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For The Season

January passes, my resolutions fail--
the holidays go swimming by
like fish that will not take my bait.
This year I'll mail my Christmas cards
before July--and tell you once again
the very best intentions pave
my special road to hell--
and wish you godspeed on your own,
and grace and love and peace.

Dear friends, the weather here
is always 28 below--
I celebrate the season,
a haystack looking for a needle
in the snow.

MARK VINZ

Literature: A Cushion for Future Shock

By DR. MARLIN VANDER BOSCH
Dort College

Many English teachers have to deal with the present shock of dwindling enrollment in elective courses. Students are seeking "more relevant, more practical courses" we're told. They want courses geared to get them through tomorrow's problems.

One of these problems, according to Alvin Toffler, in Future Shock, is that

> there are discoverable limits to the amount of change that the human organism can absorb, and that by endlessly accelerating change without first determining these limits, we may submit masses of men to demands they simply cannot tolerate.

As an English teacher wanting to serve the student, other English teachers, and society as well, I thought I'd suggest a mini-course to minister to the "human organisms" that Toffler is talking about.

To show the world what even Toffler should know--that the problem is age-old--I'd begin with Medea, the Greek play by Euripides. We hear the chorus chant:

> Gone is the grace that oaths once had.
> Through all the breadth of Hellas, honour
> is found no more; to heaven hath it sped
> away. For thee no father's house is open,
> woe is thee! to be a haven from the
> troublous storm, while o'er thy home is
> set another queen, and the bride that is
> preferred to thee.

Here the chorus laments the loss of stability that oaths once gave. Later in the play we see Medea's reaction to the sudden change forced upon her. She murders her two children. She does so to get revenge on Jason, true, but the murders might just as accurately be explained as the

result of "future shock." Medea's "stability zone"--her home--had been pulled from under her when Jason took another wife. Hence her irrational murders of her two children. Naturally, not all "human organisms" who suffered from "future shock" can serve as models to emulate. But even so, seeing we are not the first to suffer "future shock" may stabilize us.

Next I'd study Hamlet by William Shakespeare. It may be true that the famous bard never heard of "future shock," but he certainly wrote about it. Changes must be occurring too rapidly for Hamlet's system to assimilate them, as Toffler would say, for Shakespeare writes:

> ...and yet, within a month--
> Let me not think on't!--Frailty, thy name is woman!--
> A little month, or e'er those shoes were old
> With which she followed my poor father's body,
> Like Niobe, all tears,--why she, even she--
> O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
> Would have mourn'd longer--married with my uncle,
> My father's brother, but no more like my father than
> I to Hercules; within a month,
> Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
> Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
> She married.

Here the repetition of "within a month" indicates that the speed at which his mother changed bothered Hamlet more than the actual changes. True, a violation of the mores for the mourning period may be the real problem, but even such mores no doubt became established as much to cushion the mourners from future shock as to respect the dead. So a violation of a mourning period was not shocking merely because a more had been broken. It was shocking because the sensibilities which demand such a more had been trampled on. Hamlet too suffered from "future shock," if we want to use Toffler's terminology.

Next, I'd study a few poems. William Butler Yeats felt so strongly about chaotic change in "The Second Coming" that he wrote:

> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and
> everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity.

A nation which has lived through Watergate might think this had to have been written in 1974. In finding that, in fact, Yeats wrote this certainly before 1924, present readers find that if things seem to "fall apart" today, they seemed to do so before too when even the best men lacked "all conviction."

I'd like to study, too, a poem by W. R. Rodgers who helps us understand why the pace of change may seem too overwhelming just now. He writes:

> The World moves not with meant and maintained
> pace
> Toward some hill-horizon or held mood,
> But in great jags and jerks, probed and prodded
> From point of anger, exploded
> By each new and opposed touch.

Although this was written in another generation, and probably surprises us in its perception, perhaps it ought to tell us that we are experiencing a jerk right now, not so different from the "jerks" others before us have experienced. And if our change today is different, its "shock-rating" is probably no more devastating than the "shock-rating" of changes in other eras.

Think, for example, of W.H. Auden as he sat in "one of the dives of Fifty-second Street" in New York in 1939. He describes his feelings thus:

> Uncertain and afraid
> As the clever hopes expire
> Of a low dishonest decade:
> Waves of anger and fear
> Circulate over the bright
> And darkened lands of the earth,
> Obsessing our private lives;
> The unmentionable odour of death
> Offends the September night.

That was indeed a time when the future was threatening, holding no certainty and little hope. Auden describes men's reactions to it in this New York bar in a later stanza:

Faces along the bar
Cling to their average day:
The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,
All the conventions conspire
To make this fort assume
The furniture of home;
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.

Perhaps most people will still react as did the men along the bar and "cling to their average day." In fact, these seem to be the very people Toffler is describing when he writes:

> And finally, the confusion and uncertainty wrought by transcience, novelty and diversity may explain the profound apathy that de-socializes millions, young and old alike.

But having seen Auden give form to this human dilemma, we are less shocked, less frightened, because we feel we perceive the experience for what it is. We may even see ourselves as "clinging to our average day," but even so, knowing ourselves can also be a stay against confusion. So I'd use Auden's poem, "September 1, 1939" too.

To let me sense how "cognitive overstimulation interferes with our ability to think"--Toffler's words--I'd study "Change" by Stanley Kunitz. He writes that man

...lifts his impermanent face
To watch the stars, his brain locked tight
Against the tall revolving night.

And by reading the rest of the poem, I'd see that "cognitive overstimulation," in spite of what Toffler suggests, does not explain why man can't think clearly in periods of rapid change. Kunitz explains better when he writes:

Here, Now, and Always, man would be
Inviolate eternally;
This is his spirit's trinity.

Neither man gives a blue print for action, but Kunitz's explanation at least affords man the serenity of knowing that it is not merely his unlucky fate of being born in the 1970's, but his condition as man that makes him seek security before the face of Heaven.

Next I'd study an old favorite of Robert Frost entitled "The Road Not Taken," to teach my students of "decision stress." Toffler wrote that non-routine decisions

> force us to make one-time..decisions that will establish new habits and behavioral procedures...These decisions are non-programmed. They are high in psychic cost (p. 356).

But Frost tells us of a "non-programmed decision" more memorably in his poem:

And both roads that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

And he catches the "high psychic cost" more profoundly in his last stanza:

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence.

Here we sense the feeling that Toffler's jargon blurs, and sensing it we are prepared for whatever cost our own decisions may entail. No futurist's conjectures of what the respective roads hold for us could do as much.

Next Toffler says that one response of victims of future shock is that they deny that the stimuli invading them is real. Men find security by insisting that what to all appearances is happening, isn't. To get a student to understand this human tendency, I'd let him see Macbeth's tenacious clinging to the witches' promise in spite of all evidences of his impending defeat. The war is practically lost, and Macduff has invaded his castle. All the promises of the witches have been proven false but Macbeth still clings to hope of victory on the chance that Macduff was born of woman. As he duels Macduff, Macbeth says:

Thou wast born of a woman.
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born.

Let the student see Macbeth, and in Macbeth, see himself. Then he will not just see the disaster of denying the reality of "invading stimuli," but feel it.

Another wrong response to future shock, according to Toffler, is "obsessive reversion to previously successful adaptive routines." Examples of this response surface in left-wing communes, bucolic romanticism, a return to nineteenth century terrorism, and a contempt for society. Well, literature speaks precisely to people who have responded or might be tempted to respond thus to modern life. So I'd use "Carpe Diem, " by Robert Frost to give this warning to those who wish to "seize the day of pleasure" as romantics might advise:

> ...bid life seize the present?
> It lives less in the present
> Than in the future always,
> And less in both together
> Than in the past. The present
> Is too much for the senses,
> Too crowding, too confusing--
> Too present to imagine.

Frost saw long before Toffler that the present was too confusing to be assimilated. And finding that Frost can give form to our dilemma helps us respond reasonably to change rather than dropping out in defiance or despair.

Further advice to potential drop-outs of society comes in Frost's short poem, "Nothing Gold Can Stay":

> Nature's first green is gold,
> Her hardest hue to hold.
> Her early leaf's a flower;
> But only so an hour.
> Then leaf subsides to leaf.
> So Eden sank to grief,
> So dawn goes down to day.
> Nothing gold can stay.

The poem provides a philosophical viewpoint that all utopia-seekers would do well to review. It might save them from future shock whenever reality breaks in upon their romantic enclaves.

And I think I'd end my mini-course by studying one of the choruses from "The Rock" by T.S. Eliot. Toffler writes that

> Sanity...hinges on man's ability to predict his immediate personal future...When an individual is plunged into a fast and irregularly changing situation or a novelty loaded context, his predictive accuracy plummets. To compensate for this, he must

> process far more information than before and fast. Yet we are finite.

