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The two requirements for admittance to the college English profession--the Ph. D. degree and scholarly publication--frequently have little connection with the problems of teaching, the means of livelihood for most English majors. In acquiring the degree, the student must master material, acquire "professional" attitudes, and evaluate himself against a scientific standard that will often contradict normal human values. Because of these circumscribed interests and the fact that English Ph. D. candidates frequently receive little teacher training, most English professors are not concerned with the problems of teaching English at the elementary, secondary, or even college-freshman levels. College professors should become aware of needs in the teaching of elementary writing. They should bring their critical ability and devotion to literature to bear on the production of children's anthologies, such as "Children and Books." They must devise, for teachers, courses in critical explication, linguistics, and children's literature; they must publish in periodicals read by non-college teachers; and they must visit classrooms to become aware of the difficulties and challenges of elementary and secondary education. (LH)

A PRIDE OF LIONS

America's Cultural Communities and the Preparation of Teachers

The U. S. Office of Education Tri-University Project
in Elementary Education
September 19 & 20, 1968
Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Profession of English and the Training of Elementary Teachers
A Case of Neglect

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The community spokesmen have told us what they need. They have told us first of all that they need power in their community to do something about their schools. I believe Representative Morial called it "clout." I usually call it "muscle." Let's look at what the power is that these community leaders have. From the first one we've heard, without exception, that every one of them has the power of language. I never heard a more articulate group of people. I have attended the Modern Language Association Convention several times; I didn't hear that power there. I didn't hear the power of language, the force of argument that I've heard from these community people. All of them have described their communities as places where they were deprived, where the others around them were more deprived than they, and I don't think it's very difficult for us to see that the way they got into positions of leadership, that the way they got here to talk to us cannot be any other than the power of language. These people were able to say better, more forcefully, more clearly, more cogently, what everyone in the community needed. The power of language is the driving power of the culture that they want to improve.

Secondly, Mr. Dick has told us that in the varying communities and cultures that they represent they want to keep what is best of the culture that they have. They don't want to lose the past. He described this in terms of his religion. What we also know about the Navajos is that they have a literature. We have heard from the black representatives the mention of books: The Invisible Man, James Baldwin. This is literature (incidentally, we use The Invisible Man as a core text in our freshman English program at Valley State). We think literature is important; we think knowing literature is important; we feel committed to the fact that literature is one of the major vehicles for the transmission of our culture. It's no less so in a deprived community than elsewhere. In fact, when the pinch is on, you find literature. Look at The Autobiography of Malcolm X: there you have a man backed against the wall, and what does he do? He turns to myth-making; he turns to literature; he turns to an art form. Human beings against the wall turn to art. Look at the middle class America described by Mr. Chambers

(and I think he's damned right): there's something very anemic about its suburban culture. Is there a great literature coming out of the suburban culture? Oh no. Only in satire is it described; only by the books "outside": the Jewish novel. When you find a people in trouble, when you find a people needing something, they turn to literature.

Nothing could be more absolute than that these community people despise the schools as they are. When they get hold of the school and make it the way they want it, when they get control to do what they want done, they'll need teachers. They will need teachers who have the powers of language. The specific kind of teacher that I want to talk about is the teacher who will work with these two powers whose importance the community people have displayed to us: namely the power of language and the power of literature.

I want to talk a little bit about what an English professor can do to train a teacher to be ready when these people have their communities involved in the work of the schools in the way they want and have the schools ready for the teacher. The needs of the communities are so various that we really can't "prescribe" what the community needs. It's just as well that we can't, because we probably wouldn't be listened to anyway; the community will go on on its own terms. But we can say something about training teachers. In this situation I'm very happy to hear from Mr. Gibbs that we have a second chance; I think we're quite lucky to have even that. If we are to succeed with our "second chance," we shall have to do a better job of running our business than we have during our first chance.

Like Education, English is big business. Every accredited liberal arts college or university can be expected to have a Department of English, and it can also be assumed that every student matriculated for a degree from the institution will sooner or later come under the influence of the Department, almost always in the form of the ubiquitous course in Composition, and, perhaps, something called Introduction to Literature. To be a faculty member in one of these countless Departments of English and thus a member of the profession, one commits himself to certain generally accepted professional goals and standards of training and of performance.

