Minnesota English Journal

pics:

Minnesota Writers
Metaphor and Stereotypes
Mansfield's *Her First Ball*
Literary Networks

, No. 1 Fall, 1990

THE MINNESOTA COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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MINNESOTA ENGLISH JOURNAL

Volume XXI, No. 1 Fall 1990

Published by the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English

Coeditors - John Schifsky, Languages and Literature, College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, and Nancy Lund, Language Arts Specialist, Duluth Public Schools.

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CALL FOR PAPERS FOR THE MINNESOTA ENGLISH JOURNAL

For the Winter/Spring 1991 and the Fall 1991 issues.

We encourage articles on a wide variety of topics of interest to the English profession in Minnesota. Here are some suggested topics:

- •Teaching strategies/classroom activities
- •Rhetoric/teaching composition
- •Language issues
- •Literary theory
- •Composition research
- •Literary criticism/analysis with an awareness of teaching
- •Censorship issues
- •Teaching critical thinking
- •Discussions of unique courses or programs in English/Language Arts
- •Reading - research and pedagogy
- •Nonfiction literature
- •Professional issues
- •Writing across the curriculum (particularly descriptions of programs)
- •Canadian literature for American students
- •Bibliographies relating to the previous topics
- •Review of current books
- •Children's literature
- •American literature
- •British literature
- •World literature
- •Literature for young adults

Deadlines - Winter/Spring 1991 - December 15, 1990
Fall 1991 - September 15, 1991

We encourage teachers of English/Language Arts at all levels to submit their work to the *Minnesota English Journal* for possible publication. See the editorial statement on the inside back cover for further information.

Send manuscripts to:

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To Our Readers:

We have included an ERIC *FAST Bib* on "Learning Disabilities and Reading" in this issue. We hope it will be helpful, and we hope to include more of these bibliographies in future issues. We have also printed another excerpt from Edna Downing's *A History of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English: The First Twenty-Five Years*. We think our history is important and we encourage your comments.

Kathyrn Schladweiler ["African Women in the Novels of Buchi Emecheta: Characters of Oppression", *MEJ* XX, 1, (1989)] and Greta Gaard ["Collaborative Strategies in the Technical Writing Class: Results from a Study "*MEJ* XX, 2 (1990)] received the *Minnesota English Journal* Awards for Best Articles, 1989-90. Each received a cash prize of $75.00.

Perhaps you didn't notice, but the type we print *MEJ* in has changed again. We are now using Bookman, 10 on 11, type we wanted for our last issue, but couldn't have. Our printer now has the font and we will be using it in the coming issues.

Minnesota Writers: What Works and What Doesn't With High School Students

by

Ronald Barron

At one time newspapers and popular magazines ran frequent articles on "why Johnny can't read." Presently a wide range of publications seems to have taken up a new theme–why students don't and/or won't read. Although both types of articles are oversimplifications, they contain enough truth so they can't be scoffed at and discounted as the work of reactionaries. Even if many students weren't reluctant to read more than "assigned" material, one of the goals of a good high school English class should be to encourage students to read for enjoyment and pleasure. How to get students to read more while also enjoying the experience has been a question which has long plagued teachers. My "answer" has been to promote the reading of books by Minnesota authors.

For the past four years I have taught a unit on Minnesota writers as part of the English 11 course at Richfield High School. In an effort to expose students to a wide range of authors, the unit makes use of short stories, essays, and cuttings from longer works. However, because I also believe it is important for students to read more than short selections, I require students to read and give an oral report on a book of their own choosing. The oral report must include three components: (1) a summary of the book, (2) a detailed examination of some aspect of the book which the student particularly liked or disliked (i.e., dialogue, character development, suspense, plotting, etc.), and (3) an overall evaluation of the book with emphasis on why the student reached his/her conclusion.

Students are given an extensive bibliography (presently six pages but growing each year) of books by Minnesota authors. Students use their own reactions to the selections read in class, advice from students who took the class last year (I kept a list of who read what the previous year), and capsule commentaries I provide about books on the bibliography to make their own choice about what to read. When necessary, I hold individual conferences with students to explore possible areas of interest and to discuss books which might match those interests. If students start a book, but decide they don't like it, they are allowed to switch to another book as long as they meet the deadline for their oral report. The only restriction on their selection is that no two students in the same class may read the same book. Using these resources, most students are

able to select a book they will enjoy; although even students who select a book they don't particularly like are able to fulfill the requirements of the assignment by concentrating on making clear what they didn't like about the book they read and why they reacted they way they did.

