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EDITOR...Eleanor M. Hoffman, University of Minnesota, Duluth

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A Word from your editor

I've been editing Minnesota English Journal for three years now, and finally feel sufficiently versed in really all of the **mysteries** - to share some accomplishments and some concerns.

For accomplishments, MEJ can boast a stable format and a variety of contributions and contributors. Much credit for this goes, belatedly, to Anna Stensland Lidberg, who preceded me as editor, to the Publication Board, and to the MCTE Executive Board, all of whom strongly support MEJ. Other accomplishments include the development of the editorial policy, found on the inside back cover of each issue, and the formulation of a job description for the editor.

These two documents insure a stable procedure for handling manuscripts and producing the journal. Currently, the Publication Board, together with me, is forming a board of readers to help in the selection of manuscripts, insuring further a quality journal.

MEJ is well-thought of out there in the states beyond Minnesota. The twenty copies I took to the affiliates meeting at NCTE in Boston disappeared rapidly. And it is you, the members and contributors who maintain that quality. Your manuscripts are what I have to select from and what I am concerned to receive. You, as educators at all levels, must make the effort to share with members the successes, the trials and, as appropriate, the failures in your understandings and your classrooms.

Be willing to communicate with other members. Offer to review a book. Write a response to an article for Interchange. Or write an article about your teaching, your students, your professional interests.

I attempt to respond promptly to all submissions and will critique your manuscript, suggesting useful revisions. Encourage yourself, encourage your colleagues to share through MEJ.

Eleanor M. Hoffman

MEJ Call for papers 1982 - 83

Fall 1982 - Pot Pourri - manuscript due by Sept. 1, 1982

Winter-Spring 1983 - Connections: Reading and Literary Studies - manuscript due by Jan. 1, 1983

Please observe the editorial policy found on the inside back cover. Send manuscript to:

Eleanor M. Hoffman
English Department
University of Minnesota - Duluth
Duluth, Minnesota 55812

WHY DO I STAY IN TEACHING?

by Nancy Hood Stone

I am inundated by August. I just checked my trusty dictionary to reassure myself that the metaphor is accurate. Inundate, I learned, literally, means covered with water. Everything sticks to everything else. I pulled a paperback from my bookshelf yesterday, and a six foot row of books came out, all of a piece. The old screen door sticks to its frame; my body sticks to damp sheets.

I'm also feeling inundated by the daily headlines: inflation continues its climb, the air controllers' strike, another Irishman has starved himself to death, Reagan and Weinberger say we will build the neutron bomb, and Fidel Castro

accuses the United States of biological warfare.

It's time for the annual reassessment of my life. If this activity seems a bit strange, I account for it simply by recalling Maslowe's hierarachy of values. Survival activities come first. The only way I can lift my head from the torrents of August torpor is to take a fresh look, gain a breath of objectivity, at what I am doing and why I am doing it.

I teach English in an inner-city community college. The key question I raise every August, after summer school, is "Why do I stay in teaching?" Some years back I used to accuse myself of apathy, of getting into the proverbial rut, of being afraid to try business ventures or to explore other assorted career options. But that was before I spent ten years out of college teaching, working in both the business world and human service sectors. In January, 1979, I came, full circle, back to teaching which I now recognized as my first love.

Yet, there are days when I still question my rational faculties. Is it rational to choose a career as a labor of love, knowing about the pay scale and job insecurity? Am I really a masochist or a naive idealist? In my older age, am I going to become an irresponsible whiner who's not been totally realistic about teaching as a profession? These and other nagging questions torture me every August.

All right, I tell myself, let's be objective and simply tally up the plus-es and minus-es of my chosen work. Let's be hardheaded to avoid sloppy sentimentality; let's look at the negatives first.

First, there is job insecurity. Having resigned a college

tenure contract in 1969 (no one told me what would happen to the teaching market, and my family needed me at home that year -- a serious but separate feminist issue I won't go into here), I work on what is called a "temporary, limited" contract. In plain words, this means that whether or not I get to teach, or how many credit hours I teach, depends upon the enrollment figures from quarter to quarter. (This system, it seems, is necessary because of state budget considerations. Colleges cannot afford to be caught with an extra stable of teachers on permanment contracts should enrollment decline.)

Some quarters I've taught only one or two courses and taken second or third jobs for basic sustenance. Other quarters I've been lucky enough to teach fifteen credit hours, a full-time load by community college standards. In translation, fifteen credit hours means fifteen hours in the classroom and roughly thirty hours a week in student conferences, preparation and grading. Not a bad workload, but whether or not I'll be hired to do it remains a quarterly bout with nearly ulcer-producing anxieties. In this rational, balancing out mood, I wonder how many other workers have to go through these doldrums of insecurity every three months. And, ironically, I'm a much better teacher now than I was when I was in demand, with constant job offers in the '50s and '60s.

On a limited contract, there is virtually no voice in union negotiations with the state, no accumulation of credit toward a sabbatical or leave of absence, and I pay my own health insurance for at least two unemployed months a year. And some days I wonder: "Doth the limited contract make cowards of us

all?" It is harder to speak out when one is so easily replaceable. But this, too, is a separate issue. As I grow older, as much as I hate to admit my weaknesses, sabbaticals, security, and retirement kinds of things become increasingly important. About fifteen working years left, I tell myself, and what will happen to me then with inadequate retirement funds, no real estate or other investment possibilities, and Social Security iffy at best?

The second big negative is the salary, but everyone has heard this before. The top of the teaching scale is the bottom of the community college administrative scale (about $27,000). But since I'm somewhere near the bottom of the teaching scale (having been given credit for only three years prior teaching experience), I bring home less than $900 per month for only ten months a year. For a single family income, this figure means no family vacations, a lot of hot dogs, and the $2.00 matinees at the movies. The vacations are usually spent doing more grad school or taking a temporary clerking job.

I see that the air controllers think $33,000 average wages are inadequate for the responsibility they carry. After all, they make life and death decisions as do physicians; we in education are responsible only for the training of minds and skills. Corporate executives and attorneys make six figure salaries, but they are responsible for the weighty budget and legal decisions of multi-million dollar companies. Plumbers and postal workers begin at eight or nine dollars an hour, but toilets need to be fixed and mail needs to be carried. I'm not being a snob; I believe all valuable work deserves dignity and

financial compensation. I'd be one of the first to complain if these services were not available, and the workers deserve adequate income.

The whole thing, however, makes me wonder where this country places its real values. Artists and writers are notoriously poverty-stricken as are child-care and geriatric workers, and homemakers have no tangible income. As I cast my rather jaundiced eye over the inequities of salaries paid for work done, it is obvious that a retired military officer or corporate executive is considered more valuable to society than someone who contributes to the arts or humanities.

I'm not greedy; I've never desired a new car every year, a fancy house, or even a snowmobile. But it would be nice to be freed of wondering if I can make my rent payment and my student loan payment, if I can help my sons who are working their way through college, or even if I can eventually trade off my 1970 car for a more dependable model. And I find that on a subjective level, feeling appreciated is tied somewhat closely to wages received. Despite my own belief that I've been performing valuable services all my life, the lack of financial reward eventually chips away at one's feelings of self-worth. I give myself pep talks, but the reality of bill-paying each month is a constant reminder that society does not value me as a contributing member. Some days, that hurts -- still. Money obviously does not buy happiness, but the lack of it decreases options and brings stresses probably equal to that which the air controllers suffer.

But I must lift my head from mid-summer mugginess and

potential self-pity to assess the life-giving fresh air of rewards in teaching. They are many and diverse, centering largely on emotional and intellectual satisfactions.

First, there is life style. I have the freedom to come and go from campus as I wish, as long as I meet my classes and keep office hours for student conferences. I can, if I wish, do my preparation and grading at home or in the library, at midnight on Tuesday or at 5:00 a.m. on Sunday. For me, this is a real plus. My internal time-clock has never functioned well on a regimented nine to five schedule, and I was an early advocate for flex time in the business community. I may actually work fifty hours some weeks, thirty hours other weeks, since it is my decision as to how much time and which hours I put into my classes. But I also know I feel best when I've "given my all," so a certain conscientiousness and desire to serve students well keeps me from exploiting the delicious freedom from punching time clocks.

Then I must look at the very activities which constitute my work. I can do things I love best. I can read books which interest me, write lectures and design classes around subject matter which seems pertinent, conduct my classes in the way I wish, and keep abreast not only with my field but with the pulse of today's students. These activities keep my mind alive, my spirit youthful, my creative juices flowing, my sense of humor intact -- most days.

And there is a dynamic in the classroom which never ceases to excite me. I think I like both the built-in audience and subsequent interchanges, for something vital is often actually

happening before my eyes as a concept is grasped, a new skill achieved, a new idea or confidence is born. Not that every class is exciting; sometimes I think I could stand on my head and the students wouldn't even notice, but other times that magic happens and the classroom is vibrant. At these times I feel enormously rewarded and have often learned as much as I've given.

Every time I experience these August angsts, I call to mind a few choice memories. Some have come from my own mistakes that I finally saw through.

One incident revolves around an assignment I'd been giving for years in freshman English: "Write a process analysis." I'd explain that details must be arranged chronologically so that the reader could clearly grasp the how-to directions being given. I'd illustrate with what I thought were colorful and cogent examples, but I kept getting boring papers on subjects like, "How to Change the Oil in a 1975 Mustang."

Finally one day, a student who'd been struggling through the class with D's (it was his second time around for Comp 101), wrote a paper on "How to Flunk English in Three Easy Steps." The paper was not brilliant by Modern Language Association standards, but it was brilliant for Comp 101. Even his erratic sentence structure, spelling, and punctuation has emerged from murky depths to achieve some semblance of clarity and order as he expounded on his unorthodox-for English-class topic. He'd obviously been turned on by a subject so close to his heart.

I used the paper as an example in later classes and have since received some marvelous papers ranging from "How Not to

Fall in Love Three Times a Year" to "How Not to Take Your Saint Bernard on a Car Trip" (sub-titled "Travels with Charlie's Carsickness"). The injection of humor helped us get beyond dull stuffiness and pedantry to begin enjoying the task at hand: explaining a process clearly. My brave and funny student had, in his desperation, taught me a valuable lesson.

Another jewel I draw from my treasure chest every August, as I begin to redesign classes for fall, concerns class discussion of a Katherine Anne Porter essay on the pitfalls of romantic love. I had thought it choice material, relevant to student concerns, controversial social comment on the American way of life, and a chance to have students write an argumentative, pro or con paper on traditional social customs. What I had failed to take sufficient note of in my preparation was that nearly half my class were international students.

One of them, during the discussion, found the courage to say that he didn't understand the essay at all. It seems that in his country there is no concept of romantic love and polygamy is the standard practice: for males, at least, the more wives, the more social status. The American students, at first dumbfounded, were then simply curious, and they asked penetrating questions. The foreign students revealed that they saw American divorce as immoral, nothing more than serial polygamy without taking responsibility for wife #1, the most honored wife in their system.

The interchange was lively but polite, non-judgmental but mutually enlightening. By the end of class, I was convinced that the cultural exchange was far more valuable than the

precise dissection of the essay that I'd planned. Incidentally, some strong and discerning papers came out of the whole incident and I learned, again, that mistakes are sometimes gold mines for learning.

These kinds of classroom activity remain prime reasons for staying in teaching. I am never bored. I am both humbled and stimulated by the often curious turn of events. But let me continue to count the plus-es; I begin to feel a fresh wind reviving my sagging and soggy spirits.

Next, there is the chance to socialize with my peers. On the whole, they are an interesting, diverse and committed group of instructors. In community colleges, effective teaching holds priority over the publish or perish Sword of Damocles which hangs over professors in the hierarchical structure of universities. We are all "instructors" and do not compete for professorships; we are measured by how good a job we do in the classroom. The important question is: Have our students really advanced in their skills or knowledge levels by the time they complete our classes? In the democracy of an "open door" college, faculty must learn ways to translate academic knowledge into pragmatic information, for our older and nontraditional students are impatient with what they see as pedantry. As a result, most of the instructors I know may take delight in the poetry of W.H. Auden or the theories of Alfred North Whitehead in their private hours, but their teaching must make sense to the student and be relevant (that much over-used word) to the context of the situation. Community colleges rarely keep academic purists for long. Someone committed to teaching the third act of

"Hamlet" will be disenchanted quickly with the mixture of students we get, and the administration will be disenchanted quickly with the mixture of students we get, and the administration will be disenchanted with his or her specialization. One student may truly want to know, and be capable of learning how to analyze and synthesize literature or physics; another may only want to know and be capable of learning how to write a job application without embarrassment. The community college must serve both.

The kinds of instructors who stay are mostly a bright, realistic, flexible, philosophical, student-oriented group of people. They've come to terms with their own purist tendencies and are simply intellectuals who love to teach. Knowing them is, indeed, another plus; there are often good laughs over the coffee cups.

Then there is the larger community. When possible, I attend professional meetings for added information and stimulation. I gain new ideas, information and incentive for my sometimes starving mind and imagination from wide-ranging subjects: "Teaching Main Street in Minnesota in 1981," "Small Press Possibilities for Potential Publishers," "The Concept of Time in Four Quartets," "A Feminist Perspective on D.H. Lawrence," "How to Help Students with Writing Anxiety," "Differing Styles of Learning," or "Who Said Everyone Needs to Outline?" And the social interchange between committed college teachers from all over the country is a rich experience I do not want to discount.

As I continue to tally positives with negatives on my balance sheet, I cannot discount the students themselves. I do

not have any discipline problems that public school teachers must contend with -- another plus. I simply like my students. Here I must be careful; sentimentality is a real cop-out. I've heard too many pious teachers say, "The one thing that keeps me going is that one beautiful student I sometimes get." Hogwash! A lot of my students are not beautiful; a lot of them are not even interesting. But, on the other hand, a lot of them are. But I think it is the very diversity which keeps me motivated.

In the slice-of-life, inner-city college we get a wonderful mixture of age, economic and racial groups; there is enormous variation in I.Q.'s, motivations, goals. How can I reach the 45-year-old displaced homemaker and the 24-year-old ex-convict in the same classroom? And what about the young Black, the first in her family to go to college, who's sitting next to the international student who comes from wealthy aristocracy and the British school system? The traditional 18-year-old WASP, fresh out of high school, is in the minority. This rich potpourri keep me ever reaching for better teaching techniques -- and ever learning. The papers I get come from life experience, not from wishful thinking. I receive essays on everything from "The New Yam Festival in Nigeria," and "My Experience with Justice as a Native American in Prison," to "The Problems of Being a Forty Year Old Widow in a Youth Culture," or "The Joys of Beginning College after Sixty". No, there are few papers any more on either "Hamlet," or on "How to Change the Oil..." Effort has gone into most of the papers and the topics are surely more real than the ones I was getting in the '50s, or the ones I was writing in the '40s.

I find that these students are often deeply motivated to learn; they are not eighteen year olds, as I was, who went off to school because we were expected to "get an education" as we "got" a suit of clothes. They are in college because they want to be. I like them, and I also admire them. Many make real sacrifices in order to attend school, often juggling horrendous responsibilities with college assignments -- tasks that would stifle less sturdy souls.

Well, maybe I've written myself into being a cock-eyed optimist. And maybe, my paranoia tells me, I am letting myself be exploited by the budget concerns of the state. I hope not. I'm trying to take a clear-eyed look at whether or not to stay in teaching.

The tally seems to say that despite job insecurity and salary, I am committed to stay. The fact is that I genuinely love teaching; some sort of affinity pulls me back again and again. But if financial rewards (i.e., "comfort level" income) are not forthcoming, by next August (or December, March, or June), I'll have to reassess my goals again. Maybe by next year I'll decide that intellectual and emotional satisfactions are not enough.

reprinted from Council-Grams

Secular Humanism: Some See It as Threat to Schools

In the wake of the conservative political victory last fall, citizen watchdog groups have stepped up their demands for narrower definitions of appropriate subject matter for public education, public entertainment, and the public prints. The protesters, concentrated mostly in small towns and white suburbs, have founded national, regional, and local groups, of which the Moral Majority and the Eagle Forum are the best known.

The titles of the new citizens' groups - among them Pro-Family Forum, Young Parents Alert, People Concerned with Education, and Guardians of Education - convey righteous determination. Their messages express alarm. They warn that the quality of American life and even American power in the world are deteriorating because of the spread of "secular humanism," which protesting groups see dominating the public schools. They charge that today's youth are taught that "anything goes," and that there is no such thing as "right and wrong."

The citizens' groups describe secular humanism as a religion. Since religious teaching is prohibited in public schools, it follows, in conservative logic, that secular humanism (and humanists) should be barred from classrooms. A number of the new groups have ties with evangelical Christian organizations. As a result of court decisions in recent years,

Christianity no longer enjoys its former status as the de facto religion of many public schools. Some of the protest groups contend that the framers of the U.S. Bill of Rights never intended that the nation's children be brought up officially godless.

Semantics and the Protest Groups

The language these citizens' groups use to characterize secular humanism implies subversion and conspiracy. "Those of us who understand know how it is infiltrated, know how it is inculcated in the children," Terry Todd of a Minnesota group told New York Times writer Dena Kleiman. Todd's organization, calling itself Stop Textbook Censorship, asserts that traditional school reading such as The House of the Seven Gables and Robinson Crusoe have been "censored" from the schools and replaced with "humanist" literature. "Is Humanism Molesting Your Child?" is the title of a pamphlet from another group. Other titles: "Weep for Your Children" and "Anti-God Humanists Are Conditioning Your Children." "Brainwashing," "negativism," and "socialism" are other terms used to describe the humanist "threat."