True. But Toffler does not see what conclusion this should lead him to. T.S. Eliot, equally concerned about the same problem, not only knows why we are in trouble, but where we can find help. In one of the choruses he writes:

> The endless cycle of idea and action,
> Endless invention, endless experiment,
> Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;
> Knowledge of speech, but not of silence,
> Knowledge of words, and ignorance of The Word.

Toffler and Eliot agree that "endless invention, endless experiment" benumb our sensibilities today. But Eliot cites as the fundamental cause of future shock something that might indict Toffler as well--ignorance of The Word. So I'll conclude my mini-course for future shock with Eliot, both for the form he gives to our dilemma, and for the solution he implies.

But setting up a mini-course for future shock is not the only, nor even the best response to Toffler. A better response might be having literature teachers, operating from a knowledge of Toffler, show that much literature, not only ministers to the problems that Toffler isolated, but also corrects the faulty solutions that he proposed. For we can't merely sneer at him as a philistine, as I've done here, and then ignore him with impunity, suffering as we are from present shock as students select classes in movies, pop culture, TV, or journalism over literature courses. We must show that literature solves more problems than Toffler's sociology.

II.

And that's what I aim to do now--show that literature is a safer bet to solve problems than Toffler is. Toffler says that people in a "state of change" can be helped by "situational groupings" and "crisis counseling." Surely misery still loves company, so "situational groupings," where people equally disturbed by change can huddle together, may ease some hurt. But situational groupings will only provide lasting help if, first, some member of the group has something worthwhile to offer that would be applicable to others. And second, such groupings would only help if members of the group shared the same basic values so that one's advice would indeed help and not frustrate the next guy. Toffler at times seems to forget

that some men have insights, that some men do have something to offer, while others don't.

But here an English teacher must realize that not all literature is helpful either. Literature which bewilders the reader may be salt, not salve to a wounded psyche. Either teacher or student must discern between books which help and books which hurt so that a literature class is more than a perplexed artist sharing his nightmares with equally perplexed students. Otherwise literature classes, like "situational groupings," will result in little more than a pooling of anxiety.

Toffler also speaks of a "small group of top social scientists..hammering out among themselves a set of well-defined values on which a truly super-industrial utopian society might be based." The kind of values they would compromise on would likely be more depleted than defined. But values endure; man's basic needs have not changed, at least not since he began recording his wisdom. And although if I had to choose between some literary loco-colorists and Toffler's committees, I might give the nod to Toffler's committees, nevertheless I'm still certain of this: one group of top present-day social scientists can only produce values distorted by a provincialism of time that English teachers should continue to fight.

This provincialism of time, is, of course, evident in Toffler's own proposals. Ours is the age of committee, so he says we need committees since futurist novelists are in short supply. Can he think successive generations will ever cherish committee reports for their insights into the human condition as they have cherished novels? Furthermore, the futurist novelists that Toffler mentions--1984, Brave New World, and Walden Two--are all criticized by Toffler for reverting to simplified social and cultural relationships. Similarly Toffler criticizes "intentional communities" or utopian colonies for their "powerful preference for the past." But doesn't this preference for the past suggest what artists know, but some social scientists rarely learn, namely that the future must reflect past values, not merely because the past came first, but because man is still man.

Yet Toffler says that we need to encourage experimental utopias which are trying new social arrangements, arrangements based on super, rather than on pre-industrial forms. While both utopian novelists and the people most sensitive to the dehumanization of society revert to "pre-

industrial" ways and seek direction from our traditions, Toffler suggests that we pattern tomorrow after today's nightmares. I suggest that enduring literature will provide a better pattern for tomorrow's dreams.

Finally, Toffler could be right that we need a utopian vision to formulate our social goals, and that we need the contribution of various ethnic groups and fringe groups, or in his words, that we need "anticipatory democracy." But when he says that "Rising novelty renders irrelevant the traditional goals of our chief institutions--state, church, corporation, army, and the university" (p. 471), he is absurd.

First of all, to lump the widely divergent traditional goals of the church and the state, the army and the university, into one package of goals which have been "rendered irrelevant" does not help us sort out meaningful from meaningless goals. And secondly, to suggest that the goals of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness for all citizens; or goals of freedom of inquiry; or of loving one's neighbor as oneself and God above all, have been "rendered irrelevant" by mere "rising novelty" is sophomoric.

As several of the selections I've already cited have shown, many generations have felt threatened by change. But none before ours has had the short-sightedness to think that the fundamental needs and fears of man for whom state, church, and university exist, had changed. No generation before ours has thought the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness--all traditional goals--could be sacrificed with impunity for the right to abort, offend, and pursue titillation. Some knowledge of man's great literature stretching back over the centuries would sober us with that fact.

The question is not whether we are for or against change. The question is what gives us direction amidst change. I submit that an English curriculum, though never a neat, practical guide, may imply direction as well as cushion us against the future. For example, I look forward to change after reading these lines from "Two Voices" by Alice Corbin:

> But would you stay as now you are,
> Or as a year ago?
> Oh, not as then, for then how small
> The wisdom we did owe!
>
> Or if forever as today,
> How little we could know.

I know my claim for the usefulness of literature must seem like a claim raised too late for an art form too outmoded. But to say that we can learn more from the accumulated wisdom of the past than from the pooled ignorance of the present should not seem an unreasonable claim. I'll take my stand with Stephen Spender who wrote in "Statistics":

> Lady, you think too much of speeds,
> Pulleys and cranes swing in your mind;
> The Woolworth Tower has made you blind
> To Egypt and the pyramids.
>
> Too much impressed by motor-cars
> You have a false historic sense.
> But I, perplexed at God's expense
> Of electricity on stars,
>
> From Brighton pier shall weigh the seas,
> And count the sands along the shore:
> Despise all moderns, thinking more
> Of Shakespeare and Praxiteles.

I'd want The Word that Eliot refers to also, to put the stars and Shakespeare in proper perspective. But I do want knowledge of literature. The future is less of a shock to the man who knows where his race has been and where his race is leading him.

Writer In Residence

muttering
master of parentheses,
he wears his desk
like an overcoat
two sizes too small

tornadoes rummage
his eyebrows,
his hair a snow cloud
lost since
sometime in the last century

twice a day
pockets crammed with searchlights
he stalks the ferocious silence
the shadows of unbelievers
just beyond the door

MARK VINZ

On The Function Of "The Custom House" in Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter

By Claude Brew
Gustavus Adolphus College

The function of "The Custom House" in Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter is a matter of considerable uncertainty. Editors sometimes omit it, and critics usually dismiss it as either a lame attempt on Hawthorne's part to establish the historicity of his tale or to relieve its gloom. In omitting it from The Portable Hawthorne, Malcolm Cowley explains:

> He [Hawthorne] was afraid that the public would be repelled by this intense monotone, so he prefaced the book with a long humorous account of his adventures in the custom house.[1]

In summarizing critical treatments of "The Custom House," Sam S. Baskett points out that even critics who have given it "a closer look" tend to

> relegate it to a precariously tangential position in relation to the principal part of the book. The implication is that the reader of The Scarlet Letter, if he likes, may legitimately ignore "The Custom House."

Baskett and others[3] go on to give "The Custom House" a fuller treatment, seeing it as extension and clarification of the main tale or some of its themes, or as ironic counterpoint.

It is not my intention here to quarrel with any of these theories concerning "The Custom House." They all, as a matter of fact, have a certain validity. One need go no farther than the sketch itself, or perhaps some of Hawthorne's letters, to find support for any of the views so far expressed. The reader with sufficient determination

can undoubtedly read "The Custom House" and judge it irrelevant to The Scarlet Letter. The reader who sees the sketch as an autobiographical statement concerning Hawthorne's literary attitudes needs hardly to go beyond the first paragraph. In the second paragraph Hawthorne argues, much as Defoe did in Moll Flanders, that he wants to assume his "true position as editor."[4] Here is Austin Warren's "device to promote verisimilitude." For those who see the sketch as Hawthorne's literary revenge for being thrust from the custom house by the spoils system, Hawthorne clearly lashes out at a system that treated him as it did:

> But she [the Federal Eagle] has no great tenderness, even in her best of moods, and, sooner or later,--oftener soon than late,-- is apt to fling off her nestlings with a scratch of her claw, a dab of her beak, or a rankling wound from her barbed arrows. (p. 7)

Later, near the end of the sketch, he refers directly to his expulsion by the victorious Whigs and observes:

> There are few uglier traits of human nature than this tendency--which I now witness in men no worse than their neighbours--to grow cruel, merely because they possess the power of inflicting harm. If the guillotine, as applied to office-holders, were a literal fact, instead of one of the most apt of metaphors, it is my sincere belief, that the active members of the victorious party were sufficiently excited to have chopped off all our heads, and have thanked Heaven for the opportunity. (p. 43)

For the many who see "The Custom House" as an effort to soften the effects of The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne apologizes for the "sombre aspect" of his romance:

> Even yet, though my thoughts were ultimately much absorbed in the task, it wears, to my eye, a stern and sombre aspect; too much ungladdened by genial sunshine; too little relieved by the tender and familiar influences which soften almost every scene of nature and real life, and, undoubtedly, should soften every picture of them. (p. 46)

Indeed, "The Custom House" does serve to soften the effect of The Scarlet Letter, for humor and a warm geniality abound, especially when he sketches the customs house officials and employees.

