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ABSTRACT

The five articles in this journal are related to the use of traditional materials in elementary and secondary schools in Illinois. Specific topics discussed include folk literature in secondary schools, traditional songs in elementary schools, the most frequently taught literary works (a survey of Illinois secondary schools), an approach to the study of romantic literature, and the characteristics of award-winning student writing. (AA)

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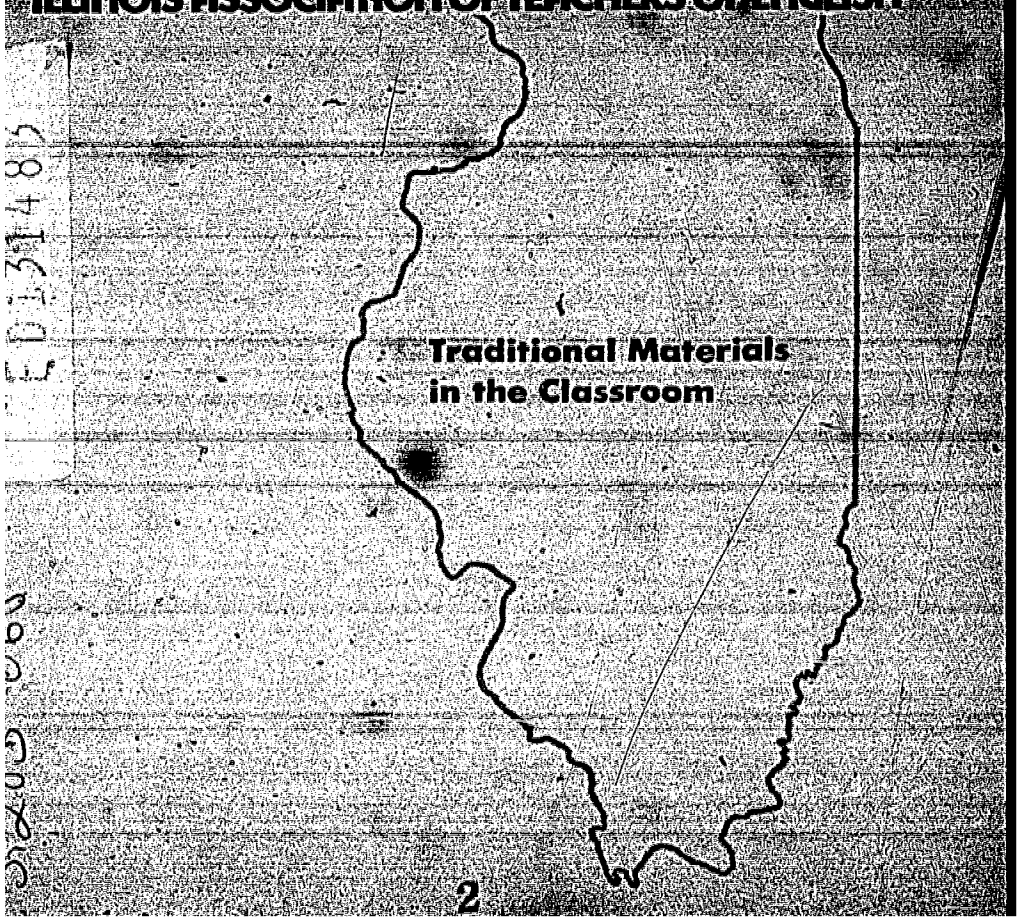

Traditional Materials in the Classroom

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Illinois Association of Teachers of English

ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN

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A Message From Your Editor

Beginning with this issue, the *Illinois English Bulletin* will be published bi-monthly instead of monthly throughout the school year. There will be three regular issues (Fall, Mid-Winter and Spring) and a special late-spring issue devoted to the best Illinois poetry and prose as chosen by an IATE panel of judges.

Every effort will be made to include in each issue something of interest and practical value to teachers of the language arts on every level — elementary, secondary, and college. The editor will seek a balance in the choice of manuscripts so that a variety of viewpoints can be represented. For instance, *Bulletin* readers will have an opportunity to learn of successful units such as the one described in this issue by experienced high school teacher, Catherine Hudson; they can receive advice from such English-Education experts as Professor John Heissler, who here speaks as a university freshman rhetoric director; or they can hear from such leading academicians as Hans Guth, eminent authority and textbook author, who contributed one of last year's most valued articles, and Professor Larry Danielson, folklorist, whose two-part essay beginning in this issue should provide invaluable enrichment suggestions for English teachers.

IATE members are urged to submit manuscripts for consideration. Classroom teachers, especially, can add to the value of the *Bulletin* by sending in for consideration descriptions of workable units or lessons, annotated reading lists, reports on innovative methods and the like. Manuscripts should be kept short (four-eight pages of typewritten copy) and submitted in duplicate. Acceptance for publication will be contingent upon the judgment of a board of readers.

Some of the most exciting teaching going on in this country can be found in Illinois schools. It is the hope of your editor that the *Bulletin* can be made to reflect this excellence. With your help, it can be done.

Dorothy Matthews
Editor

The Uses of Folk Literature in the English Classroom

LARRY DANIELSON
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

When I was a graduate student at the Indiana University Folklore Institute, summer trips back to my childhood home in central Kansas usually involved some kind of field investigation of oral tradition in family and community. In the course of one of those vacation field trips, I spent an evening gossiping with an uncle who was keeping me informed about the fortunes of my former high school classmates. I asked him about one girl in particular. His face sobered and he wondered if I hadn't heard about the frightening experience she had recently endured. She worked as a county 4-H adviser in a sparsely settled rural area. The job included attending evening meetings and a good deal of night-driving. After one particularly late meeting, she began her trip home, back to the isolated farmhouse that she had recently rented. As she turned from the highway onto a county road, she noticed that a truck was following her. She didn't worry about the matter until she turned again, this time onto an infrequently traveled road. The truck behind her followed and began to tailgate the car. Somewhat anxious by now, she increased her speed in order to lose the ominous trucker. The truck driver quickened his pace as well, and she panicked. At last her farmhouse came into view. She careened into the farmyard, braked her car with a jerk, and jumped out to run for safety. Too late. The trucker leaped from the cab, chased her, and caught her by the wrist before she could reach the house. "Lady," he shouted. "There's a man in your back seat!" Confused and frightened, she turned to see the trucker pull a man from the back seat of her car. In his hand he held a knife.

I was upset by the story. The woman had been a good friend of mine in high school and I was sorry to hear of her harrowing experience. At the same time, fears about my wife's security in night-time driving increased. In spite of these precipitated anxieties, however, I found the story to be thrilling, a suspenseful narrative that frightened me and ultimately provided a satisfying sense of awful danger escaped and ironic turn-about. A few days later another uncle told the same story at a family reunion. Again the spellbound audience received it with an anxious pleasure.

After my return to the Folklore Institute, a colleague called my attention to a series of contemporary legends about women seemingly threatened by menacing truckers who follow them home in order to save their lives from hidden assailants. One such narrative, collected in Kokomo, Indiana, in 1968, runs:

> There was a woman who, while on her way home from shopping, noticed a truck had been following her for some time. After several turns the truck was still right on her tail and was blinking its lights off and on. The woman began to get panicky when she turned down a country road to her home. Suddenly, the truck started to pass her and then forced her off the road into a ditch. The truck driver jumped out of his truck, rushed to the car with a weapon in his hand, opened the back door, and yanked out a man who was flailing a knife.[1]

I realized at last that I had witnessed in central Kansas two other narrations of this legend, labelled by folklorists as "The Assailant in the Back Seat." My uncles were not consciously prevaricating. They were passing on information they had somehow received as the description of an actual event that was of interest to their audience and that was satisfying to their listeners as a suspense story. Together with other family members I had experienced the legend told as a frightening experience narrative and, at the time, had been engrossed and intrigued by the tale as a natural community member rather than as an academic folklorist.

