MINNESOTA ENGLISH JOURNAL

Focus

ARTICULATION of the ENGLISH CURRICULUM

FIRST ISSUE OF ACADEMIC YEAR 1975-76
NUMBER: VOLUME XI, NO. 2
FALL, 1975

Annual membership of $5.00 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 Sr. Andre Marthaeler, O.S.B., MCTE Executive Secretary, Bemidji State College, Bemidji, Minnesota 55601. Annual subscription rate to the **Minnesota English Journal**, published two or three times a year, is $3.00; single copies are $1.50. Manuscripts and other correspondence concerning the MEJ should be sent to Elmer F. Suderman, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota 56082.

MEMBER OF THE NCTE AFFILIATE INFORMATION EXCHANGE AGREEMENT

ıinnesota english journal

blished by the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English

VOLUME XI, NO. 2 FALL, 1975

TABLE OF CONTENTS

editorial comments

The Minnesota English Journal is late. Very late. While this is the first issue of the academic year 1975-1976, we are now well into 1976. But the second issue of this school year should be in time for the Spring Conference. It will focus on censorship.

This issue focuses on articulation, the theme of last Spring's conference at Duluth. The two featured speakers at the conference, Dr. Margaret Early and Rogers E. Onick have graciously consented to allow us to reprint their speeches at the conference. Both speeches were thoughtfully presented. Both read well almost a year later. We are glad to have them in permanent form. They are worth referring to again and again. We can be sure that the problems they address will not go away. We may very well be facing them at the end of this century just as we faced them at the beginning of this century, as Rogers Onick points out in his article.

The article on Minnesota writers by J. Ruth Stenerson is appropriate for this bicentennial year. It is a good introduction to Minnesota writers, and, more important, it indicates just how much needs to be done before we can fully understand the richness of Minnesota literature. Hopefully this article will help others to write more about the literature of this state.

Robert S. Griffin's provocative article, "A Day in the Life of A Student Teacher Supervisor," touches in a very practical way on some of the problems of articulation faced by those who supervise student teachers, by the student teachers, indeed, by all who teach English.

A word about Minnesota English Journal and its present plight, financial, that is. I have been told that we print good articles, worthwhile articles. Yet we are in danger, as so many journals and their sponsoring professional organizations are today, of having to give up the Journal because of increasing costs. We have cut back the number of issues this year from three to two. We hope to be able to continue to publish the Journal in subsequent years. To do so we will have to have the cooperation of all English teachers at all levels throughout the state. Encourage your friends to join MCTE. That is the best way to guarantee the survival of an important professional organization and, we think, an important Journal.

We Look Before and After

By MARGARET J. EARLY
Syracuse University

When Donna McBrian asked me last September for a title that would tie in with your theme of articulation, I must have been feeling vaguely romantic to have pulled that title out of a teen-age crush on Shelley. You remember: "We look before and after,/And pine for what is not." "To a Skylark" has very little to do with articulation except to remind us that we can't build a curriculum for the 70's on what appealed to us in the 40's or 50's or 60's.

So tonight I am satisfied only with the first word of my title. That at least reminds us that we're all in this together--this being the education of the young in the uses of their language, we being the teachers from pre-school to graduate school who have to know what other teachers, before and after, are contributing to children's development in language. (Gerald Kincaid said that much better when he used "Cooperation Is the Name of the Game" as the title for an important article on curriculum development in the English Journal, May, 1972.)

In spite of my good intentions of last September, I'm going to use your conference theme only as an excuse for airing my own biases and enthusiasms.

I understand less and less about what articulation means. I know what it used to mean. Once there was a fond hope that one could specify the skills to be introduced or reinforced at each grade level. We used to think that there were certain skills, certain understandings, even certain books that we could expect students at a given grade level to have mastered. I remember once snarling at 10th graders: "Who was your teacher last year?" Two-thirds of them said, "You were." It had to do with apostrophes, I think, or maybe punctuating non-restrictive clauses (it was a long time ago). It was a small matter, but it convinced me of the folly of expecting that real live students would acquire even skills in the orderly fashion prescribed by the scope and sequence charts.

Those charts we used to make were based on hope, logical inferences, and scraps of research. Mostly hope. We looked at the way adults use language--that is, we looked at the products--comprehension, for example, and tried to figure out the process by which adults arrived at it. Comprehension, of course, is

the product; we haven't a clue as to what happens to produce it. Indeed, one psychologist has called it the Merlin factor.

Teaching is mostly guess work. We have glimmerings of light on the question of how children learn oral language, how they go on from there to learn simple reading skills. When I talk of "mapping language development," you know that the maps I refer to are about as accurate as a New Yorker's view of anything west of Buffalo. As language experts we know enough to identify large land masses but not coastal irregularities.

When we used to make scope and sequence charts in minute detail, reading teachers began to notice that they came out with a list of skills for tenth grade (e.g. understanding prefixes and suffixes, reading for main ideas, noticing similarities and differences, following directions) that was not much different from third grade.

Cornelia Nachbar noted the same recurrences when the curriculum is described in terms of behavioral objectives. I'm sure you know her helpful article "Accountability is Not a Dirty Word" (Elementary English, May 1974).

What use is it to repeat skills or objectives in scope and sequence charts? How can you say a child has mastered any skill in reading, when the skills are the same and the content changes?

The trouble with curriculum building is, as people keep pointing out, (this time it's Bob Hogan) that "Children develop organismically." (I think that means they grow like weeds--or dolphins.) Hogan continues:

> "We can identify and study distinguishable sequences in their growth if we want to. The children don't much mind that as long as we don't get in the way of their growth. But they do grow organismically. And if I were organizing a composition program for the junior or senior high school, I would take that fact into central account."

Helping children grow in language is like helping them to grow physically. A lot depends on what they digest. "It would be convenient," Hogan says, "if one could decide the best sequence of food groups. For example, wouldn't it be a lot easier if we could agree that children from 12-13 need whole grain bread and cereals; 14-15 meat, eggs and dry beans; 16-17 milk, cheese and other dairy products; 18-19 vegetables and fruits."[1]

[1] Robert Hogan, "The Significance of Prepositions," English Journal, February 1972, pp. 261-264.

Instead of scope and sequence charts, teachers today are udying the developmental cycles of childhood and adolescence. Time magazine generalized, sweepingly and inaccurately last ek, "Freud, Spock, and Piaget have charted almost every inch childhood...and Erik Erikson has put the final touches on a avincing map of adolescence." As I said, such maps are very neral, but they are having their effect on curriculums-- ong with Kohlberg's stages of moral education.

Although the implications of Piaget for language development e by no means universally accepted, elementary teachers are ecoming sensitive to his theories and are looking for signs of ch of the developmental stages in individual children and think- g about what these mean for evaluating language performance. r instance, the day before yesterday I was talking with a en-year-old in a fourth grade class that had read a story about rchimedes a few weeks ago. I asked her to tell me about it. he did pretty well with the human interest elements, giggling s she described old Archimedes leaping from his bath and running hrough the streets shouting Eureka. She knew about the crown-- ow it was suspected of being part impure metal. But Archimedes's roblem was a matter of weight, shape, and volume--and she had no nception, as Piaget would predict, of these matters of onservation. But she understood Archimedes's joy in learning and that was the goal I had for her) and a few of those ten- ear-olds understood the theory of displacement. Some day I'm oing to get one of them to explain it to me.

For teachers of English at every grade level, the stages of language development, which psycholinguists are mapping in greater detail each year, have specific implications for the classroom. For example, we know that learning to read is an extension of learning to speak, that the beginning reader figures out the rules for written language just as he has previously figured out the rules for spoken language. Knowing this, the elementary teacher doesn't expect children to read beyond their capacity to understand the spoken language. It's normal for children to translate what they read into their own dialect. We expect oral reading to make sense; we don't always demand an exact match with the printed page.

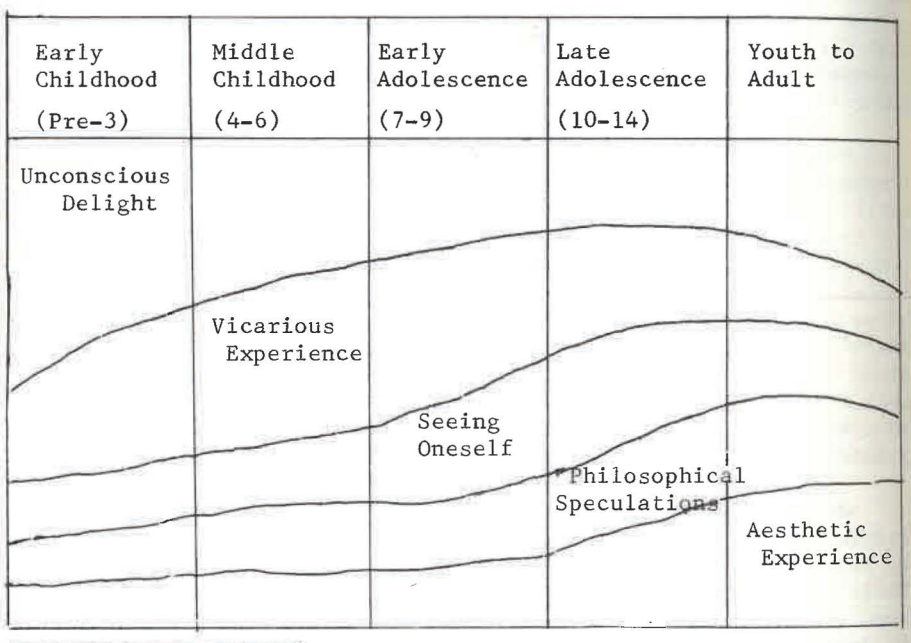
Another implication: you learn to read, and read widely, before you add other dialects to the one you learned at home. We know that children have pretty much mastered the grammar of their language--the language of their home environment--by the time they come to school. Their facility with syntax will continue to develop as they mature. It won't do much good to force-feed that growth. That is, the time you spend on sentence-combining exercises may be wasted. When children are ready to move from a series of independent clauses joined by "and" to subordinate clauses and from that stage to compressing ideas into participial phrases and infinitives, they'll do so.

