In relation to the students' experiences of creativity, there is an implicit message in this book that an environment of respect and trust needs to be embedded in the culture of the course and even the higher education institution itself. As Marilyn Fryer's survey of National Teaching Fellows found, the teachers understood that fostering creativity depended on empowering students to build their self-confidence, and 'tapping into each individual's dreams, needs, aspirations, curiosity and motivation' (p. 83). These objectives require an atmosphere of respect for the students as individuals in order that they can take risks. Norman Jackson and Christine Sinclair use the notion of cognitive apprentice-ship (p. 130) in order to suggest how tutors might act as role models in fostering creativity amongst their students. Again this raises issues for me about the current climate in which it can be difficult for teachers to act as appropriate role models given the pressures they are under to perform well in research at the expense of teaching.

However, help is at hand: practical advice in terms of what to do and how it can be done is provided from chapter 10 onwards. The assessment of creativity is undoubtedly a huge challenge. How can creativity be 'measured' and assessed? Fortunately, there are two very useful chapters in relation to this issue, by John Cowan and Tom Balchin. My favou-rite quote from the book, however, appears in the chapter by Martin Oliver and colleagues on students' perspectives on creativity: 'Students made it clear that it was easier to assess the creativity of the dead ...' (p. 47). The idea behind this statement is sound, given that post-mortem analyses of someone's creative potential are developed over time, but it does pose a particular challenge to higher education teachers.

Creativity, then, is perhaps an outcome of an ideal higher education. Ideally, teachers should be encouraged to foster the kinds of risk-taking in their students that result in creative outputs for their own sake. Creativity could help build the self-confidence of students and, through encouraging them to make unexpected links and synergies, also enable them to become the types of critical thinkers that we want them to be. These types of results are not immediately tangible and are not given enough value in the contempo-rary higher education system. This book offers a convincing argument as to why we should take note of this lack of attention.

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Educational failure and working class white children in Britain
Gillian Evans, 2006
Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan
£50.00 (hbk), 224 pp., £16.99 (pbk), 240 pp.
ISBN 1-4039-9216-1 (hbk), 0-2305-5303-6 (pbk)

This book reminds us of how much has been forgotten by educational sociology since its linguistic turn. It also indicates how much has changed in the last 30 years and how much has remained the same.

Gillian Evans' approach to the 'social fact' of social class is through her own experience as a 'posh cow' bringing up mixed-race children with her black partner over 13 years in Bermondsey. Her book thus joins recent work on the lost tribe of the white working class in darkest London, like Michael Collins' *Biography of the White Working Class* and Michael Young's *New East End*. Unlike them however, it is unlikely to find itself favourably reviewed on the British National Party's web site.

It is not, in fact, exclusively concerned with 'white working class children', though the particularities of Bermondsey are replicated a thousand times in similar areas throughout Britain. The prime focus is on educational failure. Evans approaches this anthropologically without the 'benefit' of the educational literature but 'to make analytical the categories through which people make sense of their everyday lives' (note 2, p. 176). This is Bourdieu's phenomenological approach from Algeria through to *La Misère du Monde* but most relevantly in *Distinction*.

At times this method leads Evans astray—the distinctions her informants make about themselves and others between 'common', 'common as muck' and 'common as shit' do not really hold and her attempts to distinguish between 'different types of posh people' also founder. However, she rightly divines that 'the relationship between the social classes in England hinges on a segregation that is emotionally structured through mutual disdain, not just occupationally defined' (p. 28). So that 'at school, and in life, middle-class people behave as if they are doing working-class people a favour'. Thus, 'the school ... represents ... posh people's values' (p. 32).

This was sociological orthodoxy 30 years ago when school leaving and working class were synonyms and qualifications were a proxy for middle class. Now the proxy for deprivation is free school meals. This is an indication of how the academic National Curriculum has intensified the situation. 'Middle-class mothers, who are usually educated to degree level, take it for granted that formal-learning-type skills ... should be incorporated ... into the caring relationship with the child at home' (p. 3). It is not that working-class parents do not care about their children, just 'that formal learning and caring tend not to be synonymous and often the expectation is that formal learning is what happens at school' (p. 9). 'Since middle-class people value education above all else, the comparatively low level of average educational attainment amongst the working classes is a source of middle-class prejudice against working-class people [and] among working-class people against themselves' (p. 9).

How this works out in one 'failing' Bermondsey primary school 'where aggressive boys are allowed to rule' is the subject of this book. It answers for our own times Paul Willis' question of how young men 'filled with pride about who they are ... come to terms with the actual lowliness of their status' (p. 11). And not only boys: it is 'a tragic indictment ... that a child like Emma is likely to leave primary school unable to read and write proficiently ... It is also indicative of the problems that schools in areas like Bermondsey face with working-class families in which formal learning plays little part in the way that caring relationships are established in the home' (p. 45). Here 'the whole of the school day ... becomes a virtual battle ... to inculcate in children a disposition towards formal learning' (p. 83).

This battle is mainly with boys quickly labelled disruptive 'who constantly resist the bodily constraint that appropriate participation requires of them' (p. 91) but 'Gender

differences are always going to be educationally significant in schools in areas where [many] boys [and some girls] enjoy a large measure of freedom to compete, often violently, for prestige on the street' (p. 75). 'An adequate analysis of the reasons for school failure must, therefore, account for gendered differences between children but it must also account for how those differences intersect with social class distinctions' (p. 75).

Instead, 'When formal learning breaks down and the boys' contention for control of the classroom is successful, boys are likened to apes and wild animals' (p. 111), if not mentally deficient. 'Rather than making their behaviour seem pathological', Gillian Evans proposes 'research that might help us begin to understand how it is that young boys in certain kinds of social situations, like on the street and in failing schools, can come to structure their relations with one another in such a way that troublesome, violent and intimidating behaviours become a social good' (p. 115).

For teachers who equate 'formal learning and caring', 'inadequate learning at school implies inappropriate care at home' and 'the school's failings need not be seriously considered' (p. 96). If they were brought to the attention of the Office for Standards in Education, for example, this would only result in the school being demoted from 'serious weaknesses' to 'special measures' and the school would eventually be forced to close. But 'as long as failing schools are protected from proper scrutiny and disruptive boys are treated as individuals with emotional and behavioural difficulties, the basis of the formation of their peer groups is neglected as a social phenomenon and the cycle goes on' (p. 116).

The system is self-sustaining, policed by the Inspectorate in a perpetual process of crisis management inflicted on the 'tail' of failing schools. This has the same effect on those above as on what one of Gillian Evans' informants describes as the 'new working class … who have achieved the same standard of living as middle-class people' (p. 30). Merged together economically if not culturally, this new middle-working class is subject to the insecurity of perpetual downsizing. They live in fear and loathing of the so-called 'underclass' to which a section of the traditional working class that this book describes in Bermondsey has been relegated.

Gillian Evans offers no direct suggestion of how to break out of this self-sustaining cycle. Instead, she observes how for children the then-current craze for Pokémon 'creates real opportunities for transformation both of social relations and the use value of objects' (p. 149). This is perhaps analogous to the social transformation required.

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