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The six essays in this collection indicate the new specializations and the shifting boundaries of the English teaching profession. John C. Gerber surveys the effect of recent research on the teaching of language, literature, and composition; on curriculum revision; and on teachers' professional attitudes. J. N. Hook defends the practical value in contemporary society of studying composition and literature. Four major concepts of language--language change, the nature and function of redundancy, the multiple dimensions of speech communication, and the value of linguistic complexity--are discussed by H. A. Gleason. William D. Sheldon's presentation of six issues pertinent to the development of sound reading instruction considers readers ranging from preschool children to illiterate adults. Larzer Ziff analyzes the significance of an author's particular refraction of experience and the relation of American literature to other literatures. Edward Rosenheim, Jr., defends the study of poetry for its value in encouraging a humanistic approach to life. (LH)

The SHAPE of ENGLISH

NCTE 1967 DISTINGUISHED LECTURES

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Foreword

Three forces exert themselves concurrently on the discipline and profession of English. A variety of other disciplines, especially social and behavioral sciences, impinge more and more on the once calm borders of English. Meanwhile, new specializations, some amazingly tight, are developing within what once seemed a rather general discipline. At the same time, within this ferment a constant search goes on for agreement about the center and the unity of English. The papers brought together here neither singly nor collectively equalize these forces, much less finally resolve the issues that the forces generate. Each in its own way, however, sheds light on both. Although the perimeters of English may later shift and the center may move together, the six papers that follow remind us of and illuminate for us now the shape of our discipline and our profession, English.

These papers were prepared for the Distinguished Lecture Program of the National Council of Teachers of English. The Program, conceived two years ago by past president Albert R. Kitzhaber, is designed primarily to serve school and college teachers who, because of geographical location, have only rarely the opportunity to meet leading national scholars and specialists. Each year the Council will invite six authorities, who have attained considerable distinction in diverse fields of scholarly and professional interest, to participate in its Distinguished Lecture Program. The contributors to this collection are our first Distinguished Lecturers and have spoken in more than forty locations, ranging from remote areas of the Pacific Northwest to rural Appalachia. Through this special publication, the Council is pleased to make their papers available to the entire profession.

Princeton University
November 1967

ALBERT H. MARCKWARDT
President, NCTE

Contents

Explosion in English

John C. Gerber

JOHN C. GERBER, professor of English and chairman of the department at the University of Iowa, is a past president of the NCTE and a past chairman of the CCCC. In 1964 he received the Council's W. Wilbur Hatfield Award for extraordinarily valuable service over a long period of time to the NCTE and the English teaching profession. Professor Gerber is general editor of definitive editions of Mark Twain's works and served as general editor of Volume IV of the Council's Curriculum Series, *The College Teaching of English*. His 1967 NCTE lecture appearances were at Pan American College, Edinburg, Texas; Williston School District, Williston, North Dakota; Northeast Missouri State College, Kirksville, Missouri; Judson College, Marion, Alabama; Idaho Education Association, Boise, Idaho; and College of the Siskiyous, Weed, California.

John C. Gerber

No one now needs to be told that there has been a population explosion. We are conscious of it every time we buy a house or pay our school taxes or try to find a parking place. There are now more than 198 million Americans. According to the U.S. Office of Education 56 million of these are in our schools. And the unnerving statistic for us is that well over 40 million of these students are in one form or another taking English.

The demand is therefore unprecedented for those well trained in English. Recently the Office of Education announced that 170,000 new teachers will be needed for the fall of 1967 and 2 million by the fall of 1975. Not all of these, to be sure, are needed in English, but a very substantial percentage will be. Possibly even more serious is the fact that a high proportion of those now teaching English are not adequately prepared to do so. Of the more than 900,000 now teaching English or language arts in our elementary and secondary schools, only about 14 percent were majors in English, slightly over 50 percent of the secondary school teachers and about 10 percent of the elementary school teachers. A third of the teachers at the secondary level have not had a course in English in the last ten years. Although the picture is substantially better at the college level, fewer than 10 percent of those entering college teaching for the first time last year had the docor's degree.

No one can deny that a need of great proportions exists. Fortunately, though, the response to this need within the profession has been most encouraging. One can see it in the activities of our professional organizations, in the programs of the federal government, in curriculum planning and in the training of new teachers, in research and publication. Consider just a few of the events of the recent past.

In 1958 the NCTE and the MLA along with the American Studies Association and College English Association jointly sponsored a Basic Issues Conference that identified thirty-five basic issues confronting teachers of English, regardless of level. A report of this conference, published in our professional journals, sparked discussion across the country for the first time on fundamental problems rather than on the fads of the movement. In 1961 Commissioner McMurrin of the USOE established Project English, which in its three-year life funded several scores of projects in basic and applied research, nineteen

curriculum centers, a dozen demonstration centers, as well as a variety of conferences on research in English and the teaching of English.

In 1961 the NCTE issued *The National Interest and the Teaching of English,* a publication that struck the national government so forcibly that it appeared in toto in the published proceedings of the House Subcommittee on Labor and Education. The same year the CEEB at a cost of a million dollars sponsored a series of twenty summer institutes designed to upgrade the teaching of English in our secondary schools. These institutes were so manifestly successful that they served as models for the federally sponsored institutes created when the 88th Congress extended the National Defense Education Act in 1964 to include institutes in English. By now about a tenth of the high school teachers of English have attended these federal institutes. Indirectly millions of students have felt their impact.

Traditionally devoted to research, the MLA has in recent years vigorously supported activities designed to improve the teaching of English. With financial aid from the USOE it has made materials produced by the curriculum centers available to the participants in the summer institutes. It has supported a nationwide investigation of Ph.D. training to see whether or not we can speed up the production of Ph.D.'s without loss of quality. With help from the National Endowment for the Humanities it has created the Center for Editions of American Authors. Originally the USOE had funded the editing of the works of Mark Twain and Melville; the Center is now aiding in the editing of works of Crane, Emerson, Hawthorne, Howells, Irving, Thoreau, the Mark Twain papers, and Whitman. All of these editions will be edited as meticulously as is humanly possible.

This past year the NCTE and the MLA have cooperated with the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification on a series of conferences and publications designed to establish higher standards for the certification of English teachers. The NCTE and MLA and the Center for Applied Linguistics are working with the USOE to establish four Educational Research Information Centers which will make available annotated bibliographies and inexpensive reproductions of research reports to members of the profession.

At the college and university level, the MLA has encouraged the development of the Association of Departments of English, an organization of chairmen of departments for the purpose of helping them with staffing, curriculum, and other relevant matters.

A list of such activities could go on almost endlessly. I have not mentioned the accomplishments of such organizations as the CCCC or the NEA. Nor have I mentioned the activity of the state organizations or of local school systems. There are those, of course, who view all this with a cocked eyebrow. One of my friends says that never have so many produced so little for so much. And it is true that only in time will we be able to tell surely whether this explosion within our profession in the last ten years has been a movement rather than simply motion. Personally, I am encouraged to think that this explosion of activity represents movement—and movement of a highly constructive order. In what follows I should like to mention those developments in the explosion that seem most promising to me at the present time. I select them from what is happening in language, composition, literature, the total curriculum, and the profession per se.

In the teaching of language, it seems to me, the most significant change has been not so much in the massing of new information as in the changing of basic attitudes. The old idea of grammar as a Mosaic code that must be followed by the pure and righteous is fast slipping into the oblivion that it merits. We have learned that because a boy says "it don't," it does not follow that he will steal from blind men or slap little babies. He will probably call attention to himself in an educated group, but he is not necessarily immoral. The new attitude is that English should be studied for what it is, and not for what 18th century grammarians thought it ought to be. It is this attitude that has made possible the vast accumulation of linguistic information which seems almost daily to pour in on us. That there are structuralists and generativists and other denominations is not the point. The point is that our language is being studied with magnificent results, some of which are still not clear.

One result that *is* clear, however, is that the study of language for its own sake is becoming part of the English curriculum. Formerly study of the language was confined largely to the graduate level.

and there it often consisted of no more than courses in Old English and Middle English. But now courses in the nature and growth of the language are becoming required not only of graduate students but of undergraduate majors in English. Furthermore, units on language are fast becoming part of the high school curriculum. All this is occurring none too soon. Indeed it is a development that is at least a hundred years late in coming. Knowledge of the origins, development, and the nature of our language are as important for the educated man as a knowledge of history, geography, chemistry, or physics. In some ways it is *more* important since language is of greater day-to-day relevance to the individual than any of these other disciplines. Now that we have finally realized this, it must surely follow that no school or college curriculum in English can claim much for itself unless it includes a study of the language, not because of any side effects, but simply because it is good for all of us to know something about this indispensable human tool.

Happily, though, a study of language ordinarily does have useful side effects. To the extent that such a study brings understanding, it diminishes resentment and anxiety. Linguistic study demonstrates to a student that our language is always in flux, that there are always words and expressions coming into the language and dying out of the language, that there are always new and dying expressions that people argue about, such as "it's me," "different than," and the use of "hopefully" in "Hopefully we'll be there." Linguistic study also brings home to the student the fact that we all speak in different dialects, one in the classroom, another at home, another in the Army, and so on. Coming at it this way, the student without ridiculous moral overtones sees that the classroom dialect allows for greater subtlety and greater precision, and therefore is essential to his growth and success. There is a world of difference in the effect on a student's motivation between having him observe language changes and dialect differences, and stigmatizing him as the class boob for saying "between you and I."

What English teachers always want to know, though, is whether the new study of language will help them teach writing more successfully. Since any fresh awareness of a language is likely to improve a student's writing somewhat, the answer can be a modified

affirmative. But it should not be assumed that the present scientific study of language is a gimmick that will help an inarticulate student overnight to win friends and influence people. In the first place the operations are altogether different. The study of language as presently pursued by the structuralists and the transformationalists is wholly analytical; writing, on the other hand, is and will remain a creative art that depends more on synthesis than analysis. Transformational grammar allows a student to see the possibilities of the English sentence, but it will not inform him in a given situation as to which kind of sentence is likely to be most effective with his readers. A knowledge of transformational grammar may help in the process of revision; it is not yet clear that it or any other kind of grammar will help in the heat of creation. Certainly, though, English teachers should know as much about the new grammars as possible so that they can adequately justify their generalizations about a student's writing and so that they can help him as fully as possible in his revisions.

In brief, developments in the teaching of language in the last ten years have been little short of revolutionary, for they have included a basic change in attitude, the introduction into the English curriculum of a study of language for its own sake, an approach toward usage that is more highly motivating, and studies of grammar that may in limited ways help us improve student writing. The new English is easily as significant as the new math.

Now I turn to the second element in our triad, composition. Here again we can see promising developments taking place. What impresses me most is the new interest in rhetoric. Fifty years ago when speech teachers broke away from English, they took with them as part of their discipline the study of rhetoric. It is understandable that they should do this; it is not understandable that English teachers should completely relinquish it. For years we have been teaching composition without paying attention to the basic premises of effective communication that were matters of common knowledge among Greek and Roman writers and speakers. We have been treating the student essay as though it were something static, and meant to be something static. We have talked about it as though it were an inert happening that is not meant to accomplish anything or to be of any personal or social importance. All we have asked is that it have a beginning,

middle, and end, that participles not dangle, that commas not separate sentences, and that *west* and *east* be capitalized when they denote sections of the country but not when they denote direction. It is no wonder that our students have felt that composition is niggling busy work far removed from the world of practical affairs, or, for that matter, the world of art and literature.

The renewed interest in rhetoric is at long last beginning to correct this unhappy situation. Increasingly now writing is being taught as a means of communication designed to *do* something, not simply *be* something. The emphasis is shifting from the logic of written effort to its psychology. The student is being made to see that as writer he inescapably plays a role and that he must choose the strategy that will best effect his ends. In a sense the influence of rhetoric is to turn all exposition into argument. Even simple directions on how to construct a bird bath must carry the conviction that the construction is worth doing and that the plan proposed is by all odds the most efficient and the most satisfactory. At its best the influence of rhetoric creates in the student writer an anxiety to write effectively. Doubtless he will never develop in a class theme the anxiety of the author of a love letter who fearfully measures the overtones and the undertones of every conjunction. But he surely can develop the concern of the normal writer outside of the classroom who writes to get something done, and not simply to write.

Many teachers are discovering, however, that if the student is to perform normally as a writer—that is, to want to do something to someone—the teacher must perform normally as a reader—that is, to want to learn something from someone. Now I am the first to admit that this is a hard role to play. What one learns from a hundred student papers is hardly overpowering, and yet the role of the receptive and grateful reader must be played. Moreover, the assignments must be devised in such a way as to give the student the impression that the teacher *wants* to learn from him. There is a world of difference between telling a student to write on the subject of the draft and asking him to tell you what he thinks about the draft.

I recall a teacher I had in the fifth grade who used to tell us to write about something that would entertain her. It was a stupid assignment in one way and yet an amazingly effective one in another.

We knocked ourselves out to entertain her. Our imaginations went absolutely berserk. And we were all enormously pleased when she would read a paper in class and tell us that she had enjoyed it and that it had made her less lonely. In the end it cannot be said that we were totally successful since the teacher in question turned into an alcoholic, but she clearly knew how to get us to write.

To repeat, what I see happening in the teaching of composition is a much greater emphasis on the psychology of writing. This does not necessarily mean a diminution of interest in the logic of writing, but it does mean that the logic will become only a part of the total strategy to accomplish a larger end and not be an end in itself. Probably the great impetus for this change occurred in 1962 when, as a consequence of the influence of Walker Gibson, ten of the composition courses in the CEEB summer institutes emphasized the importance of "voice" or role playing in writing. Since then more and more composition textbooks have been basing their theory on classic as well as modern rhetoric. The movement is only getting started, partly because most English teachers have not been trained in rhetoric. But now rhetoric in some colleges is being made part of the curriculum for English majors, and in some graduate schools it is being required of those taking advanced degrees. So the change is only well started, but it seems solidly started and the promise for the future is very bright. No teacher worthy of his salt from now on can afford to view the student composition simply as an object that, however neat and tidy, is inert and not designed to accomplish particular things with particular readers.

Of the new developments in the teaching of literature by far the most significant, it seems to me is the increasing interest in critical approaches. Hitherto most of us have not been especially conscious of the critical approaches we have used in teaching a literary work, with the result that most of us have employed a sloppy and relatively ineffective combination of biography and analysis.

The new emphasis on varied critical approaches gives us, and eventually the student, a variety of ways of reading the literary work, each yielding its own special illumination. Close analysis, for example, discloses the parts of the work and the relations of parts to one another and to the whole; the biographical approach illuminates

the work in terms of the author and his times; the generic approach opens up the work as an item in literary history, the psychological approach as a case study in human psychology, the sociological approach as an exploration of social forces, the moral approach as a dramatization of good and evil, the mythical as an exhibition of myth and symbol from primitive times to the present. Clearly there is no one way to read a literary work, and the students should be made aware of this as early as possible.

Take for example the reading of *Huckleberry Finn.* Close analysis discloses the semi-frame nature of the book with Tom as focal center in the first three chapters and again in the last ten. It makes us especially aware of the episodes in the trip down the river, what they have in common and what each adds to the totality of the book. It sharpens our sense of the inner relations of the characters and of the particular qualities of Huck as the waif who simply wants the world to let him alone but who is forced time after time to light out when the world forces itself upon him. But even the closest analysis leaves much undisclosed. The biographic approach helps us to relate St. Petersburg to Hannibal, the boys to Sam Clemens's real companions, and the Huck-Tom dichotomy to the major pulls in Mark Twain's personality. It also discloses how *Huckleberry Finn* is the logical combination of what Twain had been previously attempting in point of view and detail in *The Gilded Age, Old Times on the Mississippi,* and *Tom Sawyer.* The psychological approach reveals Huck's nature in detail, the principles of his behavior, his motivations, his satisfactions. The sociological approach makes us more than ever aware of the cross-section of Mississippi Valley society that Twain includes, from the wealthy Grangerfords and Shepherdsons to the river rats such as Pap. Twain once said that he wrote the book to show up the damned human race. The sociological approach reveals the comprehensiveness of this incident. The moral approach reveals the conflict between innate values and those values he has acquired from adult society. Finally, the mythical approach highlights such archetypes and symbols as may be found.

I am of course not suggesting that every critical approach must be used with every work discussed in a class. But it does seem that the teacher who has used a variety of approaches in his study of a

work is in a far better position to prepare effective lectures and discussions. For two years now we have required a course in the critical approaches at the University of Iowa for our English majors. Professor G. Robert Carlsen and others in charge of our teacher training program tell me that nothing else that we have required of our majors has so dramatically improved their teaching. Knowing the possibilities of varied readings, the young teachers are in a far better position to put together a unit that will help their particular students to enjoy and understand a particular literary work.

One other tendency in the teaching of literature seems to me to be especially valuable, and that is the growing belief that we need to have the student identify with the literary work as strongly as possible. As a result of historical scholarship and new criticism we have been emphasizing the usefulness of detachment. A student, we have been insisting, should attack the literary work as though it were a historical artifact or an item to be dissected and analyzed. Although this process has yielded great understanding, it has not resulted often enough in the literary work's becoming vital in the life and thought of the student. I recall once in a seminar in Transcendentalism that I asked another student whether he believed Emerson's essay on the Oversoul. He replied that his function was not to believe it nor disbelieve it, but simply to discover what was there. How shocked and dismayed Emerson would have been! And how shocked and dismayed we all should be if this is truly the reaction of most of our students. The new eclecticism cannot come too soon. On the one hand our students need the understanding that comes with careful analysis and on the other the personal growth that comes from the challenge of great literature to their beliefs and disbeliefs. Mark Twain did not write *Huckleberry Finn* simply to provide material for analysis or historical research. He meant to challenge us out of some of our pomposities, our self-righteousness, and our self-satisfaction.

And now what of the curriculum as a whole? Are there new encouraging developments in it? Again it seems to me that there are. The English curriculum is admittedly the most difficult of all to make cumulative and sequential. By comparison, the curriculum in mathematics seems simple. It is patently true that a student needs

addition before multiplication, multiplication before division, arithmetic before algebra, algebra before trigonometry, trigonometry before calculus, and so on. There is nothing so neat about the English curriculum. The fourth grade student who writes a short paragraph needs minor mastery over everything that the professional writer needs to master: the selection of topic and material, the organization of ideas and material, selection of words, sentence structure, and mechanics. From grade to grade our changes can be only changes in degree and not in kind—with the result that the student much too often feels he is being subjected to unfair repetition. More than this, we have three subjects instead of one: language, literature, and composition. We often have to operate these at different levels or on separate tracks, and frequently there are special problems, especially where English for the student is a second language.

Despite the enormous difficulties, however, there has probably been more attention to the English curriculum and, we can hope, more improvement in the English curriculum in the last ten years than all the years before. Much of the credit for this attention and improvement goes to the curriculum centers established by the U.S. Office of Education. In these centers there has been emphasis on unity or centrality. At Carnegie Tech the curriculum has used literature as a central discipline, at Wisconsin language, and at Oregon composition. All three seem highly successful. Furthermore, far better sequences are being devised. For example, in the Carnegie Tech curriculum students at the sophomore level study world literature and concentrate on basic personal problems; juniors study American literature and see how these problems are modified by a particular culture; and seniors study English literature and see how the problems are modified by art forms. In all of these curricula, and in others too, though one of our three disciplines is stressed, the other two are not forgotten and none is taught as though it were unrelated to the other two. In the past, this separation of our three interests has been the besetting sin of English curricula. Instead of having grammar reinforce the study of writing and writing reinforce the study of literature, we have far too often taught them as though they are discrete enterprises.

I recall once being part of a group called in to evaluate a certain college freshman curriculum. I vividly recall a plan for a certain day

which required the instructor to spend thirty minutes on the short stories of Edgar Allan Poe and twenty minutes on the semicolon. We asked the author of the curriculum if this absurd approach were really necessary: suppose the students were handling the semicolon adequately? Did they then have to stop their study of Poe to talk about semicolons? The author was puzzled for a moment, and then his face lit up with dim incandescence. "Of course not!" he said. "In that case there should be forty minutes on the stories of Poe and only ten minutes on the semicolon!"

Finally I would suggest one further result of this explosion in English and that is a new sense of professionalism. I think this has become evident in the new hierarchy of loyalties that has developed especially at the college level. A typical English teacher today, especially the younger teacher, is first of all loyal to his discipline, second to his department, and only last to his school. In my own department, for example, we tend to know members of English departments at Chicago, Northwestern, and Yale better than we do most of our colleagues at Iowa in such departments as Chemistry and Sociology and Internal Medicine. English teachers attend the meetings of the professional organizations more frequently than they used to; they write a great deal more for the professional periodicals; they volunteer for work on professional committees as they never used to do. There is a new pride in being a teacher of English, and a greater concern over our image.

For years, of course, the public has considered us simply as protectors of the language, grammatical gendarmes who defend to the death the rigid rules of purity. Every one of us, I suspect, upon being introduced as an English teacher has had the depressing experience of having the other person say, "Oh, an English teacher. I'll have to watch my grammar." After which the conversation grinds to an embarrassing halt. There is a fine story about the English teacher who was invited by a hostess to play bridge with two women who had not known her before. When she was introduced and her occupation announced, there was the usual moment of silence. The awesome information that she taught English clearly made the women who had not known her nervous and self-conscious. Finally one of them said, "Well, let's start playing. Whom deals?"

Professionally, as we know, our concerns go far beyond problems of standard usage. Our immediate concerns are with the language, with writing, and with literature. But beyond these our concern ultimately is with the humanities. For whether we have wished it or not, we have become in effect the strongest and possibly the last bastion of the humanities. We come into contact with more students than those teaching any of the other humanistic disciplines. We spend more hours with the student than teachers in any other field. And in literature we have material that is more likely to move the minds and touch the hearts of the students than any other subject matter. Comedy can bring emotional release, tragedy compassion, and satire an urge for decency. The result can be not only an informed mind but a wise mind—and a tolerant spirit. Our opportunity is awesome; our failure is correspondingly tragic.