The two central demands of the profession for admission and survival are (1) the Ph. D. degree in either English or American Literature, or Linguistics; and, (2) the evidence of scholarly research in the form of publications of books, articles, or, less desirably, textbooks.

Because the entrance into the profession is through the Ph. D., let's first consider what would be expected of the person who has achieved this level of educational achievement, During the years that a person attends Graduate School to receive his Ph. D. in English, his student lore, the scuttlebutt floating about the Graduate School usually will encourage a blasé attitude that the degree is a "union card"; that, finally, the work spent passing exams and writing dissertations is a kind of fraternity boy initiation ritual. If you can finally swallow the goldfish, you are part of the brotherhood. Doubtless most of this cast of mind on the part of graduate students is a defense mechanism, enabling the student to harden himself against possible failure, or, perhaps, to assume the toughminded, unsentimental tenor of thought which seems to characterize research in the field of English. It would seem that even at the outset of the professional training, human values such as warmth, love, compassion, do not play a large role in the scholastic activities of the student.

Let me hasten to say that, quite naturally there is probably much commitment to such values in the lives of persons engaged in the profession of English as in any other profession. But as the schooling of a doctor or lawyer, an almost absolute standard of precision in scholarship and accuracy in judgment will override lesser personal concerns in the lives of the persons being trained. The preoccupation with a standard, whether in the military world or in the academic world, often will contradict the values the members of the profession would ordinarily be expected to espouse. Most military generals would not think killing desirable in their civilian lives -- they would not shoot the paper boy for throwing the newspaper inadvertently into the swimming pool. On the battlefield it is a different matter. Likewise within the academic world, if a graduate student drops his guard and shows a vulnerability because of shoddiness of thought or a disorganized preparation, he is likely to receive harsh treatment from his mentors. Certainly we can see evidences of this also in scholarly journals, where great delight and pleasure are derived from showing Zilch or Babbidge up as having been a fool in some statement or other.

Graduate School is a necessity because it must be recognized that foremost in the list of requirements for election to the English Club is the Ph. D. To hold the degree is a demand which is virtually absolute and unavoidable in an academic career. The man without his degree, even if he is distinguished as a human being marvellously gifted in the material of the disciplines, stands almost no chance today of attaining a position of eminence in an American university or college. Persons without the Ph. D., with only the M. A., or perhaps those who belong to the great roster of ABD's (All But Dissertation) are almost invariably

held to the lower ranks of the profession, given only part-time or temporary appointments, permitted no official voice in the workings of the department, and kept to teaching the less attractive courses. These persons may be held universally in high esteem by their colleagues, but, when promotion time comes around, these otherwise fine people are skipped over because they lack that certification which is almost equal in power to that force that can "Knit/That subtle knot which makes us man."

Recently a study appeared, conducted under the sponsorship of the Modern Language Association and the Danforth Foundation, called The Ph. D. in English and American Literature. The "Dedication" by the author, Don Cameron Allen, a distinguished scholar in the Renaissance, perhaps will convey his feelings engendered by the findings of his study: "To all the graduate students who have endured me and who will wish I had seen the point sooner."

The Ph. D. in English and in American Literature, according to Allen's findings based upon an analysis of 1903 questionnaires, usually requires nine years after the Baccalaureate degree to earn, and is received at an average age of thirty-three. Ninety per cent of the persons who receive the degree become college teachers of English, and, although 90.7% of those polled found the degree "worth earning," 60.6% of those answering felt that it took too long to acquire the degree. Clearly those who had received the degree, and who were now reflecting upon the worth of having it in hand, would in the nature of human idealization of the past think the degree worth having. These persons with the Ph. D. had in time seen it essential to earning their bread -- and perhaps it is not too cynical to suggest -- had consciously or otherwise, seen to it that the necessity of the degree was maintained. The fact that so many felt that the time spent in winning the laurels was too long, suggests that deep within there was a suspicion that perhaps in the larger scheme of human energy, the degree was not all that valuable to those concerned. And, as Allen admits, his study of persons holding the degree allows for no comments at all from those many who found the water too deep and who had either been drowned or who had declined to face the current any longer. Probably those persons without the degree would have a view of its worth different from those who had received it.