This contemporary legend is an excellent example of one of the liveliest forms of folklore active today, and it well illustrates the primary characteristics of folk literature as defined by the folklorist. Although folklorists still play definition games in distinguishing their subject of study from formal literature and cultural anthropology and although enquiries into the problems of radical definition appear frequently in professional publications,[2] they generally agree that folklore can be characterized as oral, traditional, and collective. It is oral in that it is distributed and transmitted primarily through oral face-to-face communication or by means of customary example in face-to-face situations. It is traditional in that folklore materials have existed and continue to exist in different versions with a shared structure and content for a period of time over a geographic area. (How long the time period and how large the geographic area must be is a matter of present controversy.) And it is collective in that it is shared in social groups, no matter how large or small. The story of the assailant in the back seat, of course, exhibits these three basic characteristics quite obviously.

Folklorists, then, study traditional expressive behavior of many

kinds. All would include narrative forms, for example, folktales, myths, legends, and traditional ballads. Many study folk belief and custom. Traditional signs and omens, family and ethnic holiday observances, and folk medical practices, among other belief and custom traditions, have been scrutinized and interpreted in numerous scholarly publications. Some folklorists enlarge the boundaries of the subject matter to include traditional material culture — folk arts, crafts, architecture, and foodways. The Indiana University Folklore Institute archives, located in southern Indiana, are packed with student descriptions and analyses of traditional quiltmaking, sorghum preparation, and timbered house construction. Regardless of the boundaries drawn, however, the criteria of oral face-to-face communication or intimate customary example, tradition, and collectivity remain important. Today folklore courses are taught in many colleges and universities, and graduate degree programs in folklore are offered in a number of schools.[3] The discipline is no longer considered the illegitimate child of literature and anthropology as it once was.

High school curricula have sometimes included attention to folklore in enrichment courses. In recent years it attracts more and more interest in secondary school classrooms, used to supplement more orthodox materials in history, the social sciences, and literature. Often, of course, the primary data, the oral lore collected in communication situations or captured in the print of published collections and interpretations, is not quaint or picturesque. It can be disturbing, grim, ugly, and painful. We are all familiar with ethnic jokes that hurt and bloody stories that offend our sensibilities. The elevation and sanctification of drug heroes, scapegoating of Polish-Americans and Black-Americans, and the public description of private sexual acts are topics that appear frequently in contemporary youth culture oral tradition. The teacher may want to avoid them in the classroom, and probably should do so if the materials provide serious problems in contexting and objective evaluation. In some situations, however, even these folkloric materials can provide the bases for rewarding discussions of contemporary problems and popular attitudes toward them. Regardless of our personal value responses to important folkloric phenomena today, we must recognize that traditional behavior flourishes, that folklore as cultural matter has not withered away in front of the television screen, and that it is not relegated to exotic tribal groups and mountain holler communities. As students and teachers we all share in its transmission, and as

English teachers we can find in it rich opportunities for supplementing more standard classroom materials that are difficult to enliven.

Traditional verbal art is not belletristic, for it is shared in oral communication and does not allow its active participants the luxury of the careful re-reading and introspective perusal we take advantage of in the study of cultivated literature. Folk art is reflexive, effecting immediate audience response, rather than reflective, calling on its audience to consider and re-consider in the quiet of thoughtful study.[4] To some critics it appears banal, obvious, and without nuance, but once we examine it carefully in retrospect and analyze the text and its context, a complexity and subtlety emerge that demand as much attention as an Elizabethan sonnet or a Faulkner short story.

In the literature class, folklore materials can be used in many ways. They are often utilized to illustrate the indebtedness of certain creative authors to American tradition and lore, for example, in studying the works of Mark Twain and Nathaniel Hawthorne. A modest bibliography of helpful aids in the investigation of folklore in literature already exists and continues to grow.[5] Another use of folklore in the literature class is the employment of folk narrative as a seductive introduction to literary forms and structures that initially may be uninteresting to some secondary school students.

Literature textbooks commonly initiate the reader into the mysteries of poetry with a few obligatory Scots-English ballads like "Barbara Allen" and "Edward." One wonders how often they are summarily dismissed in order to get on to the "serious" poetry. Some time devoted to the study of the traditional ballad, its construction, and its affective power may provide a lively introduction to the study of cultivated English-language poetry. Using one ballad with a number of versions,[6] one can discuss differences in content from version to version. This exercise becomes especially interesting when Scots-English and American variants are contrasted. The basic narrative structure of sororal jealousy and murder in "The Two Sisters,"[7] for example, is shared by both old British and more recent American versions. However, murder motivation, the final drowning, and the supernatural revelation of the murderer's identity are dealt with differently in the key British and American versions. Similarly, "The Wife of Usher's Well"[8] in which a grieving mother is visited by her dead sons, exhibits diverse treatments of the supernatural and its conception from

version to version, even though the basic narrative content is shared by the different texts. After discussing similar and dissimilar content, one can move on to investigate shared and disparate structural elements, e.g., rhyme scheme, rhythmic patterns, repetition, and refrain, as well as the literary topics of theme, commonplace and cliche, and imagery. In "The Two Sisters" the matter-of-fact grotesquerie of a speaking harp constructed from the corporeal remains of the victim is a striking traditional motif rich with possibilities for a full discussion of the potency of image and its interpretation.

Performances of different versions of the most well-known Scots-English ballads are available in various forms, in traditional field recordings, art song performances, and even folk rock renditions.[9] It is as important to hear the ballad as to read it, a commonplace assumption made by teachers of poetry, and even more applicable to the study of an oral tradition. Recordings can be used not only for their experiential values, however. Differences in performance style will be immediately evident to students, and questions of aesthetics and taste can be confronted. The discussion of audience criteria used in judging performance as successful or unsuccessful easily leads to problems in establishing similar criteria for texts. What is a "good" poem and what is a "bad" poem? Scots-English and American ballad versions, forthright and accessible in content, structure, and style, may be fit texts with which to introduce these difficult questions.

Finally, actual ballad composition in the classroom might be attempted. Students could draw on contemporary events, local or extra-local, for plot material, and create their own ballads using traditional ballad structure, style, and conventions. One of my graduate students, who incorporated a folklore unit into his student teaching assignment, found this project to be very successful in the junior high classroom. The experience of poetry creation that demands disciplined structure and stylistic requirements can serve students as an illuminating introduction to the rigors of both writing and understanding poetry. Student free verse may be expressive, but it provides little first-hand experience with the formal requirements of most poetic expression. The traditional English-language ballad construction illustrates these requirements quite directly.

The study of structure, style, and levels of meaning in literary prose can be as easily introduced with folk literature as with the standard textbook short story examples. Folktale and legend ma-

terials are attractive to many students because the narratives seem somewhat eccentric. Folk literature often touches on the curious and bizarre, types of subject matter that captivate many private minds. Traditional tales and legends appear in many contexts — they can be found in scholarly folktale collections,[10] children's books, films and film strips, on record, and in literary reworkings.[11] One traditional tale plot might be used as the core narrative to be studied and its different versions located in a variety of sources. Folk variants from different cultural sources could provide the basis for class discussions of narrative structure, plot development, point of view, and theme. The use of stereotypes in folk narrative, absence of subtle character interpretation, and emphasis on activity and behavior rather than on character development contrast dramatically with the cultivated short story forms found in most textbooks. Such a study of structure and style in folk literature pointedly illusfrates the reflexive responses called upon by traditional oral narrative in contrast with the reflective responses expected by artists in cultivated literature. Attention to narrative in the mass media — in comic strips, comic books, television and radio drama, and pulp fiction — would further dramatize the differences in anticipated aesthetic response among diverse categories of fiction, belletristic, popular, and folk.