We can make it more likely that they'll do so by varying the situations in which they use language. In a doctoral dissertation at Syracuse, San José showed that fourth graders used more mature syntax when they wrote in different situations, using different modes of discourse.[2]

Our move away from scope and sequence charts to developmental cycles can be shown in language and literature. Moffet, starting with language presents this progression: (see chart)

In literature we are again concerned with overlapping stages. Years ago I proposed that, pre-school through high school, we remember that children go to literature first for unconscious enjoyment. They know what they like but usually they can't say why. Somewhere between fifth and eighth grade--maybe much later for some--they can deal with literary devices, with the craft of writing. At this stage--what I've called self-conscious appreciation--they may take pleasure in examining, after they have felt the impact of a story or poem, how the author produced that feeling in them. In this stage, their appreciation is self-conscious because it is to some degree imitative. Fully mature, they reach the stage of conscious delight, when they know

PURPOSES OF LITERATURE *



[2]Christine Martinez San José. Grammatical Structures in Four Modes of Writing at Fourth Grade Level, Unpublished dissertation, Syracuse University, August, 1972.

*G. Robert Carlsen, English Journal, Feb., 1974.

what they like and why and are independent of critics' views.

Robert Carlsen has another way of looking at stages of development in literature, which I've adapted somewhat in this visual.

Perhaps only with respect to literature can we face practical questions of articulation amounting to who teaches what and when. Obviously, when we are teaching works in common to a class or small group, we need to agree on grade placements. The more we use independent reading related to thematic units the more we can tolerate specific titles appearing in successive grades.

In the teaching of reading I can see perhaps the greatest implications for cooperation all the way along the line from kindergarten to college. There was a time when high school teachers closed their minds to reading instruction, expecting that if students didn't learn to read by the end of sixth grade, it was no business of theirs to teach them. Now that attitude has changed considerably, and we are much more nearly ready to assume responsibilities for teaching reading in the high school. To do so, we must know what goes on in primary grades, what follows in 4, 5, and 6, and what the junior high school program consists of.

In reading, we can see especially clearly that articulation means diagnostic teaching. However, we must ask how realistic it is to expect high school teachers, especially those in elective programs, to diagnose the reading abilities of the hundred or more students that constitute their load. Often it is a different hundred-plus every semester or every nine weeks. For this reason I urge the development of a diagnostic course of short duration for every student in ninth or tenth grade. In such a course the emphasis would be on the students' evaluations of themselves as learners. They would take many formal and informal tests of reading and related language skills, examine their interests and habits, write introspective accounts of how they learn, and prepare dossiers that all their teachers could share.

The Council and its affiliates have special responsibilities toward articulation. On a national level, the Council embraces the whole curriculum from pre-school to graduate English programs, but many affiliates center their efforts on secondary English only. Perhaps at both national and local levels our efforts are too feeble, judging by the paucity of elementary teachers among our members. How to attract elementary teachers and teacher-educators to our conferences and conventions is not a simple problem, but surely we can improve our efforts. Probably we

[3]Margaret Early. "Stages of Growth in Literary Appreciation," English Journal, March, 1960.

need to think again about the format and content of conference sessions. If we are in earnest about the need for articulation, why do we insist on separate sessions for each of the levels? Should we not have many sessions that deal with problems common to all levels?

At a national level do we need to reexamine the separatism that has resulted in a national elementary language arts conference and a national secondary conference and a conference for department chairmen?

At state and local levels, what can affiliates do to call attention to the teaching of English from pre-school to college? This year, in an attempt to strengthen the affiliate network, NCTE is offering three modest grants to those affiliates, or groups of affiliates, who can propose the best way of spending $3000 a year for the next three years. "Best ways" will certainly include plans to extend services and increase memberships not only to senior high schools but to middle schools, elementary schools, and community colleges.

THE SPECTRUM OF DISCOURSE*

Interior Dialog (egocentric speech)			
Vocal Dialog (socialized speech)	Recording, the drama of what is happening	PLAYS	P O E T R Y
Correspondence Personal Journal Autobiography Memoir	Reporting, the narrative of what happened	FICTION	
Biography Chronicle History	Generalizing, the exposition of what happens	ESSAY	
Science Metaphysics	Theorizing, the argumentation of what will or may happen		

*James Moffett, Teaching the Universe of Discourse, Houghton Mifflin, 1965.

What Articulation of a Secondary English Curriculum Means

By ROGERS E. ONICK
Edison Junior High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

"A great number of English teachers have expressed publicly or privately that the world is too much with them," Alan C. Purves states in Deciding the Future: A Forecast of Responsibilities of Secondary Teachers of English, 1970-2000 A.D. "By this they mean not what Wordsworth meant, that life has become too materialistic," he continues, "but that there seem to be too many things in the world that impinge upon them as professionals and as people. Not too long ago the teaching of English seemed relatively sure: there was the language that had rules of grammar and spelling; there was writing that had certain boundaries of decency; and there was literature which was enshrined in certain anthologies or reading lists. Matters of learning theory, of new media, of new grammars, of new attitudes towards language, of new modes of composition, none of these had penetrated the purview of the English teacher. Nor had there come the student rebellions, the demands for accountability, the teacher's sense of being a member of a labor force rather than a professional, or the sense that governmental policies in foreign and domestic affairs affected the lives and work of English teachers.

"Given the multiciplicity and fecundity of change and given the immensity of the problems that face the world," Purves remarks, "problems ecological, psychological, economic, educational, social, political, and the like, the teacher of English is even more at a loss than he might have been only several years ago. We are in an age in which the present and the future rush at us," he points out, " and in which we have barely a chance to take stock of where we are. The teacher's decisions become even more frenzied. How is he to begin to make those decisions?"

He is to begin and can begin, I respond, through reading research reports published by organizations and particularly by the National Council of Teachers of English. He is to begin making those decisions by reading the book from which I quoted Purves and which was written by Edmund J. Farrell, Associate Executive Secretary of NCTE. And the teacher is to begin and can begin by accepting the opportunity to articulate his subject with others of and not

of his profession on a city-wide or regional basis. NCTE has again facilitated and initiated the opportunity for communication through encouraging articulation conferences that bring together English teachers and others interested in our profession to discuss changes in the English curriculum, or changes in secondary and college school programs, or to reflect upon other aspects of English teaching and English as a school subject. Through articulation, chances for greater communication and for making those decisions are increased. But after we have come together, how do we proceed? Is simply coming together and sharing classroom strategies sufficient? Is expressing personal views about the state of the English curriculum sufficient? Is a sharing of strategies and personal opinions really articulation? Is it sufficient to speculate about whether or not the English teacher can prepare himself for rapid developments: increased individualized instruction, computerized instruction, student input in curriculum planning, the influence of the media world upon students' reading needs, greater concern for literary pieces representative of all races and numerous cultures, and greater concentration on dialects? To begin answering these questions which, of course, relate to the English curriculum, those who come together must try to answer another related question first, "What is meant by articulation of a secondary English curriculum?"

Several approaches can be taken in a determination to answer this question, and one which makes sense, I am convinced, is the need to look at what was happening decades ago with the English curriculum, to speculate about its future, and to view the present trends and implications of its state. Meaning of articulation of an English curriculum cannot be discussed adequately if discussions are limited solely to the here and now. Much of who we are now as professionals and as a profession is the direct result of our subject's heritage and how we perceive ourselves and our profession in the distant future. Through the approach chosen here, I hope to deduce the meaning of articulation of an English curriculum.

THE PAST

Many students in the 1800's and early 1900's, history tells us, were making low or failing grades in English and were dropping out of high school. Partly in response, various investigations and committee reports concerned themselves with the problems of adapting English instruction to the changing social demands and needs of individual students. Successive investigations and reports reflected the changing

conception of the role of English in then modern secondary education.

One of the earliest and best efforts of the past at reform of the English curriculum was made by a national joint committee on English representing the National Council of Teachers of English and the National Education Association. James Fleming Hosic was chairman. The report, which was published by the United States Bureau of Education in 1917, emphasized that the subject matter of English consists primarily of activities, not of information. "The relating of items of knowledge to the pupil's daily experience," declared the report, "is far more important than the relating of these items to each other in his memory." Parenthetically, in this emphasis upon activities and on student experience, the Hosic Report was in advance of its time. The Hosic Report classified the desired outcomes of English under the headings of cultural, vocational, social and ethical values. The trend pointing to an integrated curriculum which materialized in the late 1940's was anticipated by the Hosic Committee's insistence upon cooperation between the English department and the other departments of the secondary school. In general, the Hosic Committee may be said to have made an enormous step forward in shifting the emphasis of the English curriculum from subject-matter mastery to the needs of the students.

In 1926 a committee of NCTE issued a report called The Place of English in American Life. It found, after studying communication in everyday life, that oral expression predominated, and recommended that the schools give increased attention to oral expression. The study was supported in 1928 when statistics revealed that schools were primarily emphasizing activities least common in daily living and neglecting those which were at that time most common in then contemporary America. Subsequent studies, however, suggested that the proportion of time devoted to oral and written expression and oral (listening) and written (reading) understanding was hardly altered by this report.

A few years later in the early thirties, NCTE organized a commission of 100 teachers of English, representing all parts of the country, all school levels from kindergarten through college, and all phases of the English program. The task was to draft the outline of an English curriculum which would be in harmony with the newer educational approaches. The commission's report was published in 1936 under the title, An Experience Curriculum in English which was later

followed by Conducting Experiences in English.

