# minnesota english journal



PAUL ROBERTS on
ENGLISH TEACHING – SOME PREJUDICES

and

**focus**

TEACHING THE HUMANITIES
GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT TEACHING

Third Issue of Academic Year 67-68
Numbered: Volume IV, No. 2
April, 1968


minnesota council of teachers of english

Annual membership of $2.50 for teachers, $.50 for students includes publications. MCTE is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English, open to elementary, secondary, and college teachers and others interested in improving the teaching of English. Membership is available from Anna Lee Stensland, MCTE Executive Secretary, 413 Humanities Building, University of Minnesota – Duluth, Duluth 55812. Manuscripts and other correspondence concerning *Minnesota English Journal* should be sent to Harriet W. Sheridan, Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota 55057.

Member of the NCTE Information Exchange Agreement

# minnesota english journal

Published by the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English

VOLUME IV, NO. 2 APRIL, 1968

**EDITOR:** HARRIET W. SHERIDAN, Carleton College, Northfield
**Editorial Assistants:** Mrs. Genevieve Hall, Mrs. Nancy Dunham Grauff

*TABLE OF CONTENTS*

# preamblings

With both sorrow and pleasure we print in this issue the talk given by Paul Roberts before the 1967 Annual Conference of the MCTE held in Rochester last May. The sorrow is for the loss of an admired colleague, one who has added much to the intellectual satisfactions of the English teacher. The reasons for the pleasure must be obvious to all those who heard Paul Roberts speak, or who will read the transcription of his speech which follows on the next pages. It seems particularly fitting that Mr. Roberts' Conference speech was introduced by Professor Harold B. Allen, about whom Mrs. Roberts wrote recently: "My husband thought very much and talked often of him."

The editorial staff will become a literal "we" next academic year, when it is enriched by the addition of two associates: for the secondary schools, Seymour Yesner, Consultant in Secondary School English for the Minneapolis Public Schools; and for the elementary schools, Sister Andre, at present serving as Linguistics Consultant and Master Teacher for the Central Minnesota Education Research and Development Council.

We plan to add another continuing feature next year, under the guidance of Mrs. Lucille Duggan of Richfield High School. While the function of her column is serious and useful, the titles that came to our minds suited only our frivolous tastes. The title must wait, then, until summer renews in us the juices of dignified creativity. The contents, to which we invite you all to contribute, will be devoted to brief accounts of tested classroom innovative practices or recommendations for experimentation and research. We lead off here with an example: Instead of passing on the entire accumulation of each student's composition folder, year by year, why not ask each student to choose the best theme(s) at the end of every year to go on to the next year's teacher? This will have the advantages of reducing the impedimenta and engaging the student in a practical judgment, as well as demonstrating his increasing skill as a writer.

The McKnight Family Education Fund is sponsoring an English Program focussed on oral and written composition in the elementary schools, to culminate next year. Director is Professor Naomi Chase of the University of Minnesota, who will organize the program in concord

with newly developing principles and methods for such instruction. Professor Chase is co-director of the Annual Institute of Creative Writing for and by Children.

We are impressed afresh at how certain subjects seem to draw their metaphors from a pattern of sources. Humanities teachers, judging by the articles in this issue, are notably attracted to apocalyptic imagery. Teachers in general turn to an industrial vocabulary for the common name for their practical conferences, producing at "workshops" what high-level management might persist in considering unmarketable commodities. Student teachers become "interns" in "clinical" experiences. We find this last troubling in its undertones of disease, hospitalization, and scientism. Our own preference inclining towards mysteries, whether of art or religion, we would substitute initiate, novice, postulant, and the dark night of the soul as terms more suitable to describe the student teacher's experience. Such lexical preferences aside, we welcome the chance to publish the first results of the initial AST - UMREL sponsored five-state invitational conference to test the Stanford University "technical skills" and "performance criteria" -- and everyone had a tense time steering that last word in and out of the plural -- of the teacher, and to develop the criteria by which a student teacher's performance might be judged in the various jobs that are the particular responsibility for the English teacher. Developing such criteria to help critic teachers train new members for our profession must be of interest to us nationally; we hope to hear more of this at our Annual Conferences both in the state and from the NCTE.

Future issues of M E J will be focussed on reports and articles from the forthcoming Annual Conference of the MCTE to be held April 19-20 at the Radisson Hotel in Minneapolis; and a selection of student papers on post World War II fiction chosen from nominations of English majors at the state's colleges at their Thirteenth Annual Conference held this last February at St. Olaf and Carleton Colleges. The Forum will print some answers to the question of what the State Department of Education does for all its English teachers, and what it would like to do if only local administrators would cooperate. We've got a potential symposium in the making on underground newspapers and "tasteful censorship." And we invite your contributions to the Review of Books.



# ENGLISH TEACHING - SOME PREJUDICES

## by Paul Roberts

Introduced by **HAROLD B. ALLEN**, University of Minnesota

Where tradition is powerful and unyielding in the face of new learning, new wisdom, it is given to very few men to come forward with the right combination of knowledge and skill and courage required to build a bridge from the older learning to the new. In all ages there have been the few daring researchers whose discoveries have carried them far ahead of their fellows, and who are so engrossed in their study, their research, that they do not care for the distance between them and other men. But even fewer have been the bridge builders who can bring people from the old to the new truth the researchers have been finding out.

Our speaker tonight is such a man. Paul Roberts is a bridge builder. It is true that from his birth in San Luis Obispo, California, fifty years ago until he was well along in his graduate work at the University of California at Berkeley, he did not appear to be a future bridge builder, even though during the war he was a steam engineer in the Merchant Marine. But during his doctoral work at Berkeley he became acquainted with some of the new thinking about linguistics, particularly descriptive structural grammar and its relationship to the field of usage. He was disturbed by the distance between these new ideas and the old-fashioned grammar his students at San Jose State College would have to go out to teach. So he built his first bridge -- a book called Understanding Grammar [Harper & Row] published in 1954. It carried his students at least a little way from the old to the new.

The next year Freeman Twaddell, of Brown University, and I were in Cairo, Egypt, on Fulbright grants as senior linguists with a team concerned with the teaching of English as a second language in what is now the United Arab Republic. It was clear that someone was needed to carry on this work that I had been beginning there for the schools, for the Ministry of Education. This book, Understanding Grammar, gave to Twaddell and me the notion that perhaps Roberts was the man. Accordingly, we proposed his name to the Fulbright office in Washington. In September, 1955, Roberts arrived in Cairo. And while there, he wrote the book that became his second bridge, Patterns of English [Harcourt, Brace & World] published in 1956 for the senior high school.

You should read his very delightful Cornflakes and Beaujolais [Holt, Rinehart & Winston,] 1958 to learn how he was able to get the manuscript of that book out of Egypt at the time of the Israeli attack when he and other Americans were evacuated to Italy. Those of you who know Roberts only as a textbook writer should certainly know that book. Well, Roberts fell in love with Italy, so deeply in love that after his year there and a year back in California, he was glad to return to Rome in 1960 as a professor of Cornell University in charge of the Cornell-Fulbright Linguistics Program in Italy. In the meantime he had built another bridge, this one a book, Understanding English, [Harper & Row] 1958 for college freshmen. But while he was back in the States, he had attended in 1958 the Texas Conference on Problems of Linguistic Analysis in English, and there had learned from Noam Chomsky about another way of dealing with the language -- transformational grammar. It seemed to him that it opened new doors to deeper insights. So now he had to build another bridge, this one part structural and part transformational: English Sentences [Harcourt, Brace & World] in 1962. Further study of transformational grammar led him then to give up the idea of a bridge, half of which was in one style of architecture and the other half in another. His next bridge, English Syntax [Harcourt, Brace & World] in 1964, was entirely a transformational bridge.

But before that bridge was finished, something happened to change Paul Roberts's life. At the NCTE Spring Meeting on linguistics in the secondary schools held in Louisville, Kentucky, in April, 1963, William Jovanovich, the president of Harcourt, Brace, decided that the influence of linguistics was not a passing fancy. It was not a fad of a year or two, it wasn't just a gimmick. He flew to Rome to see Paul Roberts. Four months later as Paul and I and our wives were eating dinner in an outdoor restaurant in Rome, beneath Sophia Loren's window with Italian cats swirling around our feet and Italian vino rosso swirling in our glasses he revealed that he was going to give up his Cornell professorship to go with Harcourt, Brace in response to their appeal for someone to produce a series of textbooks from the third grade through the twelfth with consistent language orientation. I consider this the act of a man committed to English education. It was the act of a man of courage. Two-thirds of that series is now finished, already the longest suspension bridge in the history of applied English linguistics.

Fellow teachers, I am very proud tonight to present a distinguished colleague and friend, Paul Roberts, builder of bridges.



# ENGLISH TEACHING - SOME PREJUDICES

## by Paul Roberts

A talk delivered to the Annual Conference of the MCTE on May 5, 1967

Thank you very much, Harold, for the generous introduction. I don't know about generous introductions because the performance may disappoint expectation. I sometimes think it's better to say, "We've got this fellow and we'll see what he can do." But, at any rate, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to talk to you about some ideas that I've had which I call "prejudices" about the teaching of English, in all of its aspects. I don't shrink from the word prejudice, but I would like to venture the rather fine distinction between ideas that are prejudicious and those that are pre-judicial. By that I mean on the one hand that I'm not under the delusion that I'm talking about some kind of incontrovertible truth, some kind of actual fact. But that on the other, these are studied, not present thoughts by duty ruminated. They're based on nearly thirty years of teaching English, of teaching students who aspire to be teachers of English, of working with schools, and of much contemplation of the various serious problems of the English portion of the curriculum. I'm sometimes asked whether I ever taught in the lower school and I can just barely say "Yes." One year in Cairo I taught thirty-two eight-year-old Egyptian boys English, and I had the dubious distinction of introducing P.T.A. to that unhappy country.

The first suggestion that I would put to you is that English, whether in the elementary school, high school or the university, is not and should not be thought to be a service department. The English hour or the English class is of course importantly concerned with teaching the pupil how to spell, to read, how to write sentences and paragraphs. But this is not its essential function, in my view. And it is not, or should not be, the only part of the day or the school in which the goal is pursued. Teachers in the elementary school, I think, will perhaps be more easily persuaded of this than those who teach in high schools and universities, because the teacher in the elementary school is commonly with the pupils all day long, and involved in the variety of subjects in which English is used for the most part, spoken or written. The teacher does not say, "Well, now we're out of

English and into geography so it doesn't matter how you spell Mississippi." He keeps him to the spelling of Mississippi all day long. And even in arithmetic the teacher is concerned whether the child says "two plus two is four" or "two plus two are four." The teaching of English in the elementary school goes on all day. It's only in the upper grades, where one teacher teaches social studies, another math, another science, another foreign language, another English and so on, that proper spelling and the manufacture of correct and graceful sentences are thought to be the responsibility of the English teacher and nobody else. Thus we have the science teacher who complains that the reason the pupils cannot write proper scientific reports is that the English teacher, neglecting duty, has failed to teach them how to write scientific reports. But why should the English teacher, and not the science teacher, teach the writing of scientific reports? One might bear it if the science teacher were to say, "Well, you see, I have the misfortune to be illiterate. I can't spell or make sentences or organize material so would you please do this for me." But this is not the argument. The argument is the science teacher is occupied with big and lofty matters and cannot be bothered with "kitchen stuff" like spelling and manufacture of sentences. This is the task of the scullery girl, English. Or what is English for? Similarly, the social science teacher complains that English has not taught pupils how to write research papers, and the language teacher loudly asserts that the only reason that pupils cannot learn French and German is that the English teacher has not taught them English grammar.

Well, it's my prejudice that these attitudes are quite mistaken and should be extirpated from the school. In an American or British school it's everybody's business, I think, to teach English--to teach writing and speaking, to correct spelling, to eliminate errors, and ambiguity in sentence construction, to give advice on organization. I could be persuaded to the contrary only if it could be shown that all teachers except English teachers are illiterate.

Well, then, what is English for? Of course it plays a large part in the "kitchen" matters just described. It does systematically what other parts of the curriculum do only haphazardly and at random: describing the fundamental laws that underlie our words and sentences and the conventions that shape our paragraphs and articles and books. But this is not in my opinion the essential function of English. The essential function of English is to convey to the children in the largest measure possible, an understanding of



what civilization is all about. It should aim, through a careful exploration of English language and English and American literature to bring the children to some notion of what it is like to be a human being. Its purpose is not to make them happy. There are drugs which produce happiness, of a sort at least. It's rather to tell them what they are and where they are and where they've been and where they are going. All parts of the curriculum do this in some measure, but my prejudice is that English does it most because it is immediately concerned with the language and literature, and that herein lies its reason for being.

Well, if you accept this point of view as the point of departure, then there is quite a lot of consequence. We must re-examine such notions, I think, as beginning where the child is. Probably no one would object to this as pedagogical theory, but one must object strongly to the pedagogical practice that derives from it. And that is to begin where the child is and stay there. In the last few decades, the subject matter of English has become more and more the child himself. He is encouraged in the English hour to explore and contemplate and write about his family, his pets, his classmates, his summer holidays, and most of all, himself. We earnestly pursue George Robinson, third-grader, begging him to share with us his views on war and peace, the value of poetry, the relative worth of cats and dogs, the desirability of being the eldest child, the youngest child, or the only child in the family. This may have some use in getting him started in writing, but it has no other use. The views of George Robinson, third-grader, are of very little interest on any subject whatsoever, except perhaps whether he has to go to the bathroom. And furthermore, never will be unless early on we start putting information into George instead of forever trying to pull it out of him. The business of English is not to ascertain what he thinks, but to make available to him some of the things that other people have thought and written, not in the spirit of indoctrination, but in that of education. We don't require that he think that Aristotle is a genius or that Aristotle is a fool, but we don't want him to get to adulthood without ever having heard of Aristotle.