The view that the sketch presents Hawthorne's struggle to escape the stultifying influence of his life at the custom house finds much support in the sketch. Hawthorne reflects a number of times to the effect that:

> My imagination was a tarnished mirror. It would not reflect, or only with miserable dimness, the figures with which I did my best to people it. The characters of the narrative would not be warmed and rendered malleable, by any heat that I could kindle at my intellectual forge. They would take neither the flow of passion nor the tenderness of sentiment, but retained all the rigidity of dead corpses, and stared me in the face with a fixed and ghostly grin of contemptuous defiance. "What have you to do with us?" that expression seemed to say. "The little power you might once have possessed over the tribe of unrealities is gone! You have bartered it for a pittance of the public gold. Go, then, and earn your wages!" (p. 37)

By the end of the sketch, however, Hawthorne is able to say, "Peace be with the world! My blessing on my friends! My forgiveness to my enemies! For I am in the realm of quiet! The life of the Custom-House lies like a dream behind me." (p. 46)

Again it is not my purpose here to quarrel with any of these views of "The Custom House." Instead, following their example, I should like to seize upon a key passage and use it as the basis from which to suggest still another approach to the sketch. In reading "The Custom House," I was struck by a number of implications in the following passage:

> Moonlight, in a familiar room, falling so white upon the carpet, and showing all its figures so distinctly,--making every object so minutely visible, yet so unlike a morning noontide visibility,--is a medium the most suitable for a romance-writer to get acquainted with his illusive guests.

> There is the little domestic scenery of the well-known apartment; the chairs, with each its separate individuality; the centre-table, sustaining a work-basket, a volume or two, and an extinguished lamp; the sofa; the book-case; the picture on the wall;--all these details, so completely seen, are so spiritualized by the unusual light, that they seem to lose their actual substance, and become things of intellect. Nothing is too small or too trifling to undergo this change, and acquire dignity thereby. A child's shoe; the doll, seated in her little wicker carriage; the hobby-horse;--whatever, in a word, has been used or played with, during the day, is now invested with a quality of strangeness and remoteness, though still almost as vividly present as by daylight. Thus, therefore, the floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other. (p. 38)

The question I should like to consider in relation to this passage is: Could it be that "The Custom House" is to function for the reader in much the same manner as does the study for Hawthorne, as artist? Could the sketch provide for the reader the same kind of "neutral territory," between the "real world and fairy-land," that the study provides for Hawthorne. "The Custom House " viewed in this manner becomes a narthex before the inner sanctuary that is The Scarlet Letter, providing a means of transition from the everyday world in which the reader habitually moves, and that "fairy-land," which he must enter to partake as fully as possible in the drama of The Scarlet Letter. Isn't it always necessary, in order to respond meaningfully to a literary work, for the reader to partake of the creative act? Hawthorne says:

> It was a folly, with the materiality of this daily life pressing so intrusively upon me, to attempt to fling myself back into another age; or to insist on creating the semblance of a world out of airy matter, when, at every moment, the impalpable beauty of my soap-bubble was broken by the rude contact of some actual circumstance. (p. 40)

Hawthorne says he found it impossible to create The Scarlet Letter without first finding his way into that "neutral territory" that at least partly removed him from "this daily life." This ground was reached temporarily in his study, by the transforming power of "moonbeams"; the reader, it seems to me, may reach the neutral territory through "The Custom House."

An example of "The Custom House" functioning as neutral territory might be observed by a consideration of the scene, in the sketch, in which Hawthorne discovers the scarlet letter. Rummaging in the attic of the custom house, he happens upon a package containing (so he tells us) a manuscript and "a certain affair of fine red cloth, much worn and faded." (p. 34) Uncertain what the scarlet letter was used for, he begins to examine it in much the same way that any man, thoroughly grounded in the "real world," might. He measures it (in Wordsworthian fashion): "By an accurate measurement, each limb proved to be precisely three inches and a quarter in length." (p. 34) He then considers various possibilities of what its use might have been, and, finally, concludes that its mystery is insoluble. But then he remarks:

> And yet it strangely interested me. My eyes fastened themselves upon the old scarlet letter, and would not be turned aside. Certainly, there was some deep meaning in it, most worthy of interpretation, and which, as it were, streamed forth from the mystic symbol, subtly communicating itself to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of my mind.
>
> While thus perplexed,--and cogitating, among other hypotheses, whether the letter might not have been one of those decorations which the white men used to contrive, in order to take the eyes of Indians,--I happened to place it on my breast. It seemed to me,--the reader may smile, but must not doubt my word,--it seemed to me then, that I experienced a sensation not altogether physical, yet almost so, as of burning heat; and as if the letter were not of red cloth, but red-hot iron. I shuddered, and involuntarily let it fall upon the floor. (p. 34)

The unprepared reader, dwelling in the "real world," might

well smile at this scene, as Hawthorne anticipates. Yet, in the context of "The Custom House," we don't smile, and when the sketch is considered in close conjunction with The Scarlet Letter, as Baskett suggests, this scene takes on an even more serious significance.[5] Later, in The Scarlet Letter, we again see the letter "burning" on someone's breast, and here Hawthorne does not tell the reader he may smile--and we don't. "Moonbeams,"--the products of Hawthorne's imagination,--have transformed "The Custom House" into a neutral territory, in which, with one foot still firmly grounded in "the Actual," the reader can at the same time recognize and accept the significance of a scene, such as this, that partakes of the imaginary.

Hawthorne, by a number of carefully placed and imaginative flights into the past, is able to transform "The Custom House" into the neutral territory that makes this kind of participation possible for the reader. With his sketches of the custom house and its surroundings, and his descriptions of the characters and activities of the people found there, he mingles numerous fanciful digressions. Next to the modern custom house, which he describes in great detail, down to the shape and dimensions of the furniture, Hawthorne depicts the bustle of the early days when Salem was a thriving port and the custom house a center of activity. Next to the aged and stagnant custom house officers of 1850, he brings to life the "grave, bearded, sable-cloaked, and steeple-crowned" (p. 11) Puritans who were their predecessors, and Hawthorne's own ancestors. He speaks of them judging him, and alludes to a "curse incurred by them" (p. 12), which he hopes will be removed. He discusses his feelings for Salem, his desire to leave, and at the same time, speaks of a "spell" (p. 13) that holds him there, as it were, against his will. Next to a discussion of his life at the custom house, Hawthorne harks back to his days at Brook Farm, with"the dreamy brethren" (p. 27). When he discovers the package among the multitude of mundane objects that he has just described in the attic of the custom house, he says:

> There was something about it that quickened an instinctive curiosity, and made me undo the faded red tape, that tied up the package, with the sense that a treasure would here be brought to light. (p. 32)

This fanciful notion is followed by the discovery that a past Surveyor, Jonathan Pue, had sealed the package. This reminds Hawthorne of witnessing Pue's remains being dug up

as a church cemetery was being renewed, which leads to a strange and fanciful comparison between the package and Pue's skull, both remnants of this intellectual activity. Following this incident is the discovery of the scarlet letter, already described, and then the scene in Hawthorne's study, where he imaginatively removes us farther from the Custom House than at any other point in the sketch.

The effect of these "moonbeams,"--these fanciful flights and shifts in time from the present to various points in the past, and from the concrete and mundane to the unreal and legendary,--is to transform "The Custom House" into just the kind of neutral territory in which the reader must take his stand, with Hawthorne, in order to accept the "romantic reality" of the scarlet letter burning on Hawthorne's chest, as it does later on Dimmesdale's, in The Scarlet Letter.

