R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 011 180 FL 000 299

COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING.

BY- HOCKING, ELTON

PUB DATE DEC 66

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$0.32 8P.

DESCRIPTORS- *AUDIOLINGUAL METHODS, *LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION, *LANGUAGES, *LEARNING THEORIES, *READING INSTRUCTION, ADVANCED PLACEMENT, AUDIOLINGUAL SKILLS, AUDIOVISUAL AIDS, APPLIED LINGUISTICS, FOREIGN CULTURE, LANGUAGE LABORATORY USE, LANGUAGE LEARNING LEVELS, LITERATURE, MODERN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM, PSYCHOLINGUISTICS, TRANSLATION, SAN RAFAEL

THE AUTHOR STATES THAT THE AUDIOLINGUAL REVOLUTION IS BEING SUBJECTED TO A COUNTER-REVOLUTION IS APPARENT IN SUCH RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AS THE 1966 NORTHEAST CONFERENCE, WHEN CARROLL, FERGUSON, AND CHOMSKY DENIED THAT PSYCHOLOGY AND LINGUISTICS PROVIDE DIRECT SUPPORT FOR AUDIOLINGUAL TEACHING, THE WRITINGS OF RIVERS, HAYES, BELASCO, AND VALDMAN WHO HAVE CRITICIZED SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE, AND THE MANY ARTICLES THAT HAVE QUESTIONED THE VALUE OF THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY. INCREASING CONCERN WITH READING, AS SUCH, THREATENS TO SHORTEN THE TIME DEVOTED TO AUDIOLINGUAL TRAINING. CONVERSELY, SWEET AND DEWITT (FOR LATIN), AND ESPECIALLY THE LATE GEORGE SCHERER (FOR GERMAN) HAVE INCREASINGLY URGED THAT "DIRECT READING" (WITHOUT COVERT TRANSLATION) CAN DEVELOP ONLY FROM AUDIOLINGUAL SKILLS. SCHERER'S THEORY AND PRACTICE OF SLOWLY PROGRESSIVE AND "PROGRAMED" AUDIOLINGUAL READING IS BECOMING INFLUENTIAL. A STRONG COUNTER-INFLUENCE IS EXERTED BY THE ADVANCED PLACEMENT PROGRAM, WHOSE EMPHASIS ON BELLES-LETTRES EXTENDS DOWNWARD AND SIDEWISE, INVOLVING MANY STUDENTS NOT IN THE PROGRAM. SOME PHILOSOPHERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SUCH AS BARZUN AND BELL, OBJECT TO THE PROGRAM ITSELF AS INIMICAL TO LIBERAL EDUCATION. CALIFORNIA'S MANDATED 3-YEAR REQUIREMENT PROVIDES A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO VALIDATE AUDIOLINGUAL LEARNING AND TO BRING FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION. THIS VENTURE WILL BE AIDED BY THE NEW AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES FROM ABROAD, AND BY RECENT "COMBINES" OF AMERICAN ELECTRONICS FIRMS AND PUBLISHING HOUSES. THIS ARTICLE IS PUBLISHED IN THE "FOREIGN LANGUAGE NEWSLETTER," VOLUME 15, NUMBER 59, DECEMBER 1966 AND WAS AN ADDRESS TO THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (SAN RAFAEL, NOVEMBER 5, 1966). (AUTHOR,

Foreign Language NEWSLETTER

published by
FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

and the
THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

December, 1966

Vol. 15, No. 59.

Counter-Revolution in Foreign Language Teaching

AN ADDRESS TO THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

by ELTON HOCKING
Dominican College, San Rafael November 5, 1966

Although my topic, "The Counter-Revolution," may sound rather sinister, I am not going to tell you a cloak-and-dagger story. No spies, no double-agents, and no blood on the floor. I am not an alarmist, but I think you will agree with me that the audiolingual revolution is now being subjected to a veritable counter-revolution. This situation deserves our thoughtful consideration.

