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Literature in the English and Greek Secondary Curriculum: A Comparative Study¹

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Abstract

A systematic comparison of the aims and content of the secondary Literature curriculum in England and Greece shows that neither of the two countries is moving towards an idea of a united Europe, or towards an intercultural conception about the literary canon. The aims of the subject of Literature reflect certain priorities. Existing differences between the officially stated aims in both countries are related to the different place Literature holds in each culture and to different educational practices. These same differences also reflect the degree of emphasis placed on various aesthetic, political and educational factors and stem from the different social and political situations in the two countries. These factors, in turn, decide the place of Literature in the national culture and, hence, in the curriculum. This paper argues that those that set the curriculum should have their attention drawn to the possibility of Literature being taught in the framework of promoting a new European identity. This should be based on the awareness and recognition of the fact that the contribution of all European sub-cultures actually enriches and offers a great deal to the national cultures and thus establishes the new European citizenship.

1 Introduction

1.1 Choice of countries

I would like to begin by describing the countries chosen as the field of my comparison and by explaining my choice of this subject within the framework of Europeanization. There are two reasons. One is that while both England and Greece formally and officially belong to the European Community, they both exercise centrifugal forces and actually the politicians in these two countries, let alone the citizens themselves, behave as if their countries do not really belong to Europe. The idea of a unified Europe, not to mention the completion of Europeanization, is far from being internalised by both the English and Greeks. It seems that both countries, for reasons that cannot be dealt with here, stand apart from other E.E.C. countries. This does not imply that other countries do not face difficulties in adjusting educationally, let alone politically, to a unified Europe; rather that the two countries under examination present certain difficulties more noticeable than others. The

second reason is that the two countries share a common humanistic tradition upon which their educational systems and school curricula are based. Although I do not argue that the two countries view and apply humanism in much the same way, this common heritage is apparent in the curricula of both.

1.2 Europeanization

This paper views Europeanization in Education as an emphasis on the European dimension in the school curriculum, which accommodates the concern of individual countries about the maintenance of their own educational and cultural traditions while shaping a common European awareness and sensitivity. At the same time, this educational guideline - as I see it - recognises the fact that the contribution of all European sub-cultures actually enriches and offers a great deal to the national cultures and prepares students to acquire an understanding of their:

„common cultural heritage in a perspective/framework which stretches well beyond not only traditional national frontiers but also beyond the boundaries of the Community of the Twelve“ (Secondary Schools and European & International Education in Europe 1990: 28).

This educational dimension is justified on the basis of common European historical and cultural roots aiming towards a world of Freedom, Democracy, Peace and Collaboration. Europe does respect an idea of tolerance, although it is not always achieved.

„... tolerance has become one of the hallmarks of European culture. Europeans have had to learn to accept differences of principle and creed and to devise ways of living peaceably and amicably in a pluralist society“ (Council of Europe 1982: 11).

This pluralism accepts the right to be different, the right of non-dominant groups in different nations to be respected by the dominant ones, for their particular characteristics which are appreciated, encouraged and protected because they contribute to the multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multicultural Europe of our present time. In recognising the values of interdependence and respect between diverse groups, though, emphasis must be placed on the notion that the Europeanization of the curriculum must seek a wide European identity as a way of creating a new integration and sense of belonging for all pupils - future citizens - of a unified, but not uniform Europe (Balibar 1991).

The progressive consensus in the education community is that School Curricula can and should play a role in shaping a European conscience. For example, the European Parliament has argued:

„Education is undoubtedly the best way in which to eliminate the seeds of racism and intolerance from a society and to give its citizens the intellectual and moral means of deciding freely and rationally. Development of a national democratic consciousness and ability to resist fascist and, more generally, totalitarian temptations, depends on the quality of the educational system. The educational system of a contemporary democratic society must be based on values that stem from respect for human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms. It must try to apply to values in its structures and organisation as well as in the content of its teaching and pedagogical methods“ (European Parliament 1985: 84).

