gender stuff right, one year it was all women, and the next year it was all men! It's not about representation, it's about the experiences you give kids via literature. (They'd say I spend a whole year reading about men's experiences of the last century, well, that's what they would have lived through). Do the ones we really want to do from the short list, a short list of about twelve that you've got to pick six from. Will they fit the CATs sort of thing? You kind of assume they do, because there

they are. But you've got to think of yourself as an individual teacher. And you've got to have something to say yourself about the text I think. And you've got to have questions yourself of the texts, both those things. So simply, it's got to interest you. If it interests you it's going to open up a lot of stuff for the CATs. There are things like, I'd love to do King Lear next year, but have decided against it because I didn't have the time I'd have to give over to it. (0494 Hannah)

In Hannah's case, discourses which were potentially in conflict for the other teachers - versions of the subject, the traditions of the school, the culture of the Literature teacher and the 'new' discourse of critical theory - coexisted relatively harmoniously, or rather, their contradictions were able to coexist or had been 'worked through'. The interrelationship of Leavisite/New Critical Literature and critical theory together shaped her text choices, priorities and teaching style, while the discourse of the charismatic Literature teacher, in a formation shaped both by her commitment to critical theory and her heritage as a technical school teacher, was also present in much of the way she spoke.

Older discourse of Leavisite/New Critical Literature interweave with those of critical theory in Hannah's account of her text choices for 1995. Hannah moves fluidly within the multiple discourses shaping her construction of the subject, quite literally, for the next year.

Leavisite/New Critical versions of the subject, evident in the

inclusion of canonical texts and 'the old-fashioned notion of diet' sit alongside a framework of critical theory, emphasising intertextuality ('texts that will speak to each other'), and a view of texts and readings as partial. The distinction Hannah makes in relation to 'gender stuff', between 'representation' and 'the experiences you give kids via literature', together with the attendant example, demonstrates the ways theory for Hannah takes account of classroom practice and what will work. The choice here is not so much about theory or political correctness as about students' experiences through the year. Both discourses of Literary theory here, Leavisite/New Critical and critical theory, complement her priorities for classroom practice, with 'balance' (of gender, in this instance rather than of classic and contemporary texts) being one of a number of criteria which also include assessment constraints, (what won't take too much time, what will fit the CATs) and what teacher and students will find interesting and like.

The discourse of the charismatic Literature teacher can also be discerned, in this case reworked in the light of the changed assumptions about meaning and authority entailed in discourse four (Critical theory). Speaking within this discourse, Hannah values student engagement, and their sense of the relevance of set texts (will they be 'where eighteen year old heads are at?'). She speaks out of a passion for the importance of the subject in students' lives, (the experiences you give kids via literature), and a strong belief in what students might gain. In her valuing of 'that old fashioned notion of

diet', and 'balance', and the very weighing up of selection criteria she demonstrates her authority and extensive knowledge of texts and of what students 'need' that characterises Literature teachers in this vein. Perhaps most telling is her insistence on setting texts both she and her students will find interesting and enjoy. This emphasis on 'enjoyment' throughout the interviews functioned as a virtual 'secret code' indicating insider status as a rightful inheritor both of the discourse of charismatic pedagogy and of Leavisite/New Critical traditions of Literature.

The remaining discourse, that of the culture and traditions of the school, is less visible in this transcript than in others. Hannah taught in a former technical (vocational) school, with a teaching tradition both less formal and less hospitable towards academic teaching of the disciplines than that of high or private schools, and a culture in which school subjects had to justify their value to students, rather than students needing to prove they were up to the subject's demands. Technical schools in Victoria had also been the site of considerable innovation and imaginative teaching approaches from the 1960s on. Collectively, these emphases had significant implications for the ways in which subjects were conceived of and taught in year 12, as elsewhere in the school. Hannah's emphasis on students' interest in set texts, on 'where eighteen year old heads are at' and so on, is also evidence of her membership of this discursive community.

Unlike the other teachers, Hannah had been involved from the outset in the planning of the new course. For Hannah, as for no other teacher in the study, the course is one where from the outset she has agency. From the start of the first year both the theory and the design are familiar to her, and she had already confronted many of the practical implications of the changes in literary theory. As a result, in her planning each year, while she constantly reconsiders and revises the ways she will teach, neither her construction of the subject nor herself are threatened or undermined. On the contrary, she continues to find pleasure and purpose in teaching it, translates its 'new' theory readily into teaching practice, enjoying, as she said elsewhere, 'the wonderful proliferation of theories and ways of coming at a text [and] being able to talk about those with kids.'

Conclusion: subjectivity and curriculum change

Curriculum change entails the reconceptualisation or reorganisation of a subject - its 're-formation' - but this achieves little without corresponding change on the teacher's part. Shifts in the ways in which teachers construct a subject, the stance they take towards it, and the ways they construct their own role and identity as teachers of it are in turn also necessary if curriculum change is to occur. In other words, the repositioning and reconstruction of both the subject and the teacher are required.

The new version of Literature introduced by the VCE was informed by

both changes in literary theory and by debates which had characterised the subject's struggle over its identity from the earliest times: debates about the form the subject should take, its purposes and content; its relationship to society and the sorts of 'cultured men' it might produce. In interpreting this new subject in their own classrooms, the teachers in this study were influenced by inherited expectations, understandings and assumptions about what Literature should be, by their historical positioning within pre-existent discourses about the nature of the subject in school, and by pedagogical and classroom factors, including what students would like and find accessible, what would 'work', and what would bring good examination results. Their construction of the subject in practice was also strongly shaped by the desire to find ways of teaching and viewing literature that would be satisfying and enjoyable, where the subject, its texts and students' engagement, teaching practices and classroom relationships could continue as sources of pleasure or at least, of satisfaction.

The new course asked the teachers to make broad changes in the ways they saw the relationship of the subject to their students' lives, the purposes of schooling and the ways in which they or their students might be powerful within the world. Changes to the subject were seen to be about different ways of 'parcelling up the world' (0494 Jim). For those teachers who read the subject as something new, this version of Literature had profound implications for the ways they saw their teaching selves. For some, the contradictions entailed became

intolerable. For others, the new formation of the subject opened up new pathways for themselves and their students to become more 'critically literate'; to understand more about the ways texts worked to position them, and thus about themselves in turn. The new perspectives offered by the Study Design were seen as enabling both their students and themselves to become more critical and 'aware', and to act with more agency in the world.

Curriculum change stands or falls according to the ways in which is taken up, enacted and owned by those who teach it. This taking up entails a complex process of exchange, whereby the teacher too needs to reconstitute her vision of the subject. For the committed teacher, her teaching subject is centrally part of her perception and construction of herself. Where teachers' subjectivity is intimately linked to past and present constructions of the subject, and of themselves as teachers of it, changes to the nature of the subject imply changes also to how teachers see themselves. 'Changing English is changing schooling.' (Goodson and Medway 1990) As this study demonstrates, changing curriculum subjects may also entail changing teaching selves.

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