"There is a philosophy called humanism, which places man at the center of the universe, encourages free thought and scientific inquiry without deference to a supreme being and offers no absolute standard of ethics," Kleiman notes in her article. She quotes philosophy professor Paul Kurtz, State University of New York at Buffalo, as saying the citizen groups have seized on humanism because they seek someone to blame for current social ills.

"There is an uneasy feeling that maybe we've bent over

backwards with being broadminded," Scott Thomson, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, commented in the Times.

What the Activists Want

The new activists' remedy for the schools calls not only for abolishing sex education and for teaching biblical creationist theory along with evolution theory, it also calls for removing literature dealing with present-day problems and realities, downplaying creative writing, and stressing spelling, penmanship, and phonics. Some such critics fault the schools for reducing competition among students. The concept of the American system as already perfected in some unspecified past time spurs attacks on social studies texts in particular. The Office of Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association reports sharp increases this year in pressure to remove specific books from schools and libraries. One teacher of English told the Times she worried about how her son will learn to evaluate conflicting ideas if all controversial content is sifted out of the curriculum.

Some of the New Right activists also want to sweep liberal thinkers out of government. According to Newsweek July 6, Tim LaHaye, San Diego minister and founder of the conservative Council for National Policy, states in his book The Battle for the Mind that "We must remove all humanists from public office and replace them with pro-moral political leaders."

A flurry of interest in the summer centered on a campaign by the Coalition for Better Television (CBTV), a group connected with the Moral Majority, to promote a consumer boycott

of products sold by firms advertising on shows featuring sex and violence. The boycott was cancelled, but not before executives of the sponsoring companies travelled to Memphis to confer with Coalition leaders. "All we're asking for is a little balance in programming," a coalition spokesman said.

The Rev. Donald Wildmon, director of the Coalition for Better Television, has stated the issue more bluntly: "Somebody's value system is going to be in dominant control."

Marketing Freedom of Expression

Television producer Norman Lear and others have responded to conservative pressure groups by founding a counter-group, People for the American Way (PAW). It has produced TV public service announcements advocating freedom of expression and, according to executive director Anthony Podesta, is attempting "to counter the intolerant messages of moral majoritarians and the negative climate they created."

PAW-sponsored TV spots score the conservative groups for implying that those who disagree with their views are not "good Americans, good Christians," etc. In one PAW message, a steelworker says that he considers himself and his family to be religious but can't accept the assertions of "a whole bunch of ministers on the radio and TV," who would class his wife as a bad Christian for disagreeing with them on some political issues.

The first PAW messages were broadcast in more than 30 television markets last fall. Podesta says 50 million viewers saw them and "tens of thousands of people responded with contributions and offers of assistance." PAW launched its

second media campaign this past summer. According to Podesta, the organization's other projects include talks to community groups, debates with opponents, monitoring and responding to "moral majoritarian" activities, and "citizen action training programs... to combat censorship in our libraries and intimidation in our schools and other public institutions."

The Moral Majority, Inc. announced in late July that it will counter TV commercials by People for the American Way with its own 30- and 60-second spot announcements featuring the Rev. Jerry Falwell and another Moral Majority official. (WP: 7/25/81)

Is Moral Teaching Constitutional?

A report by the Thomas Jefferson Research Center noted recently that in 1775 (when the American colonies were still under British rule) 90 percent of the content of school reading concerned religion and morals. If demand for moral teaching escalates, how might such content be accommodated in public schools under the U.S. Constitution? Mark Cannon, an aide to Chief Justice Warren Burger, recently quoted a statement by a new Values Education Commission in Maryland, saying the commission had found "nothing in court decisions that would preclude the teaching of ethical content." (NYT: 5/17, 7/5; CSM: 6/29; USN&WR: 6/8; ET: 7/6/81)

A RIGHTEOUS APOLOGY

by Martin C. Wiltgen

LYCON. . . there are some matters a nation must not question if it is to continue. It must not question its virtues, its standards, its religion! If any nation questions these things it will wither away.

SOCRATES. . . The evidence will not destroy a free city, Lycon. Far from destroying it, the truth will make and keep it free. A despotism dies of the truth, a democracy lives by it. . . Shut out the light and close our minds and we shall be like a million cities of the past that came up out of the mud, and worshipped darkness a little while, and went back, forgotten, into darkness![1]

I

Hardly a week passes without my seeing or hearing something in the media pertaining to the issue of censorship. Nationally, censorship issues take the time and energy of those involved either as protagonists or antagonists. Each side in a censorship issue believes it possesses and guards the standards of truth; each makes for a confrontation in the battleground of absolutes. Any compromise convolutes the meta-issues involved.

Minnesotans have heard the opposing arguments in censorship skirmishes fought in the communities of Sauk Center, Forest Lake, Lakeville, Fairmont and several other communities over such works as Of Mice and Men, The Lottery, Ms. Magazine, The Signal Series by Scott Foresman, Person to Person, and Catcher in the Rye. Nationally, communities such as Kenawha, Iowa;

Island Trees Union, New York; Helena, Montana; and Warsaw, Indiana have experienced censorship confrontations over such works as Grapes of Wrath, Slaughterhouse Five, The Naked Ape, The Best Short Stories of Negro Writers, Our Bodies Ourselves, Growing Up Female in America, and Brave New World. Some works are censored for reasons of sex -- The Scarlet Letter by Hawthorne; of politics - The Republic by Plato; of inappropriate adolescent behavior - The Diary of Anne Frank; of war and peace - Hiroshima by Hersey and Johnny Got His Gun by Trumbo; or of religion - Sounder by Armstrong and To Kill a Mockingbird by Lee. Even dictionaries have been censored because the word "bed" is defined as a verb as well as a noun. In Texas, the Commissioner of Education removed five standard dictionaries from the list recommended by the State Textbook Committee because some of the word meanings were interpreted as in violation of two sub-sections of the Texas State Textbook Adoption Proclamation.[2] In Florida, there are communities which censored the works of John Milton and Emily Dickenson because of their alleged homosexuality.

What of the unknown number of works used in public schools which are surreptitiously removed and not replaced in libraries, curriculum, or media-centers out of fear of a potential censorship case? School librarians, teachers, and administrators have and are removing some works in print and non-print media in order to avoid possible censorship pressures. Such works as Father Christmas by Raymond Briggs, The Eye of the Needle and The Key to Rebecca by Ken Follet, certain issues of Life Magazine and Sports Illustrated, and Catch 22 by Heller

are examples of other works which have been removed from school curriculums, library shelves, and media centers or "conveniently" lost and not replaced because they have received the onus of "suspect" recognition in national, regional, or local news media. Schools which engage in such surreptitious acts of censorship disenfranchise students of their Constitutional rights of freedom to knowledge and wisdom and betray their commitment as educators in the war on ignorance.

II

The appetite for censorship is fed by frustrations with a society which undergoes rapid and uncertain change - a society under stress because of inflation, energy problems, and social-political-religious uncertainties. When people feel that their own best interests are ignored and that the future is bleak, they look for someone or something to blame. Unfortunately, one of the targets of these collective frustrations is the local public school curriculum.

Because the ability to voice frustration and opposition to change and uncertainty at the state or federal level is often viewed as a distantly difficult and disappointing process, it is easier for some citizens to direct their frustrations and prescriptions for certainty and equilibrium at the local public school. The local public school system is viewed as a major change-agent in attitudes, ideas, and values. When the public school curricula are viewed as landscapes of fear, they can become targets for direct or surreptitious censorship.

III

Recently, fear of ideological change and the frustration

with the status quo are being ambitiously fed by individuals and groups who hold to relatively narrow and paranoiac ideologies. Some of the architects of these passionate ideologies at the national level are Richard Viguerie, Meldrim Thompson, Howard Phillips, Paul Weyrich, Terry Dolan, Jesse Helms, and Paul Laxalt. These persons use sophisticated computer technology to write, edit, and distribute these views per such political and quasi-political organizations as RAVCO (Richard Viguerie Corporation), The Conservative Caucus, The Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, and The National Conservative Political Action Committee. Some sponsor a bill in Congress known ironically as "The Family Protection Act." These persons, organizations and legislation are identified with the New Right.

The ideological correlation among right wing political organizations is, unsurprisingly, supported and endorsed by fundamentalist persuasions, attitudes, and theologies of certitude. The works of Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American History (1964) and "The Paranoid Style in American Politics" (1964), and the work of Erling Jorstad, The Politics of Doomsday: Fundamentalists of the Far Right (1970), precociously illustrate a natural alignment of fundamentalist righteousness with political righteousness in times of political, econonomic, and social uncertainty.

This religious and political right directs its crusading thrusts at several issues and groups. One of the targets of their discontents and cures is the curriculum of the public schools which it feels contains the elements of SECULAR

HUMANISM. As textbooks and media are the basis for specific evidence of "sin" according to the Rev. Jerry Falwell, he says "Textbooks have become obscene and vulgar. Many of them openly attack the integrity of the Bible. Humanism is the main thrust of the public school textbook. Darwinian evolution is taught from kindergarten right through high school,"[3] and, "For our nation this is a life and death struggle and the battle line for this struggle is the textbooks."[4]

Falwell and his sympathizers make strident efforts to show that the Supreme Court recognizes Secular Humanism as a religion and that it is THE religion of the public schools. The Supreme Court gave Secular Humanism "status" in footnote reference to it as a term in the cases of TORASCO v. WATKINS (Clerk, 367, U.S. 488, - 1961) and UNITED STATES v. SEEGER (U.S. 163, - 1965). The footnote qualifications by the Supreme Court are OBITER DICTUM in law, not a matter of binding legal recognition but rather a clarification in meaning. Nevertheless, followers of a Falwellian mind-set choose to use this "dictum" as DICTA for their own purposes of malfeasance.

To add to the charge that Secular Humanism is a religion taught in the public schools, organizations which use this term as a scapegoat for their frustrations with the schools frequently cite Humanist Manifesto I (1933) and Humanist Manifesto II (1973). These organizations single out the fact that John Dewey signed the first manifesto and that B. F. Skinner signed the second. Because these two signers were and are influential in educational philosophy, it is therefore understood bythese rightist critics that the public schools

unequivocally endorse these manifestoes.[5]

Some of the organizations and publications using Secular Humanism as a funnel for their frustrations and discontents with the public schools are: THE EAGLE FORUM (The Phyllis Schlafly Report); GUARDIANS FOR EDUCATION (GEM): Onalee McGraw's "Secular Humanism and the Schools: The Issue Whose Time Has Come" published by THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION - a conservative think tank; THE NATIONAL CONGRESS FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE (The School Bell): PARENTS ALERT; PARENTS OF MINNESOTA; and CALM (Citizens Alert for Liberty and Morality) led by the Rev. Richard Angwin of St. Paul, Minnesota.

IV

Recently, three authors whose works are illustrative of this religious-political right as well as gaining in popularity among some conservative groups in Minnesota are Tim LaHaye, Zig Ziglar, and Barbara Morris.

LaHaye, a San Diego preacher who identifies himself as a Christian fundamentalist, attacks Secular Humanism as a major ideology of evil in society. In his book, The Battle for the Mind, he states that books can be reduced to either those based on man's thoughts or God's thoughts. The idea that Christianity could be enhanced or enriched by outside sources appears invalid to him. Anything not inspired by Biblical truth is therefore anti-Christian. Therefore, St. Thomas Aquinas is criticized for introducing Aristotelian ideas into Christian theology.

LaHaye criticizes Michelangelo for sculpting the Biblical David in the nude and shames the Renaissance artists for their

obsession with nude art forms. LaHaye, a modern Savonarola, says that such art forms in the Renaissance were a prelude to the modern humanist's demand for pornography in the name of freedom. To LaHaye, anything not inspired by Biblical truth is therefore anti-Christian.[6]

Zig Ziglar, founder and president of The Zig Ziglar Corporation of Dallas, Texas, and a promoter of positive motivation and salesmanship, attacks not only non-Christians, but welfare, government regulation of business, and negative trade balances in his books The Confessions of a Happy Christian and See You at the Top.

Ziglar who admits to having spoken to God twice, first in his arrow-shaped swimming pool on a hot summer night in 1972 and a few days later on the telephone in Corpus Christi, Texas, burned a set of books on Eastern religion sent to him as a gift for fear they would poison his mind. In his book See You at the Top he warns of the dangers of women's liberation (that our Creator said that man is the head of the household) and rock music (when this kind of garbage is dumped with a rhythm into an open mind, the result is disastrous.[7] Ziglar's splenetic frustrations include his condemnations of declining military strength, the recognition of mainland China, and the condemnation of Darwin and Freud as being the two most negative men who ever lived.[8]

Barbara Morris, a staff member of the National Educator, attacks the public schools for possessing a philosophy of atheistic humanism. In her text Change Agents in the Schools she claims that change-agents harm the children and betray the

country.[9] She feels that the best thing that could happen in America is the demise of public schools because "American education is based on the religious philosophy of atheistic humanism, and the values promoted in the schools are humanist values or 'articles of faith' as expressed in the Humanist Manifesto."[10]

Authors of the persuasions of LaHaye, Ziglar, and Morris echo the motifs of the passionate certainties of extremist and paranoiac religious and political righteousness. In their zealous rhetorics they prescribe specific and surreptitious restrictions of the freedom of exploration and expression. They choose to restrict the opportunities for the free exchange and debate of issues and ideas which challenge their historical, political, social, or Biblical interpretations. In their earnest sense of loyalty to their sense of values, authors of such an ilk wish to censure and change those areas which threaten their tunnel perspectives on righteousness. Although Norma and Mel Gabler of Educational Research Analysts from Longview, Texas are the most well known critics of "offensive" textbooks and progressive, humanistic education, they are not alone. Other LaHayes, Ziglars, and Morrises have joined in this crusade against the rights of exploration, examination, and expression of pluralistic issues and ideas.

Such authors either wittingly or unwittingly feed the fears of the grass roots political arena, inflame voters' sensitivities, and prescribe absolute remedies for their fears. The rhetoric of certainty and fear took its toll in the polls in the defeat of George McGovern (D - S.D.), John Durkin

(D - N.H.), Birch Baye (D - Ind.), John Culver (D - Iowa), Gaylord Nelson (D - Wis.), and Don Fraser (D - MN.).[11]

Now this righteous rhetoric is being prepared to "target" the defeat of Senators Don Riegle (D - Mich.), Howard Metzenbaum (D - Ohio), Bob Stafford (R - VT.), John Chaffee (R - RI.), George Mitchell (D - Maine), John Melcher (D - Mont.), Quentin Burdick (D - N.D.), Lowell Weicker (R - Conn.), and Paul Sarbanes (D - MD.). Senator Ted Kennedy (D - Mass.) is also likely to be added to this list.[12]

A specific "target" of the New Right was the former and Honorable U.S. Senator Thomas J. McIntyre of New Hampshire. Senator McIntyre outlined the growing forces of religious - political discontent in America in his book The Fear Brokers. In 1978 Senator McIntyre, who wrote this study during his campaign, was defeated by Gordon Humphrey, a former field coordinator for the Conservative Caucus - a group exposed in the study of New Right tactics and philosophy.

Now this coalition of the New Right is trying to effect its authoritarian postures by censoring the media. Moral Majority is the authoritarian voice and force behind such matters as "The Family Protection Act," threats to boycott sponsors of television programs, arguments for scientific creationism vs. evolution, opposition to E.R.A., support for prayer in the public schools, and censorship in public libraries and public schools.

This conservative coalition of righteousness fails to recognize the Constitutional rights to explore and participate in a pluralistic diversity of ideas. These arbiters of

righteousness seem to desire a Christian "Reich" for their limited certainties at the expense of others. What Moral Majority fails to understand is that the Third Reich of Germany enacted the Nuremberg Laws in 1935 because the politicians of righteousness and moral purity of that epoch thought such laws were for the good of all. Today, the Moral Majority doesn't speak for freedom in its Christian Bill of Rights. It speaks for license rather than freedom - the license to divide in the name of loyalty and the license to deny in the name of Christianity. Its threats of political retaliation, boycotts, and censorship are indicative of a spirit of meanness and bigotry. The voice of Moral Majority is that of hate rather than of love and caritas.

Such arbiters of righteousness fail to understand that teachers are bound by a professional ethic to war against ignorance and one-sided parochial views and ideas. Teachers in the public schools need the right to academic freedom. Because they are responsibly bound by their training to search for truth and openness rather than echo narrow catechetical political-religious-social "dogmas," teachers must be free within their contractural bounds to select materials, concepts, and ideas in teaching students basic, conceptual, and judgmental skills.