So far I think I will perhaps have carried most people with me. From now on as I become more specific about my prejudices, I shall no doubt drop off supporters and wind up possibly as a minority of one. For instance, I don't think that children should be taught to appreciate literature. More than that, I don't think they <u>can</u> be taught to appreciate it. They can

be taught to make the proper noises, but we shouldn't confuse these noises with literature appreciation. Once I visited a third-grade class where I heard a teacher read a poem on Halloween and ask, "Now Sally, can you tell us how this made you feel?" And Sally, rising to the occasion, "Oh, Miss Driscoll, it just made me feel all shivery." What I said to myself was "Well, Sally, you've become a very satisfactory small phony and if you will just persist maybe some day you can become a big phony and make a significant contribution to the decline of Western Civilization." We don want to require of Sally that she tell us how the poe makes her feel. In the first place, she can't. Appr ciation is one of the incommunicable things. Asking what a poem makes you feel is like asking what it is like to be in love. One can make noises to fill the silence, but one can never really quite tell. And th more one tries to tell, the more the experience shriv els. For support of that I will refer you to Heming way's "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." Furthermore, the poetic experience, like most deep ex periences, is essentially a private one. What Sally feels about the poem is really between Sally and God. About all the teacher and Sally can do is nod and smile to each other across the valley that divides each human being from every other one and say, "Yes, it's so, isn't it, though I'm afraid I can't tell you just what It is." The teacher can, however, require something else of Sally--that she understand the poem. Whether it gives her ecstasy or boredom, she should be able to demonstrate her understanding. She may probe this understanding at different levels, depending upon the age, the ability, the experience of the child. At the beginning, naturally, we probe for simple things. "Who is jumping over the candlestick?" Answer: "Jack." Later on we may get into metaphor, symbolism, the like, complicated matters of structure and syntactic delicacies. But the emphasis in my view should always be on whether Sally understands, not on how she vibrates. A considerable responsibility in this matter rests upon the teacher of the very young child, second or third grade teachers. A third-grade child is a very tempting animal because you can con the third-grade kid into almost anything: that the object of mankind is to breed winged pigs or that anything that rhymes makes you shivery. In the third grade, the typical child is still deeply in love with the teacher and quick to learn the responses that seem to please the object of adoration. But only on Grecian urns can one be forever panting and forever young. In the fourth grade and beyond, the child hears other voices and explores other rooms. If the third-grade teacher has fed him a lot of nonsense, he will become



disillusioned and cynical about the whole enterprise, be able to--be ready to--condemn it out of hand, and this is particularly, I think, a danger in English. Two plus two is roughly four in the third grade as in the eighth, but shivering varies. Few eighth-graders roll up to the English class with hungry enthusiasm, and I believe that the reason why they don't is that they've been taught early that English is chiefly an emotional rather than an intellectual matter. And when they don't feel the emotion, they come to look on English as a rather boring game that English teachers for some reason want to play. I shouldn't like to be misunderstood on this point. I think it's a wonderful thing for children, for anyone, to get enjoyment from literature. In some deep sense this is what the thing is all about. I just don't think that it's likely to be caught by direct pursuit. It comes, if it comes at all, with attention to understanding and not too much palaver.

Another prejudice I have is that I don't think teachers should be required to be creative, in the sense in which they have in recent years frequently been urged to be. In another sense, classroom creativity is highly desirable and a large mark of the good teacher. You must certainly commend the teacher who can hang a little loose, who can maintain some flexibility in relation to the lesson, see when it's going badly and have the wit to make it go well. You must value the teacher who is in a sensitive relationship with the pupils, and realizes that the problem of teaching Ricky is quite different from that of teaching Annabelle. If this is what creative teaching means, I'm all for it. But it has been interpreted to mean much more than this. To mean, in fact, to devise a new course of study, scope and sequence for every classroom situation. I don't think the teachers actually do this much, but they're made to feel that they ought to do it, and they often pretend to do it. If you ask a teacher whether he follows the book in whatever subject he's teaching, he will ordinarily deny it, truthfully or not. Following the book has come to mean bad or, at least, uncreative teaching. How can any book correctly anticipate the needs of the children of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, or San Jose, California? Well, no book can, of course. Ideally, Sioux Falls and San Jose would each have its separate book. More than that, each child in Sioux Falls and San Jose would have his own separate book, tailored for his own needs and capabilities. Obviously this is impossible, but it seems to me that this is just what, under some interpretations of creativity, teachers have been asked to do. Certainly a great many teachers are capable of producing a course of study,

responsible and useful and shaped to fit the needs o particular class. But no teacher is capable of doin this in the heat and sweat of day-to-day teaching. takes a great deal of time and a great deal of help produce a sequential program in any serious subject. It's absurd to think that anyone can improvise one d by-day between Huntley-Brinkley and dinner.

This problem is a little more serious in English than in other subjects. One skips around in math, science, social studies no doubt, but not so much as in English. The reason is that English in the last few decades has become somewhat formless. There have been valiant attempts on the part of school committee to indicate some sort of sequence, but they've not co to much because they've dealt almost entirely with surface matters that do not really lend themselves t sequential treatment. Thus, I once saw a course of study for the schools of a large Western city which indicated that the children should learn to capitali the pronoun "I" in the third grade, the proper nouns in the fourth, the beginning of sentences in the fift and the name of the Deity in the sixth. I don't know how this worked out in practice, perhaps they wrote all proper nouns in the lower case until they got int the fourth grade, and perhaps avoided talking about t Deity until the sixth.

Our ancestors teaching traditional grammar did much better than this. One could guess that they would be on subjects and predicates in the third and maybe gerunds in the eighth. They were going somewhe Maybe not to any important place, but at least somewhere. It was, I believe, the tendency beginning in the Twenties to abandon the sequential study of gramm that took the spine out of English and left it floppy and amorphous. This quite apart from the question of whether it's useful to teach traditional grammar. The point is rather that a subject with no identifiable subject matter is formless. It must either find a sub ject matter or disintegrate. The tendency of English in the past few decades has been to disintegrate. The orthodox view for a long time was that the only gramma that should be taught was what was called "functional grammar." This means teaching no grammar that cannot be put to direct and instant use in the correction of some specific error in speaking and writing. That is, you don't teach the participle unless you catch the youngster saying, "He had wrote a letter." Then you teach the participle, with no concern for what grammar may have been taught before or may be taught later. Obviously, such a procedure cannot possibly lead to any real understanding of the grammatical system as a



whole. The participle cannot be understood except in the large complex of which it is a part. And of course the whole notion of sequence has been abandoned.

Something of the same thing happened on the literature side of the English class. There was a time when English teachers were more or less agreed that certain poems and stories were valuable in themselves and ought to be taught to any child going to school. No doubt some of the choices were doubtful; I didn't care much for Silas Marner in the tenth grade, and I don't care much for it now. Nevertheless, I accepted then, as I accept now, the notion that literature is an absolute of some sort, that one studies the good things in school and reads the trivial ones privately as one's inclination suggests and leisure permits. This attitude changed also. The tendency grew to abandon the classics in favor of the trivial, on the ground that the latter were more interesting to the children, closer to their experience, more acceptable to them. So in many schools Silas Marner was replaced by Lou Gehrig, Grey's "Elegy" by poems on Halloween. My present purpose is not to defend Silas Marner against Lou Gehrig, but simply to point out that the replacement of the former by the latter contributes largely to the formlessness of English. For once Lou Gehrig is admitted, anything may be. Why not Bart Starr, Willy Mays, Wilt Chamberlain? With Lou Gehrig in the curriculum, anyone is safe on first. The children are no longer directed to a course of study comprising what people think any educated person should know. There are no longer particular things that the English course of study should contain, and there is, therefore, no longer an English course of study. This situation brought about English books that could be studied in any direction, forwards, backwards, sideways, diagonally. . . nothing was related to anything else. There was not much difference between the fourth grade book and the eighth except that in the eighth the sentences were a little longer, and the pictures portrayed larger children.

But this was not yet the worst that was to happen to English. Since English didn't seem to have anything in particular to teach, curriculum makers with new demands from society for things to be taught began to dump them into English. Telephone manners, for example. You speak in English on the telephone don't you, so why shouldn't the English class teach you how to speak on the telephone? Or how to behave to your grandparents, or how to be nice to the new child in class, or how to plan a picnic, or how to frame the soft answer that turneth away wrath. English came to be concerned less and less with language and literature and more and

more with manners and morals, and with other things as well. I remember an English teacher in a curriculum meeting where it was proposed to add still another thing, English say that she didn't see why science couldn't do syphillis because English was already doing gonorrhea. Maybe all of these things should be taught, I don't know, but I can't agree that they should be labeled English or be allowed to clutter up English books. Let's have a new subject called Miscellaneous. Children can study math at nine, Miscellaneous at ten, English at eleven, and so on. And let the English be restricted to the serious and sequential study of the language and of the literature.

The key word here is sequential. The hardest single thing for a text-book writer to maintain is sequence and progression, to keep building and not to be forever reviewing. There are two main developments in recent years that have exacerbated the problem. One is the formlessness of English that's just been mentioned. Since English doesn't deal with any particular thing, one cannot be sure that a pupil at any grade level, from first to thirteenth, knows any particular thing about English, anything that can be used as a foundation to climb to something else. I don't think I ever had a student in college who had never heard of Shakespeare, but I have had college students who were under the impression that Shakespeare wrote his works in Latin and that they were just badly translated. And the other development is the extraordinary mobility of modern society. There was nothing like this when I was in school. I would guess that over eighty per cent of my first grade class was still together in the eighth grade. I don't know whether we were taught well or not, but atleast we were taught more or less the same things and the teacher knew more or less what we had been taught and what to build on. Nowadays, particularly in the higher income groups, there is nothing like this. A youngster may pop in and out of two or three school districts a year. And the teacher can't possibly know what training all have in common and what to build on.

Well, what could curriculum planners do in such a situation? At the risk of sounding frivolous, I will say the only thing they can do is pretend it doesn't happen. This is what is done in the school of my own community, The American Overseas School of Rome. This school has a turnover that could be matched I think by very few in the States. The children are constantly coming and going as diplomatic and business reassignments require. A large number following in the wake of Fullbright or Sabbatical parents come for just a year



or part of a year. Yet the school curriculum is built on the assumption that every child that enters Overseas in the first grade will graduate from it in the twelfth. The assumption is patently false, of course. Few or none do. But there is the fundamental view that catching up is required, that there is a ladder from one through twelve with easy steps for the child who is always on the ladder and leaps demanded of those who come newly to it. The system works. Not only does Overseas rank spectacularly in college admissions, but those who leave it for State-side schools generally report that they're well ahead of their classmates. My advice to a curriculum committee in the American system, then, would be something along these lines: plan a sequential program. Plan it as if your population were entirely stable. Help your new people to meet the standard as well as you can, but not at the expense of the total program designed for the youngster who stays with it from one through twelve.

Well, I have many other prejudices and one of them involves what are called slow learners. Absurd as it may seem, my feeling is that the important thing about slow learners is simply that they learn slowly. This means that they must be given time to learn and also that more is demanded of the teacher than with fast learners. More wit and ingenuity, more patience. If this were a logical world, teachers would be graded for excellence and all the really good ones would be put teaching the slow learners, and the rather poor ones would be assigned to the fast learners. For the fast learners hardly need a teacher at all, and anyway can't be much harmed by a poor one. But that's not the way the world goes and my observation is that the clever teacher usually finds his way to the clever pupils. He is, therefore, not pushed to the full exercise of his professional ability. When I say that the characteristic of slow learners is that they learn slowly, I mean to imply that they can often learn the same things as fast learners, only that it takes them a longer time. I would make the further, stronger claim that they ought to learn the same things, at least in the elementary grades, and in much of high school. And I think that in English they ought to learn the same things, as much of them as they can, from one through twelve. I'll try to make this more specific with a rather exaggerated example. Suppose we have in the school district a streaming device in the twelfth grade. I have no strong opinion on streaming one way or the other. But I would see no objection to a fast stream studying "Hamlet," "As You Like It," "Macbeth," the middle stream studying "Hamlet" and "As You Like It," and the slow stream studying just "Hamlet."

What I would object to, I think, would be a situation in which the fast stream studied "Hamlet," the middle stream J.P. Marquand, and the slow stream Lou Gehrig. Streaming of this sort, particularly in the lower grades, produces a system just as pernicious as the British Eleven Plus, or other plan to sort out pupils of tender years, deciding that some will lead and dominate and others will haul and carry. They won't all achieve leadership, obviously, but they ought all to have a good shot at it and to be permitted to go just as far as their brains and industry and the skill of the teachers will take them. They ought none be barred *a priori* from the place where the power is. And I'll tell you where the power is. It's not with Lou Gehrig it's with "Hamlet." A rather interesting situation has developed in that respect with the English series that I wrote. It's rather conservative and rather hard, quite demanding, and intellectual. One would think it would be used, if at all, with superior students. Actually in a number of places it has been adopted for what I think are now called "disadvantaged children. I don't know why this is, but I imagine it has something to do with Federal funds. But whatever the explanation, I confess that I take some pleasure in the thought that these disadvantaged children are studying good things like Stevenson and Larkin and Dickens and Mark Twain, while Caroline Kennedy is learning how to talk on the telephone.

I'll now come to what is my most unpopular prejudice of all and I think quite an idiosyncratic one. I'm one of those people who cannot change a light bulb without risking blowing out the power of the whole city. And so I have a particular view of audio-visual aids. I'm a firm believer in them, but I think there are only two that are really first rate. One is the teacher's voice and the other is the chalkboard. I can see that the overhead projector may be in some circumstances more convenient than the chalkboard, but beyond that I feel that machinery is to be classed as an educational nuisance, except in very particular circumstances. I'll take an example somewhat apart from our present concern. Much of my work has been connected with teaching of foreign languages, which since the middle 1950's has been involved much with the use of language laboratories. Like most other people in this field, I was pretty bullish about language labs at one time, and have come to considerable disillusionment. I think they have some small contribution to make to foreign language learning but nothing commensurate with the cost of institution and maintenance and supervision. Our experience in Rome has been that after the first flush of enthusiasm has



rn off, it's difficult to keep students active in e lab for more than about ten or fifteen minutes at ime. And we have the feeling further that, even if could, the practice would not get us much closer to r goal, the spontaneous generation of actual and e or less accurate language. The reason that this a problem is that the educator is ethically bound, seems to me, to put up a certain amount of resis- nce to the layman's passion for machinery. The lay- n is willing to believe in almost anything that is chanical. Once in Rome I was called on the telephone a colonel attached to the United States Embassy. don't suppose that one gets to be a colonel in the ited States Army without a certain amount of intel- gence and common sense, but this colonel remarked at he had heard that he had to learn Italian, and he d heard that I was in control of an Italian learning chine, and he wanted me to plug him into this machine. ll, he advised me that he was a busy man and would t be able to devote more than two weeks to learning alian. He hoped that my machine was efficient enough meet this requirement.

On the home front, we have a situation perhaps not extreme, but nevertheless, in my idiosyncratic view, larming. We're all for teaching machines, film strips, ovies, records, tapes and much other machinery, much which seems to me of very little value. I include re the records that accompany the series that I wrote. would advise teachers to play them with very moderate xpectation, and then only when quite a lot of time is ailable; for if you're like me you can be sure the rd will be too short, or that the mechanism won't produce satisfactorily, or that you won't be able to nd the band you want, or they will play at the wrong peed and Donald Duck on you. One of the arguments r machinery of this sort is that because of the large lasses that teachers must manage, mechanical help is ecessary. Obviously the classes are alarmingly large. don't know how things are in Minnesota, but in Cali- rnia where I've been the last few months, I've been ch bemused by the luxury to be observed everywhere the schools except in the size of classes. These chools are truly impressive, beautifully designed, ry and light, extensively carpeted, equipped with l sorts of machines that pop out of the wall at the ouch of a button, but the classes run thirty-five to orty on the average. American schools overseas gen- ally do better than this. There isn't much equip- ent but the classes run around twenty. And my feel- g is that the education is much better.

