

AFFECTIVE OBJECTIVES: THE REVENGE OF THE UNASSESSED

Ray Misson

To discuss any English curriculum document as an outsider is a dangerous undertaking, because there are inevitably battles that have gone on, and you never know what or whose susceptibilities you might be hurting. Thus, I have accepted the invitation to develop some ideas around the new Queensland Senior English Syllabus with some trepidation. It's quite clear that there have been battles around this syllabus: the scars appear in the document itself. No document would look like this if it weren't the product of battles between contending forces, with bits lopped off here and there, a few ramparts built across the landscape, some land conceded, other land laid waste.

I'm actually going to be a coward (or valorously discreet) and not do a major critique of the document itself. It is very easy to be superior to curriculum documents, to criticise them from the outside, because they almost inevitably are compromises. They are political documents, marked by absences, strange shifts and jumps, lists with category confusions, which show the various attempts to accommodate different viewpoints. One of the features is always the dropping-in of favoured terms, or terms that are obligatory in the current political climate: 'global' (as in globalisation) and 'life-long learning' are two terms that any self-respecting education document must have at the turn of the millennium, and sure enough they are there, although not a lot is done with them. Indeed, their presence is perhaps one of the few things that mark the document as coming from the turn of the millennium rather than the mid-nineties. One feels at various points that terms are there because they are obligatory. They are talismanic, geared to keeping particular devils at bay, whether they be systemic functional devils, poststructuralist devils, traditionalist devils or any other race of devils out there vying for the souls of English teachers and a place in the English classroom.

It is worth considering for a moment why there are always battles over English curriculum and

why they are always so fierce, why the passions so quickly become engaged. There are many reasons:

1. English is seen as fundamental to a successful life in our society; gaining certification in literacy is a major rite of passage that it is felt people must go through. And it is true that the benefits of our society are more richly there for the literate. There is a version of this that is used to bash teachers and to make political points. People like John Howard and David Kemp can use literacy as an excuse for unemployment: it's not a systemic fault that there is unemployment, but it's because these people didn't learn to read and write properly in schools. David Kemp then goes on to bash teachers and teacher education because of this. It's worth making the point that literacy doesn't guarantee employment, but it must be acknowledged that illiteracy almost certainly guarantees unemployment, or at least employment only in fairly low-level jobs.

And, of course, at the moment, there is also a strong rhetoric of national aspiration involved. Literacy is not just presented as the foundation of a successful personal life, but is fundamental to the successful life of our society if we want to participate in the global economy. There is much talk these days of learning organisations and knowledge management. (There was even an at least half-serious suggestion that the Faculty of Education at Melbourne University should become the Faculty of Knowledge Management). An educated workforce is fundamental to economic success in the global knowledge economy and literacy is fundamental to education. Indeed, *English* is fundamental. The push that was there in the nineties for every student to learn a LOTE has pretty well disappeared. It

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has become obvious that everyone will learn English. I suspect that the internet has been decisive in this: English is the *lingua franca* of the Internet, and so all economically advantaged people in developed nations must know English.

2. Everyone has their own conception of what subject English should be about, dependant on many things, including what they went through as students of English themselves, what they see as the main features of the life the student is aspiring to, or ought to aspire to, and what they see as necessary for achieving that. Some see the ability to create hypermedia presentations, others see Shakespeare. This is exacerbated in a time of such rapid change and such uncertainty as we are living through now. There are the prophets who predict what society will be like in ten years time, and predicate their view of English Education on that: others cling to the old traditions and say that in a time of such uncertainty, the best thing is to reassert the certainties of the past.
3. It's not just a matter of everyone thinking they know what the subject is about, everyone feels they have a right to determine what ought to be taught and what the outcomes should be, or at least that they should have a say.

And, in spite of the trouble it causes, they do have a point. The centrality of English is a two-edged sword. If we genuinely believe in the importance of English to society, so much so that it ought to be compulsory through most levels of schooling, as it is in most states, if we believe governments should think it important to put money (never enough of course) into literacy, then I think we have a certain responsibility to listen to what the general community wants. We have an even greater responsibility to make them want what we know they should want, and to spend the money wisely, but I think we have to engage in lobbying, in public debate, in selling our subject, and not simply assert that we know best. In particular, we in the universities, working

with teachers in schools, have to do the research that shows incontrovertibly that the way we want to do things is in fact the most effective.