At no period has the need for wise and independent human beings been so essential. Science has brought us a control over the physical universe such as was never dreamed possible thirty years ago. We now talk about putting a man on the moon as though we were sending him to a small island in the Pacific. We live in a world in which a casual accident could start a war that would annihilate us all. We have developed chemistry to the point where we can now change the human personality and possibly the nature of oncoming generations. All of these accomplishments, and more like them, bring unnerving moral questions. To these questions science, as such, brings no answers. Only those concerned with human values can provide the answers if answers indeed can be provided. A respect for man, compassion, tolerance, a passion for justice, these are the ultimate ends of our work. It is in such a context that our success or failure as teachers of English will ultimately be measured.

So What Good Is English?

J. N. Hook

J. N. HOOK is the former executive secretary of the National Council of Teachers of English and a recipient of the W. Wilbur Hatfield Award for his valuable service to NCTE and the English teaching profession. He is currently professor of English at the University of Illinois, where he also acts as counselor in the teaching of English. During 1962–63, he was coordinator of Project English for the U.S. Office of Education. His writings include numerous articles and *The Teaching of High School English, Writer's Guide, Writing Creatively,* and *Individualized English.* Professor Hook's itinerary included lecture engagements at Jamestown College, Jamestown, North Dakota; Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania; Oakland City College, Oakland City, Indiana; Union College, Barbourville, Kentucky; West Virginia Wesleyan College, Buckhannon, West Virginia; and Gulf Coast Junior College, Panama City, Florida.

It is well known that not everyone enjoys writing. As an example, the story is told of a New York City taxicab driver who skillfully guided his cab past a pedestrian. The cabbie explained to his passenger why he was so careful.

"I always try to avoid hittin' 'em," he said, "because ever' time ya hit one, ya gotta write out a long report about it."

I can't vouch for the truth of the taxicab story, which I take only as a piece of whimsy, but we have the word of a plant personnel supervisor that my second, and somewhat similar, anecdote is true. It was told some years ago by Everett Smith, whose full title was Supervisor of Employment for the General Electric Company at Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The plant then was less automated than it is today. One job required a man to put boxes on a little cart and unload the boxes at another place. It looked like a no-brain job—load the boxes, push the cart a few hundred feet, take the boxes off, and write notes about how many boxes of what equipment he had placed where. The notes were simple things, such as "Six boxes number 309 switches moved from Station 4 to Station 7, October 29," but without the notes, nobody would be able to find anything. The job, for an unexpected reason, was a difficult one to keep filled. The workers' universal complaint was "Too much paperwork."

The General Electric story may be mildly funny. It shows, though, that many jobs even of the most menial kind require a certain degree of literacy. When we look with broader vision at industry's requirements, we can see much more clearly how dependent industry is upon communication.

A few years ago I made an informal study of the role of communication in the automobile industry. I can't call this research; it's not nearly formal enough or statistical enough. I wrote to various automobile manufacturers and their suppliers, to railroads and other shippers, and to companies that mine or process kinds of ore, and I talked with managers and salesmen in local car-dealing establishments. I explained that I wanted to find out how extensive is the role of communication in their separate parts of the industry. I explained

further that by "communication" I meant both oral and written communication—any time that words needed to be used to help in the accomplishment of the job.

An automobile starts at the ore pits or the mines—in the Mesabi iron range, for example, or the open copper pits of Arizona or Utah, or the bauxite deposits of Arkansas. The mining is performed by corporations, sometimes with the main offices located a thousand miles or more from the pits themselves. In these offices sit men and women who may never see their product. They don't dig it out, they don't load it, they don't transport it, they never touch the stuff. What they do is talk about it, write about it, make decisions about it—how much to mine, how many men to hire, how to sell, and so on. The officers of the corporation are sometimes paid salaries in six figures—many times the amount earned by the men who come into physical contact with the ore. The officers are word-men. They are paid high salaries because they are adept at using words to think with, adept at organizing the words coherently; they are men who read, at least about their business; they are men who can be persuasive in their talks with other men.

Under these word-men are other word-men, perhaps in offices scattered around the country, some at the sites of the mines themselves. These are little word-men who perhaps dream of becoming big word-men. They are called managers, assistant managers, supervisors. They, too, seldom if ever handle their product. Their job is not physical manipulation. They are go-betweens who interpret the words of their superiors and translate those words into action; they are men who make sure that words spoken in New York result in withdrawal of X tons of copper ore from a pit in Montana.

And under all these word-men in managerial and higher capacities are other word-men and word-women: a secretary or a corps of secretaries for each, assistants to the assistant manager, personnel supervisors, assistant supervisors, accountants who deal with words and numbers. There are scores of foremen, who are also, in the main, word-men. A foreman seldom drives a truck or operates a crane. He directs the men, explains what is to be done and in what way, talks with a man who is not doing the job right, retranslates the words spoken in New York yesterday or last month or last year.

When one tries to approximate for the mining industry the numbers of word-people and the numbers of people whose responsibility is largely physical, he decides that at present the numbers are about even, but that with mechanization and automation the proportion of word-men and word-women is steadily growing. It seems that in mining, about half a company's employees are primarily word-people, and that their total salaries amount to somewhat more than half of the company's payroll.

The ore is mined and must be transported to smelters or refineries. Trains and ships are used primarily. If you believe that a railroad's greatest cost is for trains and tracks, you are mistaken. About two-thirds of a railroad's expenditures are for payroll. And half or more than half of these payroll dollars go to men and women whose closest contact with a train may come when they hear it thundering along the tracks. They are word-men, word-women; they are not engineers or switchmen or brakemen or section hands.

After ore has gone through various processes at the smelter or the refinery, which also has its crews of both word-people and non-word-people, it is transported in its new form, this time to a company that makes door handles or spark plugs or battery cables or automobile radios. The automobile industry makes use of thousands of such manufacturers and suppliers; they exist in every state and in many foreign countries. (The automobile industry draws from every continent, so that international communication is highly important to its work.) These companies, too, have their word-manipulators and their tool- or thing-manipulators. The proportions may vary, but once more seem to be about half and half at the present time. In general, the larger the company, the higher its proportion of word-men.

The pieces funnel in to River Rouge or Flint or Kenosha or St. Louis or one of the other places where they are assembled. The giants of the industry—General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, and American Motors—are great users of words. Behind every man on the assembly line may be a dozen men and women who never touch a car except those in which they ride as drivers or passengers. They make the basic decisions, hold the conferences, dictate or type letters, keep the records, conduct the sales campaigns. Among other of their

expenditures are fifty to seventy-five dollars for sales messages—advertising—for every car they sell.

A visitor to an auto assembly plant is shown the dramatic part—the way that the components are brought together and quickly and deftly fastened into place. What the visitor does not see are the long corridors lined with offices, offices employing many more people than are on the assembly line, offices where the stock-in-trade is words, where a man or a woman succeeds or fails because of his or her skill with words.

The finished automobiles are transported to a dealer. The dealer and his salesmen "handle" cars, we say, but basically they "handle" words. They are persuaders, and they are often paid very well for their persuasive abilities. In almost any little community, a car dealer is likely to be one of the wealthiest men in town. The Falcon salesman, unless out of loyalty to Falcon, may drive a Lincoln. The buyer pays a substantial sum of money to listen to the roseate adjectives of the salesman.

The final sales price of the automobile contains an even more substantial sum of money for taxes, both direct and indirect. In toto, these may amount to a third or more of the cost of the car; some tax experts say that if all taxes up and down the line are included, the figure may well be over half.

What does tax money go for? Some of it is expended for things, such as buildings or military supplies. But much more tax money is expended on words. The people we elect to office are word-people—those in the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial. The Capitol is a building that houses words. The huge white or gray edifices that line the streets of Washington are temples of words. The several million federal employees scattered around the globe are for the most part specialists in words; if they suddenly became completely inarticulate, they would no longer be useful employees. Even in the military service, several men and women, dealing mostly in words, back up each man actually on the firing line. State employees are mostly word-people, and on the local level, where we have mayors and aldermen and city clerks and secretaries, even the policeman is part of the time a communicator; he is not always shooting a gun or

collaring a law violator. The more than a million teachers, paid by taxes, are paid primarily for communicating.

So the tax money, most of it spent for words, is a large part of the cost of the automobile. You go into an automobile dealer's showroom, let us say. You listen to the words, and compare them with the words you heard in other showrooms. You decide to buy this shiny car with its accessories and with that wonderful odor of newness that helps each salesman in his persuasive efforts. The car will cost you thirty-six hundred dollars. You sign a contract. When the car is ready for you, you drive it proudly down the street—thirty-six hundred dollars worth of automobile. Never do you think of how much of that thirty-six hundred represents words.

But if you should think about it, if you considered the cost of words from ore pit to highway, if you added together all the word-costs that I have been talking about, you would come to the conclusion that about half of your money went for words—possibly even more. You are driving eighteen hundred dollars worth of words down Main Street.

Industry has become increasingly aware of how heavily it relies on communication. For example, the president of Westinghouse wrote to Joseph Mersand:

> Within our organization, we find we must be increasingly mindful of the best means of communication. From a functional point of view, effective communications reduce the amount of time spent in interpreting what a person intends to convey in oral and written form. Because of our constantly changing language, we can never feel that our communications are perfect. Therefore we must seek from . . . students a higher degree of competence than that which presently exists.

The personnel director of Motorola Inc. said:

> I have often stated . . . that . . . I would like very much to be able to return to the classroom and tell the students just how desperately they will need the ability offered them by their English courses . . . . No other part of their training in school will be so vital to them in their careers as their work in English.

A representative of the U.S. General Accounting Office wrote several years ago:

> The staff engaged in our audit activities is composed of more than 1600 professional accountants and includes about 400 certified public accountants. [It is much

larger now.] The preparation of written reports on our audits and investigations is a very important phase of our work. Such reports are the primary means by which we communicate our findings, conclusions, and recommendations . . . to the Congress . . . its committees, and other Government agency managements. Because of the significance of our reporting responsibility, we are vitally interested in the competence of our employees to use English properly and effectively.

I recently completed work on a book called *Testmanship*. It consists of practical suggestions to students and to people who will take tests for positions in business, industry, and the Civil Service, and for advanced ratings in military service. In my preparatory study, I examined a large number of sample tests of kinds that are widely used. I was much impressed by the amount of attention given to reading ability, vocabulary, proofreading skills, and spelling, and also the stress placed upon reasoning with words: finding associations, understanding implications, and the like. Some businesses even give tests of reasoning and of communicative ability to their elevator operators and their night watchmen. Three of the four parts of the draft deferment test given last spring to high school seniors and to college students were tests of reading, verbal ability, and reasoning ability.

In almost any kind of work, it is safe to conclude, communication is important. One of the few exceptions I can think of is the lone fur trapper in the Far North, who almost never sees anyone else and hence needs to communicate mainly with himself. I understand that the number of lone fur trappers is not very large.

English teachers are responsible for helping students to improve in their communication, because communication will be a vital part of their daily activity throughout the lives of almost every one of them. But there is another and perhaps even more important part of the work of the English classroom about which I have said nothing. I am referring, of course, to the reading and study of literature.

This subject is much more difficult to talk about. Now I can't cite any statistics. I can't claim that literature plays any sizable role in the manufacture of automobiles. I can't talk about dollars and cents.

Let me begin my attempt to discuss the worthwhileness of literary study by parodying a few paragraphs from Dickens' *Christmas*

Carol. You all remember the scene in which Scrooge's nephew comes to the office to invite his uncle to Christmas dinner. Scrooge proceeds to attack the idea of Christmas on the ground that Christmas is not gainful, and the nephew defends it. In my parody, Scrooge is a most recalcitrant student, the nephew has become a kindly teacher, and *literature* or *reading* has been substituted for *Christmas*.

"Happy reading, student!" cried a cheerful voice.

It was the voice of the teacher, who came upon him so quickly that this was the first intimation he had of his approach.

"Bah!" said the student. "Humbug!"

"Reading and literature a humbug, student! You don't mean that, I'm sure."

"I do," said the student. "Literature! What right have you to gloat about literature? What has literature ever done for you? You're poor enough."

"Come, then," said the teacher gayly. "What right have you to condemn it? Are you so rich without it?"

"Bah! Humbug!"

"Don't be cross, student."

"What else can I be, when I live in such a world of fools as this? Literature! What's with this literature stuff? What's literature to you but a lot of hard work; something that you waste your time reading and get not an hour richer; something that you have to pass tests on and have every question in 'em through a whole nine months of school turned dead against you? If I could have my way, every idiot who goes about with 'Literature' on his lips should be reduced to the size of a worm and allowed to bury himself forever inside of a book. He should!"

"Student," pleaded the teacher.

"Teacher," returned the student, "keep literature in your own way, and let me keep it in mine."

"Keep it!" repeated the teacher. "But you don't keep it."

"Let me leave it alone, then. Much good may it do you! Much good it's ever done you!"

"There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say," said the teacher, "literature

among them. But I am sure I have always thought of literature when I have time to read or meditate, as a good thing; a pleasant, informative, often helpful thing; the only thing I know of, in the years of a man's life, that shows men and women opening their shut-up hearts freely, that reveals them for what they are as fellow-passengers in life's journey and not another race bound on other journeys. Literature is a human and a humane thing. It is not meter and vocabulary study and tests. It is man speaking as man; it is man thinking; it is man feeling. And therefore, student, though it has never put a scrap of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe it *has* done me good, and *will* do me good; and I say, God bless it."

In a book to be published soon, Professors James Knapton and Bertrand Evans of the University of California say that although literature can do many things for students, the very best thing it can do is to give them an esthetic experience, the experience of the work as a work of art. Such an experience, they say, produces "a salutary effect on the inner being." Literature moves men. "Other subjects can teach us about justice, honor, compassion; but poetry can make us want 'to do that which we know.' To 'learn about' the admirable values is one thing, and a good one; but it is not the same thing as being moved to embrace them."

Knapton and Evans quote from "Fra Lippo Lippi":

> If you get simple beauty and naught else.
> You get about the best thing God invents.

Then they say, "Perhaps we are merely foolish in insisting that if you get the esthetic experience and naught else, you get about the best thing literature has to give. Art has not, seemingly, made the mass of mankind any better. But has it had its best chance to do so?"

Time is now available for that chance. It is a truism that man's leisure is increasing steadily. In past centuries the fourteen- or sixteen-hour day was commonplace. One toiled from sun to sun, or more, and one slept to toil again. Now the hours of toil for most Americans are only 40 in each 168, and those 40 are interspersed with coffee breaks and conversation, and the toil itself is on the average lighter than ever before. Excluding the 40 hours for work and

56 for sleep, man has over 70 hours a week to spend or to throw away. There is humanity's greatest challenge other than the fight for survival itself: Shall people spend time or kill time?

The late Adlai Stevenson once said, ". . . the new leisure will mean new happiness only if care is taken not to confuse leisure with just plain having nothing to do." He emphasized, as other thinking men have done, that for human beings to come nearer their potential, they will have to devote more of their time to the nonmaterial. We are in an age of transition, and I am talking now only indirectly about the Jet Age, the Atomic Age, the Space Age, or whatever age you read about in this morning's paper. Until the past few decades, man necessarily devoted most of his time and attention to the material. He had to, because before modern technology reduced the need for labor, most persons found it essential to sweat and slave, to grow the potatoes or weave the cloth or mold the plowshare that gave them a living. Throughout history man has been bound by the necessity of working long to acquire *things*. But now we are living for the first time in an era when the *things*—food, clothing, shelter—come with relative ease. It is difficult, though, to abandon thing-thinking; too many generations have made it habitual.

Besides, most persons have no concept of a substitute for thing-thinking. If they do not need to think intensively about how to get their next meal, they tend to substitute another thing: buying a larger house, or knocking a little ball into a hole, or getting a diamond ring. The fact that thinking need not be about tangibles is an insight held by few.

William James suggested that wars would end only when we find what he called "the moral equivalent of war." He meant, I believe, that there is something inherently competitive in man's nature; if he does not fight wars, he must expend his fighting energy in combatting something else, perhaps hunger or disease or inequities. I should say, similarly, that to reduce thing-thinking we must find the equivalent of it; we must show the young that dealing with abstractions, with ideas, is even more challenging and rewarding than being *exclusively* concerned with sports and hotrods and clothing.

A short time before his death Robert E. Sherwood wrote: "The essential concept of the divinity that exists in man is the force that

impelled man out of the jungle and along the ascending path that leads to the stars. (Even if he never reaches them, it is a wonderful thing that he has been perpetually climbing in that direction, the poor, insignificant, invincible little creature.) His perhaps blind but persistent faith in his godlike qualities has enabled man to defy all scientific proof that he is frail, physically and morally—that he is subject to corruption and decay—that he is, in a word, mortal. He has gone out on his own and made himself immortal."

That is where literature comes in. Literature can help in the search for a substitute for thing-thinking. Literature is the story of man's climb along that "ascending path that leads to the stars." Literature reveals the endless journey of mankind. As Stephen Vincent Benét said in "The Devil and Daniel Webster," there is "a sadness in being a man," but it is a "proud thing too." Man is "tricked and trapped and bamboozled," but it is "a great journey."

How many young people in school realize that life is a great journey? For how many of them is it only a wild, meaningless ride, without a goal, without a reason? Entranced by the superficial attractions of television and hip-twisting and hotrodding (though there's some time for those, too), how many know that life has anything deeper and more satisfying to offer? How many of their parents and teachers are aware that we are in an age of transition: an age when man need no longer be steadily thing-centered?

If thing-thinking is to be reduced, though, as I have said, a replacement must be found. It will certainly not be the same replacement for all. We cannot assume that every man, woman, and child of the future will be content with books and music and an artist's palette. The world is full of matters for contemplation and constructive action. There is, for instance, mathematics; you remember Miss Millay's "Euclid alone has looked on beauty bare." There is botany, "heaven in a wild flower," and geology, "a world in a grain of sand." There are the vast reaches of our ignorance in physiology and medicine, in chemistry and physics, in psychology and sociology. There are realms of knowledge unexplored that have as yet been barely glimpsed, and beyond those, stretching toward infinity like solar systems, still more realms.

Back to earth. What have man's potential, man's dreams, man's

chances of becoming a humane superman, to do with us as we are? What do these things have to do with literature?

A question that I should like to see banned from the literature classroom is "What happened next?" If literature were a mere series of events, of what-happens-nexts, I should prefer to spend my time in studying fish or learning all there is to know about growing mushrooms. But I find more in literature than I find in the habits of fish or fungi. I find, of course, fun and exhilaration and information and insight and beauty, such as others may find equally in opera or sculpture or architecture. I like to find the sources of the exhilaration, the insight, and the beauty and to help those younger than I to find them. In rhythm, in rhyme, in the turn of a phrase, the perfect choice of a word, the adept twist of plot, the climbing toward a soaring climax, in the architectonics of a poem or a play or a novel, in the writer's mastery of his tools I find and hope to help others find the pleasure that comes from the realization of how effects are produced. My wife's appreciation of music is sharper than my own because she understands much more of the techniques and technicalities than I do. Appreciation of literature comes in part from understanding the techniques and technicalities of literature.

But if literature were only a matter of technique, it would be much less fascinating. It would then be a relatively useless demonstration of skill, like that of a champion bowler or a skilled trapeze artist.

Literature owes its unique power to the fact that it is a blend of technique and content. The content is richer than that of any of the other arts or the sciences, for it is as wide as a universe and as deep as a man. The content of botany is circumscribed by the definition of botany, and equally circumscribed is the content of every other science. Painting and sculpture and architecture and music are bound by the relative limitedness of the materials with which their makers work. But the literary artist may explore to any depth of which his mind is capable, and he may branch out into history and all the sciences and all the other arts. No creative talent is less circumscribed than that of the writer. Like Swift he may voyage to Lilliput and the land of the Houyhnhnms, while his quill pen at the same time pokes aciduously at man's bare follies. Like Homer and like Tolstoy

he may sketch on a giant canvas, depicting man in brutal conflict with his fellows, or like Dostoevsky he may search the soul of a murderer. Like Whitman he may take joy in being alive, or like Pope he may probe the littleness of little men whose joys are small because their souls are small. Like Parkman and Guthrie he may share the excitement of opening an unknown half of a continent. Like Huxley and Orwell he may project his imagination into the future, and illuminate perils and promises.

What I have been saying—perhaps in too highflown or abstract language—is that in the world of tomorrow the role of literature has a chance of becoming even more vital than it is or has been, for literature offers one of the best ways by which we may profitably spend much of our seventy hours of leisure each week, and it can help in bringing us away from now unneeded emphasis upon the thing-thinking. What we can learn from literature may help us and our descendants to lead fuller, richer lives than most men and women have known.

Language—A Base for the Liberal Arts

H. A. Gleason, Jr.

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Linguists are notoriously inclined to speak about highly technical matters of theory or narrowly conceived details of language structure. I want to step out of that familiar role and examine the place of language within a broader framework. To do so, I must select a point of view; mine will be that of one working within the school system and concerned with the whole educational process. I have, therefore, chosen as a title "Language—A Base for the Liberal Arts." What I mean by "language" will become clearer as I proceed. But it will be useful to indicate at the beginning, if only very roughly, what I mean by "the liberal arts," for though the term is familiar, it is not often given any precise meaning. I shall take it to comprehend all those studies which jointly build toward a broad unified understanding of man and his works. I hope this will not be understood as covering simply college studies, for I intend it to apply to all levels from kindergarten to the university and beyond, and not simply to formal institutional education, but just as much to the ongoing intellectual life for which schooling is only preparation.

Note that I have inserted into my definition the word *jointly*. It is not enough that each subject should make its own separate contribution, however important. Instead, each must relate to the others and interact in such a way that together they all yield something more than the sum of their individual contributions. The goal is to reveal man not fragmentarily but as a whole. That language study does qualify, I shall attempt to demonstrate by discussing four broader problems to which it makes essential contributions.

May I take as a point of departure a passage of literature that will be familiar to many of you? Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* opens with two tribunes addressing a "rabble of citizens":

> Hence! home, you idle creatures, get you home;
> Is this a holiday? What! know you not,
> Being mechanical, you ought not walk
> Upon a labouring day without the sign
> Of your profession?—Speak, what trade art thou?
>
> Why, sir, a carpenter.
>
> Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?
> What doest thou with thy best apparel on?
> You, sir, what trade are you?

Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman,
I am but, as you would say, a cobbler.

But what trade art thou? Answer me directly.

A trade, sir, that I hope I may use with a safe conscience; which is indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.

What trade, thou knave, thou naughty knave, what trade?

Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me: yet, if you be out, sir, I can mend you.

What meanest thou by that? mend me, thou saucy fellow!

Why, sir, cobble you.

That will be enough for my purpose. I want you to think not of the passage, but of its reader. How does he react? That depends heavily on who he is. For one, this is a pleasant enough bit of banter, a collection of not-at-all sophisticated puns, a trivial but effective device to project the play into the midst of the action. There is nothing either difficult or profound about it.

But for another—and he is representative of the most abundant class of readers of *Julius Caesar*—there is only deep mystification. A few of the words are strange, but that makes no real difficulty; it is probably no worse here than in the comic strips he reads every day. How the words fit together, on the other hand, is not only unclear but ultimately disturbing, for until this is comprehended, the meaning must remain hidden. The puns, then, are missed. Some school editions, trying to be helpful, carefully point them all out, but who enjoys a joke that is explained? Still, even the fullest set of notes leaves much obscure. Only one reason keeps this reader struggling on—if indeed anything does: the passage has been assigned.

Certainly three quarters and probably much more of the reading of Shakespeare in our high schools is so lacking in comprehension that it is neither informative nor enjoyable. Indeed, it is for most students distinctly painful and frustrating. The result is all too often a complete breakdown of communication between student and English teacher and a permanent dislike of Shakespeare. What is wrong?

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No one can read with interest what he does not understand, and the language of Shakespeare, as of many other literary writers, is often unintelligible to readers without special background or extensive experience. For a convenient example, consider the first two questions. The first poses no difficulty: *Is this a holiday?* It is, for most readers, perfectly natural English, exactly one way that they themselves might ask the same question. The second is different: *Know you not . . . ?* For me, this is almost as familiar as the first. I can, if I choose, talk this way, though normally I do not. But this familiarity comes from long exposure to Elizabethan language. For the typical American high school student, it is totally and confusingly strange. The best he can do is to make some wild guess. With luck some of his guesses will be right. If he is presented with only an occasional sentence of this sort, he will have little trouble. But if many sentences are as strange as this one guessing cannot suffice, and the whole passage becomes obscure or even completely meaningless.

This particular example I have chosen because it is peculiarly easy to clarify by a little advance attention to language structure—that is, to grammar. One convenient way to describe yes-or-no questions grammatically is to show how they can be formed by systematic alterations from related declarative sentences. The basic rule is to shift the first word of the verb phrase to a position before the subject. Thus, from *This is a holiday,* by shifting *is,* we get the question, *Is this a holiday?* All the rules that apply in this case are common to both the older Elizabethan patterns and those now current. As a result, Shakespeare's question is identical with the form that we would use today. Part of the problem in the second example can be seen by starting from a positive declarative sentence beginning *You know . . . .* The rule just stated would require the shifting of *know,* the first and only word of the verb phrase, leading to *Know you . . . ?* This was, indeed, the usual form of such a question in Shakespeare's day. In the ensuing three and a half centuries, however, one small proviso has been added to the rules: English no longer allows the shift of the main verb unless it is a form of *be* or *have.* The modern pattern can be described as first replacing the single-word verb *know* by *do know.* Then the *do* can be shifted, yielding *Do you know?* This looks superficially very different from its older equiva-

lent *Know you . . . ?*, though actually the change is not fundamentally very great.

The question in the text presents another problem arising from a change in the patterns of use of the negative word *not*. It used to be placed most often after the main verb: *You know not. . . .* Starting from this, the question rules lead directly to *Know you not. . . ?*, the form Shakespeare used in this passage. Today, *not* is placed after an auxiliary: *You do not know . . .* ; indeed, *not* and *do* usually combine to form a single word: *You don't know. . . .* If you start from this, the rules lead to what is for us the usual form of the question: *Don't you know. . . ?*

If you are not familiar with this kind of description, it may be a little hard to follow a presentation as condensed as this. Yet the matter is neither complex nor subtle when presented, step-by-step, on the blackboard. Junior high students (and not just specially selected ones) have no trouble with it. A session examining the formation of questions will effectively remove one small block to the reading of Shakespeare. A few other points similarly treated can add up to an appreciable difference in the facility, and hence the enjoyment, they have in reading Elizabethan literature. For many of them there is a very narrow margin between success and failure in understanding Shakespeare. Only a little help may bring many students across the line, replacing frustration by some measure of appreciation, giving them the start that will allow further reading to build toward real enjoyment.

What I have said so far may sound purely instrumental. I would seem to be suggesting nothing more than giving students of English literature the tools they need for the task. If it were so, there would be no reason to demur. The tools they must have, and if the schools are to teach this kind of literature, it is the responsibility of the schools to provide them.

However, that is a side issue to the one I want to present. I am not at this point concerned with language as a tool for the liberal arts, but as a base for the liberal arts. Teaching of the grammar of Shakespeare's language can give much more than a tool. It can also provide some insight into language change, a phenomenon that every educated person ought to face.

Change in language is not an isolated fact. The passage I read from *Julius Caesar* shows also something of change in culture. The whole conversation makes very little sense in terms of modern patterns. We fully expect a workman to leave his tools behind him when he finishes for the day. Our suspicion would be reserved for the man who did appear on the street in leather apron and with his rule. The change is more than alteration of a number of details of behavior. It is the replacement of one system with another partially similar system. Unfortunately, this is seldom easy to see. Culture systems are so broad and so complex that both the continuity and the change are seldom definitively exhibited in the limited data at our disposal. Our understanding of the processes of change can be greatly helped by some sharper and more manageable parallel.

Language change is just this. It too is a matter of one system replacing another, the two being partially similar. Even my brief consideration of questions and negatives in Elizabethan and current English went far toward demonstrating this. In each stage of the language we can perceive a system, a set of interconnected patterns describable in general rules. Most of the rules in the two systems are alike, but not all. The more of Elizabethan grammar we examine, the more revealing the comparison with present-day grammar. What was seen in a small subsystem can be seen in better perspective in a larger segment. What we find is two grammars with fundamental and pervading similarities, but also with significant differences. Each grammar has its own integrity. Sometimes the surface changes seem much greater than the changes in the grammatical system responsible for them: Elizabethan *Know you not. . . ?* and present-day *Don't you know. . . ?* seem more different than they really are. On the other hand, sometimes a superficial similarity hides a deeper change.

Such observations of the fact and nature of language change in turn raise many other questions: What is the motivation? What is the mechanism? How can a language, or a culture, operate through a period of change without disruption and failure? The broad significance of such questions, especially in a society such as ours undergoing rapid and accelerating change in so many aspects, can hardly be missed. None of these questions can be given final answers, of course, and the details differ from one type of system to another. Yet the

study of language change does present a remarkably sharp and tractable case, and one which does contribute in remarkable ways to an understanding of the broadest dimensions of the total problem of change.

Here, then, is the first that I shall suggest of the areas in which the study of our language can provide a base for the liberal arts. Language provides an especially revealing instance of change in system, and this is certainly a major feature of the life of man in history.

Several years ago I was taking my weekly share of driving a school car pool. Somehow this situation inhibits adolescent discussion far less than most others where adults have opportunity to eavesdrop. The boys were reading *Julius Caesar,* and they were quite frank about it. Their opinion can be summed up in a single word that kept recurring through the discussion: "gusty." I believe that this reaction reflects very largely their difficulty with reading the play. Yet, remember, this is generally considered one of the more suitable plays for high school reading, among other reasons because it is easier than most.

That spring the school went down to Stratford, Connecticut, to the Shakespeare Theatre. What they saw, of course, was dictated by the schedule of the company. It turned out to be one of the more difficult comedies, never suggested for high school reading. They came back all excited. One of them reported: "It was wonderful slapstick, so good it made The Three Stooges look stupid." His norm for comparison was not mine, and probably not yours, but this was certainly intended as high praise. He recognized a superior product, and he thoroughly enjoyed it. And so did his classmates. Why the difference in reaction to the two plays?

I doubt that it could have been anything about the two plays themselves. All this had certainly been taken into account in judging *Julius Caesar* the more suitable for high school students. There are, however, always two profound alterations from the printed text when a play is presented, and these must figure in the difference. First, the stage directions must be translated into action, and where the action is not specified in detail it must be supplied. Second, the language must be changed from written English to spoken. Probably both contributed to the boys' reactions. It is the second that interests us.

I have called it a change in language because it is certainly more than a mere change in medium. The two systems are different in significant if easily overlooked ways. All of these differences add up to what a linguist might label as an increase in redundancy. That is, nothing more is said in the spoken form than in the written, but the apparatus used to convey it is more elaborate. There are more signals. There is in language always more equipment used than the bare minimum necessary to give the desired meaning; this excess is technically called redundancy. Spoken English has, in general, more redundancy than written. Where, then, do these extra signals appear?

First, there is intonation, an elaborate machinery of pitch changes and timing. English, like every other language, though in detail in its own peculiar way, uses this to integrate sentences into wholes and to separate one from another, to mark the kind of sentence, and at the same time to show something of the relation of one sentence to the next. The written page has another, much more economical (that is, less redundant) system. We call it punctuation.

Second, there is what is known technically as paralanguage. This is an additional system superimposed on the intonation, involving quality of the voice and certain additional dimensions of pitch and timing. It is often what is referred to when someone says, "I don't like your tone of voice." Linguists are not yet able to analyze paralanguage in any detail, but they are quite certain of its importance in communication. It signals, among other things, various attitudes or emotional states. It isn't marked in most printed Shakespeare texts at all, though in some other plays it is roughly indicated by brief stage directions like "angrily," "gayly," "morosely." The actor has to provide the appropriate paralanguage, as he does much of the intonation, and this constitutes a major part of the art of acting.

The only literature which makes much effort to indicate paralanguage directly is the comic strip, which may use larger or darker letters, or even a different style of lettering.

Third, there is indication of the speaker's identity. Shakespeare texts show this by a name, often abbreviated, at the beginning of each part. These are a minor nuisance and always a little hard to keep track of. But in a stage performance, or even in a good recorded reading, every word, every syllable, is marked by individual voice

peculiarities. As babies, we learned to distinguish voices before we learned to understand anything of what was said, and so it is perfectly natural and easy for us to keep track of the speakers in this way, even though it means listening for very subtle clues. Moreover, the voice characteristics do not merely distinguish individuals; they also tell us something about the person, at the very minimum whether he is male or female, child or adult. When you watch the play, you are further reminded not only of who is speaking but also something of his role and character by his appearance and actions. This is an additional redundancy backing up the redundancy internal to speech.

Again, the comic strip accomplishes the same thing by putting speech into balloons clearly tied to the pictures. At least one strip, *Pogo,* tries occasionally to show the voice quality as well. The Deacon, you remember, always speaks in Old English lettering.

So the added redundancy in the spoken language makes Shakespeare on the stage vastly different from Shakespeare on the page, at least in intelligibility to high school students. This carries a lesson for teaching. It would be wonderful if a good Shakespeare theater were within reach of every high school. Failing that, movies or even recordings can help greatly. And the teacher should read much of it aloud. But I am not concerned here with these details of teaching method, however important they may be, but with what this shows about the nature of language: Redundancy is essential for successful communication, and increased redundancy can often be used to surmount communication difficulties, either in the reading of literature or in the most mundane affairs. If, for example, you have a poor telephone connection and you sense that you are not getting your message through, you increase redundancy. In the extreme case, perhaps, you spell out a name, and if that is not enough, you go further by saying "D as in David."

Redundancy is not a feature of language alone. Cultures are redundant, as are the biological organization of the human body, the genetic system, the highway network. Indeed, all systems are redundant, for redundancy is one requirement for being systematic. Here, then, is the second major principle that I want to mention. It is one so basic to human life that every educated person should have some understanding of it, and it is, hence, one that should be uncov-

ered and explored in any comprehensive program in the liberal arts. Language is one of the systems where it is most clearly seen and most readily understood, indeed, where it can easily be experimented with, where we can learn to control it, adjusting it to the necessities of the situation. In fact, learning to control redundancy is one of the important elements of learning to write well. Redundancy, then, is a second place where language study can be a base for the liberal arts.

Some of you have thought it strange that in discussing the understanding of Shakespeare I should repeatedly make comparisons with the comic strips. I must explain. When I was a boy, the captain of one of the great transatlantic luxury ships lived in my neighborhood and was a friend of my family. There was a steward who had been with him ever since he was a third officer on a small tramp steamer in the Caribbean. Whenever the captain came into port, his wife went down to meet him, and the steward always gave her a report. One of these was relayed to me: "I don't know what is wrong with the captain, ma'am. We have all this good food in first class, and he calls me and says, 'Go down to third class and get me some corned beef and cabbage.' " I am like the captain: I enjoy dining first class, of course, but I also like more lowly fare. And that is the way I think it ought to be, both in food and in literature.

It is not simply that most of us enjoy reading the comics, or some of them. (Like everything else, they vary from good to indescribably bad.) Like great literature, the comic strips can tell us something about language and its use in communication and, hence, about man. For they represent a genre that have been peculiarly successful—one that can, therefore, be a profitable case study. We should ask why the comic strips have communicated so successfully. One reason is their very high redundancy, far greater than most printed materials. To this we might add the more speechlike use of language: a more colloquial variety, the indication of paralanguage, and the close tie of language to situation. Another, very significant in some strips, is the recognition of the multiplicity of dimensions in speech communication.

We tend to think of language as a device to communicate ideas. This, of course, it does. But this function will scarcely account for our common compulsion to speak, even when we have no ideas to

convey. For example, when two people are thrown together for more than merely the quickest passing on the street or in a public corridor, whether they are total strangers or old acquaintances, they almost inevitably want to speak and to hear the other speak. So strong is this compulsion that our rules of etiquette tend to say more about when one should not speak than about when one must.

Consider an imaginary experiment. Suppose this college group were all outfitted with sets of the necessary little cards. You walk across the campus and meet an acquaintance. Silent and deadpan he holds up a neatly printed card reading: *Good Morning. How are you?* You return the greeting by another card: *Fine, thank you. And you?* Neither of you would be satisfied. It would not be long before nobody would bother. For the cards give only the words, and the words mean hardly anything at all. They are only an excuse. What you want to hear is the voice. From speech you can judge some things that you would very much like to know: something about the speaker, about his present state, and about his view of the situation in which he finds himself—that is, about his relation to you.

Modern telephone equipment suggests a partial analogy. Long distance wires are very expensive. To keep the investment to a minimum it is necessary to pack a number of separate messages simultaneously into a single wire. So skillfully are they added together at one end and separated at the other that when you make a long-distance call you seldom hear any hint of the other conversations that are travelling with yours.

Language does something similar. A number of messages are transmitted together, all carried by the same voice: the ideas, the speaker's identity, his mood among them. The hearer must receive them together, separate them, and then interpret each of them individually, and in quite different ways. Suppose you set up some instruments to record and analyze speech. What you will be observing is the noise in the air carrying a mixture of messages. It may be a major undertaking to separate them in the instrumental record or even to find any order at all. Yet somehow the human hearer does the equivalent, easily and rapidly—how is one of the great research puzzles.

There are differences between language and the telephone sys-

tem. When the lines are not busy, a telephone circuit may carry only a single message, though its capacity reaches toward a hundred. Whenever we speak, messages of some sort go out on all the channels. We find it very difficult to shut down any part of our human communication system. We remark with wonder when someone is able to speak in an emotionally charged situation without revealing his own identity. (But, remember, he does this only by assuming some other, false identity.) Surprisingly enough, the easiest part to take out of effective operation is the one we ordinarily think of as most important: the central message carrying channel. We do this, not by turning it off—most of us can only speak in words and sentences—but by making it almost wholly redundant. That is the way, for example, with greetings. The words are almost completely predictable, that is, very highly redundant. Think again of our experiment with cards. You would soon find out that the person you might greet would be able to guess what card you would use. So why bother to pick it out from the deck; just hold up a blank card, or even your empty hand as if it contained a card. That would tell him that you are not too angry, preoccupied, or haughty to greet him. The printed message would do no more. That is, the words in the greeting are not necessary, except to go along with the other messages.

Whenever we speak, then, we send out a bundle of messages. And when we listen to speech we hear a number of messages, to which we respond in different ways. Sometimes this is exactly what the speaker would desire. At other times he might wish to eliminate some of the subsidiary channels and transmit only that which is his central concern at the moment. But language severely limits his ability to do so. This multiplicity of messages is the third characteristic of human language which I want to suggest as a crucial contribution to the understanding of man and his works.

Looked at narrowly, language is unique in this. Construed more broadly, however, the multiple functioning of language is again a feature paralleled in many of the systems that shape man's life. Even more important for our thesis that language study is a base for the liberal arts, however, is the fact that this multiplicity of messages is the great determinant of the relation of language to all the other facets

of human activity. Language does not enter into the interaction between persons in any single way, but always in many. Human social processes verge on complete inscrutability if this diversity of role is forgotten.

I will take it as unnecessary to establish the place of the study of literature within the liberal arts, though certainly the matter is worthy of some close and searching attention. But I would like to reiterate what ought to be obvious, that the study of language is basic to literary scholarship. We have already mentioned one instance where it provides a necessary tool, but there are other aspects where it makes a more substantive contribution. Let me mention just one of these: style.

Just what it is that style does in, say, a work of literature, I will not attempt to delineate. But I do want to remind you of one of the devices it uses. This is the patterning of choices among options presented by the grammar and by the literary conventions. Style, then, is a nongrammatical system for whose operation the grammatical system of the language must make provision. And in English, as in all languages, it does indeed by providing numerous pairs or sets of alternatives, equivalent in everything but style. A simple example involves the placement of adverbs; we have our choice between *He will come soon, He will soon come,* and *Soon he will come.* These say effectively the same thing; the only difference is one of style. This is not very evident here as I recite the sentences without context. For style is a matter of patterning—patterning of numerous such choices against one another, and patterning against the background of general and linguistic context. What these sentences illustrate is not style, but resources for style. Where the adverb is placed in a given sentence is one of the elements out of which a style is built. The study of language patterns then is not stylistics, but the base for stylistics.

Much has been said of the superficiality of our school treatment of English grammar. We see here the penalty. It cannot help us much in stylistics because it stops far short of what is needed. First it restricts itself to phrases and sentences far below the level of sophistication or complexity that even the plainest authors use. To expect this kind of grammar to be of any real help in the study of style is comparable to expecting one high school general science course to

qualify a person as a top-level space engineer. And it progresses from word to phrase to clause to sentence and there stops, just short of the scope where it would become really relevant, for style inheres only very weakly in individual sentences, being largely a feature of extended discourse.

Moreover, it is in the grammatical o*ptions* that style is rooted. We have traditionally made little or no point of even the most elementary of these. Our school grammar tradition has been much more interested in the grammatical compulsions, as for example, that the verb *must* agree with the subject. This merely reveals the narrowness of our study and teaching of grammar, a narrowness that has inevitably sterilized grammatical knowledge and instruction from any contribution either to literary method or literary insight.

Style is complex, involving very subtle patternings. Those who have studied it have made it still more complex by needlessly confusing a number of quite distinct things under a single head. In addition to what I have just mentioned, we have often labeled as "style" different kinds of language and the formal patterns of certain genres. Our understanding will be furthered when we are able to sort these out and give each the kind of study it individually requires.

But all these things do have one thing, at least, in common: They all exploit the resources of the language. And that means that each imposes its demands upon the language. They are not the same demands, of course, and rather frequently they conflict. Let me just hint at an example. A poet has a certain idea in mind that he wants to embody in a poem. Its expression must be clear and incisive, but yet metaphoric. It must fit rather precisely into a metric scheme and a riming pattern defined by established conventions. Now, it is easy enough to put words together so that they scan and rime. It is not too difficult to express an idea fairly well. The poet's problem begins with wanting to do these two things at once and through the same sequence of words. It only begins here, because he also wants a certain stylistic impact, because he wants the relatively low redundancy that is characteristic of most poetry, and because of several other desires of the same kind. Each of these imposes very exacting demands, and they pull very often in opposing directions. The apt word does not rime or has too many syllables. Only an awkward construction

will scan. Most of the problems are far more subtle than these; only the trivial are easy to state quickly. He is not even able to separate out the conflicts and resolve them one by one. Still, the technical craft of the poet is the reconciling of all these conflicting demands, the finding of a solution that is felicitous from many perspectives simultaneously. He cannot be satisfied with a mere compromise that bows in each direction, but does nothing really well. This is why writing a mediocre poem is quite an accomplishment, and why a really good poem is a rare event.

But the intriguing thing is not how difficult it is—it would seem that by all rights it ought to be impossible! The astonishing fact is that poems exist at all. I am reminded of the armed forces slogan: "The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer." A crucial and revealing fact about language, then, is that it makes possible the impossible. It does this by supplying a vast store of resources and by achieving a marvelous balance between the constraints that make for order and system on the one hand and the flexibility that allows creativity on the other. We sometimes speak rather pejoratively of the complexity of language, even when we have seen only a fraction of the intricacy that is really there, viewing it as a sinister plot against students, and yearning for the simplicity of some Esperanto. But the complexity is functional, even essential if language is to be a fit instrument for all we ask of it. I submit this, then, as a fourth respect in which the study of language may present a fundamental generalization about man and his works.

If the points I have made can be accepted as representative of the ways that language study can contribute to the liberal arts, then clearly we must approach it differently than we have in the past. It must be a much broader, deeper subject more concerned with principals and their interrelation. After those first years of schooling during which the skills of reading, writing, and spelling are assumed to be acquired, the curriculum in language has consisted almost solely of "grammar," often little more than a miscellany of rules of propriety, a few definitions, and an assortment of mechanical procedures of no visible relevance. There are many other aspects of language that warrant at least as much attention and which would be intellectually much more satisfying. I have suggested four major concepts:

language change, the nature and function of redundancy, the multiple dimensions of speech communication, the positive significance of complexity. I might add a number of others, some quite comprehensive, others relatively minor. Of a few of these topics the student gets an occasional glimpse, more often in his French or Spanish or Latin class than in English. All should be looked at more systematically and the interconnections and significant generalizations sought out.