I still have something to say about grammar and

usage and I'll try to be brief. On usage, the Engli teacher is confronted with the problem not to be fou in other subjects, or at least not so acutely. This the constant change and development that is going on the language. English changes only very slowly in it deep structures, the underlying laws that govern its expression. But it changes fast in the surface struc ture. And this of course is what the argument about Webster's Third was all about. The dictionary report that the surface structures of the language had change enormously between 1934, the date of the Second Inter national and 1961, the date of the Third. This much distressed the editors and writers and many of our national magazines and newspapers who attacked the di tionary editors as if these editors were responsible for the change. But the change is just a fact of our highly developed, highly inventive, highly communica- tive civilization. Nobody is responsible for it, bu we all have to adapt to it one way or another. Havin been out of this country for more than six years, I have been quite struck by the changes in the language that have taken place in the interval. I don't mean so much the obvious things like new terms for space development or expressions like "keep your cool" or jokes like "sorry about that." I mean a large number of more subtle differences. For example, take a sen- tence like "This has got to be Barnwell's finest per- formance." Six years ago this would have meant that if Barnwell doesn't perform today better than he ever did before he will be in trouble. Now it means Barn- well has never performed so well as he is performing today. Such developments are everywhere in the langu- age. It seems it's universal now to address all ath- letes as "Baby" and other people as well; I wondered whether I should have said "Thank you, Professor Allen baby."

The question is: How does the English teacher, the teacher of the language, some would say the custodian of the language, float on this current? I suppose the answer depends somewhat on the temperament of the teacher. My own inclination is to stick pretty close to my own dialect, that is San Luis Obispo, California 1920 vintage. I don't require that the youth I teach adopt this, but I equally resist having to adopt the dialect of the youth I teach. I probably couldn't if I wanted to. The older person always sounds a bit silly, it seems to me, when he tries to talk like a young person. He is better off being himself, perhaps a little self-consciously himself, perhaps a little deliberately archaic. So far as the school is con- cerned, I think that the essential language of the English class should be a fairly conservative one, an



unslangy one--a language that dips generously into old classics and modern excellence. Structural linguistics has taught us that correctness is relative, that good English is whatever best suits the requirements of the time, the place and the circumstance, and I'm sure that we should carefully avoid making the child nervous about his use of language or ashamed of the dialect that he has learned from his parents or his playmates. On the other hand I don't think we should expend any energy in teaching the child how to talk on the play- ground, in teaching teen-agers how to talk like teen- agers. This they already know how to do. We should not bedevil them with trivial distinctions like that between shall and will, but we do have an obligation, I think, to acquaint them with how the great writers and speakers like Edward Gibbon, Edmund Burke, Winston Churchill, Robert Ingersoll, P.G. Wodehouse, have used the English language to make it do the things that they wanted done.

I come then at the last to grammar, the subject that has agitated English teachers for the last forty years perhaps most of all subjects. Should one teach grammar and if so what kind? Up to the 1920's, tradi- tional grammar was firmly in the curriculum, and taught in a more or less sequential way. It wasn't particu- larly scholarly, its connections with the scholarly grammarians were pretty tenuous, and it depended mostly from the work of textbook writers of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly, on both sides of the Atlantic, of the American, Lindley Murray. This grammar was often illogical and it could not be shown that it provided any practical benefit. But it had its own inner consistency and it was taught serious- ly and sequentially for over a hundred years. Our an- cestors, whether they understood it or not, were to some degree shaped by it. To some extent they thought differently, wrote differently, lived differently, because of the traditional grammar they learned. Short- ly after the first World War the whole matter of teach- ing grammar was called into question. It was argued rather successfully that there was little correlation between the study of grammar and improvement of writing. The orthodox position came to be that grammar should not be taught in the schools or, if taught at all, only functionally. That is, directed ad hoc to the cure of specific writing ills. Many teachers, I suspect most teachers, continued to teach grammar as best they could, but with the onus of being considered old-fashioned, unprogressive, with no official support and with an increasing difficulty in maintaining the sequence. They came often to the point of having always to re- view the grammar instead of teaching it.

There came then the impact of what is generally called structural grammar. This developed through th researches of linguists of the 30's and 40's, and cam to general notice in the publication of Charles Carpe ter Fries' Structure of English in 1952. This brushed away a number of illogicalities and inconsistencies of traditional grammar, promoted a more rational view of the very large problem of correctness, and satisfi the needs of some teachers who wanted grammar but who were quite dissatisfied with the traditional grammar which had, until then, been their only alternative. Had I the time, I would like here to dwell on the merits of structural grammar. The contributions of th structuralists to our understanding of language have been very large and, unfortunately, have often been minimized by their successors. But time being what it is, I will pass over them and point simply to their essential weakness. They tended to teach grammar as a closed system, and to base their recommendations for language learning and language study accordingly. The work suggested that learning a language was essentially a matter of learning a number of sounds, of words and sentences, and sentence patterns and then using these as the need arises. Most systems for foreign language teaching evolved within the last few years have been based on this assumption and have therefore failed.

Then the transformationalists, and particularly, of course, Noam Chomsky of M.I.T., came along in the mid 50's pointing out that language is not like that at all, that it's not a closed system but a very open one. The language is not the set of sentences one learns and uses at need. It is instead a system for generating these sentences according to unpredictable situations. Most of the sentences generated will be new ones never used before and yet accepted by the reader or hearer as correct and proper sentences of the language. The number of possible sentences available to the speaker of English is, if not infinite, at least on the order of magnitude of the particles of the universe. And the number of sentence types is not importantly smaller. Thus it can be shown that apart from the simplest formulas and greetings like "Hello" and "Thank you" and trite expressions like "A good time was had by all," the chances that any particular person will have occasion to use any particular sentence are quite small. This is so even in cases where the needs of the person are pretty well known in advance. For example, tourists. Countless British tourists preparing for Continental travel have memorized the French, German and Spanish equivalents of "I have two pounds of tea and three bars of chocolate for my own personal use," but it's doubtful that any



considerable number ever stammered out the sentence. What happens is that the Customs man boards the train at Calais or Modane, usually anxious to get back to his card games, says hopefully, "Rien a declarer?" and you say, "Rien a declarer," and go back to the study of your phrase book. The views of the people who write phrase books on what phrases might come in handy are sometimes peculiar. There's a Dutch book on useful English words and phrases which contains the sentence "Our postilion has been struck by lightning." One is not likely to find use for this, which is a pity because it's a sentence with a certain euphony and a kind of dignity. But in fact, the chances that a Hollander visiting New York will have occasion to say, for example, "Where are my suitcases?" are not much greater than they are for "Our postilion has been struck by lightning." They're a little greater, but not much. He'd have to lose his suitcases first of all, a thing not really easy to do, and then be in a situation in which "Where are my suitcases?" is the proper thing to say. Maybe "A thief just made off with my suitcases" or "Has anyone seen any unclaimed suitcases in the lobby?" would be better. The order of probability of "Where are my suitcases" and "Our postilion has been struck by lightning" are quite similar. Both are near zero.

Well, what does all this mean to the teaching of English? I'm not so bold to claim that I know. What it suggests to me is that we ought to be more occupied with describing the underlying systems of the language--the systems that permit us to make new sentences, new words, pronounce them correctly--than with devoting our energies to the haphazard pursuit of surface matters. Like whether it is better to say "Two plus two is four" or "Two plus two are four." The child who learns what it is that enables him to come up to each new situation with the language that the situation requires learns to a considerable extent what it is that makes him a human being. I cannot think that this knowledge is less valuable than that of history or mathematics or biology. It's also entirely possible that conscious understanding of the mechanism of the language will improve his control of the language. If it does, so much the better.

This is then roughly my position, my set of prejudices, on the teaching of English. Perhaps you will think them too conservative or reactionary. It's certainly conservative. I think we've been a little too quick in the last few decades to jettison cargo. Yet I wouldn't want to return to the Twenties even if we could. I would just like to recapture for English

some of the old things of value, and to teach them w
the help of the many important advances that have be
made, not only in pedagogy, but also in the understa
ing of language and literature, because I think this
is the most important of all subject matters in the
school, the best and loveliest, and most powerful th
that the teacher can set before the child.



# focus on teaching the humanities

## A NOTE ON BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR HIGH SCHOOL HUMANITIES COURSES

BY WALLACE KENNEDY
Special Projects Coordinator of Bloomington Schools

Humanities courses being taught in Minnesota are as various as the teachers who design and teach them. They follow organizational schemes that are interdisciplinary, chronological or thematic and they may be philosophically, historically or structurally focused. Their bibliographies are better understood within the context of each course syllabus. They are probably best understood from visitation to see them taught.

A partial listing of teachers and schools that offer humanities is given with the suggestion that appeals be made to those schools for information about course content.

### Humanities at Grade Eleven

John Goodnature
Albert Lea H. S.
Albert Lea, Minnesota

James Warren
Alexander Ramsey H. S.
Roseville, Minnesota

Gene Lohman
F B Kellogg H. S.
Roseville, Minnesota

Donna Marshall
St. Anthony of Padua H. S.
830 N. E. Second Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota

### Humanities at Grade Twelve

Orville Gilmore
Albert Lea H. S.
Albert Lea, Minnesota

Neal Luebke
Robbinsdale H. S.
Robbinsdale, Minnesota

Donna Marshall
St. Anthony of Padua H. S.
830 N. E. Second Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Cornelia Nachbar
English Coordinator
Indep. School District 271
Bloomington, Minnesota

John Loegering
St. Louis Park H. S.
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

Jerry Villars
Stillwater H. S.
Stillwater, Minnesota

Martin Wiltgen
Mankato H. S.
Mankato, Minnesota

**Wallace Kennedy, a John Hay Fellow in Humanities at Columbia University in 1957-68, has taught English and Humanities courses at Albert Lea High School and John F. Kennedy High School in Bloomington.**

# WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD: HUMANITIES PROGRAMS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

BY FRED E. H. SCHROEDER
University of Minnesota – Duluth

In planning a humanities program there is some danger of having fools rush in where angels fear to tread. I shouldn't like to have the imagery regarded too literally, for I don't like to think of myself as clothed in either identity, even though I have had some experience in rushing in where angels had feared to tread. Some years ago I was hired to teach junior high school "core," a curricular term which antedates the more sophisticated-sounding "humanities." What I was expected to do was to teach American history and English. Since I rather prided myself in having an integrative mind, I envisioned a perfectly dovetailed integrated course in which my students would study the history and the literature of given periods and places in American life, whereupon they would exercise their learning in free-wheeling themes. But I failed to do as I had intended, and ultimately divided the two-hour period evenly between history and English.

Now, with the angelic credentials of a degree in American Studies and five years' experience in teaching college humanities courses, I know a little more about why angels may have feared to tread where I had rushed in. Furthermore, I now see a spate of problems involved in planning any kind of humanities program in the secondary school.

The first of these problems is that of defining the word "humanities" so that teachers, students, and maybe even parents will have some common ground of understanding. One valid definition of "humanities" is the study of Humanism, that is, the "Great Books." Another valid definition of "humanities" is the study of the humanities, that is, the arts and social studies. The inclusion of social studies is debatable, but when it is considered that many works which are by any definition humanistic (Plato's Republic; More's Utopia; Castiglione's The Courtier) are also unquestionably social studies, it seems patent that any humanities course of study must include both the arts and the social studies. The distinction between these definitions of "humanities," however, is easily resolved if we regard "humanities" as an integrative study of man, of man's problems, and of man's achievements. The key term is "integrative." There are two



traditional academic methods of integrating the study of man; first, offering courses which integrate materials from the various disciplines; second, offering courses of study which expose the student to the various disciplines per se; thereupon requiring some kind of integrative project or seminar.

The problem which develops out of the first method is the possibility of superficial eclecticism. The problem which develops out of the second method is administrative. Eclecticism is often a misunderstood term. It ideally implies educated selection from varied sources for the purpose of developing an integrated whole that incorporates all of the best. In practice, eclecticism in humanities courses frequently results in one's roaring up and down the centuries, skimming off choice morsels passim. That is, it produces thirty-week courses in Man, God and the Universe--with pictures. On the other hand, the piecemeal exposure to the several disciplines in separate courses is disintegrative, and the possibility of preparing an effective integrating seminar is slim, what with the usual poor viscosity in the flow of communication among the departments of English, history, social problems, art and music, and what with the additional problem of finding a teacher suited for such a task.

For either method of integrating a humanities course of study, the selection of the teacher is the major and essential task. The teacher must have an integrative mind, which may be the result of his academic training or of his own natural talents, or all too rarely, both. His interests must be broad, not only as they are implied in his college transcript, but also as they are exhibited in his way of life. Many humanities majors are such only because they were too snobbish for sociology and too ill-disciplined for the more conventional major programs. A humanities degree is sometimes a cocktail-party patina which scratches all too easily in the academic grind. Furthermore, breadth of interest and training is not always coupled with organizational ability, and any interdisciplinary program is a slippery creature to hold onto, exasperatingly octopusian in its direction.

Octopus or not, a true humanities course must be interdisciplinary. If one limits the study of man and his problems and achievements to philosophical matters, this is a philosophy course, not a humanities course. If one limits the study to literary achievements, it is a literature course, not a humanities course; and if one limits the study to social achievements, it is

a history course. Moreover, merely lacing philosophy, literature or history courses with a few slides and a warmed-over award-winning television documentary is not integration. Nevertheless, such practices are a step in the right direction and might very well be planned as an intermediate stage in moving toward humanities in the secondary school. It has been said that if English teachers and history teachers did their jobs, humanities and interdisciplinary studies would never have been needed. Let me explain.

Ordinarily in history and literature courses we cluster ideas around some convention of the prevailing ethos, such as Romanticism or the Enlightenment. Such an ethos will evoke intellectual creations in various forms. Consequently, there are often close relationships among artists in the different creative fields. Thus, in American romanticism, the cult extended from the writers Bryant and Emerson to the painters Thomas Cole, Asher Durand, and Washington Allston. Although there can never be a one-for-one relationship between the arts, common themes and attitudes are always there, and exposure to one medium will reinforce the image in the other media. In a remarkable number of instances, too, artists worked in several media. William Blake, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, D. H. Lawrence and E. E. Cummings, for example, were painters. Hector Berlioz, Richard Wagner, and Gian-Carlo Menotti were at times their own librettists. Francis Hopkinson and John Dowland were composers, and Thomas Jefferson was an architect. Even where the relationships are not necessarily so immediate, the juxtaposition of artistic products from different fields is valuable. For example, one can relate Alexander Pope to Thomas Rowlandson, Ludwig van Beethoven to Kaspar Friedrich, Carl Sandburg to Aaron Copland, or Walt Whitman to Matthew Brady. Frequently, too, artists select their themes from other artists. John Quidor painted scenes from Washington Irving. Gustave Dore illustrated the Divine Comedy. Deems Taylor composed music for Through the Looking Glass, Henry Purcell for The Fairy Queen, and Charles Ives illustrated Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne and Alcott in a piano sonata. These and many other parallels and relationships can be profitably brought into the English or history classroom--if one can locate and afford the supplies and equipment needed for their presentation.