An Experience Curriculum in English stressed the continuity of growth in language and reading abilities, rather than specific grade placement of individual items. It placed heavy reliance upon actual experience with reading and language in lifelike situations. It advocated teaching grammar directly as an aid in the improvement of an individual student's speaking and writing, rather than as grammar in isolation. It gave impetus to the free reading movement by advocating a wide variety of reading experiences, with nonliterary as well as literary materials, placing structure and enjoyment above factual knowledge and familiarity with the structure of literary types. Its recommendations for the English curriculum were bolder than those of the Hosic Report, in that they departed further from traditional forms and came closer to the lives of students.

In the sixties, the English curriculum was reassessed to establish priorities, to specify the task of the English teachers, and to create effective sequential, integrated programs which balance content and skills. Even now discussion topics that are widespread among English teachers and others were present in the sixties: the real or imagined differences made by instructional innovations; the place of the humanities and of reading in a technological age; the advantages of interdisciplinary units; the alleged shortcomings of the traditional curriculum. Contrary to reports like ones prepared by the Hosic Committee and the Commission of 100, the traditional English curriculum was still accused in the sixties of failing to deal directly with the relationship between education and life.

Great consideration in this decade was also given to emerging concepts in the teaching of language, literature and composition, and their application in actual programs. Nation-wide discussions focused on the importance of linguistic insights into the nature of language and of language development to the content and organization of instruction in language and language skills. Changes in the concepts and teaching of composition were viewed with emphasis on sequential programs based on psychological patterns of organization which concentrate, first, on the composing process itself, and secondly, the rhetorical principles of organizing and expressing ideas. New concepts and teaching models in literature were argued, especially those which stressed rich and expanding literary experiences as central to educating the imagination of the student and to developing lifelong reading habits.

What does articulation of a secondary English curriculum mean? It means reassessing and/or reviewing the trends and implications of past curriculum patterns and their directions to avoid going over covered grounds, and to determine how best to proceed now; it means reflecting the changes of the secondary and college English programs to try to clarify our position now; furthermore, it means to not just share information about what is happening at the school levels involved and about what is happening in individual schools within each level, but it also means reaching a consensus about certain aspects of the English curriculum. Articulation must not merely include and mean an awareness of those reform movements that characterized the forties, fifties and sixties, but it must also deal with their failures to place English as a school subject and to place the English curriculum in the right perspective.

THE FUTURE

"A central concern for those engaged in secondary English programs and curriculum development" writes Edmund Farrell, "is to help the English teacher anticipate educational change and encourage his participation in and contributions to the direction of that change during his professional career." When the English Association of Greater Milwaukee sponsored one of the two prototypic articulation conferences in 1973, the Conference Planning Committee unanimously agreed that some concentration on the future of the English curriculum was essential to any discussion of present trends and implications. What articulation of an English curriculum means bears greatly on the future of that curriculum and how knowledgeable English teachers are of future trends and implications. Let me, therefore, present data which should bring more closely into focus the meaning of articulation of an English curriculum.

Once again I call on Farrell and his extraordinarily detailed and informative book Deciding the Future for presenting this data. However, let me point out as does Farrell that the generalizations to follow pertain first of all to "effects upon 20%, not 100%,of the educational programs or student population of the secondary schools; second, they are drawn from the forecasts of one panel, not all panels; and third, they derive their support from speculations that received 40% or higher probability of being implemented between 1975 and 1999."

Generalization 1: The English curriculum will be more flexible, its objectives and means of evaluation more clearly defined, and its emphasis more upon process than

upon content.

Flexibility in the curriculum will result from the development of ungraded programs in English: the elimination of English as a mandatory subject in grades 11 and 12, for example; team teaching which involves both small-group and large-group instruction, as another example; the existence of independent reading as a scheduled elective; and the flexible scheduling of classes.

Behavioral objectives for English and techniques to evaluate according to those objectives will be developed.

Increasingly during the next thirty years teachers will place emphasis on students' learning methods of problem solving rather than on their learning facts. The movement in secondary English will be from "content-oriented" to "process-oriented" programs. And by the end of the century, we will find a closer relationship than found now between theory based upon educational research and actual practice in the English classroom.

Generalization 2: Students will have numerous opportunities for individualized instruction. They will be able to individualize their learning of basic skills through programmed texts and computerized programs; they will be able to develop skills in reading and writing at clinics designed for this purpose such as the Writing Clinic on the campus of the University of Wisconsin at Madison; they will attend learning centers which permit various kinds of individualized instruction; and they will increasingly receive tutorial instruction, particularly if they are more capable students.

Generalization 3: The present split between affective and cognitive modes of learning will diminish.

English as a school subject will be stressed as an instrument for clarifying personal and social experiences in daily life.

Generalization 4: Language study will be broadened in the curriculum and students' use of language will be better appreciated by teachers.

Based on the responses Farrell received, he points out that "Greater attention will be given in the

curriculum to aspects of language or linguistics not widely taught now--the nature and history of language, dialects, semantics, phonology, morphology, etymology and lexicology, etc.

Generalization 5: More attention will be paid to processes underlying written and oral composition.

These generalizations as well as others detailed in Farrel's book do stimulate concern and have far-reaching implications. Farrell points out, however, that the "forecasts are limited in that they fail to show which of these developments as well as which of the developments anticipated by participants on panels other than English may have the most pronounced influences on the responsibilities and behavior of a secondary teacher of English."

We are told in The Nature of the Curriculum for the Eighties and Onwards by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, that in the next decade "More students will stay longer at school, consequently students will form a larger proportion of the population. Simultaneously the rate of social change will accelerate; mass media will become more influential; new patterns of authority will emerge and leisure time will be extended as the length of the work day recedes.

"The school cannot remain aloof from these developments. Teachers, individually and through their professional organizations, will wish to redefine their role in face of these external pressures and will themselves be affected by social changes. The students, who are maturing earlier, will wish to participate more in decision making." Certainly as English educators we cannot afford to disregard the overall developments of these effects upon the English curriculum.

These high probabilities remind us that "The times they are a changing." Change like time is neutral. You have to do something with it before it can work, says Samuel G. Sava, Executive Director of the Institute for Development of Educational Activities. And through very serious and thoughtful articulation about what we are about and what the English curriculum is/ should be about, we respond to the need for doing something.

We are told that human knowledge doubles every ten years or less, and that in many areas of this world every forty years.

We are reminded that twenty-five percent of all the people

who ever lived, live today.

Fifty percent of all the energy consumed by humans has been consumed by them in the last 200 years.

Ninety percent of all the scientists who ever lived, live today.

By the year 2000, seventy-five percent of us in this country will be concentrated in urban areas.

And our median life span will approach 80 and beyond.

Margaret Meade put it this way a decade ago and reemphasized it again at the Minneapolis NCTE Convention: "No man will ever again die in the same world into which he was born."

J. Robert Oppenheimer adds: "This world of ours is a new world in which the unit of knowledge, the nature of human communities, the order of society, the order of ideas, the very notions of society, and of culture have changed and will not return to what they have been in the past. What is new is new not because it has never been there before but because it has changed in quality. Our world alters as we walk in it." Preparing our students for the future is what education is all about, I'm convinced; and articulation of an English curriculum must most definitely assess the needs of change and the improvement of present-day trends upon students' future.

Again, for emphasis, we cannot set ourselves apart from education generally; what articulation of an English curriculum means for us bears significantly upon what the implications of the future curriculum means for us as teachers and people, and for young people.

Dealing with the meaning of articulation of an English curriculum, therefore, must require a sane awareness and understanding of future probabilities. We are chronologically distant from the future and our past but we are not so in thought. We are unable to articulate what we are about without concerning ourselves with what we were yesterday and what we may become tomorrow. We are an inseparable part of what we were and what we are to become.

Facts of the past must be weighed carefully and judiciously; probabilities of the future must result from careful analyses of the present. Articulation, then, must not

be incidental, opinionated, overly simplified or lacking in a panoramic view of secondary education.

Several major developments of the past and projections of the future have been presented in an effort to deduce the meaning of articulation of a secondary English curriculum. The approach, however, is incomplete without a concentration on the present.

THE PRESENT

Of today, I can safely contend that articulation must bear upon the needs of the individual students and the demands and needs of the society. Great concern must be given to the changing roles of the family. International tensions and the present wars in other lands of our world will need to be present in our thinking because they are reflected in the anxieties of our students, particularly those at the college level. Personal conflicts, interracial and intercultural misunderstandings, the uncertainties of employment opportunities after graduation and the present high rate of unemployment complicate the lives of students and require of us all the expertise we can bring to our classrooms. We must therefore articulate how the English curriculum can help us deal with these concerns and reach some consensus.

Several questions can be raised at this time to help shape the meaning of articulation of an English curriculum; and hopefully these are questions which can be articulated:

Literature

1. Is the study of literature planned to provide opportunities for the student's development of greater insight into the human experience not only to better understand himself and his contemporaries but to connect with the universality of man?

2. Do we want a sequential balance in the programs of various literary types--the novel, short story, poetry, drama, essay, biography, and other nonfiction?

3. To what extent should film making be included in the curriculum as one form of literary communication?

4. Can consensus about several important present and future aspects of the literature component of the curriculum be reached?

Reading

1. How can the reading program be closely correlated with literature, composition and language?

2. What reading skill priorities must the English curriculum make towards attending to the needs of all students?

Writing

1. If we accept or go along with good writing as that which helps us to know ourselves--our experiences, our wants, our needs, our hopes, our fears--and to make ourselves known to others and to know them, what should the priorities be in developing writing competencies in the English curriculum?