Still, grammar must remain the central core of language study, since the system it describes is the central mechanism in language, the framework around which all these other aspects are built. Without a foundation in grammar nothing else about language can be treated meaningfully in any depth. But it cannot be the artificially narrowed kind of grammar that has traditionally had the bulk of our attention, nor grammar so fragmented that the system is lost sight of, nor grammar so simplified that all the interesting and significant questions are concealed or avoided, nor grammar detached from every other segment of the curriculum. Any of these things can make it dry and pointless. And worse, such insipid teaching of grammar by sterilizing one segment of the base on which a true and balanced program of liberal arts must be erected will impoverish other subjects, most notably the study of literature. And it can make the acquisition of language skills unnecessarily haphazard.

People are not all alike, and each individual develops his interests in his own direction. We must not expect, for example, that all the students in a class will become excited about English literature. But if none do, we can be sure that something is wrong. The chances are that a program in any subject that fails to produce some excitement is accomplishing little or nothing for any of the students. This is the test that convinces me that most of our language curricula are nearly worthless. So widespread is the apathy that I would be most pessimistic about language study, and hence about liberal arts, but for the fact that I have seen, here and there, language programs that are producing their share of enthusiastic and excited young people. I know it can be done. All that I believe about education tells me it is worth doing.

What is needed, obviously, is sweeping curriculum change in

English. The realities of the situation, however, lead many to believe that such a statement is little more than high-flown rhetoric. Indeed, today it is presumptuous to claim that the most favored school can go very far in presenting or making use of these fundamental concepts or of the interconnections between language and the study of literature, the acquisition of writing skill, or any other elements in the total curriculum. For that matter, some of the material which ought to go into a well-rounded English curriculum is just now emerging, and only to be seen in abstruse technical publications. The building of the kind of curriculum needed is a task of tremendous dimensions.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle is our American faith that money—large quantities of money—can do anything. I will not bewail the large sums just now becoming available to the schools for strengthening the English curriculum. Whether they will prove bane or blessing is, ultimately, in the hands of the English teachers themselves. Juggling syllabuses, producing new textbooks, even endless summer institutes can of themselves produce relatively little—perhaps nothing more than a smug contentment that can make a new curriculum as stultifying as any old one.

What *is* needed is a company of excited, energetic teachers. Only they can build the curriculum which will be needed. Only they can put life into the interim expedients that we will have to use in the years immediately ahead. And I must say that I am hopeful. I see them coming forward here and there in all kinds of school systems and in all parts of the country. They seem seldom to be placed where we might expect them to have great effect, in the nerve centers of the educational power structure. But they are, many of them, in the place where new dimensions of teaching must take shape, in the classrooms, face to face with students who are catching from them some of their excitement. They are where they can see this thing working, hence where their convictions will be strengthened.

On the other hand, linguistics, whence much of the basic equipment must come, is developing its techniques rapidly, and expanding just as rapidly into the investigation of new and important questions. A few suggestions which a decade ago would have had to be labeled as sky-blue promissory notes can now be paid without discount. Some of the wildest dreams are beginning to take substance, and

active and productive work is going on in areas beyond our recent imagining. And perhaps just as important as all these new things, there is, I think, a growing appreciation of some of the solid older work which both the schools and the linguists had pushed aside and forgotten.

If I am right in my optimism about these two factors—and some would dispute either or both—then the hope for the future lies in bringing together the dedicated teacher and the informed linguist into a partnership. If this happens, I am sure we will find ourselves being led toward a broad, balanced, penetrating course of study of the English language, toward effective curriculum reform oriented toward restoring English to a basic central place within the liberal arts.

For those of you who are teachers or prospective teachers, I have tried to give some indication of what lies ahead, of the ways language study will be rebuilt to become a true base for the liberal arts. It may be for many of you a difficult but rewarding time as your field of teaching changes repeatedly and with increasing speed.

Many of you will be, perhaps as parents, only involved bystanders as these changes sweep over the schools. But very few of you will escape the effects, one way or another, of this revolution in education because, you see, it will be much more than that. It will be a revolution in thought that will make itself felt throughout our society and in the most unexpected ways. Language—deep and informed knowledge of language, its nature and function—will become in truth a base for the liberal arts, not simply in some academic sense, but in the life of society.

Reading Instruction 1967

William D. Sheldon

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William D. Sheldon

There are a number of issues raised by teachers, parents, and the press concerning reading instruction in America. Such diverse authorities on learning as psychologists, psychiatrists, optometrists, curriculum generalists, and reading specialists all have something to say about the manner in which reading should be taught and when it should be taught. After careful consideration of the issues, I have selected the six which I consider most pertinent to the development of sound reading instruction. There are many other issues worth discussion, but these seem to merit prior consideration: teaching the preschool or nursery child to read, the role of the kindergarten in the reading program, methods and materials for first grade instruction, teaching disadvantaged children to read, teaching students to read in the secondary schools, and the role of the school in teaching illiterate adolescents and adults to read. Among other issues of less importance but still worthy of comment if space permitted are the value of i.t.a., the use of machines as instructional aids, the place of programed materials, the contributions of linguists to beginning reading, speed reading, and the improvement of perception through special materials created originally for the brain-injured.

Teaching the Preschool or Nursery School Child to Read

Should we teach preschool and nursery school children to read, or should we spend the years from birth until the time children enter kindergarten or first grade preparing them in a general, informal, and unstructured way to cope with the listening and speaking aspects of their language?

For almost a century it has been customary to begin the teaching of reading when children entered the first grade. Children were ordinarily six years of age, and fifty percent of them had attended a kindergarten designed for the education of the four- and five-year-old child. A few of these children had attended nursery schools. These were either the children of the élite or the children of the poor who, because parents worked, were housed in welfare-sponsored daycare centers. While some reading instruction did go on at the pre-six-year-old level, it was random in nature, not publicized, and usually provided for the very bright three-, four-, or five-year-old child.

In the last dozen years, however, the laissez-faire attitude toward

the formal education of the very young has given way to a much more academic approach. Now a large number of documented experiments and demonstrations suggest that the very young can be taught to read, that some learn to read on their own, and possibly that young children should be taught to read long before they reach the age of six.

The principal and most publicized advocates of early reading are Omar K. Moore,[1] Nancy M. Rambusch,[2] Dolores Durkin,[3] a number of researchers in Denver Public Schools, a number of psychologists and sociologists working with disadvantaged children, and Doman.[4]

Moore's work received a great deal of attention in the 1950's largely because of the dramatic presentation of his experiments through films entitled *Early Reading and Writing*. The films pictured Dr. Moore and several associates using an electric typewriter, a tachistoscope, and a chalkboard to instruct two- and three-year-old children in reading and writing.

Following his first relatively primitive experiment, Dr. Moore, in cooperation with Mr. Richard Kobler of the Thomas A. Edison Research Laboratories, developed the Edison Responsive Environment System (ERE), a learning system which has been called the "Talking Typewriter." The ERE has been established in several schools and in at least one hospital. In the Freeport, New York, Public Schools, an experiment, reported by Dr. John H. Martin, determined the validity of the ERE as a medium for teaching reading to kindergarten and mentally retarded children.[5]

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[1] Omar K. Moore, *Early Reading and Writing,* 16mm. film in color (Guilford, Conn.: Basic Education Council).

[2] Nancy M. Rambusch, *Learning How to Learn* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1962).

[3] Dolores Durkin, *Children Who Read Early* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1966).

[4] Glen Doman, *How to Teach Your Baby to Read* (New York: Random House, 1966).

[5] John Henry Martin, "We've Been Wrong About Early Reading," *Grade Teacher Year Book,* 1965, 38–40, and *Freeport Public Schools Experimenting on Early Reading Using the Edison Responsive Evironment Instrument* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Responsive Environments Corporation, 1966).

In June 1966, Moore announced that his Responsive Environment's equipment would be used in Chicago to provide disadvantaged preschoolers with basic intellectual skills.[6] Sargent Shriver, Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, recently stated that his office would provide twenty ERE machines to help New York's culturally deprived children and nonliterate adults.[7] From the latest announcements of the installation of ERE machines one might conclude that they are being used largely with primary grade children, brain-injured and mentally defective children, and nonliterate adults. Interest in using the ERE with very young children seems to have waned although unpublicized research and experimentation might be going on.

Nancy M. Rambusch presented an American approach to the Montessori method in *Learning How to Learn*.[8] Mrs. Rambusch's book describes the adaptations of methods originally developed by Madame Montessori as they are used with three-year-olds and other children in private schools such as that in Whitby, Connecticut. Mrs. Rambusch not only discussed what was taking place at Whitby but depicted her ideal school of the next decade, a school "in which the arbitrary distinctions of pre-school versus 'real' school have disappeared, one in which children from age three until age eight are thought of as being in the first phase of learning." Special teachers would be available at specific times to help children in the first group acquire the skills of reading, writing, and mathematics as the academic portion of their learning. One receives the impression from the Rambusch book that the pursuit of reading and writing is encouraged by the environment and facilitated by direct instruction after children have tried to learn to read and write by themselves.

During the past several years more than 150 nursery level Montessori schools have developed. The Montessori movement is finding a reception on the fringes of American public and private education. Critics of current Montessori schools range from Edward Wakin of Fordham University, who points out that what was revolutionary in Montessori's proposals in the early 1900's has be-

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[6] *Newsletter* (No. 13, June 1966), Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh.

[7] *Audiovisual Instruction* (September 1966).

[8] Rambusch, *op. cit.*

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come commonplace today,[9] to Evelyn Beyer, Director of Nursery School and teacher at Sarah Lawrence College, who suggests, among other things: "By overstressing achievement and one proper means of achieving, the Montessori method overlooks something of prime importance in any education of the very young—the children's feelings." [10] Regardless of critical comment, the impact of formal instruction of three-, four- and five-year-olds in Montessori and other types of private nursery schools will have an influence on education in both private and public kindergartens which could lead to a formal structuring of kindergarten programs. It will be virtually impossible for kindergarten teachers to argue against teaching formal reading in their classes if parents have already sent their children to Montessori schools where reading and writing is often taught to three- and four-year-olds.

Although Moore's work and the presence of Montessori schools will have some effect on the curriculum for young children, the effect will cause scarcely a ripple compared to the efforts in the Denver Public Schools. The Denver reading research program consists of two chief studies, one dealing with preschool children and the other concerned with kindergarten children. Our comments at this point will relate to the efforts with preschool children. According to a letter received at Syracuse University from the office of Joseph E. Brzeinski (director, Department of Research Services, Denver Public Schools), the pioneer parent-education program conducted by the Denver Public Schools during the school year 1960-1961 and continuing in 1961-1962 provided a program for parents of preschool children, designed to instruct parents in ways to teach their children some beginning reading skills. Parents learned from sixteen taped television programs and were also guided by a manual entitled *Preparing Your Child for Reading*.[11] The lessons in the booklet focus on those prereading steps which help children to discriminate among sounds, relate sounds to letters, and utilize a combination of

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[9] Edward Wakin, "The Return of Montessori," *Saturday Review*, XLVII (Nov. 21, 1964).

[10] Evelyn Beyer, *Montessori in the Space Age*, NEA Journal, LII (December 1963), 36.

[11] *Preparing Your Child for Reading* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1963).

initial letter sounds and context to supply words in sentences. The material is learned through a series of well-planned lessons which involve a friendly cooperation between parent and child. Some lessons, such as the one learned through the game "Giant Steps," require the addition of a neighbor child.

The introduction to *Preparing Your Child for Reading* provides the rationale of the program. It states: "Many parents are eager to help the child become an independent reader as soon as possible. That is why it is important to teach him an economical and effective procedure to use in finding out all by himself what are given strange printed words. Would you like to help your child get ready to learn this procedure? It is the purpose of this guide to provide you with definite suggestions for doing just that." I have no quarrel with the simple steps presented in *Preparing Your Child for Reading.* We might well shudder, however, at what could happen when thousands of eager parents, guided by television lessons and using this booklet, launch an attack on their young children. Obviously, we cannot quarrel with the idea that parents should cooperate with their own children in such a venture. We can only express our deep concern about what may happen when relatively untutored parents begin to press very young children into the formal routine presented in this program.

Bernard Spodek reacted to the parent participation in the Denver program and the use of the workbook in a review found in *Elementary English.* In concluding his article Mr. Spodek writes:

> We do know that there are some activities in which all parents can participate that will help their children read sooner and better. The support of language activities in the family setting is such an activity. Parents can read to children and this will improve their reading achievement. Parents can provide opportunities for speaking to children and listening to them in a host of informal situations and this will improve their reading achievement. Similarly, giving children verbal labels for their experiences as well as providing a rich variety of experiences will help children read better and, possibly, sooner. These activities would also provide some concomitant learnings that early introduction to workbooks would not; a setting would develop that would facilitate positive mental health in the family.[12]

[12] Bernard Spodek, "The Educational Scene," *Elementary English,* XLI (January 1964), 84–87.

The televised series *Preparing Your Child for Reading* has been tested on various educational television stations and has been used widely by educational television stations throughout the United States. One of the early stages in the experiment has been described by Anastasia McManus.[13] The Denver Schools coordinated their preschool instruction with that in the schools and can not report experimental evidence which shows the advantages of early instruction. Other schools have adopted the Denver approach and articles describing their programs, which I shall mention later, have appeared in educational journals.

The long term effect of the Denver and similar experiments and demonstrations will be hard to measure. The magnitude and apparent success of the program will affect many parents and will not only encourage them to teach their preschool children to read but also undoubtedly cause them to put pressure on the schools to teach reading in kindergarten to the very young.

It is apparent that for the next decade at least we will observe many programs of preschool reading instruction conducted by parents or in nursery schools. The overall effect of the program on children in terms of their interest in reading at a later date or their general maturation in learning will probably never be evaluated. However, it is clear that if schools want to maintain an unstructured kindergarten with a minimum of formal instruction, educators will have to be persuasive indeed. Parents and educators intrigued by the published results of the Denver Project might read the reviews of the study written by Kenneth D. Wann.[14] Wann's specific comments are reported later in this paper.

Dolores Durkin has written a number of articles and a book related to a limited group of children who learned to read before entering school. From findings elicted from a group of forty-nine children and a replication of the study, Miss Durkin has encouraged the idea that because a number of children have learned to read on

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[13] Anastasia McManus, "The Denver Prereading Project Conducted by WENH-TV," *The Reading Teacher*, XXX (October 1966).

[14] Kenneth D. Wann, "Beginning Reading Instruction in the Kindergarten," NEA pamphlet, and "A Comment on the Denver Experiment," *NEA Journal*, LVI (March 1967), 25–26.

their own, revisions need to be made in the curriculum provided young children in the first days in school. At the conclusion of a careful summary of her findings, Miss Durkin asks: "What is the function of the total kindergarten program in the 1960's? It is both safe and sensible to assume that different communities will find different answers to this most fundamental of questions. It is probably safe to assume, too, that some of the answers will include help with reading for some five-year-olds. If this is the case, it is the sincere hope of this writer that findings from these two studies of early readers will provide at least a small amount of guidance in making decisions about what is appropriate help for five-year-old children who are ready to read." [15]

The reports of those working with extremely disadvantaged preschool pupils are too recent for definitive evaluation. However, Walter Hodges has reviewed the recent book of Bereiter and Engleman.[16] He suggests that the authors propose a departure from the traditions of early childhood education. Hodges praises the book as being wonderfully complete and specific but states that the authors "provide little evidence that the program accomplishes the goal of helping experimental groups catch-up to more advantaged groups except by presenting larger than typical IQ and ITPA gains." [17] Hodges' report raises questions about the advantages of the program which can only be answered by the passage of time and continued study by the experimenters. The articles of Deutsch [18] and others raise questions which also demand time and continued study before definitive answers can be given. However, it is apparent that educators of very young advantaged and disadvantaged children are going to pursue experimentation using formal means to open up the minds of young children and accelerate their acquisition of academic skills.

The most startling publication related to teaching the very

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[15] Dolores Durkin, *Children Who Read Early* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1966), p. 139.

[16] Carl Bereiter and S. Englemann, *Teaching Disadvantaged Children* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966).

[17] Walter Hodges, Review, *American Educational Research Journal*, III (November 1966), 313–4.

[18] Martin Deutsch, "What We Have Learned About Disadvantaged Children in the Preschool," *Nation's Schools*, LXXV (April, 1965).

young was that of Glenn Doman.[19] Among other things, Doman suggests that two years of age is the best time to teach children to read. He also says that if one would go to a little trouble he could begin instruction at eight months or even as early as ten months of age.

The efforts which are being made by teachers, parents, and psychologists to teach the very young continue. Those who are particularly interested in the disadvantaged see the preschool period as one in which there is an urgent need for intervention in the form of specific education. Whether or not the various preschool programs will yield valuable results, only time will tell. Opinions at least of the efficacy of structured, formal reading instruction are sharply divided, and will probably continue to be until one group yields to the other or parents and experimenters become tired of the efforts to teach the very young and move on to other projects.

The Role of the Kindergarten in the Reading Program

Evidence that there is an issue related to the role of the kindergarten in the reading program can be found in recent issues of such educational journals as *The Reading Teacher, Elementary English, The Elementary School Journal,* and *Childhood Education.* The question seems to boil down to this: Should we or should we not teach children to read in the kindergarten?

For more than a hundred years the kindergarten in American schools has served as a nonacademic, unstructured, informal year aiding the child to make the transition from a home where he often ruled as the center of attention with few responsibilities to a first grade program relatively heavy in broad social and academic demands.

During the 1950's surveys of schools in New York State conducted by the staff of the Syracuse University Reading and Language Arts Center revealed a definite shift in the kindergarten program from informality to formality, from unstructured to structured programs, and from a generally fluid approach to the development of concepts, listening-speaking skills, and emphasis on the growth of

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[19] Doman, *op. cit.*

social and emotional status of individuals to a rather rigid academic approach to the teaching of readiness for reading and actual reading instruction, plus a gradual overall change from the child's garden to a rather rigid academic environment.[20]

Educators across the United States, aware that changes were taking place in the kindergarten, began to search for evidence to support their heretofore unassailable position on the kindergarten as an informal learning center. It was noted, for example, that the Soviets do not begin formal reading instruction until children are seven. During the kindergarten year the Soviets teach children to classify, discriminate, compare, and designate what they see through discussion in appropriate language. The curriculum includes drawing, construction, and general language development. The teaching of reading and writing is not suggested as starting in the kindergarten but as growing out of the language development program of the kindergarten which features oral and prebook learning. The Soviets look upon the kindergarten year as a time of informal learning. Indeed the reported kindergarten resembles the relatively unstructured program for five-year-olds which has been traditional in American school for many years.[21]

In Sweden, according to Malmquist, children start school about one year later than children in the United States and England.[22] Swedish educators feel that from both psychological research and pedagogical experience it is a great advantage for children to start school as late as seven. Many Swedish psychologists and teachers feel that the late beginning age is one of the important reasons why comparatively so few children have reading disabilities in the elementary schools of Sweden.

Other educators noted that children who learn to read and write at a very early age, either on their own or with some slight guidance

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[20] Bernard Belden, "A Study of Selected Practices Reported in the Teaching of Reading in the Kindergarten and Primary Grades in New York State," (Doctoral dissertation, Syracuse University, 1955).

[21] Eunice Matthews, "What Is Expected of the Soviet Kindergarten?" *Harvard Educational Review,* XXIX (March 1959), 43–53.

[22] Eve Malmquist, "Teaching of Reading in the First Grade in Swedish Schools," *The Reading Teacher,* XV (September 1962), 22–29.

from others, are present in almost every school in the United States A survey made by Durkin in Oakland, California, could probably be replicated with similar results in almost any community.[23] Durkin found a number of boys and girls who had begun to read before entering school. During the past year the writer has observed children in a number of schools on Long Island who entered the kindergarten able to identify words and, in several cases, able to read simple material in more or less competent fashion. There is little or no proof, however, that these children maintain their initial advantage when compared with children of similar ability at a later age.

The reports of Brzeinski, Harrison, and McKee,[24] related to the Denver Experiment, and that of Hillerick [25] suggest that children can be taught to read successfully in the kindergarten. No evidence was found that early instruction in beginning reading affected visual acuity, created problems of school adjustment, or caused dislike for reading.

Wann, in a comment on the Denver Experiment, stated that the Denver program merited careful consideration by those interested in developing modern kindergarten programs. After pointing out the balanced approach of the Denver experimenters and noting the following advice given to teachers:

> Go at a rational pace and limit instruction to 20 minutes a day
> Be prepared to stop temporarily or to retrench if necessary
> Excuse from the experiment any child unable to handle the material
> Avoid pushing the children to get through the program by a given date,

Wann stated that these suggestions imply that some pupils can:

> learn all that the activities aim to teach, that others can absorb some but not all of this learning, that still others can absorb little if anything, and that each pupil, without being pushed, should be given the chance to learn all that he can. These

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[23] Durkin, *op. cit.*

[24] Joseph E. Brzeinski, "Early Introduction to Reading," *Reading and Inquiry,* Proceedings of the Annual Convention, IRA, X (November 10, 1965), 443–446; Brzeinski, "Beginning Reading in Denver," *The Reading Teacher,* XVIII (October 1964), 18–19; and Brzeinski, L. M. Harrison, and P. McKee, "Should Johnny Read in Kindergarten?" *NEA Journal,* LVI (March 1967), 23–25.

[25] Robert L. Hillerick, "Pre-Reading Skills in Kindergarten: A Second Report," *Elementary School Journal,* LXV (March 1965), 312–17.