During the course of study leading to the Ph. D., students progressing normally pass examinations in one or more foreign languages; they probably also take required courses in Old English and Bibliography; various other preliminary or comprehensive examinations are mastered; and, finally, a research dissertation is written. For those curious to know the nature of the dissertations in English, I would suggest browsing in Dissertation Abstracts. (And please do not look

at mine.) A course of research to follow in the remainder of the career is ually set at this point. By now, one is labelled as a Blake man, or a Chaucerian; he is a Transformationalist, or a Structuralist, etc. It will be difficult for him to change streams of scholarship after the dissertation. He will be hired to fit a slot his particular specialty suits him for.

The budding English professor, in receiving the Ph. D., has demonstrated to the satisfaction of probably three to five persons already established in his field, in the presence of the usual checks and balances system of having people outside the field sit in on the proceedings, that he has the markings of literary scholarship of a high order (though these markings may not show in the dissertation very much).

Nine out of ten of these fledgling scholars will become college professors of English. It is thus surprising that nowhere along the way does there appear any requirement that the candidate demonstrate an ability to teach. In some circles, indeed, it is thought that the abler candidates should get full-time stipends with no teaching duties. Thus, experience as a Teaching Assistant, clearly valuable as the background for future work in a more influential position on the faculty after receiving the degree, marks one as less than the best -- thus not as good a hire as the man who never taught a class in his entire life. It is also interesting to note that the recipients of the first American Ph. D.'s in English Literature were described by Harvard in 1878 as "recognized as qualified to give special private instruction to candidates for the degree in the departments in which he himself has taken the degree" (Allen, p. 8). Although there is a certain exclusiveness already apparent in the notion of "private instruction," there is still clearly the inference there that the person holding the degree knows how to teach his skills to another person.

Although at the outset, the Ph. D. was recognized as a pedagogical degree, this is no longer the case. Today's Ph. D. means that the person holding it is trained to do a certain kind of research, a research which William Arrowsmith (in an article in Harpers, "The Shame of the Graduate Schools") describes as an unfortunate wedding of scientific research with explorations appropriate to the humanities, research which robs findings in the liberal arts of the plasticity and largeness valuable to the study of culture.

What kind of research is it that the Ph. D. in English will undertake in the progress of his career? The field of English encompasses roughly all that has been written or spoken in man's history. Either for artistic or linguistic reasons, the researcher in English endlessly explores new sources, archetypal patterns, connections between hitherto divergent paths, and takes all of human knowledge as his field.

As an example, consider the scholar who works on James Joyce's Finnegans Wake. The ineffable complexity of this book, and of Joyce's layers of meaning derived from polyglot puns, or ironical juxtaposition of disparate mythologies, makes the task of the scholar almost as great as the artist's. And then, of course, each generation will leave behind it an ever growing corpus of scholarship, which in addition to the increasing number of literary works to be mastered, must also be known and familiar to the researcher.

From this style of research have come scholarly works of great importance to the study of literature and language. There are the great biographies of the literary artists; there are numerous critical books which illuminate and make whole the picture of an age; there are theories of language and its uses which we can variously call grammars and rhetorics; and there are the definitive texts, accurate to the author's manuscript, which have only with great difficulty been established.

But most of the scholarship in the name of English research is petty, a rehashing of old issues, the peddling of weak wine in leaky goatskins, and almost certainly never concerned with human values in the modern world. Again, William Arrowsmith, himself a Professor of Classics, states the cases cogently in "The Shame of the Graduate Schools":

> In philosophy the analysts are not only senile but greedy. They identify what they do as the only conceivable activity of modern philosophy, but they have in fact abandoned the humanities. In literature almost nothing has happened since the New Criticism -- and the New Criticism was old hat twenty years ago.