In school curriculum documents throughout Europe the promotion of the European dimension in Education is usually stated as a curricular aim, or is implemented through short or long-term projects or through textbooks (where cultural or historical elements relating to Europe are being introduced or emphasised) in the areas of History, Social Studies, European Studies, Civic Education or is attempted by means of a complete integration into the curriculum (European dimension across the curriculum) (Peck 1992).

To my knowledge, there has never been an attempt to teach about Europe or to reinforce the European ideal through the subject of Literature. Since Literature is, by the usual definitions, nationally oriented and specific to national cultures, written in different European mother-tongue languages and instructed always through those languages, it seems at first that it is the least suitable subject area for the reinforcement of the European ideal. However, this paper argues that curriculum designers should have their attention drawn to the possibility of Literature being taught in the framework of promoting and establishing this new European identity.

1.3 Literature

The subject of Literature is about familiarising students with the corpus of texts that are written in their national language and are thought of and described as the Literature of the nation. In most cases Literature is related to the nation's „high culture“ which is thought of as the best means of educating the young morally and aesthetically. Hence Literature, as I see it, is about the ways tradition and heritage are expressed in a special linguistic form. However, Literature is also about understanding ourselves and others as well as communicating with others, since it is one of the main and possibly most vivid sources of obtaining information about the culture, ideas, values and lives of other peoples. Literature in schools could include the teaching of texts written in other languages in authorised translations. This way Literature could serve as a means of transgressing the notion of boundaries, at least among nations in Europe if not in the whole world.

On the one hand, these nationally framed boundaries are not so rigid as they seem to be and they do not always apply to the production and appreciation of Literature as they possibly do in other fields². On the other hand, the criterion of national language for including a literary text in the corpus of a certain national Literature is not always adequate, for what would it mean for nations like Belgium? Thus one can argue (Καγιαλης 1994) that the corpus of any national Literature consists or could consist of the works that are written or translated in the language spoken by the citizens of each country and with which readers could become acquainted. For, readers do not necessarily make distinctions as to the national origin of a work of Literature and do not deliberately base their reading choices on the grounds of whether a text has been written in their mother tongue or whether it is translated in it from another language. Readers tend to assimilate whatever they like and find relevant to their experience and their reading habits, or whatever their school teaches them, because:

„Response to Literature is a learnt behaviour and is modified by what the student reads and is affected by his culture ... Response to Literature might be said to be a ‘cognitive style’, a way of thinking about literary experience, a way of ordering that thinking for discourse. If it is learnt, the curriculum maker must then deal with the question of what is to be learnt“ (Purves 1973: 315).

If we decide then that what is to be learnt has partly to do with the sensitisation and cultural awareness of the students towards the idea of a unified Europe (placing the emphasis on the cultural dimension of this unification) this decision could be implemented in the commonly designed Literature curricula of all European schools. Literature viewed in this way could very successfully serve as one of the important means, among others, of promoting the idea of a unified political, economical and cultural Europe as well as of promoting an awareness of belonging to a wider group of people with common bases, aims and values. For we can claim for Literature what G.Z.F. Bereday (1964) claimed so strongly for Comparative Education:

„... One studies foreign Literature not only to know foreign peoples but also - and perhaps most of all - to know oneself. Readers wrestle with foreign ways to learn about their own roots, to atomise and thus to understand the matrix of their own cultural heritage.“³

In other words, one of the justifications of Literature Education could very well be the better understanding of one's self and one's own cultural tradition without which the tolerance towards others cannot exist and flourish.

1.4 Method of study and sources

The comparative method of study adopted in this paper is that of G.Z.F. Bereday, though for reasons of economy the four stages of his method (Jones 1971: 22-25) have been merged: the pedagogical data of the two countries are described briefly and in most cases a simultaneous interpretation of those data in terms of existing knowledge is offered. In the main area of comparison, hypotheses are formulated (juxtaposition), and finally, conclusions are drawn from the simultaneous comparison.