If the survey of versions of the same tale type ranges beyond folk literature into a wide variety of media, for example, print, illustrated print, recording, and film, additional questions of medium/message relationship can be raised. How does the film version of a narrative differ from a printed "book" version and the story shared in a small group's face-to-face communication? How do these three kinds of media affect the way the same story is told and the audience's response to the narrative? It is a truism that contemporary youth culture is one informed by and sensitive to electronic sight and sound media. It would be worthwhile, I think, to pursue in the classroom questions about the significance of different types of narrative media communication and effects of the communication mode on form, style, and content. Using traditional narrative as the basic subject matter in such an investigation allows the teacher to locate a wide variety of media versions of the same narrative, as well as initiates the discussion of a rather complicated topic with a comparatively straightforward narrative form.

The relation of an artistic creation to the culture in which it is popular is another interesting question that appears in the study

of folk literature. If we examine a traditional tale as it exists in different cultural contexts, culture-literature relationships are suggested. In many Japanese versions of Cinderella, for example, the heroine's attractiveness is to be found in her gentility and refined aesthetic tastes rather than in her physical appearance. In fact, the critical test of her authenticity as heroine is a test of aesthetic sensibility — she must compose a poem on the spot about a pine needle on a plate of salt. Her step-sister fails the request miserably, but the Cinderella character triumphs with a spontaneous and lovely poem.[12] Assuming that popular tales are meaningful to their audiences, why, we might ask, does the identification test in the Japanese version differ from that found in many western versions? Does the heroine illustrate different ideal virtues and physical characteristics in different cultures? What kinds of behavior are overtly and covertly sanctioned in the diverse variants of the Cinderella tale? How can these proscriptive and prescriptive lessons be related to the larger cultural patterns of the society in which they are found?[13] These questions begin to illustrate in simple ways the relation between literature and society. If we examine reflexive forms of literature in terms of their social and cultural matrices, we can persuasively suggest that all literature — cultivated, popular, and folk — is expressive in some way of the culture from which it springs, and that the study of one enriches the study of the other.

As students of literature we are all concerned about the ultimate values of its study. Why do human beings tell stories and how do they respond to them? What are the functions and meanings of narrative for a particular group in a particular socio-cultural context? The legend of "The Hook" commonly circulates in modern youth culture.[14] It involves a young couple parked in a deserted area who are informed by the car radio that a hook-armed madman has escaped from a local institution. The girl becomes frightened, and the couple leave the area abruptly. When they return home they find a hook dangling from the car door. Why is this story so popular in adolescent and pre-pubescent groups? The didactic functions of the story, both overt and covert, are most immediately apparent: Don't go parking. It's dangerous for several reasons. But the narrative has other implications that can be discussed by mature students. Is it significant that the madman is also physically disabled and a bizarre deviant in the minds of some, perhaps many persons who hear and tell the story? (In how many versions of "The Assailant in the Back Seat," one wonders,

is the villain described as an ethnic or racial minority member?) How important is the theme of threatened bodily mutilation? Do such stories articulate young persons' fears about nightmarish dangers to their physiological integrity? One character in the narrative has lost an arm and the other characters are threatened by physical assault. It is tempting to suggest that such subject matter is especially potent for those whose consciousness of personal physiology is intense because of physical changes taking place in adolescence.

If the classroom is ready for the question, one might also introduce the possible sexual implications of the narrative. Is the story expressive of private sexual anxieties that can be publicly articulated in the guise of a frightening horror legend? Alan Dundes has suggested, for example, that the madman's hook arm is a phallic image, threatening to the adolescent female in the car, and goes on to develop in detail a sexual interpretation of the narrative.[15] Similar questions about theme and meaning can be asked of the traditional fairy tales familiar to us since childhood. Diverse levels of meaning can be discovered in tales that have enjoyed both oral and print circulation, and they can be used effectively in the introduction of Freudian or Jungian analysis in literature study.[16]

We must admit to the fact, however, that fairy tales and other kinds of traditional narratives found in standard western folk literature publications may not arouse much compelling interest among junior and senior high school students. Alternative kinds of folk narrative materials are available however. Interest in Native American culture continues to be strong and could be utilized in folk literature studies. Several good American Indian narrative collections can be employed in ways similar to those earlier discussed.[17] Student collections of local legends, urban horror stories, jokes, and even family history narratives can be put to use in like manner.

Oral traditional literature may serve other functions in the English classroom besides those of literary analysis. These materials also provide means of expanding student writing experiences. Folklorists have long emphasized the importance of describing the natural folklore event or performance in as much detail as possible, because such data alert us to the dynamics of the oral narrative event and suggest possible interpretations of meaning and function of the narrative performance for the group involved. Information about attitudes expressed verbally and nonverbally

by the performer and audience, conversation before and after the narration, interaction during the performance, physical setting, psychological atmosphere, and so on, are important because such information suggests why the story is told in the first place and reasons for its success or failure as narrative communication. This description of performance in context, an ethnography of the complete folkloric event, is a challenge to one's attention and writing abilities. Careful observation of human activity and its clear, precise expression are necessities in folklore research! For the English student such writing exercises can become valuable experiences in descriptive and expository writing. The lucid, attentive account of a complex event is a difficult, though rewarding achievement for any writer, folklorist or not.[18]

Yet another writing potential can be exploited in folklore-literature units. For teachers and students interested in creative writing, traditional narrative provides opportunities for the most imaginative kind of work. The basic plot available in a variety of versions supplies the content which the creative writer can process and elaborate. The folkloric materials, often bizarre, lend themselves to many kinds of literary treatments, from grim realism to fantastic expressionism.

The uses of folk narrative in the English classroom that I have thus far suggested are somewhat commonplace and commonsensical, perhaps wanting in detailed illustration. Generalized suggestions are seldom as helpful as explicit discussions of particular examples. In a forthcoming issue of this journal I plan to delineate more specifically the possible uses a literature class can find for one of the most popular genres of folk narrative in contemporary youth culture, the urban legend. Such stories, like "The Assailant in the Back Seat" and "The Hook," are grim tales, but their possibilities in the enrichment of literary analysis in the high school English class are exciting.

NOTES

[1] Xenia E. Cord, "Further Notes on 'The Assailant in the Back Seat,'" *Indiana Folklore*, II (1969), 48.

[2] Two important articles on the definition of folklore that have elicited some controversy in folklore circles in this decade are Dan Ben-Amos, "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context," and Roger D. Abrahams, "Personal Power and Social Restraint in the Definition of Folklore," both in *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore*, ed. Américo Paredes and Richard Bauman (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), pp. 3-30.

[5] See Ronald L. Baker, "Folklore Courses and Programs in American Colleges and Universities." *Journal of American Folklore,* 84 (1971), 221-229.

[6] For a helpful discussion of folk art as reflexive art see Roger D. Abrahams and George Foss, *Anglo-American Folksong Style* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 10-11.

[7] See, for example, Chaps. 11 and 12, "The Identification of Folklore in American Literature" and "Folklore in American Literature: A Postscript," in Richard M. Dorson, *American Folklore and the Historian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 186-209. A helpful introductory essay on folklore-literature relationships is Archer Taylor, "Folklore and the Student of Literature," in Alan Dundes, ed., *The Study of Folklore* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp. 34-42.

[8] A good collection of texts is Albert B. Friedman, *The Viking Book of Folk Ballads of the English-Speaking World* (New York: Viking Press, 1972).