Now, put those three things up against these other three:

1. The field of English is immensely broad. You only have to think of the things that are expected of your average English teacher in an average week: a bit of developing writing skills, a bit of argument analysis, discussing the media presentation of issues, taking the class through a novel, some poetry, a film; doing a bit of Shakespeare; ensuring that they cater for ESL students properly, teaching about sentence and text structures; discussing philosophical issues; perhaps doing some drama work, some work on hypertext, – English can cover virtually anything.
2. The field is inherently unstable because it is not particularly anchored by any content. Any one of those things I have just mentioned can be highlighted and seen as most important at any point, and, of course, different frameworks can very readily be applied (as debates over the value of critical social literacy, or the genre/whole language debate suggest).

These two things make the field always open to contest because people will always be wanting to construct it differently. The passion, the savagery in the contest comes from a third thing:

3. Language and literacy are always deeply implicated with values, with ideology. Fights over English are not just fights about whether we should have films as texts in English classes, or whether to call 'run' an intransitive verb or a material process; they are fights over how the world is to be seen, and what matters in it. They are fights over what we as human beings are. Language is fundamental to our processes of self-definition. We talk ourselves into being. We perform

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ourselves through language. People's selves are deeply implicated, so it is not surprising passions run so high.

It might be nice sometime to see a curriculum that was developed coherently from first principles and actually implemented, but I doubt we ever will, because that would imply that there could be agreement about what are the most important goals in English, and how best to achieve them, and one can't imagine that ever happening. It would imply that society was monolithic, and there was a common set of values, whereas, of course, society is increasingly diverse, and values are becoming more unstable, contextualised and relative.

Anyway, once the battles are over or have died down, the important thing is to find out what you can do with the curriculum document that has been produced out of the battles and make it work.

I want to take as my starting point today just one aspect of the curriculum. I will say immediately that I know I am being unfair. Those familiar with the syllabus will be continually wanting to say, 'Oh, but if you just look on page 23, you'll see that ...' In some ways, that's the point I was making. Writing such a document is not easy because there are so many devils to placate. It is a process of accommodation as much as of creating new directions. You can find acknowledgment of most things in the document, of necessity, which is probably a good thing, because it means that teachers can work out from the familiar, although, quite properly, not being able to fall back on it. So, I know I am picking on one thing out of context, but it does allow me to say the things I want to say, and to suggest an important element of how I would implement this syllabus.

The thing that jumped out at me most starkly when I first read through the document was the section on General Objectives. This is divided into four sub-headings 'Knowledge Objectives, Cognitive Objectives' Skills Objectives, and Affective Objectives'. The first three are (not surprisingly) very closely linked. At first I found it hard to see why all three are

necessary, and in fact there is a great deal of repetition from one section to the next, as if the terms - particularly 'discourse', 'genre' and 'register' - were just being configured and reconfigured in different patterns. But there is a difference: the knowledge objectives are facts or propositions that you learn, cognitive objectives are the processes whereby you work with the knowledge, and skills objectives have to do with putting the knowledge into practice. It is indicative that the definition of knowledge objectives uses nouns, that of cognitive objectives present participles, and skills objectives verbs.

But then, there was the interesting fourth one, the outlier – Affective Objectives – and this group is very different. They are defined in a quite different range of language, as if they have wandered in from somewhere else.

The very first phrase under the heading suggests how deep the difference goes, and sets up interesting questions: 'While these are not formally assessed for summative purposes ...' I suppose it is Derrida who has made us sit up and take notice of such statements. Derrida in some of his earlier work (1977) has written about the 'supplement': the thing that belongs and doesn't belong, the thing that is not welcome within the main body or business of the text (or other phenomenon), but without which the text is felt to lack completeness. Since it is unwelcome, but cannot be left out, it is forced to the periphery, only given the status of supplement. The supplement is that which is marginalised so the text can appear neat and ordered, but which is always lurking around, and which can be brought back in to disrupt the seeming coherence and logic of the text.

In a curriculum which, like most curricula at the present time, is obsessed with assessment and outcomes, here is something which is not assessed, something which is (nervously? embarrassedly? belligerently?) excluded from assessment. Why? One can well imagine the answers that those writing the curriculum would give to that question – 'it's too subjective', 'it's between the person and themselves' – but it is worth pressing the

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question and taking the exclusion as the sign of something significant that is going on in subject English at the present time. What I want to explore is the way the field is divided between what is considered as the domain of the knowledge/cognitive/skills objectives and the domain of the affective objectives, and to look at the relationship between the two domains.