This is the final problem of a humanities course of study. It is expensive. Slides, both purchased and specially made, film strips, movies, and recordings for only one course can cost up to $2000 or



even $5000, and the equipment for presenting them as well as a teacher's time expended in ordering and organizing the materials are additional costs. For this reason, a modest budget spent to enrich existing courses over several years' time might be a better starting plan than a full-blown humanities program.

Money isn't everything, though. A thousand slides and a Schwann-filled music library are no aids to education if the teacher is not able to use them. A salted mine is no more than a salted mine, and no student will strike intellectual paydirt from the mere garnishment of a literary course with non-literary sources. He must be taught to see and to hear closely and critically, and he must be taught by a teacher who himself sees and hears. The disciplines are disciplined. The truly interdisciplinary must be proficient in more than one discipline and at least passively competent in all. An admittedly Botticelli-like quiz might help explain my point: two paragraphs above some thirty-five persons and titles were mentioned. If you are not quite familiar first-hand with specific works of, let us say, thirty of these artists, you probably are not yet ready to teach a humanities course. And if you didn't catch the contemporary allusions to Schwann and Botticelli you may not be the aesthetic swinger that you may have thought yourself to be. Also, the thirty-five names mentioned are rather local in time and place--they include no classical allusions, no oriental allusions. The only medieval name is Dante; the only Baroque, possibly Purcell. In short, there is no undisciplined short cut to humanities.

All of the above, I'm afraid, has been rather negative. Let us suppose, however, that one has the teacher with an integrative but disciplined mind, a faculty to support him, and a generous budget. How does one organize the course?

There are three approaches to interdisciplinary humanities courses, any of which are good. These three approaches are area studies, period studies, and problem studies. In area studies, one is usually limited to American or British studies (or some region of these nations) because of the language barriers in other cultures. In period studies, one could specialize, for example, in classics, or the renaissance, or the enlightenment. Here, since one ranges across many national borders, reading works in translation is not so provincial. Finally, in problem studies, the teacher selects one or more themes--religion, liberty, the image of man, for instance--and examines these throughout world history. In the final accounting,

no matter which approach is used, it will be, to a degree, a combination of all three. Thus, American studies is necessarily limited in time period--post 1500 A.D.--and will probably be further limited in theme--for example, the frontier or anti-intellectualism or nationalism.

All the troubles involved, however, are worthwhile. The ideal of humanities courses hardly needs defense. In every sense of the word, they are liberalizing for the student and the teacher who are freed from slavish specialization, from limited exposure to the literary products of culture and from narrow cultural provincialism. Humanities courses can effectively enrich the student's academic experience more than any other kinds of courses, and although they are, because of the sophistication of the materials involved, best suited for the high ability student, the sweeping variety of the education experience is equally appealing to the less able student. Nonetheless, I still say step, don't rush, where the angels have feared to tread. Their fears have not been unfounded.

Fred E. H. Schroeder, former public school teacher, and a contributor to SEWANEE REVIEW, E J, AMERICAN QUARTERLY, ETC., is now at the University of Minnesota – Duluth.

## HIGH SCHOOL HUMANITIES – SOME WHYS, SOME HOWS, AND SOME WHY NOTS

BY BETTY S. STAINER
Lincoln High School, Bloomington

The place of the humanities course in the high school curriculum has been a much discussed subject in the past few years. Many English teachers have wrestled with the problem of the feasibility of placing humanities at the high school level. The pro-humanities voices have been increasingly stronger, and now the problem has become more how to structure the humanities program rather than whether to teach humanities.

Although there are many advantages to a humanities approach to English, there are also pitfalls. Those of us who helped develop a 12th grade humanities curriculum in Bloomington have become increasingly conscious of both the advantages and the weaknesses of the humanities program which is now in its fourth year in the Bloomington high schools. Perhaps a brief sketch of the development, philosophy, revision and continuing re-revision of the curriculum will point up



both these problems.

In the spring of 1964, four Bloomington high school senior English teachers were asked by the English Co-ordinator to help prepare a humanities course geared to the top ten per cent of the senior class. All that summer we wrestled with what to teach and how long to spend on each part of the curriculum. We developed a basic philosophy which has not been fundamentally altered: that the honors English curriculum should provide an opportunity for students to consider philosophy, music, architecture, and literature as expressive of the prevailing world "view" of a period. We narrowed the field to the Western World, and since we wished our main emphasis to be on literature, we included genre studies of expository writing, drama, novels, and poetry.

By the end of the summer the humanities curriculum was ready - complete with lecture assignments and a day-to-day lesson plan for the whole year. The class was to be taught by six teachers to about 100 honor students. While most of the time was to be spent in non-directed small group discussions, the groups met together for lectures, films, and field trips.

At the end of the first year, we revised the curriculum. We had found that (1) The materials we had so carefully chosen did not always live up to our expectations; (2) The tight scheduling threw teachers and students into a frenzy when there was a sudden pep fest, senior class meeting, honor society initiation, snow day - ad infinitum. (The irony of the scheduling situation was that since we were nearly always "off" the schedule given to the students at the beginning of the year, the students felt we weren't well organized); (3) Non-directed group discussions are slow, and not always as fruitful as they might be, and verbose teachers have a hard time not talking except when asked a direct question by the students, and an even harder time not turning the answer into a twenty minute lecture; (4) Some of the more complex areas we felt the students could comprehend, such as logic, were a little difficult for even the best high school senior English student.

We spent much time the summer of 1965 revising and preparing to teach the course in two high schools with three teachers (two former team members and one new member) in each building. During that year, we scheduled exchange lectures and joint field trips. This proved difficult, and at times impossible, so at the end of the '65-'66 school year, a congenial divorce

was arranged, and though we have done some joint revision, the two programs have developed separately. At Kennedy the class has not remained completely team-taught because of scheduling problems, so at present two teachers may work together one period, two different teachers work together another period, and one of the teachers may have a single section to make a total of five sections. At Lincoln the class remains team-taught. The course is now offered to approximately the upper twenty per cent of the senior class in both schools. Thus, the present structure of the program has changed, but the basic curriculum has remained the same with minor changes in specific novels, plays, and other material.

At present the units covered include these: expository writing; Greek drama, philosophy, and architecture; Hebrew and Christian philosophy, history, and literature; European Medieval and Renaissance art, architecture, music, philosophy, and literature; modern art, architecture, philosophy, music and literature; and a poetry unit.

Specifically, materials covered in each period are these: Greek period: Greek theater and theology, philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, forms of Greek architecture. Readings include the Theban Plays of Sophocles coupled with readings from Aristotle's Poetics; The Oresteia of Aeschylus; readings from Plato's Republic. Lectures on Greek architecture include many overhead projections of sample architecture and various forms of construction of buildings and of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian styles. Students write several essay tests, and either sketch or photograph samples of Greek columns found in Minneapolis.

Expository writing: review of stylistic techniques, discussion of semantics, the fundamentals of syllogistic reasoning and its use in argumentation, writing of several compositions including definitions of concrete and abstract words, abstract ideas, and an argument which will be rewritten by each student until he makes an A on the paper.

Bible unit: Lectures on Hebrew and Christian history and theology. Readings include the articles in Life Magazine, December 25, 1964. This issue was devoted entirely to discussion of Biblical lands, background material concerning translations of the Bible, notes on archeology, and most important of all, a sequential condensation of Old and New Testament history, theology, and philosophy and excellent reproductions of religious art. Other readings include the



entire books of Genesis, Exodus, Ruth, Job, Luke and John, and readings from Leviticus, Isaiah, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes. Students write essay tests, character sketches, and parables.

The Medieval and Renaissance period: Lectures on philosophies of the Stoics, the Epicureans, the Cynics, the "Courtiers," and specific philosophies of Descartes, Pascal, Erasmus, More, and Luther. Lectures on music - the Gregorian chant, the troubadors, the madrigals, development of Baroque music. Lectures and viewings of Byzantine art, and European Renaissance art including Giotto, Michelangelo, DaVinci, Raphael, Rembrandt, Van Eyck, Holbein, Durer, to mention a few. Study of architecture, including a local tour of churches which are representative of Byzantine, Gothic, Romanesque, and Baroque styles. Readings include: parts of Beowulf and Canterbury Tales, The Second Shepherd's Play, Everyman, Machiavelli's The Prince, More's Utopia, selections from Castiglione's The Courtier, sonnets from Petrarch to the modern period, and Hamlet. Students write critical essays on some of the works read, character sketches, sonnets, critical essays on art and music. In addition to the one day architectural tour, students spend a day at the Minneapolis Art Institute viewing the collection of Medieval and Renaissance art.

Modern period: readings from and lectures on existential philosophy including Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Buber, Sartre, and Camus. Lectures on, and viewings of samples of modern schools of art including the cubists, the Dadaists, the impressionists, op art, and pop art. Listening to and lectures on modern music including jazz, semi-classical, opera, folk, electronic. Reading includes: Moliere's Pretentious Ladies, Ibsen's Enemy of the People, Shaw's Pygmalion, MacLeish's J.B., Chayefsky's Gideon, Kapek's The Insect Play, Ionesco's The Bald Soprano, Golding's Lord of the Flies, Boulle's Face of a Hero, and Camus's The Plague. Much critical writing is done.

Poetry Unit: As a basic text, we use Introduction to the Poem, by Robert W. Boynton and Maynard Mack (Hayden, 1965). Because we are especially pleased with the approach to poetry presented in this text, we follow the outline of the book and add any sample poems from other sources which we find helpful. During this unit students concentrate on writing poetry.

Although the material covered is divided into units, these are only units of concentration rather than separate compartments of study. As each area of concentration is studied, it is incorporated into what

students have studied previously. Thus, as we read Hamlet and J.B., we still discuss the Greek tragic hero. Likewise as we read the Canterbury Tales, J.B., Gideon, and as we listen to music and look at art and architecture of the Medieval Period, knowledge gained in the Bible unit is incorporated into our discussions.

In addition to the material covered, each student must have completed an independent project before spring vacation. The project consists of a research paper, a creative production, and an oral report. Each student chooses some humanistic subject, but is encouraged to pursue a field of interest he has not previously concentrated on. For example, students write and produce plays, sculpt, do oil paintings, design and make models of an "ideal home," design costumes for a play, or work in some aspect of dancing. Students who compose music, sculpt, or paint are not graded on the basis of a perfect product but are reminded that even if the sculpture cracks, or if the music sounds discordant, they have at least learned what not to do. The emphasis is on learning and on creating rather than on perfection.

During the year students are taken on additional field trips when opportunities arise. This year we attended an evening performance of The House of Atreus at the Guthrie and will attend a performance of Britten's opera Midsummer Night's Dream in the spring.

Perhaps at this point an obvious danger of the humanities curriculum will be clear. We began developing the curriculum with the intent of "in depth" study of selected philosophies and works of literature. With each teacher adding a work he felt was "terribly important," the amount of material covered in the curriculum indicates that we are trying to capsulize three quarters of college freshman humanities, plus some facets of the traditional senior English curriculum into one year. When this happens, we begin to place impossible homework demands on our students and we lose depth coverage. We will revise again this summer.

Another obstacle to the success of the present program is the wider ability level of the students. We moved from four ability groupings in English to three. The placing of twenty per cent of the seniors in the humanities program was, I feel, a mistake. We cannot move as rapidly nor go into depth as much as we were able to do with more select grouping; thus the quality of the program has suffered.



One of the most critical weaknesses of the humanities program this year is the larger "small group" sizes. This increase in group size was forced on us by greater enrollment and larger teacher-pupil ratios in the English department. Most English teachers at Lincoln this year carry loads of 140-160 students. With 20 to 23 students in each "small" humanities group, productive discussion is more difficult. We have found that when there are more than 18 students in a group, there is a significant loss in participation. We feel 15 students is an optimum number for our humanities discussion groups.

Though we have not avoided pitfalls, and though we see the problems involved in such a program (one significant problem is the tremendously increased teacher preparation), we feel the advantages of such a program are many. In such a course, the student gains a better perspective of the place of literature, and does not view it as being isolated from the "real world." Students in such a course are forced to think, and to come to conclusions for themselves. They are not spoon fed. Although the discussion is not totally non-directed, the teacher remains a resource person, and uses inductive methods when direction is necessary.

Along with the advantages such a program offers students, teachers also benefit from teaching such a class. An English teacher who does any kind of adequate job in working with a humanities curriculum must broaden his knowledge, must become more flexible, must learn to work with other teachers, and must teach and learn with students rather than impart information to them. A teacher with more knowledge and more flexibility is a better teacher five periods a day; thus many students in regular English classes benefit indirectly from the humanities program.

English teachers in Bloomington hope that the pilot program at Kennedy in 11th-grade humanities can be expanded; and so far as we are concerned, there is every reason to believe that there is a place as well in the 10th-grade honors English curriculum for a humanities program.

**Betty S. Stainer teaches English and Humanities at Lincoln High School in Bloomington.**

## CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE SETTING UP A HUMANITIES PROGRAM

BY MARTIN C. WILTGEN
Mankato High School

Many secondary schools throughout the United States have introduced into their curricula humanities courses as an added elective course in the non-science program of studies. In many instances this has been the only new addition to the non-science curriculum for too many years. Charles R. Keller, former director of the John Hay Fellows Program, states

> These courses constitute a needed challenge to the present separate-subject-dominated curriculum. Knowledge is now compartmentalized in the familiar five-classes-a-day, five-days-a-week pattern. Subjects have little relation to one another. Fusion of knowledge, when it does occur, results more from accident than from design. The student's day, week, and year are mad scrambles as he moves from subject to subject, usually learning without being involved, frequently simply overcome by continuous exposure to unrelated subjects. Compartmentalized education may have fitted a more unified era when fewer people had much formal education. It must be questioned in a more complex, atomistic, disjointed period when so many human beings are rootless, mobile, unconcerned about others, and without standards of value. (Charles R. Keller, "The Humanities in Our Schools." A talk given at an Institute for Teachers in the Hamden, Connecticut, schools: January 4, 1966.)