Perhaps a scanning of the PMLA for May 1968 can be illuminating. This publication is probably the most prestigious publication in the arena of literary studies, the goal at the top of the mountain for the aspiring young Assistant Professor of English. We find there several articles with "humanism" in the title; but the articles themselves yield up no consideration of what the works there studied might have to say to a modern American. The work is carried out with the pure objectivity one might expect in a total vacuum, and one might draw the further parallel of the lack of oxygen and vitality. And certainly, one does not ever encounter in these essays our initial question: "What does the professor of English have to say in a world in which the study of the humanities does not make men humane?"

Doubtless there is much sincerity in the articles one sees in scholarly journals in English studies. One cannot easily criticize them on their merits as pure literary research. It is just that they are not focused on human or societal or educational problems. Perhaps it is thought that making statements about humanism in the sixteenth century will make others understand the force, worth, or applicability of the doctrine in the twentieth. If that is the assumption, alas, it is in error.

A man's prestige in the academic marketplace is based almost wholly upon the research he has done. His prestige will determine his place, and vice-versa, until the circularity of prestige leading to place, and place to prestige, becomes a true Gordian knot. And as a final chilling note to the overemphasis on research, consider the following excerpt from The Academic Marketplace by Theodore Caplow and Reese McGee:

Q: Are the men's publications read?
A: Oh, yes!
Q: By whom?
A: By the tenure members, at least.
Q: All of them?
A: Yes.
Q: Did you read them?
A: Yes.
Q: Did you read those of the man you finally hired?
A: Yes.
Q: What was the one which you remember best about?
A: Well . . . I didn't read it, exactly. I looked it over. It was in a good journal. Nothing trashy gets in there.
Q: What do you mean by you "looked it over"?
A: Well, I looked at it, looked at his references, read his abstract.
Q: Is that the way the rest of the committee handles the publications, do you think?
A: I think so, yes, they look them over.

Thus it seems clear that although the English professor must meet a few classes, the quality of his teaching is not assessed in any direct way From such books as The Academic Marketplace, from George Williams' Some of My Best Friends are Professors, and even from Vladimir Nabokov's Pnin, the inference is plain that teaching cannot replace publication in an academic career in English. No matter how loud student testimony may be in favor of a teacher, with a lack of research, the professor will be in trouble at the next crucial point in his career. It is either write articles or be banished to what Baplow and Reese call the "bush league": it is up or out; publish or at best languish.

With this bleak, and, doubtless some will say overly negative, picture of the training and milieu in which the academic man lives his life, the question remains: "How involved is the professor of English in the training of elementary school teachers?" From a survey of the research articles in scholarly journals concerned with English studies, it would seem that the English professor is not at all involved in elementary school teaching at least from a research viewpoint. Just how many English professors publish in journals of elementary education is difficult to say. One suspects very few. And this feeling of a lack of research involvement in the problems of teaching English in the elementary classroom, and in the English training of elementary teachers, might be reinforced by the complete absence of such consideration in the "establishment" scholarly journals.

Therefore, if the professor of English has not involved himself in an overt way in training elementary teachers, are there more discreet areas in which he can be said to function, such as in the teaching of courses which directly confront the questions of training teachers of English? In his The Miseducation of American Teachers, James D. Koerner examines 435 transcripts of teachers graduates in 1960 or 1961. His findings and his recommendations for the improvement of teacher training are probably well known to all of us here. For present concerns, however, I wish to dwell upon one point which emerges from the data Koerner presents as a sample of his evidence.

In the transcripts given in full to illustrate certain typical patterns of course work, there is an astonishing variety and fluctuation in the number and kinds of courses in English which elementary teachers have taken. The range is from eight units in English composition, usually the minimum which would be required of any college graduate, to twelve or fourteen units in such courses as the English Novel, Introduction to Literature, or Masterpieces of Literature. Except where required (California, New York, and Texas) the work taken above the barest minimum is obviously left entirely to the initiative of the prospective teacher. In the choice of courses appropriate to the education of an elementary teacher the English faculty would seem to have left the choice and combinations of English courses entirely to the decision of the student and his advisor in the Education Department. In short, the English professor might be said to have almost no voice in the courses taken or not taken by trainees in elementary education. And Education Departments have not seemed to ask more of their students than the most rudimentary training in English.