Viewing "The Custom House" in this manner, it seems to me, is to connect it to The Scarlet Letter not only thematically, autobiographically, and mechanically, but structurally as well, for it provides the means for the reader to bridge the gap between his world and the world of the drama that is The Scarlet Letter. It allows him a way of casting off certain kinds of preconceptions and prejudices, of adopting Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief," and of looking at the romance from a standpoint that allows him to see that the world of The Scarlet Letter has a special "reality" of its own, that isn't necessarily the same as the reality of the world Hawthorne inhabited at the custom house, or that the reader habitually inhabits.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Malcolm Cowley, ed., The Portable Hawthorne (New York, 1948), pp. 270-271.

[2] Sam S. Baskett, "The (Complete) Scarlet Letter," College English, XXII (1961), pp. 321-328.

[3] See, for example, W.A. Moses, "A Further Note on the Custom House," College English, XXIII (February, 1962); Frank Macshane, "The House of the Dead: Hawthorne's Custom-house and The Scarlet Letter," New England Quarterly, XXV (March, 1962); Charles Feidelson, Jr., "The Scarlet Letter," in Hawthorne Contemporary Essays, ed. Roy Harvey Pearce

(Ohio State University Press, 1964); Terence Martin, Nathaniel Hawthorne (New York, 1965), p. 64.

[4] Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Custom House," The Scarlet Letter and Other Tales of the Puritans, ed. Harry Levin (Boston, 1960), p. 6. All further references to "The Custom House" are to this edition, pp. 5-47.

[5] Baskett, pp. 325-326.

A Map Of Otsego Country

This ragged, fragile map of Otsego County
Has followed me through two house-movings.
It is stubborn, like me.
The old Scotch tape on its corners
Says that once I prized it enough
To have it on my study wall.
Did I follow its directions?
No, I preferred to follow my nose.
Thus, if I found Arnold Lake, it was by chance.
I didn't want to be shown,
But to come on it on my own.
I wanted to discover it.
So here is the crumpled map.
Once I paid it no attention.
Now I don't need it.
I walk where I go
And I know
The way.

ROBERT W. ROUNDS

Teaching Teachers Poetry

By JOHN MILSTEAD
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater

This was to be my first course in "Teaching Poetry" or "Teaching" anything else. A summer short course or workshop, utilitarian, pragmatic. These were no-nonsense people, fresh (or dulled) from wresting thoughts from reluctant minds and finding most replies tangential to the central issue. What they had come from, they must return to. Their needs ranged the pedagogical spectrum from naivete to a greedy gimmickry. Some said, "I've never had a really basic course in poetry." Others said, "I want a refresher course." Others said, "I've tried everything. Give me something new."

To those who wanted something new, I had to admit at the moment that, like many others, I was empty. We would have to wait and see what developed. Beyond the basic line of sound, image, and metaphor, where is there to go in poetry, really, except to specialism or eccentricity? Teaching consists of understanding as well as technique. More than most, English teachers should make sure that a common understanding preceded new techniques, for techniques can distort as well as clarify. As students have remarked, "When we've taken a poem apart, who's going to put it back together?"

My conservative comments did not satisfy some, and they left.

I feel safe in assuming that anyone reading this article agrees with--or at least knows of--the theory that a poem consists of three elements, sounds, images, and metaphors arranged in arbitrary units called lines. Within flexible limits, these elements parallel, deviate from, and interact with lexical and syntactic patterns of the English language. With this assumption, I shall proceed, not to re-emphasize the three basics of sound, image, and metaphor, but to share a learning experience based on these fundamentals.

The first assignment was to submit a natural image with strong associations. Result: fourteen people, fourteen images, this despite the fact that their images came from the same general area, which is to say, nature in Oklahoma. The directions had been to make the images strong and readily shared. Here is the list: lightning, creek bank, ozone layer, hay, wind, locust, dust, lightning bug, rain, honeysuckle, wine, fish, waterfall, mushroom. Variety in universality, a necessary (though not sufficient) step in realizing literary appeal.

Practical assignment #2: each student was to add one adjective to any five images he chose. Strictly speaking, we should have ended up with 70 adjectives. We actually had 93 turned in, which means that several people were carried away in hot pursuit of images. Here are some of the adjective + image combinations: dark-scattering lightning, dribbling creek bank, merciful ozone layer (pardon the pathetic fallacy), crisping hay, willow wind, shrouded locust, web-caught dust, helicoptering lightning bug, feathery rain, amorous honeysuckle, subtle wine, shadow fish, $29.95 waterfall. Again, variety.

To make the image-object even clearer, each member of the class wrote at least one haiku within the following few days. Simplicity was essential here because I intended the haiku to be an exercise in imagery (and to some extend sound), not an exploration of an imported Japanese poetic form. It seemed enough to specify the 5-7-5 syllable distribution with two or more interacting images, while avoiding abstractions, "ideas," and metaphors. The students were to use natural images. They could draw on the class list if they wanted. Here are some of the resulting image combinations: waterfall--days;butterfly--journey; sun--snake; bird--glass; dust--newspaper; bricks--flower; asphalt--squirrels; rain--steps; sun--skin; surf--pole; rain--nose.

They could not become expert haiku writers with one trial. Their most common violation of haiku rules was introducing metaphor. Even so, they brought images together in a brief compass and they showed me (and more importantly themselves) a good instinct for poetic sound.

From the bright red sun
striking, beating my skin;
Oklahoma heat.

This next one indulges in metaphor but captures a bright tone in the last line.

Fickle butterfly,
On a credit-card journey
To nowhere special.

Another one caught with ironic detachment the Zen identification of man and nature--within a technological medium.

Asphalt makes walking
less fun for summer squirrels
and my shoeless feet.

Of the more than twenty haiku the class wrote, no two used the same image. Only one subject--fishing--appeared twice, but they were entirely different in tone and images, one lazy fresh water fishing, the other deadly salt water fishing.

Once again variety.

The first assignment in metaphors was to bring to class examples of figurative language in common use. Dead and dying metaphors illustrated the tendency of language first to create and then absorb metaphors. I received fifty different examples of current metaphorical language in varying stages of demise. Some were journalistic clichés, such as The team dropped off the pace and Box office revenues jumped this year. Others showed that old metaphors still had some life in them: digest information, something turns me on, peaches and cream complexion, red hots (candies). In other instances metaphors long since dead revived for a moment simply because they were isolated: plenty of room, a blind alley, the eye of a storm, a bookworm.

Having been made aware of the metaphorical vitality of language, they created their own metaphors. Some of their metaphors were overwritten and precious. Since this was not a course in writing poetry, we did not go into their own metaphors in any detail. Their fifty or so metaphors were all different except for two; "vomiting waterfall" appeared twice. Dust, wind, and fish were favorite images. Many metaphors luxuriated out of control.

Willow wind searching the fields
instead of
Wind searching the fields.

or

A chilling rain of fear running down my neck
instead of
Fear running down my neck.

A few were direct and clear: Tomb of dust; high on roses; and web-caught dust.

A few others indulged in humorous ambiguity, such as A woman haloed in curlers and In the office he was greeted by a smiling fish.

English teachers too often inhibit their students' imaginations by criticizing mixed or overdone figurative language. Here, I refrained from negative criticism altogether, since the class was in its first blush of rediscovery. If I were to use figurative language as a basis for writing exercises, as might well be done, I would see figurative language developing with two general purposes. The first purpose would be to re-awaken the student to a consciousness of metaphor, first in language around him, from slang to advertising to journalese and then to recognizable literature. The second purpose would be to enable him to make objective judgments about his own writing.

The following metaphors among those submitted illustrate the need for condensation. It would be desirable to bring the student to recognize the overdone quality of "the cozy coffee of friendship." If he can see that the essential metaphor, coffee of friendship, holds in it an image and an abstraction, he might question the addition of "cozy," since "cozy friendship" would be too much. Or he might leave the metaphor at "cozy coffee," with a different implication than "coffee of friendship" has. In other words, does he want "cozy coffee," "cozy friendship," or "coffee of friendship"? The choice should be his for interest and accuracy in expression. The phrase "Velvet dust caressing bare toes" is unsatisfactory also. Perhaps the writer meant, "Dust caressing bare toes," since caressing carries all that needs to be implied of softness, velvety or other. Perhaps it should read "Bare toes caressing the dust," so that the animate object does the action. Or perhaps the verbal action is wrong and all that is needed is a straightforward image: "Dust on bare toes." A few, like "Battleground for honeysuckle," were problematical, needing a context to determine their effect.

The class recognized that certain words and sounds didn't go with the lightning. For instance, this metaphor

was accepted as a good one: "Lightning, probing the clouds with fierce question." But it didn't sound good. Changing "probing" to "probes" made the phrase sound better to the class, and the question of sound brought us to the final major point, prosody--a subject that the class wanted to avoid.

