



This is a peer-reviewed, post-print (final draft post-refereeing) version of the following published document and is licensed under All Rights Reserved license:

McLoughlin, Nigel F (2015) Interpretation, Affordance and Realised Intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer. In: Creative Writing and Education. Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, pp. 107-119. ISBN 978-1783093526

AAM post peer-reviewed

Official URL: <http://www.multilingual-matters.com/display.asp?isb=9781783093526>

EPrint URI: <http://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/2551>

Disclaimer

The University of Gloucestershire has obtained warranties from all depositors as to their title in the material deposited and as to their right to deposit such material.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation or warranties of commercial utility, title, or fitness for a particular purpose or any other warranty, express or implied in respect of any material deposited.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation that the use of the materials will not infringe any patent, copyright, trademark or other property or proprietary rights.

The University of Gloucestershire accepts no liability for any infringement of intellectual property rights in any material deposited but will remove such material from public view pending investigation in the event of an allegation of any such infringement.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR TEXT.

Interpretation, Affordance and Realised Intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer.

Nigel McLoughlin

Since 'Interpreting the Variorum' first appeared in 1976, it has had a great influence on reader response criticism, where it has been part of a movement towards centralising the experience of readers; the interpretive strategies readers use to make meaning; and the socially constructed nature of language more generally. The arguments contained in 'Interpreting the Variorum' have been seen as problematic for the discipline of stylistics (Fish, 1979; Smith, 1978; Paton, 2000). Cognitive stylistics (sometimes also called cognitive poetics) is based around a set of theoretical approaches which attempt to explain and model the cognitive processes through which readers make meaning from texts. It incorporates theoretical approaches from cognitive science, psycholinguistics and linguistics and applies them to the interpretation of literary texts. This can include consideration of mental scripts and schemas (Cook, 1994), the ways in which cognitive metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Turner, 1987; Lakoff & Turner, 1989) and blending theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002) can be applied to texts, or as in examples I consider later, how Text World Theory (Werth, 1999; Gavins, 2007) might allow us to analyse the mental spaces constructed through the act of reading the text in a particular context. Text World Theory offers a way of analyzing the relationship between mental 'worlds' produced as readers integrate information in the text with their contextual knowledge in order to generate a stable representation of the world of the text. This considers the 'world-building elements'

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

(people, things) that make up the text and the processes that act upon them, and how they are integrated into a holistic mental world. It also maps the types of movement into different worlds, by allusion to past or future worlds for example, or through modalised propositions which offer insights into characters wishes and beliefs, for example, which create separate worlds in which these wishes and beliefs might be realised (see Stockwell, 2002a for a broad introduction to a number of different approaches).

This chapter examines the arguments Fish makes, offers ways in which cognitive stylistic analysis may address Fish's concerns, and finally identifies any common ground between Fish's arguments and stylistics generally, and cognitive stylistics in particular. In so doing the chapter considers how such analyses can be of benefit to the educational development of creative writing students by examining how such approaches may deepen their understanding of how texts are processed by readers, and what the evidence suggests may be ways of manipulating readerly processes for authorial goals.

Fish's (1980a) basic arguments in 'Interpreting the Variorum' may be summarised as follows:

1. Formalist analysis 'flattens' the text and makes the temporal or serial aspect of language and text disappear (147).
2. Formal structure does not exist independently of the reader's experience (147).
3. The focus of description should be the reader's experience rather than any structures in the text (152).
4. The reader 'realises' both in the sense of 'makes real' and in the sense of 'understands' the author's intention through their interpretive strategies (161).

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

5. Interpretive communities are those who share the same strategies for 'writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions' (171).
6. An author makes an utterance on the basis of assumptions about strategies employed by a reader rather than what is 'in' the text. These assumptions are in turn based on the strategies the author would employ when confronted by such an utterance (173).