Teachers are more than the extensions of their employers. To restrict the right to academic freedom inherently restricts the opportunities for students to be involved in the open forum of the free exchange of ideas. As public schools are for the total public rather than parts of the public, teachers are

given the charge to educate students for effective citizenship in a participatory democracy. Thus the right to explore divergent views of sensitive or controversial issues and ideas cannot be left solely to the institutions of higher education. The opportunity to intelligently explore, discuss, debate, and discriminate the value differences in all subject areas must continue without bias and prejudice in the public schools. Those students who cannot have the advantages of higher education could easily become educationally disenfranchised if only the views of the majority or elitist minority were taught. The tyranny of the majority or the minority is as contrary to the basic principles of the Constitution as the authoritarianism of a political-religious autocracy.[13]

The tyranny of absolutes, righteousness, ignorance, revenge, and fear caused the defeat and demise of teachers such as Jesus, Abelard, Thomas More, Galileo Galilei, Thomas Paine, Adlai Stevenson, and Robert Oppenheimer. Socrates, one of the first philosophical martyrs accused and found guilty of being a doer of evil, corrupting the youth, not believing in the gods of his state, and having other new divinities of his own, said it best when he knew he would not be the last to incur the wrath of the righteous of his time,

> "If you think that by killing men you can prevent someone from censuring your evil lives, you are mistaken; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honorable; the easiest way is not to be disabling others, but to be improving yourselves."[14]

The accusers of Socrates - Meletus, Lycon, and Anytus - have reappeared in the togas of righteousness worn by the Virgueries, Laxalts, Helmses, and Falwells. The affidavits of today's righteous are similar to the ones sworn against Socrates in the troubled times of Athens in 399 B.C. The message of Socrates is the same:

> "The unexamined life is not worth living! The unexamined life is built on lies and a free world cannot live by lies."[15]

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2 Edward Jenkinson, Censors in the Classroom - The Mind Benders. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern University Press, 1979, p. 77.

3 "Clean-Up America Campaign, Still Important," Thomas Road Family Journal-Companion for Truth, 26 January 1979, p. 3.

4 Jerry Falwell, Clean-Up America, Special Edition, April 1979, p. 5.

5 Jenkinson, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

6 Kenneth L. Woodward with Eloise Salholz, "The Right's New Bogyman," Newsweek, July 6, 1981, pp. 48 & 51.

7 Robert Friedman, "Inspiration Inc." Esquire Magazine, Sept., 1979, p. 30.

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9 Barbara Morris, Change Agents in the Schools. Elliot City, Md: Barbara M. Morris Report, 1979.

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11 George W. Cornell (AP Religion Writer), "Religious Right Claims Success," Mankato Free Press, Mankato, MN., Nov 6, 1980. p. 36.

12 DuShane Fund Reports, Vol XI:1, Dec 80-Jan 81, p. 7.

13 Bob Cary, et. al. v. Board of Education of the Adams - Arapahoe School District 28-J, Aurora, Colorado, 427 F. Supp. 945, 952 (D. Colo. 1977). p. 14 (acc. to mimeographed copy of decision).

14 "Apology," Dialogues of Plato (ed. Robert M. Hutchins, Great Books of the Western World, Chicago: Enc. Britannica, Inc., Vol. 7, p. 210).

15 Maxwell Anderson, op. cit. p. 245.

INTERCHANGE

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LITERARY EXPLORATIONS OF AGING: A COURSE DESIGN AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

by Dr. Geraldine Giebel Chavis

I had for some time been convinced of the usefulness of an undergraduate course on aging, when one of my composition students submitted an essay reinforcing my conviction. The writer of the paper, a good-natured eighteen-year-old coed, had this to say about "aged people":

> . . . the old people's days are empty. They are lonely. Their bodies, crippled with arthritis, need a cane to

> support their painful steps. Eyes depend on glasses now. Freckles which faded years ago have been replaced with creases and wrinkles. Whereas children plan for the future, the old people's future has already passed. The world has lost the excitement, and lost its size also. It is now the size of their homes or rooms; going out just seems to be too much of a bother now. The lonely days of the old person are busy too, though not with life and living, but with death and dying.

My student's portrait of old age, dismal to say the least, unfortunately reflects not only the view of many young adults but of our society in general. Although growing old is a natural phenomenon, being old is a stigma in our society, and old people are often objects of pity or prejudice. Moreover, "Few people know how to be old," as LaRouchefoucald put it, because few want to accept their own old age or view with understanding the old age of others.

Viewing old age with understanding is the primary objective of the course I am about to describe. Entitled "Literary Explorations of Aging," this course explores the unique problems, needs, and experiences of elderly individuals and examines society's attitudes toward the old, primarily through the reading and discussion of fiction and poetry. Underlying my choice of these materials is my basic conviction that well-chosen examples of these literary genres are likely to encourage honest self-exploration in a nonthreatening atmosphere, evoke strong emotional responses and help induce the formation of valuable new insights regarding self and society.

It is my belief that examining issues related to old age helps eliminate negative attitudes toward the elderly and can constitute a crucial step in the young college student's psychological preparation for his or her own aging. As it is designed, this course can be offered either as a literature-humanities course organized thematically or as a sociology-social-work-gerontology course whose material is chiefly literary.

The use of literature to increase self-understanding and expand social awareness has long been recognized by bibliotherapists and educators who are sensitive to their students' or clients' needs and the needs of society. In her book, Family Insights Through the Short Story, educator Rose Somerville vigorously espouses the use of imaginative literature in the study of family life. Moreover, she specifically advocates the use of literature as a tool for educating students on the elderly, when, in one of her chapters, she discusses works of short fiction that can help increase students' understanding of aging family members' problems and needs. Like Somerville, the renowned gerontologist, Robert Butler, also recognizes that "the arts are an important way of illuminating old age." Yet he laments the sparcity of "novels, poems, movies or other art forms in Western Civilization that deal with older persons as central subjects" and notes that "the old, if depicted at all, usually play supporting and stereotyped roles."[1] While no one would probably disagree with Butler that realistic literary studies of the aged are difficult to find,

[1] Why Survive? Being Old in America, p. 411.

there do exist a sizeable number of literary works whose fully developed heroes and heroines are elderly people engaged in a variety of struggles related to their aging. Furthermore, when gathered from the numerous anthologies in which they appear, these materials can provide the foundation for a thorough course exploring the aging process.

"Literary Explorations of Aging" consists of four basic units or phases, summarized as follows:

1. Definitions, Stereotypes and Societal Attitudes
2. Self-Image and Assessments of the Aging Individual
3. Family Relationships of the Elderly
4. Life Review and The Experience of Death

Commencing the course is a discussion of various definitions of aging and old age as well as society's stereotypes of old people. A slide presentation of advertisements and paintings depicting the elderly initiates an examination of both positive and negative stereotypes. In conjunction with this general exchange of views and definitions, students are encouraged to share their impressions regarding society's attitudes toward the old. Two contrasting poems by D.H. Lawrence, "Old People" and "Beautiful Old Age," can be highly effective in focusing students' attention on these attitudes.

The remainder of the course's initial unit revolves around fiction that also emphasizes societal attitudes toward the elderly and specifically what Butler calls "Ageism," the discrimination against the old as a stigmatized group.[2] Through following closely the fortunes of old people and identifying or

[2] Why Survive? pp. 11-12

disagreeing with the various young people in these works, students examine their own assumptions regarding old age. Moreover, through discussing these works in class, students have an opportunity to test their own reactions and assumptions against those of their classmates and teacher.

All the works selected for this part of unit one deal with the young or middle-aged person's insensitivity to the loneliness, poverty, or loss of status that attends old age and with the younger person's or society's failure to conceive of an old person as fully human. While several of these works highlight the psychological space between the young and the old, others focus on specific social issues directly related to discriminatory attitudes toward the elderly. For example, Zugsmith's story, The Three Veterans," raises the issue of the medical profession's treatment of the older patient in our society, while Crane's "A Detail" and Lessing's "An Old Woman And Her Cat" poignantly reveal how an old person's options regarding employment and housing arrangements are affected by societal attitudes.

While the emphasis in the first unit is primarily sociological, the focus in Unit Two is psychological, for the works comprising this second unit disclose the aging individual's interior life and depict men and women assessing themselves in their new life stage or attempting to adjust to changes brought on by their aging. By connecting the substance of units one and two, students can begin to see how society's attitudes influence the old person's view of self. Through the works read for this phase, students have a rare opportunity

to discover the intimate thoughts of an old person and are able to evaluate a variety of reactions to the aging process.

It seems appropriate to introduce this psychological phase with literature depicting characters who examine, in general terms, the implications of being old and draw a variety of conclusions regarding the nature of old age. Including both brief poetic self-explorations and the more extensive self-assessments found in fictional pieces, these introductory materials reflect a wide range of attitudes and tones in order to reinforce the idea that old or aging people are individuals comprising a diverse population. For example, the positive speakers who affirm old age in such works as Baker's poem, "Let Me Grow Lovely" and Welty's story, "A Worn Path," could be set in contrast to those gloomy speakers who paint dismal pictures of old age in poems like Arnold's "Growing Old." In a similar manner, students can profit from reading in pairs such obviously contrasting poems as Kinsella's "Mirror in February" and the anonymous "Now I Am Old," for while the persona of the former mourns his physical deterioration, the latter's persona accepts the limitations of his old age and retirement with humor and good grace.

In addition to exploring reactions to the aging process itself, this "self-assessment" unit of the course includes works which focus on the emotional needs of elderly persons involved in a variety of situations. For example, there are a number of literary works revealing the personal reactions of elderly men who, in their fervor for self-rejunenation, are hopelessly drawn to young, attractive women. Also, there

are several works exploring old men's psychological adjustment to the concept as well as the everyday realities of retirement. Since readily accessible works on the above subjects do not contain female protagonists, it is a good idea to examine in classroom discussions, the needs and problems of elderly women in these same kinds of romantic and retirement situations.

In dealing with stereotypes, society's attitudes toward aging, and the old person's self-assessments, the course's first two units touch upon the issue of role change or loss; however, Unit Three focuses entirely on this all-important aspect of old age by examining the old person in his or her roles within the family unit. The material chosen for this unit, psychological as well as sociological in perspective, introduces students to elderly characters who are spouses, widows, widowers, grandparents, and parents of adult offspring. Here, students become acquainted with elderly family members who are adapting to new roles, suffering from role loss or modifying existing roles. Moreover, in this unit, students have a chance to examine the effect that the elderly person's behavior has on younger family members, at times changing their roles as well.

Since some of the most difficult and emotion-laden challenges facing families involve the relationship between aging parents and their middle-aged offspring, the first half of Unit Three deals with several dimensions of this relationship. One such dimension involves what has been called role reversal. When parents become old and their offspring reach adulthood, the parents often find themselves in a dependent, child-like

position. For parents who lack adequate financial resources, this dependency may be almost complete. However, even when not forced into economic dependency, old mothers or fathers often discover that they are becoming more and more emotionally dependent on their children and feel they must decide how much independence they wish to retain. Also, elderly parents often need to decide how much of their parenting function they will relinquish as the years go by or how accepting they will be of their offspring's values when these differ sharply from their own. Moreover, in facing the above situations, elderly parents are ultimately affected by the kind of relationship they have established with their children in the past.

Through studying materials that elicit discussions of the above issues, students become aware of the social and psychological pressures that help to determine the relationship between middle-aged and elderly adults. For the college student who recognizes, in the fictitious characters, his or her own parents and grandparents, a deeper understanding of a personal family situation is likely to result.

In addition to focusing on the old person as parent, students take a careful look, in Unit Three, at the marital relationships of the elderly. As they read such works as Lardner's "The Golden Honeymoon" and Cavanaugh's poem, "Apartment Four Upstairs," students examine some of the unique problems, needs, and joys elderly people experience in their marriages while also discovering that the marriages of old couples have a great deal in common with those of younger couples. In contrast to these portraits of spouses fortunate

enough to grow old together are the fictional widows and widowers whose stories help acquaint students with the adjustment process and the normal reactions of sorrow, anger, despair, and denial that surviving spouses experience.

From an examination of the elderly spouse's grieving process, students move on, in the final unit, to an exploration of the grief or acceptance that the old person experiences in facing his own death. In the course's final unit, we look at old age as a concluding stage of life. The old people students read about in the semester's final weeks are aware of their own finitude and are experiencing a personal sense of their entire life cycle. They are going through what Butler terms "life review," the "progressive return to consciousness of past experiences" as well as the surveying and reintegration of past unresolved conflicts.[3] This process of life review is succinctly outlined in a four-line poem called "Dying Speech of An Old Philosopher" by Walter Savage Landor. Taking the measure of his life, the aged philosopher conveys the following message:

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife:
Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art:
I warmed both hands before the fire of Life;
It sinks; and I am ready to depart.

Obviously, not all old people are as complacent about their lives or as accepting of their deaths as Landor's wise man. Therefore, in order to provide students with a well-balanced and realistic view of life's concluding stage, the works selected for Unit Four depict elderly individuals whose life

3 Why Survive? pp. 411-414.

review is negative as well as positive. While some of the fictional characters studied reflect on their lives with a sense of satisfaction, others feel their time is running out and view their lives as a series of missed opportunities.

After examining the life review process of fictional characters whose life styles and basic philosophies of life vary greatly, students are ready to tackle the question of what exactly constitutes a successful old age and to elaborate on their own criteria for successful aging. They are now ready to explore, in their final discussions, the question of how one's life style and fundamental view of life affect one's state of mind or attitude toward death, during old age. Attempting to deal with these questions helps to bring students closer to the realization that old age, as the concluding stage of one's life, forms a natural continuum following from one's youth and middle years. The old are not a separate species, different from ourselves; they are, in fact, what we will be if we survive our middle years.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SELECTED COURSE MATERIALS

- UNIT I -

D.H. Lawrence's "Old People"--presents an overview of society's negative attitude toward growing old. By describing the young person's frantic effort to remain young and the old person's resentment toward the young, the speaker of this poem neatly sums up the "cult" of youth worship that permeates society.

D.H. Lawrence's "Beautiful Old Age"--the speaker of this poem tells us what old age "ought" to be like. It ought to be

a time of contentment, peace and a mellow sense of fulfillment, in short, a stage of life that the young can view as a goal.

Ernest Hemingway's "A Clean Well-Lighted Place"--vividly shows how the young can easily fail to commiserate with the old. Although focusing on an elderly widower who spends every evening in a cafe, this story is also about the cafe's young and middle-aged waiters who disagree in their assessment of the old customer. Impatiently awaiting the cafe's closing, the young waiter sees the customer as a useless old drunk. But the more mature waiter understands the old man better because he too knows the fear of an empty and lonely life.

Eudora Welty's "A Visit of Charity"--depicts an adolescent girl caught up in a whirlwind of youthful activities and insensitive to the problems of the elderly. Obliged to visit an old age home as a part of her "campfire girl" duties, young Marian is at first repulsed and unable to conceive of the Home's residents as human. Yet, in spite of her initial resistance, she does recognize, in one brief reflective moment, the human anguish and tragic loneliness of one old woman she visits. For any students who have found themselves forced to interact with old people they did not know, Marian's experiences should provide a strong stimulus for classroom discussion.

Katharine Mansfield's "Miss Brill"--is a particularly powerful story because it provides a contrast between an elderly

spinster's sensitivity and perceptiveness and the callous stupidity of the young couple who sit next to her on a park bench. Almost certain to evoke a powerful emotional response, this story is a poignant reminder of the old person's humanness and the manner in which younger people tend to deny that humanness.

Leanne Zugsmith's "The Three Veterans"--deals with three elderly women who visit a doctor's clinic regularly. Filtered largely through the perceptions of a middle-aged nurse, this story illustrates the all too prevalent denial of the old person's uniqueness as a human being. To the nurse and doctors, the veterans are three of a kind--all meddlesome, foolish old ladies with varicose veins. Yet before the story ends, these women learn how to assert their human dignity and rebel against the stereotype imposed on them, by observing the actions of an angry young patient.

Stephen Crane's "A Detail"--is a brief recounting of an old lady's search for employment. Although Crane's old lady possesses a sense of her own dignity, she is not taken seriously by the young people around her. When she accosts two fashionable young women in order to inqure about a sewing position, her request meets with amusement and surprise, for the old woman's fragility and age seem to be incongruous with her need for gainful employment and her dignified, assertive manner.

Doris Lessing's "An Old Woman and Her Cat"--is a fully developed study of an old person's fight for survival. In her scathing satire on society's neglect of its elderly poor,

Lessing focuses on the actions and perceptions of a poor widow, Hetty Pennefather. As Hetty ages, she becomes more and more eccentric, at least to the respectable world outside her, but we, the readers, see that her "gypsy"-like and so called senile ways actually stem from her fiercely independent nature and the poverty of her surroundings. At the tragic close of this story, Hetty dies of hunger and pneumonia in a condemned building with her sole companion, a ragged tom cat. Although she has "chosen" this alternative by refusing to vegetate in a public home for the aged, we can't help seeing that she really has no choice at all, given her need for freedom, her love of her pet, and her lack of financial resources.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher's "Old Man Warner"--depicts an elderly farmer who is as fiercely independent as Hetty yet is more successful in maintaining his freedom in the face of societal pressures and prejudice. Because Old Man Warner lives alone in a farming settlement and refuses to live with his chidren or in a public institution, he is viewed by society as foolishly obstinate and cantankerous. Yet society's narrow view of him is in direct, ironic contrast to the sympathetic view of the young woman who narrates the story. To her, the ninety-three year old farmer's determination and ability to "do for himself" are admirable and unequivocally heroic.

- UNIT II -

Karle Wilson Baker's "Let Me Grow Lovely"--the speaker of this poem wishes to believe that old age can be equated with

beauty rather than ugliness. She points out that if so many objects in our lives, objects such as lace, ivory, silks, become more valuable and more lovely with the passage of time, why can't this be so for people as well?