> are pertinent observations and should be heeded by anyone planning to develop such a program beginning at the kindergarten level.[26]

Wann also suggested that reading must be only one part of a sound kindergarten program and that "to focus too narrowly on a reading program is to fail to recognize the great range of experiences five-year-olds need in order to meet their developmental tasks." [27]

A number of other educators have commented on this issue. Dolores Durkin presented a bibliography entitled *Reading and the Kindergarten* [28] in 1964. In twenty-three articles nineteen educators presented the pros and cons of the subject. An interesting report by Elizabeth A. Zaruba presented the attitudes of teachers toward beginning reading instruction in the kindergarten. Miss Zaruba concluded that most kindergarten and primary teachers had positive attitudes toward reading instruction in the kindergarten.[29]

I will restate the crucial question we are asking: Should the kindergarten abandon its traditional unstructured program and become a first grade in terms of learning activities? Psychologists, pediatricians, and educators in general have contradictory things to say about the effect of introducing reading and writing to four- and five-year-olds. One can read research reports and not be entirely convinced one way or the other. The best single procedure might be to visit a number of kindergartens and observe the reaction of boys and girls in structured and unstructured classes. A subtle factor which escapes immediate detection in terms of any comparative study is the children's interest in reading at a later date. This observer has seen tension and strain in the kindergarten where reading instruction his been carried on. There is no conclusive evidence concerning the value or harm done by teaching children to read in the kindergarten instead of in the first grade. We know that children can be taught to read at five. Our concerns are, first, whether or not the advantage

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[26] Kenneth D. Wann, "A Comment on the Denver Experiment," *NEA Journal*, XVI (March 1967), 25.

[27] Wann, 26.

[28] Dolores Durkin, *Reading and the Kindergarten* (Newark, Del.: IRA, 1964).

[29] Elizabeth A. Zaruba, "A Survey of Teachers' Attitudes Toward Reading Experiences in Kindergarten," *The Journal of Educational Research*, LX (February 1967), 252–255.

of early learning persists and therefore makes the strain and struggle worthwhile, and second, whether interest in later reading is increased or diminished by the earlier introduction of a disciplined approach to learning. My own private plea is for informality in the kindergarten and a subtle, carefully developed program which leads children to a step-by-step maturity in conceptual development and listening and speaking skills, a knowledge of stories and poems, and a sound social and emotional development.[30]

Methods and Materials in First Grade Reading Instruction

The most hotly debated issue of those considered in this paper relate to which methods and what materials are the best to use in teaching in first grade. The debate over the best approach to the teaching of reading to beginners began more than a hundred years ago. Educators such as Horace Mann wrote their views on the problem as early as the 1830's. The argument has not been two-sided but rather has advocates representing many points of view. The most publicized attack on initial reading instruction was that of Rudolph Flesch, and the views expressed in his best seller, *Why Johnny Can't Read*.[31] Flesch advocated the use of a synthetic system of phonics for first grade reading instruction. Because of the manner of his attack on the then current methods and his denigration of the position of leading United States reading authorities, Flesch drew the fire of virtually the entire reading establishment. The Carnegie Corporation entered the debate, and as a result of a widely publicized meeting of twenty-two nationally known reading experts, published a paper in which the eclectic position attacked by Flesch was defended.

In 1959, between the time of the publication of Flesch's book and the issuance of the Carnegie report,[32] reading specialists from all parts of the United States gathered at Syracuse University to discuss

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[30] William D. Sheldon, "Teaching the Very Young to Read," *The Reading Teacher*, XV (December 1962), 163–169.

[31] Rudolph Flesch, *Why Johnny Can't Read* (New York: Harper and Bros., Inc., 1955).

[32] *Learning to Read: A Report of a Conference of Reading Experts* (Princeton, N. J.: Educational Testing Service, 1962).

needed research in reading. As a result of three days of discussion, it was decided that the area of reading instruction in greatest need of research was the first grade. From 1959 to 1963 a committee sought funds to carry on a coordinated national research study of first grade reading. In 1964 the USOE awarded approximately $30,000 to each of twenty-seven research centers to carry on the proposed study. Eleven widely different methods, represented by a variety of materials, were tested in some five hundred classrooms of first grade children during 1964-1965. Summary reports of the studies appearing in the May and October 1966 and the March 1967 issues of *The Reading Teacher* revealed that by and large methods and materials were not the crucial elements in teaching first grade children to read. Such variables as teachers, the intelligence of children, and the socioeconomic status of pupils all seemed more crucial than methodology or materials. In fact, I concluded that the most important single factor in developing a successful first grade reading program is the teacher—not a novel idea by any means. The full impact of the first grade experiment has not yet been measured, and it is likely that much of it will be dissipated by a lack of follow-up. While thirteen of the research centers did follow their populations through the second grade, only a few are currently studying the continuing effects on third grade pupils.

Among the procedures and materials used, we find the language-experience approach, a variety of standard basal reading series, an italicized basal version developed by Edward Fry at Rutgers University, the i.t.a., several linguistic approaches, and a variety of phonics programs.

While the initial findings of the studies and the lack of complete follow-up of the children involved is quite disappointing, the studies did encourage the participants to evaluate new methods and materials quite carefully before launching into their use. In the schools in which the Reading and Language Arts Center of Syracuse University studies of linguistics, i.t.a., phonics, and basal readers were made, teachers and administrators learned to appreciate the often overlooked variables mentioned above as ones to be reckoned with in any program of instruction. For example, the effect of continued inservice evaluation of ongoing programs caused teachers to raise questions

about what they were doing. The continued presence of supervisors aided teachers in seeking solutions to specific questions and eliminated the feeling of frustration that comes when teachers feel left alone and ignored by the rest of the school.

The several research teams who have continued to evaluate boys and girls in the initial first grade study should be able to present interesting findings in the next few years which might suggest advantages of this method or that material not discovered after one year of study. Positive and negative results on continued learning might be observed as the longitudinal studies are made. We at Syracuse University are interested, for example, in following the boys who, contrary to usual results, were not less able in reading than comparable girls after one year. Will these boys maintain or lose their equal status as the years pass? This and other questions will add to our insights about the learning of reading.

Other studies of first grade or initial reading instruction are contributing to our understanding of best procedures without causing the emotional reactions which accompanied the Flesch book. The study of David E. Bear is typical of those which compare two phonic methods of teaching beginning reading, synthetic and analytic. Bear defined the synthetic method as that of synthesizing of sounds into words as contrasted with the analytic method, which involved the analysis of whole words. Bear found, in a study of two groups of pupils each taught by one of the two phonic approaches, that pupils in the middle range of intelligence received greater benefit from synthetic phonics than pupils in the highest and lowest twenty-five percent. The longitudinal aspect of Bear's study made it particularly valuable as he followed his pupils through the sixth grade and found that initial advantages were maintained. Bear concluded from his study that the proponents of basal readers using an analytic phonics approach and proponents of those using synthetic phonics should abandon their extreme positions and combine the best elements from both approaches.[33] An inspection of several revised basal reading programs suggests that editors of basal readers have modified their positions

[33] David E. Bear, "Two Methods of Teaching Phonics: A Longitudinal Study," *The Elementary School Journal*, LXIV (February 1964), 273–279.

and use synthetic phonics much earlier in their programs than heretofore in combination with the usual analytic procedures.

The study of Bliesmer and Yarborough, one of the most comprehensive studies on the topic of first grade reading, has elicited a wide response, both positive and negative.[34] It deserves attention because, unlike many studies, the data are drawn from comparisons of five analytic methods and five synthetic methods rather than comparisons of one analytic method and one synthetic method. The researchers found that the synthetic methods in general produced significantly superior results in virtually all measures of reading achievement. While the limitations of this study, indicated by the researchers, suggest broad replication and the need for longitudinal follow-up, it is a valuable contribution to the debate.

The contributions of i.t.a. to first grade reading instruction was explored in several of the USOE first grade studies. In addition, two articles pro- and con- i.t.a. experimentation have appeared recently in the *Phi Delta Kappan*.[35] I was tempted to consider i.t.a. as a major issue in reading instruction, but the article of Downing, in particular, seems to suggest broad misinterpretation in the use of i.t.a. by Americans and evidence of a family argument between advocates of i.t.a. He suggests more or less that an appraisal of i.t.a. in terms of its contribution to reading instruction should wait for further research and evaluation.

The textbooks used in first grade reading instruction have come in for heavy criticism, particularly from the press. It has been noted that the content of preprimers, in particular, "has been the target of public criticism, scorn or ridicule" in the form of cartoons, jokes, and comments.[36] Unlike the superficial criticisms of the public and press, based largely on impressions, four University of Colorado researchers

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[34] Emery P. Bliesmer and B. Yarborough, "A Comparison of Ten Different Beginning Reading Programs in First Grade," *Phi Delta Kappan*, XLVI (June 1965), 500–504.

[35] John Downing, "What's Wrong with i.t.a.?" *Phi Delta Kappan*, XLVIII (February 1967), 262–266; William B. Gillooly, "The Promise of i.t.a. is a Delusion," *Phi Delta Kappan*, XLVII (June 1966), 545–550.

[36] Richard R. Waite, G. E. Blom, S. F. Linnet, and S. Edge, "First-Grade Reading Textbooks," *The Elementary School Journal*, LXVII (April 1967), 366.

studied first grade reading textbooks because of their "concern with the value of preprimers and primer stories in developing children's interest in reading."[37] The researchers centered their studies on finding how appropriate the materials were for boys and girls, how appropriate they are for six-year-old children, and how successfully the activities are carried out.[38]

"The examination led to several impressions. First, the description of primers as pollyannish, as representative of the upper-middle class, and as unrelated to real life situations have some truth Second, the stories depicted activities that in real life are most frequently engaged in by children younger than most first graders. Rarely did the stories tell of activities appropriate for children older than first graders. Third, the activities were those in which girls rather than boys usually take part. Fourth, frequently stories in which children did not attain the constructive goals of the activities were common. Finally, the activities that boys most frequently engage in were the activities in which the goals were most frequently not achieved." [39]

The researchers indicate a need for further study, particularly in terms of the effect of the stories on later interest in reading. They cite that the original Hollins study [40] of commonly used first grade readers is now being replicated and the results will establish a more current analysis of first grade texts. There is little debate over the lack of pertinency of much first grade material to today's pupils. Textbook publishers are aware of the issues and are creating multiethnic texts with a more mature content emphasizing stories which will appeal to boys as well as girls.

It is apparent in 1967 that much of the former complacency concerning first grade reading instruction has disappeared. No single textbook company or no proponent of *the* way of teaching beginning reading can hope to engage the serious attention of all or nearly all first grade teachers as was true in the early 1950's. The questions raised by Flesch, the answers given them, and further questions raised

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[37] *Ibid.*, 366.
[38] *Ibid.*, 366–367.
[39] *Ibid.*, 367.
[40] W. H. Hollins, "A National Survey of Commonly Used First-Grade Readers," (Unpublished data, 1955).

by researchers since 1955 suggest that future methods and materials of first grade instruction will be based on sounder research which should do much to obviate the possibility that an inadequate initial reading program is responsible for later failure in reading.

Teaching Disadvantaged Children to Read

There is no debate about the necessity of taking special measures to insure success in teaching disadvantaged children to read. Argument does exist, however, concerning these issues: the need for early intervention and whether it should involve direct or indirect language instruction; whether it is better to transport pupils to schools where they learn with predominantly advantaged pupils or make the attempt to improve facilities in the neighborhood school; the approach used in text materials for the disadvantaged; and whether or not the materials should reflect the race, dialects, and environment of the disadvantaged.

There is no easy answer to any of the debated issues concerning the disadvantaged. At the present time educators and others usually refer to the Negro living in the center city ghettos when they talk of the disadvantaged. A recent visitor to a remedial center operated by the writer observed that only three Negro children were present and said, "I see you are not particularly concerned in this center with the disadvantaged." Actually, almost all white children in the group could be labelled as disadvantaged not only when judged for their inability to read, but also when measured on any socioeconomic yardstick.

The literature and the research on the disadvantaged is extremely limited. The conference reported in the volume *Compensatory Education for Cultural Deprivation* gives the reader some general guidelines in working with the disadvantaged.[41] The previously mentioned book by Bereiter and Engleman is one of the few reports of actual research which leads to programs for the disadvantaged young. More than one hundred reports have been written in various magazines, newspapers, and educational journals related to Operation

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[41] Benjamin Bloom *et al.*, *Compensatory Education for Cultural Deprivation* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Inc., 1965).

Headstart, a program designed specifically for the very young, preschool culturally disadvantaged children. The reactions are mixed, and one is left with the feeling that an evaluation of the pertinency of the projects under Operation Headstart is very much needed.

Ausubel has suggested a teaching strategy for culturally deprived pupils involving cognitive and motivational considerations. He states that "an effective and appropriate teaching strategy for the culturally deprived child must therefore emphasize these three considerations: (a) the selection of initial learning material geared to the learner's existing state of readiness; (b) mastery and consolidation of all ongoing learning tasks before new tasks are introduced . . .; and (c) the use of structured learning materials optimally organized to facilitate efficient sequential learning."[42] He believes that "we may discover that the most effective method of developing intrinsic motivation to learn is to focus on the cognitive rather than on the motivational aspects of learning, and to rely on the motivation that is developed retroactively from successful educational achievement."[43]

Riessman has helped us understand the educationally or culturally disadvantaged by discussing their characteristics.[44] He describes the deprived individual as being slow at cognitive tasks but not stupid, appearing to learn most readily through a concrete approach, often appearing to be anti-intellectual, being pragmatic rather than theoretical, being inflexible and not open to reason about his beliefs, and being deficient in auditory attention and interpretation skills. Riessman also mentions a number of strengths of the disadvantaged, many of which unfortunately work to his disadvantage in a competitive, middle-class school situation.

A careful perusal of the literature of language arts research reveals little that is related directly to the problems or issues which we debate. There is some evidence that early intervention does help the young child participate more fully when he enters formal education,

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[42] David P. Ausubel, "A Teaching Strategy for Culturally Deprived Pupils: Cognitive and Motivational Considerations," *The School Review*, LXXI (Winter 1963), 455.

[43] *Ibid.*, 461.

[44] Frank Riessman, "The Culturally Deprived Child: A New View," *Education Digest*, XXIX (November 1963), 12–15.

but this is usually based on observation rather than research. The problem of whether it is better to transport or "bus" pupils to schools out of their environment is clouded by the emotionality both of those who see this as the solution and of those who feel that this is not a good answer to the problem. While the Detroit Public Schools have participated in the development of a new type of text specifically designed for the disadvantaged child, we have yet to see evidence that the material has resulted in advantages for the children when compared with standard text material.

To date the linguist has suggested that teachers accept the dialect of their pupils as their standard speech and teach him standard English more or less as a second language. No practical answer has been presented concerning the reading and writing of standard and nonstandard English.

At the present time we need research into every aspect of the education of the disadvantaged. There is no doubt that it will be undertaken, but we are impatient to receive the guidance research will yield the teacher, parent, school official, and textbook publisher.

Teaching Students to Read in the Secondary Schools

It hardly seems possible that an argument exists over whether or not students in the secondary schools need to be or should be taught reading. The debate, in which I have participated within the past school year, revolves around these questions: Who should teach reading in the secondary school—the English teacher, the content-area teachers or a special reading teacher? Who should be taught—the average or above average students who read on grade level, the student who reads below grade level or the student designated as remedial and who enters the secondary school reading five or more years below grade level? At what point should reading instruction terminate for each of the above groups of students, and what is done with those who remain semiliterate in spite of the schools' best efforts?

In a few research centers in the United States, work is being carried on to determine what the secondary pupil needs in the way of reading instruction and how he can be best taught. Margaret J. Early, Harold Herber, and I, working in a Project English center,

have produced a series of ten films in junior and senior high school settings which demonstrates the full scope of the reading problem in the secondary school. The films and related manuals suggest that developmental reading instruction needs to be carried on by reading specialists during the junior high school years, that corrective and remedial reading instruction is called for throughout the secondary school for some students, and that teachers of the content areas must teach the effective reading of their subject to guarantee its mastery. The goals of secondary reading instruction have been well stated by Robert B. Heilman:

> The graduating senior high school student should be one who has been trained in planning his own reading activities and one who has acquired effective study habits so that he can continue to use reading to learn. He should have become able to use reading as a guide and aid to creative endeavor so that he can lead a full, active life. He should be able to read thoughtfully and make critical judgments about what is read so that he may appraise the validity of the author's point of view and the accuracy of his statements. The high school reading program should develop readers who can and will read for pleasure, information, and continued growth in their chosen occupations and in their social understandings.[45]

Whether or not a viable program of reading instruction will be developed in the secondary school is debatable. Most observers, however, believe that unless the curriculum includes such instruction, the number of semiliterate and illiterate adolescents leaving high school will continue to increase and in a highly technical society will need to be maintained by their more literate peers.

The Role of the School in Teaching Illiterate Adolescents and Adults to Read

The debate concerning the illiterate mainly concerns responsibility. Which institution is responsible for teaching the illiterate adolescent and adult to read? Several minor issues relate to the kind of materials, the training of teachers of illiterates, and the support of the illiterate while he studies.

My position is that it is the duty of the public and private

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[45] Robert B. Heilman, "Literature and Growing Up," *English Journal*, XLV (September 1956), 309.

schools of America to provide for the education of the illiterates in every community. The problem of illiteracy in the United States is enormous. It is estimated that there are more than eleven million male adolescent and adult illiterates, and five hundred thousand semi-literate individuals leave the schools each year.

Despite the scope of the problem of illiteracy, no real action to reduce illiteracy has been taken by the schools of America. At the present time educators are trying to determine which agency or agencies have the major responsibility for teaching the illiterate; at present all sorts of public spirited groups—service organizations and churches—are attempting to deal with illiterates in specific communities. The United States government's efforts are sponsored through the Department of Labor, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the United States Office of Education.

Adult educators have been concerned mainly with the instruction of those in need of continuing education—not basic literacy. It seems apparent that American educators have not been prepared to assume a role in educating the illiterates living in each school district. However, it is expected that through governmental pressure and the interest of industry and individuals, the school will soon have an opportunity to choose whether it or some other agency is to eradicate the blight of illiteracy on the American scene.

Most of the reports on illiteracy and the treatment of illiterates come from agencies other than the school. It is probable that most college reading centers deal with random adult and adolescent illiterates. The report by Rosner and Schatz from the Reading Clinic at Temple University is probably typical of the experiences in most college reading clinics. Rosner and Schatz describe such aspects of their program as evaluation and instruction. They studied ten adults—nine male and one female—ranging in age from 18 to 42. Their description of techniques of instruction and material used could provide others with limited guidance. The results of the program were mixed and no growth patterns were provided.[46]

For many years the Laubachs, Frank and Robert, have worked to provide teachers with the techniques and materials of literacy in-

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[46] Stanley L. Rosner and G. Schatz, "A Program for Adult Nonreaders," *Journal of Reading, XIV* (March 1966), 223–31.

struction. The famous slogan of the elder Laubach, "Each One Teach One," is known around the world. At present time, under the leadership of Robert Laubach, many volunteers teaching in churches and schools are bringing initial literacy to adults in rural areas and city centers. Research, other than the doctoral dissertation of Robert Laubach,[47] is lacking. The efficacy of the program is assumed as an act of faith by men who have seen thousands of men and women take their first steps toward literacy. The book *Toward World Literacy* provides the neophyte teacher with the basic steps of the Laubach approach.[48] *News For You,* a weekly newspaper written by the staff of the Laubach Literacy Center, provides up-to-date reading material for new literates. If a program similar to that of the Laubachs were available to adolescents and adults within the framework of our American elementary and secondary schools, it is possible that the first steps towards the eradication of illiteracy would be taken.

TV, as a means of instructing the illiterate, has had some success. The case for the use of TV in coping with the masses of illiterates has been stated by Pauline Hord. Hord reviews the television programs in Memphis and the five years she spent creating lessons which resulted in ninety-eight films now used in TV stations in Alabama, Georgia, Texas, and Arkansas.[49]

The Diebold Literacy Project was a valiant attempt sponsored by the National Council of Churches and the Diebold Group Inc. to provide a well-designed program for the illiterate adult. The fascinating efforts of John Blythe and his staff have been reported in an article by Burrill L. Crohn.[50] It must be noted that in the case of this program, two organizations, both outside the school, provided the money and talent for the project. It is my hope that through the

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[47] Robert S. Laubach, "A Study of Communications to Adults of Limited Reading Ability by Specially Written Materials" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Syracuse University, 1963).

[48] Frank C. and Robert S. Laubach, *Toward World Literacy* (Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1960).

[49] Pauline J. Hord, "Shall We Use Television in Developing Literacy?" *Changing Concepts of Reading Instruction, IRA Conference Reports,* VI (1961), 233–36.

[50] Burrill Crohn, "The Diebold Literacy Project: Programing for the Illiterate Adult," *Programed Instruction,* III (June 1964).

sponsorship of the USOE, with an assist from OEO, the job of developing literacy programs for the millions of illiterates will be assumed by the schools, not as a part of adult education or continuing education, but as a specific program held within the school, during the school day and with a full program provided to that the illiterate not only learns to read and write, but also acquires the job skills needed in an automated society. A staff is needed that is educated for the task of teaching the adolescent and adult illiterates. Heretofore, staff for the most part has been haphazardly recruited from teachers in the elementary and secondary schools who add the teaching of the illiterates to their load as means of supplementing their income. There is no evidence that such a staff has provided adequately for the needs of their illiterate students.

This lecture has addressed itself to six issues in reading instruction in 1967. Despite the intensity of some of the conflicts documented here, it is heartening to observe, particularly among teachers and administrators in schools, growing interest in disciplined experimentation and in careful study of research findings and their implications for teaching. The problems which these and similar issues present are clearly ones which American schools are eager to solve.

My Country Write or Wrong: Literary Patriotism in America

Larzer Ziff

74/75

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The Nobel Prize used to afford us the most obvious occasion for literary patriotism. Most almanacs stress this by not only listing the prize winners but then following the list with a national box score: to date so many awarded in literature to France, to Great Britain, to Germany, etc. Recently Irving Wallace's novel, *The Prize,* gave this aspect of the awards its *reductio ad absurdum.* The plot dealt with the goings-on in Stockholm at the time of a fictional awarding of Nobel prizes, and the hero was an American Nobel laureate in literature. After establishing the two facts central to the popular portrait of any great American writer—his books were ignored by his countrymen and he drank too much—the novel went on to the hairbreadth adventures connected with his saving another laureate from being kidnapped by the communists. He was a literary man, and his fist fights and leaps into the canal displayed his patriotism. This is not, however, what I mean by literary patriotism.