Fish argues that there are no objective linguistic structures, only subjective ones. In the introduction to his essay, 'Interpreting "Interpreting the Variorum"', Fish states that interpretive communities will agree among themselves what constitutes a 'fact' and by extension a 'structure' (1980b: 174). Fish is right in that all structures that we perceive are the result of perceptual strategies we employ. Because our perceptual systems tend to function in basically the same ways for the vast majority of us, we tend to agree on our perception of those structures. With regard to language such perceptual strategies are required for us to perceive even the most basic structures. Phonemes are perceptually classified with clear boundaries, which can change depending on the language spoken (Werker & Lalonde, 1988); the rate of speech (Summerfield, 1981); and the surrounding phonological and lexical context (Ganong, 1980). Part of language acquisition is the use of interpretive strategies to decide where word boundaries are (Johnson & Jusczyk, 2001).

We have socially constructed inferences, which we understand, but which exist beyond what is said. Because of this, we can understand 'it's warm in here' as a request to open a window, when the context signals it. Speakers of a language agree on what constitutes, and what functions as, basic linguistic structures within that language. I agree with Fish that 'intention and understanding are two ends of a conventional act' (1980a: 161). That act takes place in language; usually where both participants are familiar with, and broadly agree on, what the 'interpretive

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

community' of those who use the language consider to be the 'rules' of that language. They generally agree what particular 'structures' are used for; and the set of meanings that those 'structures' generally afford.

So in effect, even though linguistic structures arise out of interpretation, whether they are 'real' or 'socially constructed' is a moot point among the community who use them. The community behaves as if they are 'real'. Fish slips into this behaviour on several occasions, for example he says: 'a reader is invited to place [the significant word or phrase] first in one then in another structure of syntax and sense' (154). If, as Fish asserts, these structures do not exist, then the reader must create the structures into which they can insert the word. The fact that it is possible to describe the structures a reader creates in terms of syntax and sense, and understand these descriptions in reliable ways, demonstrates that language users construct very similar structures in similar circumstances. Further, they socially construct agreed sets of possible affordances and meanings that are generated prototypically from what they agree to see as structure. This will influence what the author is likely to try and achieve through the use of that agreed structure, or through novel variations of language structure that may challenge the agreed use. This is not to say there cannot be some disagreement, and misunderstanding, but the disagreements and misunderstandings are usually limited within certain bounds. Fish acknowledges as much in his chapter 'What is Stylistics and why are they saying such terrible things about it?' when he says:

The structure with which the stylisticians are concerned is a structure of observable formal patterns, and while such patterns do exist they are themselves part of a larger pattern the description of which is necessary for the determination of their value (Fish, 1995: 108-109).

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

In order to illustrate what he feels is wrong with formalist analysis, Fish presents several ambiguities, which he refers to as 'syntactic slide[s]' (1980a: 147), that are resolved across a line break. Fish asserts that formalist analysis of the text results in a masking of what the reader is experiencing, by focusing on a 'correct' interpretation which may not necessarily be agreed by other readers. A cognitive stylistic reading of the lines concerned will bring out the reader's experience, foreground the temporal and serial aspects that Fish asserts disappear in stylistic analysis, and provide an explanation for what the reader experiences.

One would predict that such explanations can be very helpful to the creative writing student in offering a structure and a vocabulary through which they can understand and analyse the reader's experience. This is important for two reasons: Creative writers are always the first readers of their own texts, and any means of understanding how they function as readers, and what the processes of reading actually entail will be helpful to them as readers of their own texts by allowing them to better understand how their interpretive processes integrate with their perceptions of linguistic structure to yield the effects that they do. Secondly, by understanding the mechanisms by which it is thought that these perceived structures may relate to interpretations, the student may be better equipped to devise texts which deploy certain structures in novel ways and to experiment deliberately, while having some theoretical understanding of the likely effects engendered on the reader. Such experimentation and analysis on the part of the writer may also inform the theories they test through the need to explain surprising results and the manifestation of unintended meanings, which may require some change to the theory to be made in order to accommodate the new knowledge generated with regard to perceived structure and meaning.