Furthermore, we all know that the national trend is to leave the teaching of Freshman English largely in the hands of part-timers and graduate students, perhaps, but not always, guided by a Master Teacher or Chairman of Freshman English. Almost certainly we are leaving

the little training in English which, given the present state of the art, elementary teachers obtain in the hands of persons other than the Ph. D.'s and more experienced teachers in the department. The prospective elementary teacher is left with an Amateur Night in Dixie in one of the most vital areas of his training, in his ability to use the English language with power and precision.

There seems to be no universal offering, or requirement, of courses in the English Department in what the New Grammars -- whether transformational or structural -- can offer to what will be the first writing and composition experiences of the children taught by the teachers the English Department has failed to reach otherwise. In turn, a generation of young people will in the fullness of time arrive at the universities and colleges bearing all the marks of incoherence in writing, looseness in thinking, and downright hatred for English that we in the colleges find so bewildering. As an English professor, one constantly hears, and says, "Why can't the students write? Why can't they put even one logical thought sequence onto the page?" For some reason, known I would imagine only by the angels, very few persons seem willing to consider that maybe the sad fact of bad writing in the colleges is attributable to the failure of the English department to train elementary teachers to teach kids to write.

And then there is the question of Children's Literature. In almost any program I have seen which leads to certification as an elementary teacher, there is invariable a course called Children's Literature. Again, to quote Mr. Koerner:

> . . . the bulk of reading in "Children's Literature" courses is in second and third-rate authors, or in those never heard by anyone but the compilers of the textbook involved.

There is other evidence than Mr. Koerner's opinions concerning the courses in Children's Literature. An exhaustive study by the National Council of Teachers of English Committee on Teaching Children's Literature in Colleges and Universities has just been completed. The results of the study are not to be published until November 1968, but they have very kindly been made available for my use at this time by the Chairman, Professor Elliott D. Landau of the University of Utah.

Several further implications of the lack of involvement of the professor of English in the training of elementary teachers can be drawn from this study. Of the responses to the questionnaires, twice as many of the Children's Literature courses (314 to 148) are taught in the Department of Education as in the Department of English. When

the results of the study are summarized, it appears that most of those teachers of Children's Literature represented in the population of the research have a B.A. in English, with some additional work in English for the M.A. degree. Only 25 out of 573 teachers of Children's Literature wrote a dissertation focused on Children's Literature. It can, perhaps cynically, be assumed that very few of the 25 dissertations on Children's Literature were written for a Ph. D. in English.

Hopefully, I have established a context in which to make suggestions for change. It should be obvious that English professors are not directly involved on a national scale in the training of elementary school teachers, and the flaws of the professional milieu should also be apparent.

The question then arises, what does the English professor have to offer which is not currently a part of most credential programs in elementary education?

The book most used in the courses in Children's Literature can give us a clue in this direction. The most widely taught book in these courses is May Hill Arbuthnot's Children and Books. This text is followed in popularity, not too closely, by Huck and Kuhn's Children's Literature in the Elementary School. From the earlier surveys of transcripts in the Koerner study, it would appear that the Children's Literature course would be the most stable literary element in elementary training, far more widespread than any particular course in English, and that this course, taught from the Arbuthnot text, would most likely be the major source of knowledge concerning children and books, and therefore of literature, in the schools in the United States.

Arbuthnot's Children and Books is an exceptionally important book in American culture at this time, because by it will be governed the first literary experiences of those children under the tutelage of teachers trained from its pages. So important a book deserves careful scrutiny. The emphasis of this book is upon the psychological needs of the child in his early encounter with books. In more places than one, the reader is warned to keep hands off the child's literary perceptions, and, oddly enough is also reassured in other passages that, in effect, the child's initial good taste and sense in literature cannot be spoiled by intervention from the adult world. Professor Arbuthnot quotes Paul Hazard on this point:

> Whatever their differences may be as to age, sex, or social position, they detest with common accord disguised sermons, hypocritical lessons, irreproachable little boys and girls who

> behave with more docility than their dolls. It is as though . . . they brought into the world with them a spontaneous hatred of the insincere and the false. The adults insist, the children pretend to yield, and do not yield. We overpower them; they rise up again. Thus does the struggle continue, in which the weaker will triumph.