Generally, these humanities courses fall into three types of course structures or combinations of these three. They are most usually centered around the historical, philosophical, or aesthetical approach.

I.

The historically structured humanities course is most generally a class in world civilizations with the emphasis on what has happened to what is happening. Although it is not a history class in the sense of studying political and economic events, it has overtones of a history of cultures course where the socio-ethnic, cultural, and religious aspects of civilizations are



covered.

The organization of the course is chronological and more often than not the program begins with the pre-Greeks and ends with the modern world with its emphasis on Western Man. The major concept desired from such a historically structured humanities program is the knowledge of tradition.

This type of course structure has the advantage of easy organization since it is usually chronological in its approach to each civilization. It is most frequently taught by the lecture and discussion method with accompanied readings. Of course, many other resources such as tapes, transparencies, films, recordings, and slides can be and are utilized to add to the understanding of each culture studied.

The disadvantages of such a course are that it attempts to cover too much in too short a time and that it does very little for the student's capacity to experience his feelings on the subject matter since it is concerned with the accumulation of factual information. It tends to develop the "parrot-complex" in students, the ability to repeat the information programmed into the student.

II.

The philosophically structured humanities course is usually a class in the history of philosophy and the study of philosophical problems with the concern for the student's capacity for reasoning. It is usually a course that is centered around types of philosophy--ethics, logic, epistemology, aesthetics, and metaphysics-- and problems presented in each type, or the study of the "Great Ideas" from the Great Books. The majority of the humanities courses stressing this approach tend to emphasize Western philosophical issues.

This type of class is often a disguised information course and it aims at problems which are basically set up for the class. More frequently than not, a high school course such as this is topically organized; that is, it is centered on specific problems that have always been unanswered. At the high school level a detailed survey of the problems of the types of philosophy is rather difficult for the students; therefore, the problems are centered or topically organized for the students.

The philosophically structured program has the advantage of fairly easy organization as well as the historically structured program. It is fascinating and

challenging for the teacher since it tends to encourage participated involvement on the part of the students. For the high school student and the college freshman it is a very appealing approach because they are at the "self-identity" period in intellectual and emotional growth, and they like to identify themselves with some trend of thought and/or philosophical school.

This type of class is usually taught by the lecture-reading-discussion method which encourages some extremely thought-provoking discussions between the students themselves and the teacher or teachers. However challenging this program can be, it does have the more than probable disadvantage of becoming a vague and watered down course where not much is ever really decided if too much is covered.

III.

The aesthetically structured humanities program is more often than not a highly analytical observation of works of music, art, architecture, literature, and philosophy. The degrees of analysis are usually threefold: the appreciative level, the interpretive level, and the critical level. Through these degrees of analysis the students acquire the understanding of the specific dimensions of each area necessary for appreciation, interpretation, and criticism. Such a course is basically "experiential"; that is, the students are confronted with the work of art itself through reading, seeing slides and movies of the visual arts, and hearing recordings and/or going to concerts.

The results desired from such a course structure as this are the ability to appreciate, interpret, and criticize works of art; and to develop sensitive and informed analysis of the works studied.

The methods of instruction used in this type of course structure are the demonstration, the lecture, "readings" of works of art, music, and literature, and the lecture-demonstration-discussion.

This type of course structure is difficult to organize because of the problems in selecting works and texts which will best develop the capacity for critical analysis. It has the severe disadvantage of difficulty in finding staff personnel to teach it. Such a class tends to become too analytical where the art form being studied is so dissected as to totally dismember the meaningful unity of the whole art work, and by so doing the purpose of the arts as education and experience is lost. However, if well taught by one teacher or a team, such a course encourages involvement



on the part of the students whereby much is gained.

In addition to the historically, philosophically, and aesthetically structured programs in the humanities there are combinations of all three structures or combinations of two.

IV.

There are, of course, some problems and dangers that ought to be considered in setting up humanities courses. Professor Fred Stocking reviewed present school offerings and advanced what he called four strong opinions concerning the planning of such courses. Each is worth considering carefully:

1. There is no such thing as an ideal course in the humanities for high school students: an excellent course might be designed in any dozen different ways, and the best course for any school exploits the particular talents which are available.

2. The better courses are usually taught by two or more teachers - one from music or art, one from literature, one from history, for instance. But unless there happen to be two or more teachers who share an exuberant desire to work together in such a course, a single energetic and enthusiastic teacher, with diverse interests and a mastery of several disciplines, might well be preferable.

3. The best courses awaken that kind of interest in the humanities which is based on depth of understanding rather than on a glib familiarity with names and titles, or on the social fun of field trips. That is, good courses never make any attempt at coverage. One novel, one painting, and one opera out of the middle of the 19th century might well provide more than enough material for a semester.

4. The goal of such a course should be: first, to arouse interest in the arts as providing experiences valuable for their own sake; second, to show that an art work acquires deeper meaning when placed in its historical context; and third, to make clear that a full understanding of-- and delight in-- any one of the arts requires the eventual mastery of difficult, complicated, and highly rewarding intellectual disciplines. (Fred H. Stocking. "High School Humanities Courses: Some Reservations and Warnings." The English

Leaflet 53 (5): 37-38; Fall, 1965.)

Whenever a school decides to implement a program of studies in the humanities, the planning staff member or members should keep in mind that they should carefully evaluate the personality of the community and the school and decide precisely what they feel would best suit their particular circumstance. They should ask; "What is it that we feel our students should have?" As a result of having asked this question many schools have different programs in humanities. Another factor which needs serious consideration is the matter of very clear curriculum articulation; that is, of not duplicating a subject area that is already covering certain academic disciplines. As a result of this careful curriculum analysis, some programs in the humanities serve a very important function in the school as being the only interdepartmental course where several disciplines are merged into a meaningful whole for the students.

Schools which have programs in the humanities gear them to the types of students they want in the class. Many of the programs in the humanities are geared for the pre-college and/or accelerated student. The criterion for being in such a humanities class is most generally the grade point average of all subjects or the composite average of English and history. Although programs with the academically elite in them are rich in content, student involvement, and interest, I cannot totally agree with the philosophy of offering the humanities to a selected few. The humanities are the huMANities-- for everyone who desires to undertake such study. The main criterion for humanities students should be the desire to take the course.

Those who may shake their heads at this idea need not worry about any resultant watered down program. Although I am not in agreement with homogeneous groupings when it comes to the humanities, such grouping can be done: schedule the more gifted in one group and the "less gifted" (but just as interested) in another group. At the high school level homogeneous groupings sometimes turn into groupings ranging from the "intellectual" group to the "dumb-dumb" group or any other inappropriate labels attached to such groups by students and sometimes by teachers and administrators. To maintain a democratic and/or pluralistic feeling in the humanities heterogeneous grouping is recommended.

Granted the difficulty in staffing for the humanities programs, it need not be an insurmountable problem. What is needed is a teacher or group of teachers



with a well rounded and macroscopic view of the discipline and a high degree of interest. For administrators it is a dream come true to find one teacher who is capable of teaching the program, thereby highly diminishing the problem of scheduling. However, there are certain disadvantages to having a one-teacher program. The most apparent disadvantage is that the students get only one point of view and one bias on the material taught where many points of view should be given. The material selected for the one-teacher program tends to be what that teacher thinks is best, omitting other valuable areas of instruction. Another disadvantage (and this is not only true of the one-teacher humanities program) is the falling off of motivation for the students by having one teacher teach the program; what is needed are many or several different "faces" in order to keep the fire going.

In reality it is a herculean task to expect one teacher to be learned enough in all the diverse areas of the humanities. This is especially true today where there are very few teachers who are graduated with a major or minor in the humanities, and if they hold such a degree it is most generally a degree in the classics.

The most lively and interesting humanities programs are those taught by the team teaching method. The team has the distinct advantage of pooling together several valuable sources of talent. What is of absolute necessity for the team approach is its agreement as to what the discipline of the humanities is. One of the greatest setbacks in instituting the team teaching approach to the humanities is the Carnegie system--six or seven hours of instruction for each day of school. Schools with modular scheduling have circumvented the difficulty of team teaching.

Of the three types of programs in the humanities--the historical, philosophical, or aesthetical approach--two can be taught without too much difficulty by one teacher: the historical and philosophical programs. How well they can be taught by one teacher depends on that teacher's preparation in the discipline. The aesthetical program in the humanities is best taught by the team where each member of the team teaches his area of art, literature, music, or philosophy.

The costs of the various types of humanities programs vary greatly depending on just how many materials and teachers are used. Generally, since textbooks are the main sources used by students, the historically and philosophically structured programs are less

expensive in setting up than the aesthetically structured programs. It should be kept in mind that good single texts are difficult to find and for that reason paperbacks are most frequently used in humanities classes. The aesthetically structured programs are more expensive since they use many sources: tapes, records, slides, books, films, transparencies, and the equipment needed for them.

Cost should not be a factor in education, but since it is, the costs can be spared by the teacher or team if they would make their own materials with the cooperation of the audio-visual department. Often, in fact, a purchased set of materials doesn't meet the specific needs for a particular school's program in the humanities. Schools can make their own colored slides by taking pictures from art books with a 35mm camera, making tapes of recordings that the public and/or school library and other teachers may have, making full use of the bulletin board, and the overhead projector. One of the best sources for materials to be photographed for slides, tapes made from records, and published materials for transparencies is from the class itself.

Recommended for further reading on the humanities are the following articles:

J.C. Baxley, "Humanities for the Less Able Student," E J, 51:485-87, October, 1962.

W.A. Clark, "Humanities Program in the High School E J, 51:474-76+, October, 1962.

E.M. Copeland, "There Was a Child Went Forth," E J, 54:182-84, March, 1965.

L.K. Frank, "Why Modernize the Humanities?" Educational Leadership, 20(4):220-24, January, 1963.

C.R. Keller, "Humanities in an Educational Revolution," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, 44:166-73; October, 1960.

C.R. Keller, "The Wave of the Present," E J, 54:171-74, March, 1964.

Martin C. Wiltgen, Humanities teacher at Mankato High School, studied at the University of Chicago as a John Hay Fellow in 1965-66.



# STUDYING THE HUMANITIES: HEAVEN ON EARTH?

BY DAVID WEE
St. Olaf College, Northfield

"This was a piece of heaven in an otherwise bleak summer." Few of us teachers in the humanities would publicly assert, I suppose, that our teaching provides anyone with a corner of paradise, although most of us may be secretly sure that the celestial omnibus embarks from our fields more regularly than from the scientific laboratories. But we do believe in the ultimate importance of humanistic studies, and wish to impress this upon a generation of young people weaned on the educational and cultural emphases spawned by Sputnik and the race to the moon. So last summer at St. Olaf College we taught the humanities for five weeks to sixty high school juniors and seniors. Not all of them reacted like the student quoted above, but almost unanimously they expressed gratitude for exposure to an exciting new learning experience. For some it was even a pivotal personal experience, as it was for the student who responded, I think without hyperbole, "I wish to thank all four professors from the depths of my soul."

For over a decade, St. Olaf has conducted highly successful summer science institutes for talented secondary school students, and the college has long wanted to provide a similar opportunity in the humanities. Last year the Louis W. and Maud Hill Family Foundation granted funds to establish a pioneering humanities institute at St. Olaf. While more and more high schools are now beginning to offer general humanities courses, many schools lack the resources to offer interdisciplinary courses, especially to large numbers of students. We wanted to introduce students to the breadth and inter-relationships of the humanities, not only because this has intrinsic merit for any human being, but for the practical reason of supplementing the students' subsequent high school and college freshman courses in various humanistic fields. We hoped to send the students back to their senior year in high school or their freshman year in college with a zest for the humanities that might intensify their academic careers and rub off on some of their classmates as well. The enthusiastic student reaction during and immediately following the institute has given us high hopes for such far-reaching results. Furthermore, the institute taught us

much about teaching the humanities interdepartmentally. We will offer it again this summer under another Hill Foundation grant, and we expect to improve upon a successful venture.

The initial cause of the institute's success lay in long months of hard advance planning. The four of us who taught the program -- St. Olaf professors of philosophy, music, art, and English literature -- met almost weekly for a full year to plan the institute before its existence was assured by the foundation grant, and then for another frantic five months before it began. The resulting esprit de corps contributed immensely to our teaching effectiveness. We had discussed our plans so often that we almost felt prepared to give each other's lectures. Virtually every physical and academic detail of the institute fell upon our shoulders, making it impossible to be less than fully committed to each other and the program. This factor can hardly be underestimated, as those who have taught without it will testify.

Our most trying administrative task was screening the applications. One hundred and twenty students applied for the sixty positions. Their almost uniformly high ability was insured through preliminary screening by their teachers, for in order to assure widespread representation we asked that no high school send us more than two applicants. The application required transcripts, rank in class, scores on national examinations, an essay by the applicant, and written recommendation by a teacher. The sixty applicants we admitted included eleven who ranked first in their class, thirty who ranked in the top ten, and all but two who ranked in the top quintile. These two came from cultural deprivation, but bearing impressive letters of recommendation about their intellectual potential. One of our goals had been to accept creative students whose intellectual potential might have been obscured by mediocre grades; we wanted to try to release latent student abilities through an exciting intellectual climate. But few schools sent us this kind of application, and our resulting class was a group of students who had already proved themselves with honors. We hope that in subsequent years the letters of recommendation will lead us to more students whom we might lead out of academic indifference into excitement and real scholarship. Our concern lies less in having an "honors section" than in creating excitement about the humanities in both individuals and classrooms.

Early in the planning we chose our topic: "Romanticism: The Expression of Man's Limitless Self."



We felt that this period of history, and this permanent element of every man, would prove especially fruitful for an understanding of cultural change and the human expression of revolt, both of which concern today's young people. Virtually any carefully-chosen subject could serve the purposes of a humanities institute, but this subject seemed particularly timely for introducing students to some kindred spirits, and thus creating a cultural perspective so many of them lack. The students expressed almost unanimous approval of the topic, and we will use it again for this summer's institute.

We treated the Romantic period topically rather than chronologically except for the first week, when we each presented an historical overview of Romanticism in our field, taking care to relate the period to antecedent impulses of the Enlightenment. We felt that Romantic conventions needed to be displayed against the contrasting background from which they emerged and often revolted. In literature, for instance, the first lecture outlined neoclassical literary conventions and critical standards; this helped the students recognize the magnitude of Romantic innovations. The subsequent four weeks focused upon four general emphases of Romanticism: its response to the past, its attitude toward nature, its celebration of the inner self, and its search for the infinite. This structure proved to be most satisfactory, as it permitted us to interrelate our lectures better than any other organizing principle we considered.