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

The first of Fish's examples considered here occurs in Milton's '*Lawrence of Virtuous Father Virtuous Son*':

He who of those delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise. (in Fish, 1980a: 149).

The word 'spare' at the end of the first line quoted is lexically ambiguous. It can mean 'refrain from' or 'forbear to'. At the end of the utterance the reader is left not knowing whether the lines are a warning to refrain from delights or an approbation of judicious indulgence in them. There is psycholinguistic evidence to indicate that both senses of an ambiguity are activated initially and resolved by contextual cues subsequently (Swinney, 1979). Where the context favours both, the most common meaning tends to be initially chosen (Rayner & Frazier 1989). If the meanings are equally common, then the ambiguity may well persist without final resolution, as it does here. In terms of Text World Theory (Werth, 1999; Gavins, 2007), the effect of such ambiguity may be described as giving rise to two possible text worlds at the same level: one where the delights are warned against, one where they are approved, and the reader is then forced to toggle between these as no clear resolution emerges (for an example of Text World Theory in action see McLoughlin, 2013; for an in depth treatment Gavins, 2007 is exemplary).

Such an analysis does what Fish asks and analyses the experiences of the reader as they attempt to make meaning in real time. Further it offers the potential to include Fish's interpretive communities as part of the analysis. For example, those who view Milton as a devout and temperate man, may settle on 'refraining from delights' as the meaning. Others, who perhaps view Milton primarily in terms of his beliefs in personal freedoms, may construct the meaning 'that one should make time for delights'. Yet other readers, perhaps those who see Milton's

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

closing lines as transferring judgment to the reader, may resist settling for one meaning and maintain both meanings as important and integral features of the text. However, readers are also capable of holding in mind these three possible intentions without settling on a final choice. Such analysis demonstrates for the writing student the interplay between context and structure, and how different effects can be achieved or may be favoured through manipulation of the relationship between the structural features of language and what is allowed into context and what is withheld. This provides a principled way to examine and explain the interpretive moves the reader carries out in terms of different sets of cognitive processes and their relation to the linguistic structure.

Contextual knowledge is processed along with lexical meanings and syntactic structure in order to generate the overall meaning of the text. The meaning generated can and does change as the reader encounters the words in series. A classic example of this occurs in certain reduced relative clauses e.g. 'The horse raced past the barn fell', where one meaning is constructed up until 'barn' but a new meaning must be constructed when one encounters 'fell'. This typically results in a need to go back and reanalyse. There are also texts that withhold sense – nonsense verse, for example, even where it is syntactically regular such as 'Jabberwocky' (Carroll, 1936: 153). We cannot claim to make *sense* of them, because even though the structure is capable of making sense, the words that are strung on the structure lack lexical meaning. Sense is also difficult to make where meaningful words are combined on an 'illegal' structure such as 'fell past raced the pig the cow'.

Fish's argument that intention is known as soon as it is recognised, and it is recognised when sense is made, and sense is made as soon as possible (Fish, 1980a: 164) is in line with psycholinguistic theory. Research has shown that initial sense is made as soon as the (perceived)

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

structures afford closure; that this may be influenced by expectation and prior context; and that re-analysis occurs if there is later found to be an irresolvable conflict with subsequent contextual or linguistic cues (Rayner, Carlson & Frazier, 1983; Taraben & McClelland, 1988; Tanenhaus, Carlson & Trueswell, 1989). The experimental data supports the idea that different senses and meanings can emerge in temporal series and change as the text is presented. This can be exemplified by an analysis of another example Fish uses, which focuses on a structural ambiguity, which again is situated at a line break in Milton's 'On the Late Massacre at Piedmont':

Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant: that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who having learnt thy way
Early may fly the Babylonian woe. (in Fish, 1980a: 153)

The structural ambiguity here is whether the adverb 'early' acts to modify 'learnt' or 'fly'. The former will imply a meaning that those brought up in faith may escape the coming woe; while the latter will imply that those who have seen what God is capable of will flee quickly from his wrath. Because of the introduction of the line break, the latter meaning is initially constructed because the eyes need to perform a longer 'return sweep saccade' (Liversedge & Findlay, 2000: 10) back across the line allowing time for 'who having learnt thy way' to be activated as a unit of sense, and because readers know that lines of poetry often function as a unit of sense, the adverb is initially assigned to the following sense unit modifying the verb 'fly'. Reanalysis may also take place because part of the contextual knowledge about the author conflicts with this reading.