Perhaps the most spectacular recent evidence of this was presented at the 1966 Northeast Conference, in New York City. Some of you were doubtless there; I was not, for I was on leave of absence in Europe. But we have the printed text of the work papers by John Carroll, Charles Ferguson and Noam Chomsky, and we have eye-witness evidence of the dismay and alarm caused by their oral remarks at the Conference. The official representative of the University of Illinois has reported as follows:

> *Three representative scholars were asked to report on what their fields have contributed, and will contribute in the future... The reports were adverse, amounting to "Sorry, but we can't help you at the moment"...*
>
> *[Carroll reported on] the research on language teaching conducted primarily by educational psychologists... One is overwhelmed by the large amount of research completed, and disappointed by the paucity of results...*
>
> *Chomsky's short paper...made many people unhappy...He challenged the view ...that linguistic behavior is habitual, that a fixed stock of basic patterns is acquired through practice, and used by the speakers as basis for analogical creation of new patterns. On the contrary, said Chomsky, the most obvious characteristic of linguistic behavior is that it is stimulus-free and innovative... In the discussion which followed, Chomsky was accused of being indifferent to the language teacher's needs, and offering no help; Chomsky replied that there was no help to offer.*
>
> *The rest of the discussion was a series of testimonials to linguists of the anti-Chomsky type, in which a lack of communication between the audience and Chomsky was evident... The main point brought out by the panel was therefore that interdependence of psychology. linguistics and language teaching should be limited, since they are essentially separate disciplines.*
>
> (—University of Illinois *Newsletter*, Autumn 1966)

Evidently that session was an emotional experience for many of the 3,000 persons attending the Northeast Conference, that spiritual home of audiolingualism. And yet there had been no lack of portents or omens. Carroll had repeatedly warned that the audiolingual theory was based on mere assumptions. In 1964, at the Berlin Conference, he completed a major address by listing the deficiencies of current FL learning theories, chiefly the audiolingual, and he concluded:

> *The audiolingual habit theory...was perhaps, fifteen years ago, in step with the state of psychological thinking at that time, but it is no longer abreast of recent developments. It is ripe for major revision...*
>
> —(*MLJ*, May 1965, p. 281)

Now let me quote briefly from Chomsky's paper:

> *There has been a significant decline, over the past ten or fifteen years, in the degree of confidence in the scope and security of foundations in both psychology and linguistics...It seems to me impossible to accept the view that linguistic behavior is a matter of habit, that it is slowly acquired by reinforcement, association and generalization...The relevance of psychological theory to the acquisition of language is a highly dubious and questionable matter... Turning to linguistics, we find much the same situation. Linguists have had their share in perpetuating the myth that linguistic behavior is "habitual" and that a fixed stock of "patterns" is acquired through practice, and used as the basis for "analogy."...*
>
> —(NE Conference *Reports*, 1966, 43-44)

Evidently, Chomsky and Carroll were merely repeating themselves at the Northeast Conference, but the audience was unprepared for what was said. Apparently they had not read the book by Wilga Rivers, *The Psychologist and the Foreign Language Teacher*, a systematic analysis and criticism of audiolingualism, its major assumptions and its corollaries. It is the source, whether acknowledged or not, of an increasing number of critical articles in our professional journals. We also have, of course, more and more articles which are mere denunciations. Emotional and violent, such articles do not deserve our respect, but they are nevertheless straws in the wind — a rather strong wind.

Much more significant is the evolution of some of the linguists themselves. Recently we have heard little from the extreme left wing which advocates total instruction by programming, with meaning completely excluded at the early stages. Marty has concluded that some personal instruction — perhaps 20 percent — is essential for college students, and that some analysis of structure is necessary. Simon Belasco criticizes as superficial most of the pattern drills currently in use; he rejects the assumption that English can be banished from our classrooms; he insists that, "in the beginning stages, practice in speaking should be performed in the interest of reinforcing listening comprehension, rather than developing proficiency in speaking." (*Florida FL Reporter*, spring 1966, p. 13) These views are supported by Alfred Hayes (*MLJ*, May 1965, p. 289).