A systematic examination of the aims and the content of the Secondary Literature curriculum in England and Greece is undertaken with the examination of official documents (Laws, Statutory Requirements, Legislations, Presidential Decrees ...), curriculum material (Syllabuses) and prescribed books (those of the Examination Boards in England and the ones prescribed, written and distributed by the Ministry of National Education and Religion in Greece). In addition, a number of related articles are also examined to support the outcome of the study. The focus of this paper is on Secondary Education; this does not imply though that the idea of teaching about the European ideal through Literature could not be implemented in Primary School as well.

2 Description and interpretation

2.1 Broad description of the educational systems

The two educational systems can be placed at the two extreme ends of the (theoretical) spectrum of de-centralisation-centralisation, with England on the one extreme (decentralisation) and Greece on the other (centralisation). During the last ten years systematic attempts have been made by the British government to exercise greater control over Education as a whole and especially over the school curriculum. Under the 1988 Education Reform Act the responsibility for the curriculum is no longer shared among Central Government, Local Authorities and Schools. This partnership no longer exists due to the Conservative Government's belief that

„standards“ had fallen during the 1960's and 1970's. Their solution was to prescribe a School Curriculum in the form of a National Curriculum. The responsibility of Curriculum Design and Examinations which belonged to two separate bodies, namely the School Curriculum Development Committee and the Secondary Schools Examinations Council, has been passed on to the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA). However, England is still far from having an educational system as centralised as the Greek one. One indication of this is the time needed in England for these changes to take place.⁴

Even when control over the curriculum and examinations is fully centralised the question „Who is in control of the curriculum“ remains a complex one and involves two major issues: the distribution of knowledge in a given society as well as the procedures that are relevant to the decision making process of this distribution. In every educational system, even in the most centralised ones, we can distinguish several levels of distribution of the educational responsibilities, starting from the national level down to the individual level (of the actual teachers and their classrooms) (Lawton 1983: 120-121). The intermediate levels of authority may vary in different countries, however, and, as the English educational system shows, it is useful to underline the idiosyncratic and historic independence at the local level, the relative independence of the individual schools and the relative autonomy of the English teachers in deciding on the content of their teaching.

In Greece, on the contrary, the educational system is centralised and the task of providing education is on the whole the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education and Religion, which designs, implements and evaluates the knowledge imparted in schools and distributes the set textbooks.

2.2 The school curriculum

One result of the distinct character of the two educational systems is the distinct character of their school curricula. In Greece the curriculum has always had the form of a National Curriculum (it is called Analytical Programme) imposed on all teachers, schools and students from Primary to Secondary Education. This curriculum includes both general and specific aims for each subject, the content to be taught and guidelines as to the teaching methodology. It does not operate as a framework within which the teachers can improvise but as a complete and detailed list of what should be covered by any class/year and at what speed. This, when combined with the school textbooks for Literature which are always prescribed books, gives a clear picture of the boundaries within which the Greek teacher has to work.

In England the curriculum is still largely determined by teachers, although serious attempts have been made to change the situation in the last ten years. The introduction of a National Curriculum in September 1989 can be considered a dramatic change for the educational system, especially when knowledge that is prescribed is also tested by the Central Government. However, the level of uniformity found in the curriculum in Greece cannot yet be observed in England. Certainly this level of uniformity does not apply to Primary Schools and Lower Secondary Schools,⁵ where the curriculum is designed primarily by teachers of the schools with consideration of the students' educational level and needs. Even in Upper Secondary Schools or in Sixth Form Colleges the freedom of teachers to choose the texts that are to be taught is comparatively wide and teachers of English

have always fought for making it even wider through the establishment of course work as an alternative to examinations graded externally.

2.3 The subject of Literature

In Greece, Literature is always taught separately from Language (although even in Language the dominant linguistic paradigm is the literary one) while in England, Language and Literature are not always separately treated as two distinct fields of study. Specialisation increases when moving from Lower to Upper Secondary School and at the same time there is a tendency for the two subjects to be combined. Literature in Greece is a compulsory subject for all students of Secondary Education while in England it belongs to the group of subjects taught to all students up to the age of 16.