Una W. Harsen's "Apology for Age"--For the speaker of this poem, the old, with their clear vision of an afterlife and hard-earned wisdom, play as vital a role in our world as the young.

Matthew Arnold's "Growing Old"--Through a series of rhetorical questions and assertions, the speaker of this poem dismally itemizes the many physical, emotional and spiritual deficiencies that old age brings.

Thomas Kinsella's "Mirror in February"--The aging speaker, shaving in front of his mirror on a dreary winter morning, reflects not only on his physical losses but on his spiritual disillusionment as well.

"Now I Am Old"--although the old man who speaks in this anonymous poem acknowledges his loss of physical energy and mental acumen, he is content to live in quiet retirement and can even view his old age with humor.

John Crowe Ransom's "Old Man Playing With Children"--In this poem, a spry old grandfather not only cheerfully accepts his old age, but in the poem's final stanza clearly points out that his self-image as an old person is much more positive than it was when he was caught up in the petty materialistic concerns of the middle-aged.

Eudora Welty's "A Worn Path"--Pursuing a journey to the town clinic, Phoenix Jackson evaluates her resources. As this

old Negress encounters numerous obstacles, she assesses her physical stamina, mental acumen, and courage, and remains proud in the knowledge that despite her age, she can still fulfill her nurturing role as her grandson's chief caretaker.

John Cheever's "The World of Apples"--focuses on an eighty-two year old poet laureate. Although still an active writer, Asa Bascombe begins to question the adequacy of his memory and his creative energies and to be troubled by his growing sensuality. With lustful feelings obsessing him, the elderly poet sets out on a pilgrimage to cleanse both his soul and his art. Through his rejuvenating experiences on this journey, he is restored to his best creative self and a dignified self-image befitting his age.

John Crowe Ranson's poem "Piazza Piece"--depicts an old man desperately trying to attract the attention and win the love of a young woman, who, involved in her own romantic dreams, is repulsed by the old man's advances.

Guy DeMaupassant's novel Strong as Death--provides an in-depth study of an aging painter's desire to renew his sources of passion and creativity through union with his mistress's teenaged daughter.

Bernard Malamud's story "In Retirement"--reveals the intimate thoughts and feelings of Simon Morris, a recently retired physician and widower of sixty-six. Suffering from loneliness and boredom, Simon allows his imagination to deceive him. He conjures up images of a romantic

involvement with an attractive young woman who doesn't even know he exists. While "In Retirement," like the two previous works, raises the often ignored issue of the aging individual's sexual and romantic needs, it also focuses on the common losses and problems of the retiree.

Farrell's "The Old Timer"--is another story focusing on the retirement experience and along with Malamud's tale, can help students realize what retirement can be like if one is not psychologically prepared for it. "The Old Timer" consists of portraits of men who, after giving the best years of their lives to their employers, are left with nothingness when they retire. The narrator of these portraits is an aging man not far from retirement himself, and as the story progresses, it becomes increasingly apparent that he is suffering anxiety over his own future. Realizing what the "old-timers" have gone through, the narrator vows at the end of his story not to make his job his whole life and prays that he will never be caught in that limbo between being too old to work and too young to die.

- UNIT III -

Honore de Balzac's Pere Goriot--portrays an aged man victimized by his own obsessive fathering. After years of self-deception, Goriot is forced to recognize the ingratitude of his two daughters and realize that paternal over-indulgence and the showering of material goods on one's children does not guarantee their filial affection in one's old age. Balzac's tragic novel raises several

crucial questions related to both filial and parental responsibility.

Dorothy Parker's "The Wonderful Old Gentleman"--provides a meaningful contrast to Balzac's novel, for while Parker's aged parent is also the father of two daughters, he is a very stingy, unsympathetic character whom we never even meet. With her characteristically ironic style, Parker paints the picture of a selfish, demanding old man through the comments and perceptions of his two middle-aged daughters. Although we never meet the old man, his presence dominates the story, and the problems he creates as a boarder in the home of one of his daughters are excellent topics for discussion.

"I Never Sang For My Father" (film based on play by Robert Anderson)--Although not focusing in particular on the old parent's struggle, this film provides an indepth study of a complicated relationship between an elderly father and his adult son. A primary lesson to be learned from viewing this film is that the neurotic patterns characterizing parent-child relationships can endure throughout the years, often creating crises when the parents are old. Here, we meet a father who is unable to relinquish or modify his critical parent role even when he becomes dependent on his son. We also closely follow the son as he responds to his father's attempts at manipulation and his own sense of guilt. Not only does this film clearly delineate the situation of role reversal that so often takes place between old parents and middle-aged

children, but it also encourages its viewers to explore the difference between normal filial devotion and excessive self-sacrifice.

Edna Ferber's "Old Man Minick"--focuses on the innermost thoughts and feelings of an aged father. Ferber invites us to commiserate with Minick as he tries to adjust to a life of dependency with his son and daughter-in-law, before deciding he must strike out on his own. Minick's choice to dwell independently in a "Home for Aged Gentlemen" is based on his awareness that interaction with his peer group adds to his self-esteem and gives meaning to his life.

Edna Ferber's "The Sudden Sixties" and Willa Cather's "Old Mrs. Harris"--contain two very different views of aging mothers. Students can profit from reading these two works together for they provide a significant contrast in maternal attitudes. Both Hannah Winter in "The Sudden Sixties" and Mrs. Harris are widows who are attached to their children and grandchildren. Yet while Mrs. Harris lives like a servant with her daughter's family, sacrificing without question her own needs and independence, Hannah lives on her own and experiences a great deal of conflict between her desire for relaxation and peer companionship and her feeling of obligation toward her daughter and grandchildren.

Ring Lardner's "The Golden Honeymoon"--Narrated by the spirited husband, Charlie, this story provides a detailed as well as humorous picture of a marital relationship

characterized by habits of honest affection and harmless bickering. Yet, even though Charlie and his wife Lucy are so comfortable with one another after fifty years of marriage, they still react like jealous young lovers when they run into Lucy's old flame and his wife.

James Cavanaugh's "Apartment Four Upstairs,"--a much more succinct account of a marital relationship than Lardner's story, this poem portrays an old couple who, in spite of their age and debilitation, still share a relationship marked by lively affection and sexual feelings. Short as it is, this poem effectively challenges the narrow but commonly held view that old people are sexless or ought to be.

Theodore Dreiser's "The Lost Phoebe"--recounts the story of a widower who cannot accept his wife's death after forty-eight years of a loving marriage. Avoiding a grieving process which would be too painful, Henry Reifsneider convinces himself that his wife is still alive and journeys obsessively to find her until he meets his own death. Although perhaps extreme in his reaction, the widower in "The Lost Phoebe" is not unlike many elderly people who lose a beloved spouse.

- UNIT IV -

Luigi Forni's "Peace for Geretiello"--Although the seventy-six year old Geretiello does not know that he is living his last day, he feels he is at a concluding stage of his life and spends his day examining his past, present, and future. Longing for the peace and dignity of retirement,

Geretiello is bitter over the fact that he still must work for the dowry of his seventh daughter. Not only does he regret the slavishness of his lifetime occupation as a beach attendant, but he regrets not having a son to lighten his financial burden and become the free man he himself has not been.

Frieda Arkin's "The Light of the Sea"--Like Geretiello's bitterness, the dissatisfaction Jessica Packard experiences in this story stems from her fear of oblivion and her sense that her life has been wasted. Jessica's life review is characterized by anguish over the disappearance of her family line, suppressed anger over the infidelity of a husband who is long dead, bitterness over her two nephews' neglect, and overwhelming sadness over the death of her only son.

Katherine Anne Porter's "The Jilting of Granny Weatherall"--focuses on the actual death experience of an eighty year old woman and the negative life review that renders this experience all the more painful. While Granny can experience some pride in having kept a well-run house, having married a good man and having raised normal, healthy children, she feels she has missed something very important in her life. Moreover, her sense of incompleteness is accentuated by the fact that in her dying moments she is compelled to relive the jilting she experienced many years ago.

Dorothy Parker's "Little Old Lady in Lavender Silk"--the elderly lady in this poem does not refer to her death

but does review her past life in positive terms. She half facetiously issues a statement to the world summing up her life. Despite some bitter experiences and heartbreaks in past love relationships, she does not regret any of her decisions and glibly conveys her attitude in the phrase, "There was nothing more fun than a man!"

Robert Frost's "A Record Stride"--the positive life review of the old man speaking this poem centers around a faithful pair of old shoes. The speaker's pride in these "past-active shoes" is in fact his pride in himself and his satifaction with his lifetime adventures and accomplishments.

Willa Cather's "Neighbour Rosicky"--Although Anton Rosicky knows he is not far from death, he retains his cheerful outlook and thinks of death as the inevitable conclusion to a life well-lived. As Rosicky sits remembering his past, he is thankful that he chose farm land and open spaces over crowded and corrupting city streets. He is also content in the knowledge that he is leaving a valuable legacy to the family he loves so well.

Dorothy Canfield Fisher's "The Heyday of the Blood"--The hero of this story, Gran'ther Pendleton, does not shrink from the reality of his own death because he has lived his life fully. Although eighty-eight and ailing, Gran'ther continues to enjoy his life with gusto, and his trip to the county fair with the great grandson who narrates the story is symbolic of his basic attitude toward life, summed up in the words, "Live while you live, and then

die and be done with!"

Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Ulysses," lines 1-32--In these lines, the aged adventurer reviews his accomplishments and comes to the conclusion that for him an active life until death is the only answer. Ulysses' words provide a clear illustration of one current popular theory of healthy aging. Proponents of this "activity theory of aging" maintain that continuation of the activity level and life style of one's middle years constitutes successful aging.

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USING LITERATURE TO TEACH ENERGY-RELATED SOCIAL PROBLEMS

by Darryl Hattenhauer

Civilization depends on energy use, and the farther along a society is on the scale from hunting and gathering, to agriculture, to industrialism, to post-industrialism, then the higher will be that society's energy use. If art imitates life and life depends on energy, then art implicitly tells us about the social factors involved in energy use. This essay discusses some of these social factors that accompany the getting and spending of energy. The primary energy exchange is in nature, where the sun and earth interact to determine climate and natural resources, the basis of human environment. Obviously nature is one of the most common subjects of art, and environment one of the major energy issues. That considerations of nature lead also to considerations of politics, religion, economics, and education can be seen in American literature, where the myth of a new world and virgin land has been accompanied by America's own versions of the universal conflicts between authority and egalitarianism, upward mobility and stability, voluntarism and regulation, church and state, progress and timelessness, affluence and frugality, machine and garden, industrialism and agriculture, free market and planning, centralization and decentralization, ecology and growth. So on the one hand, this essay only re-plows old ground. But there are no new frontiers, no new world, in the ecological sense that we've always tilled the same earth and will continue to live or die by that limitation, and in the archetypal sense that there is nothing

new under the sun.

But there may be rebirth. This essay returns to the organic, pre-modern view that humans have one environment and that one of our tools for living in it is art. The art form discussed here is literature. Since this piece takes up the theme of the social issues raised by the energy crisis, the literature discussed is organized chronologically as a reflection of the growth of energy use. In drawing from these suggestions on using literature to explore energy related issues, you could include as much as you like about the elements of literature, although this essay stops short of such considerations.

Today's students are possibly the first generation to understand that progress can be regressive. What they don't understand is not only that this notion has been suggested repeatedly for centuries, but also that the doubters of science and technology were conservatives. The Faust legend is a good place to start exploring the counter-progressive tradition, and Marlowe's play may be the best version. Ask the students to consider whether some matters should be known by none, some, or all of the people. Would humankind be better off without the discovery of nuclear power? Would we be better off if only a few knew of it? If all should know, should all have access to nuclear technology? Doesn't widespread access as a means to controlling a dangerous technology lead to its misuse? Doesn't limited access? Progressives and optimists need to ponder such ironies if they are to realize that all avenues might lead to a very dead end.

Frankenstein is a good novel to continue with. As in the

legend of Faust, the notion of original sin, a concept long out of fashion with progressives, suggests limits to progress. If students claim that all knowledge is good and only the misapplication of it is bad, let them consider how to stop the misapplication. Once an Einstein appears, can a Teller be far behind? In this context, the proponents of the counter-reformation seem not perverse but wise. But even if we can sympathize with the efforts to bury the forbidden fruit of Galileo, should we try to prevent humans from thinking? And how accomplish such an end? Frankenstein shows how the innocent, well-intentioned scientist can use his creations, his technology, as a scapegoat to deflect criticism from his innate depravity. Victor sublimates his evil side into his doppelganger, who must absorb the punishment, as if it's not the theory or scientist that's at fault, but only a mistake in the results, the results being something that doesn't count. But if the monster and technology are evil, it's only because humans are. A machine is neutral. It performs only what humans have it do (so far). Guns don't kill people, people kill people, but the more guns you have, the more corpses.

Another theme in Frankenstein relevant to our energy-intensive, high-technology affluence is our self-deification. We perform tasks previously reserved for God. Obviously technological advances prevent human suffering in the short run. But the implications for the long run, while only suggested in Frankenstein, are unmistakable in Hawthorne's "The Celestial Railroad," a redux of John Bunyan's "A Pilgrim's Progress." In this nineteenth-century tale, only

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the old-fashioned Christians still walk from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City; the moderns ride on a train, their guide a Mr. Smooth-it-away. The Hill of Difficulty has been defeated with a tunnel; the Valley of the Shadow of Death is illumined with gas lamps. In Vanity Fair, the modern city on a hill, liberal theology reigns. As the passengers shift from train to ferry to finish the trip, Mr. Smooth-it-away is revealed as the devil. In his Civilizing the Machine, John F. Kasson concludes that in this tale, "the road to hell is paved with good inventions." (New York: Penguin, 1976, p. 49).

The glorification of the quintessential machine, the train, as a miraculous harnessing of energy for extending the geographic and economic range of human dominance and ease is the theme of Walt Whitman's "To a Locomotive in Winter," which appears in Leaves of Grass. We often regard Whitman as the apex of romantic individualism, though as such he is perhaps a vortex. Here he clebrates the "ponderous," "convulsive," "throbbing," "swelling," "protruding," "fierce," and "lawless" locomotive--this "emblem of motion and power." Such sentiment sounds like an ode to John Wayne rocketing through an Indian village.

For a tale to be trusted, try Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. Recalling the doppelganger in Frankenstein, A Connecticut Yankee implicitly compares Hank and Merlin, and Hank the technocrat comes off as just a more effective magician, though an equally evil one. (However, whereas Victor is knowledgable about theory yet bungles the application, Hank is a very effective ignoramus.) Hank

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Cosponsored by the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English

The new Spring Convention is built around three program strands, one for each of the instructional levels represented in the Convention audience: elementary, secondary, and college. The college strand focuses on the concerns of teacher education programs but also includes sessions sponsored by the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English on teaching composition and literature in college.

Each of the parallel program strands extends over eleven time periods, Thursday morning (April 15) through Saturday afternoon (April 17). At any given hour, registrants can choose among six to eight sessions aimed at their own teaching level, or they can attend any of the sessions in the other strands. Sessions on as many as seventeen different topics take place at the same hour.

In addition to over 150 concurrent sessions, the Spring Convention features guest speakers at three luncheons and two general sessions. These events are scheduled so that registrants may attend all of them, regardless of program strand.

CONVENTION TIMETABLE

Thursday, April 15

9:00 a.m. - Noon	Concurrent Sessions and Half-day Workshops
12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.	Annual Luncheon, Conference on English Education
1:15 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions and Half-day Workshops
8:00 p.m.	Opening General Session

Friday, April 16

8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Roundtable Discussion Breakfast
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Concurrent Sessions
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Elementary Section Luncheon
12:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Annual Business Meeting, Minnesota Council of Teachers of English
2:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	Annual Business Meeting, Conference on English Education
3:45 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Secondary Section General Session

Saturday, April 17

8:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	Elementary Section General Session
8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Concurrent Sessions and Half-day Workshops
Noon - 2:00 p.m.	Secondary Section Luncheon
1:00 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.	Concurrent Sessions

Program Chair: Mary Jane Hanson, MCTE Vice President
Minneapolis Public Schools

Local Arrangements Chair: Shirley Vaux
Valley View Junior High, Edina, MN

- - - CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS - - -

As hosts for the Spring Convention, MCTE and the Local Committee are planning various tours, parties, and special events for our visiting colleagues. One event, "An Evening Out With A Twin Citian," needs volunteers willing to provide escort and transportation to small groups for a dinner or evening out on Friday night, April 16. If you could help and wish more information, please call or write Shirley Vaux, 5805 Arbour Avenue, Edina, MN 55436. Phone: 929-4562

vacillates between original sin and environmental determinism, between nature and nurture--innate depravity and the possibility of social regeneration. This vacillation provides a good opportunity to discuss the limits of education as well as the role of the masses and elites. If humans are innately depraved, what can education accomplish? If we are improvable, aren't some people better at some things than others? If so, shouldn't experts have more power than others? What constitutes an expert?