The normal class morning included a discussion period from 8:45-9:45, a snack break, and a lecture from 10:30 to 11:45. The students were divided into eight discussion groups of seven or eight, led by the four professors and the four St. Olaf seniors who worked as full-time tutorial assistants and dormitory counselors. The groups discussed the day's assigned reading before the related lecture, thus encouraging their independent reactions. Throughout the institute these groups remained intact, but each week they had a different leader -- two professors and two assistants. Students found these discussions to be one of the best features of the institute, and everyone contributed with considerable enthusiasm. They seemed to prefer discussions led by the student assistants, for in our absence they felt freer to challenge our lectures. This year we may leave all of the formal discussions to college student leadership.

Monday through Thursday we took turns lecturing, one of us each day, to show how the week's topic

emerged from Romantic literature, art, music, or philosophy. Each week we rotated the order of our lectures, and we attended all the lectures with the class. The art lectures were presented with constant use of two simultaneous slide projectors; the music lectures made frequent use of recordings; and all four of us often gave the students dittoed material to accompany the lectures. In our desire to cover extensive material in a single lecture, we too frequently embraced the pedagogical temptation not to quit, and too many lectures ran until noon. This was disastrous for students unaccustomed to long lectures and panting for an overdue lunch. This year we will probably give two forty-minute lectures each day, with a good break or the discussion period in between.

The most unsuccessful enterprise of the institute was the Friday 10:30 panel discussion, when the four of us answered questions passed up to us on paper from the class. Only occasionally did the students engage us in active dialogue, and their interest flagged as it did in no other institute activity. On the other hand, one of the surprisingly effective matters was the humorous "war" between two of us professors. During the first week one of us prefaced a lecture with an insulting joke at the expense of another professor, who retaliated in kind the next day. The students expressed such gratitude for our unexpected (by them) ability to take ourselves lightly that we continued the barbs for a month, while the students eagerly anticipated the jokes and the other two teachers feigned innocent abhorrence for such unthinkable animosities. After the institute ended, many students cited this repartee as a real joy for them. We are convinced by their response that we should plan some such regular humor in any subsequent institute.

Four afternoons a week the group met from 1:30 to 3:00 in what we called for want of a better term a humanities workshop. We wanted to involve each student in some regular creative or critical activity in one of our fields. There were two series of workshops, each running for roughly two weeks. Everyone took one workshop in a "verbal" area (literature or philosophy) and one in a "non-verbal" (music or art), changing workshops after the first series. Between ten and fifteen students comprised each group workshop, and several pursued independent study for their project.

The art workshop was a studio experience in painting, silk screen, or sculpture. Most of the participants had little technical experience in these media, so the instructor provided daily problems in design



fundamentals. Several students took such interest in their creations that they returned to the studios for countless late hours of work, and proudly took home from the institute the result of their first extensive artistic efforts.

The music workshop consisted of individual or small-group research in Romantic period music, such as the Romantic oratorio, the symphonies of Beethoven, Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde," Chopin's concert etudes, and the French art song. The research was both literary and auditory, involving the extensive recordings, reference library, and listening equipment of St. Olaf's Christiansen Hall. Each student turned in a final written summary of his study-listening procedure and his conclusions. Many institute students had remarkable musical talent, and were fully capable of handling this experience.

The literature workshop involved three types of activity: interpreting fiction, independent research, and creative writing. Twice the workshop met as a group to discuss the themes and techniques of a pre-assigned short story; this was, for many of the students, their first experience with close, critical reading of fiction. Then every student pursued a project either in independent research on a literary topic related to Romanticism, or in creative writing of poetry or fiction. Those doing independent research met two or three times with the instructor in tutorial sessions, and then produced a paper or an oral report. The creative writers met every day as a group under the direction of student assistants, read and criticized each other's work, and turned in the best of their efforts.

The philosophy workshop provided an elementary introduction to logic, as few students were prepared for more advanced work in this discipline. The students met together every day, studying first the nature of logic, then the nature and definition of terms, the formulation of and logical exercises with propositions, syllogisms, and material fallacies. All the work was done through exercises during the workshop session.

The second workshop series included a drama workshop, organized by the students with the help of two St. Olaf drama majors attending regular summer school. After brief but intensive work, this group gave a delightful production of part of Moliere's The Imaginary Invalid at the institute banquet during the last week.

The workshop experiences, then, were various in

nature, in time consumption, and in result. But the students were able to choose two activities that had captured their interest, and they pursued them with gusto. Students evaluated the workshops favorably, and the change of pace from the morning discussions and lectures was refreshing for all of us.

Three other regular institute features deserve mention -- visiting lecturers, field trips, and a film series. These ranged from attendance at lectures by Carleton College and St. Olaf professors on subjects related to the week's theme; performances at the Guthrie Theatre and guided tours of the Walker Art Museum and the Minneapolis Institute of Art; a piano recital by St. Olaf professor DeWayne Wee of Moussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" which many students later cited as an institute highlight; a picnic at the college farm retreat; and experimental and other films produced by both professionals and college students.

We had considerable difficulty choosing texts for the course, especially in determining the balance of primary and secondary works. We finally decided on these, all available in paperback:

Jacques Barzun, Classic, Romantic and Modern
Marcel Brion, Art of the Romantic Era
J.W. von Goethe, Faust (Abridged version, trans. Louis MacNeice)
John B. Halsted, ed., Romanticism
Howard E. Hugo, ed., The Portable Romantic Reader
David Randolph, This Is Music
J.-J. Rousseau, The First and Second Discourses
Robert D. Spector, Seven Masterpieces of Gothic Horror

Students displayed the usual widely various reactions to these texts, but their comments have led us to reconsider texts for this year. We had them read most of Barzun during the first week, but this proved too heavy and bored them. If we use Barzun again, we will spread out the reading over five weeks, as the students were unable to profit from so much secondary material during their first few days. Readings in Hugo were assigned throughout the course. Hugo's anthology is organized topically, and dovetailed well with our own weekly topics, but students tired of reading bits and snippets. Many requested that we assign readings from fewer authors, and that we include one or two long Romantic novels, such as Wuthering Heights. Faust was popular, but gothic horror they considered camp. Next summer the readings will include a greater ratio of primary sources, with most of the secondary material



on a reserve reading list.

The institute exhausted us. We were with the students every day from 8:45 to 4 or 5 o'clock (seldom did the workshop activity stop abruptly at 3) and two evenings a week; then we raced home to prepare lectures or workshop material, to grade examinations, and to read the material in each other's fields, for we had to lead discussions on readings in every discipline. Even our morning coffee break we used for evaluation and planning. The students worked hard, too. The course was offered for full college credit at St. Olaf if the student so requested (57 of the 60 asked for credit), and we taught it on a college, not a high school level. This made the students scramble, especially as they encountered unfamiliar vocabulary in philosophy and music lectures. We gave two difficult examinations, including a 2½ hour final. But the class performed exceedingly well, earning higher grades than many college classes. Their academic future looks bright.

Most importantly, judging from the six-page evaluation form we gave the students on the last day, the institute apparently accomplished its purposes. It provided an intensive intellectual experience that introduced students to the breadth of humanistic studies, and excited them for more. In the process they learned much about themselves.

David L. Wee is assistant professor in the Department of English at St. Olaf College.

## THE NEW COMMONWEALTH: WORLD LITERATURE WRITTEN IN ENGLISH

BY WILLIAM D. ELLIOTT
Bemidji State College

In its November, 1967 Newsletter, M.L.A.'s Group 12 presented the issue of what has formerly been called British Commonwealth Literature:

> 'World Literature Written in English' has been adopted as the title of our newly-established Group to show that our principal concern is the spread of the English language and the English literary tradition beyond their original confines in the British Isles from the late sixteenth to the present. (Joseph Jones, WLWE Newsletter, November, 1967, 15.)

Commonwealth Literature, once the attempt to bring together all the literatures under the British Empire into one body for viewing, has experienced a scholarly growth important to students of literature and teachers alike. With the growth of the countries once a part of the Empire, a significant body of literature has emerged that must be studied as a part of the tradition and history of English literature, since it is for the most part written in English and has been inspired by English cultural borrowings, English education, and written by English expatriots and emigrants. Perhaps the best example is the Australian novelist, Henry Handel Richardson, author of what is considered by some to be the Great Australian Novel - her trilogy, The Fortunes of Richard Mahony. She was born in Melbourne, achieved her early education in the English-modeled Presbyterian Women's College of Melbourne, her later education in the Music Conservatory in Leipzig, and spent the rest of her life in London and London society.

While her influences were Australian in inspiration her education was British and German; and only by the wildest stretching of the imagination could we consider her literary apprenticeship natively Australian; it has its roots in the novels of Hardy and Eliot, and influences are even traced, in her trilogy, to her awareness of the novel of stream of consciousness as written by Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf. As to her interests in the Australian "tradition," she tells us in her article, "Some Notes on My Books":

> So far, all the novels about Australia that had come my way had been tales of adventure; and successful adventure: monster finds and fortunes made in the gold fields, the hair-raising exploits of bushrangers, and so on. But there was another and very different side to the picture, and one on which, to my knowledge, no writer had yet dwelt. What of the failures, to whose lot neither fortunes nor stirring adventures fell? (Henry Handel Richardson, "Some Notes on My Books," Southerly I, 1963, 14.)

Her concerns lie, finally, with the traditions outside of Australia, in this case traditions that together make the British tradition important as it was infected by the movements in realism on the Continent; and what we find is not another romantic story of Australian settlement, but a deeply pessimistic vision, born of the most inveterate of realists and



the early realists that held the concept of the expansive, leisurely Victorian novel in their minds. A curious combination, but a typical one; and so representative of the various national literatures which make up world literature written in English, and which have their own unity within the boundaries of a country but must be allowed academic recognition and study within and without the country of origin.

It becomes even clearer, indeed, that teaching and studying Henry Handel Richardson and her Australian trilogy must be a process of discovering what is important without the country of origin; and to this list must be included Wole Soyinka in Africa, Hugh MacLennan in Canada, and particularly Doris Lessing and her Children of Violence. We must understand the central disciplines of English Literature so that, as Professor Jones tells us, we can be concerned with "wherever and whenever the first has been used and the second has appeared in the English-speaking world." (Jones, 15.)

For the students of any college and high school in Minnesota, a study of Canadian literature is especially important; but just as vital is an understanding of the place Canadian literature holds in the tradition of literature as it is and has been written in England and the world. To such an end, the study of Morley Callaghan, for example, and Hemingway, is useful; and even the study of Richardson and White of Australia, and Tutuola and Soyinka of Africa, serves as a ready means of comparison in the context of both the Canadian tradition and the larger British tradition. What must be cultivated is an understanding and a teaching of the comparative literatures that make up this vast body of imaginative work. As William H. New tells us in "The Commonwealth in Print," parallels in the Commonwealth literatures exist to such a point that the countries often face similar literary problems.

The first international conference on Commonwealth literature, held in Leeds in 1964, testifies to this. People came to it knowing their own literatures, but left knowing more; more important, they left knowing each other, having discovered that problems with a language, an identity, an indi-

genpus people, a relationship with Britain, and even with the practical matters of publication were in some way common to them all. (William H. New, "The Commonwealth in Print," Canadian Literature 30, Autumn, 1966, 53.)

William D. Elliott invites students and teachers from Minnesota to his summer session course in Literature of the British Commonwealth, at Bemidji State College.





# REVIEW OF BOOKS

## Herbert J. Muller's "USES OF ENGLISH"

REVIEWED BY CLARENCE A. GLASRUD
Moorhead State College

In the January issue of the Minnesota English Journal, Angela Drometer reviewed John Dixon's Growth Through English, the first publication to come from the 1966 Dartmouth Seminar. In his preface Herbert Muller explains this second volume:

> This book is a report on the proceedings of the seminar, designed for the general reader. (John Dixon of England has written a report addressed to the professional community.) Inasmuch as the discussions ranged all over a large subject and produced dozens of papers on different topics, my account is highly selective. I have skimmed over some problems that interest chiefly specialists. But I owe some further explanation to the general reader, too.

Before we consider these explanations, let us concede that some of us may be drawn to the book because it is written by the author of The Uses of the Past: Profiles of Former Society (New York; Oxford, 1952; available since 1957 in a Galaxy paperback). A professor of English who can write as a philosopher and historian and can use his realistic analysis of past civilizations to shed light on our own obviously has a special claim on our attention. Professor Muller's preface continues:

> One reason I was asked to write this book was an odd qualification. I knew little about the teaching of English in the elementary and secondary schools, which was the primary concern of the seminar, and had taken only a casual interest in it. It was thought that I would therefore be uncommitted, unprejudiced. I soon lost this possible virtue, however, as I found the discussions uncommonly stimulating and realized more fully the importance of the issues at stake. Although I have reported in the guise of a detached observer, I should emphasize that all these issues are highly debatable (a gentle way of saying "controversial" - a word frightening to some Americans) and that I am not in fact

uncommitted or free from bias. Naturally I have tried to do justice to the different opinions expressed, but I have not tried to write a wholly impersonal report. While obliged in any case to select and interpret what seemed to me the most important questions raised at the seminar, I have felt free to add some commentary. Often I deliberately introduce the first person to make clear that I am expressing my own opinion, but also to remind the reader that it is an opinion and therefore debatable.

Many working teachers, secondary and college, may be discouraged by the first chapter entitled "What Is English?" This is a question which no one can answer, but it is a question that must be raised in beginning such a fundamental inquiry as this, in a book written for "the general reader." If the Dartmouth Seminar's findings and Mr. Muller's observations seem overly obvious to some of us, it is because we have thought long and seriously about the problem and have already arrived at the same conclusions.

Many of us will still have this feeling through the next two chapters, "Democracy in the Classroom" and "The Development of the Child." Sometimes the seminar's findings and Muller's comments are little more than common sense or, more properly, the concensus of concerned and open-minded and experienced teachers of English. Even so, it is not a bad thing to have your findings and opinions supported and reinforced.

Beginning with chapter four, however, the book will certainly interest most of us and may be especially valuable just now. "Good English" explores the role of linguistics in the English program. The next chapter, "The Uses of Literature," discusses approaches and strategies in the teaching of the subject. Both chapters are lucid, fair, and well-balanced; if they solve no problems and do not help us out of our dilemmas, they sort out much information and misinformation, prejudice and propaganda. Here and later Muller (and the Dartmouth Seminar) serve us well by airing these problems candidly.

A first impression of this book is that it takes in too much territory. I should add at once that the Dartmouth Seminar gave much attention to elementary education, perhaps too much in Muller's opinion. What can be said about writing that applies to the early primary grades and also to the last high school years? Surprisingly, this wide-ranging look at English sheds



much light on the really basic problems. Thus,

> In the first place, children need an audience other than the teacher. They write most easily when they write for the class, are entertained and stimulated by one another's fancies. English teachers forget that with older children an audience is no less important. . . Too often they assign the youngsters literary topics for which there can hardly be a live audience except the teacher himself. . . They weaken children's confidence by stressing their errors, stifle their interest by making correctness the main end.