After a brief review of accentual-syllabic meter, we proceeded to discuss the relationship between stress and meaning. I instructed them to be concerned with rhythm as it arose from natural stress. If a rhythm naturally arose from a free reading, the passage was to be considered poetry whatever overt form it appeared in, prose, movie dialogue, or advertising spiel. I used the opening of A Tale of Two Cities as an example.

It was the best of times, / it was the worst of times, / it was the age of wisdom, / it was the age of foolishness, / it was the epoch of belief / it was the epoch of incredulity, etc.

The stress pattern emerges as two stresses to each statement, the statements being arranged in antithetical pairs. The rhythm is established in the construction, It was the _____ of _____. Either the first or the second blank of a pair contains the same word. This pattern, once established, is then varied further on in the paragraph as with, "it was the spring of hope, / it was the winter of despair," but the rhythm has been established by the "it was the _____ of _____" sequence. Since the students did not have to worry about meter in a prose passage, they identified the stress pattern I have marked above. They became aware of variety within a norm, in this case the norm being imposed by the writer himself working within the confines of English syntax.

Having thus illustrated inductively the relationship between sound, syntax, and semantics (or if you prefer, meaning), we then took up the idea that meter represents a regularization of linguistic tendency and that stress patterns in even the most conventional accentual syllabic verse bears on meaning. Several students saw that the first line of Shakespeare's Sonnet 116, which I had asked them to memorize, illustrated the relationship between stress and meaning. They observed that once the whole

sonnet was in mind, the first primary stress should come on not, with me perhaps receiving a secondary stress:

Let me / not to ...

The next step was to overcome their insecurity about free verse, which they seemed to like better than accentual syllabic verse but were reluctant to analyze. I introduced them to Whitman's prosody by way of the first stanza of Swinburne's famous Atalanta chorus. Their natural reading caused them to place the stresses as follows:

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil and all the pain.

The stanza is a metrical puzzle or miracle, as they immediately perceived. Because of Swinburne's command of rhythm, their initial response was to find a regular meter, but of course none was found. They found a four stress line with a caesura coming regularly near the middle (except for lines 5 and 6), thus forming a two-stress beat on each side of the caesura. The half line ranged from four to six syllables. The exceptions, of course were lines 5 and 6. We explored the possibility of reading the first line as anapest, iamb, anapest, amphibrach:

When the hounds | of spring | are on winter's traces

In discussing the fact of the dominant rhythm, which sounds like "galloping anapests," I suggested the possibility of a two-beat pause before line 3, thereby accounting for the continuing gallop. But the syntax of lines 2 and 3 suggests that Swinburne intended the "sprung" effect of plain / Fills. They were now ready to reject the stanza as being unanalyzable, which I suppose is a defensible position, but hardly one that becomes an English teacher. I therefore suggested that we go back to our first illustration of stress, "It was the best of times, / it was the worst of times..." and apply that principle to this stanza, written by the most versatile traditional prosodist in English. What we found was a natural phrase stress pattern which I describe below. (I repeatedly emphasized that they should first be guided by their ear. Not only the stress but the meaning would--or should--come clear if they let the words have their way.) The brackets represent the natural phrase groupings, each pair of which is joined within the larger group of the half line (except for lines 5 and 6).

[When the hounds] [of spring] [are on winter's] [traces,]
[The mother] [of months,] [in meadow,] [or plain,]
[Fills,] [the shadows,] [and windy,] [places,]
[With lisp,] [of leaves,] [and ripple,] [of rain;]
[And the brown] [bright,] [nightingale,] [amorous,]
[Is half] [assuaged] [for Itylus,]
[For the Thracian,] [ships,] [and the foreign] [faces,]
[The tongueless,] [vigil,] [and all,] [the pain.]

With this inductive paradigm they grasped the principle of letting the rhythm come out of the verse instead of imposing a strict metrical beat on their reading or trying to read it as flat prose. It also made them feel more comfortable about "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow..."

We were not ready for Whitman, whom they didn't like and avoided in their teaching. The poem was "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer." Following the principle of letting the reading lead to the pattern, they discovered a predominantly three-stress line, with some variation in the number of secondary stresses. They checked this analysis against the meaning, which they saw as structured around the antithesis of mathematical order and personal emotion arising from natural images. Line 4 caused trouble. Most of them thought the rhythm broke down, not because it had more strong stresses than the other lines but because there was no effective way to read sitting, which they felt had no semantic function. They were also troubled by the semantic irregularity of unaccountable, which they thought should be in adverbial form, though they admitted that an ly would destroy the rhythm. Rather than being discouraged, I

took these criticisms as signs that they were coming to terms with the poem.

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in
columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add,
divide, and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer, where he lectured
with much applause in the lecture room,
How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick,
Till rising, and gliding out, I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night air, and from time
to time,
Look'd up, in perfect silence, at the stars.

They discovered that Swinburne's and Whitman's poetry had in common the tendencies for the one to fall into phrasal groups and for the phrasal groups to determine the positions of primary stress as indicated by oral reading. The class reading did not agree with my own nor is it likely to open new pathways to prosodic analysis of Whitman's verse. But the exercise did bring them to terms with the poem's inherent rhythmical tendencies, and as I recall the reading I have no serious quarrel with the effect, which is what primarily concerns public school teachers.

This summer's experience makes me increasingly skeptical about the virtue of identifying alliteration, assonance, and consonance per se. The ability to find examples of these sound arrangements added little if anything to student appreciation or understanding of the poetry. However, by substituting the more general term sound patterns for these particulars, they seemed to find meaningful relationships in phonological, syntactical, and semantic repetition. In the Swinburne sequence "brown bright nightingale" brought them to a three-stress sequence not by rule but by sound, the alliteration joining the first two words and the rhyme joining the second two, giving the syllables a position of

equivalence in the oral rendition--this despite the fact that linguists deny the possibility of such equal stressing. The actual rendition however, governed as much by the poet as by linguistic stress rules, makes the three syllables sound isochronous. The pause enforced by the syntactic wrenching of sitting in Whitman's poem made them pause not because of a grammatical or syntactical rule but because of the interruption of sound flow.

In the first few days of the workshop I had asked the class to hand in lists of the poems they found most successful with students. The total number of poems submitted was 138 with 73 poets plus Anon. Wordsworth had eight titles, Dickinson seven, Frost and Cummings five each, and Shakespeare, Blake, Burns, Keats, and Ogden Nash, four each. The rest were widely distributed among the famous and the almost unknown. What impressed me most about the lists was the small amount of overlapping. Perhaps half a dozen poems appeared in more than one list. Once again one had to be aware of variety. The students themselves were not aware of this fact, nor were they extensive readers of poetry. Considering the small range of texts available in the state, the wide distribution of titles became even more noteworthy. Only two or three had enough background or initiative to have favorite poems duplicated for their classes. Their main complaint was the narrow range of poems now available to them in the standard textbooks. Unofficial censorship was a real issue here, though they were not inclined to take direct action through official protest or legal challenge. The next point I addressed myself to was how to revivify the old poems still acceptable. The Eve of St. Agnes had been banned in several schools. "Annabel Lee" survived, but I was informed that today's teenagers no longer care for Poe. Other poems available but disliked were "Invictus" and "The Arsenal at Springfield." I suggested that we accept the challenge of censorship and cultural stereotyping and see if anything still could be made of these poems in the light of the basic techniques we had been reviewing.

For this group of teachers, the key to refurbishing "Annabel Lee" was the simple process of making clear the connection between one stanza and the next. Beginning with the device of labeling each stanza with a descriptive word or phrase as an exercise in reading comprehension, they discovered that their first inclination to label the first stanza "The love of Annabel Lee" (or something equivalent) turned out to be incomplete because as the poem progressed it became evident that the phrase "In a kingdom

by the sea" introduced an echoing phrase in the next three stanzas and that "by the sea" appeared in every stanza except the fifth, where a variation, "under the sea," appeared. The class then modified the descriptive label of stanza 1 to "Love by the sea," which they found tied this stanza into the rest of the poem, especially when the chilling wind sent by the envious angels kills her and the speaker erupts in violence against both angels and "demons down under the sea." What they had missed on the first reading of stanza 1 was the most immediate and most obvious image, the sea. Once they had corrected this oversight, the poem began to come alive, for they found that each stanza ties in with the next verbally as well as thematically. To cut the resumé short, since explication is not the primary purpose here, they found that questions of metaphorical implication grew out of the images. They also saw that they should have given more attention at first to the image in stanza 1.