Language

1. James E. Miller, Jr., past President of NCTE, in his new book Word, Self and Reality, emphasizes the importance of language as a means of self-exploration and self-discovery. He says that "the task of diving deep within oneself and finding what really lurks there is not an easy nor comfortable one, but it can be important, even definitive in the discovering of self. Sorting through and coming to terms with it is the job of a lifetime. And it is finally a job for language--the language of introspection, perhaps, but written language, too, in which the flow of inchoate feelings can be arrested, clearly delineated and examined; and the sorting through can proceed in some kind of orderly fashion." Given this definition, what are its implications for dealing with communication in the English classroom, and what consensus can be reached in viewing language as a self-actualizing and humanizing activity?

Articulation of an English curriculum means settling some long overdue arguments about various aspects that make up the subject we call English. It means raising questions that perhaps cannot be answered today or the next or the next; it means asking questions that may lead to overall general consensus of who and what we are about and are to become. It means synthesizing those things we do in the classroom in helping students, weighing those things against our backgrounds and acquired knowledge and awareness of the future, then coming up with a pretty good sound explanation about some aspect of the curriculum.

"Our sharpened concern for preservation of our natural environments and for the physical conditions with which we live," we are told in a statement written by the NCTE Committee on the Preparation of Teachers of English; "our increased power to communicate quickly and accurately with most other people on this planet; the expanding population of our world; the increased mobility of our population; the turnover in the population of our schools; our ability to place human beings on a celestial body, and cameras on those we cannot reach with people; our increased power to destroy ourselves--either deliberately or inadvertently; our increased awareness of poverty and even starvation throughout the world; our increased reliance on non-print media for information about our world; our increased awareness of minority cultures and of their claims to recognition; the liberalization of our attitudes towards sex; our increased concern for the adequacy of supplies of energy to meet our own needs, let alone the world's needs--all these are far more urgent subjects of discussions among adult citizens and among students." They are, I add, urgent because they deal with human daily experiences and because their far-reaching effects on our future are great. Certainly in articulating the meaning of an English curriculum, how we evaluate compositions and how we teach the various literary types should not be given any priority. We must arrive at mutual decisions and involve ourselves in serious and thoughtful discussions that will help us prepare to practice our profession effectively in our schools and that will help us to put English in the right perspective, which is to deal primarily and directly with the daily needs of our youngsters as well as with their future needs.

These Books on Our Shelves: Minnesota Prose Writers

By J. RUTH STENERSON
Bemidji State College

One of the first requests I faced when I came to my present teaching position was that I prepare to teach a course in Minnesota Literature. Not being a native of the state, I was tempted to ask the same question tossed at me this summer, "Is there any?" But of course. There were Sinclair Lewis--and O.E. Rolvaag. (I though of F. Scott Fitzgerald as an Easterner, and had no idea he had ever lived in Minnesota.) But inexperienced and untenured teachers know how to gulp and say "Certainly" in the same breath. That was the beginning of a sleuth-like search which garnered a name here, a title there, a detail in a newspaper and an unknown book, all added to the soup kettle of regional literature and allowed to simmer. Now, years later, after repeated visits to Carmen Nelson Richard's Minnesota Writers; the Minnesota Centennial Literature Group's A Selected Bio-Bibliography: Minnesota Authors; the section by John K. Sherman in the state's centennial volume, The History of the Arts in Minnesota, and a good deal of sleuthing on my own, I am confident that the answer to "Is there any?" is definitely yes. By now, I have read several dozens of books written by Minnesota authors or interpreting the Minnesota scene. Many can well be used to enrich our offerings in the classroom or our interest in the state.

Valid reasons exist for inclusion of such literature in our readings. My treatment in this article will be limited to prose writings. Many of our writers, both fiction and non-fiction, have in their works helped to clarify our identity as Minnesotans. Now busy with our bicentennial celebrations, we realize that what we are as a nation is a composite of what fifty states are individually. As a state in which the history of the white man goes back nearly as far as in the orginal colonies, we have played a significant role in the development of the nation as a whole. At present we talk about the individualization of reading in our schools a good deal. Minnesota prose writers offer a variety of approaches and subjects that can be used as they appeal to individual readers and age levels.

We need not, however, search for sociological, historical, or methodological reasons for including Minnesota writers. Many of them are well worth reading in their own right, and rewarding to the teacher as well as to the student. Helen Clapesattle's

biography, The Doctors Mayo, may be worth reading because it reveals, painlessly indeed, much of the history of the state as a whole, of the Rochester area especially, of the development of medicine and surgery, as well as of a famous family of doctors and the internationally known clinic they established. But it is equally attractive because it is a fascinatingly interesting book that is hard to put down. (It is now available again in paperback edition.)

Another satisfaction in reading Minnesota writers with any plan or thoroughness is that one has the opportunity to watch a written literature develop from its early beginnings in the diaries and journals of such explorers as Cass and Schoolcraft, through its early attempts at literary prose so often imitative of the style of Eastern writers, to a distinctively regional approach and then full participation in American literature. Where else but in the development of an individual state can one observe the entire development of a written literature?

We recognize, of course, that an oral literature which included tales, oratory, legends, and poetry had been present in this area for a much longer period of time than any written literature. I am not attempting in this article to deal with that as it existed in the Indian culture. That is a large subject by itself which most of us as teachers need to know more about than we do.

The more fully one looks at the idea of a state literature, the more one realizes that the term needs definition. What writers are we to include under such a term? Are Minnesota writers those whose subject matter deals with the state? Those who themselves live in the state, no matter what their subject matter? What kind of limitations can we accept? Is Justice William O. Douglas a Minnesota writer because he lived here from birth till he was four or five years old and because one chapter in his My Wilderness--East of Katadin is devoted to the Quetico-Superior through which he traveled as an adult? Or are we speaking of a writer like O. E. Rolvaag whose whole adult career was lived out in Minnesota but whose trilogy was set in South Dakota? How about Robert Penn Warren who taught at the University for some years but whose writing make little use of the Minnesota scene? The Centennial Literature Group included all writers born in Minnesota who lived here at least six years or had present residence in the state. They listed about seven hundred writers active from 1830 to 1958.

For the purpose of this article on the prose literature of the state, the term Minnesota writer will be considered to refer to someone who has spent a significant part of his life in the state or who has used the Minnesota scene as a basis for his writings. An obvious limitation on what is included is the

knowledge of the author of the article about Minnesota writers. The three source books referred to earlier are now fifteen years old. Even alert sleuths can miss new names and titles, especially when they must present their evidence infrequently. There is no single text giving a comprehensive account and evaluation of Minnesota literature. Current knowledge of the total subject, as I have said, must be garnered here and there and is dependent on one's possession of a frame of reference into which to place the new. There is a special satisfaction, once the interest has been aroused, in finding in the stores and the reviews books like Robert M. Pirsig's Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance or Sigurd Olson's Open Horizons and adding them to the collection already on our mental shelves. But that method may lend itself to glaring omissions--or to completely missing a gem from the collection.

In any literature there is that which is local (regional) and that which is universal. Some lock upon the regional as a lesser variety; others find it especially interesting because of its physical nearness to them. Both the regional and the universal are present in Minnesota's prose writings: the reader can satisfy his own preferences. He can find much variety in subject matter as well. Much of the best of what is available, when one looks at the past century, grows out of the kind of physical setting Minnesota enjoys--the lakes and woods country, and out of the ethnic variety and heritage Minnesotans so richly possess. One hopes there will be more capturing of the ethnic heritages before those who remember them first-hand have left the scene. Rolvaag, Martha Ostenso, and others have caught the Scandinavian immigrant experience in their fiction. Where are the equivalent stories of the Minnesotans of Finnish, Italian, Slovanian, Irish extraction? The bicentennial stress on our history would be profitable indeed if it led to the keeping alive in memorable form for tomorrow the seminal cultures of the many ethnic groups here.

A teacher wishing to include Minnesota's prose writings may well ask, "Where do I find out what is available?" "Who are the major state authors other than the big three?" "What books are available for the level at which I teach?" One valuable, though incomplete, source is the literary map published under the auspices of the MCTE. Attractively designed on durable heavy paper, the map is an inviting visual aid for any school room and comes at a nominal cost. A good addition to a school library is the book by Carmen Nelson Richards entitled Minnesota Writers (T. S. Denison and Company, Inc. of Minneapolis). Mrs. Richards includes her own brief introduction to each author, an auto-biographical sketch by each author, and a listing of the author's publications. The book needs up-dating, but there is much valuable content. Mrs. Richards has done patient research to put this book together.

One of the problems in using Minnesota authors in the classroom is that many books are out of print or available only in hardback or with difficulty. I have enjoyed using Martha Ostenso's Wild Geese, for example, but now it can no longer be secured in paperback. There is no difficulty in securing Giants in the Earth and Peder Victorious from Rolvaag's trilogy, but the third book, Their Father's God, was hard to find even in hardback until a recent reprinting. No doubt many books by Minnesota authors are tucked away in boxes in attics or dusted occasionally on the shelves of school and public libraries. Students may be interested in helping to locate some of the now-rare books. Once in a while our city library has sidewalk sales of books that are being removed from its shelves. I have found at them several otherwise unavailable books by Minnesota writers--for no more than ten cents each. Perhaps if we directed more requests for unavailable works to their publishers, some might be reprinted for us.