A little later in the same chapter ("Writing and Talking") Muller pays his respects to the inconclusiveness of research findings on methods of teaching composition and makes one of his "guesses" (which are invariably shrewd and sometimes wise):

> The clearest agreement was again that the study of traditional grammar had a negligible effect on the improvement of writing, or even a harmful one, since it takes up time that might have been spent practicing writing. Little study has been made of the effects of all the correcting and grading on which teachers spend so much of their time. My guess is that students might improve more if they were split up into groups and simply practiced writing for and on one another, now and then bringing to the teacher what they considered their best efforts; but I suppose no experiment could conclusively prove this.

The book often contrasts the way English is taught in Great Britain and the United States. At first the completely different points of view taken by British and American teachers seemed likely to lead to nothing but quibbling about aims and philosophies. Midway in the book, however, it becomes apparent that much light is shed on the whole problem of how to teach English by contrasting the opposing British and American strategies.

British participants in the Dartmouth Seminar kept insisting on the importance of "the personal and the inner life" of the child and resisted emphasis on "a body of knowledge or mere techniques," according to Muller. They objected to any systematic teaching of language before the students were fifteen or sixteen, and liked the stimulus of creative writing better than the American training in exposition. The full impact

of this English emphasis comes out in Muller's chapter on "Creativity and Drama." Although the British teachers admitted that creativity was "not actually the core of their curriculum," one of them, David Holbrook, insisted that it should be the "basis of our approach to English teaching as an art." Arriving finally at the use of drama as a teaching device, Muller seems as fully convinced as the Amherst English chairman whom he quotes:

> Benjamin DeMott, the most enthusiastic of the American converts, emphasized that drama brought the stuff of life into the English classroom - the life of feeling, in all the variousness that textbooks reduce to academic order. Students may learn the first principle of good writing: "What we truly have in good writing is a moment-to-moment embodiment of the breathing contradictoriness of the living mind: we are given vouchers of variousness."

This chapter, like some others, ends with a look at the practical difficulties:

> Few English teachers in America have been trained to teach such dramatic activities; many might feel as uneasy as the older students if asked to start improvising. The seminar therefore recommended that a team of American teachers be given the opportunity to tour British secondary schools that have a strong program in drama. Assuming that American schools do get interested in experimenting with a similar program (as I would hope), another problem arises. Dramatic activities cannot be carried on in the conventional classroom with its rows of desks. They require space, moveable funiture, rostrums, ideally equipment for making a tape or a book, "publishing" the work done. A large-scale program in drama would require the overhauling of both our schools and the curriculum, at some expense - maybe as much as a fleet of bombers costs. As always the question is: Are school boards, superintendents, lawmakers, taxpayers and parents willing to support such a program?

There is matter in The Uses of English - including questions raised and topics scarcely more than mentioned - to occupy all of us for years. "Myth," for instance, is a much larger, more complex subject than the literary uses of mythology and fable. I hope all



teachers, from kindergarten through graduate school, who have been drawn into this tempting realm will read the last part of Muller's eighth chapter.

The same can be said about the "Mass Media," covered in the first part of the same chapter. Once again this report does not attempt to give us the answers, but clears the air and identifies the issues. Muller notes, gratefully, I think, that "most participants (in the Dartmouth Seminar) chose not to treat the mass media as simply the enemy. Some pointed out that mere diatribes did little good; a frontal attack was poor strategy, since they were certainly here to stay." But the English teacher could help students to be less passive in choices, could help them "to develop more discriminating tastes in a source of entertainment they were sure to feed on anyway."

Long before we come to the chapter on the mass media we have become aware of Muller's concern about modern society's pressures toward conformity. He makes no concessions to the American commercial establishment, nor does he minimize the pressures that make for "trashiness" or mediocrity. He is always aware of the larger issues, and he frequently cites the impact of our industrialized, urbanized, computerized civilization on the teaching of English.

At times Muller plays the editor or recorder as he credits ideas and specific suggestions to seminar participants, to Benjamin DeMott of Amherst (Professor DeMott will speak at the MCTE Spring Convention on April 20th) or Barbara Hardy of London, to Albert Kitzhaber of Oregon or Frank Whitehead of Sheffield; and eventually we come to identify many divergent and stimulating viewpoints that contributed to the Dartmouth Seminar. But Muller's role is much more than this. As he discusses the various aspects of The Uses of English in his ten chapters, he frequently adds observations of his own, invokes Suzanne Langer or David Riesman, Nancy Mitford or Marshall McLuhan.

In his preface to John Dixon's book Albert Marckwardt of Princeton noted that the last day of the Dartmouth Seminar "produced a rare burst of unanimity." Dixon's book, says Marckwardt, presents and interprets "eleven points of agreement" to "the English-teaching profession" in Great Britain and the United States. Herbert Muller characteristically presents the divergent views aired at Dartmouth and often simply says that no conclusions were arrived at. To me this seems more reassuring than the unanimity on the final day.

Muller cites topics or areas that should have been explored and were not, and he has the confidence to report others very briefly. Even when "subscribing to the consensus" on some issues he faithfully records "tiresome complications" or "practical difficulties" that he feels must be faced. So honest, positive, and broad-gauged a study of the English predicament deserves to be read widely. Long before I finished it I began to plot strategy: how to con or cajole my fellow teachers into reading it.

Clarence A. Glasrud, professor and chairman of the Department of English at Moorhead State College, has taught in a one-room rural school and in junior and senior high schools in Pelican Rapids, Lake City, and Mankato.

## Rebecca Caudill's
## "DID YOU CARRY THE FLAG TODAY, CHARLEY?"
## REVIEWED BY TOM WALTON
### Ely Elementary School

Each year I attempt to find a few new books to add to my list of material to be read orally to my fifth graders. Last year our librarian recommended Rebecca Caudill's Did You Carry the Flag Today, Charley? (Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1966) as one of the books I might like to add. It met with so much approval from my ten-year olds that I took it along with me to use for a demonstration class in Children's Literature at U.M.D. during the summer. Though the age spread in the demonstration class increased to encompass nine to thirteen-year olds, the book was received with as great, or greater, enthusiasm.

In discussing this book with my two groups of children and the adults who observed the demonstration class, I found several reasons that made the book a wise choice for oral reading by the teacher and as a topic for discussion. Charley Cornett is a character who leaves no doubt as to his verisimilitude. He is five; his world is in a constant, humorous disharmony with that of his peers and the adults who are guiding his development. Either because of their own nearness to his age and problems or because of their contact with children of his age, both the children and adults could understand the problems toward which his curiosity could lead him. Charley is a person with whom it is easy to identify.

There are many ways to fit Charley and his story into areas of study if there is a need to correlate the book with subject matter. "Little School" is Appalachia's answer to the Headstart programs that receive comment in local papers. Mountain living blends into many areas



of study in the field of science. A five year old's need for activity, need for understanding adults, and need for getting the upper hand once in a while as he strives for independence will lend nicely to character studies and fill the need for children to see that adults don't always succeed in holding children down. A deeper study of reading skills will offer a chance to explore possible hidden implications in the expression "carry the flag" though it outwardly is a reward for good behavior in this book. Rebecca Caudill also uses some good similes and they make a fine reference if they are being studied as a class project in literary techniques.

For the teachers' own interest, the adult response to Charley and his antics is a terrific study of some very understanding people. It could be a rewarding experience to compare their own inward response as they identify with the book's adults.

I feel that Did You Carry the Flag Today, Charley? is a rainy day book. Charley's uninhibited aggressiveness creates laughter and offers chances to guess at outcomes or reasons; rainclouds and darkness are soon forgotten. The illustrations and frequent opportunities for facial dramatization by an oral reader make it a delightful reading experience.

Tom Walton, elementary school teacher in Ely and poet, was a demonstration school teacher in a Summer Institute at the University of Minnesota - Duluth.

# forum

## JUSTIFYING LITERARY STUDY IN AESTHETIC TERMS

BY DAVID V. HARRINGTON

Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter

Would it be a distortion of recent trends in MCTE activities and policies to say that the values in literary study are more nearly taken for granted than openly defended? In the past ten years or so, the leaders of the NCTE as well as our state leaders have emphasized the need for more emphasis on linguistics and rhetoric, the need for more systematic attention to composition teaching, to the point where just about any conscientious classroom teacher might feel ashamed of himself for devoting most of his time to the study of literature. In fact, we devote very little time to discussion of the values of literary study.

Nobody connected with our profession is actually opposed to literary study. We are not told to give it up or neglect it or even minimize it. But, on the other hand, nobody is advocating more emphasis on literary study, exalting it, urging its necessity for all students. It is this negative trend which strikes me as peculiar for such a large and sophisticated group of English teachers. It seems to me that most of us are attracted to the field of English through the experience of literary study. I doubt whether many English teachers are capable of defining in clear logical terms what there was about the appeal of literary study which drew them into the fold at the moment of their decision to major in English, or to teach English, but it was the appeal of literary study. The more practical motive of a general shortage of English teachers may cause many people to be English teachers, but usually these people if opportunities were equal would prefer to do something else. I am speaking only of those people who are committed to English. The decision in each case, as explained by people who have confided in me, was largely the result of an intuitive response, a semi-conscious need, which is fulfilled through literary study.

To be sure, any student of English when pressed for a reason for his engaging in such study can offer commonplace answers, all of which have an ancient



pedigree in the history of culture: works of art, including poetry, are worthwhile; the greatest poems stand the test of time; they are worth preserving as records of our cultural heritage and justify strenuous study for one to perceive their full value; beauty has its own reward; art is autonomous, not subordinate to other values--social, theological, practical, philosophical, political. But it is very difficult to state a simple, unassailable definition of the value of literary study.

One can admit this difficulty; but the English teacher must nonetheless face up to the responsibility of defining the values of literary study. My impression is that students in their schooling at any level, high school, college, or grade school receive little guidance in formulating such definitions. In spite of the enormous amount of critical writing and scholarly lecturing about literature, few people go to the trouble of trying to define why literature should be studied. In any of the major schools of criticism--historical scholarship, the "new criticism", myth-archetypal studies, even romantic aesthetics--one can gain countless insights into the structure, the ideological content, ambiguities, subtleties of all kinds, an awareness of recurring themes and patterns. But many of the simplest and most basic aesthetic questions are not answered. The critics and the scholars rarely anticipate the students wondering "Why should one read this?" "What is of value in poetry?" "Does one learn anything from such study which is transferrable into common experience?" As I remember my own years as an undergraduate and then as a graduate student, the question "Why should one read a poem?" never occurred. The typical English major's response to literature is initially intuitive. One recognizes nearly all the works traditionally included in courses in literature to be satisfying, more or less immediately. Through consideration of critical approaches which illuminate parts of the poem, pointing out interrelationships, subtler implications, historically relevant assumptions, one learns to like most poems even better. But the teacher of English majors does not face all the problems that one faces in teaching non-English majors in a required literary course. The student who has never been much attracted by reading, and whose motives in entering college (whether we admire these motives or not) are basically practical if not brazenly mercenary, is naturally suspicious of a required course in literature. Even some people from pious, moralistic backgrounds appear dubious about some kinds of poetry. How do we anticipate the questions about literary art: "What is the value of literature if it won't necessarily make a person healthier, wealthier, more

comfortable, or more virtuous?" "Is it a frill?" "Is it conspiracy on the part of English teachers to gain employment?" "Is there any reason why a student should receive instruction in literature rather than in income tax laws, accounting, or some kind of handicraft?" Stupid as such questions might seem to the person who has long ago devoted his life to literary study, we should nonetheless recognize that such questions are fundamental. They are not asked all the time. Depending upon how awesome an image of himself the teacher manages to project, one may not hear questions resembling those I have suggested for years at a time. I wish to point out, however, that such questions as these may very well be at the root of some students' antagonism towards literature.

It simply isn't enough to fall back upon the simple answers that poetry is of value because it gives pleasure or because it is fun or because it is commonly considered by most competent critics to be beautiful; even though each of these statements may be true. These are not sufficiently convincing answers to the student who does not immediately derive pleasure or fun or an aesthetic response from the poem placed before him. We have all seen the suspicious look on the face of an unsuccessful literary student whenever we have told him that he will enjoy the poem after he has scrutinized it longer or after he matures.

The object behind this review of problems is to suggest a need for greater attention to fundamental aesthetics. This is not to recommend another required course for all English teachers. Heaven forbid that, in view of how aesthetics is usually taught, with hair-splitting arguments over terminology. Even the traditional historical survey of literary criticism, from Plato to Cleanth Brooks, is of dubious value for solving the questions I posed earlier in this essay. Rather this is to encourage concentrated reading in the works of those aestheticians who come closest to solving basic problems concerning artistic values. As one of the few leading philosophers to pay systematic attention to aesthetics, Benedetto Croce deserves primary consideration. His Aesthetic is not easy reading, but his distinguishing intuitive or particular knowledge is a good start.

If one can convince the student that there is a genuine value in looking at specific things to see what makes them distinctive, singular, individual, or unique, one has a chance to clarify the difference between aesthetic and logical knowing. A clearer,



more systematic reading text than Douglas Ainslie's translation of Croce's Aesthetic is the article by Croce on "aesthetics" in the 14th edition of the Encyclopedia Brittannica, 1929, recently retranslated by Cecil Sprigge and included in Croce's Philosophy, Poetry, History (Oxford, 1966). One should go on from Croce, however, and read Susanne K. Langer's major works on the subject. Her germinal study Philosophy in a New Key (1942) is available in paperback as a Mentor book; but this study should be passed over in favor either of Feeling and Form (Scribner's, 1953), clearly her best book, or Problems of Art, a popularized collection of lectures in Scribner paperback, 1957. Langer emphasizes the importance of art as a form of knowledge. In her terms, "art is the creation of forms expressive of human feeling." Her studies emphasize the complexity and non-discursive character of knowledge about feelings.

All of these works need more popularizing to mean much to students. They are essentially tools for the teacher. But no matter which major school of modern aesthetics the teacher enrolls in, he should recognize his obligation to teach literature in such a way that the lectures and discussion questions are aimed at answering the fundamental questions about the nature and value of art. We should teach the student to focus his impressions through literary study, to refine his sensitivity, by recognizing that works of art are expressions of complex feelings by unusually varied people. By comprehending the inner emotional life of man as it is given formal, emphatic expression in works of art, one comes a good bit closer to realizing his potentiality as a fully developed human personality. It is by encouraging this kind of awareness that we can justify the study of literature as a vital academic course.

## A Selective Bibliography

Croce, Benedetto. Philosophy, Poetry, History. Oxford, 1966. $16.80. Expensive but very big, giving us glimpses in 1135 pages of Croce's remarkable range of achievements in philosophy, criticism, history. Good for inclusion of both aesthetic theory and practical literary criticism.