As I mentioned before, the terminology in which the affective objectives are couched is very different from that used for the others: the first three sets are built up from notions of discourse, genre and register, showing strongly the twin influences of the critical literacy movement – Queensland is, after all, the state that has given the rest of the world (or at least provided a home for) Bronwyn Davies, Peter Freebody, Pam Gilbert, Allan Luke, and Wendy Morgan to name just a few in a safely alphabetical way - and systemic functional grammar, since Queensland still fairly openly embraces SFG as at least part of the basis for its school literacy curriculum. The statement on affective objectives, on the other hand, is much less strongly theorised. It says that ‘it is important that students develop positive attitudes in relation to language, its use and its users in terms of ...’ and then we get a list of dot points, each giving a present participle, which is then expanded after a semi-colon:

enjoying playing engaging relating
appreciating empathising and
sympathising.

When looking at the list, the thing that struck me most forcibly was that matters of interpersonal understanding, cultural awareness, and social justice had been virtually hived off into these unassessed affective objectives:

- engaging: participating effectively in activities that involve connecting with people, feelings, places, objects
- relating: respecting the identity of different cultural groups
- appreciating: valuing the world/s in which they live in order to understand better the worlds of others

- empathising and sympathising: understanding the experiences of others.

(QBSSS 1999, pp 5–6)

Matters of human social interaction and justice are, of course, implicit in the use of the terms ‘discourse’, ‘register’ and ‘genre’ – critical literacy and systemic functional grammar are both built on a concern with the social – but there is nothing explicitly about developing social understanding there in the first three sets of objectives. It is true that in the Knowledge Objectives we have such things as that students must. develop explicit knowledge about the ways:

- language in texts shapes and is shaped by discourses in cultural contexts and social situations
- cultural assumptions, values, beliefs and attitudes underpin texts
- the relationships and identities of individuals, groups, times and places are represented in texts.

(QBSSS 1999, p 5)

But this is seen as abstract knowledge, and what is suggested here seems very tame and external: it suggests a curiously vacant and undynamic view of language. Cultural assumptions surely do more than underpin texts, they absolutely inform them. Relationships and identities may be represented in texts, but texts also produce relationships and identities in profound and multifarious ways.

If you look at the affective objectives in relation to these knowledge objectives, something important becomes clear: *the knowledge objectives are dead concepts – it is the affective objectives that make them matter.* One might teach about cultural assumptions, values, beliefs, relationships of individuals, etc and it will not be of any but academic interest unless students are engaging, relating, appreciating, empathising, sympathising, etc.

On the other hand, I would want to make the reciprocal point: that the affective elements are useless, even dangerous, without being

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underpinned by knowledge. What came to mind when I noticed that the socially critical and the concern for social justice was located in the affective was a superb passage from Jonathan Dollimore's *Radical Tragedy*, in which he is doing a Marxist reading of *King Lear*.

King Lear on the heath has his prayer about 'houseless poverty', in which he exclaims, 'O, I have ta'en / Too little care of this!' (3.4.33-34). Jonathan Dollimore writes,

Too little: Lear bitterly reproaches himself because hitherto he has been aware of yet ignored the suffering of his deprived subjects ... He has ignored it not through callous indifference but simply *because he has not experienced it*.

King Lear here suggests a simple yet profound truth. Far from endorsing the idea that man (sic) can redeem himself in and through the access of pity, we might be moved to recognise that, on the contrary, in a world where pity is the prerequisite for compassionate action, where a king has to share the suffering of his subjects in order to 'care', the majority will remain poor, naked and wretched. Insofar as Lear identifies with suffering it is at the point when he is powerless to do anything about it. This is not accidental: the society of *Lear* is structured in such a way that to wait for shared experience to generate justice is to leave it too late. Justice, we might say, is too important to be trusted to empathy.

(Dollimore 1984, pp 191–192)

It is that memorable last statement that is particularly apposite to the discussion here: 'Justice ... is too important to be trusted to empathy.' In our terms, social justice is too important to be seen only in terms of the affective. It has to be seen as an imperative based on a knowledge of how society works, and how language works to construct disadvantage.