Belasco's colleague and co-author, Albert Valdman, is very specific in his criticism:

> *Obsessed by structure, the linguisst never pondered over the process that takes place in the foreign language classroom, namely* learning... *The most serious shortcoming of these [audiolingual] materials is that they constitute a closed system. The student learns a finite stock of basic sentences which he can parrot if the proper circumstances present themselves...New Key objectives and present elementary courses, in college and in high school, are fundamentally incompatible.*
>
> —(*Implementation and Evaluation*, etc., pp. 13-14, 31)

I suggest that Valdman has got to the heart of the matter. Chomsky said much the same thing, although less directly: "Teachers in particular have a responsibility to make sure that ideas and proposals are evaluated on their merits, and not passively accepted on grounds of authority, real or presumed. The field of language teaching is no exception." (NE Conf. p. 45) In this connection it is relevant to remember that the NDEA Institute directors have felt, from the beginning, morally obliged to include a descriptive linguist on their staff, even though he might not know the foreign language in question. I remember visiting one Institute whose linguist knew neither of the languages concerned, and who, in order to have a full teaching schedule, gave his lectures twice each day, once for each half of the participants. It seems fair to say that the Institutes have, until very recently, made a special place for linguistic theory and materials. Naturally, the prestige of audiolingualism was enhanced throughout our profession.

Another aspect of the counter-revolution is the reaction against the language laboratory — in fact, a rather general disenchantment with it. The reasons are

many: exaggerated claims and expectations for the laboratory, shoddy equipment (especially headphones), inadequate maintenance, learning materials that are either poor in themselves or unrelated to the classroom materials, opposition based on habit or principle, and finally the teacher's lack of time and special know-how.

The equipment is now very good, on the whole — certainly superior to most of the tape-recorded materials — and it keeps improving. A recent innovation is a simple but fairly expensive device which permits the student to replay, at any time, any utterance that he has just heard, whether it be long or short. This device is the equivalent, on audio tape, of the "instant replay" that we frequently see during television broadcasts of football or baseball games. (As you know, network TV almost invariably uses videotape.) This new resource, the "instant replay," re-opens the whole question of record-and-play-back in the language lab. You will recall that the question was much debated a few years ago, with the opponents insisting that delayed playback was a bore and a waste of time. The factor of delay, along with the very considerable cost of playback equipment for every student position, discouraged many schools from purchasing complete equipment for the language lab. It was tempting to think that the "electronic classroom" was just as good, especially since it cost much less and did not require an extra room and extra time for a teacher-monitor.

Today we have, or rather, tomorrow we will have, new evidence of this line of thought. A fifteen-minute film, entitled "Resources for Language Teaching," has just been produced at San Jose State College. Script and pictures are primarily the work of Professor Gustave Mathieu who needs no introduction to you. I was asked to criticize the script and found it generally excellent, except for the emphasis on the electronic classroom and the assumption that a language lab should be installed only after an electronic classroom has been provided. And I found no reference to the "instant replay" adjunct to the tape recorder. Perhaps the script has been modified since I saw it; at any rate, it was intended not for our profession, but for parents, administrators, and so on, who will learn from it much that they need to know. However, please don't ask for the film until after the first of the year, for it will not be available until then, at the earliest.

The opposition to the language lab has been mostly passive and non-violent; the objectors simply "went limp," and of course their students in the lab did likewise. In some cases, however, the reluctant did not merely drag their feet; they did some vigorous kicking in the pages of our professional journals. Such articles have appeared with increasing frequency in the last few years.

With some exceptions, the opposition — active or passive — was based on valid reasons: poor equipment or materials, but especially the teacher's lack of special training in language lab techniques, and most of all, lack of time. The teachers were not given time allowances for their new lab duties, and the students were not scheduled into the lab often enough to make it profitable. As Sarah Lorge has demonstrated, two sessions per week should be the very minimum, yet most schedules permit only one. Two years ago the late George Scherer devised a schedule which would permit a daily lab session of one-half period in addition to the daily class meeting of one full period; there would be monitoring by the regular teacher, but with no increase in his schedule. If you are interested in this plan, I refer you to *International Journal of Applied Linguistics,* January 1966, Part II, p. 218. Since I am no expert in school schedules, I leave the matter to your judgment.