One might wonder what happens to all of the innate good taste and imperviousness to insincerity which characterizes the child, at least in the minds of Hazard and Arbuthnot, when adulthood is reached, where obviously the same absolute values are not to be found. A further statement goes far toward reaching the point I wish to make about this book:

> Certainly, children need books to widen their horizons, deepen their understandings, and give them broader social insights. They also need books that minister to their merriment or deepen their appreciation of beauty. They need heroism, fantasy, and down-to-earth realism. And they need books that, in the course of a good story, help to develop clear standards of right and wrong. Finally, children's books should have those qualities of good writing that distinguish literature for any age or group of people.

Arbuthnot tells the prospective teacher to look for right and wrong in stories for children, without pointing out that in most of the world's literature there are vastly conflicting notions of this polarity. She does not try to define or illuminate what those "qualities of good writing" are "that distinguish literature for any age or group of people." Finally, she creates a rather grand confusion, in the lines above, between what makes literature and what makes propaganda. And earlier we had been warned to avoid offering the child overly moralistic literature. Let's go on. What is down-to-earth realism? Is it an honest portrayal of sex, prostitution, adultery, and incest in a tenement? Is it the portrayal of drug-induced ecstasy, obviously real to the person on the trip, real enough to make him want to fly? One suspects that these topics and issues do not quite fit into the distinction between fantasy and realism present by implication in Arbuthnot.

The fault with the book lies in the fact that it is not a vehicle by which one is taught to see literature with his own eyes, as an adult first, and then as an adult who teachers children also. The book centers on the problems of the child, and not on the problems of the adult who is quite likely encountering literature himself for the first time at the college level. In a sense, the book is a series of what are probably quite well-intentioned lessons about what to do "for" the child in looking at the books which publishers put out by the droves each year. The focus is not upon the development of a critical method, either in the child or in the prospective teacher.

A critical sense, or means of understanding the deeper meanings implied by the structure inherent in literature, enables a teacher to evaluate and illuminate works in the classroom in a way which places the discussion on a plane of intellectual activity which is honest, rich, and important to the developing intellect of the child. That literature possesses larger meanings and significances than a mere appeal to merriment or mirth is the contribution the English professor can make.

One very clear area where such a contribution can be made would be in a demonstration of just how weak Arbuthnot's discussion of William Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience really is. For such a demonstration, compare Arbuthnot on Blake with Harold Bloom on Songs of Innocence and Experience in Blake's Apocalypse.

William Blake, particularly the Blake of the Songs of Innocence and Experience, is important to me. He knocked me out of being a backwoods Southerner (if I was knocked out of it): "Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion;" "Every Harlot was a Virgin once;" "Prudence is a rich ugly old maid courted by Incapacity;"

> But most thro' midnight streets I hear
> How the youthful Harlot's curse
> Blasts the new-born Infant's tear,
> And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse.

There's power in that. But Arbuthnot merely tells us that in Songs of Innocence there are lambs; in Songs of Experience there are tigers. In Songs of Innocence there are chimney sweepers who wash in the river and laugh in the sun; in Songs of Experience there are others who don't. That's all Arbuthnot gives you. Recall "The Chimney Sweeper."

> When my mother died I was very young
> And my father sold me while yet my tongue,
> Could scarcely cry weep weep weep weep.
> So your chimneys I sweep and in soot I sleep.
>
> There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
> That curl'd like a lambs back, was shav'd, so I said.
> Hush, Tom, never mind it, for when your head's bare,
> You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.