Indeed, of late, the box score kind of literary patriotism that surrounds the prizes has become diminished. Boris Pasternak's award in 1958 apparently pleased the American readers of *Dr. Zhivago* far more than it did the Russians who knew the poetry that was presumably the principal basis for the award. And four years later, restive Russians were gratified when the judges named John Steinbeck, whose social criticism they admired, though Americans by and large were unhappy with the selection.

The reserve with which the American literary world received news of the Steinbeck award signifies, I suppose, that we have grown up. The fact that he is an American was postponed to the larger question of whether or not his literary achievement was of such merit as to warrant his being recognized in so distinctive a fashion. It was not always thus.

Another interesting critical point appears in the fairly safe inference that Steinbeck's international reputation is based on work, such as *The Grapes of Wrath,* that appeals to its transatlantic audience as a masterful reflection of American reality, whereas American critics do not so much reject Steinbeck's bleak view of one aspect of their society as they question whether a mere reflection of it is sufficient to make the novel a memorable work. Again, it was not always thus—with maturity we have apparently gained sophistication and are no

longer willing to trumpet an American work because it contains American materials.

If our literary journals have gone beyond the point of applauding American writers merely because they are American, the patriotic stance they have vacated has not remained unoccupied. To be sure, we can still count on one or another public figure or popular publication, none of them literary, to call for a truly positive American literature. I do not refer to them, however, but to a well-established group of writer-teachers who speak from a field variously called American literature, American studies, or American civilization.

Their growth, consolidation, and entrenchment have been swift. In 1928, Norman Foerster was a pioneer when he edited the collection of essays called *The Reinterpretation of American Literature.* In his Introduction, he said:

> Our increasing awareness of our world supremacy in material force has more and more evoked a sense of need of self-knowledge. In Europe, similarly, the feeling is growing that the power of America renders it perilous to remain in the dark as to what she really is. In the universities of both America and Europe, the study of our literature as a revelation of our culture is at last being seriously undertaken. Nothwithstanding a few honorable names, American scholarship and education in the field of the national letters have till recently merited shame rather than pride. In general it has been a subject attractive to facile journalists and ignorant dilettanti, and repellent to sound but timorous scholars. The time is not distant, however, when this study will be pursued in the same spirit and with the same methods employed in the study of other modern literatures.[1]

Professor Foerster's prediction has been fulfilled amply. The world supremacy in material force of which he spoke has increased since 1928, and with it has increased the study of American literature. In this gross and obvious way, then, the obvious in this matter is too often overlooked, the study of American literature is keyed to American economic and military success. Though the majority of those who work in American studies may produce what appear to be negative rather than approving estimates of their country's cultural realities, the overall carriage within which they have their reservations is pulled by the engine of materialistic nationalism. Willy-nilly, most of them are embarked on the patriotic ride.

My own reading of American literary history does not convince

me that this is either a desirable situation or one that must inevitably continue. The pre-Revolutionary American writer was not restive at being a colonial. The New England Puritan wrote his tract with a London printer at the back of his mind, the Virginia settler reported on his experiences to London coffeehouse readers, and the Pennsylvania poet awaited the day when he would have saved enough money to embark for London and there get his literary career under full sail. The American Revolution, therefore, had an immensely debilitating effect upon him, because it deprived him of an assumed audience that possessed the scholarship or the wit or the taste necessary for an appreciation of his works. His subject matter, insofar as it was American, used to be worthy matter because he could assume that in writing about it he was interpreting it to a wider and deeper audience. Deprived of a vital relationship to the audience, and turned toward his narrower contemporaries, his material seemed repetitious, shallow, and drab.

For, as we know, the American Revolution did not revolutionize the society: after the war men were pretty much what they were before the war; the same merchants continued merchandising, the same farmers farmed, and the same fishermen fished. Now their activities were called American commerce, American agriculture, and American fishing, rather than British, but the activities were unaffected. One marketed tinware, or grew corn, or netted cod in substantially the same fashion whether one were British or American. Even the old royal charters served, in most instances, as adequate state constitutions; all that was needed was some substitute wording from place to place.

But the man of letters did not become an American writer simply by carrying on as he did in colonial days. Since literature was of value to a new nation as a badge of its stability, the call that promptly went out for an American literature was one that assumed that it would have immediate and important differences from the old colonial literature. It would show the world that the new nation was a great nation and a good nation, and would, in some unformulated way, have its Americanism written all over it.

But what things were there to write about after the Revolution that did not exist before, since the society was essentially the same? The chief change, from the writer's point of view was, as I said, that

he had been cut off from a more demanding and therefore more stimulating audience. He was now presented with the familiar society of his pre-Revolutionary work made thinner and more anemic by its no longer being rooted in the tradition and the titles of the mother country. And his tool was still English, though the sparseness of his materials seemed to mock its elaborateness—as if he were given a crane in order to build a pebble border.

James Fenimore Cooper voiced the definitive lament when he said that in America

> there are no annals for the historian; no follies (beyond the most vulgar and commonplace) for the satirist; no manners for the dramatist; no obscure fictions for the writer of romance; no gross and hardy offences against decorum for the moralist; nor any of the rich artificial auxiliaries of poetry . . . . There is no costume for the peasant (there is scarcely a peasant at all), no wig for the judge, no baton for the general, no diadem for the magistrate. The darkest ages of their history are illuminated by the light of truth; the utmost efforts of their chivalry are limited by the laws of God; and even the deeds of their sages and heroes are to be sung in a language that would differ but little from a version of the ten commandments.

Cooper knew whereof he spoke. When he began his career, the idea of a series of romances built on American history had appealed to him because his novel, *The Spy,* loosely attached to specific Revolutionary events and figures, had met with success. But his one self-conscious attempt at such a romance, *Lionel Lincoln,* was a disaster. History was just too recent and Americans just too unpolished to allow him the latitude for suspense and spectacle that Sir Walter Scott enjoyed in his medieval and border romances. Indeed of the hundreds of early-century plays that were based on American heroes and American events and that appealed to the patriotic spirit of their audiences, those few that had any success seem to have gained popularity because soon after they went on the stage the performers learned to bend themselves in the direction of caricature and buffoonery. Known American heroes and historical deeds became related to the plays themselves in very much the same way that today stock movie characters and plots, once followed seriously by thousands, are relegated to the performances of comedians who use them as a source for satiric exaggerations.

Cooper and his most accomplished contemporary, Washington Irving, soon learned that the only way to overcome the lack of distinguishing classes and characteristics in general American society was to identify groups within the nation, cultural pockets, that still retained a European flavor, and mine them for all they were worth. So both wrote of the Dutch in the Hudson River Valley. Cooper also dealt with those Americans who had never lost their Tory tastes and who therefore carried on as if they comprised an American aristocracy, while Irving, once he was validated as a notable American writer through gaining recognition abroad, chose particularly to write directly about foreign subjects such as English and Spanish legends.

Cooper's response after his initial success, however, was more profound than Irving's, and though he never lost his fondness for groups within America that behaved socially in more or less of what might be called an old-world fashion, he came to believe that if the American writer could not write about his countrymen because they were thin, then his task was to write *at* them in order to civilize them—in order, as it were, to fatten them up.

In over thirty novels as well as in histories and travel accounts he undertook this task, for the greater part of his career reaping a harvest of hate bacause the honest American bridled at the notion that he needed cultural fattening. Even Cooper's most popular works, the Leatherstocking Tales, served this grand end of making American literature a device whereby Americans are brought to some degree of civilization. The question that they consistently address is whether or not Americans can make a civilization by combining the better halves of both their European background and their location in a vast virgin land, or whether they must either stifle the wilderness and become commonplace commercial versions of the European, or stifle the European and become barbarous peasants in coarse surroundings.

Leatherstocking himself symbolizes the dilemma. He is, on one hand, of European ancestry and he has instinctive sympathy with the refinements of the well-bred men and women whom he meets in his infrequent trips to the settlements and whom he is willing to help in their journeys into the forest. On the other hand, he sees that their civilization is being built in America at the expense of an immensely wasteful assault upon God's bounty. Pigeons are knocked from the

skies by the thousands for the sake of a half-day's sport, and a whole tree is felled for the sake of one evening's fire. With the destruction of this natural amplitude, he feels, man's capacity to regulate himself through becoming attuned to the rhythms of nature is being destroyed in favor of artificial standards of behavior. America, in its growth, is not staying to hear what the land has to tell it. But he cannot escape the fact that though a total commitment to the settlements is a commitment to the rape of nature, a total commitment to undisturbed nature is a commitment to the primitivism of the Indians and the ravenousness of the beasts.

Through Leatherstocking, Cooper attempts to develop for his countrymen one part of his formula for civilization, as, in other novels, he illustrates what he takes to be the good manners, good morals, and clearly defined social classes that are compatible with democracy. The form of literary patriotism that he practiced was one which attempted to make literature the chief civilizing influence in the society. His subject matter is either the contrasting directions that civilization can take within America, or the differences between American possibilities and European realities. In pursuing these topics, Cooper built upon existing English assumptions as to what is literary and saw his work as an American manifestation of an honorable tradition. Indeed, for him to have seen it otherwise would have been for him to deny the part of his theme that asserted the need for continuity with the best the past had to offer.

This view—that the function of American literature is chiefly that of a civilizing force exerted on a malleable society that lacks the institutions that had contributed to older civilizations (hereditary social classes, an established church, a divine head of government)—found many another practitioner who felt he was most American when he accepted the institutional responsibility of his writing. Such a writer attempted to attach his countrymen to what was worthy in a human history that had left no ruins on their shores, while at the same time indicating to them how they could modify their freer access to their own destinies so as to improve their society beyond that of Europe.

We may appreciate the strength of this view by looking in on the 1870's, a decade in which a great many rapid fortunes are being

made as the commercial boom set off by the Civil War extends itself into rapid industrial development. Silas Lapham, the paint king, is investing some of his newly earned fortune in an entrance into society. The rough-mannered former farmer from the Vermont-Canada line has bought a lot in Back Bay Boston and the house is even now going up. But wealth alone does not make the cultured American, and one day Irene, Lapham's handsome daughter, and Tom Corey, a well-bred young man, representative of the class the Laphams hope to enter, set themselves upon a trestle within the framework of the unfinished house and have the following conversation:

"We are going to have the back room upstairs for a music-room and library," she said abruptly.

"Yes?" returned Corey. "I should think that would be charming."

"We expected to have book-cases, but the architect wants to build the shelves in."

The fact seemed to be referred to Corey for his comment.

"It seems to me that would be the best way. They'll look like part of the room then. You can make them low, and hang your pictures above them."

"Yes, that's what he said." The girl looked out of the window in adding, "I presume with nice bindings it will look very well."

"Oh, nothing furnishes a room like books."

"No. There will have to be a good many of them."

"That depends upon the size of your room and the number of your shelves."

"Oh, of course! I presume," said Irene, thoughtfully, "we shall have to have Gibbon."

"If you want to read him," said Corey, with a laugh of sympathy for an imaginable joke.

"We had a great deal about him at school. I believe we had one of his books. Mine's lost, but Pen will remember."

The young man looked at her, and then said, seriously, "You'll want Greene, of course, and Motley, and Parkman."

"Yes. What kind of writers are they?"

"They're historians, too."

"Oh, yes; I remember now. That's what Gibbon was. Is it Gibbon or Gibbons?"

The young man decided the point with apparently superfluous delicacy. "Gibbon, I think."

"There used to be so many of them," said Irene gaily. "I used to get them mixed up with each other, and I couldn't tell them from the poets. Should you want to have poetry?"

"Yes; I suppose some edition of the English poets."

"We don't any of us like poetry. Do you like it?"

"I'm afraid I don't very much," Corey owned. "But, of course, there was a time when Tennyson was a great deal more to me than he is now."

"We had something about him at school too. I think I remember the name. I think we ought to have *all* the American poets."

"Well, not all. Five or six of the best: you want Longfellow and Bryant and Whittier and Holmes and Emerson and Lowell."

The girl listened attentively, as if making mental note of the names.

"And Shakespeare," she added. "Don't you like Shakespeare's plays?"

"Oh yes, very much."

"I used to be perfectly crazy about his plays. Don't you think *Hamlet* is splendid? We had ever so much about Shakespeare. Weren't you perfectly astonished when you found out how many other plays of his there were? I always thought there was nothing but *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth* and *Richard III* and *King Lear,* and that one that Robeson and Crane have—oh yes! *Comedy of Errors.*"

"Those are the ones they usually play," said Corey.

"I presume we shall have to have Scott's work," said Irene, returning to the question of books.

"Oh yes."

"One of the girls used to think he was *great.* She was always talking about Scott." Irene made a pretty little amiably contemptuous mouth. "He isn't American, though?" she suggested.

"No," said Corey; "He's Scotch, I believe."

Irene passed her glove over her forehead. "I always get him mixed up with Cooper. Well, papa has got to get them. If we have a library, we have got to have books in it. Pen says it's perfectly ridiculous having one. But Papa thinks whatever the architect says is right. He fought him hard enough at first. I don't see how anyone can keep the poets and the historians and novelists separate in their mind. Of course Papa will buy them if we say so. But I don't see how I'm ever going to tell him which ones." The joyous light faded out of her face and left it pensive.

From talk of a furnished house they had unconsciously come around to talk of a furnished mind. The question of what furniture an American of breeding should possess is postponed to the larger question of what furniture such an American should carry around in his head. The vitality of the question is pointed up by young Corey's

father that same evening when he makes fun of the crudeness of the Laphams and lightly mocks his son's interest in that family. In defending them, Tom attempts to separate intellectual accomplishment from intelligence. "They're not unintelligent people," he insists; "they are very quick, and they are shrewd and sensible."

His father replies: "I have no doubt that some of the Sioux are so. But that is not saying that they are civilized. All civilization comes through literature now, especially in our country. A Greek got his civilization by talking and looking, and in some measure a Parisian may still do it. But we, who live remote from history and monuments, we must read or we must barbarize."

The American authors that Tom recommended to Irene Lapham, with one exception, accepted this notion of the function of literature in America. There is Cooper, of course, although Irene unfortunately confuses him with Scott. There are three historians: Parkman, who traced the career of French aspirations in North America so as to remind his countrymen of what was gained and what was lost when they inherited a continent dominated by British habits; Motley, who wrote the story of the Dutch states and in so doing showed that America's democratic ideal was of international application and of universal efficacy; and George Washington Greene, the first man to hold a professorship of United States history, who supplied his countrymen with a historical perspective on the American Revolution and, from that perspective, found it was good.

Emerson is an exception, but the other poets on the list—Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier, Holmes, and Lowell—are men who strove to demonstrate that the American landscape was as susceptible to idealization as the European landscape, to relate established literary forms and themes to American settings and to import Indo-European myths and lore into the native storehouse of common knowledge. To some extent, these men had worked also to express native themes in a native tongue. But as one reads their works, the major impression is that of their civilizing intent, their wish to demonstrate that native ore can be cast in the foundry of tradition without breaking the mold.

Indeed, William Dean Howells, who created the novel in which Tom Corey and Irene Lapham have their conversation, shared this view of American literature as a demotic branch of English literature

Though he is more often remembered for the great encouragement he gave native and especially regional writers, he encouraged them within the same frame that made him the propagandist in America for Turgenev, Zola, Flaubert, and Tolstoy. He felt his own works were more closely related to those of Jane Austen than to those of any earlier American writer. From the deepest patriotic impulses he tried to help all American authors who appeared to him to serve the institutional function of making of literature a source of civilization, and in this attempt he was widely and tolerantly plural, finding a place for Henry James and a place for Mark Twain.

One may well maintain, then, that as Rome was attached to Greek literature, and England to Graeco-Roman literature, so America is attached to English literature. American literature is a demotic branch growing from an honorable old trunk, and American critics best serve their literature when they measure it in terms of the best that has been thought and said in the English language.

Though this may be called a patriotic literary task, it runs counter to that phrase as it may more conventionally be used to denote those authors and critics who self-consciously tried to build a radically new literature on the very fact that America lacked the usual characteristics of civilization. This, they maintained, was a virtue, for it means that the American writer was he who accepted the unliterary nature of native material, appreciated the local reasons for this condition, and worked to discover a form that would elevate the materials onto the level of expression even though such a form, by definition, had never hitherto appeared in the history of literature. In the main, a new poetry and a new nonfictive prose work were the results of their efforts.

Their leader was Ralph Waldo Emerson who, more than sixty years after colonial writers found themselves adrift through dint of their now being Americans, issued what Oliver Wendell Holmes called "our intellectual declaration of independence." In "The American Scholar," Emerson accepted the fact that American realities resisted conventional literary treatment, but rather than electing to enrich those realities so that they were susceptible to such handling, he insisted that conventional literary treatment was dead. The classics, he affirmed, are of no formal value whatsoever; they are

worthwhile only insofar as they inspire. New forms must flow from the American flux.

He listed some of the local banalities that resisted literary treatment and called for the American writer to encompass them:

> What would we really know the meaning of? The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and the gait of the body;—show me the ultimate reason of these matters; show me the sublime presence of the highest spiritual cause lurking, as always it does lurk, in these suburbs and extremities of nature; let me see every trifle bristling with the polarity that ranges it instantly on an eternal law; and the shop, the plough, and the ledger referred to the like cause by which light undulates and poets sing;—and the world lies no longer a dull miscellany and lumber-room, but has form and order; there is no trifle, there is no puzzle, but one design unites and animates the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench.

The trifles would take form once they were polarized on an eternal law, and Emerson sought to arm his followers with confidence in such laws so that everything they saw about them would lie ready to their literary hands. Then indeed American literature would be a distinctive literature, speaking of new things in a new way, not a modern branch of Western European literature, which noted local varieties of the traditional topics and shaped them to established forms.

Walt Whitman gave Emerson's doctrine its most splendid application. His poetry, he believed, did not exist to civilize his countrymen through attaching their reality to the accumulations of the past. Rather, it showed them that their sprawling, middle class democracy was a new kind of civilization and a better one than had ever before existed. They key to its accessibility was an appreciation of the way in which Americans were separate from one another with no institutions forcing them into types, and yet, in their open democratic natures, had a common identity. This was an entirely new thing in the history of the world, according to Whitman, and the task of the poet was to enforce that identity. He should operate, said Whitman, by

> permeating the whole mass of American mentality, taste, belief, breathing into it a new breath of life, giving it decision, affecting politics far more than the popular superficial suffrage, with results inside and underneath the elections of

> Presidents or Congresses—radiating, begetting appropriate teachers, schools, manners, and as its grandest result, accomplishing (what neither the schools and the churches and their clergy have hitherto acomplish'd, and without which this nation will no more stand, permanently, soundly, than a house will stand without a substratum) a religious and moral character beneath the political and productive and intellectual bases of the States.

Responding to Emerson, Whitman attempted to pick up every possible bit of American reality and polarize the pieces along the eternal laws of the new democratic identity and the creative force of the poet who was its shaper and without whom there was no order. His best work bristles with apt combinations of his demiurgic tone with the materials at hand: "Urge and urge and urge, Always the procreant urge of the world." And his worst work suffers from the stridency of insistence of a poet who believes that absolutely everything will shape up under his compelling voice and who sometimes offers rhetorical pertinacity in the place of verse.

Henry David Thoreau responded to Emerson's call also, and so far was he from bemoaning American thinness that he asserted that there was enough at Walden Pond alone to contain the world, provided that it were ranged along eternal laws. The past offered him nothing with which he cared to retain a formal relationship; it served, indeed, as Emerson said it should, only to inspire as he considered the depth of the pond, the ferocity of maggots in the body of a dead horse, or the timidity of a midwinter hare. American materials did not resist him, did not cry for enrichment before they could be transformed into literature, because during a morning at Walden he was contemporaneous with Homer and the authors of the Hindu scriptures and felt himself drawing water from the same well.

If Whitman, in Emerson's wake, sometimes substituted clamor for form as he attempted to contain a myriad of impressions, Thoreau, with a premium placed on the force of eternal law, was sometimes so selective in his materials that he refined them out of all immediate relationship with the America of his day. He concentrated intensely on the individual example, but then overleaped that individual's social context as he related it to the eternal verities.

Whitman and Thoreau represent the breadth of response the doctrine of a radically American American literature evoked. In

severing itself from the models of the past it could be either immensely detailed in treating its unliterary materials, thereby placing a premium on the demiurgic power of the writer to shape it, or it could center on the relation of the individual example to the largest generalizations and bypass the intermediate combination of individuals into societies, bypass what is conventionally regarded as the sphere of realistic literature. The work of Hawthorne and Melville, in many ways explicitly anti-Emersonian, carried these implicit relationships to Emerson's doctrine. Both attempted greater social density than Thoreau, and Melville especially accepted the demiurgic character of the author. But confronted with the thinness of American society, both eventually overleaped it and centered their concerns on the individual and the eternal verities.

Mention of Melville and Hawthorne brings us full circle, however, because the influence upon Hawthorne of Spencer, Bunyan, and Goldsmith, or upon Melville of the Bible, Shakespeare, and Cervantes is writ large in their work. And so we return to the question of the validity of a study of our literature as a form of self-knowledge based on the principle that American works have American origins, as opposed to its study as a demotic branch of an older literature with constant cross-reference to the main trunk and to other demotic branches a necessity if we are to comprehend it. It is clear that such critical concerns parallel authorial concerns, that the former point of view shares greatly with Emerson and Whitman and the latter with Cooper and Howells.

I do not mean to force these views into polar opposition, and, theoretically, they are not so opposed. No believer in the Americanism of American literature denies that Emerson was influenced by Fichte and other continental followers of Kant. No believer in the shaping power European literature exerted on American literature denies that Cooper was greatly influenced by the people and scenes he encountered in frontier Cooperstown.