2.4 Aims⁶

In England⁷ priority and emphasis are given to the teaching of Literature as an independent form of art. The main aim is purely aesthetic: knowledge and understanding of the texts, awareness of the literary phenomenon, aesthetic awareness, aesthetic pleasure derived from the reading of texts, aesthetic response to the text, familiarisation with Literature, in general, as a social phenomenon (*„knowledge of the contexts in which literary works are written and understood“* [2.1]) with historic continuity (*„sense of the Past and Tradition: the ability to see a literary work in its historical context as well as that of the present day“* [2.2]), and social implications, (*„candidates develop their awareness of personal, social and cultural significance in the study of literature“* [1.2]), critical appreciation of literary texts. As I will show, this is in sharp contrast with the situation in Greece.

It is remarkable that political and sociological awareness is openly stated as part of the syllabus aims. Thus, the subject matter of English Literature is defined in a way so as to include *„American and Commonwealth writing; significant works in translation may also be included“*, [1.1] while care is taken that *„the syllabus reflect in a positive way the linguistic and cultural diversity of society in the range of tasks set“* [3.1]. But this cultural diversity is translated and delivered in a way that makes no room for the rest of Europe and what is usually described as Western European Literature; it refers to and describes the socio-cultural diversity of Britain.

Elsewhere it is recognised that the discipline is *„humane (concerned with values)“* [3.2], that *„students discern and consider values and attitudes in texts“* [5.1] and *„communicative (concerned, that is, with the integrity of language as a means of enabling human beings to convey their thoughts and feelings one to another)“* [3.2] which is precisely where the notion of Europeanization could actually be cultivated, but as we shall see, it is not.

In Greece, priority is given to non-aesthetic aims, namely the transmission of national heritage: *„knowledge, understanding, acceptance and support of national culture and civilisation, knowledge of other civilisations, critical appreciation of the national culture and civilisation“* (Προεδρικό Διαταγμα 438/85, ΦΕΚ 158). In both countries there exist those aims bound closely to the teaching of Literature for reasons related to the linguistic development of students: understanding of the structure and function of language, language awareness, development of the ability to

communicate and express oneself correctly in speech and writing and cultivation of personal creative expression.

On a first reading of the curriculum documents in England it would seem that the English educational system is not oriented towards the transmission of cultural values (cultural tradition) through the teaching of Literature. Examining the situation more carefully, though, we come to the conclusion that in England the literary canon is itself the cultural heritage of the English people while in Greece this role is played by Ancient Greek Literature. This is why, in contrast to Greece, there is no mention of the cultural heritage in the English Examination Board syllabuses.

Needless to say, there is always a discrepancy between intentions and attitudes, curriculum aims and account of practice, statements and reality. The IEA hypothesis puts it well:

„The principal education officers commonly spend much effort on official statements of aims in the various parts of the curriculum. These statements serve a double purpose. On the one hand they explain the purpose of the various subjects to the public, and on the other hand, they seek to influence teaching in the classroom. For Literature the latter purpose is often not well served“ (Bloom 1969: F-13).⁸

2.5 Content

The subject of Greek Language and Literature has had a turbulent and unstable history following the struggle for the establishment of the modern Greek language as the formal language of the state.⁹ Literature is taught through prescribed set texts that are written and distributed by the Ministry of National Education and Religion. These texts are always extracts of literary works and never the whole literary piece, unless we are referring to short poems or short stories. (Though, sometimes even these are included in the form of an extract). For the subject of Literature six books have been used since 1977 (consequence of the last reform of 1976), one for each class (year) of the six years of Secondary Education. Each of these books is an anthology of pieces of Literature covering the whole period of modern Greek Literature i.e. 1100-1960. The books for the first two years are organised according to a thematic approach while the rest are organised according to a historical approach to Literature.