I. Minnesota Fiction: Adult

Those who like generalizations point to Sinclair Lewis, F. Scott Fitzgerald and O. E. Rolvaag as the state's most important fiction writers. Most, though not all, of their works are available in paperback or inexpensive editions. The writings of all of them escape from the regional into the universal: Main Street and Zenith are not to be found only in Minnesota; the jazz age as Fitzgerald portrayed it was likely less in evidence in Minnesota than in more urbanized parts of the country; Rolvaag's pioneer immigrants existed wherever non-English speaking immigrants and their children knew the loneliness and culture shock of a new land. In years of using Giants in the Earth, I have found it a book students respond to as compelling and authentic. One Sauk Center resident contemporary with Lewis who later taught at Teachers' College, Columbia--Henry Johnson--did not find Main Street authentic, and wrote a book called The Other Side of Main Street to present an alternate view.

These three novelists stand out, but they are far from the only ones. As Rolvaag presented the immigrants who homesteaded the South Dakota prairies, so Herbert Krause depicted the frontier farmer in western Minnesota. Grimly realistic in their handling of the frontier experience, Wind without Rain, The Thresher, and The Oxcart Trail give a vivid picture of the human cost his characters paid for their land. Martha Ostenso in Wild Geese drew from the lives of the Icelandic immigrants who farmed in the northern Red River Valley, their settlements reaching north to Winnipeg. Like Rolvaag's Per Hansa, Ostenso's Caleb Gare is the land-starved farmer from northern Europe intoxicated with the abundant acres of the new country. Ostenso wrote other novels about the Red River Valley--for example, O River, Remember! (Her husband, Douglas Dirkin, was also a writer.) Cornelia Cannon in Red Rust drew from the Swedish experience in central Minnesota. Her central character, Matts

Swenson, works to produce a rust-free strain of wheat in the New World. Is it straining too far to include as Minnesota fiction the novels by Wilhelm Moberg, the Swedish writer: Unto a Good Land and The Last Letter Home? These novels are set in the St. Croix Valley near Taylor's Falls.

Walter O'Meara depicted another facet of Minnesota's early days--the fur trade and the logging industry. The Grand Portage is probably his best-known novel. Others include Minnesota Gothic and Trees Went Forth, both set in the northeastern part of the state. Margaret Culkin Banning is probably better known for her editorial work and non-fiction writings, but she too has novels of the Duluth and Iron Range areas, especially the Mesabi. G. R. Bailey's The Red Mesabi gives a picture of life in the iron-mining communities, as does Phil Stong's Iron Mountain. (Stong is an Iowa writer.) Kenneth Davis's In the Forests of the Night is set in the bog country south of Lake of the Woods.

One of the first fiction writers to portray the Indian realistically was Joseph Snelling in Tales of the Northwest, recently reprinted. The son of the army commander after whom Fort Snelling was named, he lived among the Indians and knew them as they were, rejecting both the "savage" and the "noble savage" stereotypes. More recently, Gerald Vizenor has edited some of the Indian's own tales in his Anishinabe Adisokan, Tales of the People. He has also written the non-fiction The Everlasting Sky. Another writer to deal with the Indian was Bernard Ederer, whose Birch Coulee was an objective corrective of the traditional view of the Sioux Massacre as an unprovoked attack on white settlers. He portrays vividly the frustration and desperation felt by the Indians in the face of the withholding of their food supply and the trifling with treaty agreements. A contemporary writer to portray the Indian is Frederick Manfred (Feike Feikema) in Conquering Horse. Other novels by him include The Golden Bowl, The Chokecherry Tree, and Lord Grizzly. Gordon Parks is a contemporary novelist who writes of the black experience effectively in such books as A Choice of Weapons and The Learning Tree. Like Manfred, he is also a poet.

Fort Snelling is the setting for one of the best-known novels of Maud Hart Lovelace. In Early Candlelight, she tells the story of the early days of the fort as a military and trading post. The Mankato area is the setting for a novel by her and her husband, Delos Lovelace, called Gentlemen from England, in which the characters are younger sons of English gentry who come to support their urbane, fox-hunting way of life by growing beans--with no market for beans available. The rustic Yankees and the immigrants about them fare considerably better.

Darragh Aldrich's Girl Going Nowhere is a slight novel but it gives a fictional portrayal from depression days of the young

people who left home because their leaving would mean one less mouth to feed in impoverished families, and who rode the boxcars in a half-starved search for survival. These youth were a reality of their times, but few writers have used their story.

A contemporary fiction writer well known beyond Minnesota boundaries is J. F. Powers, who has moved to Ireland. Mostly concerned with portrayal of the Catholic church and clergy, his short stories are usually set in central Minnesota. Stories such as "The Forks" and "The Valian Woman" are often anthologized, and the novel Morte D'Urban is easily findable.

Classification of Pirsig's Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance as fiction may be open to challenge, but certainly he has used fictional devices and narrative as a vehicle for his philosophical ponderings of such issues as the nature of reality, romanticism and realism. The title is well chosen, but readers who are interested in neither zen nor motorcycles may find this book rewarding. Advanced high school and college level readers would be its most likely audience.

The mention of these authors does not exhaust the list of fiction writers from Minnesota. Many would want to include Max Shulman's satire and comedy, Clifford Simak's science fiction (Ring around the Sun, for example), Mabel Seeley's mystery novels, the short stories of Meridel LeSueur (and North Star Country), and the short stories and novels of Frances and Dorothea Malm. Ignatius Donnelly's polemical and futurist novels, such as Atlantis, set up utopian or anti-utopian societies which bring out perceptive commentary on our own times. Those who include Saul Bellow as a Minnesota writer because of the time he lived in the state bring in a major writer who ranks high among contemporary American novelists.

No account of the fiction of the state would be complete without mention of the tall tales of Paul Bunyan. These tales are shared with other states of the forested border country, so they are hardly more part of our literature than of that of Michigan, Maine, or Washington. But some of tales no doubt grew tall in the crisp air of Minnesota logging camps.

II. Minnesota Writing: Juvenile and Adolescent

I am hesitant to begin a list of authors in this category since there are many, and these levels of fiction are not my familiar preserve. There are, I am afraid, new writers of whom I am quite unaware. One writer already mentioned will be easily recognized in this field--Maud Hart Lovelace, with her Betsy-Tacy stories. Betsy grows from childhood to young womanhood in those stories, which have delighted thousands of readers for decades now. Even more popular, if we consider their contemporary renaissance, are the stories of Laura Ingalls Wilder. The Wilders lived in Minnesota long enough for the state to be the

setting for On the Banks of Plum Creek, but several states would have an equal claim to Mrs. Wilder, since other books of her series were set in Wisconsin and the Dakotas.

Caddie Woodlawn, a Newberry Award winner, comes from a writer who lived for some years in Minnesota, Carol Ryrie Brink. Thousands of children-grown-adult can still visualize the pages of Millions of Cats and other books by Wanda Gag, whose sister Flavia was also a writer and illustrator of juvenile fiction. Wanda Gag also translated and illustrated new editions of Tales from Grimm, More Tales from Grimm, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Annette Turngren, Ethel Brill, and Emma Lillian Brock are also authors of books for juvenile readers.

Among the books by state authors written for adolescents are Swiftwater and The Runner by Paul and Jane Annixter (his real name is Howard Allison Sturzel). Each new copy of Fiddlefoot Jones in the North Woods by Philip Jordan kept disappearing from our children's library at Bemidji State with such dispatch that I gave up hope of finding it, but this story of city boys introduced to the forest and wildlife by a wise old woodsman would naturally attract youngsters. Other books which suggest their at-homeness in Minnesota by their titles include Winter Cottage by Carol Brink, Honk, the Moose (set on the Range) by Phil Stong, and Winter on the Johnny Smoker by Mildred Houghton Comfort. The Johnny Smoker, a houseboat on the Mississippi River, is also used in Comfort's Treasure on the Johnny Smoker. Edythe Records Warner's The Little Dark House is a delightful portrayal of ice-fishing, and her The Tiger Is at Como Zoo obviously has a Minnesota setting.

While Adrienne Stoutenberg and Laura Nelson Baker each wrote books individually, they collaborated on biographies such as Dear, Dear Livy (about Mrs. Samuel Clemens), and Beloved Botanist (about Carl Linnaeus). Stoutenberg has also written books about animals, as has Helen Hoover in her Animals at My Doorstep.

These are certainly not all of Minnesota's writers of juvenile and adolescent books. Your students may be able to search out others and add them to your list or map.

III. Non-Fiction: Personal Experience Writing

Some of the writing most rich in human interest in Minnesota literature is to be found in the genres of biography, autobiography, and that kind of personal experience narrative that relates so closely to them. This is especially true where the stories told deal with the Minnesota scene, though we should surely recognize that Minnesota has had its share of biographers who have ranged widely in their choice of famous subjects. Marchette Chute, one of three sisters who are all writers (Joy

and Mary are the others), has written fine biographies of such literary giants as Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Chaucer. Oscar Firkins wrote studies of Jane Austen and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Arthur Mizener lived in Minnesota at the time of his writing of his famous biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Far Side of Paradise.

Paul de Kruif, while not a Minnesota writer, wrote an interesting biography of the Merritt brothers, so important to the discovery and development of iron mining in Minnesota, in his Seven Iron Men. Steward Holbrook's James J. Hill, a Great Life in Brief is one of several biographies written of the railroad magnate who made his home in Minnesota. I have already written of Helen Clapesattle's The Doctors Mayo as an illumination of the Minnesota scene. (Most readers would probably prefer the abridged edition.)

Much of the biographical writing is tied to the immigrant background of the state and to its early settlement--for example, Once upon a Lake by Thelma Jones, I Wanted to See by Borghild Dahl, Letters of Longing by Frida Nilsen, and The Third Life of Per Smevik by Rolvaag (supposedly a novel but in reality very close to his own experiences). No doubt many such writings exist, still in handwriting or privately published, unknown outside of the families whose stories are told, preserving the letters and accounts of those who came from many lands to Minnesota. For many years at Bemidji State College it was a traditional Freshman English assignment to write a paper researching the story of an older member of one's family, most often a grandparent. Thinking back now on many of the interesting stories unearthed, I hope some of those papers were saved as part of family history.