May I say, in passing, that I agree heartily with Marina Valenzuela, who wrote in your newsletter of last April that laboratory practice without expert correction is "criminal." I assume that she refers to first-year students primarily, rather than advanced students who have acquired good habits of pronunciation and intonation.

This leads me to my next point: that we very much need a revolution in the teaching of reading, and generally in the intermediate and advanced courses, whether in school or college. First, let's consider reading. The audiolingual revolution considers it to be the third "fundamental skill," following hearing and speaking. Up to a few years ago, reading was generally thought to be the only fundamental skill, and no doubt many people still think so. At any rate, we are all agreed that reading is essential, but the next question is: What is reading? If audiolingualism proves to be merely a detour which leads us back to that rutted old road of "translation reading," then the audiolingual revolution is a fiasco. Thirty years ago, Robert M. Hutchins, then President of the University of Chicago, stated that any professional translation was superior to the product of our student translators in the classroom. Nobody could deny it, and today we all agree that the do-it-yourself translation is justified only for specialists who merely wish to keep abreast of overseas developments in their specialty.

Our humanistic aim, and claim, has always been to enable the student to read the foreign literature directly, without translation, and thus to appreciate it in a way that no translation provides. Yet it is notorious that, in school and especially in college, the "reading" of literary works is still accomplished through translation. There are brilliant exceptions, of course, but the generalization is a perfectly safe one. And it makes a mockery of our most cherished humanistic goal.

Most teachers of Latin are familiar with the audiolingual theories of Professor Waldo Sweet, and perhaps also with his audiolingual materials, which I understand have just been published. A similar point of view is held by Professor Norman De Witt of the University of Minnesota, who writes:

> *Our goal is to teach students to read Latin, so we don't begin by translating. Since all Latin is based on patterns of sound, we begin with the sounds. Our beginning students work in the language laboratory, listening to, and drilling, the patterns of literary Latin. This does not mean that we consider understanding and pronouncing more important than reading. It is strictly a matter of operational priorities — just as it's a matter of operational priority to put on one's stockings before putting on one's shoes.* (Minnesota *FL Bulletin*)

That reminds me of a comment by my distinguished friend, the phonetician Pierre Delattre, who has written: "Only the student who can pronounce a poem correctly can grasp its complete significance." (*Esprit,* November 1962, p. 598)

It is ironical that the college departments which distrust audiolingualism thereby reject a vital prerequisite to literary appreciation, namely an immediate awareness of, and a feeling for, the language itself. Direct communication, without the intervention of English, is a basic tenet of the new approach. Yet we must admit that we, too, have often failed to live up to the theory as it applies to reading at Level III and above, and sometimes even at Level II. There are many reasons or excuses for this failure: suitable new materials were not available; the Institutes were concerned primarily with Level I; the colleges wanted us to teach reading as they understood it; we were pressed for time, and translation was a short-cut; we had too many students and too many extra chores, and we were tired

Now we are beginning to have the new materials for an orderly progression from hearing and speaking to audiolingual reading. At this point I want to show you a sample, on film. It is a recitation by a professional actor interpreting a French poem for children. Perhaps you know the entire

series of these filmed interpretations, produced by Professor Howard Nostrand. Preceding the five-minute recitation is a two-minute film clip which I took from one of the bi-weekly series available from the French Cultural Services. It is unimportant but charming, and I use it as a reminder of the resources available to teachers of French. (Film)

The theory of audiolingual reading was admirably presented by George Scherer at the Northeast Conference of 1963, and again in the Harcourt Brace *Teacher's Notebook,* early in 1964. These two documents constitute a milestone in the theory and technique of the teaching of reading. If you don't already know them, I hope you will.