The teaching practice in Greek schools is still very traditional and could be seen as autocratic, teacher and text-based and one which does not recognise the needs and interests of individual students. The decisive factor for the teaching of Literature in school (even in the first two years of Secondary Education) is the literary canon in the way that it is formed by literary critics Κοντολιδου 1989: 62). This is in accordance with the low opinion of children's Literature reflected in its absence from the set textbooks, even from those of the first year. The boundaries between the last years of Primary School and the first years of Secondary are not so rigid and children's Literature (with a long tradition of excellence in Greece) might provide the link between the two kinds of schools.

The extracts of foreign Literature that are included in the set texts are mainly older Western European Literature (including Latin!) and to a lesser extent modern Western European texts and some modern American Literature. The only exception is that of Pablo Neruda.¹⁰ Given the inclusion of these texts it is striking that Literature of the countries surrounding Greece (Balkans, Turkey ...), not to mention

Third World Literature, is not included for reasons that have more to do with the Ministry of National Education and Religion than with the public taste¹.

In England, Literature is taught through the actual books published by commercial publishers and even when a school edition is available, in most cases the whole literary piece is included in the anthology. It is only a very recent practice that anthologies with extracts of texts have begun to be used for the first time in the history of the subject as a direct result of the latest changes in the educational system.

As far as the Lower School is concerned, the selecting of literary texts is almost unlimited and is based on and/or restricted by financial considerations (whether or not the Department has already got the selected books chosen by the individual teacher) while for the Upper Secondary School and the Sixth Form College the choice, while limited by the lists produced by the Examination Boards, remain rich and varied compared to the Greek anthologies. A number of Examination Boards, however, still allow teachers to choose among a great variety of books.

The literary canon, which is still a major force in deciding the texts, has been criticised widely by a number of English teachers (mainly by those who work in Inner-city schools) who, with an eye to immigrant minorities, have struggled against this narrow conception of the canon. They have tried instead to reflect, through the school organisation and curriculum, the multicultural character of today's British society. This struggle has resulted in the teaching of either very modern texts, or texts that have been written by citizens of the Commonwealth². It was not aimed at enlarging the canon's boundaries, but rather aimed at offering a direct challenge to it. This, of course, does not mean that in the subject of Literature the majority of texts are still not the literature of the elite (Eagleton 1983: 214, Widdowson 1982: 7, 28). Indeed a close look at the prescribed texts in the syllabuses, especially after the latest educational changes, shows that the majority of the texts are those that have always been thought of as „high culture“. There are a few Western European texts, which could not be considered adequate for the promotion of understanding among European nations, and the required American writers (Eagleton 1983).

In Greece the school literary corpus consists of partial texts taken from the literary canon (which is much looser than the English one), without the slightest questioning of its usefulness or its need on the part of the Greek teachers. A possible explanation for this is that in Greece after the period of 1974 (when the dictatorship was replaced by a democratic government) the focus was on the teaching of Ancient Greek in translation and on the teaching of progressive authors. The body of Greek teachers will probably need more time to adjust to the relatively new period of democratic stability before the debate can move on from „*what is chosen to be included in the literary canon*“ towards „*who is making those choices*“ and „*what is the justification of those choices*“.

In England the literary canon is more rigid and stable and has been the regulatory factor for the teaching of the subject matter since the establishment of English Literature as a University subject. The exposure of students to the literary canon is perceived to be the best guarantee for the transmission of high culture from one generation to the next (Eagleton 1983: 201). In general, the higher the grade the closer the content is to the literary canon; teachers are more free as to the content of the subject (choice of books) when in Primary Education or in the Lower Secondary School.

A decisive role in maintaining and transmitting a literary heritage, is played, of course, by the Examination Boards: what is tested is established through the lists of

their prescribed books. Since in England there has never existed the issue of „politically progressive“ authors being censored by central government, the debate was from the beginning a radical re-examination of the canon. A dynamic minority of English teachers (the ones who identify themselves with the National Association for the Teaching of English and the ones who work in Inner-city schools) have exercised in their classrooms a policy of cultural tolerance and, even more, an appreciation of the different cultures that were present along the lines of a multicultural education. The latest educational changes have not left these notions unchallenged. Sometimes they are openly attacked (Marenbon 1987); other times they are re-framed so as to improve and guarantee educational standards that, according to the conservative politicians, have fallen dramatically.