[9] Ibid., pp. 161-168.

[10] Ibid., pp. 34-39.

[11] See e.g., "The Two Sisters," *Child Ballads Traditional in the United States,* ed. Bertrand H. Bronson, Library of Congress, AAFS L57, Vol. I, side A, band 1; "The Two Sisters," *Anglo-American Ballads,* ed. B. A. Botkin, Library of Congress, AAFS L7, side A, band A5; "The Two Sisters," *Folk Ballads of the English Speaking World,* sung by Paul Clayton, ed. Kenneth S. Goldstein, Folkways Records, FA 2310, side 2, band 7; "The Cruel Sister," *Cruel Sister,* by Pentangle, Reprise Records, RS 6430, side 1, band 4.

[12] University of Chicago publishes an excellent series of scholarly folktale collections under the general editorship of Richard M. Dorson. The series titles in paper include narrative collections from China, England, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, and Norway.

[13] A variety of materials dealing with the fairy tale can be found in most children's libraries, sometimes in highly refined recreations. See, for example, Walter de la Mare, *Told Again: Traditional Tales Told by Walter de la Mare* (Oxford, 1927).

[14] "Benizara and Kakezara," in *Folktales of Japan,* ed. Keigo Seki (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 131-134.

[15] See, e.g., Betty B. Lenham and Masao Shimura, "Folktales Commonly Told American and Japanese Children: Ethical Themes of Omission and Commission," *Journal of American Folklore,* 80 (1967), 33-48, and Kay Stone, "Things Walt Disney Never Told Us," *Journal of American Folklore,* 88 (1975), 42-50.

[16] See Linda Dégh, "The Hook," *Indiana Folklore,* I (1968), 92-100.

[17] Alan Dundes, "On the Psychology of the Legend," in *American Folk Legend: A Symposium,* ed. Wayland D. Hand (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 30-31.

[18] The most recent extensive psychological interpretation of the fairy tale is not by a folklorist, but by a psychiatrist: Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment* (New York: Knopf, 1976).

[19] Alice Marriott and Carol K. Rachlin, eds., *American Indian Mythology* (New York: New American Library, 1968); Margot Astrov, ed., *American Indian Prose and Poetry* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1962);

Stith Thompson, ed., *Tales of the North American Indians* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1966); and *The Zunis: Self Portrayals*, trans. Alvina Quam (New York: New American Library, 1972), all in paper.

[18] Impressive examples of folklore ethnography by high school students can be found in the Eliot Wigginton series, *The Foxfire Book*, *Foxfire 2*, and *Foxfire 3* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1972, 1973, and 1975).

A PRIMARY LIST OF RESEARCH AIDS IN FOLKLORE STUDIES

(The starred items are those most useful as introductions to the topic.)

INTRODUCTIONS TO FOLKLORE GENRES AND CATEGORIES (INCLUDING BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES)

*Brunvand, Jan Harold. THE STUDY OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE. New York: W. W. Norton, 1968.

Good, introductory overview chapters on different folklore genres, with excellent bibliographic references.

*Brunvand, Jan Harold. FOLKLORE: A STUDY AND RESEARCH GUIDE. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976.

Another helpful reference guide to basic bibliographies, collections, and studies.

*Dorson, Richard M., ed. FOLKLORE AND FOLKLIFE: AN INTRODUCTION. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

Excellent introductory essays on different folklore genres, written by authorities on the topic, followed by basic bibliographic references.

INTRODUCTION TO THEORY AND APPROACH

*Dundes, Alan. THE STUDY OF FOLKLORE. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1965.

Useful collection of essays by well-known folklorists illustrating diverse approaches to the subject matter. Dundes' introductions to the essays are intelligent and clear.

Dundes, Alan. ANALYTIC ESSAYS IN FOLKLORE. The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

Collection of essays on theory and method, structural analysis,

and psychoanalytic analysis by one of the most imaginative folklorists at work today.

DICTIONARIES

Leach, Maria. FUNK AND WAGNALLS STANDARD DICTIONARY OF FOLKLORE, MYTHOLOGY, AND LEGEND. 2 vols. New York, 1949.

This dictionary is available in most libraries. Its entries vary in quality, depending on the writer.

INDICES

Aarne, Antti, and Stith Thompson. THE TYPES OF THE FOLKTALE. 2nd rev. ed. Folklore Fellows Communications, No. 184. Helsinki, 1961.

Basic catalogue of traditional western European folktale types (plots), with appropriate bibliographic references.

Baughman, Ernest W. TYPE AND MOTIF INDEX OF THE FOLKTALES OF ENGLAND AND NORTH AMERICA. Indiana Folklore Series, No. 20. Bloomington, Indiana, 1966.

Similar to Aarne and Thompson (above), but also includes valuable attention to supernatural and grotesque motifs common in Anglo-American legend and tale.

Thompson, Stith. MOTIF INDEX OF FOLK LITERATURE. 6 vols., rev. ed. Bloomington, Indiana, 1955-1958.

Basic catalogue of widely distributed motifs (minimal units in folktale plots, e.g., remarkable person, remarkable activity) rather than plot types. References to their appearance in folktale, legend, and myth are included.

JOURNALS

INDIANA FOLKLORE (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University and The Hoosier Folklore Society).

Good publication for legend texts, both supernatural and urban, not necessarily restricted to Indiana materials.

JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE (American Folklore Society publication).

A major folklore journal, publishing analytic articles, though in the past it published many texts.

JOURNAL OF THE FOLKLORE INSTITUTE (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University).

Another important folklore journal, publishing analyses rather than texts.

WESTERN FOLKLORE

Another journal with a regional title, but national and international in scope, publishing articles of substance and quality.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

ABSTRACTS OF FOLKLORE STUDIES. American Folklore Society, 1963-

Useful bibliography covering folklore articles in a wide variety of publications.

Coffin, Tristram P. AN ANALYTIC INDEX TO THE *JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE*. Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1958.

Covers all the articles, collections, notes, etc., published in the JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE up through 1957.

Haywood, Charles, A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NORTH AMERICAN FOLKLORE AND FOLKSONG. 2 vols. New York: Dover Publications, 1961, reprint.

Helpful, though uneven bibliography. Unfortunately it is littered with citation errors.

Murdock, George Peter, et al., ETHNOGRAPHIC BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NORTH AMERICA, 4th rev. ed. New Haven, Conn. 1965.

Useful bibliography of North American Indian collections and studies.

Hand in Hand

JOYCE C. LIVESAY
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER
HOUSTON, TEXAS

Children clap, snap, and sing their way through life. Can we use this natural love of sound to teach Language Arts? Can music

help teach reading, spelling, speaking, and literature? Yes, it can, because music and language arts go hand in hand.

READING

Traditional songs bring forth new, unfamiliar words. The little song "Waltzing Matilda" is full of new words to read and discuss. "Once a jolly swagman camped by a billabong under the shade of a coolibah tree." What mysterious words they are. What in the world is a billabong? What does the class think a swagman is? Who ever heard of a coolibah tree? (A swagman is a man on a tramp carrying his swag, a bundle wrapped up in a blanket. A billabong is a water hole in the dried-up bed of a river. A coolibah tree is a eucalyptus tree.) Now the teacher can help the class wander with the swagman, all over Australia, and in passing do a little reading and learn a little geography.

Reading about the American West is enjoyed by all children and you can whet their reading appetites by singing "Whoopee-ti-yi-yo, Git along little dogies." An important part of our culture are the cowboy songs we all love such as "Home on the Range" or "Red River Valley" and "On Top of Old Smokey." Singing these songs can help stimulate our interest in reading about the West.