Another issue implicit in A Connecticut Yankee has direct bearing on the energy crisis: the relationship of church and state. Under our present Secretary of the Interior, our national policy is not to conserve energy and natural resources, but to use them faster--this in the name of having the republic follow God's plan. Scholars in many fields show that the state has become sanctified into a "public religion" or "civil religion," and that theology has been debased into little more than wishful thinking and salesmanship in support of ever-increasing energy-intensive production and consumption. You might suggest the inadequacies of a Christian tradition which asserts that the material world is profane, that the earth--in the mind of one who truly understands this hostility for nature, James Watt--is only so much fodder to use before the fiery end, a prophecy lots of us seem to be itching for lately.

In A Connecticut Yankee, then, progress is explicitly stripped down to one element: affluence. Hank More Gun, the prophet of upward mobility through industrial technology, even if we have to fight for it, expresses one of his nation's

central assumptions:

> There are written laws--they perish; but there are also unwritten laws--they are eternal. Take the unwritten law of wages: it says they've got to advance, little by little, straight through the centuries. (New York: Washington Square Press, 1964, p. 263).

A precursor of the taxpayer's revolt (which as of this writing is taking food from children to finance increasing affluence and economic growth) Hank opposes the progressive income tax; he believes a flat percentage--what we now call "across the board"--is the ultimate fairness. Such increasing expectation is, of course, present in Hawthorne's allegory criticizing his own age, but vulgarity of affluence was ubiquitous in the Gilded Age. After the ignoble end in Faust, Frankenstein, "The Celestial Railroad," and A Connecticut Yankee, you can set the stage for later discussion of entropy and the limits of growth.

A final point about A Connecticut Yankee is Twain's suggestion that how one arranges perception--the structuring of what we call facts--is more important than the facts, can hide or distort the facts: "You can't depend on your eyes when your imagination is out of focus." (Washington Square Press edition, 1964, p. 351). Students need to know that science has its own artifice and fiction, that the scientific method does not shed the scales of superstition and tradition, does not come face to face with just the facts. Rather, science invests the same currency of hope and fear, intelligence and error in the balancing act of turning experience into findings. In addition, the alleged objectivity of science is

negated by the aesthetics of science--the penchant for simplicity, elegance, and parsimony. Like the rest of us, scientists track in pollen from their own flower arranging.

One of science's greatest arrangements of steel into cultural symbol is the Brooklyn Bridge. You can excerpt "Atlantis" from Hart Crane's The Bridge and read it while showing slides or prints of Joseph Stella's painting "The Bridge," which likens Brooklyn Bridge to a cathedral, thereby evoking, like the Crane poem, the sanctification of technology. You might also want to discuss the theme of timelessness, which is implicit in Crane, implicit in all the material we've covered, and according to David Noble in The Eternal Adam in the New World Garden, the central myth of American culture. This theme of timelessness can provide both a review and a new application of the works already read. The pursuit of timelessness is a universal tendency that is particularly strong in America, where, with a faustian expenditure of energy, a "new world" was supposed to allow Europeans to escape the limits and pain that had always plagued humans since the fall. History and time, then, are normally a struggle, but the norm would be transcended in the "new world." The struggle and limits were supposedly left behind in time and history after the new man, the American Adam, escaped into timeless, endless felicity and abundance.

Also of interest for its view of the twenties is Sinclair Lewis' Babbitt. This story about the post-progressive return to normalcy in the twenties, with the revitalization of American mission and exceptionalism, deregulation, private

enterprise, individual initiative, and upward mobility speaks to our present day revitalization of rugged individualism and expansion in perhaps the only appropriate mode--comedy. Like Hank Morgan, George Babbitt's attempts to further the American Way are contradictory. His desire to crack down on undesirables in the name of tradition, law, and authority violates the Constitution. And despite his professed egalitarianism, he is a social-climbing elitist, yet castigates the rich as "plutes." Also, he wants his son to succeed but not excell, to be a professional but not an intellectual. Similarly, he believes in laissez faire when it comes to "hand outs," but favors subsidies to business. Amidst all of this contradiction, he is consistent; his choices are always determined by his self-interest.

One of the greatest symbols of timeless felicity, energy, and production is the machine. Eugene O'Neill's "The Dynamo" presents the post-World-War-One questioning of the machine as progress. The protagonist, ridden by dirt fantasies and guilt as a result of his success-oriented parents, confuses the dynamo with both God and his mother. In the Byzantine conclusion, the protagonist shoots his addled girlfriend to protect his purity and, trying to rejoin his mother and the godhead, leaps to his death in the dynamo. Elmer Rice's "The Adding Machine" is another example of the reaction against machines during the interwar era. In this play, the protagonist loses his mechanical job--one that he hates but desperately needs--due to automation, and finally kills his boss.

This view of the machine continues in Robert Frost's poem "The Egg and the Machine," which contrasts with the Whitman poem. In Frost, the narrator resents the deification of the machine: "He railed against the gods in the machine." (The Complete Poems of Robert Frost. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1949, p. 349). But the narrator's response is impotent and destructive. He considers throwing a turtle egg at the engine, an act that would only reduce the number of the train's opposite, the leisurely turtle.

Time and trains are also the subject of Ray Bradbury's short story "The Dragon." What at first seems like two cowboys riding the range is really two knights hunting a dragon. But the dragon, it turns out, is a railroad train. The two engineers on the train callously run over the knights, who are the engineers' alter egos. The result of energy-intensive industrial technology, then, is self-destruction. The train becomes the archetypal evil to be slain by questing heroes. But in the end the dragon-evil is human, the engineers. This eternal struggle against eternal evil, a struggle that can be neither won nor given up, is what Noble calls the eternal Adam, which is the opposite of the American Adam, the symbol of the mistaken belief that we can, through progress, actually leave behind the mistakes of the past, the limits binding other cultures. The one knight who prophesies that they will fail to slay the dragon of evil, just as all of their predecessors have failed, exclaims, "On this moor is no Time, is only Forever." (in A Medicine for Melancholy. New York: Bantam edition, 1960, p. 8). He realizes too late that eternal limitation is the

human lot, that the eternal dream of heaven on earth, which we pursue in our secular paradise, should remain a dream but has not since the Renaissance and Reformation defined paradise as attainable in the city of man.

In the beginning of "The Sound of Thunder," another Bradbury story, there is "a sound like a gigantic bonfire burning all of time, all the years and all the parchment calendars, all the hours piled high and set aflame." (in Robert J. Gangewere, The Exploited Eden. New York: Harper & Row, 1972, p. 364; originally published in 1952). But the protagonist pays $10,000 to step out of time, age, and death and go back--in the ultimate technology, the time machine--to prehistoric time, when all was new. The promise is to reverse time, to achieve, in the phrase of that unappreciated wit, Henry Kissinger, a "world restored." (World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problem of Peace, 1912-1822. New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1973). In this reversal, everything would "fly back to seed, flee death, rush down to their beginnings, suns rise in western skies and set in glorious easts...." Yet ironically this flight from death is a flight to death, if all is "returning to the fresh death, the seed death, the green death, to the time before the beginning." (Ibid.) The burden of time in this story is that whatever the time travelers do in ancient times can change the course of history. Despite all precautions, a hunter steps on a butterfly, and the ecological reaction up the food chain into human history brings dictatorship. Also implicit in this story is the issue of government regulation. It is only the

government, not private enterprise, that opposes such risky land use. And again we have the train as the symbol of energy-intensive progress. The dying dynosaur sounds like a "wrecked locomotive," suggesting that human depravity will destroy industrial civilization. (p. 369).

The fiction of Kurt Vonnegut, of course, is a mine of dystopian warnings about the high-energy, high-technology future. Cat's Cradle suggests that the scientific method does not so much extrapolate conclusions as impose them on the facts. But Player Piano is perhaps more useful for social issues exacerbated by the energy crisis. It attacks the myth that energy-intensive affluence can lead to the good life, that the "condition of man improves in direct ratio to the energy and devices for using energy put at his disposal." (New York: Dell, 1974, p. 284; originally published in 1952). As for authority, the engineering elite is lampooned, but so are the masses. The people first elevate a half-wit screen personality to the presidency, and then foment a revolution to depose him. And after destroying the industry, technology, and manufacturing that oppresses them, they cheer when they are able to fix a soft-drink machine. As in A Connecticut Yankee and Babbitt, the professionals become increasingly neurotic under the demands of technology. Ed Finnerty could have been an artist, writer, or architect, but was obliged to become a technocrat. As a result, he becomes a suicidal alcoholic. And the confusion of secular and sacred are here too. For example, Mr. Kroner believes there is no higher calling than engineering and management. Also here is the

full bloom of narcissism, the fruit of self-reliance devolved to self-interest. For example, the protagonist's wife can't understand abstractions without reducing them to terms of her intimates and herself.

The Crying of Lot 49 by Thomas Pynchon, Hawthorne's distant relative, is the most difficult work discussed here, but not so difficult. After all, it was popular campus reading a decade ago, and can be made more manageable if you hand out a plot summary and note where in the text Pynchon provides the same. If we are choking on the excess of wealth, we are doing the same on the excess of information. The theory of Maxwell's demon is an information theory that emphasizes not the accretion of data but the arrangement of it. Oedipa's problem is that she has data without arrangement, facts without artifice. She must arrange her facts in a way consonant with them, but there are several ways to do that. Her hope for explanation comes from art--the oracular painting in which she sees herself, and the play in which she sees history and the trystero. In the setting of Lot 49, even urban planning, or the lack of it, corresponds to the imagination. The urban landscape in this novel is a jungle of hotels, freeways, suburbs--less a place for humans than "a grouping of concepts." The facts of this man-made environment, then, are a projection of the imagination, and the imagination is out of focus. The professionals, no longer just bumbling Babbitts, are gone to alienated psychopaths shooting up the neighborhood and lusting after teeny-boppers. The masses fare no better. Their cars are "projections" of themselves.

(Bantam edition, 1967, p. 7; originally published 1966). Also in Lot 49, death and the past continue to influence the present. A dead man's will sets the whole narration in motion--provides the energy. And the characters are playing out the tradition of an underground mail system that originated in medieval times.

For essays, Walden is useful, as is Joseph Wood Krutch's "Conservation Is Not Enough." But students are tempted to find the appreciation of wilderness to be a sentimental luxury that must yield to the need for more energy. Instead, you can use an essay which explains that according to the laws of physics, especially entropy, exponential growth must stop; there are physical limits to affluence. Such chapter can be found in many energy texts, but my favorite is "Limits" from Energy: Sources, Use, and Role in Human Affairs by Carol and John Steinhart. (Belmont, Ca: Wadsworth, 1974). It explains clearly the physical limits to growth, and is a good middle style prose model. For a useful model of more academic prose, see John William Ward's "The Meaning of Lindbergh's Flight" (in Joseph J. Kwiat and Mary C. Turpie, Studies in American Culture. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1960). Ward shows that Lindbergh symbolized a joining of attributes that we fear are irreparably sundered: the individual and the teamworker, the simple and the complex, old and new, rural and urban, agriculture and technology, tradition and progress. With Lindbergh we could have it both ways. In the ever-increasing effort to apply technology and energy to transportation, we could preserve the old without succumbing to the sins of the new. And finally, for a model of informal prose, see Wendell Berry's long essay The Unsettling

of America (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1977). Discussing the relationship of agriculture to energy, technology, and culture, Berry establishes the interconnections of land use, affluence, and alienation, showing the correlations between land exploitation and human exploitation, even in male-female relationships.

THE REFUGEE STUDENT -- BLESSING OR BOTHER?

by Nancy Ward

Southeast Asia, Russia, Iran, Korea -- the refugees keep coming. Maybe there are only one or two in your district, or perhaps there are too many and the names are too "funny" for any individual identity to be recognized. What is your reaction when you are assigned a non-English speaking student in your class? If you are asked first, is your response negative? A reluctant "Yes?" If it is less than an enthusiastic "Yessirree!", you are missing out on an opportunity.

Foreign students threaten your free time, the effectiveness of your standard curriculum, the use of the dependable notes you made last year, and in the midst of all this, they may well make a shambles of your grouping techniques. I propose that they also bring in some healthy fresh air of reality and relevance -- it's exciting to work with people for whom English is a survival skill rather than a required subject that has little to do with "real" life. The secret is to sharpen your communication skills so that the new English-speaker is included a maximum amount of

the time. More of your American English-speaking students will be involved in the class, too. Effective communication includes using a vocabulary that the entire class understands, purposely introducing new words and defining them as you speak, writing page numbers on the board along with simple directions to ensure that the assignment is precise and clear. Facing the class, speaking clearly, being open to questions, encouraging clarity of organization and content are common-sense techniques for any teacher. These and other skills are sharpened when you are aware that one or more of your students requires these techniques to participate successfully in the class.

Our most basic, and some would argue, most effective, form of communication is body language. When some portion of the students depends heavily on body language, the teacher has an opportunity to practice and develop positive, encouraging, discipline--effective, physical communication.

The reality of the current world situation that foreign students bring with them is an excellent opportunity to enrich your curriculum. Our students, American and foreign, must be educated to be world citizens. Our world is too small, communication is too rapid, the economics of various countries are too interrelated for responsible teachers to encourage narrow provincialism. Basic ideas of written communication, literature as an expression of culture, the universality of common human experiences, grammar as a basic structure are all enhanced by a comparative study of English and another language.

If you are fortunate enough to have a foreign student in your class, take some time to get to know that student. Don't

let the lack of a common language interfere with communication--you'd be surprised at how much information and good feeling can flow back and forth in the midst of many smiles and nods. Your perspective will be broadened, too. When a wealthy Jewish person was persecuted in Iran, my Iranian student, who had never heard of Catholicism or Protestantism, told me about it with tears in her eyes. When the Mayor of Guatemala City was shot, I felt concern for my two Guatemalan students who might have to go back to that kind of danger. When someone mentioned Holland, I remembered conversations with two charming little Dutch girls. And when someone makes a slighting remark about Asian refugees, I think of several Cambodians who have lost family, country, homes, and, since 1975, education -- who are coming into high school classes with only two or three years of formal education behind them and with years of physical and emotional deprivation, who are studying algebra and English and even science -- and who are making it.

Grasp an opportunity to toss out old, rigid ideas of how your presentation must be given. Bend your curriculum to include fresh new insights. Encourage peer tutoring, small group discussion, illustrations to explain plots, and comparative language study to broaden your students' awareness of the basic structure of language. Most of all, expand your own awareness of the plurality of cultures that enriches "good old U.S.A." and blesses us with diversity and complexity.

"We have a new foreign student. Is placement in your class all right?"

"Yessirree! With pleasure!"

SELECTED TOPICS

Those interested in the preparation of teachers of English and the language arts in elementary and secondary schools can choose eleven sessions to attend from among the more than 150 sessions offered. Over 50 of those sessions deal with preservice or inservice teacher preparation. Among the subjects to be discussed are those listed below.

Thursday

Research in Language
Professional Education for English/Language Arts Teachers
Preservice English Education
English Education and the Future
Making the English Teacher Computer-Literate
Improving Composition in the Secondary School: A Practical Workshop
Research in Literature
Inservice Training for Writing Teachers
Bringing Together Reading and Writing
Abstraction: Basis for Planning Learning Activities in the Language Arts
Exploring Vocabulary Development

Friday

Training Future Teachers of Writing
The Moral Majority
Writing as Learning
The Spelling Problem
Teacher Response to Student Writing
Multicultural Education and the Language Arts Program
Teaching ESL K-12: What, Why, How
Sociolinguistics and Reading
Computer-Assisted Language Instruction
Creative Writing and Literature

Saturday

Teaching Styles and Human Relations Skills
Assessing and Remediating Communication Skills of Prospective Teachers
Perspectives on Student Writing
Implementing Listening and Study Skills Programs

Reading and Writing Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress
Evaluation of Inservice Training for Writing Teachers
Writing and the Community
The Topical Approach to Teaching Literature
Speaking and Writing Apprehension
Language Arts Methods Course
Questions and the Teaching of Literature
Language and Learning Summer Institute
Composition and Film
Teaching Thematically
Research in Writing

Spring Convention

THE BEGINNING OF TALENT: CASE IN POINT

by Alice Glarden Brand

Writing as a way of learning has become a keystone of the profession. Georges Gusdorf, Benjamin Lee Whorf, Carl Rogers said it each in his own way. E.M. Forster said it best. It is the platform on which the interdisciplinary writing movement rests. It is a guiding principle for research in cognition, linguistics, and the humanistic psychologies. At the pedagogical level, the expression refers to the Brunerian discovery of the world through the structure of the items that constitute its business. In its existential sense, writing is one of the symbolic ways we try to render intelligible the meaning of life, the reason of death, the cycle of things, and the place of self in that cycle. This last became synonymous with the personal growth paradigm which in turn figured centrally in the Dartmouth conference and in the period of psychosocial enlightenment that followed and promoted my research.

Two years ago I wrote a book about using writing as a way of social and emotional learning. At the time my purpose was to make a case for using personal writing for personal growth. My work reported on a program that provided for such experiences. Eight secondary school students participated in a five-month, intensive personal writing program. After objective and naturalistic analyses, I concluded that three students resisted deep engagement in personal growth writing and five students experienced varying degrees of social and emotional enhancement through writing--two of whom exemplified the purposes of the

program. It helped them learn more about themselves, explore some life questions, solve some problems of daily living, and discharge some tensions. My book, Therapy in Writing, details this progress.