The next lesson in the impact of imagery was in Longfellow's "The Arsenal at Springfield." Because of the word Miserere in line 7, I decided that the class should get into Longfellow's context by reading in unison the 51st Psalm. Everyone contributed with a will, and we had a good reading without unwelcome hesitations. Then we read the poem aloud. We were now ready for discussion, which proved to be extended and productive. They were now looking for dominant images, so the talk quickly focused on the issue of whether the central image was noise or music. The noise suggested by "clamor," "din," and "tumult" was weighed against the figure of the organ in stanza 1. Next, still centering on the sound images, the class raised the question as to whether "Tartar gong," "battle-bell," and "war-drum" suggested noise or music, the conclusion being that they were musical instruments giving forth discordant sounds. Here those in the class with musical backgrounds began to discuss the significance of harmony, the minor key, and so on. Finally, they were ready for the last stanza, where the harmonies and discords are reconciled through the imagery. This discussion reinforced the principle of allowing images and metaphors to proceed together. They had discussed the poem within the context of poetic structure such as a high school class could handle.

We did not talk down when discussing these poems, even though they are anthologized for the public schools. Rather, we assumed that the same questions can profitably be asked of any poem. If the approach is truly inductive, the class

will respond on the level at which it is prepared to handle the poem.

The final poem we looked at for revivification was Henley's "Invictus." The first question I asked was where the stress marks should come in the last two lines:

> I am the master of my fate;
> I am the captain of my soul.

Having read the poem, almost everyone agreed that the "I" in both lines should take a stress. We then turned to another poem by Henley, entitled "Waiting" from the series In Hospital. I had two purposes for introducing this other poem. The first was to reinforce the importance of getting at the total poem, including its prosody, through the images. The second was to help them see that different poems by the same poet might help in reading. Here is Henley's "Waiting."

> A square, squat room (a cellar on promotion),
> Drab to the soul, drab to the very daylight;
> Plasters astray in unnatural-looking tinware;
> Scissors and lint and apothecary's jars.
>
> Here, on a bench a skeleton would writhe from,
> Angry and sore, I wait to be admitted;
> Wait till my heart is lead upon my stomach,
> While at their ease two dressers do their chores.
>
> One has a probe--it feels to me a crowbar.
> A small boy sniffs and shudders after bluestone.
> A poor old tramp explains his poor old ulcers.
> Life is (I think) a blunder and a blame.

Having gone through this poem it was less likely that one would read "Invictus" as facile optimism. The realistic imagery of "Waiting" gave insight to the more generalized, less immediate images in "Invictus," such as "Black as the Pit from pole to pole," "fell clutch of circumstance," and "bludgeonings of chance." The reality behind the Byronic pose made the defiance more assertive and caused the class to shift the stress to the second syllable in each of the last two lines, thereby bringing metrical stress (i.e., iambic) and meaning into emphatic coincidence.

One of their major deficiencies--probably their major one--was a lack of extensive reading of poetry themselves. I had asked them to include with their lists of poems that students liked, a list of poems that they themselves liked

if there were any titles different from the first list. Only two included the titles of other poems or poets. If this restricted frame of poetic reference is at all indicative of English teachers at large, the problem of teaching poetry is indeed a serious one. I suggested to my students that they find a poet of choice, one whom they hadn't met before but whom they found an affinity with. In this way several students discovered Roethke, Plath, and (to my surprise) Blake and Hopkins. I say to my surprise because, although I was aware of the failures of our academic tradition, I had not suspected that licensed English teachers had no acquaintance with Blake and Hopkins. This fact indicates to me that university English departments had better look to the basics in poetry.

To end on a more optimistic note, the evidence of variety (or idiosyncrasy) was indeed heartening. The teachers could carry this fact into their own classrooms with the knowledge that, except for the absolutely retarded or seriously aberrant pupil, each could make his/her own discovery of matters poetic without being unduly limited by text or terminology.

With all due allowance for recordings, photographs, film strips, and so on, the primary goal and instrument should be the student's own senses responding to images and sound patterns.

Curtain Call

Spare the prod and spoil the shadow
Cast in my role. Death plays a bit
Part in the last scene, but no one
Remembers his lines. Backstage sounds
Of rehearsing and prompting--
A new act to follow and follow.
In the wings the flutters of souls
Searching for costumes and cues
To begin the new scene mingle
With mellow hand claps of souls
Who sing for a part well played.
But always the last blackout--
Curtain fall--the lines spoken,
But not understood; the lines heard,
But not remembered, are felt and held.

DALE S. OLSON

Finding Poetry In The Schools

By GARY A. NEGIN
University of Minnesota

A found poem is a piece of prose rearranged into a poetic form by breaking a paragraph into rhythmic or expressive units. This article offers a procedure for implementing the technique of finding poems into the language arts program. Benefits of this approach include the creation of personal reading materials, stimulation of an interest in poetry, improved phrase reading ability, and provision of opportunities for written expression without fear.

A found poem is a piece of prose rearranged into a poetic form by breaking a paragraph into rhythmical or expressive units. Found poetry is not a new idea. William Butler Yeats, for example, produced one in the 1930s from a prose selection by Walter Pater. This article will attempt to demonstrate how found poetry can be successfully introduced into the classroom.

The justification for the inclusion of poetry in a language arts program is well established. Creative writing develops sensitivity, encourages imagination, increases feelings of self worth, stimulates an interest in reading, and provides an opportunity to use previously learned skills. Specifically, the use of found poetry techniques provides a gentle introduction to the study and writing of traditional poetry which children unfortunately sometimes find frightening and dull.

Unless an atmosphere of trust exists in the room, students may be reluctant to express their innermost feelings or to participate at all. Frequently the teacher can remove

the barriers of caution and suspicion by reading and discussing one of her own poems to the class. This enables the students to understand that the teacher wishes to communicate with them on a personal level.

The second step is to have the students list as many "soft, warm, and beautiful" words as they can. A preceding discussion of frequently used words such as tender, delicate, roses, cuddles, laughter, lollipops, and smiles will help clarify the concept. Bear in mind that no standards should be imposed upon the children's selections. Any word that satisfies them is acceptable.

Next, the class is instructed to play a word association game by connecting as many words on their lists as possible into a passage with a central theme. When the students are finished they should carefully read their selections aloud two or three times in private and then place slash marks where natural pauses (breaths) occur. If the impulse strikes you to take this opportunity to teach about phrases, clausal structure, meter, or rhyme, firmly reject it. It is important that the children do not feel that you are trying to mask a grammar lesson. Furthermore, your goal is to preserve the child's vocabulary and syntax so the material conforms more closely to his natural language and is therefore easier to read.

The concluding activity is to have the students place each section between a set of slash marks on a separate line.

Julie, age 13, offers the following example which illustrates the final steps. The delicate fingers/of a new born babe,/the tender,/slender,/shapes of love,/gently kiss their mother's breast/then slowly/return/to sleep.

> The delicate fingers
> of a new born babe,
> the tender,
> slender,
> shapes of love,
> gently kiss their mother's breast
> then slowly
> return
> to sleep.

Teachers should be lenient when reviewing children's writing. The formal disciplines of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and syntax should not be corrected. If the

child is convinced that your effort to communicate and your acceptance of his ideas are sincere, his pride and his wish to express himself will motivate him to improve his mechanical skills. A desire to communicate must be cultivated before the need for practical skills can be realized. The content of the student's poem must always be commented upon and praised lavishly but not insincerely. Differences of opinion must be handled tactfully, if they are impossible to ignore. Faithful expression of an experience is the only requirement. No idea should be categorically rejected or belittled. Remember the devastation that will result if a piece of a child's heart is red-penciled.

Upon completion of the poetry activities, most students will accomplish the objectives that were discussed previously in this article. These benefits alone clearly indicate the desirability of such activities. However, another accomplishment can be added to the list. A serendipitous effect of this unit, which indicates a possible area for future study, was the improvement of phrase reading among the poorer readers. Apparently this unexpected dividend is the result of the child's heightened attention to thought units. His expectations for finding meaning are expanded from words to strings of words.

Creative writing of any type must be practiced and encouraged to a greater extent than is presently found. Expression is essential to the development of sensitivity and feelings of self worth in children. Teachers must recognize student's communicative needs and provide bountiful opportunities for written expression without fear.

Me? The Teacher? What Happens When Students and Teachers Change Roles

By CAROL LERFALD
Hopkins Lindberg High School

SCENE: Senior Drama Class

ACTION: Assignment of "Independent Study Projects"

DIALOGUE: Student: "When is it due?"

Teacher: "April 15th."

Student: "How long does it have to be?"

Teacher: "I don't want to be dogmatic about length but I don't see how you could possibly cover the topic in less than 15 pages."