SPELLING

With new songs comes the effort to learn to spell the new words. Songs help us with syllabication, because in all songs words with more than one syllable are divided. You can co-ordinate songs with your pupils' reading or spelling problems. Perhaps you can take the week's spelling words right out of the songs.

Let the rhythm of the song aid you in teaching accents, or the sound of long a or short e. Do you need to reinforce a particular sound? There is a song for every purpose, a song for every need.

In this Bicentennial year consider the "Star Spangled Banner" as a starting point for a dictionary lesson. "O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming." What is a rampart? Since we do not use the word rampart in daily conversation most children do not know what it means. Give the children a short time to find the word in the dictionary. You can now discuss the meaning of rampart, or the way wars were formerly fought, or construction of fortifications, or military life now. These are all interesting paths to take, and they began with a song.

CREATIVE WRITING

"White coral bells upon a slender stalk." Does this provoke your imagination? All of us have pictures in our minds, just waiting for the proper stimulus to bring them forward. The teacher can use a song to stimulate children to write creatively. One method is to ask the children to find a new solution to a problem. For instance, in the song "Clementine," the daughter had sandals made from herring boxes. What other containers can a girl with big feet use? The Riddle Song has a cherry that has no stone, a chicken that has no bone, and so on. Can your children write a new riddle? There are three verses to "Oh, Susanna," but the last two are very sad. Can your children come up with some cheerful verses?

Walt Whitman wrote a beautiful poem called "I Hear America Singing." In it he speaks of the carpenter singing, the mason singing, the woodcutter, the shoemaker, the mother; each singing a song of his or her own. After reading to the children the entire poem, suggest they try to compose a chant for the carpenter, the woodcutter, or the boatman. Perhaps they could compose a poem for the mother's song. All of these suggestions are to stimulate their imagination, to help them write creatively.

LITERATURE

The flavor of a country is reflected in its folk tales and folk songs. Is the next unit on France? Then there are two folk songs that will enhance the unit, "Frere Jacques" and "Alouette." Will you study Germany? Try using Brahms' "Lullaby" in German. Guten Abend, gut' nacht! Mit Rosen bedacht.

The sound of a language spoken has a beauty and rhythm children do not always hear. Before you sing the "Lullaby," draw attention to the rhythm and the sounds. Twisting the tongue around new sounds is fun for the children. Have them chant the German in rhythm. This is a valuable lesson in training the ears to distinguish different sounds.

The times are also reflected in folk tales and songs. Sing "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" and see if you can feel the unhappiness of the slave. Try singing "Shenandoah" and feel the sadness of people who had to leave their homes to go west. A more cheerful song is "Turkey in the Straw." Soon the children can begin to associate a time with a song and hopefully will have a better sense of history and their place in it.

SPEAKING

A child who has trouble speaking before an audience can "open up" when he is pretending to be somebody else. As the Jolly Swagman roaming all over Australia, what will he find there? Can he tell us in his own words? Yes, he can speak very well, because you see, he is the swagman, not Billy Jones. For a moment he can be Somebody Else, and is at ease before his audience. Children love to dramatize songs as well as plays.

Another good song for dramatizing is "This Is Your Land." The opening line is "As I was walking that ribbon of highway, I looked above me there in the skyway, I looked below me in the golden valley:" Can you see a child begin to pantomime that for his class? The wide gestures, the feeling of space all around, can be conveyed without words. It is communication between people. And it began with a song.

Music and language arts can go hand in hand through the school day. Music is not an isolated field; it is part of every subject. Therefore, it has something to offer every teacher, an aid to make every subject more interesting. It can keep children clapping, snapping, and singing throughout all the language arts areas.

A Guide to Curricula in Illinois Schools

AL CARPS
GLENBARD SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL, GLEN ELLYN

This writer has heard considerable speculation about the nature of the curriculum in the English programs in Illinois public secondary schools. School districts, and even schools within districts, do not normally conspire in the formation of curricula. It is most common, in fact, that neighboring schools are ignorant of each other's curricula.

In what directions then have Illinois schools tended to develop curricula in this aura of independence? Are they traditional and conservative or non-traditional and liberal or somewhere between the two positions? A knowledge of such data would perhaps create more confidence among English educators in their own curricula. Perhaps with such knowledge some English departments would be challenged to abandon the selection of materials based upon the

private and personal tastes and preferences of individual instructors or department chairmen and to align the department more closely with most Illinois schools.

Upon investigation it was soon obvious to this writer that no one really knew with certainty which major works were being commonly studied in Illinois English programs. Nor was there educational research available. There was no central agency from which to acquire the data. Thus, in order to learn the nature of the curricula in English programs in Illinois public secondary schools, this writer was faced with the task of acquiring the data directly from the individual schools and of reading their curriculum guides.

Using an up-to-date list of Illinois secondary schools from the Illinois Association of Teachers of English (IATE), I selected several member schools at random from each of the twenty large school districts (or blocks) as distinguished by the IATE for the purpose of district level meetings and conferences. Special care was exercised to include schools in the sampling from every section of the state, from city and community schools, from large and small schools. A form letter was composed to the English department of the selected schools. The researcher requested departmental curriculum guides or course descriptions. Two hundred twenty (220) form letters were mailed. Seventy-five (75) samples were returned from the mailing. Tabulation required a reading of each guide with a recording of each major work of literature listed for study in the curriculum. The results were not particularly surprising.

The following data is a partial list of the major literary works being studied in Illinois public secondary school English programs as of March, 1976. Only the works of highest frequency are included because of the limited space in this essay. The frequency of usage from the seventy-five (75) reporting schools is included (the first number within the parentheses) and the percentage of usage (the second number within the parentheses).

Walden (60/80%) by Henry David Thoreau
Macbeth (53/71%) by William Shakespeare
Romeo and Juliet (50/67%) by William Shakespeare
Huckleberry Finn (48/64%) by Mark Twain
Leaves of Grass (48/64%) by Walt Whitman
Moby Dick (47/63%) by Herman Melville
Our Town (46/61%) by Thornton Wilder
Beowulf (45/60%)
Bible (44/59%)

Paradise Lost (44/59%) by John Milton
Hamlet (43/57%) by William Shakespeare
Canterbury Tales (42/56%) by Geoffrey Chaucer
Scarlet Letter, The (41/53%) by Nathaniel Hawthorne
Great Gatsby, The (40/53%) by F. Scott Fitzgerald
Julius Caesar (40/53%) by William Shakespeare
Tale of Two Cities (40/53%) by Charles Dickens
To Kill a Mockingbird (40/53%) by Harper Lee
Separate Peace, A (38/51%) by John Knowles
Odyssey, The (36/48%) by Homer
Lord of the Flies (35/47%) by William Golding
Red Badge of Courage (34/45%) by Stephen Crane
Antigone (33/44%) by Sophocles
Old Man and the Sea, The (32/43%) by Ernest Hemingway
In the Zone (31/41%) by Eugene O'Neill
Roughing It (31/41%) by Mark Twain
Self-Reliance (31/41%) by Ralph Waldo Emerson
Crucible, The (30/40%) by Arthur Miller
Death of a Salesman (29/39%) by Arthur Miller
Glass Menagerie, The (29/39%) by Tennessee Williams
Great Expectations (29/39%) by Charles Dickens
Brave New World (27/36%) by Aldous Huxley
Gulliver's Travels (27/36%) by Jonathan Swift
Pearl, The (27/36%) by John Steinbeck
Pygmalion (27/36%) by George Bernard Shaw
Ethan Frome (26/35%) by Edith Wharton
Cry the Beloved Country (25/33%) by Alan Paton
Merchant of Venice (25/33%) by William Shakespeare
Bridge of San Luis Rey (24/32%) by Thornton Wilder
Fahrenheit 451 (24/32%) by Ray Bradbury
Farewell to Arms, A (24/32%) by Ernest Hemingway
Grapes of Wrath, The (24/32%) by John Steinbeck
Return of the Native (24/32%) by Thomas Hardy
Shane (24/32%) by Jack Schaefer
Animal Farm (23/31%) by George Orwell
Idylls of the King (23/31%) by Alfred Lord Tennyson
Of Mice and Men (23/31%) by John Steinbeck
Midsummer Night's Dream (23/31%) by William Shakespeare
Catcher in the Rye (22/28%) by J. D. Salinger
Iliad, The (22/28%) by Homer
Oedipus Cycle (22/28%) by Sophocles
Siddhartha (22/28%) by Hermann Hesse