Dollimore is not saying that feeling is unimportant in matters of social justice, and neither am I. Of course it is: social justice

depends on feeling for others. But feeling in itself is insufficient. Being affected by representations of social injustice is at best self-indulgent unless it is allied with knowledge of how disadvantage is reproduced and an ethical drive to do something about it. It is very easy to be enormously sympathetic and upset about street kids, or racism, or suicide amongst young gay males, and be so involved and moved by the spectacle of your own deep feelings that you do nothing about helping the street kids or working to subvert racism, or supporting young gay men.

The challenge for teachers is to make the knowledge that texts are made out of discourses, are the products of (and produce) culture, values, relationships and identities affectively important. In fact, I don't think this is difficult if indeed you move beyond notions of texts being constructed out of discourse and genres to considering what is affectively involved in the construction, how the writer and readers are affectively positioning themselves. One needs to ask the question, what is at stake? Let me take a particular example. I expect that this poem came to mind because the Queen, our beloved Head of State, has just graced our nation with a royal tour. The poem, originally published in the seventies, is by Bobbi Sykes. It is the first poem in her book, *Love Poems and Other Revolutionary Actions*:

Requiem

Neatly pressed / dressed / crowds / Lined up to wave / flags / babes / At the Queen /

I could see first / your stony eye / And I knew you weren't here / To welcome /

But to reject / the 8th descendant / Of George the Third / in whose name / Years ago /

Our land was claimed for Him / now Her /

And you were magnificent / straight as die / Let them know that this /

Was no country of beaten losers /

But proud warriors /

Whose time has almost come.

(Sykes 1988, p. 15)

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The very fact that we are aware that this poem could not be about a royal tour in the year 2000 shows how much particular cultural values are encoded in the poem, and one could do a lot of interesting and valuable work on the discourses out of which the poem is built.

The opening phrase, 'Neatly pressed / dressed crowds', evokes a kind of respect for the royal family, and a way of showing that respect – getting dressed up in your best clothes – that is quite alien today. The neatness is drawing on notions of ordered suburban life, in a seventies satirical inflection, stressing naive regimented conformity. It might be compared with the current satirical preoccupation with the same thing, as in *American Beauty*, but of course the satire now has a different inflection, much more to do with the corporate world and consumerism. The naive patriotism is also nicely caught in 'waving flags / babes', with its image of people holding up babies, so that they can see, but also to be blessed by the royal presence.

Then we get the 'stony eye' of the man watching, strong and persisting, critically observing, measuring the enemy, and it is the beginning in the poem of a strong, political discourse which is set up against the discourse of suburban parody. We can also note how the legalistic, historical-political discourse – 'descendant' 'in whose name' – imports one set of values and cultural beliefs, which is contrasted against a discourse of revolutionary beliefs, which actually has a strong African-American influence – this is the seventies, after all – with 'losers' 'proud warriors', and the sexual undercurrent of physical admiration that was there in much of the Black Power rhetoric.

Much work can be done on the poem in terms of knowledge about discourse and genre, and it is really valuable work in coming to understand how language and texts work. But it's only half the story. If the text is going to matter to students, they have to feel how all these things come together and create the revolutionary excitement, they have to engage with the firm and forthright anger expressed in the poem.

The work on the poem needs to be energised by

an awareness of what's at stake in the language use in the poem, in the mobilisation of these discourses. It is not just a linguistic game, but Bobbi Sykes is constructing a particular view of social reality that is both personally and politically important. The poem is geared to making a strong political statement, one that will help create political involvement and energise political action. She clearly has a lot invested personally, because her use of the discourses is allowing her to position herself in a powerful way, to set herself in a particularly significant set of alignments and oppositions that allow her to make the political affirmation to her readers.

I've been comparing the affective objectives with the knowledge ones, but in many ways it would be more expected to pair them with the cognitive ones. It's not surprising, for example, that the affective objectives are expressed as present participles, like the cognitive objectives, since the affective is so often paired with the cognitive, dividing between them the realm of consciousness, of the processes through which we become aware of and respond to the world.

However, if we put the affective objectives up against the cognitive ones, the contrast is even sharper than with the knowledge objectives, since matters of cultural awareness and interpersonal understanding, let alone of social justice, are completely absent, except by implication. Perhaps a bit curiously, these objectives all have to do with manipulating language, seemingly in a vacuum:

- conceptualising how discourse, genre, register and textual features work together
- making decisions about the effectiveness of particular language choices among these relationships to clarify and negotiate meaning making
- evaluating and modifying language choices to gauge their appropriateness
- speculating about and trialing alternative options to generate different meanings.