But, in practice, the views are opposed. Since 1928 when Norman Foerster issued his call for a concentrated study of American literature as a source of self-knowledge, the Emersonian view has come into critical dominance. Before that time, American literature was separated from other literatures by the simple distinction of

geography. But as the students of it gained in number, they were increasingly attracted by the notion that a literary, or at least a cultural demarcation of American literature could be drawn, and this in turn made those American authors who had consciously worked toward such a clear demarcation more attractive, more American than others. As extraliterary cultural criteria came into play, literature itself got somewhat lost in the shuffle. Writers outside of belles lettres, such as Henry Adams, who had the obvious virtue of being self-consciously intellectual about being an American, being a New Englander, and being Henry Adams, were elevated into central importance, and belletristic authors whose work was thin were seen as at least culturally representative and therefore worthy of study from that point of view. After the second world war, along came the Fulbright and other American Studies awards as powerful encouragements to institutionalize such an approach, to formalize, that is, the expansion of a relatively small body of literary material to the size of the political importance of the country of origin of that material.

The opposing view, that of American literature as a demotic branch of European literature did, of course, suffer as a consequence, but of late it has been translated into a new form and is making a good recovery under the name of comparative literature.

What is most immediately to be pointed at in this revitalized approach is that by applying the standard of the undeniable classics of the world its practitioners rescue good literature—in whatever language—from the company of the bad literature foisted upon it by arbitrary national or linguistic boundaries. Should not literature be allowed to work primarily as literature? And is not *Moby Dick* far more articulate when it is ranged with *Tom Jones, Don Quixote, War and Peace,* and *Ulysses* than when it is held to the companionship of *Uncle Tom's Cabin, The Red Rover, The Rise of Silas Lapham,* and *Rose of Dutcher's Coolly*?

Even if one rebelled at this view as too narrowly aesthetic—a position that is by no means self-evidently defensible—and hewed to Norman Foerster's reasons for the study of American literature—the crucial need for self-knowledge—the comparatist's approach is still viable. Self-knowledge, after all, is not confined to learning only how one differs from others; it is also concerned with the larger

matter of man as a social animal, what he shares. Moreover, it may be argued that self-knowledge is incomplete until one is willing to measure one's self against common standards, and the comparative approach encourages this.

To advance this view further, we realize that since 1928 when Foerster issued his call, American world supremacy has taken on another dimension. Now, as then, we exert a material force. But now we also claim that we exert a civilizing force. We offer our allies not only bread and gunpowder but institutions, patterns of civility, and this new emphasis, it appears to me, strongly favors the comparatist's case. Perhaps our civilizing motives and their results are shaky because, among other factors, we have grown too parochial about civilization and equate it with life in the United States, conveniently forgetting that though we cherish certain things we do not necessarily possess the best examples of them, and that, at any rate, we have inherited more culture than we have produced. We do seem to have the boorish habit of laying claim to the invention of a number of civilities of life with as perverse a grasp of their historical development as we accuse the Russians of having when they advance one or another claim for the invention of the telephone or the airplane. If we are to carry civilization in the wake of our force—and we really have no choice, the dominater, be he Greek, Norman, or British, does just this—then we must ask ourselves what it is we should carry. The answer appears to call for our surrendering a parochial view of our literature in favor of seeing it as but a chapter in the history of human consciousness in very much the same way as the British Empire favored us, when we were colonials, with a grasp of that culture as the living present of the Graeco-Roman tradition. In so doing, we shall certainly better serve not only those who live in areas of the world which we influence, but ourselves. The meaning of our allegiance to America is—or should be—part of the meaning of our allegiance to humanity, for though one aspect of the dilemma of the American writer after the Revolution was that of being deprived of all the richness of tradition, another was his realization that what was most American was what was most international. That is, he saw, as did many a European intellectual, that the American really stood for everyman when he was given an opportunity to develop his

capacities free of inherited caste prejudice. What was most characteristic of American society in this view was what would be characteristic of any society of free men. Washington was but echoing what almost every one of the American thinkers of his day had asserted when, in his Farewell Address, he affirmed that the American people should preserve their union so that they would acquire the glory "of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation which is yet a stranger to it."

The view I have been advancing is one that maintains that American literature is to Western literature as the inflected ending of a verb is to that verb's root. It must be seen as an inflection different from other inflections, but this can best be done by constant reference to the structuring power of the root and to those other inflections.

At this point, however, the Emersonian voice may again make itself heard in the dialogue, and it speaks as follows. It is true that American Studies has been guilty of regarding literature as mere rhetoric and thereby cheapening its value, and it is true also that it has inflated the third rate with a resulting coarsening of the discourse. But to protest against this is to protest against abuse, not for proper use. The comparative approach too has similar abuses, chief of which are the artificial elevation of a feeble genre in one tongue because it is all that tongue offers for comparison with the same genre in another tongue; and the acceptance of the relativity of cultures to such an extent that everything is seen as one or another filament in an endless web that has no center, and no shape, so that ultimately, it has no meaning.

But the proper use of American Studies is based on the assumption that through its literature a people manifests its existence. The study of that literature therefore reveals the nature of the inescapable life of a people and the position they have taken within that life. For example, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* speaks to all men and is a source of civilization to all who have access to it, but its universality is inseparable from its having grown out of the Spanish condition and its being an expression of a position within the inescapable life of the Spanish people. It is thoroughly universal because it is thoroughly Spanish, just as a thoroughly great man is first of all thoroughly himself.[2]

So American Studies, rightly considered as a study of the

alternatives that the American people have exercised within their inescapable life, must begin with a full appreciation of the cultures upon which Americans have consciously or unconsciously built and from which they have borrowed. But their literature can best be seen as manifestations of that life; *Moby Dick's* universality is intimately connected with *Moby Dick's* Americanism.

I believe this to be a fruitful outlook, but it is at present only an outlook. The abuses do far outweigh the uses in American Studies as it is now practiced while the beneficial uses far outweigh the abuses of the comparatist's approach to American literature. I think that in the face of these facts, two entirely practicable lines of action are called for.

First, the curriculum in the schools and in the colleges should be realigned to assure the fact that American literary works are not taught in nationalistic isolation where they become supplements to American history, or where the first rate and the third rate become blurred in the excessive emphasis placed on the rhetoric of literature. We best serve our literature and our commitment to self-knowledge when we concentrate on our best, and compare it with the best of its kind produced by other nations, especially England, since fortune has favored us with immediate access to the language of British literature.

And second, when we do isolate our own literature for study, we must do so with a realization that such isolation must be justified. This justification will not come if we simplistically read literature as a mirror reflection of the culture that produced it. It is, rather, a refraction, and in gauging the angle of refraction we must develop a sense of the limitations as well as the opportunities with which America has equipped her writers.[3] We must locate the position the writer has taken within the inescapable life of his people.

The literary work is an expression finding a form freed from the fluctuations of time, as character endures beyond the tribulations of an hour, but fixed by the position the artist has taken within the inescapable life of his people.

The two lines I have suggested are based on the premise that the United States of America is adult in responsibility whatever it may be in years. This adulthood, forced upon it by its world posi-

tion, cannot be served by a criticism that keeps it in cultural nonage by dwelling with adolescent self-consciousness on its peculiarities and magnifying with adolescent selfishness every attribute it possesses as a creation of the self. In maturity we come to terms with the parent and recognize our heredity and our similarity to our brethren. We no longer believe that such recognition threatens our own identity.

But in maturity we also recognize the fulness of the maxim which advises that every man must seek his salvation in the place of his birth. And so we return to consider with instructed interest that edifice of interconnected values which is our dwelling place, scrutinizing it with the realization that only from it can we express ourselves, only from it can we manifest our own reality.

The self-esteem of a mature adult is based on an acceptance of the limitations of the self and a consequent confidence in the manifestations of existence possible within those boundaries. The literary patriotism of a mature nation is likewise based on an acceptance of the limits imposed by the mesh of values that is that nation's culture and a consequent confidence in the expressions that elevate those values out of time and into form. America has an adult's responsibilities, but it awaits the critics who will bring the stance of poised maturity to that adulthood by teaching it no longer to begrudge the brother or to deny the parent or to avert the full force of its searching gaze from the mysteries of the dwelling place.

NOTES

1. Norman Foerster (ed.), *The Reinterpretation of American Literature* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1928), pp. vii-viii.
2. I rely upon the theory and also, in part, the terminology of Americo Castro, *The Structure of Spanish History* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1954).
3. I here borrow the distinction between *reflect* and *refract* that is so ably made by Harry Levin in "Literature as an Institution," *Accent*, Spring 1946.

A Defense of Poesy: 1967

Edward Rosenheim, Jr.

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Edward Rosenheim, Jr.

On Tuesday, December 6, 1966, the *Washington Post* provided its readers with a lively article bearing the following headline: "Library of Congress Speakers Agree: Poet's Pet Peeve: The College English Department."

The story began:

> Three respected American poets met in a room at the Library of Congress yesterday and, after a few minutes of small talk, found themselves in a spirited denunciation of English departments and the way they teach literature.
>
> "The English department at the American state university is designed to protect the human race against literature," said James Wright.
>
> "An English department was one of the few human agencies that could have sent me to work in an advertising agency as better than it," said James Dickey.
>
> "The liberal arts college is becoming more like vocational training," said Louis Simpson. "English departments are really out of touch."

There was a good deal more to the piece, much of it to the same effect. The poets obviously warmed to their subject, and before they were finished English teachers were assailed for, among other things, their ignorance of literature and being "just not involved."

A clipping of the entire article reached me the day after its appearance—December 7—to provide a kind of English teacher's second Pearl Harbor Day. As a matter of fact, I had been reflecting a bit on the problem I wanted to discuss in this lecture, and I had been somewhat uneasily contemplating the case that can be made for teaching imaginative literature in today's crowded curriculum. To be honest, I had not imagined that we English teachers were as sorry a lot as we had been made out to be by the poetic visitors to the Library of Congress. At worst, I had thought, the teacher of literature was in the position which Oscar Wilde is supposed to have attributed to the youthful George Bernard Shaw: "He's not yet important enough to have any enemies, but none of his friends like him." We may have been a bit embarrassed when it came to defending the rigor and usefulness of our calling; our voices were rarely respected in the secular councils of the land; our enterprises doubtless appeared crabbed and wasteful to the uninitiated. Yet surely we should have sympathetic allies among the practitioners and devotees of those arts that were our professional concern. Surely, among such

friends, our pronouncements and practices should be hailed as true defenses of poesy.

Alas, the strictures of the poets had all but destroyed this comforting image. If poetry is to be defended, they seemed to say, the very worst place for its defense is the college classroom. If anything is to be defended, it is not poetry itself but the teaching of poetry—at least as it is presently conducted. And this is, in a sense, the task I am now facing. For I am going to ask—as the poets themselves seem to ask—by what right imaginative literature occupies such a central place in our formal curriculum, why literature (rather than, say, linguistics) continues to be the principal concern of graduate English departments, why it dominates the programs and source-materials pouring out of English institutes, why it remains a respectable "major" for young people contemplating careers in banking, brokerage, hairdressing, husbandry, and homemaking. In asking such questions, I am forced to drop such roles as those of advocate, apostle, or ally, and to think about my genuine role, that of teacher. I am forced to forget about the poets, gracious and ungracious, and to ask about the products of poets and what they have to do with the educational process.

Of course my own observations must likewise be a defense of poetry—but it is a teacher's defense and not a poet's. For I must ask why poetry should and how poetry can be defended as an indispensable part of the education of people who are going to be anything but poets. These are questions which persistently confront all teachers of literature, for unless we have some firm convictions, both about the nature and power of the poetic arts and about the ends for which we teach, we are indeed a vulnerable crew.

Let me say immediately that by "poetry" I mean very much the sort of thing which I think Sir Philip Sidney had in mind in the document whose title I've stolen for these remarks. For Sidney "onely the Poet" disdains to be tied in subjection to nature and "lifted up with the vigor of his owne invention, dooth growe in effect, another nature." I am talking about literature which, whether it finds its form in verse or drama or narrative prose, can be defined and defended as a product of the creative imagination. I am concerned with the sorts of writings that are produced by singers of

songs, tellers of tales, actors of imaginary roles. And obviously I am not talking about the writings that can be most profitably viewed as documents or demonstrations or arguments, the works that reflect the inquiries of scientists, historians, social investigators, or even moral philosophers.

To distinguish poetry in this fashion from other kinds of writing may be unsatisfactory to the theorist, but it throws into clear focus the plight of those who are supposed to teach the kind of literature I have described. How do we defend its place in an educational structure which has become a fiercely competitive arena? We all recognize that today a minimally respectable knowledge of the physical universe, of man, and of society is becoming ever harder to achieve. We cannot remain indifferent to arguments that involve educational priorities; with the realities of the universe and its troublesome inhabitants to be confronted and mastered, poetry and fiction increasingly appear, if not as escapist luxuries, then as rewards to be enjoyed only after successful engagement with necessities.

The so-called "information explosion" has resulted in more than an astonishing multiplication and proliferation of facts to be known. It has produced an age which is marked, as Robert Oppenheimer somewhere observed, by "the prevalence of novelty." In most areas of learning today, "knowledge" largely consists of what has been newly discovered or is about to be discovered. Today's college physics or sociology or even philosophy must be the physics, sociology, and philosophy of 1967; the 1950 versions of these disciplines simply will not do. Only the knowledge held to be the province of the humanities remains relatively inert, massively oriented toward the past. And if we argue that the humanities are properly and gloriously "timeless," the argument is likely to have small appeal to an age in which time is of the essence. (Parenthetically, I venture the opinion that the arts of imaginative literature are, in particular, currently unable to present even the appearance of innovation. We have gone far in experimenting, but you can go only so far with language as your instrument, and lacking soup-cans, electronic tape, and a philosophy which justifies the random disposition of words upon the printed page, the literary artist has a hard time selling himself as a true innovator. His plight, indeed, leads one to question whether

we are not attaching too much value to innovation per se in the arts—but this is a question to be pondered on another occasion.)

We all should be agonizingly conscious of certain circumstances in society which suggest that the teaching of imaginative literature deserves a very low place in the total educational pecking order. If the urban, desperately underprivileged youngsters in the first grade of Chicago's schools find hopelessly alien the secure, white world of Dick and Jane, with its tricycles and puppies and well-dressed-commuter father, how remote must their equally deprived older brothers and sisters find the worlds of Romeo and Juliet or Ivanhoe or Daisy Miller or J. Alfred Prufrock? It is impossible to escape the presence, in America's schools, of hundreds of thousands of youngsters for whom some of the most commonplace words have no meaning—since these children are denied the commonplaces of stable family existence. We need to understand that *any* handle on the attention and imagination of such kids has to be resolutely grasped, even if we must forget every notion we've ever had about "good literature" in the battle for minimal literacy.

In actual fact, it is difficult to deny that some kind of humanistic awareness should be a goal of universal education, yet why should it involve the traditional poetic—or indeed literary—forms? Certainly such arts as music and painting seem today to be enriching our total national life far more than are the words of the poets, who seem these days (when they are not attacking English teachers at the Library of Congress) chiefly to be serenading one another over the rooftops. From venerable citadels in places like Toronto and St. Louis come powerful voices, warning of the obsolescence of our materials—and our calling, as we now define it. We have all heard it argued that what are today proven sources of general comfort and delight—television shows, folk music, happenings, movies, picture magazines, and the rest—will inevitably constitute the humanistic materials of the future and therefore merit primacy in our educational plans.

These arguments have engendered misgivings which, I confess, have long plagued me. And they reached a kind of horrid climax when, as I say, our friends the poets openly and unapologetically rejected the support of the English-teaching fraternity. If, I thought,

by teaching poetry we are doing service neither to our students nor to poetry itself, why not abandon the whole undertaking and "retool" in a way which conforms if not to the demands of art to the demands of society?

So there was a period of a week or so when this paper threatened to become a bold and sensational manifesto. In my new disillusion, it occurred to me that I could make headlines by sounding the death knell of traditional literary studies and valiantly calling for a redefinition of art which would make the New Linguistics look stuffy by comparison. I could begin with the cunning exposure of the clay feet on such idols as Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, and Wordsworth—each of them well enough in his own linear way but each a hopeless failure in anticipating the sensibilities of twentieth-century man. Then, in spirited encounter with today's and (we can be confident!) tomorrow's actualities, I would propose a curriculum whose core consisted of elementary, intermediate, and advanced television viewing. Some rubrics from the old order might survive: the lyric as practiced by The Monkees, the novel as represented by the James Bond canon, dramatic literature in a close, sustained scrutiny of *Bonanza*. In the libraries, a few books would be preserved as curiosities; the rest would be pulped and turned into newsprint, tasteful wallpaper, or, with certain chemical additives, breakfast food that snapped, crackled, and popped informatively. "Literary" training and scholarship would be restored to its rightful home in schools of journalism, broadcasting, and education. As for the traditional kind of English teacher, a well-known dilemma would be resolved: since he could not publish, he could only perish.

But of course this is not how the paper has turned out. At some point during my soul-searching, a small Socratic voice whispered to me that the battle is not yet lost, that there *is* a case, however wistful and precarious, for the teaching of poetry in our time. Yet the same voice insisted that, as an English teacher, I had better declare poetry indeed a lost cause or at least a luxurious hobby for the élite unless I was willing to subscribe to one or more clear beliefs about poetry—and about what poetry alone can do. In fact, the same voice affirmed that *any* English teacher had better abandon himself to the teaching of copy writing or public speaking, unless he is will-

ing to embrace, with complete seriousness, one or more of such beliefs.

If we are to study and teach imaginative literature today with any real conviction, we must embrace some principle more narrow than sheer broad-mindedness, for we must have some kind of reasonable doctrine to sustain us against the kind of doubt, apathy, and downright assault I have been describing. In the absence of convictions which border upon dogma, we can only find ourselves in a state of moody relativism or else of meek subservience to unexamined tradition. We shall be engaged on a mission whose merit we feel only by vague instinct, powerless to defend it against the pressures I have been describing. For the appalling realities of today and the even more appalling possibilities of tomorrow powerfully suggest that one does not teach—one does not "profess"—any subject without convictions that have been rigorously examined, found good, and embraced with devotion and doggedness.

The first of the beliefs about literature which sustain many of us is belief in the peculiar power of various kinds of imaginative writing to yield peculiar satisfactions—satisfactions which are deep, humane, and authentic, but which are, at the same time, different from and not "exchangeable" with the pleasures provided by other arts or other kinds of human experience. It is clear that neither the satisfactions nor the properties peculiar to any kind of writing have ever been defined in a way to meet with universal acceptance. Yet the competing theories which have been produced from the days of the earliest critics and which continue to burgeon in our own day testify that such satisfactions do exist and that, aware of their reality, curious men probe their sources and devoted men seek to share their satisfaction with others.

It may be asked whether this belief in the power of literature to yield pleasure justifies "training" in literature. Indeed, it's possible to make "education for pleasure" look like a pretty silly idea. It's just possible, for instance, that poets sometimes attack English teachers because they object to the idea that young people have to be systematically educated to read their verses. I have certainly known poets who cherish the image of the reader as a kind of noble savage, whose untutored heart miraculously increases its beat in the presence of Beauty.

But I wonder whether education can seek any higher goal than the cultivation of a capacity to use our uniquely human gifts for the achievement of uniquely human satisfactions. And if it be argued that no one needs to be "trained" to enjoy the things of this life. I would reply that the deepest, most distinctly human pleasures are precisely those which arise from the active, energetic, *cultivated* employment of our human endowments—which is precisely what is implied by the word "training."

I want to be quite clear about this "pleasure principle," this combination of satisfaction and cultivated understanding to which I, unapologetically, attach the unfashionable word *appreciation*. Unlike, perhaps, Sidney or Horace or Dryden or Dr. Johnson, I am not talking about "delightful instruction." Nor am I talking about pleasures which can be substituted for or subsumed by the pleasures yielded by kinds of human experience that are not literary. I am saying that the artful products of language, in their various kinds, yield high and special kinds of satisfaction. I am suggesting that if one seeks other satisfactions than those afforded by poetry—those of television spectaculars or happenings or even music or painting—one courts delights which, however legitimate and even sublime, are not the experience which poetry provides.

I make this point, obvious as it may be to many of you, with a rather special concern. For there is a tendency in our schools and colleges, especially I suspect in many of the courses labeled "The Humanities," to neglect the distinctions I have mentioned and hence the peculiarity of the experiences provided by each of the many kinds of art. I believe devoutly in the "comparative" and the "interdisciplinary"; I have, in fact, taught for many years in a Humanities program in which training in the visual, musical, and literary arts proceeds concurrently. Such courses make abundantly clear the analogies between the arts and even the tendency, in Pater's language, of one art to aspire to the condition of another. Such courses, I believe, are less than successful, however, when the analogies are stressed at the expense of the unique, whether that uniqueness inheres in an artistic kind or an individual work (and of course it inheres in both). For example, there is nothing intellectually disreputable about exploiting, quite indifferently, poems, plays, novels, paintings,

and musical pieces in an effort to discover more about, say, "the spirt of the Renaissance" or "the Romantic Movement"; such inquiries are, after all, the legitimate and useful province of the cultural historian. But procedures of this kind are almost inevitably carried out at the cost of neglecting the "pleasure principle." In effect, I believe that the deep and memorable satisfaction which Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" can provide is a better reason for teaching it to freshmen than is anything it can tell us about the Romantic Movement—or indeed about odes, birds, or John Keats, all of which are conceivably "topics" to which courses in literature have addressed themselves.

This is, I hasten to say, a personal belief, and I have already indicated that I shall have alternative beliefs for your inspection. However, I venture the opinion that a belief in the power of poetry to provide special pleasures will prove more sustaining in our present juncture than a belief in the intrinsic importance of understanding movements, periods, genres, or even the nature of the mysterious resemblances which bind together the humanistic arts.

A second kind of belief which can buttress our faith in poetry is the belief in the ability of imaginative literature to provide its *own* kind of wisdom—in the power of *Hamlet* or *Paradise Lost* or "Among School Children" to let us perceive things that the psychologist cannot directly tell us about melancholy, the theologian about the grounds of faith, or the philosopher about youth and old age. This is a wisdom so different from both the hard core information of the current "explosion" and the formulas of abstract thinkers that one is tempted to speak of it, not in terms of learning, but of "acquiring a state of mind." To communicate this kind of wisdom is to share perceptions which are not the less real for defying literal formulation, not the less important for resisting paraphrase, not the less permanent for refusing to fit into filing cabinets.