Miracle Worker (21/28%) by William Gibson
Martian Chronicles, The (21/28%) by Ray Bradbury
Nineteen Eighty-Four (21/28%) by George Orwell
Silas Marner (21/28%) by George Eliot
War of the Worlds (21/28%) by H. G. Wells
Crime and Punishment (20/27%) by Fyodor Dostoevsky
Diary of a Young Girl (20/27%) by Anne Frank
Heart Is a Lonely Hunter (20/27%) by Carson McCullers
Flowers for Algernon (19/26%) by Daniel Keyes
Lilies of the Field (19/26%) by William Barrett
Oxbow Incident (19/26%) by Walter van Tilburg Clark
Pigman (19/26%) by Paul Zindel
When the Legends Die (19/26%) by Hal Borland
Wuthering Heights (19/26%) by Emily Bronte

In order to complete the overview, the frequency of usage by authors is listed. The parenthetical number beside the author's name represents the accumulated score of the number of schools which use at least one of that author's works, plus the number of works by that author that are used in each school. The parenthetical number beside each work is merely a tabulation of the number of schools which use the work.

Shakespeare, William (340)
Macbeth (53)
Romeo and Juliet (50)
Hamlet (43)
Julius Caesar (40)
Merchant of Venice (25)
Midsummer Night's Dream (23)
King Lear (18)
Othello (17)
As You Like It (14)
Henry IV (14)
Taming of the Shrew (9)
Twelfth Night (9)
Anthony and Cleopatra (8)
Richard III (7)
Much Ado About Nothing (5)
Tempest (5)
Steinbeck, John (106)
The Pearl (27)
The Grapes of Wrath (24)

Of Mice and Men (23)
The Red Pony (10)
Travels with Charley (7)
Cannery Row (5)
The Moon Is Down (5)
The Winter of Our Discontent (5)
Twain, Mark (103)
Huckleberry Finn (48)
Roughing It (31)
Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (9)
Puddin' Head Wilson (6)
Tom Sawyer (5)
The Prince and the Pauper (4)
Dickens, Charles (87)
Tale of Two Cities (40)
Great Expectations (29)
David Copperfield (11)
Oliver Twist (7)
Hemingway, Ernest (80)
Old Man and the Sea (32)
A Farewell to Arms (24)
The Sun Also Rises (11)
For Whom the Bell Tolls (9)
The Snows of Kilimanjaro (4)
Wilder, Thornton (74)
Our Town (46)
The Bridge of San Luis Rey (24)
The Matchmaker (4)
Thoreau, Henry David (72)
Walden (60)
Civil Disobedience (12)
Melville, Herman (69)
Moby Dick (47)
Billy Budd (14)
Bartleby, the Scribner (8)
Bradbury, Ray (67)
Fahrenheit 451 (24)
Martian Chronicles (21)
Dandelion Wine (13)
Illustrated Man (9)
Miller, Arthur (59)
The Crucible (30)
Death of a Salesman (29)

Homer (58)
The Odyssey (36)
The Iliad (22)
Sophocles (55)
Antigone (33)
Oedipus Cycle (22)
O'Neill, Eugene (53)
In the Zone (31)
Ile (7)
Emperor Jones (6)
Long Day's Journey into Night (5)
Hairy Ape (4)
Hawthorne, Nathaniel (49)
The Scarlet Letter (41)
The House of Seven Gables (8)
Whitman, Walt (48)
Leaves of Grass (48)
Beowulf (45)
The Bible (44)
Courses in Bible as Literature (8)
Courses of varied approaches (7)
Bible as Religious Literature (1)
Bible and Mythology (1)
Bible for Students of Literature and Art (1)
Literature from the Bible (1)
Literary Survey of the Bible (1)
Old Testament Literature (1)
Survey of the Bible (1)
Bible used as a major segment or unit of a course (3)
Comparative Religious Literature (1)
Literary Backgrounds (1)
Senior English (1)
Listed Bible as a major source in courses (5)
English courses that list specific books of the Bible to be studied (21)
Genesis, Ruth, Psalms (12)
Job (4)
Job, Genesis, Ecclesiastes, Luke, Isaiah (1)
Job, Genesis (1)
Job, Hebrew Literature (1)
Bible selections (1)
Bible as source of "The Wandering Jew"

Fitzgerald, F. Scott (44)
The Great Gatsby (40)
Tender Is the Night (4)
Milton, John (44)
Paradise Lost (44)
Orwell, George (44)
Animal Farm (23)
1984 (21)
Chaucer, Geoffrey (42)
Canterbury Tales (42)
Lee, Harper (40)
To Kill a Mockingbird (40)
Hardy, Thomas (39)
Return of the Native (24)
Mayor of Casterbridge (10)
Jude, The Obscure (5)
Knowles, John (38)
A Separate Peace (38)
Wells, H. G. (36)
War of the Worlds (21)
Time Machine (9)
Invisible Man (6)
Williams, Tennessee (36)
The Glass Menagerie (29)
Streetcar Named Desire (7)
Golding, William (35)
Lord of the Flies (35)
Shaw, George Bernard (35)
Pygmalion (27)
Arms and the Man (4)
St. Joan (4)
Crane, Stephen (34)
The Red Badge of Courage (34)

While conformity may not be virtuous, testimony from English instructors and chairmen confirm that schools are retaining or returning to a more traditional, classical literature, partly because of the teachability of the classics and partly because students themselves, when allowed to select, are demanding and enrolling in those courses which include the classics. The research findings support the testimony.

Individualized Group Study of the Romantic Era

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The individualized group study to which I refer is a description of a classroom tested program by my English IV students working with the Romantic Era of English literature. However, this project may be applied to any study of American, English, or World literature that calls for a creative development of varied interpretations by which a class may identify the characteristics of any particular author or era through a comparison to our modern generation.

A period of three to four weeks will be sufficient time for this project because a student's enthusiasm will vary. It is best to stop at the peak of interest rather than to let the interest begin to die.

* * * *

Define classicism! Define romanticism! What is the difference between classicism and romanticism? Why are Gray, Burns, and Blake considered the forerunners to the romanticist period? The same old questions every year. No wonder the students yawn, look out of the windows and hope that the dismissal bell will soon ring. A thought suddenly occurred to me that the romanticist authors could easily be compared with today's individualists so why not go along with the "Pepsi generation" by making this period "Come alive."

With a simple suggestion that today we were going to recreate our world through the romanticists the enthusiasm began to simmer. I then announced that we would try a different method of study — a study in which each student would read independently concerning the Romantic Age. With our project beginning to boil each student selected for intensive study a romantic writer. He was to choose any phase of the author's life or writing and then relate this study to a unit for presentation and discussion.

Knowing that several would choose the same author, I suggested that this method of presentation be done as a group. Assignments were then made to read the introductory material in their anthologies, and a list of books was set aside in the library for research. The students began to determine the philosophy of the romanti-

cists and to concern themselves with what other critics said about the period. They soon found that they were studying writers who were as independent as some of the revolutionists of today.