Today I can only hit a few high spots: Scherer started from the now-accepted premise that all reading — even silent reading — is necessarily audiolingual, that is, we inwardly hear and speak while we read. Since this is so, we must make sure that our students hear and speak the foreign language correctly while they read silently. The audiolingual skills of Level I must be maintained and developed in Level II through the reading of carefully contrived materials that introduce new vocabulary and grammar at carefully spaced intervals, and in accordance with the new frequency lists. At levels III and IV, the progression moves through adapted and/or edited selections from literature (but not the great masterpieces). Then the student is ready to read integral texts of normal difficulty.

Although this sounds like the "graded readers" of thirty years ago, there are important differences. Each selection is preceded by basic sentences or dialogs to be memorized; each new item in the text is marginally glossed *in the foreign language,* and there are frequent re-entries; cognates, word-building and derivations are systematically taught; inference is taught and practiced; many passages are tape-recorded for intensive listening practice, followed by audiolingual drills which emphasize the new items. Scherer calls this "programmed reading," and with good reason, for he has broken the problems of reading down into an almost infinite number of small steps, which are then drilled and repeated until they are mastered. Please note that all this is done without the intervention of English. Of course we know that English thought processes must necessarily intervene, especially in the early stages, but these are not "rewarded," as the programmers say, and gradually they diminish with practice and with skill in reading the foreign language directly. Translation is rigidly avoided; audiolingual reading is developed through hearing and speaking the language.

"Programmed reading" is thus a highly sophisticated process, demanding infinite pains of the programmer. It was characteristic of the late George Scherer that he accepted his own challenge. I understand that he wrote a series of three programmed readers in German, which, however, are not yet readily available. I have seen his very recent college course, *Contemporary German,* written in collaboration with his colleague Wängler. It is a prodigious work of 600 tall pages, and it includes programmed reading. There is also a handbook for the teachers and tapes for all the audio-lingual material, but apparently these too are not yet available.

As we take leave of the subject, let me remark that "programmed reading" is a "catchy" term which is already being applied to various new books or series of books which deserve the term in widely varying degrees. There are some which come very close to Scherer's rigorous concept and treatment, and some which provide mere practice in word-by-word translation. No doubt the latter can be useful to graduate students and other specialists who want only a translation knowledge, but they bear no resemblance to Scherer's programming. On the other hand, we still get new beginning readers which, in the name of literary appreciation, plunge the beginning student into poetry, and even ask him to explicate it in the foreign language. Such things leave me frankly lost in disbelief.

The question of "what to read" is no less important than that of "how to read," but we are only beginning to ask it. College departments and of course the schools have generally assumed that a youngster begins a foreign language in order to study its belles-lettres when he gets to college. Although this assumption was perhaps justified sixty years ago, when our secondary schools were properly called college preparatory, it has long since ceased to be justified. Today there is an urgent need of a revolution against this domination of our high school teaching by the colleges and the graduate school. Two years ago you may have seen my article on this subject, published here in California by the *Journal of Secondary Education.* It stated, among other things, that the schools have their own function in our society of today; that this function must be determined philosophically by the needs of society and the needs of the age group; and that such needs can best be determined by the leaders and the teachers in the schools themselves.

This heretical opinion received indirect support last spring, when one of the working committees of the Northeast Conference published its report entitled "Wider Uses for Foreign Languages." Overshadowed by the dramatic confrontation with Carroll and Chomsky, this Report is no less revolutionary and surely more encouraging. Let me quote from the first paragraph:

> *We have new insights about language; we have improved methods for language learning; we have a wider demand for language; yet we continue to direct our students toward a single goal, literary appreciation. By doing so we overlook the broader horizons of language study and thereby lose many students whose interest and talents are not exclusively literary.*

The Report goes on to specify various "wider uses," and I commend it to you as an authoritative presentation of this long-neglected concept. Unfortunately, membership of the committee included only one professor of literature, so I predict that the colleges will simply reject this Report, which is unpalatable to them in any case. The student will find that the "wider uses" of this high school course will not help him, when entering college, he meets the usual choice of "literature — or else!"