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

Such structural ambiguities afford different interpretive communities the opportunity to construct different readings, depending on contextual knowledge and personal beliefs about the nature of God, or beliefs about what poems are meant to do. It is possible to use cognitive stylistic analysis to help understand and explain the cognitive processes the reader uses in order to make meaning from the utterance, and to suggest possible ways in which different interpretive communities may construct different meanings from the text, and how these may be preferentially accessed and why. It is interesting that in the example above 'thy way' can be understood as meaning how God has treated the Waldensians. However, Fish argues: 'This is not the conclusion we carry away' (1980a: 154). An interesting question which may be raised at this point is: who is the 'we' in this instance? It appears that Fish assumes we all belong to the same interpretive community at that point, possibly because certain biases and cultural and autobiographical knowledge related to Milton are being assumed in the reader of 'Interpreting the Variorum'.

Reading as a poet, I 'realise' (to use Fish's parlance (1980a: 161)) Milton's intention as using the line break in order to play off the afforded meanings in both poems. Because the reader must perform a longer saccade across the line break, this means that it is a useful place for a poet to insert structural or lexical ambiguities because the reader's brain will have longer to process the information to that point while the longer saccade is in progress, and thus will be forced to hold active any ambiguity at least until after the saccade.

Students of creative writing (particularly poets in this instance), having been made aware of these effects, and the ways in which they can influence how they use their line breaks, stanza breaks, and other pauses, may be encouraged to usefully apply this knowledge to purposefully experiment with likely cognitive effects in the reader as a deliberate artistic strategy within their

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

work. In the case of prose writers perhaps switches between alternate plotlines; or for dramatists changes between speakers and scenes might also provide equivalent opportunities to use space and pauses in equivalent ways. Cognitive stylistic analysis also provides an appropriate theoretical framework and a set of vocabulary which can be used by students to discuss the use of craft for certain cognitive effects when contextualising their work in the critical commentaries which tend to accompany assignments.

Fish's notion of interpretive communities has received just criticism for not being fully explained, either in terms of the origin of interpretive communities, or how they may change (Toolan, 1990: 130). The fact that a collection of individuals will engage in readings which are stable 'because they will see (and by seeing make) everything in relation to that community's assumed purposes and goals' (Fish, 1980c: 15) is problematic, because, as the human sciences have shown us, human beings tend to vary across a statistical distribution (and not always a normal distribution) with regard to almost every measurable quality in terms of perception and belief. So, at the very least, such communities must be radial categories with individuals varying across a number of different axes. It may be that most individuals may be classified as belonging to more than one interpretive community; and it is possible to expand the notion to include an interpretive community of 'English speakers' who interpret utterances as arising from the structures that exist for them; who have developed and use strategies to 'decode' these perceived structures; and who draw socially agreed denotations and connotations from them. It could further be argued that such an interpretive community is constructed through the processes related to language acquisition such as phoneme recognition; the development of word boundary recognition; and parsing competence.

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

Interpretive communities may develop from training or political views. Fish gives one clear example of this where he refers to those readers who impose a 'Christian exegesis' on texts (1980a: 170). Perhaps some of the most easily identifiable interpretive communities are those who construct resistant or politicised readings of texts from particular perspectives, such as feminist or Marxist readers. However, there will also be significant individual and sub-group variation within these radial categories. As Sara Mills (1992) demonstrates, it is possible to belong to more than one; or to sit in the radial space between two or more; or to construct a new interpretive community out of elements of others.