My four years of experience using this assignment has given me a good idea of which books work well with high school juniors and which ones don't. Keep in mind the judgments I am going to relate deal with independent reading assignments. Some of my recommendations would be identical if I were suggesting a book to be "taught" to a full class, but in some other cases the conclusions might be quite different if the book were to be used in some other way than as independent reading.

So what works with eleventh graders? Action-adventure and mystery stories seem to generate the most frequent positive responses. The use of teenagers in major roles and the use of a Minnesota locale also seem to help insure the attractiveness of a book for this audience. However, because of the ranges in students' reading skills, maturity, interest in reading, and personal interests, a typical class will have students reading everything from young adult novels to books written for the adult market.

Steve Schwandt's young adult novels usually garner a positive response. This year one of my juniors claimed *The Last Goodie* was the first book he had ever read from cover to cover. Although his response may be extreme, the efforts of Marty Oliver to solve the mystery of what happened twelve years earlier to his favorite baby-sitter, kidnapped while Marty was in bed upstairs, grabs the attention of most teenagers. Combining the mystery with the story of Mary's preparations to compete for the state title in the mile run only adds to the attractiveness of the book. Most students who read *The Last Goodie* contend that Schwandt's teenagers act and talk like real teenagers rather than like characters in a book.

Although students also seem to like the realistic presentation of teenagers in *A Risky Game*, the novel itself tends to draw mixed reviews. Students are intrigued by the "psychodrama" suggested to Juliet Lamar by her bizarre (the term frequently used by students) writing instructor Troy Conner, in which the conventional and cooperative Juliet becomes rebellious and assertive in order to "shake up" the class. However, the latter chapters in which Troy Connor won't end the "experiment" and in which he tries to explain the point of the psychodrama to Juliet confuse some students. In general, good readers and/or the "mavericks" in class give the book high praise, while some other students will frankly admit the ending left them confused.

Schwandt's first two books seem to work equally well with both male and female students. The same cannot be said for *Holding Steady*. Female students tend to praise the realistic presentation of a teenager's response to the death of a parent and the believable romantic relationship between Brendon Turner and the young woman he meets in a Wisconsin resort community. In spite of the use of Brendon Turner as the focal character, most male students have had a lukewarm, at best, response to the book. Occasionally, males have even responded very negatively; one student told me this year that he felt like he was reading a book "written for his younger sister," a judgment reinforced by his embarrassment during his oral presentation on the book.

Although none of my students have read *Guilt Trip*, Schwandt's most recent book, I feel safe in predicting it may be one of the most popular selections next year. Both Eddie Lymurek and Angela Favor, the two major teenage characters, will be attractive to readers, as will the plot which deals with the murder of Corey Howe-Browne, famous director of the New Energy Theater Troupe. Students who followed the child abuse stories involving the Children's Theater will recognize one of the sources of Schwandt's novel.

Gary Paulsen is one of the most prolific and versatile writers for the young adult market. He seems to have written something for every taste. *Dogsong*, the story of a young Eskimo's vision quest in search for his roots, and *Tracker*, in which a young boy attempts to come to grips with the death of a grandparent, seem to work best with high ability students. Both Russel's journey north with a dogsled and John's efforts to track and touch the deer move these books beyond mere adventure stories into the realm of novels of self-discovery which make them attractive to high ability students. These students are also impressed with the poetic language of the two books. Although both of these books can be read on many levels, average and below average readers usually like the storyline, but they are sometimes uneasy talking about those two books because they suspect Paulsen is saying more than they fully understand. High ability students, however, usually praise these two books because they claim Paulsen doesn't oversimplify complex issues.