This problem of articulation is one to which your Association has given sustained and vigorous attention. I trust that the California colleges and universities have been more cooperative than those described here a year ago by Dr. MacAllister, who said to you: "The weight of authority in our [University] departments tends to come into the hands of scholars who have little regard for the importance of language teaching, and less sympathy for its problems." Dr. Conant states it more sharply: "I have found institution after institution in which most, if not all, the members of a subject-matter department...were totally unfamiliar with what was going on in the schools, and they couldn't care less." (*The Education of American Teachers,* p. 169). George Scherer was even more pointed:

> *It is an educational atrocity to destroy a student's careful preparation by letting it lapse into dormancy, and in addition to extinguish the ardor that this preparation kindled... The obvious needs and desires of language students cannot be ignored forever in this new kind of world.*
> (Northeast Conference *Reports,* 1963, p. 44)

Domination by the colleges has long been felt through the "College Board" examinations, and more recently we have had the Advanced Placement Program, which I consider to be, in effect if not in purpose, another aspect of the counter-revolution. The Advanced Placement Program is frankly thrusting Level V, which

is to say the college Survey of Literature, down into the secondary school. The goal is obviously to enable foreign language majors to specialize earlier, so that they may take graduate courses and get their Ph.D. earlier, and thus become professors of literature earlier.

This precocious specializing doubtless provides recruits for the professoriat, but the other students — meaning most of them — are affected adversely. The Provost of Columbia University, Jacques Barzun, is alarmed to see liberal education being squeezed from above by the graduate school and squeezed from below by the Advanced Placement Program. A recent study financed by the Carnegie Corporation demands drastic reforms to restore general education. The author mentions what he calls "the nature of the adolescent beast"; he maintains that high school students lack the maturity necessary to profit from college-level work in the humanities and the social sciences; he laments the student who brags that he has read Plato in high school, but cannot write a decent English composition. (From *College and University Bulletin,* May 1, 1966).

One of our own colleagues, after reading my article in the *Journal of Secondary Education,* wrote to me as follows:

> *I should not recommend that anyone start the Advanced Placement Program. I have taught the Survey course in college for 25 years but never succeeded in teaching these literary works to freshmen, no matter how bright or how well prepared they were linguistically. They simply are not emotionally mature enough to* understand.

The writer of those words is a dedicated and distinguished professor who has repeatedly been entrusted with an advanced NDEA Institute abroad. I could add some of my own experiences with the Survey course in college, but I will merely say that our bright youngsters reading great masterpieces only *think* they understand — and more's the pity.

As for the less bright or the less well prepared students in the schools, their reading of belles-lettres tends to be mere plodding — the looking-up of countless words and the writing of English equivalents between the lines. This deadly routine is surely not a literary experience; in fact, it makes many students think they hate literature. More likely than not, it makes them drop the course. The Oregon State Consultant wrote, a few years ago, "The traditional third-year literature-grammar-translation course has probably killed more student interest than any other single factor." (*NEA Journal,* March 1962). In a recent issue of your excellent *Newsetter,* Mr. Dusel emphasizes that two-thirds of your students drop out within two years and nine-tenths drop after three years. Like him, I am confident that this disastrous situation is related to the college-preparatory orientation — that is, the literary orientation — of levels III and IV. It is a situation that you share with the rest of the country, and it makes one fear for the future of our subject. We can summarize by saying that, nationally, our enrollments at Level III and above amount to about three percent of the total high school population.

In contrast to this very dark picture, let me say that California offers the brightest prospect of improvement. Although I realize the special problems and dangers of your mandated three-year requirement, I believe that there are compensating advantages and opportunities. The very novelty of the situation, and the inexperience of the teachers involved, make it possible for you to break away from the routines and traditions and phobias which throttle our teaching in the Senior High School throughout the country. With wise and courageous leadership, a modified audiolingual approach can capitalize on the increasing resources of integrated films and filmstrips, thus heightening motivation — and let's remember that little learning takes place without motivation. Level II in this sequence can continue with A-V materials and also move into programmed reading of materials which, as we like to say, interest the students but don't offend the PTA. This reminds me, by contrast, of a certain letter which my son wrote home from college. It ended as follows: "Now I must sign off and study my German lesson. It is entitled: 'Fritz besucht das Museum'." I might add that eventually my son switched his major from German to English.