3 Juxtaposition and comparison

The political and constitutional stability of England is relatively unknown to Greece which has faced major political and constitutional changes during the last fifty years. The existence of political stability in England is closely related to the notion of tradition, of continuity and of piecemeal educational changes and innovations. On the contrary, in Greece innovations take place (or at least they are designed and planned) rapidly and are revised almost automatically with every change in policy resulting from a governmental change.

In comparison to Greece, in England the political and historical factors have resulted in a certain amount of success in creating a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society (Richmond 1983, Rosen 1975, Rosen & Burgess 1980).

„Colonial links have encouraged sizeable immigration to the UK. continuing during and after the change from Empire to Commonwealth. The large size and diversity of ethnic minorities in the UK. are due not only to the country's links with its former colonies, but also to the, by European standards, relatively liberal immigration policies pursued by succeeding Conservative and Labour Governments and the originally wide definition of citizenship of the UK.“ (European Parliament 1985: 48-49).

English society seems to be developing an increased awareness of its multicultural and multi-ethnic character with direct effects on the design of educational projects and policies in general, as well as on the subject of Literature, not without, of course, some difficulties or political attacks on the relatively new conquest. There is still much to be done to widen and sustain this change, since the national heritage remains still powerful and indeed is being strengthened by recent educational changes.

On the other hand, the Greek Ministry of National Education and Religion, with some justification, sees the Greek student population as mono-cultural and mono-religious. During the last five years, however, and due to the radical political changes in Eastern Europe, Greece has seen the increase of immigration mainly from the states of the ex-Soviet Union and from Albania. This can be called „internal“ immigration, since the majority of the immigrants consider themselves Greeks and should be accepted as such. No serious concern has been given to these immigrants by schools so far, except for the nomination of some of the Primary and Secondary Schools as „Schools for the Reception of Immigrants“^{d3}. The situation is far from hopeful, for sub-cultures are not encouraged by the dominant Greek culture. Since the system is centralised and very little is left for the teachers to determine, there is little hope that

the Ministry will recognise the need for the design of a new school curriculum that will conscientiously tend to the needs of the different and changed cultural picture of the school population.

We may conclude, then, that in the curricula of both countries the awareness of Europe is minimal if not altogether absent (with Greece being more European oriented) and hence the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the history, culture and traditions of their neighbours is only fragmentary. And while England has made at least an effort to reduce overt racial discrimination against members of its sub-cultures and has managed to achieve this with relative success, (even if this success seems under threat), Greece has a long way to go before it is able to ensure that the needs of the newly acquired students are met.¹⁴

In England the subject of Literature has followed a course leading from a cultural heritage model to a personal growth and social awareness model (Dixon 1975). Or to put it in other words, there has been a move from the autocratic towards the liberal perception of the subject under the influence of the movement of progressive education and child-centred education. During the last ten years, however, an attempt has been made by the government to re-orient and steer the subject towards the learning of skills.

As with the aims and content of education in all disciplines, the aims and content of the subject of Literature reflect certain priorities. In England one might say that these priorities could be summarised in the exercise, on the part of the students, of an in depth analysis and critical appreciation of Literature which leads to the articulation of a literary discourse about the literary text. In Greece, on the other hand, these priorities could be summed up as an effort simply to transmit the cultural heritage. These existing differences between the officially stated aims and the subject content in both countries are related to the different place Literature holds in each culture and to the different educational practices. These same differences also reflect the degree of emphasis placed on various aesthetic, political and educational factors which in turn stem from the different social and political situation in the two countries. These factors, in turn, decide the place of Literature in the national culture and, hence, in the curriculum.