Again the contrast makes a clear point: *the cognitive objectives are in themselves empty:*

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they need the affective to give them purpose.

You can conceptualise the relationship between discourse, genre, etc, make decisions about effectiveness, speculate and trial alternative options until you're blue in the face, but without affective involvement, these are just mental games. In fact, the very notions of effectiveness and appropriateness imply purpose, which in turn implies affective involvement.

But again, I would make the converse point, that I am not wanting to privilege the affective over the cognitive. I simply want to assert that for genuinely productive work they must both be present. The cognitive processes give the affective voice: they realise the affective (ie make it real) by operationalising it in language. In a very profound way, as I have been arguing on the Bobbi Sykes poem, is actually creating that self and world.

Let me exemplify this further by looking at another Bobbi Sykes poem:

One Day
Moving along Main St./
Whitesville/
Digging all them white faces /
(Staring or 'not staring')
Until I felt surrounded /
Lost / bobbing on a sea I didn't know /
I began to concentrate so hard /
(Head down)
On the lines and cracks
Of the footpath ...
And I felt you / unknown Brother /
Across the street /
Over the heads / cars /
Throwing me your glance /
Your salute / clenched fist /
Smile ...
Fellow Black /
You were majestic /
Your sparks lit up the street /
Whitesville/
And I was no longer moving along /
But / Brother
Moving up!

(Sykes 1988, p. 25)



Black Power movement at the Chicago Freedom Movement Rally Soldier Field Freedom Sunday. Source: Wikimedia Commons

The discourse of this poem is very recognisably African-American, drawing on the language and images of the sixties/seventies Black Power movement. The pivotal moment is the Black Power clenched fist salute. Even the rhythm has a kind of syncopated, jazzy/swinging movement. The discourse is clear and fairly easy to analyse – 'Main St', 'Whitesville', 'Digging' – one recognises easily the scene we're in. One also understands the importance of this discourse to Bobbi Sykes, how she is creating the self performatively through it. In fact, that is virtually the overt subject matter of the poem. She is there, alienated – 'lost' in 'Whitesville', trying to negate herself – 'Head down' – when she is called into a discourse that allows her to become a different self, that moves her into a different discursive universe where she feels strongly that she belongs. The poem is written out of the self constructed through the Black American political discourse. Again, as in 'Requiem', the work on understanding the discourse of the poem is pointless, unless we can get the students to understand the significance of Sykes's affective investment in it, and get them at some level to empathise with it.

Reading is an imaginative act Unless we are able to imagine ourselves into the text – and I think it's virtually true at some level of any kind of text – then the reading process is

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seriously undermined. We, don't need to agree with everything the text is saying, but we need to project it imaginatively, even if only to engage with it critically. We, as readers, in recreating the text imaginatively, are extending, creating ourselves, and that's why reading matters. Similarly, a writer creates a world and a self through mobilising language, as we have seen with Bobbi Sykes, and that's why writing matters.

Just briefly, I want to mention the skills objectives without saying much about them, since they are so similar to the knowledge and cognitive ones, and the contrast with the affective objectives is just as stark. The notion of 'purpose' gets a look-in here:

Students should be able to...

- use and control texts in their contexts, taking account of purpose, genre and register...

although there is nothing said about generating significant purposes or about evaluating or critiquing purposes. Purposes seem to be given and accepted.

The view of language skills here seems to deny the creative dimension of language use, that the relationship between the self, language and the experiential context is often very complex indeed. Language has an exploratory dimension. Experience is not just represented through the skilful use of language, but the discipline of writing enables one to get experience into perspective, to work out the implications and significance of what has happened. The ability to use language is not just about understanding how to manipulate it for specific functional functions, but is intimately linked with the ability to honour, understand and come to terms with what affects us deeply. To explore this point further, I want to look at one final poem from Bobbi Sykes:

FaUin'

The Sister has been raped, they said.

I squeezed my eyes tight-shut – in horror, though I knew, knew, knew, that the horror had just begun;

In shock, but not in disbelief, I heard,
by five Brothers.

And I thought
Brother, flesh of my flesh,
You have watched / while we /
your sisters cried, gave birth, died, went insane,
tore out our own hair,
spat on our own bodies,
screamed the soundless scream,
sweated blood –
in agonies which white men caused,
damn them and their lives.

Yet you have still learned from them,
and turn your new craft to us. Rape.
Bash. Kill.