Also bringing out a part of early Minnesota life is the writing of Dr. Charles Eastman, a Sioux medical doctor, author of such books as The Soul of the Indian and Indian Boyhood. There are so many writings to tell us how the white man felt and thought as he came to this area, but far fewer to make us feel the bewilderment and frustration of the Indian whose way of life and culture were attacked or disregarded.

The adventures described in many of the personal experience writings could make interesting reading for today's students. Decades have passed since Charles Lindbergh told the story of his transatlantic flight in The Spirit of St. Louis (other books include We and Of Flight and Life), but the story still has its thrills. Eric Sevareid's Canoeing with the Cree, a youthful account of his canoe trip from the source of the Red River to York Factory on Hudson Bay, was recently reprinted by the Minnesota Historical Society. He and his companion, Walter Port of Bemidji, were seventeen and nineteen at the time of their trip. Readers who like outdoor adventure can go on to more of

it in Sigurd Olson's The Lonely Land, also set in Canada.

Sigurd Olson and Eric Sevareid have other writings that fit the genre of autobiography. Sevareid tells the story of his youth and early years in journalism working for Minneapolis newspapers in Not So Wild a Dream. And in Open Horizons Sigurd Olson gives us the story of his youth and his coming to the Quetico-Superior area he loves.

The connection between nature writing and autobiography is often a close one. It is the personal experience of the student of nature that makes his kind of writing alive for us. Sigurd Olson's The Singing Wilderness is the illustration par excellence of that. As in his Listening Point and Runes of the North, individual chapters are complete in themselves, bound together by the book title, the seasons, and Olson's love and concern for the country he writes of. Students can observe as they read his works the importance of careful observation to the success of writing.

Three of Olson's books are illustrated by the noted wildlife artist, Francis Lee Jaques, whose wife Florence wrote several enjoyable nature books--Canoe Country and Snowshoe Country, both set in the Gunflint Trail area of the Quetico-Superior. Her last work, Francis Lee Jaques: Artist of the Wilderness World, has dozens of his paintings and etchings as well as excerpts from the best of her own books.

Many readers of books narrating people's retreat from urbanized society to the solitude of the woodlands are familiar with Louise Dickinson Rich's We Took to the Woods. Minnesota has her counterpart in Helen Hoover, with her A Place in the Woods, The Gift of the Deer, and The Long-Shadowed Forest, her best work. The escape from the city has been the basis for many recent Canadian and Alaskan books as well. Another writer to deal with nature is Richard Davids, author of How to talk with the Birds. He is also the author of a fine biography, The Man Who Moved a Mountain.

IV. Other Non-Fiction

History is often not included as literature, but some well-written history may have many of the characteristics of literature. The diaries and journals of some of Minnesota's early explorers, for instance, make fascinating reading. William Whipple Warren, himself Ojibwe, wrote The History of the Ojibway Nation, recently reprinted. Theodore Blegen's history of Minnesota is ponderously thorough for the ordinary reader, but his essays about the Minnesota scene anyone would find worthwhile. Grace Lee Nute preserves the story of the colorful voyageurs in our early history with books such as The Voyageur and The Voyageur's Highway.

State newspapers, especially those in the Twin Cities, have brought to Minnesotans the essays of such writers as James Gray, whose Pine, Stream, and Prairie is a delightful and perceptive interpretation of the state and its people; Carl Towan, with books such as The Pitiful and the Proud and South of Freedom (his autobiography), and John Sherman, whose Sunday Best compiles many of the best of his short columns, both serious and entertaining, models of lively writing. Contemporary columnists whose offerings attract many readers include Dr. James Shannon and Robert T. Smith. Harrison Salisbury began his career with the Twin City press, as did Eric Sevareid. Dated by their political nature but evidence of other Minnesotans turning to the essay for expression are Hubert Humphrey's The Cause is Mankind and Eugene McCarthy's A Liberal Answer to the Conservative Challenge and Frontiers in American Democracy.

Literary criticism is not always listed as literature itself, but English teachers are perhaps not all aware how much Minnesota has added in that field with the writings of scholars such as Oscar Firkins, Joseph Warren Beach, Alan Tate, William Van O'Connor, Leonard Unger, Marchette Chute, and many others, most often associated with the University of Minnesota.

Where does one begin and end in one article with a subject so full of details? Inevitably there are authors and works that should have been included which are not mentioned here; there are readers who will consider that some of what has been mentioned is insignificant in terms of "real" literature. Whole areas of writing which take fully as much creativity and ability as those included have not been dealt with at all. For example, books published by church publishing houses in the state have given to the readers of the state books which include all genres of literature and which have had circulations as wide as many of those included in the article. The name Youngdahl is as well known in the publications world of the state as those of many professional full-time writers.

There have been and are many serious authors who have by their writings helped to define the identity, setting and way of life of Minnesotans. Many of them have in the process dealt with what is significant not only in Minnesota but also in the Upper Midwest as a whole. Many have raised issues and created images that are truly universal in interest and scope. Surely there is something for everyone available from Minnesota authors, something that teachers may find relevant and helpful in bringing their students to see that literature is not only that which depicts the long ago and far away, but that which offers a constant interpretation and imaging of the life and world about us.

A Day in the Life of a Student Teacher Supervisor

By ROBERT S. GRIFFIN
The University of Vermon, Burlington

Recently, as part of my work as a university supervisor, I visited a Minnesota high school to observe a student teacher with whom I had been working. She had been assigned a classroom supervisor by the university and he in turn had assigned her to teach aspects of an eleventh grade course in "vocational English." The class was homogeneously grouped on the basis that these were students "just interested in a job when they get out of school; you know, they aren't interested in college," according to the student teacher. In most ways the experience of the day was a typical one for me. In another way, however, it was most significant. The incident I will describe and my conversation with the student teacher following it were stimulants to me, "catalysts" which for me resulted in a great deal of thought and discussion. I talked with the students and student teacher involved and with colleagues as I worked to assess the meaning that these kinds of experiences had for me as an educator of teachers. This paper, then, is an attempt to explicate the outcomes of my consideration of some aspects of the teacher training process.

The day I observed the student teacher, the class was going through a culminating activity in a unit of study on technical writing. The class of thirty had been divided into six groups and given a week to devise and construct an advertisement for any product of their choice. The unit had been introduced through a one-hour talk by the student teacher on effective advertising techniques and had then spent a week in groups putting the ads together with construction paper and pictures from magazines. The completed ads were tacked onto the walls around the room. The day I came to visit, the class activity was to criticize each of the six ads.

As I walked into the class the student teacher whispered to me with a concerned look, "We've had some trouble. One of the ads had a sexual content." She pointed to an ad on the wall, an ad about the size of a large wall calendar. At the top was printed GET AHOLD OF THINGS and at the bottom BUY A SMITH BRAND PLIARS. It was clear that something had been stapled to the ad between the two printed phrases but had been removed.

"What'd they have up there?" I asked.

"A picture of a girl in a bikini."

Oh, I got it. Get ahold of things; then the girl captures your attention with the sexual connotation; then the new meaning as you read on to note the pitch to buy the pliars. Not bad, I thought--maybe a bit sexist, but it seemed to me that the students had put some thought into the work and in fact had created something not different from much commercial advertising. But the picture had been removed by the student teacher after a conference with the classroom supervisor, who thought the inclusion of the picture made the ad pornographic.

The class began to evaluate each ad in turn. As each was discussed there was much bickering among students and a harsh adversarial climate prevailed amid a barrage of accusations and defenses: "I can't make any sense of that ad your group did." "It's better than that thing your group did. You didn't even use any pictures." And so on. The student teacher had quite a difficult time trying to deal with one confrontation in particular between two students who quarreled with one another for several minutes. The student teacher's pleas was "let's be reasonable and stop arguing." At the end of the class discussion of each ad, the student teacher gave her own two to three minute critique, beginning with favorable comments and ending with suggestions as to how the ad might have been more effective.

The offending ad was discussed last. A student had the censored picture on her desk. I saw it was a picture taken from a Sports Illustrated magazine of a young woman modeling a swim suit. "Why was the picture taken down? We got it from the library. How come we can look at it in the library and we can't put it up on the wall?" asked one member of the group who had put the ad together. In response, the student teacher gave a brief talk in defense of the picture's removal. It was offensive to community standards she told them. You just can't do anything you want in school; you have to think of the reaction to the ad from people in town.

The classroom supervisor who had been sitting in the back of the room began to talk bruskly; all eyes turned to him. He spoke for perhaps five minutes. The thrust of his comments was that "you are always going to have somebody over you." Life is a matter of doing what those in charge require of you: "That's the way democracy works. Isn't that right?" he demanded. Many

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of Larry Olds, my colleague at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, to the analyses presented in this paper.

students nodded in what I took to be sincerity. "You've got to remember where you are. This town just won't put up with this. We got a letter from a school board member about this." The student teacher waved the letter aloft. "He did say he'd talk to you about it, though," she told the students. The implication, to me at least, was that the letter condemned the ad. The supervisor then announced a film "on the telephone company" to be shown during the next class meeting and dismissed the class. The film was one of those that is distributed by industry for public relations and employee recruitment purposes.

"How'd I do?," the student teacher asked me at our conference which followed the class. I asked her to tell me on what she wanted me to comment. "You know, did I look nervous up there? Did I keep the discussion going all right? Were my evaluations of the ads perceptive, do you think? Was this a good way to teach ad writing?" We spoke for quite a time about these matters, and the "discipline problem" of the arguing students.

I asked her finally about the "censorship issue," as I called it. "Oh, I'm not sure I would have taken that picture down off the wall. But what can I do, it's Mr. ____'s class."