As far as the actual content is concerned, when it is examined against the notion of Europeanization, questions like „*whose culture*“ and „*whose literature*“ are answered in different ways by the two countries. England seems to pay little or no attention to the rest of Europe while concentrating on the existing sub-cultures within its boundaries. Greece focuses more on Western Europe in a rather superficial way while paying no attention to the urgent demand of changing the whole school curriculum for all its pupils.¹⁵ Little by little the European dimension is regaining its former historical and cultural meaning. It is possible that this very notion has to be constantly rethought, challenged and enlarged in the light of current events (Secondary Schools and European & International Education in Europe 1990).

The definition of Europe has changed (Balibar 1991: 7, 10, 18), if nothing else, and therefore different nations should be encouraged to perceive and translate this change in various ways as well as to exercise different policies reflecting their starting points.

„Migration encourages the spread of sub-cultures. In a Europe composed of many historic cultures, the movement of peoples will add to existing cultural diversity“ (McLean 1990: 8).

Europe can be viewed either from an international and cosmopolitan perspective or from within its narrow historical Western European tradition. Whatever the case, the experience of this dimension and the widening of this perspective beyond the national region will facilitate mutual understanding and cooperation.

The European dimension cannot and should not be determined by a Ministerial directive, or looked upon as a superficial and empty political task to be accomplished. It must be a conviction or a commitment by the people involved. The European dimension in the curriculum should first of all tackle difference as a pedagogical challenge with unlimited possibilities and promises. Whether this will take new directions is not yet known, but we must always have in mind what is realistically attainable within the limited boundaries of the school system and the society within which it operates.

Notes

1. Paper presented at the 13th CESE Conference in Copenhagen, June 1994 under the theme „Education in Europe: The Challenges of Cultural Values, National Identities, Economic Demands and Global Responsibilities“, in Group 6: „Contemporary Curricula, Europeanization and Interculturalism“. For Correspondence: Eleni Hodolidou, 4 Heraklias Str., GR 546 36 Thessaloniki, Greece, tel./fax: 010 30 31 214 379.
2. The examples of T.S. Eliot and Henry James, among others, serve this argument very well.
3. Substituting „Comparative Education“ with „Literature“ which could be another means of comparing different nations (Bereday 1964: 4).
4. This Governmental effort to take control of the curriculum started in 1977 and has not been completed yet. It is often the case that in centralised educational systems these changes occur rapidly and as soon as they are designed they are implemented. On the other hand, even among conservatives there is the notion of diversity among schools as an aim, only that this „diversity of schooling is combined with rigorous standards for all our children“ (O’Hear 1993).
5. I am very aware of the different focus that somebody coming from a centralised educational system, like the Greek one, adopts when describing the notion and degree of centrality in a given educational system. Differences, however, between the two systems still exist.
6. The aims of the subject of Literature for England can be identified in both the Examination Board syllabuses as well as the D.E.S. documents Cox Report and the D.E.S. Document for the subject of English published by the HMSO, while for Greece they are stated in the Curriculum for the Teaching of Modern Greek Language and Literature (Appendix 1, D.E.S 1985, D.E.S. 1988, D.E.S. 1990, Προεδρικά Διατάγματα 479/85, ΦΕΚ 170, 427/86, ΦΕΚ 201).
7. Some of the examined Examination Board Syllabuses adopt the same aims. This is the case with 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 4.1 and 3.1, 6.1.
8. However, the examination of the actual educational reality in everyday practice is beyond the intensions of this article, which focuses on the prescriptions of the subject of Literature alone.
9. There has always been an emphasis in the Greek Educational System on literary-humane values very much supported by the Greek Orthodox Church, whose role in Education is stronger than in other European countries. The school curriculum of all students (and not only of the ones attending the equivalent of the Grammar School) has always been „heavily oriented towards the study of ancient Greece, but in order to give emphasis to a special Greek collective identity rather than to produce a distinctive kind of individual morality and sensitivity“ (McLean 1990: 107, Dimaras 1978: 11-20, Dimaras 1973-1974, Papanoutsos 1978: 46-50, Χοντολιδου 1989).