We, your sisters, newly learnt
that protection is possible,
that with you by our side we are safe,
that together we are all safe,
must learn again...
Must learn to defend ourselves
from those who stand so close,
eat of our table, of food which we prepared, must
learn again to recognise the mad-dog disease
which is again the white man's legacy
(Sykes 1988, p.22)

The impression one gets is of the poem being generated out of a profound and driving need to come to terms with this terrible thing that has happened. This is played out in the language. Sykes had been constructing her world around notions of sisterhood and brotherhood, of all black people as family, of family as protection, and you can feel her rearranging the mental furniture as she reacts to what has happened, questioning the discourse, or rather modifying it. The terms, the 'field', that she had seen as the realm of the white man, have been taken over, 'taught' to the black men, contaminating the discourse of protective solidarity. The poem undoubtedly shows great command in its use of language, but to talk about it just in those terms seems almost obscene. One can't detach the affective charge. Which is not to say that one would value a bad poem on the same topic. The writing skill and the affective element must both be there, working in concert.

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It is instructive to take some of the affective objectives and turn them into skills, by turning them from present participles into non-finite verbs:

Students should be able to

- Experience and express emotional reactions
- Experiment with the flexible nature of language, explore its possibilities, and create desired effects
- Participate effectively in activities that involve connecting with people, feelings, places, objects
- Respect the identity of different cultural groups
- Value the world/s in which they live in order to understand better the worlds of others
- Empathise and sympathise: understand the experience of others.

It makes an excellent set of outcomes to complement the language skills the students need so they can actually practise the 'affective skills' listed here.

I should repeat that I am not doing a critique of the new syllabus, but just taking the section on objectives as a starting point for discussion. There is a tendency to build English curriculum around analysing the social nature of language – how it is informed by particular values and how it can be utilised for particular purposes – without acknowledging properly the significant affective dimension often underlying language use. Feeling in language is not necessarily illusory, misguided or manipulative. Any worthwhile English curriculum should be as concerned with understanding the often passionate personal involvement informing language use, as with the ways in which particular discourses or genres are utilised.

Howard Gardner has just published a fairly popularly-oriented book on education, *The Disciplined Mind* (Gardner 1999). I wouldn't agree with everything that he says by a long shot, but he does start interestingly from the classical notion that the purpose of

education is to teach 'the true, the beautiful and the good'. In other words, education should develop people in the areas of the intellectual, the aesthetic and the ethical. Those elements can be distributed in different subjects, but it does seem to me that English as the foundation subject in the school curriculum has some responsibility to cover them all. It might be a test of any English syllabus, how well it develops people in each of those areas. It certainly suggests the significance of the affective in English classrooms. Without question, it is important to work from a strong intellectual base of what we know about how language operates, and to develop the skills of using the resources of language in reading and writing. However, the aesthetic and the ethical are closely bound up with the affective, and it would be an impoverished curriculum indeed that ignored the affective realm.

In fact, what I have been trying to argue is that it is virtually impossible to ignore the affective, because the affective is not able to be separated out from knowledge, cognition and skills. If intellectual matters are to be meaningfully engaged with, then there must always be an affective element inherent.

In mounting the kind of argument that I have been developing here – that the intellectual and the affective are deeply interconnected and inseparable – there is a kind of inevitable self-subversion that happens. Since it is necessary to talk about and identify the two separate areas to affirm their interconnectedness, there is always the danger that one may seem to be assuming their separability and arguing for one over the other. For this reason, to finish, I do particularly want to stress the close connection between the affective and the intellectual, to insist that they aren't opposed at all, but rather bound up with one another. One of my favourite lines from Brecht is when he has his Galileo say, 'Thinking is one of the greatest pleasures of the human race' (1963, p.42). We experience thought affectively, pleasurably.

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Similarly our feeling is not divorced from thought. We are constantly using language to create the world for ourselves, and to create ourselves as thinking/feeling beings. As I said, it is why reading matters, why writing matters. In the end, it is why English teaching matters.

And to return to my title: what is 'the revenge of the unassessed'? The revenge of the unassessed is that the 'affective' has the last laugh. People think they can exclude it from assessment, but any work that didn't grow out of affect would be empty, weak and pointless. The affective is fundamental, and so, whether we want to or not, whether we like it or not, whether we acknowledge it or not, we are assessing the affective all the time.

If we've got to assess, I hope we wouldn't have it any other way.

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