Langer, Susanne K. Feeling and Form. Scribner's, 1953. $4.95. The best book for a definition of those qualities which all the arts have in common; combined with careful analysis of the distinctive character of each major art form.

## Recommended Paperbacks

Cary, Joyce. Art and Reality. Anchor Book. 1st pub. 1958. $ .95. An interesting study by a distinguish novelist, partly autobiographical, partly critical, of what is involved in the creative process.

Collingwood, R. G. The Principles of Art. Oxford Gala Book. 1st pub. 1938. Very closely related to, and derived from, Croce's aesthetics. Perhaps more systematic.

Croce, Benedetto. Aesthetic. Translated by Douglas Ainslie. Noonday Press. 1st pub. in Italian 1902. $2.25. A pioneering study, clumsily translated. The first part, "Theory of Aesthetic," is basic but superseded in many respects by the encyclopaedia article referred to previously.

Fry, Roger. Transformations. Anchor Book. 1st pub. 19 $1.45. By an art critic, very much a Brahmin of the old school, but deserving respect for arguing that art has value because it points out relationships, not merely because it depicts objects.

Langer, Susanne K. Philosophy in a New Key. Mentor Bo 1st pub. 1942. Her first important book, which pave the way for Feeling and Form. Analysis and definitions of symbols lead to a definition of art.

Langer, Susanne K. Problems of Art. Scribner paperback 1st pub. 1957. $1.25. Wordy, repetitious, and uneven, it is nevertheless the best introductory text for mystified beginners.

Langer, Susanne K. (ed.) Reflections on Art. Oxford Galaxy Book. 1st pub. 1958. $1.95. A collection of essays by a variety of aestheticians and artists. More useful for experts in the field.

Shahn, Ben. The Shape of Content. Vintage Books. 1st pub. 1957. $1.25. By a painter. Very good for explaining the artist's need of freedom, problems in evaluation, the inexhaustible subject matter of the arts.

David V. Harrington is associate professor of English at Gustavus Adolphus College.



# GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT TEACHING:

## AN ADAPTATION OF THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA IN TEACHING TO AN ACTIVITY IN LANGUAGE ARTS

BY LUCILLE DUGGAN, Richfield High School, and
SISTER ST. ALFRED, College of St. Catherine, St. Paul

In March, the Upper Midwest Regional Educational Laboratory sponsored a five-state A.S.T. conference on teacher competence in six different subject matters. It was the task of the conference members to study the Stanford University Performance Criteria in Teaching and to adapt these criteria to particular activities of special subject matter areas. The English committee is quick to acknowledge that what follows is not new material. As they now stand these criteria do, however, represent one consensus of high school and college teachers of English and supervisors of student teachers of English, worked out under the support of two organizations concerned with developing performance criteria in all subject areas by means of which student teachers can be judged.

The guidelines were devised to foster better training of teachers and to expedite communication between the student teacher and his cooperating teacher. They can improve teacher training by providing a positive and discussible chart, instead of a nebulous and prosy set of maxims. This chart does not replace the need for teacher decisions. Once the student teacher has decided what to teach, the performance criteria can help him to choose suitable activities and to consider how these can be implemented. The guidelines serve as a check list for the student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and the supervisor, and help the student teacher and the cooperating teacher to communicate.

This committee's adaptation of the Stanford Performance Criteria centers on one activity which is pertinent to teacher training in language arts--the writing of a composition. The criteria were developed for student teachers, not for experienced teachers. They were devised to be applied as needed and are intended to be flexible. The activity that results in composition is divided into stages: preparing for the assignment, guiding the writing of the composition, evaluating the work, and returning the papers. The composition program is organized around rhetorical principles, and the criteria are designed for assignments in exposition or persuasion. For certain writing assignments which have their own unique writing patterns, these criteria are not pertinent. They are, however, applicable to many writing assignments in academic areas other than English.

It was impossible for such a group to confer without recalling and discussing some of the abysses into which they had individually or collectively fallen. Such considerations led to the statement which is addressed to student teachers and which is attached to the last section of this paper.

## CRITERIA

AN ADAPTATION OF THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA IN TEACHING TO AN ACTIVITY IN LANGUAGE ARTS

ACTIVITY: WRITING A COMPOSITION

Observable Performance Criteria

I. Preparing to write

The teacher

1. Chooses an auspicious time to begin a writing experience.

2. Develops sources for composition.

3. Identifies and explains the rhetorical problem to be emphasized in the composition (e.g. definition, generalization and specification, explanation by example, etc.)

4. Provides models.



## EXPLANATION

Note: The numerical symbols preceding the comments below are keyed to related items in the Criteria section.

I.1. Since writing is a subtle, elusive, and difficult endeavor, a composition assignment should not be initiated when pressure of school activities diverts the students' attention or when time is lacking to develop and to complete the assignment. Sometimes the failure of a composition is related to a flaw in the assignment. It is good practice for a teacher to follow his own assignment and write a composition himself. Such a procedure can show a need for clearer directions, can help him to anticipate students' problems, can determine the amount of time to be spent on the paper, and may even show whether or not the plan is worth pursuing. In some situations the teacher can show his composition to the class in order to inspire confidence and trust.

I.2. The teacher extends the possibility of the students' finding ideas to write about by using such materials as serve the purposes of the rhetorical problem: literature, mass media, personal experience, contemporary issues, etc.

I.3. The choice of a particular rhetorical problem to be emphasized in a composition helps the teacher to arrange for a sequence of content to be taught. Such a choice of emphasis helps the student to develop and master a specific skill. He is also helped to choose the arrangement of his material which is best for a specific audience.

Rhetorical principles are applicable for writing in other fields of study such as science, social studies, etc.

I.2,3. In making the assignment, the teacher not only discusses the matter of the assignment but also isolates and demonstrates the rhetorical strategies to be used in accomplishing the assignment.

I.4. The use of professional and/or peer models can encourage and direct students as well as clarify the assignment. Use of flawed professional prose can effectively demonstrate the difficulties of writing. A good treatment of the problem by one of the students can be shared with the class while it is working on the assignment. The teacher who uses students' themes for demonstration should use them anonymously.

## CRITERIA

II. Composing
The teacher
1. Observes to identify specific problems and general progress.

2. Confers to encourage and motivate students.

3. Demonstrates to provide solutions for general problems of content arrangement, style, usage, and mechanics as they arise.

4. Signals conclusion of writing and gives final instructions before the collection of the compositions.

III. Evaluating
(While the evaluation of a finished composition is not capable of being translated into observable performance criteria, the process is a crucial one and thus deserves special consideration. For some help in this evaluative process, see Explanation for Criterion 1 under Section IV.)

IV. Returning the papers
The teacher
1. Comments on specific strengths and weaknesses.

2. Measures achievement against assigned rhetorical problem.

3. Shares representative papers or selected passages from papers with class.

4. Counsels for revision or correction where desirable.

5. Invites questions on evaluation of paper.

6. Induces student evaluation through exchange of papers.

7. Extends the experience.



## EXPLANATION

II.1. The teacher provides for the major part of the writing in class. He keeps an eye on the process of composing and anticipates problems before they arise. Observation also alerts the teacher to the range of individual differences and needs. A matter of immediate concern will be the differing amounts of time students will need to complete the same assignment satisfactorily. The teacher must be flexible and resourceful, respecting the reality of these differences and attempting to meet them.

When the teacher is free to do so, he should walk about the room, examining students' work to make sure they are working on the specific rhetorical problem assigned. This observation should express interest in the students and give significance to the process of composing.

II.2. The conference keeps the student in contact with part of his audience--the teacher. It should also help him to learn how to evaluate his own work. Some arrangement or schedule should be devised so that every student has a conference with the teacher while he is working on his composition. In the causes of courtesy to other students and of practicality, these conferences should be at the teacher's desk. An extra chair should be provided so that teacher and student can sit down to confer.

The teacher does not tell the student what he should have written. He asks questions. He asks the student to justify the rhetorical choices he has made. He asks the student to explain meanings. He guides the student tc alternate choices where necessary.

II.3. Meeting these problems as they occur eases the writing process, strengthens good writing habits, uses teaching time economically and effectively, and cuts down the amount of time a teacher must spend on final papers.

IV.1. Some methods for identifying strengths and weaknesses
The teacher
Skims a selected group of themes in order to sense the achievement of the group.
Skims each composition before making any comments on it.

## EXPLANATION

Measures success against the specified rhetorical principle and/or previously demonstrated competency.
Places emphasis on ideas, not on mechanical details.
Gives evaluative comments rather than letter or number grades.
Gives specific recommendations which provide alternative choices for solving specific rhetorical problems.

IV.3. The teacher may share students' themes by use of the overhead projector, by dittoed copies of the themes, or by public reading of the themes. Present papers anonymously to prevent embarrassment to students.

IV.7. Extend the experience by using such things as displays, publications, exchange of themes, public reading, filing.

Have a folder for each student in which all of his written work or a representative sample of that work is kept. Both teacher and student should review these papers periodically to assess the student's growth in writing.

To Student Teachers

As students work with the process of composing, help them to be aware of audience and of point of view.

Give students help in discovering topics, and demonstrate the necessity of limiting their topics.

Anticipate problems to be ready to help students solve them effectively.

Assign short papers.

Have students do most of their writing in class.

Be aware of and provide for individual differences in writing speed and in manner of composition. For example, the teacher does not have to be rigid about a due date if more time would be an honest benefit to a student.

Not every paper needs to be evaluated. Some papers are to be skimmed, some are to be evaluated for special problems, and some papers require thorough evaluation.

Overcome the tendency to overcorrect themes.



Participants at the Five State A.S.T. Conference, English Section:

Miss Edythe Daniel, Wisconsin State University, Platteville, Wisconsin, associate professor of Education, Methods teacher, and off-campus supervisor of English and speech student teachers;

Mrs. Lucille Duggan, Richfield Sr. High School, Richfield, Minnesota, English teacher and supervisor of student teachers;

Mr. Gerald Kongstvedt, J.I. Case High School, Racine Wisconsin, English department chairman and supervisor of student teachers, who served as chairman for the group;

Sister Mary Roy MacDonald, Alverno College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, assistant professor of English, department chairman, Methods teacher, and supervisor of student teaching;

Sister St. Alfred, College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota, assistant professor of English, Methods teacher and supervisor of student teaching, who served as recorder for the group;

Mrs. Harriet W. Sheridan, Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, professor of English, Methods teacher, and supervisor of student teaching.

UMREL representatives included Ronald Brandt, Miss Donna Smith, and Mrs. Barbara Long; A.S.T. representative was John Pearson, Wisconsin State University.

Mrs. Lucille Duggan teaches English at Richfield High School and supervises student teachers.

Sister St. Alfred, assistant professor of English at the College of St. Catherine, teaches the Methods course and supervises student teaching.

# are you using the right incentive to make reading programs "FUN"?


Educational studies show that even the slowest readers are more attracted to compact, colorful paperbacks than to more formidable looking cloth bound books.

PERMA-BOUNDS retain all of the features of paperbacks which youngsters like, and add a new dimension which *you* will like . . . *durability*.

A sparkling clear laminated plastic coating enhances and protects the artwork from soiling. Binders boards keep covers *rock-hard* and free from dog-eared corners. A special new adhesive *locks* pages into a *resilient* binding, so they *cannot* fall out.

The durability of PERMA-BOUNDS will save you precious time and money. You will eliminate the costly replacing of paperbacks which wear out so quickly.

Choose from our catalog of over 4000 PERMA-BOUND paperback titles especially selected for schools and libraries — or let us rebind the old or new paperbacks now in your possession. Either way, PERMA-BOUNDS will put "fun" into your reading programs.

PERMA-BOUNDS are eligible for purchase with Federal funds under Titles I, II, III.

**PERMA-BOUND®**

***PAPERBACKS***

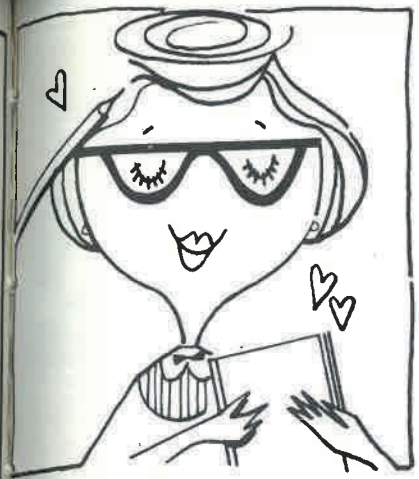
***With durability "built in"***

**Every paperback in PERMA-BOUND binding is GUARANTEED for 50 circulations or 2 years, whichever comes first.**

PERMA-BOUND
**Hertzberg-New Method, Inc.** Dept.
Vandalia Road, Jacksonville, Illinois

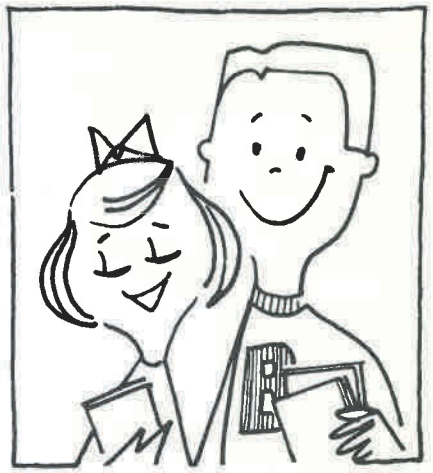
- ☐ Please send a FREE SAMPLE of a Perma-Bound without obligation.
- ☐ Please send catalogs of Perma-Bound paperbacks now available.
- ☐ Please send information on how we can have paperbacks now in our possession Perma-Bound.

Name _____
Title _____
Institution _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____



**TEACHERS AND LIBRARIANS LIKE PAPERBACKS**

Teachers and librarians like paperbacks because they induce teen-agers to read—paperbacks have psychological appeal for teen-agers. Paperbacks give the teacher a new *flexibility* in assigning reading material to students of different abilities and skills.



**TEEN-AGERS LIKE PAPERBACKS**

Outstanding students are assigned more paperbacks than slower readers. No longer are teachers and students chained to one anthology, one reading pace. Teen-agers prefer paperbacks because of compact size, light weight, ease of handling, and attractive artwork on covers.

# EDUCATIONAL PAPERBACKS

## (NOT REBOUND)

Order from 4000 carefully selected English, social science, science, and leisure reading titles especially selected for school and libraries from one source.

Immediate delivery — all titles are in stock. Your orders will be picked, packed and posted at once.

**Special discount on quantity orders.**

**paperback division**
**HERTZBERG-NEW METHOD**

Paperback Dept.
**HERTZBERG-NEW METHOD, INC.**
Vandalia Road, Jacksonville, Illinois

Please send paperback catalog and full price information

Name _____ Title _____
Institution _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____