After careful analysis of the authors and critics, groups were formed for final presentations.

First, one group selected to present a Reader's Theater interpretation of "The Eve of St. Agnes" by Keats. The poem was divided so that one student gave an introduction informing the class of the meaning of St. Agnes' Day; two students read the narration; and other students portrayed the characters of Angela, Madeline, and Porphyro. After the reading the group then discussed the imagery of the poem and Keats' effectiveness at painting pictures. Another one of the group then analyzed "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode to a Grecian Urn."

Two musical groups presented "Kubla Khan" by Coleridge. The first group set aside as its purpose to create atmosphere and metrical rhythm for the reading of the poem. The group analyzed the poem and decided to write a musical introduction made up of the trumpet and the electric organ. Great care was taken in setting the mood. Having found that Coleridge had just been reading Samuel Purchas' *Pilgrimage* previous to his dream, the boys wrote a majestical introduction in a major key using 3/4 time. Then to prepare the audience for the first line of the poem (the beginning of the dream), they progressed from 3/4 time major key to 4/4 time minor key. The trumpet was chosen for its regal effect and the electric organ for its rhythm and mood emphasis. The reading of the poem was emphasized throughout by the organ with chord progressions[1] used for the purpose of mood effects on such words as *war, rebounding, hail, damsel, beware.* After the reading of the poem, an instrumental conclusion was used with the chord progressions now changing from a minor key back to a major key as though Coleridge were awakening from his dream. In writing an evaluation of their presentation the boys believed that they had helped the class realize the meter and mood of the poem through the transitions from reality to a dream, and from a dream to reality.

The second musical group chose to make the imaginative power of Coleridge more realistic through the use of the electric organ which provided the metrical background and set the mood, and the electric guitar which emphasized assonance, alliteration, and ona-

[1] A succession of tonal combinations to produce an emotional response.

matopoeia. The poem was divided for the reader so that the special effects given by the guitar would recreate the power of imagination within the audience. Words stressed for special effects were *decree, sunless sea, sinuous rills, greenery, savage place, demon lover, thick pants were breathing, thresher's flail, sacred river, prophesying war, eaves of ice, Mount Abora, music loud and long, Beware! Beware!,* and *Paradise.* Tonal effects used were *fuzz tone* for the ancient sounds, *bass run* for caverns, *modern psychodelic* for music loud and long, *classic love melody* for damsel with a dulcimer, *high tinning sound* for eaves of ice, and a *bass run* (slowly rolling) for sacred river. Psychodelic lighting was used throughout for special weird and dreamlike effects. In evaluating the accomplishments of this group the boys felt that although they had definitely helped to create imagery through the lighting and tonal effects, that each student freely created within his own mind a definite image of the poem.

Four groups decided on an oral discussion and an evaluation of the following authors: Wordsworth, Byron, Scott, and Lamb. Their material was of course new to them, but the usual procedure of deciding that Wordsworth worshipped nature; Byron was an independent egotist and was the hero in all of his poems; Scott's main interest lay in his love of the past; and Lamb's love of the city in comparison to the other writers' love of nature and his ease in writing the familiar or personal essay made up their final evaluations.

Perhaps the most unique group wrote and presented a play entitled *Twentieth Century Shelley.* The dramatis personae were Percy Byshee Shelley, Harriet Westbrook, Mary, Thomas Hogg, the dean, a friend, the Priest, and the narrator. The narrator began with the following explanation: "As you have probably noticed, the life of Percy Byshee Shelley closely resembles the modern-day radical college student completely rebellious to all authority. Shelley was a rebel with a cause, a revolutionary in his own time who lived by the code of 'God is Dead' and advocated 'free love'."

Act I took place in the Dean's office in Berkeley, California, where Shelley and his friend, Thomas Hogg, had just been thrown out of their Foods I class for writing a pamphlet on atheism instead of baking their coffee cake. With them was Harriet Westbrook, a girl with a good "bod" but lacking in brains, who agreed with Shelley on the pamphlet. Act II revealed the marriage of Shelley and Harriet witnessed by Thomas Hogg. Act III showed the reason for the dissolvement of Shelley and Hogg after the

honeymoon trip in Shelley's pad. In Act IV Shelley became tired of the same old drag and decided to throw a love-in in search of a new broad. This designated the beginning of his new life with Mary and the reason for the death of Harriet. Act V portrayed Shelley, Mary, and friends studying transcendental meditation with the neighborhood Guru at which time Shelley, who had become a drag racer, made a bet with a friend that his car could outdrag any car on the beach.

As the play ended, the narrator began, "His flaming remains made a living cremation by the time Mary arrived on the scene. However, her devotion was so great that she snatched his heart from the burning wreckage and sold it to the Smithsonian Institute for a year's supply of opium. Thus ends the life of Percy Byshee Shelley."

Although parts of the play were a little weird, the idea was well accepted and the group studying Shelley as well as the class listening to the play will probably never forget the life of Percy Byshee Shelley.

In the final evaluation of the period the students decided that nearly every romanticist saw only that part of the world that he wanted to see — that part which belonged to him. In the poems a spiritual biography was reflected through the intensified experiences of the authors. The favored themes were those of nature, an interest in humble life, an interest in the past, the power of imagination, and a revolt against society.

Certain types of poetry became more meaningful to the students after an historical presentation of the ode. The boys had never realized that the ode was first produced by a chorus to celebrate the victor in one of the great athletic contests in Greece. The sonnet form which had been discussed in the Elizabethan Age along with the lyric poetry were enhanced by the use of imagery and the simplicity of the language. The metrical romances were found to be good Reader's Theater material.

Two methods of evaluating the students for grades were used. First, I chose a sample selection from each author and had the students determine how each selection was typical of the writer and what aspects of romanticism were shown throughout the selection. In the analysis they were to consider subject matter, purpose, construction, and the writer's treatment of the subject. Secondly, they each wrote an in-class descriptive theme or poem based on the style of the romanticist authors.

By the time we were finished with our project, I'm sure the

interest and enthusiasm of the students had simmered, boiled, and even boiled over to regard completely the Romantic Era as the one period to "Come alive" in their English literature.

Aristotle and the National Achievement Awards

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For about the last fifteen years the National Council of Teachers of English has sponsored the National Achievement Awards Program, an essay contest, the purpose of which, according to NCTE, is to encourage student writers and to recognize publicly some of the best in the nation. This contest is open to high school juniors who submit two pieces of writing to be judged. Those who win are not awarded any prizes but instead are recommended to colleges. As a result, the contest attracts many qualified high school juniors who have been nominated on the basis of their work in school. Winners, on the other hand, are few. The latter possess certain characteristics of good writing, composition skills which, I think, should be brought to the attention of all teachers of English, especially now when the national trend is "back to basics."

Before I go into those skills which constitute good writing, let me explain briefly the process of the Awards Program here in Illinois. Early in the fall term, the NCTE invites English department chairpersons of high schools to submit nominations of juniors who might want to enter the contest. Each candidate must submit two pieces of writing — a sample of what the student considers his or her best piece of writing and an impromptu theme, the topic of which is determined by NCTE. Then teams of judges, asked by the state coordinator, evaluate the essays. The makeup of each team in Illinois consists of one high school teacher of English and one college teacher of composition. In late spring, each participating high school sends the compositions to the state coordinator who, in turn, processes them and sends them out to the judging teams.