On the other hand, *Winterkill* and *Hatchet* work well with all ability levels; in fact, I have never heard a negative report about either of these two books. Students frequently mention that Paulsen's characters in these two novels learn about their own capabilities and about human relations in a plausible fashion. For example, one student mentioned that Bryan, the major character in *Hatchet*, learns through "trial and error in the same way a typical teenager would have to do, rather than having survival skills and information most teenagers wouldn't have."

Another student commented on how Paulsen "baits you into reading the next chapter through suspenseful endings to his chapters." The student went on to say he found himself saying "maybe I should read just a little more of the book before I quit" and "before I realized it, I had the book finished." Students also mention how Paulsen avoids a simplistic approach to life in these two books. His characters "grow" during the course of the novels, but, as one student put it, Paulsen doesn't use "and they all lived happily ever after" endings. A case in point is *Winterkill*. Not only do students have a mixed reaction to Duda, the policeman who befriends the major character, while they are reading the book, but they also have a mixed reaction to Duda's death and how it will affect the central character. Also, although the level of violence makes some readers uneasy at first, most readers later conclude the extreme violence helps them experience a lifestyle they may not know firsthand. Since Paulsen doesn't provide a "neat little answer," readers are free to speculate about what they believe the story means.

The Voyage of the Frog has many of the same attributes as *Hatchet*. While David survives his nine day voyage alone on a small boat, he experiences the same combination of learning, testing and self-discovery which students seem to like about *Hatchet*. Although quite different from the preceding books, *The Crossing* also has wide reader appeal. Students are drawn into the story of Manny, the Mexican orphan, and Robert, the U.S. Army sergeant who becomes his friend and protector. Some students initially object to the ending of this novel, but on reflection they see the death of Robert as a necessity if Paulsen is to preserve the harsh reality of the lifestyle presented in the rest of the book.

Sentinels, by contrast, always seems to get mixed responses from most readers. Unlike Paulsen's other books which either focus on a single individual or a single relationship, *Sentinels* recounts the stories of four characters whose paths never cross, yet whose stories provide the unified effect of exploring the choices and options faced by teenagers. However, the girl caught between the white world and her Ojibway heritage, the young Mexican migrant worker looking for a better life in the United States, the daughter of a sheep rancher trying to rise above the limited female role assigned her by her father, and the rock musician searching for a new sound all prove to be almost too interesting to readers. Students claim they get so involved with all of the characters that they feel cheated that Paulsen doesn't devote more space to each one. The usual solution suggested by students is that Paulsen should have written a separate book about each of the characters, rather than "teasing them with part of each story."

One of the most amazing qualities of Paulsen's books is that even though he almost always uses males as the major characters and relegates females to secondary roles if he includes them at all, both male and female students like his stories. Female students report that they like the books because the problems faced by the characters are universal teenage problems so it doesn't make any difference what the sex of the major character is.

The novels I have mentioned are not the only ones students might enjoy, but they do indicate the range of Paulsen's stories. Extensive reading of Paulsen's books and a careful consideration of the students in a class should enable teachers to find a good match somewhere in Paulsen's material. A rule of thumb I have found useful is that when I am unsure about what other choice to suggest to a student, I advise him/her to skim read Paulsen's books in search of something which catches his/her interest. Usually that method works well for all types of students.

Jon Hassler's two young adult novels, *Jemmy* and *Four Miles to Pinecone*, receive positive reviews from the full range of students found in a typical classroom. *Jemmy* convincingly presents the complexities in the life of an American Indian high school girl caught between two cultures. The Minnesota locale (a high school probably based upon Park Rapids High School) helps provide immediacy to the story, but the major factor which students cite in their positive evaluation of the book is that they are left with the sense they have read about a real person in a real situation where simple answers won't suffice. The same evaluation is echoed by students who read *Four Miles to Pinecone*. When Tom Barry fails his English class for the year because he received 47 zeros for uncompleted homework assignments, his English teacher agrees to change his grade to a passing one if Tom writes a story one page in length for each zero he earned. The novel thus becomes an extended version of the old standby essay on "What I Did During My Summer Vacation," but with more action and excitement than the typical high school essay would contain. A major strength of both *Jemmy* and *Four Miles to Pinecone*, according to students who have read them, is that Hassler's characters agonize over their oral decisions, rather than finding "pat" answers which allow them to avoid the difficult decisions of real teenagers. As one student said this year, "not many books captivate me, but I felt what Tom felt and I really wanted to know how Tom would attempt to cope with his problems."