I never imagined that, by mere serendipity, the program would be delivered not of the therapeutically ready (in the holistic sense) or the therapeutically reluctant but of a third sort, Diane--the proverbial natural. Diane's writing was impressive in its honesty and detail, unmistakable in its elasticity and spirit. Why then did she not appear in the chapters of my book given over to individuals? The first and most obvious reason was space restrictions. The second was insufficient contrast. Diane's material did not provide as striking a transformation as the writings of the two students I did profile. Diane was not a student whose social and emotional development the program seemed to have much to do with. Diane was not a student whose fluency and felicity of language the program could take major credit for. It was as though she had been at the brink for years, already thinking about commonplace experiences in uncommon ways. The program merely gave her permission, gave her place.

Of course, maybe it was too early to tell; Diane still had a few more years in the system. Maybe her gift was more in managing to escape academic suffocation--a gift in itself, never mind the writing. It reminds me of a Picasso quotation: "Once I drew like Raphael. But it has taken me a whole life time to learn to draw like a child." We know the stage in the life cycle that Diane was then in. She was 14 years old and

writing appropriately like one. But one wonders why in the phylogeny of writing it seems that so many of us must pass through, as Shaugnessy states, a stage of formalese that echoes the bombastic styles of more experienced writers in order to acquire our own mature style. And once there, like Picasso, complex ideas may be expressed in more elemental terms. Must our expository selves first be pried away from our expressive selves in order to know the difference between the two? Must Diane's unabashed illuminations be abandoned somewhere along the academic line before they are restored later on (if at all)? Are we better writers for having gone through that stage? Or is our writing otherwise considered simplistic but not artful? One wonders if "English" is indeed is an institutional mandate, contrivance, or part of the of natural course of cognitive events.

In any case, Diane is a student who has not yet arrived at that stage. Those of us who have come full circle would do well to note her transparency, her forthright insights, the relaxed, natural style of her written voice.

Let me explain. Writers like Diane do not have to start reclaiming the parts of themselves that some of us were trained to deny. They are naive (or wise enough) to do writing as an egocentric enterprise in so far as their deep down knowing is the centrifugal center for everything else that occurs to them. They have a gift for saying, as they claim of poets, what most of us barely permit ourselves to think. Remember, it is not so much the informational content. It is not so much originality as it is bravery. Good writing is risky business.

Young writers like Diane have unusual access to themselves. Their writing actually produces ideas; and they are not afraid to declare them. They startle us with their observations. The writing simply delivers the goods.

So what, you may say, Diane is no different from my John, Debbie, or Carol. And I'm sure that is true. We have all had Dianes at one time or another in our careers. But we don't have enough of them. We don't have enough students that never stand in quite the same relationship to the world again once they have come to certain ideas, who sense the increase in themselves once they have said certain things. We don't have enough students who sense that they never knew more about what they were writing than at the moment they were writing it. We don't have enough students who sense that so much of experience is lost to them without such writing.

Yet good teachers are not interested in producing great writers. They are not expected to turn students into embryonic professional writers with unfailing fluency, disciplined thought, and a discriminating sense of style. But good teachers have an intuitive sense of what is quality writing. And the job of a teacher is to recognize promising work and keep it going.

So what I would like you to do first with Diane's work is enjoy it as you might a Peanuts' cartoon or a Zindel dialogue, an apprentice Woody Allen or Judith Viorst. Then I would like you to take Diane's work to your students and help them get acquainted with her. Say to them: "This is one way Diane knows herself and one way we can get to know her. Look at what we can learn about ourselves if we can say these things.

Imagine how we can think about other things if we can write these things about ourselves."

Let me tell you about Diane. She was a small, vivacious girl, a conscientious student, and an active member of the community. At the time I taught Diane, she was involved in her church and did volunteer work at a local nursing home through the Girl Scouts. It has been several years since I last saw Diane. I do not know what she is doing now, whether or not she is still writing, still fighting with her sister, or has grown any taller. I do, however, know some things we can learn from Diane that we should never allow the school system to deprive our writing of: its (1) emotionality, (2) honesty, (3) particularity, and (4) personal quality.

Emotionality

Promising writing is fueled by feeling. Diane was first among the program participants to verbalize the disparity between the happiness she thought she was supposed to feel and the anger that she actually felt. During opening sessions she seemed to have no trouble making midcourse corrections; happiness was in fact finding out how important it was to say what you meant to say and then saying it.

> Happiness is all sorts of things to me. I'm just going to tell you about things I like. Well, you already know I love backpacking and camping. I like outdoor things like sports. Soccer and swimming I like best. Happiness is also when you do something better than another person. I feel good all over and then do a bit better. To tell you the truth I'm sick of writing about things I like.

I wrote about these things in 5th, 6th, 7th grades and now I'm doing it in 8th. I'm not mad about you I couldv'e picked something else. I'm going to write about that thing I feel anger but/and often express. . . (whatever). When I'm mad and I yell a little bit, I take it out on my mom. She's a nice "kid". I guess she understands my problem and accepts it. When I'm mad I sometimes go to my room and listen to the radio and clean and when I'm mad and start cleaning theres no stopping me. I think I do this to get my mind off my anger. I really don't like being angry but sometimes its good to let your emotions out. If everybody in the world were never angry this world would be boring and less challenging in making your own life.

Unlike the above piece in which Diane addressed her anger almost proudly, she treated remorse with deference and confusion. In the passage that follows, Diane tracks the responses which trigger her distress and her writing. Her associations bring her to several frontiers. She talks about the indiscriminate suffering of cancer victims as well as of those close to them. She wonders about the constancy of friendship. She takes on the role of her friend, acknowledging what calls friendship into question, and then she reaffirms her loyalty. (She also mentions in passing the therapeutic benefits of her writing.) She is more subdued and clinical here. The emotional level is subtle but the tenor of her concern is unequivocal.

I got a stomach ache ever since this morning on the bus stop. Maybe because I'm upset. Today well, really this morning, my mom called up grandma. She found out that

Aunt Anne has cancer. It's all on her neck and shoulder. My mom was very upset I hope my Aunt doesn't have to suffer. Every one else has to suffer also but I don't want her to go through it all again. Her best friend died I think in 75 -no 76. Well, any way Mrs. Musto had cancer and suffered for three years. My mom didn't have the cancer but I know she suffered. It took her a long time to recuperate, I don't think she's ever going to get over it because I still can't. She was Barbara's mother. Barbara never talks about it. I wonder how she feels. She is still my best friend and not because I feel sorry for her. I've never written about this before. I don't know if it's good or bad for me. I could keep on writing about this forever. Maybe this could become a log. I'm going to write about it on white paper and see how it comes out.*

Honesty

As would be expected, the disquiet of adolescence often crystallizes around siblings. Over a three week period, Diane pursued a younger sister by correspondence--probably no better form to inspire authenticity. We see in Diane's word choices very specific adjustments for her reader. Diane spins a couple of metaphors, reminds herself that her sister may not understand, then follows with a brief explanation. She also refers to their mother in the familiar form as "mommie" not as "my mother" like my other students who were

*Writing on "white paper" meant putting it in final form.

writing letters to family members. She owns up to her share of the provoking behavior but uses the letter as a way of unloading a stockpile of resentments. She is conniving if not patently diabolical. At the same time however Diane does seek some rapprochement. She invites Karen to enter into a written exchange to settle differences. The co-existence of Diane's drive for control as well as her desire to come to terms with her sister has an impassioned ring of truth. Here is the last and strongest of those communications:

Dear Karen,

I'm going to come straight out with it. We don't understand each other. It seems like my brain is on pluto and yours is on earth. To communicate we use a C.B. and the wires are short circuited. The wires need repairing and we have to fix them up. This is like a comparison of our relationship. We could give each other lists. On the lists we could write what bugs each other. After they are done we could switch them and read it over. We could stop bugging each other if we know what bugs us. Well, do not tell any body! This is top secret!! (corny!) Do <u>not</u> tell Mommie - repeat do <u>not</u> tell Mommie or Janice for that matter. Everything I do you have to hit me or complain. I hit you because I have to defend myself. You also tell Mommie everything. That's why the kids up the block don't like you. When you get mad you yell out secrets I told you. That's why I don't tell you anything. You have to get control. You can't tell <u>anybody</u> because you have to decide on your own. Don't consult mommie. Well, here is something

you shouldn't do. Never tell anybody any secrets. Anyway give me a note if you want to do it or not.

Diane is loud and brassy. Her writing is rough and ready. She means business. Although her letters were in fact sent, they apparently made little impact. Several weeks later Diane recounted another run-in with Karen. I note it because it documents casually but candidly the self-management and self-repair experienced on at least two levels. Diane substitutes a nonviolent, symbolic behavior for a violent act which she then describes through the linguistic symbol.

I forgot Saturday Karen and I had a fight again. I stormed out of the house and started to whittle. I kept thinking Karen was the branch. I think I'm going to ignore her so I won't get bugged so much.

Adolescence is the first period in life that individuals hold up for examination their doings and believings. They also learn about the more creative uses of defense and equivocation. At another time Diane talked about honesty itself. Her reflections on lying are not exotic and spiritual exercises. They are moral, realistic, and playful. Diane knew her rights and wrongs (I suspect that a dutiful upbringing saw to that). Fluent youngsters draw on their experiences however homely and familiar. Here they enable Diane to amplify her perspectives--to justify positions in between categorical rights and wrongs. For all intents and purposes, we have caught Diane in the process of constructing her personal world view. Isn't that precisely the way exposition should begin?

I lie very seldom. When I do lie it's usually during a

fight with my sister. Well, it's not really lying -- it's exaggerating quite a bit. If she punched me I'll make it sound terrible. But - sometimes it hurts real bad and she goes "I just tapped you!" That gets me sick. I wonder how many people lie. I guess everybody but, I mean how much do they lie. If it's once in a while or every minute of their life. Anyway lying is bad but sometimes it comes in handy. For instance, you got a rip in the seam of your gym shorts because you are "plump" or "full". So you say to your gym teacher "I can't play gym because my things are in the wash." But you shouldn't because then you will get use to it and use it more and more.

Did you ever stop and think about lying? A lot of people don't give it much thought. Maybe they lie so much it's a part of your daily life. Others don't lie a lot but when they do it's probably a "biggie."

There are advantages and disadvantages of lying. Sometimes it comes in handy. For instance: You got a rip in the seam of your gym shorts because you are a little "full". So you say to your gym teacher "I can't play today because my clothes are in the wash". Lying can become a problem because it will become habit forming. Nobody will believe you -- like the boy who cried wolf.

Particularity

Diane had a knack for paying clearheaded attention to detail. Ideas and things probably never brought into relation before tumbled out of her effortlessly: a pen was a poem on a stick; strolling on the beach was like walking on Corn Chex. Though

a high degree of specificity permeated all Diane's material, I want to share with you the way she treated it in verse form. At one point in the program she wrote a poem about her beliefs in general and about friendship and materialism in particular. The poem showcases her ability to alternate judiciously between the general and the specific through a blend of imagistic opposites.

This Poem

This Poem is about FRIendship
It talks about Diane FRANcavilla
And BARBARA MUSTO
Some parts are FAN TAS tic
Some parts are decomposed like a
dead squirrel lying on the road.
Some parts are in between.

This poem talks about MONEY
the bills are in Fives ANd tens
Some parts are valuable like life
Some parts are worthless like an old doll
Some parts are in between

This poem talks about lonliness
lonliness like an ant without a colony
some parts are tiptop like a neatly cleaned bedroom
some parts are cold like wet mittens in winter
some parts are in between
This poem goes just like this

The Personal

Diane had an untutored sense of the comic, the ironic, the rhetorical. Everything she experienced was a potential topic. The world was her realm and everything in it worthy of comment. Just as we all are graduate students of ourselves, Diane waxed most prophetic when she wrote about her personal self. However, while so many of our students move from childhood to their adult years with feelings of pessimism, cynicism, and despair, Diane confronted those troublesome parts in herself with good-humored perceptivity. The pieces that follow are

unpolished but to my mind remarkable, because their originality, intimacy, and vitality counterbalance the national obsession for correctness and reverence for propriety that virtually paralyzes writing.

The part in my hair is like a road on a highway meandering someplace or trying to get to the back of my head. Sometimes it gets lost on the way there and I have to straighten it out. Other times the road is quite curvey and hard to control. But there are times when the road is straight and there are no buckles in it. Buckles are very rare. They occur when I'm playing baseball and the ball hits my head on my part.

My highway is now in the middle of my head because a person gets sick of it on the same side for 5 years. Sometimes during the summer I would switch back and forth. Now I'm going to keep my part in the middle until I get sick of it. Mabe I can have it halfway in the middle and halfway on the side. That's a thought.

In the beginning this is going to be boring but, at the end there will be a spark in this writing. This is about Short People, First off I grew 2 inches over the summer--which I am very delighted. Second, I don't know why people keep asking why a person is so short. There are two very simple, logical reasons. The first reason is: if your mother, father, grandmother and grandfather are short, then your answer is heredity! The second reason is simply: because God made you that way. Well, here comes the spark in the writing (ready for this?!) Short people

are: Extraordinary, outstanding, eye catching, marvelous, phenomenal, well known (Sammy Davis Jr., Paul Williams and me!) incredible, inconcievable, rare, wonderful, fabulous, remarkable, spectacular, legendary, striking, superb, and finally, as Mrs. Brand puts it, sublime. (howd ya like that!)

Clothes are a problem to me. I don't have much of a selection because I'm in between sizes and I don't know what size I wear. It's either a size 12 or 14. Some 12's are gigantic and then some 14's are too tight. Ifyou can figure out why tell me.

If I go in the girls department all the clothes fit good but are babyish. My mom won't buy them because they are going to shrink and money is going to waste. In the junior high department everything is much too big or a little old for me. I guess I just have to wait, and grow more in every direction, up,, down, and sideways.

Oh--this really takes the cake. I wanted to buy a pair of navy blue polyester pants. I took a size 12 and 14 into the dressing room. You know what happened--I end up with a size 10! I couldn't believe it. We didn't buy the pants because the seam by the hip puffed out and I looked like a jockey.

I have no solutions but wait to grow. My mom would put darts in and hems. I don't think that's a good solution because I'd look like Frankenstein--all sewed up! Diane's mother once told me that Diane could write about a string.

Here's one of her best strings:

As you can see I took the typewriter out. Thank God It is not dusty. My mom cleaned it out last year before we put in back. It seems different from last year. It seems smaller, mabey because I grew. As you can see the ribbon is not too great. By the way the name of this typewriter is REMINGTON. I have to rewrite this over. This is really wiered writing because half of these sentences are not on the line. Well, getting back to the ink ribbon story. I said that the ribbon was a story within itself. The ribbon has the imprints of letters, numbers, and punctuation marks. With all these things to communicate with a person can go writing on forever like a babbling brook, (this seems to waste paper). A brook is always changeing. You can form something different every time whether it is a story, poem, or just plan writing. It is funn thing though, when something you type does not come out right or the way you do not want it the ribbon seems to know what you do not want it there because the ink comes on very light. I just took a look at the ribbon and it is on the last oomph of energy. The material is dried out, there is hardly any ink left. It seems like it is doing it for me. You know something - a ribbon seems to reveal a face. It has wrinkles, it is dried, and every crosssection of a weave are like the eyes THIS is amaxing. If a person really stares at it you can see something like the eyes. They are looking intently at you. Well if you get a chance look at the ribbon on your typewriter. (I think that blotch was the last spurt of energy left).

TEACHING WRITING: PROCESS vs. PRODUCT

by Joseph W. Miller

The teaching of writing is seriously deteriorating, notwithstanding the proliferation of workshops, institutes, group meetings, seminars, visits of specialists, conferences, and conventions, all dedicated to the improvement of teaching writing, and notwithstanding the new respectability of English teachers who teach writing and not only literature.

The decay comes from the professionalization, an artificial codification of methods, the development of a kind of arcane mandarin cult in which practitioners talk only to each other, while the work of the student who is supposed to be improving his writing is ignored, or taken for granted. Often the work itself--the product--is not examined or analyzed; after all, grading is very boring for the teacher, and surely a summary comment shows the piece has been read, however sketchily. How the student writes, the processes he goes through as he plans and eventually commits words to paper, are analyzed and discussed at great length; terms like "pre-writing" abound, and there is much wordplay involving psychology and linguistics and learning theory. What the student writes, and whether the product is good or bad, whether it says anything, and in what ways it says it well or poorly, are all ignored.

Many human endeavors start out as worthwhile, serious, and important activities, genuine efforts to improve some social problem. Consider, for instance, the institution of marriage, and the establishment of labor unions, and then examine the present status of each. These initially worthwhile attempts,

however, seem to deteriorate into specialized professionalized entities, with increasingly rare participation by the rank and file, except via votes at annual meetings. There is increasingly frequent manipulation by the elite in power. Thus programs for improving the teaching of writing get state and federal grants, and private funding; universities and area agencies vie with each other to throw money at the improvement of teachers and teaching, with the avowed ultimate aim of improving the writing. All of them want to do a good deed, and at the same time enhance their own images. Andrew Hacker's "The Shame of Professional Schools," in HARPER'S, October, 1981, pp. 22, 24, 26, 27-28, reports the wide spread of this malaise.