And so he was quiet, and that very night,
As Tom was a sleeping he had such a sight,
That thousands of sweepers Dick Joe Ned and Jack
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins and set them all free.
Then down a green plain leaping laughing they run
And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind.
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.
And the Angel told Tom if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke and we rose in the dark
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm,
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

One can discover an immensely complicated irony in that poem, written as it was in 1789, amid the rising emotional fires of the French Revolution and by an English Redcap. We who live with the issues presented by the community representatives here may not be chimney sweepers but we still have chimney sweeper problems.

When I tried to do an honest job with kids and with such poems, I had a hell of a time learning how to teach. I thought all you had to do was tell someone something; I didn't know there was more to it than that. I got in this room with the kids, and it took me about two weeks this summer to get them to come around in a group. I couldn't just say, "Sit on the floor"; I knew enough to know that that wouldn't work. So I just let them raise hell for awhile, and finally we got together on the thing. I have several terrible flops with poems. I tried cute things like seating them in a circle; then I got a ted rose and said, "My love's like a red, red, rose that's newly sprung in June." That didn't work. They said, "Mr. Anderson, who are you engaged to?" They took it quite at the literal level. I watched some other teachers and I discovered that I had to chart the poem if I wanted them to look at the text of it, and put my charted poem on the board. That was lesson number one.

Lesson number two was that I had to do something that would involve the children and their own life experience with the life experience rendered in the poem. For example, when I was teaching Blake's, "To the Evening Star," I had to start with that moment we know in California when the sun drops down behind the beach; there is a lovely moment there on the beach, when a gull goes past just before it's dark,

just when you're ready to go home; this balance between night and day is the metaphor of the poem. Once my teaching was started in this way, then the children could see the poem. But I had to do the relating.

But first I had to understand the poem. The poem, "Evening Star," is not about evening, it's about tranquility. I didn't just teach them poems like "To the Evening Star;" I went on to others -- "A Noiseless Patient Spider," "Learned Astronomer," "Stopping by a Woods on a Snowy Evening" (which was very hard to do on a hot day in California.) I had an even worse time when I got to the first poem that is in the Roberts series, (a state-adopted text in California). It's a poem about playing with building blocks, by Robert Louis Stevenson. None of my kids had ever played with blocks.

I had thirty Mexican-American children from the ghetto in the city of San Fernando; I had other sophisticated little sharpies who had spent all of their youth on surf boards or in a swimming pool. They had never played with blocks. It was impossible to relate that poem to anything that they knew, so we had to junk it. They associated staying in the house and playing with things with being sick, and so, therefore, didn't want to have anything to do with it. Perhaps other children who lived in colder places would know what it meant to stay inside and have to play with something.

I had the teachers there as I tried to learn to teach. The reason they wouldn't go with me on some of these literary ventures is the plain fact that they didn't know what I was talking about. I said, "All right, now, you've taught Peter Rabbit. It develops the same motif that many a fairy story and hero-adventure story develops. Someone leaves home, goes on a trip, confronts a dragon, a monster, or some obstacle or another, surmounts it in some way or other, and then comes home and is changed by his experience. Well, in this case, Peter Rabbit leaves the hole, he meets Mr. McGregor, he somehow or other gets out of that mess, and gets home." I said, "That's the same thing as Odysseus leaving Ithaca, bumping into Scylla and Charybdis, the Cyclops, the Sirens, Circe, all of these things, and then through his strength getting home again." Well, the Peter Rabbit side of things was fine; The Odyssey was less successful as I presented it to them. So I said, "All right; watch me do it then." Of course, this meant I taught elementary school all summer, which was a great delight. The students are far more receptive than most college freshmen are. In this, if you know the literature, you have a range to work in. As you get to something that you can plug in to support what you have done earlier, you're able to do it.

The teachers I was working with were very reluctant to admit that they did not know The Odyssey. I would mention The Odyssey, and there would be a polite look, and finally I'd say, "You don't know The Odyssey, do you?" "No, I really don't." Now that's the heart of the problem. There isn't that fund of literary knowledge and knowledge of the techniques of explication in the program that you can rely on if you want to do something to improve the way the literary teaching is done.