Belief in the power of poetry to communicate wisdom implies that poetry is capable of reflecting aspects of the human condition which, though intangible and evasive, are inescapably authentic, are susceptible of being felt and known, are indeed genuine aspects of our common humanity. There is a critic's threadbare phrase to the effect that after reading or seeing such-and-such, one will "never

again be exactly the same." Threadbare or not, it is a phrase which expresses quite happily the kind of thing I am talking about. From reading the kind of work I have mentioned, one simply *grows up* somewhat, in an indefinable but undeniable way. One senses a little more of the wonder and wealth of our situation on this planet; one discovers new objects of laughter or sorrow, compassion or fear; one worries a bit over what has never before been a source of worry; one senses often at the same time new possibilities for confidence and gratitude.

Wisdom of the kind I have in mind is a far cry from the limp little aphorisms a certain kind of teacher expects in answer to the ridiculous question, "What does the story teach us?" The wisdom, like the pleasure, afforded by great works of poetic art eludes precise and unequivocal description, and this is precisely the reason I am describing it as an article of belief. Nonetheless, I do not entirely despair of man's ability to discover more about the strange processes of both recognition and discovery that operate in our experiences with literature. I am not among those who disdain the curiosity which has brought to the study of literary experience specialists from the areas of psychology and anthropology or, conversely, has induced literary scholars to exploit their researches. Here again, as in the case of criticism, the tendency to probe into the nature of poetry's power to sustain and mature mankind points to that power as an established fact.

A final belief which can justify our devotion to poetry has to do with its capacity to cultivate literacy in the most tough-minded sense of that battered term. By now most educators are aware that we simply cannot divide our fellow human beings merely into the literate and the illiterate. The raw gap between those who have a minimal ability to read and write and those who are complete readers and writers is enormous and underscores the fact that true literacy is far more than a technical knack. It seems to involve, in its fullest sense, the power to visualize and imagine, to select, to analogize, to discriminate, to abstract. Total literacy requires a keen and constant awareness of language, not as simple "utterance," but as the substance from which can be fashioned an infinity of artful intellectual constructions.

I am not among those who view with pious alarm the spread of the word "communication" and hold it responsible for various kinds of vulgarity in the contemporary scene. To transfer satisfactorily what is on one's mind to the mind of another seems to me a critical and very difficult job and one which is quite legitimately a matter for training. If it happens that today's "communicators" in the mass media have relatively little on their minds to communicate, the concept of communication itself cannot be blamed. But in its highest sense, literacy is more than the capacity to understand the meaning of words in their various combinations. Literacy calls into active play our faculties of compassion and sympathy, our skepticism and hard-headedness, our imaginations, our humor, our susceptibility to emotion of every kind, our fortitude in resisting surrender to emotion alone. For the genuinely literate man or woman, the fact of "mere" communication is only the beginning of literacy experience.

Poetry in its many forms is, as Aristotle indicated and Sidney and many others agreed, a "making," a fabrication designed to stand permanently and to elicit from its audiences a critical, thoughtful, informed series of responses. In a sense, a poem is an "act"—an act of communication, if you will—but it is also a "product" which each man is free to understand and relish in his own fashion. If, indeed, poetry were only communication, then it would be successful only to the extent that its "meaning" could be explicitly and generally agreed upon. It is, of course, possible to treat a poem as if it were a telegram and, indeed, most teachers recognize the student's tendency toward such reduction as a common classroom problem. For to treat the great products of the human imagination as mere communication is to ignore the magnificently individual sensibility which letters elicit from the truly literate.

It is possible that what I have been describing as literacy will vanish as the powerfully explicit audiovisual media take over from the austere products of the printing press. Metaphor and musicality, symbol and suggestion, the marvellous amalgam of rigor and ambiguity which invests the written work—these agents of literature may yield completely to the shrewd manipulations of sight and sound which have already removed the mass media from the realm of the literary. To do justice to such a prospect, the gestalt of the

new media may well exact from us a companion gestalt by which we shall listen, look, infer, judge, at a very sophisticated level indeed. Yet this new set of skills will not be the set we associate with literacy; nor will it involve the same capacities for inference and association, for feeling and believing, for imagining and responding which, since the first poets sought to "make" of words wise and delightful constructions, have been a source of strength and delight to the literate mortal.

I have mentioned three convictions, any one of which can justify the effort to teach imaginative literature. I happen to cherish all three of these convictions, but, as a good University of Chicago pluralist, I should think that any one of them offers firm ground for commitment to literary teaching and study. There is great strength in the doctrines both of art for art's sake and art for something else's sake; their common enemy, after all, is the subversive maxim of no art, for Pete's sake!

Yet commitment to such beliefs is not, as the poets in Washington have reminded us, an adequate defense for the teaching of poetry. If we English teachers are to defend poetry, the defense will occur in our classes and our writings; our gestures of admiration and faith will be effective educational gestures. To talk of joy and wisdom and true literacy rather than of lessons to be learned or communications to be understood increases the practical difficulties of our task. We cannot settle for the starry-eyed illusion that our students can somehow be induced to fall in love with the love affair that we ourselves have long conducted with poetry. Having affirmed our own convictions, perhaps in rather elevated language, we must tackle their consequences for our teaching; and they must be tackled, I am afraid, in the language of the educator.

First, there is the perennial problem of "engagement"—a term which has produced some transcendent poppycock and lured more than one of our number from his proper business into futile psychologizing. Nonetheless, the obvious but troublesome fact is that if we are to teach literature, the student must encounter literature. A literary work must in some way be capable of engaging the student, making some initial breakthrough against apathy, bewilderment, or downright hostility. There is no magic formula for the selection of works

to be studied, but there is assuredly the opportunity to use some common sense. There *is* a gap between literature and life—especially the life of a highly unliterary teen-ager. But it seems folly to widen the gap with works which, for such a kid, aggressively declare their inaccessibility or irrelevance.

When this gap is neglected, works for study are selected only on some such principle as the teacher's unexamined infatuation—or worse, the docile acceptance of the view that what's "great" for Dr. Eliot, Mortimer Adler, or the County Superintendent of Schools must be equally great for the students. I'm aware that seldom in the educational ladder are choices of readings exclusively left to the individual teacher—which is probably just as well. But having seen something of the arbitrary and archaic ways in which reading lists can be compiled, I believe the least the teacher can do is make known his alertness to student needs and student diversity and to resist the monolithic, here as everywhere else in educational planning.

On the other hand, it's easy to overstress fatally the simple and familiar. Teachers of composition soon come to realize that just because a child owns a dog or has had a vacation, he is not particularly eager or able to write eloquent essays on My Dog or My Vacation. The same, I think, applies to reading. Unlike the bluebird of happiness, exciting literary experience rarely claims one's own backyard as its native habitat. Moreover, I am talking about education, and all education is a moving from the better known to the less known. To bathe in the tepid waters of the familiar may be a comfortable experience, but it is not an educational one. And it might be added that insistence on the familiar tends to invite the kind of rejoicing in "recognitions" that are really irrelevant to the works and workings of the imagination—those accidental correspondences between what is found in books and what is familiar in life that may blind readers to the major substance of literary experience. One of the most common words of praise in the youthful critical vocabulary is "realistic." It is a good word and it can point to some high and authentic literary qualities. I suspect, however, that at times it simply signals the student's satisfaction with a book that comfortably confirms his view of life, amiably mirrors the surface of

the world he knows, and makes few demands upon credulity, imagination, or curiosity.

This appeal to the recognition of the commonplace seems to me a rather frail principle on which to chose or to teach works of literature, for I do not see how the presence of this low-level "realism" can for very long sustain a youngster's enthusiasm for reading. On the other hand, what seems more robustly to engage even the least sophisticated reader is generally what is in some way novel, reading which somehow pulls him *from* the world of the commonplace. This is true of stories of danger. It is usually true of even the shabbiest romance. It is true of the many themes, comic and serious, of rebelliousness against the status quo. Among the underprivileged inhabitants of the blackboard jungle, the manifestations of protest, crude and even animal as they may be, are accompanied by unrealistic, often ridiculous, often pretentious apparatus—which is, at the same time, somehow touchingly imaginative and romantic. We discover this tendency in the mystical causes, slogans, and rituals of juvenile gangs and brotherhoods, for example. And we may note, moreover, that such popular "art" as even the semiliterate youngster is drawn to is not conspicuous for "realism" or for the familiarity of its content—whether we are speaking of Batman or James Bond.

However, to exploit the thirst for novelty inordinately would court the danger of viewing literature entirely as some form of escape. And, in a kind of counterpoint to our desire to escape reality, there is in most of us an insistence that a literary work be "meaningful." By this we imply that it somehow must reflect circumstances and feelings and issues which we regard as authentic and important. These "common denominators" may be very basic indeed, involving half-submerged human questions, drives, doubts, memories. Yet precisely because they are so fundamental, they supply to art the redeeming component of reality. When a child begins to grow out of childishness, a book will no longer remain credible merely because it provides a familiar beagle or traffic cop or peanut butter sandwich. It will be "real" and engrossing because it reflects more basic actualities, more pervasive issues and preoccupations: belief and doubt, conflict and love, success and failure, weath and poverty, life and death. If in

truth we are interested in our students' engagement in reading, we must exploit rather than suppress the fact that the literature of suspense involves threats, that tragedy involves trauma, that love poetry involves sexual passion, and that comedy often involves malice.

The tendency of much of the "formal" criticism of recent years has been to discourge talk of "themes" as leading only to an impressionistic and fragmentary understanding of literary constructions. I quite agree that theme-mongering rarely conduces to a close and profitable analysis of a text. But we are speaking now not of analysis but of the prior matter of motivation and engagement. We are concerned with initiating and fostering the encounter between student and book, without which there is no understanding of literature at any level. Surely it is relevant to consider the thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears which our students bring to that encounter and, if such colleagues as the behavioral scientists can shed light upon the matter, to make use of their wisdom. Certainly it is wrong, for example, to dismiss (as I have in the past) the enormous appeal of a writer like J. D. Salinger on the ground that it is peripheral or even meretricious when judged on "literary" terms and the appeal can only be attributed to the author's mastery of some canny tricks. The tricks are there alright, but they involve the exploitation of ancient and powerful archetypes which are not too hard to discover and are very much worth our thinking about. These discoveries can be put to work in our choice of readings, our discussion of readings, our teaching of reading. And if such procedures offend our friends the poets (as, of course, they may well offend Mr. Salinger), then our reply must be that most of us are not poets, but that we are teachers who strive to teach proudly and well.

With some embarrassment, I'd like now to pass to another topic. I've mentioned the "pleasure principle" and I have proceeded as though the enjoyment of literature, however attained, were a worthy and important educational goal in itself. But our students are with us to learn, and learning is always hard work, even though its ultimate aim may be a heightened capacity for enjoyment. And since learning involves the formulation and pursuit of problems, the most "poetic" literary work may be viewed as an object not only to be enjoyed but to be satisfactorily understood. A work of any orig-

inality and complexity (a work, that is, that helps us to "grow up") will ordinarily present problems to be detected and, if possible, solved. In the awareness and pursuit of such problems, indeed, lies our insurance that the "pleasure principle" will not lead us to accept capricious and uninformed responses, that we can distinguish between mere satisfaction and the appreciation of which I have spoken.

In tackling a poetic work as, in some sense, a complex of problems, I think we must honor our students' curiosity, however latent or low-level this quality may be in many of them. The study of poetic literature most properly proceeds not by aphorisms, definitions, classifications, paraphrases, and summaries, but by *questions*—questions, moreover, which try to anticipate the student's own curiosity about the nature of the work he is confronting.

My greatest chagrin on inspecting much of the new curricular material in English that is being produced these days arises from the continuing neglect or abuse of the possibilities afforded by questions. Where this opportunity is neglected, we are simply writing off the student's curiosity as an invaluable agent of learning. Questions are abused, it seems to me, when we merely have that dreary old phenomenon, "Questions for Study," questions that seem to spring full-panoplied from the brain of the teacher or textbook writer, unnatural, needling, and apparently indifferent to what is on the mind of the student. I do not mean that we must avoid so-called "technical" questions—questions of structure, characterization, diction, prosody, and so on—but only that we ask them at a stage of the game at which they have some immediacy; they should, in effect, seem reasonable and useful questions to the student who is being required to answer them. Around far too many of the questions I find in the textbooks and teacher's manuals there hovers the chalky aroma of the examination maker. They are easy to classify as "coverage" or "memory" or "analysis" questions. What seems to be missing, however, is the kind of question which might naturally strike a curious student as important and useful to ask and attempt to answer.

To create the most profitable questions is certainly not an easy job, but nothing about teaching or writing for teachers is easy. I think here again we can be guided if we keep before us the image of the student's encounter with the work, neglecting neither party to

that encounter. "How do you feel about the poem?" we ask, but also, "What has *gone on* in the poem to make you feel this way?" Ideally, I suspect, such questions should never be frozen into print in the teacher's manuals. At most, the writer can try to produce those questions which, being the most natural, are going to be the most profitable in the long run. And their "naturalness" should bring the questions together into some kind of orderly and progressive series, avoiding those collections of questions which, by making sporadic sorties into a variety of dissociated topics, outrage the organic wholeness of the work of art they are intended to illuminate.

A third thing we might remember as we strive to teach defensibly is the willingness most youngsters have to admire excellence of various sorts, however they may define it. I have already spoken of a distinction which can be made between literary works as objects and as acts. I have suggested that, although it is an important critical distinction, the work's identity as both cannot be denied, nor do I feel it should be long ignored. For I think it entirely proper that a student consider a work of literature, among other things, as an act which has been courageously and successfully undertaken.

I think we tend to neglect this possibility when, in deference to critical practice, we discourage all questions of historical identity, all efforts to reconstruct the image of a living artist, dealing with authentic problems which are themselves the products of a particular moment in history. It is not, I feel, irrelevant to recognize that a villanelle is a difficult kind of poem to write, that Shakespeare's historical plays presented the tough problem of shaping historical material into credible drama, that *Madame Bovary* represented a new, courageous kind of enterprise, that Auden's "September 1, 1939" is the poetic response of a profoundly distressed, conspicuously talented man to a specific moment in history.

Of course we can overdo the urge to admire in a way which will lead to that fatuous "Hall of Fame" frame of mind, in which "great" literary works survive only as monuments to past achievements, mute objects of uninstructed admiration, uncommunicating and unloved and unlovable. Or it can lead to that form of silly condescension in which Chaucer is hailed chiefly as a kind of triumphant primitive, Blake as a precursor of Romanticism, Joyce as a

persecuted pioneer—and none of them is regarded as having much immediately to say to our preoccupied 1967 selves.

Perhaps we can avoid the extremes of neglecting and overemphasizing the writer's personal achievement if we remember that it is nothing if not the achievement of artistry. Within the context of tradition and circumstance, the writer succeeds only by what he has created. And thus our search for the admirable brings us full circle to the same questions of shape and structure and diction and self-contained power which claim the primary attention of the "formal" critic. To put it very simply, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* is not intrinsically greater because its composer was deaf; the poems of Chatterton or the young Keats are not intrinsically more moving because they were written by self-educated teen-agers. Yet no critic can legislate out of existence our knowledge of the conditions under which a difficult job is well done. To determine if it is in fact well done we look at the work with dispassionate alertness to its own qualities; to recognize the difficulty with which success has been won is merely to enjoy an added dimension of admiration and delight.

Discussion of poetic achievement brings me finally to a commonplace of education which we teachers of English cannot afford to neglect. I refer to the importance of the student's *own* sense of achievement. It is likely that one great source of student dissatisfaction with literary studies is a feeling that "you never get anywhere with it." Elsewhere in the curriculum, study yields the palpable acquisition of information and skill, the mastery of formulas applicable to novel bodies of problems, the progress by manifest, mensurable steps from ignorance to something approaching certainty, the comforting thought that Grade Twelve will find you quantitatively and qualitatively wiser than did Grade Eleven.

We English teachers labor in the absence of anything like certainty and in a state of some confusion about the cumulative structure of humanistic knowledge. Whatever can be learned from singers of songs and tellers of tales does not lend itself very well to definition, progressive arrangement, and the other reassuring devices by which progress is measured. The various traditional ways in which courses in literature are constructed attest to this difficulty. Arrangements according to historical order, genres, topics, and even "problems"

display, at the very most, a superficial, peremptory recognition that it is sensible to move from the easy to the less easy, from the simple to the complex. There is little in such curricular structures to suggest that the teaching of literature involves the progressive and cumulative acquisition of a body of rigorous disciplines.

To this dilemma we are likely to respond in some less than satisfactory ways. There is always a strong temptation to strive for some kind of enchantment which can be agreeably substituted for the notion of active learning. It is quite possible to win friends and influence students by offering a few fragmented insights, by reading (sonorously) a few sonnets or (humorously) the Porter scene from *Macbeth* or (affectingly) Sidney Carton's last words and inferring, from student sighs and chuckles, that we are developing literary sensibility. It is likewise possible to make of English classes fascinating exercises in Group Dynamics, in which the development of various social virtues becomes the governing principle for the discussion of literature. Basic to such goings-on is the dismaying assumption that where there can be no certainty, there can be no responsibility, no rationality, no rigor, no possible distinction between the more persuasive and the less so. Accordingly, where there is no absolute conviction, it is assumed that there can be no progress toward conviction, no expansion of understanding, in short, no demonstrable learning but only a kind of salutary social and emotional experience.

Understandably uneasy with such sloppiness, many teachers strive, on the other hand, for the certain and unequivocal at any cost. At the lowest level, this involves imparting impeccably precise literary junk. Students are taught the "facts" that surround the creation of literature, the distinctions and classifications that sometimes assist in discussing literature, the careers of authors and "schools" and "movements"; they are taught the "facts" but not the literature, and in the absence of the latter one wonders what conceivable value can be discovered in the facts alone.

But a far more sophisticated, reputable, and tricky temptation comes the way of those of us who have undergone various forms of critical conversion in the course of our teaching. As I have argued elsewhere, the "critical revolution" of the last thirty years has filled

an urgent need in the history of humanistic study. The most influential of the revolutionary critics have forced our attention to texts and away from the concrete but secondary data of context. They have offered in many instances systematic, illuminating, and persuasive modes of analysis. They have come with products that the worldly and experienced intellectual feels free to accept or reject, in whole or in part.

When, however, any single critical mode is allowed to dominate and shape the teaching of young students, it is likely to produce rigidity, limitation, and dogmatism which are anything but truly critical. Students are not professional humanists, and a "how to" book written in the best possible faith by the latter for the former can become a very limiting and inadequate instrument indeed. I have written such a book, and I share the embarrassment of wiser colleagues, who have written similar but better books, upon observing how inflexibly, ineptly, and servilely our well-meaning suggestions have been put to use. I have been made belatedly aware that such books are likely to engender a false sense of mastery and certainty and, in effect, to suggest that literature is something to be licked and that the student has now been equipped with a handy home-guide for licking it. To feel that, thanks to Mr. Brooks's explication, one has finally "mastered" Donne's "Canonization" may be a satisfying state of mind, but it is not a truly humanistic one.

Let me suggest that achievement can mean something other than mastery or certainty and that it can be measured and valued in many ways. Santayana has pointed out the fondness of our own society for a kind of achievement that is neither entirely "rational" nor demonstrably "useful," but to be measured in its own special terms and relished for its own special sake. This I believe to be true of the achievements of both the writers and readers of the literature I have been calling poetic. As I have suggested earlier, I believe it is possible to note how a poem achieves, joyously and admirably, from a number of points of view. As to the student, achievement and progress are the products of discovery. In all memorable experience we are conscious of discovery, whether it can be formulated, classified, sorted, or not. And literary experience of the most memorable kind

involves discovery which, whether or not it can be defined and assessed, remains profound and permanent. I suspect it is this kind of discovery which lies at the heart of what I have called "growing up."

Of course in our encounters with imaginative literature we do not leap suddenly from ignorance to knowledge, nor do we usually move through discoveries regularly and predictably. But move with such works we can—from the less observed to the more observed, from lesser enjoyment to greater. And because I believe there is an "art" of literacy capable like all arts of development and strengthening. I obviously believe that there can be cumulative achievement and growth in the study of literature. As habits of reading grow stronger, readier, more manifestly rewarding, moreover, our sense of the achievement of literature grows keener, our alertness to the qualities of literature more acute.

It might be said, therefore, in this struggling, frustrating, overpowering moment of history—when we teachers deal with so many who struggle and are perplexed and overpowered—that there is special comfort and strength in the achievements of literature. The writer, as I have said, is both a doer and a maker. What he does is to tackle a uniquely difficult job of observing, inventing, articulating—willing as few of us are to risk failure or disdain by declaring what is on his mind. What he makes is a poet's "monument more durable than brass," capable of yielding to us and those who will come in centuries after us profoundly human satisfactions and stimulations and special wisdom.

Having thus spoken admiringly about the poet as doer and maker, I return, at the end, to those poets in the Library of Congress. What I have said will not, I fear, heal the breach between us. My "Defense of Poesie," unlike that of Sidney or of Matthew Arnold, does not [redacted] argue that poetry is or will be profoundly influential in the great affairs of mankind. It does not even argue that poetry fills universal human needs, or that it should, now or ever, assume primacy over other forms of human expression. And it certainly does not posit the existence of a transcendent realm of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, of which the poet's art is a unique reflection.

It is said that the Humanities, unlike the sciences, are not pri-

marily concerned with facts. Yet my defense of poetry rests, in the final analysis, only upon facts. It is a fact that men have in the past created of language works of great beauty and wisdom. It is a fact that some men have always possessed the gifts for the creation of such works. It is a fact that a condition of our humanity is our ability to respond to the works and acts which we call humanistic—to rejoice in them and profit from them. I believe our task as humanists and teachers can be put very simply: It is to recognize these facts, to honor them, to do them justice.

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