We have developed entrepreneurs and showmen rather than effective teachers. When asked what the student writes, whether or not the product is good, and whether or not the technique allegedly applied has in fact caused the alleged improvement, the specialists respond with exasperation and contempt. They contend, first, that the quality is obvious, though they are non-specific about the ways and components which have improved. They say, second, that it is equally obvious that the improvement resulted from the special treatment being touted at this particular conference or meeting, or in this particular article.

Part of this pernicious situation is the result not only of the obvious need to improve student writing, but also the very human desire to improve professionally, to be better than one's colleagues or opponents, to secure tenure and promotion and, finally, to receive public and financial recognition.

Like doctors who become so specialized they are bored or annoyed when asked actually to deal with a patient directly--like the unidentified radiologist who "reads" the X-Ray and sends a separate bill after the patient has paid the hospital at which the X-Ray was taken--these writing specialists are eager to spend their subsidized hours in abstruse activities where they are not bothered by contacts with boring, illiterate students. Medicine would be a lot more interesting if it weren't for the patients, and the teaching of writing would be a lot more rewarding if one didn't have to deal with students and their wretched papers.

There is an ever-growing tendency to specialize, to mechanize, to computerize, to develop a fool-proof system which can be marked, for teaching writing. One computer program purports to teach writing, but is only a mechanized rehash of familiar grammatical clichés, that ignore and omit real problems of idiom and changes in attitudes towards usage. Such software can do very little with matters of tone, organization, sequence, and style. Even the sequence of those four items here--not a good one--could not be dealt with in such programs. Another approach, complete with cassette and film strip, only permits the teacher to let AV handle the familiar drill of parts of speech and sentence structure. One self-help tutorial package course asserts that it teaches writing, but little is said about actually grading a paper, or determining what is in it. Somehow the actual product, the evidence of a student's writing ability, seems to be largely glossed over, and assumed.

In some classes students write journals, which are not graded. Comments include "ooh, good! I like what you say about your grandfather" and "Don't you think it's about time you shaped up?" The student's writing is characterized by emptiness and artificiality, a tacit recognition that this writing is mere busy-work, and that so many words or so many pages must be turned in, regardless; it doesn't matter what one writes. One student wrote the words to "The Star Spangled Banner," and another wrote those to "America." One was marked "Excellent," the other "Superior." Grading criteria were not specified. Teachers' comments often indicate only that the teacher is acknowledging that the student wrote something, rather in the fashion of the physiology teacher who has the class turn in lab notebooks at the final exam. He returns them at the end of the period, each page date-stamped in one corner so it can't be used again.

It is often alleged that the sheer fact of the experience of writing, no matter what is written, helps one improve. Swimming, without adequate direction, and guidance, only makes one perpetuate poor swimming habits. Why should writing improvement be inevitable?

Has any concrete, objective evidence been cited, via well-conducted, statistically sound experiments, that shows that ungraded journal writing actually improves the writing of students? Are there any before-and-after studies which "prove" that journals are the active force in the alleged improvement?

Journal writing is not, of course, necessarily nor always

a waste of time. It can be valuable and useful, frequently in a kind of psychological, social-adjustment manner. Consider Meta Potts' article "Dialogue Journals: A First Step in Helping Troubled Students." TODAY'S EDUCATON, September - October 1981, pp. 42-44.

Gimmicks are certainly "in." Many teachers seem to rely on them, on anything that can seem to get the student's interest or attention, and to assume that such a gimmick automatically produces writing improvement. In one class, the teacher prints on the board a series of initials, say IADBTD or LMNHTSYS. The student is supposed to determine what they stand for ("It's always darkest before the dawn," and "Love means never having to say you're sorry"). In some transubstantiatory way the recognition or realization of the significance of the initials is supposed to improve the student's writing, even though the teacher often has to explain what the initials signify when the kids "give up." The mediating effect of this transmogrification is not explained; perhaps it involves magic. When asked about the evidence that writing was improved by this technique, the instructor responded with asperity, and contempt; the impact and the desirable effect were obvious to any one with the slightest intelligence.

In another class the teacher sets up simulation situations. He and an eager student teacher come to class and dramatically put on surgical gowns, caps, and masks. They explain, after writing various faulty sentences on the board, that they are going to do surgery, and the students will be consulting physicians. Adding a modifier will be doing a transplant;

removing words will be amputation; and so on. The analogy is, to say the least, strained. When it was complained that it was not clear how this approach improves the student writing, one teacher observer countered with "I thought it was kinda (sic) cute!" How such a device, or other role-playing simulations, can improve writing is not explained. No assessment of student ability or achievement is mentioned or discussed. The salutary effects of this improvisational theatre are assumed, and obvious, as any fool can plainly see.

A somewhat similar occasion occurred at one high school when students wrote a 5-minute silent movie, as the entire work of the semester in composition. In another, students who made banners or carts or toy animals for the model circus parade (possibly set up to illustrate "jargon," with roustabouts' language) got "A" marks because they participated in the "English" project.

In one class, in groups of ten, students each write one sentence of a progressive story. Each has to rely on what he has received as stimulus for expanding and developing the story, which is eventually supposed to have a plausible or at least meaningful ending. In all the examples observed, in every case there was some kind of cop-out conclusion, often ridiculous, of the sort that made clear the writers' collective contempt for the situation. One miraculous ending involved a magic cabbage which rescued a young couple from a stalled ferris wheel. Another had a goody-goody conclusion in which a Mafioso had a change of heart (an Italian Scrooge?), and agreed to try to do better if given another chance. Not once was there

a convincing resolution of the conflict, or even a recognition of the need for some consistency, or sequence, or relationship between cause and effect, between event and result. The net result was something like the old Uncle Wiggily game, or "the funny mixed-up story," or Kellogg's tri-partite animal books.

In this story situation, aside from the lack of realism or reality and the distortion into proto-TV plotting, matters such as misspelled words and error in sentence structure were ignored, in what seemed to be a reinforcement of the students' contempt for English teachers and English as a subject. What this story effort achieves in and for student writing is not clear, although it seems obvious that the exercise gets the contempt it so richly deserves. No one kept any of the stories; why would one? They showed only that some student effort had been expended, some class time had been consumed. Once again "process," not product, had been the focus.

In another class the teacher has pairs of students, with one of each pair blindfolded. Those with sight lead those who are blindfolded, as they wander about the building, no doubt so as to "understand" and "feel" how a blind person might. Trying out wheel chairs is also a biggie. After the predictable "wow" responses, it is obvious that the now re-sighted, or newly reambient, students have developed a firm philosophical grasp of the problems facing those who are handicapped, and will now write expert papers. Whether they do, in fact, write better papers is never determined.

In still another class the teacher suddenly whips arounds and shouts an insult, such as "Your mother stinks!" He then

commands the students to "Write what you think and feel!" Any student with self-respect or common sense would probably write something unprintable, but the majority record genteel attempts at what they think this stupe wants. Here again, the process is interesting, or clever, but the product is nugatory, or ignored.

There are countless other gimmicks, ranging from forcing the student to use only present tense, or only adjectives of color, to showing the student a tray full of 14 items, and making him base a paper on them. The reader can name various approaches he has heard of, perhaps even tried. In each the process of writing, or some process that consumes class time and eventually leads to the necessity of writing, is involved. Seldom is the product, what the student actually writes, even cited, much less analyzed and returned with helpful comments. Yet the alleged focus and purpose of teaching writing is to improve what the student writes, not only to anatomize what he does prior to producing the written pieces.

Gimmick approaches seem uninterested in whether or not the student has, in fact, something to say, something to convey of interest or significance, or meaning or information. Gimmick users seem uninterested in whether or not the paper meets conventional standards of grammar and rhetoric, however increasingly lax these may be becoming. The process of producing something, anything, which has been written, for whatever reason, to whatever audience--or none--seems to be the only important matter.

Of course, a student who is reluctant to write, and

inexperienced in writing (and what student isn't these days?) needs to be encouraged in self-expression, and in organizing his thoughts and ideas. He needs to realize that his own experiences are of some significance, and very possibly of interest to others, and that he need not expatiate on the political situation in Iran, or "What I would do if I were on Voyager II," to have something to say.

Allowing the student, however, to write "just anything," and then letting him think that what he has produced is automatically "good," is an example of the Finger-Paint Syndrome: "I did it, ergo it is good!" It is a grave disservice to a student to let him think he has written something that is good, when any objective reader would determine that it is not only NOT good, but seems to have no purpose, no content, and no audience. All it shows is that effort has been expended--and sometimes it's another student's effort anyway.

Students who take "creative" writing, or "self-expression" or "personal development" writing courses in sub-college writing, are distressed and appalled when asked to write something with content and meaning, in a form that is grammatically, idiomatically, and rhetorically acceptable. One need no longer bother with hoping for fluency, control, subtlety, or organization.

Many students have been misled by the thought that the process--the steps or antics one goes through to produce something written on paper, so it can be "turned in"--is what is important, that WHAT they write does not matter. The fact of having written is itself important, as in potty-training.

The fact of having labored and produced, not the product, warrants hurrahs, and a good mark.

What a student writes <u>is</u> important, as he will find, once he is out of school. The process by which he writes it is, of course, also important, but too often it becomes the only goal. Teaching is not automatically good when it involves or needs gimmicks, or quaint and cutesy approaches, or delightful games.

The game approach to teaching writing teaches only how to play games, not how to write, and students are cynically successful at playing the games. What should survive, what is important, is what has been written. In real life it is the product, not the process, which is evaluated.

FRESHMAN COMPOSITION

HOW TO WRITE AN ESSAY EXAMINATION

by Steve Swanson

After having taught Freshman English for 15 years using every approach from grammar-school-marm fussiness to creative writing seminar permissiveness, it finally occurred to me what freshman writers in a liberal arts curriculum really need. They do not necessarily need to make me happy by writing imaginative and engaging essays, nor to make my reading job easier by writing flawlessly--laudable as these abilities always seem. What freshman writers really need in order to survive their next three years is skill in two specialized kinds of writing: answering essay examination questions and writing research papers. A unit on doing and writing up research has been a part of most freshman writing classes as long as I can remember, and research techniques remain a concentration in my sections. Teaching specific skills in order to help students write better essay examinations seemed, when it occurred to me, a new approach.

I started by trying a few experiments with essay examination question assignments during the same term as the idea emerged. The students were so appreciative of a focus specifically on that skill that I spent some of the following summer designing an entire course aimed at this set of techniques.

The first concern was the reading list. To be most useful, such a course would not focus only on literature (<u>my</u> specialty) as freshman English courses often do. Students in a liberal

arts program often have to write exams in four or five different disciplines each term. I therefore set up some very broad distribution requirements, trying to find materials that represented several academic disciplines and that would be readable, comprehensible, and interesting to any reader, including college freshmen.

In the first term the reading list included the following items representing several departments and approaches:

1. A reprinted article on the effects of alcohol, age, and speed on highway accidents, deaths, and automobile insurance rates. (Sociology, Ecology, maybe Economics)
2. Ole Rolvaag, Giants in the Earth. A pioneer novel. (American Literature and History)
3. Farley Mowat, Never Cry Wolf. (Outdoor Education, Biology, The Scientific Method)
4. Lewis Thomas, The Lives of a Cell. (Biology, Genetics, Anthropology) And a related video tape, Mysterious Castles of Clay: The Fascinating World of the African Termite. (Entomology, Sociology)
5. An article on the fine arts. (Aesthetics, Imagery, Our Visual Apprehension of the World)

These were chosen not only because they were readable and engaging but because they had recognizable theses or presuppositions that could be exploited in essay examinations.

The students showed remarkable improvement in writing their first few essays. We printed several of each set for class discussion and tried to see how a given answer succeeded

or failed in

1. analyzing the question,
2. recognizing possible approaches,
3. then outlining and writing according to an appropriate approach (temporal-historical, comparison-contrast, analytical, etc.).

We also discussed teacher expectations, the use of appropriate supporting quotations and allusions, suitable styles for various disciplines, and more. They caught on quickly.

After we were well into the course I could see that my students were getting practice in writing essays based on reading comprehension, but they were getting no experience in writing essays based on lectures. I announced a new assignment. I had a book in galleys on health, exercise, and nutrition so I read them the nutrition chapter and asked them to take notes, then to write a short essay examination (as if for a home economics course) based on that lecture and their notes--ALL IN THE SAME CLASS PERIOD. I asked for their notes as well as their examination essays, made written comments on both, and again printed a few examples for class discussion.

Another technique evolved. Toward the end of the term we discovered that a corollary skill in writing essay examinations was trying to get as much focus and direction as possible from an instructor beforehand. We prepared a list of questions called PUMPING YOUR PROFESSOR ranging from such mundane entries as "Is it going to be open book?" and "Can we bring dictionaries?" to the more disarming foreign student's question, "Could I write it, please, in German?"

In a typical series of ten class periods, about three would be spent writing in class, two discussing the reading after it had been written about, four in analyzing printed examples of the most recent writing (we tried to print at least one of each student's papers during the term), and one with a visitor: a research librarian, the author of a book, a local critic or expert in the field under consideration.

The advantages students are apt to see in this approach are:

1. successful progress toward a limited but useful goal,
2. the reading of a variety of materials that could be useful introductions to other courses, and
3. very little of that feeling that the English Department is stuffing them with a literature that the professor may love but they may not.

The main advantages to the instructor are that the course almost teaches itself; the goals are understood; there is variety in the several ways the class periods are used; the reading list is inexhaustible--and should be interesting to a broad spectrum of students, and to the instructor. Since all writing other than the research papers is done in class, our natural tendency to suspect plagiarism and ghost writing is all but eliminated.

Finally, it is patently fun to bask in the appreciation students express when what we do is clearly and immediately useful in their broader experience of education. Like the exuberant girl who ran up and hugged me at mid-term in the semester after our exam course. She was fairly bubbling over. "I did everything we learned," she said, "and I got my first A."

RHS WRITING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

by Miles Canning

The Writing Assessment Program has been a successful attempt to improve writing instruction and student writing skills at Rosemount High School. To this end several purposes were established by the communications department.

A. In order to evaluate our performance in TEACHING WRITING, some measure is needed.

B. In order to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our STUDENTS, some measure is needed.

C. In order to maintain a RECORD of students' progress throughout their experience at RHS, some method must be used to organize and interpret the information received.

D. In order to aid English teachers and counselors in the PLACEMENT of students in classes which can serve their needs, data is needed.

E. In order for the communications department to build an effective writing CURRICULUM to serve students, assessment of their abilities is needed.

F. In order to communicate with the SCHOOL BOARD, PARENTS, AND FUNDING sources, assessment of the writing program is needed.

In 1978, meetings and discussions of various methods available to the Communications department, four assumptions gained consensus and formed the basis for the actual testing and scoring procedures.

The first assumption states that prose writing is the best

way to determine if a student has mastered how to write prose. The second assumption is, that of the three target areas for analysis, no one area is weighed more heavily than another. The third assumption concerns standardization. The test is written for local district use according to local goals. Students write on the same topic for the same length of time under the same conditions. All samples are graded anonymously and impartially. The fourth assumption is that this assessment should be used; counselors and teachers should have access to it, and students should see their scores and understand the criteria used to score their tests. In every way it is hoped the test will influence and enhance the writing curriculum. It was decided that fall term ninth graders be tested and a follow up conducted in the spring of their tenth grade year.

Once the assessment assumptions are accepted and the department decides the effort and time will be valuable, a timetable should be established. A coordinator is needed to insure paperwork and deadlines are met. This person directs the topic search, the dissemination of test instructions and materials, the inservicing of scorers, the tallying and recording of scores, and the publishing of the data. This person can make some preliminary conclusions and keep all department members appraised of problems. A sample timetable follows this report.

At Rosemount the scoring is divided into three areas. The samples are graded using the "primary-trait" method. The first area consists of grammar and sentence skills. This area is further divided into five specific skills. The second area

includes five specific punctuation and mechanics skills. The third area includes five paragraph structure and organizational skills. The criteria list with specifics follows this report.

The samples are given points for how many skills are demonstrated in each area. A total score is the sum of the three area scores. The rating points are from 4 for perfect score to 1 for an area showing less than two out of five areas mastered. The total scores range from a maximum of 12 for a "perfect" paper, to 3 for a sample with less than 4 out of 15 skills mastered.

Statistical evaluation of this data can be facilitated by computer analysis, and our school is now investigating this method. Comparisons among students, between classes, from year to year, and with specific class groups all can provide useful information. After several tests of the same grade level, a rough idea of how well a "typical" student for that grade can write is possible. Progress can be monitored and the purposes of the assessment program can be satisfied.

One aspect of this program which bears mentioning is the effect it has had on the communications faculty. Our department consists of thirteen full-time English teachers. The criteria sheet has unified our teaching objectives. The sharing of ideas and the consensus approach to developing these criteria have given us all a cooperative spirit. The willingness of all members to give time and professional effort to make this program work (four assessments in the last two years, with another scheduled for Nov., 1981), is the real secret to the success of this program.