The end of your three-year sequence is of course the crucial point at which every student will say to himself: "To drop or not to drop, that is the question." He will continue if he knows that an interesting and profitable experience lies ahead; he will drop, in most cases, if he is faced with an exclusively literary sequence. If our profession can learn anything from experience, it is this.

The question of enrollments and drops is no mere matter of personal pride or professional status; it is a question of our duty to the youth of today, to the American society of tomorrow, and to the foreign cultures which we represent. Those cultures do not consist exclusively of belles-lettres; their contributions to civilization are not found only in libraries and museums; their great men have not all been poets and artists. If our western civilization is to withstand its internal tensions and exterior threats, then its member countries — our own first of all — must overcome the monocultural provincialism which now pervades and weakens us. This cultural poverty was nicely satirized last summer by a TV special program entitled "Today is Tuesday, so this must be Belgium." If you saw that program, you know that those American tourists would not have been helped by a reading knowledge, or even a speaking knowledge, of the languages whose countries they visited. They would still have been insulated from the foreign people and their culture, just as they were insulated by their air-conditioned motor coach. But when they return home, they announce proudly — and they believe — that they have "seen Europe." I find a parallel here with our bright youngsters reading a masterpiece of the foreign literature. Their linguistic ability enables them to cruise through the book, but they are effectively insulated by their monocultural outlook, so that they see much and understand little. At the end of the journey they will say — and believe — that they have read Racine, or Cervantes, or Goethe.

One of the best resources for breaking out of our monocultural isolation is the film from abroad, preferably a series of films produced as an integral part of a complete course. We have several such series, and now I want to show you a six-minute clip from one film from one series. (Film)

The learning the understanding of a foreign culture has well been termed "a new educational imperative" for the youth of today. The teaching of it is a task — or rather, an opportunity — that falls naturally to us, but it is so urgent that if we do not embrace it promptly, some other agency must do so. This is no remote possibility: educational change is all about us — in science, in mathematics, in the social studies, and even in English. A few weeks ago the education editor of *Saturday Review* wrote as follows:

> *Today the education scene is changing so rapidly that no man can predict with certainty what the schools of 1976 will be like... Increasingly the design of education's future is being drafted by pragmatic men who are bound neither by the heavy hand of tradition, nor by dogmatic educational philosophy. For them the measure of success is "what works." They are found in positions of influence in the federal bureaucracy, in private foundations, in the halls of Congress, in the new curriculum research centers, and in the vast new electronics and publishing combines. And they promise to add new, basic, and sometimes frightening dimensions to education's future.*
>
> (*Saturday Review,* October 15, 1966, p. 69)

So here is another revolution: educational initiative is being assumed by big business. Let me dwell, for a moment, on those "vast new combines." Last year *Time,* Inc. and General Electric formed the new General Learning Corporation, which promptly absorbed the Silver Burdett Company, and named, as President, Francis Keppel, former Commissioner of Education. The Raytheon Corporation absorbed several firms, including Dage-Bell and D. C. Heath and Company. *Reader's Digest* and the Sylvania Corporation have formed a joint study group on electronic systems for education. Several other combines have been formed, their leaders being IBM, Xerox, RCA, CBS, and *Newsweek* magazine.

These industrial giants are not restrained by educational tradition; they can marshal the best talent available, and they can capitalize on their vast experience in research, development and marketing. They are of course attracted by our country's educational enterprise, which now involves 55 million people and 40 billion dollars; some of them, at least, also feel a commitment to the public interest, so they plan to spend large sums on research and experimentation.

I predict that our field will be one of the first to feel the impact of these new forces, for the combination of the foreign language and foreign culture is a "natural" for those combines of publishing houses and electronic firms. There is also the recent proposal to link our 116 educational TV stations into a true network by means of new satellites. Altogether, the possibilities are truly exciting. But will our profession be ready for them?

Let me say, in all sincerity, that I think the California schools deserve the first chance. By leading the way with your unique requirement of three years, you have provided the greatest experiment in foreign language teaching and curriculum. Your opportunities and problems are matched only by your courage. I am confident that you will continue to meet the new demands imposed by our changing society, and I thank you for this opportunity to discuss them with you.