10. English: Shakespeare, Byron, Oscar Wilde, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, French: Paul Eluard, Albert Camus, Jacques Prévert, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Jean Paul Sartre, Charles Baudelaire, Stendhal, Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac, Molière, Montaigne, Russian: Fedor Dostoyevsky, Alexander Pushkin, Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekov, Maxim Gorki, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Micahel Solohof, German: Goethe, Berthold Brecht, Heinrich Böll, Spanish: F.G. Lorca, American: Hemingway, Ezra Pound, Latin: Vergilius, Lucritius, Plautus as well as series of several others, such as Hans Christian Andersen, Franz Kafka, etc.
11. The number of translated fiction books in Greece is astonishing when compared with its population. The number of translated fiction books of Turkish literature e.g. is not small and Turkish writers are well known and appreciated by intellectuals in Greece (the example of Nazim Hikmet is possibly the most well known).
12. Some characteristic examples are the inclusion of Commonwealth writers under syllabus headings such as „English World Wide“ [3.2], or „Writers and their Culture“ [1.2], or „Childhood and Family in Black Writing“ [3.1]: Samuel Selvon, V.S. Naipaul, Chinua Achebe, Athol Fugard, Wole Soyinka, Narayan, Timothy Mo and several Caribbean poets such as Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Derek Walcott. Other non-British and non-Western writers to be found in syllabuses are: Jung Chang, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Toni Cade Bambara, Earl Lovelace, Antonio Jacinto.
13. No research has been conducted so far for the systematic investigation of the needs of these children, their schools and their teachers.
14. By teaching their literature and recognising as well as respecting their cultural identity and difference as a start.
15. If the different type of literacy that immigrant students possess is seen as illiteracy, as deficiency or as problematic then the changes that will occur will affect only partially the school curriculum; they will be designed only for the immigrant groups until they are assimilated.

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Table of examination board syllabuses used in this paper

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A Level Syllabus 1996: English Language Advanced Level (9174), English Literature Advanced Level (9171), English Advanced Level Supplementary). [1.1]

Key Stage 4 Syllabus 1994: English Literature (1212). [1.2]

2. *Midland Examining Group*

University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate. AS&A Level English Literature and English Literature (Modular): Syllabuses for Courses Starting Autumn 1994 UK Centres only. [2.1]

University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate. English Subjects General Studies: Examination Syllabuses for 1994 and 1995 UK Centres only. [2.2]

General Certificate Secondary Education: English Literature Syllabus A (syllabus code 1512) 1995. [2.3]

General Certificate Secondary Education: English Literature Syllabus B (syllabus code 1513) 1995. [2.4]

3. *Northern Examinations and Assessment Board (formerly The Joint Matriculation Board)*

General Certificate of Secondary Education. Syllabus for 1995: English Literature. [3.1]

General Certificate of Education (AS/A/S). Syllabus for 1995: English [English (Advanced Supplementary), English Language (Advanced Supplementary) English Language (Advanced), English Literature (Advanced and Special) Syllabuses A, B and C, Optional Test in Creative Writing. [3.2]

General Certificate of Education Syllabus Offprints 1994: English [English (Advanced Supplementary), English Language (Advanced Supplementary) English Language (Advanced), English Literature (Advanced and Special) Syllabuses A, B and C, Optional Test in Creative Writing. [3.3]

4. *Southern Examining Group*

Certificate of Secondary Education (NC95/53) National Curriculum: English Literature, 1955 Examinations. [4.1]

GCSE English and English Literature Key Stage 4. Revised January 1993. [4.2]

5. *Associated Examining Board*

GCE Advanced Level English and English Literature: Syllabuses for 1996 Examinations. [5.1]

6. *Welsh Joint Education Committee*

General Certificate of Secondary Education/General Certificate of Education 1994: English and English Literature. [6.1]