Mills' reading of John Fuller's poem 'Valentine' (quoted in full in Mills, 1992: 195-197) demonstrates how two very different interpretations may be constructed from the same text. Mills chose to analyse the poem, because it caused a polarised discussion along gender lines when it was taught at a summer school she attended. Most of the males, she reports, found it humorous and read the poem according to what she says is its dominant reading: that of a light-hearted address from the poet to the object of his affection which uses innuendo and playful images. However, the females felt more angered by the poem; perhaps because it invites a reading from a perspective of male power and objectifies the female. Mills uses a Marxist feminist contextualised stylistic approach to analyse the poem, through which she produces a reading which in many respects runs directly counter to the dominant one, and in which she demonstrates the potential within the language for much more ambiguity, and through that, its affordance of a very sinister reading indeed.

In part, this is generated by the images that Fuller uses. For example, the voice of the poem talks of having the object of his desire in his power, and seeing her eyes dilate. The dominant reading reads the dilation of the pupils as being due to desire, but the pupil of the eye also dilates

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

when one is afraid, so the potential exists to read against the dominant account and the contextual knowledge affords a more sinister possibility. This is not the only image in the poem that affords this ambiguity. The object of the speaker's affection is visualised being chased up a tower screaming and being made to cower. The dominant reading is taken to be that such 'violence' is merely playful, but the potential exists for it to be read (as Mills does) to signify the wish to frighten and subjugate the object of desire and to have power over her.

What such analysis demonstrates for the writing student is that intention is not fixed, and as Fish says, is 'realised' by the reader, and can be 'realised' according to the reader's particular reading strategy (and the political context of their reading), and that the language affords such constructions of perceived intention and meaning through its heavy dependences on the context or contexts within which the utterance is perceived by the reader to occur. This is might be particularly said of literary critics who are trained to foreground what may be backgrounded, or unconscious in the text; and by being aware of this, writers may be more sophisticated readers and more in control of how their 'intent' might be 'realised'.

However, interpretive communities need not be so clearly marked. Fish (1980a: 168) outlines two interpretive presuppositions for his reading of 'Lycidas': that the reader is familiar with both Milton, and pastoral poems. However, if the text is presented as a completely anonymised text to someone unfamiliar with it, the reader will still be able to extract much of the same basic meaning from it, even though their reading may not be quite as rich because there are things that will be missing from their background and contextual knowledge. A similar example how differing cultural knowledge may lead to different 'realisations' of a poem may be given with regard to Heaney's 'Mid-Term Break' (Heaney, 1998: 12). In the poem a large number of white

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

things are mentioned: snowdrops, ambulances (white with a red cross), nurse's uniforms, bandages and candles.

However, a Northern Irish Catholic will know that traditionally, young children are buried wearing a white shroud, in coffins lined with white material. In the case of very young children the coffin itself is also white. So when those who possess that specific cultural knowledge read the poem, the overpowering image is complete whiteness except for the poppy bruise and the red cross on the ambulance. Many people will share the knowledge related to the ambulances, nurses, candles and bandages but not the shroud, coffin and lining. They may picture the child in a suit, or a uniform, and picture a brown coffin. There is nothing in the linguistic structure of the text to indicate the colour of the coffin or the burial clothes, it depends entirely on the contextual knowledge. Readers from these different communities are constructing different texts from exactly the same utterance. These differences can be explained by cognitive stylistics in terms of the mental picture evoked by the interaction of cognitive processes and cultural contextual knowledge in each case, thereby providing ways of understanding how interpretive communities may originate and change. Text World Theory, for example, could therefore be used to describe the differences in the text worlds constructed by each reader. In this example above, the two text worlds constructed will be populated by subtly different world building elements. The aim is not to merely identify that different readers construct different meanings, we know that they do. The aim is to identify the factors that influence that, and find cognitive models which can explain how it happens. Such models may help the student better understand how readers construct meaning, and the mechanisms through which the construction of meaning may be influenced by the linguistic choices of the writer.