We continued to talk, discussing a number of topics I introduced. It seemed to me that there were many crucial aspects of this learning situation that the student teacher seemed not to take into account in her concerns or analyses. At least they were crucial to me; they were things I thought about and investigated.

To me it was apparent that one function served by this classroom was a sorting function; students were being socialized into subordinate status within society. The lecture on situations always involving "someone over you who you have to obey" was a clear lesson in deference to authority and hierarchical control. The "someone over you" in this case was the school board. In case the point was missed by these students, they were informed that "that's the way democracy works." A neat bit of political socialization into "object" status for these students, objects acted upon rather than "subjects" acting to transform their circumstances.

In most every way in that classroom for that hour, the students had been basically acted upon. The two teachers chose the activity, convened the class, determined the topics and controlled the pace, stood while the students remained seated, controlled information (I later learned that the letter from the school board member had not condemned or prohibited the

xhibition of the ad), were the locus of evaluation, and etermined the direction of student activity. The students ere, and from what I could tell from reviewing the curriculum r the year essentially had been, passive recipients of the ctions of the teachers, acting not from any careful consideration their own purposes but instead at the bidding of those teachers. month after this incident I asked four of these students hether they had read the letter from the school board member. o." Had he visited class? "No." "Why not?" I asked. A nfused look was the reply. "Are you going to try to do ything about the picture being taken down." "We ought to, t we couldn't get anything done." They didn't have control things like that. I think they learned their lessons well.

The promotional film the next day would be a further esson in subordinance, in this case within a conventional rk role. Early in the year, the students had "picked" a cation, became indentified with it, so to speak, for the year. e "jobs," as the students referred to them, included secretary, tewardess, dental assistant, electrician, law enforcement, rsing and carpentry. I need not tell you which were chosen the boys and which by the girls. During the year the stuents gave several five minute speeches on "their" profession, earned to write letters of application, were given instruction a business firm's personnel representative in good interview havior and wrote out responses to mock interview questions, acticed writing business letters and job inquiries, heard alks from military representatives, were visited by represenatives of technical training schools in the area, and engaged a "job for a day" experience. To me, the students were earning, among other things, to be "good workers" who would rade their diligent efforts at whatever task and toward whatver purposes chosen by their employer in return for wages. s presented to these students, work is not something chosen enrich one's life, as consistent with one's purposes, as omething created out of an analysis of one's needs and others' eeds. Work to these students is a matter of choosing "a job" rom the options offered by the work institutions--but only hose options consistent with their status in society. In no ases was a career in the professions--medical doctor, attorney, eacher and the like--or in the arts, or in social or political ction chosen by these students. None of these lessons were xplicit--none appeared in the lesson plans presented to me the student teacher--but to me they were as significant as ny of those stated in the curriculum.

All of this I saw to be taking place in an environment hich was antithetical to the personal liberation of these

students. There were no students in this homogeneously grouped class who saw their life in any major degree differently from those of others. There was not the healthy challenge of diversity of perspective, of divergent purpose, which might tend to challenge and elevate the consciousness of these students. There were no books or information concerning individuals experimenting with their lives. There were no ideas or theories to be used by students to gain a new perspective on what one could do with life. Nothing that I could see promoted the kind of personal introspection or social analysis which might lead to a greater understanding of the political, economic and social context in which these students lived. These students were not taught to communicate or provide each other with critical comments: I did not see the ad evaluation, for example, as a situation helping these students to learn to operate in a climate of respectful mutual help and criticism. It was my view that experiences such as these taught students in subtle ways to be on guard, not to let anybody "put you down," to be wary of each other. Thus, it is my conclusion that they were not challenged to transcent or re-make their circumstances, but rather to accommodate themselves to "their place in society"--as their teachers had accommodated themselves.

I did not expect the student teacher to necessarily agree with all that I thought about the functions being served by the classroom in which she worked. But I did expect her to have thought about the role of the school in the larger social, political, and economic context. I would have expected that she would have asked herself why these young people were being tracked in classes such as this. I asked the student teacher if she knew how the students got into the class: "Test scores?" "Counselors?" "Volunteered?" She did not know. Moreover, she had not tried to find out. I thought the morality of her behavior in tearing down the picture and justifying its removal, even though she, as she said, would "probably not have done it," should have been a more important issue to her.

I could not blame completely this student teacher. She had learned what she had been "taught" in the teacher education program. And, of course, this is not to say that the teacher education program was solely at fault or inconsistent generally with her role as a student in the university or in schools earlier in her life. She herself had been basically an object acted upon during the pre-service experiences. It had not been a matter of her selfconscious participation in the decision as to what manner of educator she wished to become. Competencies were decided upon, without her mature participation, and her

responsibility was to master these outcomes chosen by others. While those who created these goals most certainly took her needs into account when devising the skills and knowledge to be learned, she most certainly was not engaged in an intense effort to do so. Her task, as I believe she saw it, was to become an "innovative" teacher, one who effectively and creatively accomplishes the objectives of the school system which hires her--or as one of my colleagues has put it, one who "makes ripples and not waves."

In this and in so many programs of which I know, emphasis is placed on the means of schooling--particularly the techniques of classroom instruction. She learned to draw up lesson plans, to sequence activities, to relate to students, to lead discussions, to discipline students--the list could go on. She had, to be sure, been exposed to content related to the sociology of American education and had read of several philosophical points of view which considered the functions or purposes of education. I don't think she spent much time considering just what schools do to and for individuals and the society. Or, really, just what we ought to be teaching in school (I'll teach my major"). It is my judgment that these concerns remained far less salient, less important, to her--and the faculty who worked with her--than the more "practical" concerns of "getting up there in front and doing a good job of running a class." I do not think she was intensely reflecting on the meaning or significance of her own education in the teacher training program. And I don't think she was drawing implications from her thinking for her actions as an educator or as a person. Her "actions" were--as were her students in that English class--directed toward outcomes which were not chosen by her or even explicit in any detailed way in her thinking.

With all of this, it can be seen that it is my view that education programs are by and large weak for just the opposite reasons from those posited by many critics. Pre-service courses are at fault, not because they "aren't practical"--my experience is that as a matter of fact they do teach many useful methodological and management approaches. It is that these programs are not theoretical enough; do not allow the development and enhacement of ideas and ideals within the context of the student's self-conscious participation in the activities of learning about and actually educating others.

Students are admonished against "idealism": "Wait till you get in front of those students. All that stuff they teach you in those education courses won't do you any good here in the trenches." As a matter of fact the "idealism" is often at

the level of running an "open" classroom or doing away with tests, or managing discipline through humane approaches. It is not idealism supported by any measure of self-knowledge or well-thought-through political, social, or economic beliefs and values. It's not the idealism of an opposition to racism, economic inequality, or sexism, or the idealism of the promotion of personal freedom or democratization. It's not the idealism of a vision of a world that this student has chosen as an educator to work for. It isn't an idealism supported by a self-image of personal efficacy, or an idealism bolstered by the desire and ability to, alone or with others, take action against obstacles in the society and within the school itself (a power that takes understanding, skill, and courage). Too often in my experience teacher-training programs have pointed toward the development of the embodiment of a role--classroom teacher, a role that does not often imply idealism and action of the sort I value.

The idealism of the "latest fad" as I pajoratively refer to it, is often shattered during the initial in-service experiences. Particularly is it shattered among teachers who are mainly oriented toward activity within a classroom context--in contrast to a focus which includes the school, professional, community and societal content. I worry that we produce teachers who see "a better lesson plan" as the solution to every problem, ignoring the larger circumstances which influence their lives and the lives of their students. Then, when it does appear that "those things I hoped for just aren't happening," what is to guide behavior but expediency, practicality, newness: "It works." "The kids like it." "At least they keep quiet." "It's a good way to cover the material." "It's the latest approach."

From an analysis of the typical student experience and from talking and working with student teachers, the student teaching experience itself is one of accommodation rather than liberation for student teachers. Most often the student teacher is sent alone to the classroom supervisor. The supervisor then "plugs in" the student teacher to the curriculm the supervisor has developed. The student teacher is often told, "I don't care how you cover the material, but the students have to be through Silas Marner by March," or some such instruction. The student teacher then has a great deal of control over the "little questions" as I have called them--control over developing and sequencing activities, giving assignments (although sometimes not even that). But too often the student teacher does not have

opportunity to answer the basic questions of curriculm velopment: What? and For what? and With Whom?

The student teaching experience where I've been is seldom matter of coordinating one's behavior with one's considered als, and then after the activity assessing the purposes, sumptions and values which guided and informed the activity. ny times the student teacher uncritically models herself/ mself after the critic teacher--emulation substituted for alysis and autonomy. If not emulation, most certainly the udent teacher will refer most often to the wishes and approaches the critic teacher and to the university supervisor. Because the monumental importance of the recommendations of the udent teacher's performance for employment, the last person e student teacher feels must be pleased is himself. In my perience if a student teacher is faced with the choice of ing what he sees to be right by his students or himself, or please the supervisors, he will most often attempt to please s supervisors (the awful position to be in for a student acher is when one thing will please one supervisor and its posite will please the other). We tell the student teacher at practice teaching is a learning experience, but he knows is as much a place where you show what you can already do. d while we sell ourselves, his supervisors, as his helpers, knows that we are also his judges. With these circumstances, it any wonder that "looking competent," "hiding weakness," afety first," and "Will this be OK?" are the prime orientations many student teachers?