Student: "TYPED pages???????????"

The bell saved me from continuing this depressing conversation which deflated my hopes of teaching an exhilarating semester of drama. When John, my fellow team member, and I had first organized our syllabus, we had carefully included multi-media presentations, field trips to live productions, and the study of contemporary provocative plays.

We had planned the course with great idealism but it seemed as though even the most attractive opportunities would not infect our school-weary seniors with excitement. In fact, their passive reactions were an ironic contrast to our initial enthusiasm! When we sat down to discuss our problem, we regretted that they had not been present at our earlier planning sessions. As we had developed the materials, our interest had grown. Would this also happen to our students? How would they feel about drama if they worked out the details themselves? Would they become more engaged with the product if they helped participate in the process?

We knew that they were reacting as they did in many classes and that their indifference was sometimes accepted

as an inevitable part of their role as students. In the theatre, an actor's gestures are determined by his part; in life, too, certain responses are expected for certain roles. Those who violate these expectations make headlines: "Mother Abandons Baby!", "Priest Marries Nun!" These stories are newsworthy because they contradict firmly established roles.

Similarly, in the school setting, certain stock responses have almost become reflexes. Consider, for example, what behavior is expected of the principal, the custodian, and the coach. Certainly, no two roles are more clearly defined than student and teacher. Unfortunately, the following description seems to sum up the role of student:

> "Now what is it that students do in the classroom? Well, mostly they sit and listen to the teacher... Have you ever heard of a student taking notes on the remarks of another student? Probably not. Because the organization of the classroom makes it clear that what students say is not the content of the classroom."[1]

What other actions characterize the role of student? How about tardiness, cheating and incompetence? The pervasiveness of these negative habits can be shown by requiring teachers to fill our questionnaires or take tests in a style reminiscent of their student days. Ordinarily intelligent people fumble around, ask obvious questions, and fail to follow even simple directions. This ineptitude differs from the normally efficient behavior of the professional teacher.

John and I concluded that our students, too, were only performing as expected. They were seniors and were expected to be tired of school; we were teachers and were expected to fight the malaise. In order to combat these expectations, we decided on a rather drastic strategy. We would refuse to fight our roles; instead, we would switch them!

This meant that we would retire from directing and lecturing and that our students would assume these duties as teachers. For the second nine-week period, they would research and present the material for the course, while we would act as "curriculum consultants and supervisors." We initiated the switch by giving them a comprehensive list of playwrights, from which to choose one as a specialty.

At the end of the first quarter, they would each have to teach this specialty, so they began reading plays, reviews, and biographies, recording their impressions in lesson plan journals, which we periodically read and evaluated.

Their selections added some unusual contributions to the usual drama survey. One girl, working on Shaw, picked Mrs. Warren's Profession as her key example. I would have never used it, but it was one of the more intensely discussed readings of the semester. Another student, who was interested in Russian literature and history, chose Maxim Gorky as his writer, someone we have always omitted as too difficult.

When the second quarter started, our students were assigned a list of readings which had been prepared by their peers. Since our school, on modular scheduling, uses a variety of instructional modes, the demands on the teachers were quite diverse. They wrote lectures and rehearsed dramatizations for large group and created discussion questions for small group. Many of them gave quizzes on material they required of the class. These they also corrected and graded and were surprised when an occasional argument ensued over ambivalent test items. When this occurred, it became a valuable learning experience on the complexity of the communication process, not just another "hassle" with a "dumb teacher."

Other side effects developed which we explained with our role conversion theory. For instance, students are expected to be anxious about grades, but during our role reversal, grade talk almost disappeared. It was replaced by statements like "You really should read this play more than once," and "I hope you guys get something out of our discussion." One boy, notorious for his indifference to grades, assignments, and even other students, puzzled at length over why "the kids didn't really understand Ibsen." Without our coercion, a desirable attitude was expressed, the attitude that "...the acquisition of knowledge and skills are valuable, not in the service of competition for grades, but as the means for personally significant interaction with others."[2]

Efficiency is expected of teachers, but they despair of creating it in their students. Here again, our teachers checked on details, were early for class, and even nagged us about duplicating materials. They scurried around looking for additional resources from other teachers and

libraries, and no one "forgot" his responsibilities or was not ready to teach on his day.

Finally, our student teachers demonstrated sophistication and insight when analyzing even difficult authors. We had thought that when they confronted Shakespeare and Strindberg independently, without the close guidance of a teacher, they would be discouraged by their complexity. When they expressed sympathy and admiration for their authors, we attributed it to the long period of research and the purpose which directed it. As teachers, they were forced to read the literature in a new way. Which play was most interesting? What motivated the writer? These questions they had to ask and answer for themselves. In doing so, they became involved with the playwright they were studying.

Although we were satisfied with the quality of the lessons, we admitted that facets of literary criticism were neglected which we might have emphasized if we were teaching. However, since the students had read extensively in one rather narrow area, they were equipped with some expertise, at least with one writer. Therefore, we felt that depth was not sacrificed, and the students seemed confident in their presentations.

After the semester ended, our students endorsed the experience as interesting and worthwhile. They agreed that not all the teachers had been equally impressive, but still they felt they had learned much about drama, especially from their own teaching. This subjective evaluation confirms the findings Reissman and associates present in their survey of tutorial programs, Children Teach Children (1971). When students teach others, extraordinary leaps in achievement occur in the tutor.

Perhaps this is because teaching provides motivation for a student to test his knowledge by communicating it to others. This is why Charles Silberman, in Crisis in the Classroom, recommends that every college student do some teaching in his own field, even if he is not planning to teach. Since teachers often say, "I never knew a thing until I had to teach it," why should they always dominate a position that results in so much learning?

The absorption of subject matter, though, is not the only justification for role shifting. Could it not also begin to cure a common malady of too many students? This

malady Jerome Bruner diagnosed not as a "lack of freedom," but as a "lack of aim," caused in part by our overly long postponement of vocational choices. He noted that "At the very moment the young man or woman is seeking authenticity, the only legitimate role that is open to him is that of student."[3] Without a vocational goal this role may seem meaningless, and even when it is directed by a specific objective, it is still defined as passive and dependent.

We discovered that role changing did cause a renewed feeling of participation and that our trade off increased dialogue in the classroom. Our students asked us, "Is teaching this hard for you?" "Do you know all this stuff?" Interaction among the students became more serious and vital. They worked hard for clarity and coherence when they saw their friends actually taking notes from their lectures.

A more cooperative community of learners developed when we assigned adult roles to our students. Our encouraging experience suggests that role changing should be explored by teachers in other disciplines and grade levels. Students teaching students might "...help get us an inch on the way toward making the helper and the helped the universal exchange within a culture that continues to produce lonely crowds, lonelier than ever."[4]

FOOTNOTES

[1]Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, Teaching As A Subversive Activity, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1969), pp. 22-23.

[2]Herbert A. Thelen, "The Humane Person Defined" (Paper presented at the Secondary Education Leadership Conference, St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 1967), as cited in Frank Reissman et. al., Children Teach Children, (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p.6.

[3]Jerome Bruner, "The Uses of Immaturity," Intellectual Digest (Feb. 1973), p. 43.

[4]Jerome Bruner, "Toward a Sense of Community," Saturday Review-Education (Jan. 15, 1972), p. 63.

The State We Are In, Or Appear To Be: Final Report Of The Censorship Survey

By RUTH M. STEIN
University of Minnesota

After the results of the preliminary survey were announced in the winter issue of the Minnesota English Journal, the Censorship Committee received an additional twenty-four filled-in questionnaires, increasing the sample by a third. This final report is based on the total number of one-hundred responses received. Despite publication of the questionnaire in various organizational bulletins, newspapers, and journals, over 90% of the survey participants were reactions to the questionnaire's appearance in the MCTE Newsletter. Below is the final tally. Where questions were not answered, the total sum is less than 100%. Where people filled in more than one blank, where appropriate, the totals exceed 100%. We will deal in percentiles, but the reader can convert to numbers easily. Some of the results were unchanged, while others were altered significantly.

1. What is your official school title? 64% of the respondents were teachers. 20% classed themselves as chairpersons of grades or departments. 7% were librarians, while another 2% called themselves media specialists or coordinators.

2. Level of school? 51% were secondary school personnel. 39% came from elementary or middle schools, virtually the same as in the preliminary survey.

3. In the past 3 years has anyone objected to or asked you to remove any work? 29% of the respondents cited 33 specific incidents, an increase of 10%. 71% took the time and effort to say no such attempts or objections had been made. Questions had been asked about certain books, but in some cases, no formal protests were made.