When discussing how interpretive communities are made up, Fish seems to fall into the trap of which he accuses others – that of flattening the text. The temporal dimension that Fish so prioritised in the early part of the essay seems to have been overlooked. Fish gives no consideration to the various points within the temporal processing of the text when the interpretations begin to diverge and how readers find themselves moving into different interpretive communities over the course of the textual utterance and why that might happen. This leads to my main argument with Fish, especially in relation to the 'cruxes' he analyses: why should we read a text roughly the same way up until an ambiguity and then suddenly find ourselves in different 'interpretive communities' if the linguistic structure itself (socially constructed or not) did not afford such differentiation. There seems to be no dispute among readers with regard to the vast majority of meanings, and even where there are cruxes that afford choices of meaning, readers must recognise the choices of meaning available in order to choose between them. Psycholinguistics suggests that one possibility for readers settling on a preferred interpretation is the varying contextual weights each reader may give, dependent on their experiences and viewpoint, to the meanings afforded by the perceived structure.

In the preceding arguments and analyses it has been demonstrated that stylistics is capable of foregrounding the temporal aspects of texts and foregrounding the reader's experience of making and choosing meanings. Even if readers construct the 'structures' rather than the structures being 'real', one can still use cognitive stylistics to analyse these agreed 'structures' and how they give rise to meaning(s) even if one has to begin by acknowledging the fact that they are constructed using perceptual and interpretive strategies. Given that Fish acknowledges that there is an author 'hazarding projection' (1980a: 173) and that projection, since it takes the form of an utterance, must have some linguistic structure, 'real' or socially constructed, from

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

which members of a language community are capable of creating meaning(s), then stylistics can accommodate Fish's view as one which does not lie outside its disciplinary aims, expressed by Stockwell as:

'a rigorous account of reading that is both individual and social, and genuinely recognises the text as an intersubjective phenomenon and the literary work as a product of craftedness and readerly cognition' (2002b: 92).

This accommodation is particularly useful to creative writing students in that it allows a way of analysing and contextualising the perceived 'authorial projection' in terms of its 'realised intention', thereby acknowledging the co-operative venture entailed in making text, and the complex relationship between writers, readers, and writers as readers, while also drawing on preexisting literary, cognitive and linguistic frameworks, which can inform such discussions, and place them within a theoretical context.

(4483)

Exploration:

1. Cognitive Stylistics may prove useful to creative writers because it offers a set of theories and models, through which it is possible to understand the cognitive strategies of the reader, and different ways of reading.
2. Models such as Text World Theory can provide a detailed examination of cognitive effects engendered by linguistic structures, and their effects on the reader in real time.
3. Cognitive Stylistics may offer insights into the ways in which interpretive communities are formed and operate.

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

4. It can also offer an alternative view that can account for tolerance of ambiguities and readers reading from the viewpoint of several interpretive communities simultaneously.
5. This is useful to the student writer because through learning how language structure influences readers' cognitive models of the text, they can learn to manipulate those structures and thereby the reader's cognitive processes.
6. Fish's realisation of the 'author hazarding projection' and the 'realisation of the author's intent' can influence emergent creative writing theory that seeks to focus on the experience and strategies of both writer and reader.
7. Focus on the cognitive processes engendered through the processing of text can also suggest some interesting new exercises for textual production that can be used to teach students about language structure and creative textual structuring.

Biography: Nigel McLoughlin is Professor of Creativity and Poetics at the University of Gloucestershire, UK. He is a published poet with five collections in print, the latest of which is *Chora: New & Selected Poems* (Templar Poetry, 2009). Since 2008 he has been Editor of *Iota* poetry journal, and he has served as a guest editor for *TEXT: The Journal of Writing and Writing Courses* and for the journal *American, British and Canadian Studies*. In 2011 he was awarded a UK National Teaching Fellowship. A recording of his poetry can be found on The Poetry Archive here: <http://www.poetryarchive.org/poet/nigel-mcloughlin>

References:

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

Carroll, L. (1936) *Jabberwocky*. In *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll* (p. 153). New York: Modern Library.