BUT

Soon after the delivery of this address, your editor received several telephone calls, some from those who were delighted to share the opinions of the lecturer, others from a couple of people who did not agree with Elton Hocking's views. One call, I remember, ha. to do precisely with the Advance Placement Courses and the difficulty of preparing students (and teachers) for those courses. Only one 'objector' took the time to put his objections down in black and white. We publish his letter here, as it expresses a point of view which is shared, I am sure, by others who have not written us.

LITERATURE? NO LITERATURE? There are of course two classes of thought. My opinion, for what it is worth, is that a happy combination of informative material and literature is the answer. Some of you argue that you want to teach more of the CULTURE of the country. And what is literature anyway? If not the *country* seen from the point of view of *the writer?* With this in mind, I beg you to take time to read this short letter, and I invite you to use the NEWSLETTER as a means of communicating to others your reactions. *Cecilia Ross*

University of California
Department of Spanish
and Portuguese
Berkeley, Calif.
November 10, 1966

The Editor
Foreign Language Newsletter

Dear Editor:

Someone should take issue with parts of Professor Elton Hocking's address to the FLANC conference in San Rafael; and since I have no assurance that anyone else will do it, I venture to come forth myself. I come, admittedly, with bad credentials: a teacher of literature, a sceptic with regard to panaceas, and a collaborator in the Advanced Placement Program. This much confessed, allow me to proceed.

It seems to me that the literary emphasis of most college language departments is entirely justified. Once a certain level of competence in a foreign language is achieved, the study of its literature is the best next step, both for its own sake and as an introduction into the particular foreign culture. This does not mean, as Professor Hocking implies, that we think foreign countries have produced no great men other than authors. It simply means that most of us are not trained to speak in intellectually solid and meaningful terms of Goya, Pasteur, Fermi, etc. Colleges have courses on history, cultural anthropology, physics, theology, and so on; to expect a foreign language department to be a jack-of-all-trades is to condemn it to intellectual charlatanism and mediocrity. There is no French chemistry or Portuguese theology. These are artificial divisions, while the study of a national literature, the artistic expression of a people's linguistic individuality, is intellectually coherent.

This does not mean, of course, that high school courses ought to be literature courses; and perhaps Professor Hocking is justified in complaining about a literary slant in high school instruction, if it exists. This ought not, however, to reflect on the Advanced Placement courses. They naturally resemble the college work for which they prepare, and no one is compelled to take them. Anyhow, the introduction to "the culture" to be had from film strips, movies, and so forth should not be overrated. A solid argument could be made (not here and now) for the proposition that a good novel or play teaches more about the culture of a people than a number of tourist views of architectural wonders and an introduction to the intricacies of foreign hand-shaking. And on the same topic, let me warn that a condemnation of literarily oriented courses in favor of the allegedly more practical "culturally" oriented ones is quite dangerous. When you get right down to it, most high school students will probably never leave the United States.

And now the last but by no means least of my demurrers: I can by no means subscribe to Professor Hocking's dictum that a high school student or college freshman is incapable of understanding a great work of literature. He may of course not have the linguistic competence to do so; but if he does, I should think he could manage to get as much from Virgil or Calderón as from Shakespeare (or is he out, too?). To be sure, living helps us to understand literature (and vice versa); but then, when have we lived "enough" to comprehend fully? Perhaps, according to this line of thinking, great works should be studied only in another and presumably better and wiser world.

In short, I sympathize with those who, basically disliking all poetry (in the broad sense), resent having to study it in order to receive degrees and credentials; but I should hesitate to accept this resentment as a valid argument concerning the needs, interests, and abilities of others.

Sincerely yours,
John H. R. Polt

Model T Schools In A Technological Age

The President of Encyclopedia Britanica Inc., Maurice B. Mitchell, insists that our schools are very antiquated. He would like to establish a completely new system of schools where computers, recorders and TVs and other technical aids are widely utilized for effective teaching. He claims that the machines have already been invented and the money is available!!!