In Illinois last year, for example, I used 26 teams, or a total of 52 teachers, and each team read 15 or 16 entries, a total of about 800 or more compositions, quite a few, however, being samples of poetry. On a tally sheet each reader scores from one to three on the impromptu and also on the sample of best writing, the highest total being six points from each reader or a combined total of twelve points from each team for a single entry. Moreover, each reader circles "recommended" or "not recommended." The winners, therefore, receive totals of ten to twelve points. Each reader then sends his tally to me, and when all tally sheets are received with all the compositions, I check for winners. Illinois is allowed 48 winners, the number determined by the total number of Illinois congressmen times two. The number of outright winners, those recommended by the two judges on a team, is relatively small, usually about 29 or 30. For those entries where one judge recommends a winner and the other not, I will become the third reader, provided the total score is ten or higher. I was, consequently, able to submit 41 winners this year.

These winners all exhibit certain composition skills in common. First of all, they have thoroughly considered the topic assigned them until they have focused on something they know about, not on what they think they know. Their knowledge will then generate specific details, the meat of the essay. Secondly, by writing on what they really know, and also from experience, they will develop a clear thesis from which the rest of the essay can be developed. Before the student even begins to write, he will marshall his ideas on the topic, look for common denominators within the ideas, and then formulate a thesis statement, a single declarative sentence that sums up his main idea and that allows him to choose whatever modes of development he wishes to use to argue or illustrate his points. The majority of rhetorics develop a chapter to that topic alone, but unfortunately, the method of developing a thesis is so simple that many students ignore it. If the paper has a clear thesis, a reader will not need to have prior knowledge of that topic. The topic under discussion can easily be inferred from the thesis (whether or not the thesis statement has been formally included in the paper).

Winning essays also show a clearcut and proportionate division of parts. These essays usually run to three pages, the first paragraph being an introduction and the rest, the body, except for a short concluding paragraph. The introduction contains the thesis statement and other important data such as statement of topic and

point of view and is in itself a well-developed paragraph. Aristotle states, for example, in his *Rhetoric*, Book III, that an introduction should contain an attention getting device, a statement about the subject and aim of the essay, the character of the writer, and that it should make the audience receptive to the essay and the writer. The conclusion, according to Aristotle, should try to dispose the audience for or against one's opponent, magnify the leading facts, refresh memories, and excite the required emotion. One word of caution, however: the attention getting device must be controlled; too strong a device will have the tendency to turn the reader off. The body of the essay, of course, consists of paragraphs, each with its topic sentences and supporting details along with transitional devices tying the paragraphs together. Moreover, in developing the paragraphs of the essay, the student should be familiar with various strategies such as comparison and contrast, example, cause to effect, to name a few. These strategies discipline a student's development of an idea, allowing him various tools to say what he means to say. All a paragraph is, to state it simply, is a topic sentence, a "but," a "why," and an example.

In addition, the style of the writers is pleasant, simple, and straightforward. In other words, their style is controlled. Also, since style is made up of words and sentences, the syntax consists of good, standard English. The style of these winners is not "literary" or "intellectual" but plain and easily understandable, and I might add, mature for their age. These points can best be illustrated, perhaps, by reading an introductory paragraph from a winning, impromptu essay that I picked out at random.

> I can accept it now, but when I was young I would refuse to enter a room containing what my young imagination considered a specter or a ghoul. Even now, I feel uneasy, slightly nauseous and very uncomfortable in the presence of an open coffin. The parlor talk sounds stilted and manufactured, instead of expressing open emotion. There is a certain aura around a cold, embalmed body that sets people on a precarious edge. I have never liked wakes, or visitations, and I probably never will. Some adults and some of my friends consider it necessary, but I consider it a useless chore that makes all concerned uncomfortable.

One will note, of course, the plain, unadorned style of the writer. The first sentence calls attention to the subject of the essay which has to deal with some aspect of death, and the second sentence hints at the subject again and the aim of the essay as well as about the character of the writer. The thesis statement is

found in the last sentence of the paragraph. One could also assume from reading the specific details that the writer has a first-hand knowledge of his subject.

On the other hand, let me list some of the judges' comments of what *not* to do. One judge complains that the students have something significant to say but lack the means to do so. This ignorance of grammar and syntax weakens the writing considerably. Here is a quotation from another judge who says basically the same:

> Perhaps I am growing old and cynical, but this year's entries appear inferior to previous ones. Several students have significant things to say but are limited in basic skills . . .

One judge comments that the students understand the form of the essay but have precious little to say on the assigned subject. They do not think out the topics at hand; moreover, inconsistencies abound, or other students overdo expressions or take a torturous route. The approach of some of the students is shallow or labored in cuteness or else loaded with cliches and generalities.

These comments point up again the major aspects of good writing that Aristotle and other rhetoricians have stressed, that is, not only must one know his subject matter but also his audience. Aristotle observes in Book III that it is not enough to know what we ought to say; we must also say it as we ought, and therefore, any style must be clear and appropriate, made up of current and ordinary words with tasteful metaphors and similes, all of which express the emotion and character corresponding to the subject. Lest anyone think Aristotle not valid, let him renew his acquaintance with his rules by analyzing the structure, organization, development, and style of any essay published nowadays.

Some of the Best Illinois High School Poetry and Prose

This year some of the best poetry and prose written by Illinois students in grades 7 through 12 will appear in a special late-spring issue. This is your invitation to submit selected writings of your students. We would like to encourage wider participation throughout the state, particularly in those schools unrepresented in past poetry or prose issues.

Please observe the following rules carefully:

1. Send *poetry* manuscripts to Professor Beth Stiffler, Department of English, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois, 61455. Send *prose* to Professor Ruth McGugan, Department of English, Loyola University, Lake Shore Campus, 6525 North Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois 60626.

2. If possible send the manuscripts no later than December 15, in order that they may be judged during Christmas vacation. January 12 is the final deadline; no piece received after that date can be judged.

3. Typed copy is preferred, but is not absolutely essential. Send manuscripts first class. No manuscripts will be returned unless you enclose an addressed envelope of sufficient size and with first-class postage affixed.

4. Each teacher is requested to send no more than five pieces of prose or ten poems. The work should be carefully screened on the local level. Judges can work more effectively if they do not have to screen out manuscripts of inferior quality.

5. It is preferable that each manuscript submitted be typed or written on regular 8½" by 11" paper, or, in the case of works submitted in school publications, that each selection for judging be mounted on 8½" by 11" paper. Interesting and attractive as many of the literary magazines are, handling entries submitted in that form is awkward.

6. Do not hesitate to send writing by your seventh, eighth, and ninth graders.

7. Any writing done during the second semester of 1975-76 school year or during this year until the deadline for submission of manuscripts is admissible.

8. At the *end* of each selection, include the necessary information in exactly this form:

Ann Tyler, twelfth grade, Centennial High School,
Jason Winfield, teacher

9. Make a careful check of the punctuation of the poetry as well as of the prose. Many poems in the past have been disqualified because of inadequate punctuation.

10. You are urged to submit expository essays as well as creative work for the prose contest.

11. Before the submission of manuscripts, check with each student to be sure the work is original. Failure to submit original work can cause embarrassment to the writer, to the teacher, and

to the *Bulletin*. Enclose with the writing a statement to this effect: To the best of my knowledge the enclosed manuscripts were written by the students whose names they bear.

Coming in the Mid-Winter Issue

The Mid-Winter issue of *The Illinois English Bulletin* will be devoted entirely to the teaching of writing. Those of you who are interested in hearing about the report from the University of Illinois Committee on the Use of English can look forward to reading Professor James Scanlon's forthcoming article. He will discuss the implications of the committee's findings for teachers of composition. Professor Scanlon is not only a member of this committee but he is also Chairperson of Freshman Rhetoric at the University of Illinois. Also included will be many other articles with suggestions for the improvement of student writing.