TIMETABLE

1. Department meeting - overview for new teachers, report on program. Review topic criteria. (model)
2. Propose 10 topics to teachers
3. Select most popular
4. Write up information and instruction sheet for test. Distribute to all teachers with the topic selected. (model)
5. Set and publish timetable of due dates. Watch calendar conflicts. Establish inservice dates for scorers.
6. Secure lists of students and prepare forms for recording scores. Coordinate support services. (secretary-computer)
7. Secure labels and folders for storing tests.
8. Xerox inservice materials, criteria and rating lists.
9. Give out paper and make up folders for each teacher.
10. Testing days (give choice of 3 days).
11. Return samples (alphabetized) to coordinator. Include lists of absentees.
12. Inservice new scorers and other interested parties (ESL, SLBP, administrators, etc.) (CERO credits? pay?)
13. Alphabetize or random shuffle papers. Apportion papers to be corrected to <u>all</u> communications teachers.
14. Give papers to teachers in folders. Include criteria and rating sheets. Include summary of special directions. Set due dates.
15. Send reminder memo to all communication teachers of due date, availability of help, etc.
16. All papers due (including absentees).
17. Review scoring. Cross check with small group.

18. Compile lists of all students who took test and their scores. (Computer? Secretary?)
19. Analyze lists and statistically significant data (Computer? Calculator?)
20. Distribute lists and a preliminary write-up to all concerned parties.
21. File samples in folders.
22. Department review - feedback on problems and results of the testing-scoring procedure.
23. Set goals and timetable for next assessment.

RHS WRITING ASSESSMENT

DETAILED CRITERIA SHEET

<u>AREAS OF EVALUATION</u>

GS <u>Grammar and Sentences</u>

1. <u>Clear subject - verb construction</u>

   (Using "I think" to begin a sentence is poor subject-verb construction. If this occurs in the <u>topic sentence only</u>, just count it off in the "paragraph" section, and not in the grammar section. If it occurs within the paragraph, count it off in the sentence, section #1. This avoids "double jeopardy." If it occurs in the topic sentence and elsewhere, count it off in both sections)

2. <u>Use of compound and complex constructions</u>

   (Variety in sentence patterns desired) (If all that is wrong is a punctuation error, but multiple clauses

are still used well, consider this section error-free)

3. Run-ons and fragments

(These are incomplete sentences or sentences which string together too many ideas.) (Disregard for "sentence" concept)

4. Usage

(S-V agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, consistency in tense of verbs, confusion of adverb and adjective forms, double negatives, dangling modifiers, pronoun cases) (Specific grammatical problems)

5. Style, diction and slang

(Word choice eliminate deadwood, parallel structures, eliminate jargon) (General criticisms)

PM Punctuation and Mechanics

1. Capitalization (handwriting confusion counts as an error)
2. Spelling (one error or many, only count this area off once)
3. Commas (especially before a conjunction in a compound sentence, and after introductory elements)
4. Semicolons, colons, apostrophes, and other marks.
5. End punctuation (appropriate)

INFORMATION AND DIRECTIONS FOR WRITING ASSESSMENT

We will administer the 10th grade writing assessments on Monday through Wednesday, April 6th through 8th. Please plan on using an entire period one of these three days for testing. If you plan on testing early, make-ups for absentees are

easier to accomplish. It is important to refrain from "teaching the test" during this week. A better measure of what students have learned about writing can be achieved without prompting. We hope to discover several things with this assessment:

to measure reliability of this tool

(this is the third test of the same population)

to measure the progress in GS, PM, PH scores

to document the writing levels of 10th grade students

(comparisons with their own 9th grade scores, Fall and Spring as well as with the theoretical "averages" derived after the Fall, 1980 assessment)

to provide a base for future measures

to teach students what is expected of them in this area

to use the data in curricular planning, revision and registration

DIRECTIONS TO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

1. Tell students this is a test to measure how well they write. Tell them the results of this assessment will be available to them later in the trimester.
2. Tell them to do their best and that you cannot answer any questions for them because it would affect the results. "Show What You Know."
3. Tell them to put their entire names in the upper right hand corner, last, first, middle initial, the class hour they are in, and today's date and year.
4. Tell them to put teacher's name on the back side in the upper righthand corner.

5. TOPIC: Advice to Freshmen (Write on board)
They may write a rough, outline, etc., but only the final will be collected. Only one paragraph is required on the assigned topic.

6. No papers should be collected until 40 minutes have passed. Proofreading should be done and all should remain quiet (reading, etc.) until the time is up. All papers will be collected then.

7. Make a list of <u>all</u> students missing the test. (Please try to keep this list small). Try to get these made up by 4/8, Wednesday.

8. Please put all papers from all your sections in the folder bearing your name and give it to me on Wednesday, 4/8/81. I will shuffle the papers so that you don't correct your own students! You will receive your share of papers to correct on April 10, 1981. They aren't due corrected until April 29, Monday.

9. Inservices will be provided for any individual upon request.

10. Thanks.

SAMPLE OF WRITING ASSESSMENT WRITE-UP

The lists of scores for all 10th graders (Class of '83) are now in your hands. Please tell students their scores and once again explain the criteria we use to determine the ratings. This might be the most important part of the assessment programs; to communicate to all students what is expected of them in writing and where they compare with other classmates. Ask them to look at the areas of writing in which they do well and need

to improve. Scores are also used to help identify students for RHS programs such as SLBP, PACE, Basic, Advanced, Research Paper, and Writing Lab.

Overall, we can also take a good look at our teaching of writing skills and make some comments about the performances of our students on this test. But first, the test itself needs to be analyzed.

The tool still remains a valid and important measure of comparative writing ability in the three areas. No figures should be taken at face value, and certainly this assessment, because of procedural and evaluation errors, should not be the only measure of an individual's writing ability. It can tell us about trends and changes from test to test with the same population.

This group, statistically, had about the same total score as they did a year ago. Increases were apparent in the paragraph section; in fact, 4 and 3 ratings increased over last April's assessment by 6%, and over Nov. 1979's assessment by 15.6%. 60% of all of our sophomores received a rating of at least 3 for this area.

The mechanics and punctuation section has stayed virtually the same through the three assessments. 49.8% of 10th graders received 4's and 3's, the same as in 1980.

An area for concern is the grammar and sentence section. In 1979, 48.6% of the students received 3's ans 4's. This year only 44.4% of the students received 3's and 4's. The intervening assessment indicated a drop of 1.2%, and this test gives credence to this "trend." A reason for this has been suggested to me, and

I pass it along as a possible explanation - The topic, "Advice to Freshmen," suggested to many students slang-language, and two words, "advice" "advise" and "freshmen - freshman" could "load" the possibilities for errors in usage or style. These assumptions do not change the results, but they may help to explain them.

The paragraph portion is so strong, and improvement is so obvious that I think both students and teachers can be proud of the learning accomplished in this area.

Look over the tables. Please let me know your opinions or observations about this program, this particular assessment, or how we can use this information more.

I do have some specific observations to pass on to all the staff involved. This was the most difficult test to coordinate. Reading tests and the play and other spring activities interfered with both administering the tests and getting them graded. Most deadlines were not kept by all teachers. This makes all the deadlines set on the calendar difficult to maintain.

Some students were not tested at all. Their names were not given to me, and therefore we missed some important data. Obviously, conclusions are more valid with comparable scores. These students also are among the most needy of attention by our department.

Correcting was more conservative, on the average. I only know this from the preponderance of 2's in the ratings. It seems to be a popular rating (rather than checking closely and making sure at least 3 errors are evident).

I appreciate all the effort and cooperation everyone puts

forth. I really do. It shows as a department that we are willing to go a little extra to build up some credibility for what we work so hard to do - teach writing.

With all of its shortcomings and potentials for error, we can at least be sure that we are trying to be honest with ourselves and our students.

We have now had 4 assessments. The schedule for next year includes The Fall 9th grade test, the Spring, 1982, test of the class of '84 (this year's 9th), and the follow up assessment of the class of '83 needs to be scheduled. At the next department meeting, I will ask for opinions on this test. Should it be in the winter of 81-82 or in the winter of 82-83?

Again, thanks to Doris for all of her patience and effort. And thanks to everyone who helps with this and who uses the results we get. By the way, all tests for this group and all tests for the '84 class are filed and available in the writing lab room.

RHS Writing Assessments April, 1981 Class of '83 (10th)

	April, 1981	April, 1980	Nov., 1979
GS	Average: 2.3622	Average: 2.445	Average: 2.379
	392 samples	418 samples	448 samples
4	= 5.6%	5%	5.1%
3	= 38.8%	42.6%	43.5%
2	= 41.8%	43.1%	35.5%
1	= 13.8%	8.9%	15.8%
PM	Average: 2.4107	Average: 2.443	Average: 2.379
4	= 4.1%	10.3%	6.5%
3	= 45.7%	39.5%	43.5%
2	= 37.5%	43.1%	35.5%
1	= 12.8%	13.6%	14.7%
PH	Average: 2.6352	Average: 2.562	Average: 2.371
4	= 16.1%	12.7%	10.5%
3	= 43.9%	41.4%	33.9%
2	= 27.5%	34.9%	37.7%
1	= 12.5%	10.5%	17.9%
TOTALS = GS + PM + PH			
	Average: 7.4362 April, 1981	Average: 7.450 April, 1980	Average: 7.199 Nov., 1979
12	= 1%	1.4%	.9%
11	= 4.3%	5%	4.5%
10	= 9.4%	7.9%	7.6%
9	= 16.9%	15.8%	19.6%
8	= 17.6%	18.7%	12.9%
7	= 15.9%	21.1%	16.5%
6	= 19.4%	14.4%	13.4%
5	= 8.4%	9.6%	13..4%
4	= 4.8%	3.1%	4%
3	= 2.2%	2.6%	4%

INTERCHANGE

Kenneth Risdon, University of Minnesota - Duluth responds to Garvin Davenport, "Technical Writing and Liberal Arts" Risdon teaches technical writing at UMD.

In "Technical Writing and Liberal Arts" Garvin Davenport explains what he learned while teaching technical writing and how the cooperation displayed while teaching technical writing helped make a curriculum-wide writing program successful. Basically he discovered that faculty from other departments strongly support teachers of writing and are willing to help and want to be helped in using writing in their classes. However, in order for faculty outside the English Department to be willing to help and be helped, they must be approached with an attitude that seems to have been rare in too many English departments. As Davenport points out, the physics department etc. need to be approached with a willingness to learn. If English faculty go to another department and tell the faculty there what good writing is, the advice will most likely be rejected. What the non-English faculty need to know is how to help their students produce writing that is considered good scientific or technical writing. I have worked with many faculty who don't know what to do when they have students who don't "write well," but I have never had a faculty member tell me that he or she didn't know what good writing is. Unfortunately, what an English teacher considers "good writing" or "bad writing" is not judged the same way by faculty in the sciences. When given two versions of a biology report and asked to pick

the better one, about 125 out of a group of 150 English faculty from across the U.S. picked the version that the biology faculty thought was the inferior report. The group was appropriately embarrassed that few of them knew what scientists considered good writing. They were surprised that it was not what freshman comp texts present as good writing. More English faculty need to join in the type of cooperative effort

Davenport describes. It is one of the better ways to learn about scientific writers.

In his discussion of the usefulness of his association with scientists, Davenport says that he had disassociated himself from the English Department and freshman comp. That such separation is often necessary is a sad comment on the state of the profession. If the faculty in a college or university is so suspicious of freshman composition that to work with them one has to "break" with English and freshman composition, the freshman composition program needs some serious revision. Freshman composition and curriculum-wide writing programs should not be separable; one should support the other. Freshman composition should teach the basics-a sensible writing process, organization, development, outline awareness, levels of formality, etc.--that specialized technical and professional writing courses can build on. If freshman are made aware that they will be expected to use what they learn in freshman composition in courses in their major, they will take freshman composition more seriously. It will be easier to teach and students will learn more.

Davenport's article has an important message, but we have

a long way to go. I'm waiting for the excitement that will be generated when more English departments discover business communication and the school of business.

A MEMORANDUM TO THOSE WHO CHOOSE APPROPRIATE AFTER DINNER SPEAKERS

TO: MCTE Spring Conference Speaker Selection Committee

FROM: J. Rylander, MCTE Member and 1981 Spring Conference Banquet Attendee

SUBJECT: Selection of Appropriate Speakers for After Dinner Speeches

In past years at MCTE Spring Conferences, I have often been entertained and enriched by the after dinner addresses. Two such occasions are still alive and lovely in my memory.

The first of these is an after dinner talk by the Elizabethan scholar, Dr. Daniel Fader, author of Hooked on Books. As he spoke to us of the need to love our students, to cherish their uniqueness while encouraging them toward literacy and the fulfillment of their human potential, Dr. Fader made each of us in the audience of 500 or so feel as though he were speaking to us alone, individually. The man and his message were uplifting, challenging and enlightening. The quality of education in Minnesota was enhanced that day.

The other really marvelous MCTE Banquet Speech embedded in my memory is one delivered by the fine contemporary poet, Robert Hayden, in the ballroom of the old Hotel Duluth. As he read his poems and commented on them and his art, all of us in his large audience developed deeper insights into the craft of the artist and the crucible of life from which art is crafted. The poem--those black marks on white paper--gained a

voice, a face, a life--and we were inspired to try to make literature live in our classrooms as it lived for us that evening.

And that brings me to May 1981 and the Hotel de France. I'm glad I have those two exceptionally good memories. I need them as a counterbalance to the fiasco perpetrated by Richard Mitchell, the banquet speaker for our 1981 Spring Conference. Mr. Mitchell, noted for his newsletter, "The Underground Grammarian," proved during his overlengthy performance that he is a master of the underhanded insult, the gratuitous low blow. He also demonstrated his adeptness at setting afire strawmen of his own devising and at belaboring the obvious. His attempts at satire were merely venomous, not instructive. He pilloried a fellow scholar for the pretentiousness of his prose--and certainly the passage adduced was horrible--though the twenty minutes devoted to the attack on both the prose and its author was out of any semblance of proportion of propriety.

And all of this was done in the name of "literacy!" But any encouragement for us to coax, to nudge, to propel ourselves, our colleagues and our students toward greater literacy was buried under this Don Rickles of Academia's avalanche of invective, his miasma of example and metaphor.

So what do we need and deserve from our MCTE Conference Speakers? Truth, of course--but truth tempered with human understanding and compassion. Encouragement, surely--so that we might return to our schools and our classes renewed and rededicated to the difficult job before us. Pettiness and meanness, never. Spare us that in the selection of speakers.

ABOUT OUR AUTHORS

Alice Glarden Brand (8001 Natural Bridge Road St. Louis MO 63121) is an Assistant Professor of English committed to teaching writing. "She has an abiding belief in the power in finding one's own written voice." She would like readers to respond to her thoughts directly or through "Interchange."

Miles Canning (14445 Diamond Path Lane, Rosemount, MN. 55068) admires the reading diagnostician's ability to place children's achieved ability. He's completed his own "writing scales," although they are not yet "bug-free." Canning would like to hear from persons with computer knowledge who might assist him or from persons who have writing assessment systems currently in use.

Geraldine Giebel Chavis (The College of St. Catherine, Saint Paul, Minnesota) has long been interested in interdisciplinary approaches to "literature, psychology, and sociology." She would like to hear from persons who teach courses similar to hers on Aging and Literature or who have experimented with courses involving the three fields noted here.

Darryl Hattenhauer (University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, General College, Nicholson Hall) is a student of cultural history wth a speciality in Rhetoric. He is interested in the "influence of intellectual history on social, political and economic policy."

Joseph Miller (Box 144, Moorhead State University, Moorhead MN 56560) first wrote about the evaluation of Freshman Composition in his Ph.D. (1958) dissertation. He is still attempting to discover what the effects of Freshman Comp. are

on the students and would be interested in hearing from persons engaged in similar studies.

Nancy Hood Stone (1501 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN. 55403) is a practicing journalist as well as a teacher. She has been a single parent for many years, one reason money outranks, at times, her love of teaching. She would like to hear from kindred spirits who fight battles similar to her own.

Steve Swanson (St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN 55057) would like further suggestions for a Freshman reading list.

Martin C. Wiltgen (Mankato West High School, Mankato, MN.) would like information which might contribute to an understanding of "the motives of a grass roots level of censorship," and accounts of specific instances of censorship carried out in a surreptitious manner.

Nancy Ward (19016 Radford Road, Minnetonka, MN 55343) a certified ESL instructor in the Minnetonka district, would like to know how you handle foreign students in your classroom.

EDITORIAL POLICY: MINNESOTA ENGLISH JOURNAL

Minnesota English Journal is an official organ of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English. It ordinarily appears two times a year, Fall and Winter/Spring. Minnesota English Journal publishes articles of general interest to its membership, teachers K through college. Particularly sought are manuscripts which show how pedagogy implements theory and which describe or discuss current and real problems faced by some segment of the teaching profession in English in Minnesota. Manuscripts from Minnesota teachers are preferred. The Journal is distributed free-of-charge to the membership. Individual issues can be ordered for $2.50 per issue.

Manuscripts should be submitted to the editor. Please use an approved style sheet, either APA or MLA. Footnotes should be included in the text if possible. Manuscripts should be 7-18 pages, typed double-spaced.

The editor prefers manuscripts that exploit the theme chosen for the given issue. Themes for the coming year will appear in the Winter/Spring issue of the preceding year and be posted at the MCTE booth during the annual Spring convention. Prospective contributors may write the editor to request a statement of themes for the year. Enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply.

The editor will make every effort to acknowledge receipt of a manuscript within two (2) weeks and to inform the contributor of its acceptance or rejection within 60 days. Include with the manuscript a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The editor reserves the right to accept or reject a manuscript. The editor may return a manuscript to request its revision. The editor may make minor changes in the manuscript without consulting the contributor.