It must be remembered that the teacher who is not himself in the possession of a critical sense will accept at face value the authority of the text as presented him in the Children's Literature course. The teaching done from such a foundation of weakness as the presentation of Blake or Whitman or even Peter Rabbit in Arbuthnot or in conventional children's literature books will hardly be stronger in the elementary classroom.

Rather too often we forget the fact that the child's intellect at the age of seven probably is capable of quite sophisticated intellectual manipulation (even those that are appropriate to the study of poetry from an analytic point of view). I always encounter a great deal of opposition on this point. The general notion among elementary teachers is -- and I must insist that this experience has occurred too frequently for me to be able to dismiss it -- that an analysis of poetry spoils its aesthetic value. This is the single most disputed point between elementary teachers and college professors of English. In fact, the opposition is so strong to accepting the point of view that a certain amount of probing and questioning must occur before a complete cognition of a poem can take place, that one is tempted to retreat in self-defense. But my experiences with children in the Lincoln Public Schools, and in the NDEA Institute Demonstration School at San Fernando Valley State College this summer with teaching poems to children encourages me in the insistence that even second and third grade children are capable of understanding the most important points about very difficult poems (Blake's "The Tyger" and "To The Evening Star," Frost's "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening,") and that their responses were only developed and expressed when the meaning of the metaphors was discussed, analyzed, talked about, and explored in quite intellectual fashions.

And the children did understand and retain the poems. I had several of them write about the poems after a few days had elapsed, and the hard evidence was there that the meaning of the poem had penetrated and had remained in the child's mind. Without explicating the poems myself, I could not have known which questions to ask. I assert that explication is an indispensable preparation for a teacher of literature. And I further assert that this is the proper and usual

business of the professor of English. He does it all the time. A college professor of English probably does more explicating than any other human function. He just does not seem to do it yet in the direction of the elementary teacher.

To return to my war with the anti-explicationists, let me tell an anecdote about an experience which happened late at night, after all the guns were still, when some colleagues and I were talking during our Salt Lake City Conference in May. I got into a gray with one of them when I said, "You know, Madam X doesn't like what I said today very much, does she?" (I had said that Blake's "To the Evening Star" is a richer, and likely-better, poem than "Starlight, Starbright".) My friend flashed back, much to the defense of the Madam X's point of view, which was contrary to my own, by saying, "Of course she doesn't like what you said: She isn't interested in literary criticism, she's interested in human behavior."

Well, that hits at the heart of the thing. The English professor has almost completely neglected the human behavior which is represented in the elementary schools. He has kept his talents for accuracy of text, for complete respect for the integrity of the literary artist, for almost slavish devotion to the causes, greatnesses, and glories of literature, almost exclusively to himself. Now it is time for him to offer his values to the society in the form of training teachers for teaching literature to the young, and in so doing, he will doubtless open new gateways for his own experience. It has simply not occurred to most English professors, perhaps, that they can become involved in the future of the schools. And this is in the surest sense of the word tragic.

It will not be easy to change, either for the English professor to see his errors, or for the school people to accept him even if the does look repentant. As Paul Goodman tells us in Compulsory Mis-education and the Community of Scholars, we do have an educational system "proliferated into an invested intellectual class worse than anything since the time of Henry the Eighth." It will not be easy to change.

But Tri-University Project is certainly more than a beginning. The involvement of the academic professor with the question of teacher training for elementary schools is the signal of a new era for cooperation between academic subjects, and schools. It remains for us then, in English to:

1) Devise courses in explication and critical method which will reach the elementary trainee.

2) Devise courses in linguistics which will reach the elementary trainee.

3) Involve ourselves in teaching Children's Literature as a serious study.

4) Spread our knowledge by publishing in journals which reach elementary teachers.

5) Visit schools and answer the special demands of the elementary classroom which can be met only by college English courses.

And, finally we must set our own house of teaching in order. For, as Chaucer's Parson says of those who do not set a good example for others in their charge (and isn't the same thing true for teachers?):

That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste.
And shame it is, if a preest take keep.
A shiten shepherd and a clene sheep.