Cook, G. (1994) *Discourse and Literature: The Interplay of Form and Mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fauconnier G. and Turner, M. (2002) *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York: Basic Books

Fish, S.E. (1995) What is stylistics and why are they saying such terrible things about it? In J. J. Weber (ed.) *The Stylistics Reader: From Roman Jakobson to the Present* (pp. 94-116). London: Routledge.

Fish, S.E. (1980a) Interpreting the Variorum. In *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (pp. 147-173). Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Fish, S.E. (1980b) Interpreting "Interpreting the Variorum". In *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (pp. 174-180). Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Fish, S.E. (1979) What is stylistics and why are they saying such terrible things about it? Part II. *boundary 2* 8 (1), 129-146.

Fish, S.E. (1980c) Introduction or how I stopped worrying and learned to love interpretation. In *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (pp. 1-21). Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

- McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM
- Ganong, W.F. (1980) Phonetic categorization in auditory word perception. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 6, 110-125.
- Gavins, J. (2007) *Text World Theory: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Heaney, S. (1998) Mid-Term Break. In *Opened Ground: Poems 1966-1996* (p.12). London: Faber & Faber.
- Johnson, E.K. and Jusczyk, P.W. (2001) Word segmentation by 8 month olds: when speech cues count more than statistics. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 44 (4), 548-567.
- Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1989) *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Lakoff, G. and Turner, M. (1989) *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide To Poetic Metaphor*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Liversedge, S.P. and Findlay, J.M. (2000) Saccadic eye movements and cognition. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 4 (1), 6-14.
- McLoughlin, N. (2013) Negative polarity in Eavan Boland's 'The Famine Road'. *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing* 10 (2), 219-227.
- Mills, S. (1992) Knowing your place: A marxist feminist stylistic analysis. In M. Toolan (ed.) *Language, Text and Context* (pp. 182-205). London: Routledge.
- Paton, F. (2000) Beyond Bakhtin: Towards a cultural stylistics. *College English* 63 (2), 166-193.

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

Rayner, K., Carlson, M. and Frazier, L. (1983) The interaction of syntax and semantic processing: Eye movements in the analysis of semantically biased sentences. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour* 22, 358-374.

Rayner, K. and Frazier, L. (1989) Selection mechanisms in reading lexically ambiguous words. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 15, 779-790.

Smith, B.H. (1978) *On the Margins of Discourse: The Relation of Literature to Language*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stockwell, P. (2002a) *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Stockwell, P. (2002b) Miltonic texture and the feeling of reading. In E. Semino, & J.V. Culpepper (eds) *Cognitive stylistics: language and cognition in text analysis* (pp. 73-94). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Summerfield, Q. (1981) Articulating rate and perceptual constancy in phonetic perception. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 7, 1074-1095.

Tanenhaus, M.K., Carlson, G.N. and Trueswell, J.C. (1989) The role of thematic structure in interpretation and parsing. *Language and Cognitive Processes* 4, 211-234.

Taraban, R. and McClelland, J.L. (1988) Constituent attachment and thematic role assignment in sentence processing: Influences of content-based expectations. *Journal of Memory and Language* 27, 597-632.

McLoughlin, N. (2015). 'Interpretation, affordance and realised intention: the transaction(s) between reader and writer' in G. Harper (ed.) *Creative Writing in Education*, pp. 107-119. Clevedon: MLM

Toolan, M. (1995) Stylistics and its discontents: or getting off the Fish "hook". In J. J. Weber (ed.) *The Stylistics Reader: From Roman Jakobson to the Present* (pp. 117-135). London: Routledge.

Turner, M. (1987) *Death is the Mother of Beauty: Mind, Metaphor, Criticism*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Werker, J.F. and Lalonde, C.E. (1988) Cross-language speech perception: Initial capabilities and developmental change. *Developmental Psychology* 24, 349-355.

Werth, P. (1999) *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse*. Harlow: Longman.