4. Does your school have a written selection policy or procedure for handling complaints about instructional materials? 38% responded in the affirmative, 42% in the negative, and 20% left this blank or did not know. Of those schools with policies and procedures, 15% used the NCTE as a model. Others used principal or teacher-devised statements, or procedures created by committees of the Board of Education. In situations where objections had been raised, twenty-one of the thirty-three cases, 64% were in districts with written guidelines.

5. In selecting instructional materials, which best describes your options? Overwhelmingly, 66% said they had "free choice." An additional 16% said they had "free choice from an approved list," while 12% checked "other." The last included "...free choice with personal judgment," "...teachers' showing some discretion," "...if a teacher can justify its use in the classroom," and "As a department, we figure out what to order, but no one says what we may not order."

Other statements included the following:
"It is the responsibility of educators to provide materials that realistically portray life. Educators cannot satisfy the whims of all nor can they cater to the hang-ups of all adults, but must be left to exercise their best judgment. Professionalism should include the expertise in book and non-book selection according to the level of the students being served."

And:

"People are pleased to know there is a policy to follow--it is being followed. Media coordinators feel secure. It's a plus for our side!"

Over 95% of the time books were selected, as before, on the basis of professional recommendations in journals, reviews, or by appropriate personnel.

Additional instructional materials against which complaints were lodged are: Renevoize's A Wild Thing, Zindel's My Darling, My Hamburger, Politi's Little Leo, Roth's Goodbye, Columbus, Serpico, an Honest Cop, Go Ask Alice, Mayer's Mrs. Biggs and the Wizard, Wrights's short story, "The Kitten," the play, The Diary of Anne Frank, and graffiti on walls provided for that purpose.

Material questioned, but against which no formal protest was made include Bradford's Red Sky at Morning, Hair, McCall's Jack the Bear, Neufeld's For all the Wrong Reasons, MacDougal's The Cheer-Leader, and Rauchen's Summer of '42.

The reasons given for the objections are listed in descending order: language--mentioned in over half of the cases, sexual references or incidents, type of subject matter being treated, religion and witchcraft, ethnic stereotypes, and one incident each where the parent wanted the child to read classics only, another child was said to be too immature for that particular book, drugs, and the illustration on the book cover.

Six times as many complaints involved secondary students, as compared to elementary pupils. In only 15% of the instances was the material in contention "required." The rest of the time it was "suggested," or "optional," or "read by students on their own." Over 95% of the protesters were family members. The other 5% consisted of members of the clergy, members of the community, or school personnel. In only four cases was the offensive material removed, and three of these occurred where the school had no written policies or procedures.

Unreported in the survey, but published in the April 7th edition of the Minneapolis Tribune, is the item that the Litchfield Board of Education removed Manchild in the Promised Land from the Litchfield High School library because of objections by some parents. The resolution calling for the action also requires teachers to begin sending class reading lists home with students. If a parent objects to a book on the list, teachers will be informed and the student will not be required to read the book. The resolution sets up a study committee to search for other solutions to the problem of when and where students should begin to be exposed to books such as Manchild in the Promised Land.

Constructive criticism concerning juvenile books has changed since the 1960's. During that period there was a legitimate concern about the misrepresentation and omission of certain groups and certain codes of ethics in young people's recreational reading. Since then, criticism has shifted almost to the point of dictation to librarians and teachers as to what should or should not be taught, read, or made available to students. However well-intentioned they may be, pressure groups both inside and outside of the school are attempting to remove certain books from

circulation for many reasons, some of which have surfaced in our survey. One unwelcome trend, reported in lay and professional journals but not obvious in our survey, is the meekness and haste with which qualified, trained personnel pull from their shelves books that attract or may attract adverse criticism, as appeared to have happened in Litchfield.

When material is challenged, it is helpful if a written procedure defines how the situation is to be handled. This procedure should be based on a written selection policy which states its philosophy, objectives, and criteria for ongoing selection. The Library Bill of Rights, the School Library Bill of Rights, and the Freedom to Read Statement provide sound rationale and assumptions upon which to base such policies. The point of contention is not the merits of any one book or movie, but who is to be responsible for its choice, evaluation, and use.

Responsible school districts must work with the communities of which they are part to insure implementation of such policies. Cooperation among all segments of the educational milieu of which a child is a part must take place in order to provide a worthwhile educational experience. Litchfield is showing some evidence of movement toward this vital school-community partnership.

Although this survey has concentrated on external threats of censorship, in-house attempts have yet to be explored seriously. "Closet censorship" may even be more pervasive and more influential than heretofore considered. Perhaps this should be the direction of future investigations on the subject. It is not just a matter of banning books--it concerns the students' real right to read and write. If pupils are not allowed to read what they want or to write on a subject dear to the heart, regardless of its controversial nature, will those students choose to read or write at all? And without use, can the abilities to read and write do anything but atrophy? Does going back to the "basics" really touch the basic problem at all?

The Censorship Committee of the MCTE wishes to thank those who cooperated and encouraged its efforts in conducting the survey. For those who would like more specific guidelines and aids, the following addresses are listed:

American Civil Liberties Union 22 E. 40th St. New York, N.Y. 10016	for "The Rights of Teachers: the Basic ACLU Guide to a Teacher's Constitutional Rights by David Rubin.
American Library Association 50 E. Huron St. Chicago, Ill. 60611	For many helpful statements, articles and publications.
Association of American Publishers 1 Park Ave. New York, N.Y. 10016	for Freedom to Read Bulletin
National Council of Teachers of English 1111 Kenyon Rd. Urbana, Ill. 61801	for The Students' Right to Read, Arizona English Bulletin issue on Censorship, Feb. 1975., and much useful material
Educational Policies Service National School Boards Association 152 Cross Rd. Waterford, CT 06385	for Policies for Coping with the Critics
National Education Association Commission on Professional Rights & Responsibilities 1201 16th St., NW Washington, D. C. 20036	for various publications on the subject

Slow Learners

He moons in the corner,
forever awaiting opportunities.
The other children know
only that he's different--
that his smile is perpetual,
even when he weeps and screams
and breaks and hits.

Read mine, he says.
But there's nothing there.
Read mine, read mine,
he says, and twists
his arms around a desk,
casting all our faces
into the treacherous air.

MARK VINZ

NCTE Committee On Censorship

The newly formed NCTE Committee on Censorship, chaired by Edward Jenkinson (Indiana University--Bloomington), has asked that the following announcement be sent to you in hopes that you will publish it in your affiliate newsletter or journal. The committee hopes this will give a great number of teachers who have experienced recent censorship activities an opportunity to report to the committee and thereby forward its work.

The newly formed NCTE Committee on Censorship decided, in its initial meeting at the NCTE Convention in Chicago, that one of its first tasks is to gather and to examine reports of incidents of censorship that have occurred since September 1, 1976. Not only will the committee report the incidents to members, noting censorship trends throughout the nation, but it will also examine the information carefully to help it complete six other projects of interest to members.

The committee urges teachers who have experienced any form of censorship to send reports to the chairman of the committee at the following address:

Edward Jenkinson, Director
English Curriculum Study Center
1125 Atwater Avenue
Bloomington, Indiana 47401

The committee requests the following information:

1. The name and address of the school and/or school district involved and the grade level(s) involved.
2. The complete title, author, and publisher of the textbook(s) and/or trade materials objected to. Or a complete description of the ideas and/or teaching strategies objected to.

3. Who made the objection (s)?
   (Parent, student, teacher, administrator, clergyman, citizen's group, etc.)
   To whom was the original objection made?
   How was the complaint made?
   (Individual conference, letter, telephone call, citizen's request form, etc.)
4. Can the person making the complaint be identified with any specific group? If so, which group?
5. What was the specific complaint?
6. What action was requested by the complainant?
7. What action was taken by the school? Who made the decision of the action taken?
8. What was the direct result of the censorship complaint?
   (Student read another book; book was removed from reading list; book was placed on closed shelf; parts of the book were excised; etc.)
9. What were the indirect results of the censorship complaint?
   (Book wasn't removed from reading list but was not reordered; department quietly decided not to teach the book again; etc.)
10. Was the incident reported by the mass media?
    (Please enclose any available newspaper clippings with the report.)
11. Please give the name and home address of the person making the report so that a member of the committee can contact you if further information is needed.

What Dreams Are Made Of

Pipe dreams scatter
when reality slashes.
Fighting oblivion is a noble cause,
but muscles grow weak with use,
weaker with disuse,
knees chatter,
the voice withers--
I've forgotten why I fight.

Pain is inevitable.

Reality's a two bladed sword;
nerves numb
and I watch my flesh part
with the backswing.

DALE S. OLSON

minnesota council of teachers of english

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