Obviously, I don't see this state of affairs as promotive ough of a change of the status quo in education. At best it ads to mild reform (ripples). It has always struck me how ld" 22 year-old student teachers become when they student ach. The student teacher may be just a few years older than e student she is teaching--they are of the same generation-- d in any other situation they would use the styles of commun- ation and manner common to them. But instead the student acher often affects a "pose" of a person much older--affecting formal, rather authoritarian style or a pseudo-warm, patronizing ounselor" manner. My guess is that the student teacher is ying to please us, her critics. She knows that we control her; e must please us. She is outnumbered (we rarely allow student achers to plan and teach together and support one another) and a position of very limited control over her life. We should

give, in my view, more "room" to those younger to reconstruct the profession.

These and similar experiences have caused me to think hard about education generally and teacher education specifically. What follows are some personal goals which guide my work. I'm not really at the point where I can implement these notions, but they do act as criteria to guide my behavior.

I am working for a program which is personally liberating for students (and for me). I contrast the idea of liberation--or transcendence--with the notion of accommodation. Programs can take the posture of helping individual prospective teachers to become critical, analytical, committed, autonomous, powerful educators, who may reconstruct the way we educate children. Alternatively, a program can be oriented toward the training of effective classroom teachers who will view their professional responsibility essentially as effectively accommodating themselves to the way schools presently function--or, most likely, to the current "fads" of the profession, whether "values clarification" or "inquiry" or "open classrooms."

Surely, no program will acknowledge that it wants to produce a particular kind of mildly innovative, but "safe" and accommodating, classroom teacher. I do understand that this matter of the liberating quality of a program is a continuous and not a dichotomous variable; programs can be at many positions on a continuum from liberating to objectifying. I also understand it is not always easy amid the rhetoric to tell what state in fact exists. However, I believe, upon analysis, that we <u>can</u> distinguish a pre-service program which is manipulative--which treats students as interchangeable parts, as objects--from one aimed at liberation, human freedom. At least I think I can tell when I am in a situation in which my liberation is promoted from a situation in which others are attempting to mold me into this or that.

Students should <u>study</u>, explore, engage the world, rather than respond to a series of lesson plans faculty develop and implement. Rather than work to achieve the specific goals or competencies established by others, I want students to work in programs centered around their transaction with a rich, diverse environment of books, people, and experience possibilities.

he program I envision would promote an interplay of self- and ocial analysis, theory building, skill development and activity. ames Macdonald, Bernice Zaret, and Esther Wolfson describe uch a program, one which centers around student <u>learning</u>, the hrust of a student into freely chosen activities within an nvironment contrived with his participation, activities ccompanied by intense personal reflection and analysis. They ontrast this model with an <u>instruction</u> centered model in which he teacher asks and resolves the usual questions, controlling oth the means and ends of learning: What outcomes do I want rom my students (usually particular knowledge, skills, values)? hat activities can I employ to attain these goals? How can I equence these activities to best provide for the attainment f these goals? How can I evaluate the students' achievement f the knowledge, skills and values I consider important? Thus, would hope to work in a program in which students engage in ork as a matter of personal choice, chosen from <u>varied</u> opportunities which they have participated in creating, with outomes unique to them and determined in the course of their work.

Students in teacher training should be challenged (required f you will) to assume responsibility for the goals and directing f their life at <u>this</u> <u>time</u> of their life within relationships ased on shared work, mutual help and criticism. Included in teacher training program should be encouragement of students and teachers) to engage the ongoing processes of education--oth the efforts being undertaken to educate children and the tructures in which they find themselves (the teacher training etting)--with the aim of altering the processes and themselves. tudents should have extensive opportunity to work with others n colleagueal relationships instead of continually being in a eferential position in relation to an older person. In some egree I see teacher training to be a struggle of one generation's ttempts to impose its style of teaching and living on another. ertainly becoming an effective educator involves an intense ndividual struggle to gain greater personal understanding and fficacy. But also, this growth in individual competence and he improvement of education is a result of an interplay between n individual's struggle and the struggle he shares in collective ction with others. I think a teacher education program would o well to promote both individual and collective work; each ontributes to the effectiveness of the other. Most pre-service rograms in my experience place greatest emphasis on individual effort at the expense of individuals coming together and deciding what purposes they share and work together to employ means that will facilitate the realization of these aims. A part of the

collective experience is mutual help and criticism among students and teachers. Typically the instructor alone is responsible for the helper/critic role. Students do not respond very much to one another's or the teacher's work.

With this in mind, perhaps instead of assuming "aide" responsibilities in schools, as is often done in "school-based" programs, students could perhaps be more often in observing, evaluate roles, and, most important, "altering" roles--altering in the sense that the student's activity is aimed at changing, improving, the means and/or ends of education rather than furthering current practices. Students and teachers should develop educational activities they consider consistent with their purposes as educators at this time of their life, developing projects or programs which will be aimed at present contributions to the field (after-school enrichment programs, work in alternative schools, student organization, curriculum reform efforts, etc.). Instead of being placed in a practice teaching assignment, students should participate in the creation of options to the conventional student teaching assignments. One immediately thinks of student involvement in alternative schools--or starting an alternative school of their own. Perhaps a public school that has elective courses could assign one or more to groups of student teachers, who would in their own way develop completely and teach the course to school students who choose it. Perhaps they could help organize "school-within-a-school" programs. These groups could be facilitated by public school and university personnel. This approach still runs the danger of supervisor dominance, but at least there are some aspects of the situation which may give more power to students. There is no on-going program to act as a restraint on curriculum planning, and at least the student will not have to face the supervisors alone. Under this arrangement, students could decide what to teach and how to teach--and unlike most practice teaching arrangements, whether or not to teach alone. More important than the approaches to practice teaching that I can think of, however, is student participation in the process of creating options which make sense for their lives and the lives of the students they will teach. Lastly, students should be encouraged to act in ways to alter their own education; they should share with faculty the responsibility to continually improve the nature and quality of the teacher training program. This means a situation in which students maturely participate individually in such matters as curriculum, selection of faculty, and entrance and exit requirements of the program. It means students being organized enough to exert collective pressure to bring about changes in

ir education. This in contrast to a situation in which ulty go off, virtually in secret, to decide the course of educational lives of students. Or, it means a situation which students seemingly participate but in actual fact are erless, dominated by faculty.

I know that teaching is not a "value free" or "belief e" enterprise. I may try to create an environment in which ense work is expected, but the individual purposes and ections are an outgrowth of each individual's encounter with educational environment. I know my values and beliefs e into play when I contribute to the identification of erials, experiences, opportunities, people, issues, and the e, that make up the environment. I do not underestimate effect on students. I'm older, have more experience, and am a dominant role position. I know that what is "in" a dent--the meanings, goals, values, whatever they are called-- going to be in some measure affected by his/her experience h me. I notice many of my students become much like me and er instructors' students much like them. There is nothing ng with this as such, but I do worry--or at least I think orry--about uncritical discipleship.

One value I say I have is that I want students critically l self-consciously to choose their way as educators. Perhaps an help this along by making my motives, values, assumptions, l actions clear to them. Too often, I think, teachers do not ll students who they are and what they are trying to do, a tuation which could run the danger of giving a false impression ng students of "objectivity" on the part of the teacher and thin the learning situation. I also may be able to help by inging students into contact with people representing diverse ints of view, views different from mine. I can not fairly present all sides of any issue. As a matter of fact, I want be all that I am with students, all my preferences and ssions and involvements, and really do not care to be a eutral" discussion leader or a "laid-back" facilitator. wever, a program centered on learning can, I hope, break away om the single instructor dominance in classes as students ntact individuals with diverse perspectives. In this circum- ance I do not think I need worry as much about being "every- ing to everybody." Lastly, I can invite and allow students consider and talk about my control over them; I can make it explicit issue. I can invite students to take action to ssen my control over them.

All this has taken me pretty far from the censored advertising layout. I have read that important things result in "global applications," where this leads to this and then the other thing. It would be easy enough to say that everything is interconnected. But that is the point, is it not? Everything is connected to everything else. If we are too narrow in our perspective--as I thing the student teacher was in that English class--we miss the basic relatedness of things and perhaps never come to grips with some large and important issues. I have concluded that if change in teacher education is to be significant, it must involve more than reform of the practice teaching experience--although I must start somewhere. What-ever, it is time I went to work.

Reference

J. Macdonald, B. Wolfson and E. Zaret, Reschooling Society: A Conceptual Model. Washington, D. C., Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1973.

Security

By DAVID J. FEELA
St. Cloud, Minnesota

When it is dark
   and accusingly quiet
I must sit
on my hands
for two dollars an hour
and protech these cars
                that rest
like sleeping coffins
in a dusty half-acre lot
behind the bloodshot eyes
of a meat packing plant.
I wonder what earthly good
   I am doing
            here;
Nothing ever happens
but people worry
about what might
   and I worry
about rent
and groceries
and my fingers
that are growing numb
from the weight of an unactive body.
The air is sensuously still;
listening to rust
   make love with crome
and the muffled groans
   of dying cattle
who are processed to feed
                the dying.

David J. Feela
721 5th Avenue North
St. Cloud, MN.

Visions of a Teacher as a Gifter of Awareness

By KENNETH WARNER
Northfield Senior High School

As a grifter of sore dawns
and psychic muggings
and muse to the chants of
Filo Filligree, Milo Mugeroo
and Blatant Badolescents,
mad cricks in the neck
and cranky mauve smothered
dispositions,
he peers into the grain of a bedstead
as if a vision might be there
among the warm highlights,
dashes of splinter
and warm smears of stain.
Imagines some delusion there.
Not tree as tree
conscious of its own pattern
of swirling mute growth
and the crackling of its limbs,
but the victim of some divine obfuscation.
His cells divide on him,
drift, float and die.
They are brats, dispensible;
he breathes them away.
Yet he survives himself
and is not even aware of it all
or of the synapses in his brain.
But synapse as synapse
is all he hopes to know to teach.

Kenneth Warner
Northfield Senior High School