Although these two young adult novels have always been popular with students, I have not had as much success with the books Hassler has written for the adult market. Hassler's adult novels appeal to a narrower range of the student body, but when they do work, they work extremely well. I have found it difficult to interest students in reading *Green Journey* and *Simon's Night* (two books I personally like), but I have been

more successful when I have encouraged good readers to try *The Love Hunter*, *Staggerford*, or *Grand Opening*. The question of whether Chris MacKensie's plan to kill his friend Larry is a mercy killing to save Larry from dying from an advanced case of multiple sclerosis, a scheme to marry Larry's wife, or a combination of the two has fascinated some female readers. However, students who are interested in that question often complain that the portion of the novel devoted to Blackie's hunting camp is too long. *Staggerford*, however, usually generates a more consistent positive response, with most students who start the novel getting involved in the story and responding favorably to it. I have also had success encouraging students to read *Grand Opening*, primarily because I have some students who want to know more about Dodger Hicks once they have read "Dodger's Return," a short story Hassler originally published in the *Twin Citian* magazine. Once they start reading *Grand Opening* they also seem to become interested in Brendan's grandfather and Wallace, the bizarre clerk who works for Brendan's parents. Because of my limited success with these novels, I suspect Hassler's adult novels should be taught if students are going to fully appreciate them, particularly since Hassler's major strength is characterization rather than plotting.

Although she has written only two novels, Kate Green has many admirers each year. "I usually don't read much because I don't have time, but I made time to read this book once I started it. In fact, I read 170 pages the first day I had it," claimed one of my juniors this year in her oral report about *Shattered Moon*. Other students have also commented on how they got caught up in the story of Teresa, a psychic who hears the voices of women killed by a serial killer. An additional attraction of the book seems to be that students don't guess how the novel will end prior to finishing the book, but once they do finish the book, they are content with the way Green chose to end it. Kate Green's most recent book, *Night Angel*, has proven almost as popular as *Shattered Moon*. Set in California, using characters involved with witchcraft and the occult and including flashbacks to the "hippie era," the book quickly grabs the interest of female readers. Male readers usually don't respond as favorably, generally citing the fact that female characters seem to provide the focus for the story with males relegated to minor roles and/or unattractive ones. I can usually predict that students who read one of Green's books for their oral report will read the other one because they like the first one so much.

Marjorie Dorner's mysteries have usually had a similar effect on readers. After she read *Nightmare* this year for her report, one of my students asked if she could borrow my copy of *Family Closets*, Dorner's second book. She also wanted to know if I knew of any other books like

Nightmare that she could read during the summer. What makes Dorner's novels attractive? Female students claim they can empathize with the mother in *Nightmare*, understanding the frustration she feels when she wants Ryter, the child abuser, punished while authorities claim they can't do anything because her daughter goes away before anything really happened. Although students don't always approve Linda Hammond's decision to kill Ryter, they do get drawn into her plans for murder and they do want to know if she will go unpunished for the crime. Although *Family Closets* and *Nightmare* are very different types of books, both have strong female protagonists, women who can and do deal effectively with all of their problems. Most female students comment on how this feature of the books influenced their positive response to the novels, also probably accounting for their desire to read something else by Dorner or someone who writes like her after they have finished one of her books.

L. A. Taylor's mystery novels, particularly those with a St. Louis Park setting, are also attractive to students. Taylor has created an amiable cast of characters for her J.J. Jamison mysteries. J.J., her amateur sleuth, is a computer technician whose hobby is investigating UFO sightings for CATCH, the Committee for Analysis of Tropospheric and Celestial Happenings. J.J. is usually assisted by his wife Karen, a full time housewife who hopes to become a writer, and by Mack Forrester, a St. Louis Park policeman who later starts his own security agency. Students respond favorably to Taylor's use of Minneapolis and the southwestern suburbs as her locale, as well as to her mix of murder mysteries with UFO investigations. My students' favorite Taylor book has been *Only Half a Hoax*, which combines the investigation of a St. Louis Park UFO hoax with the search for the killer of a man left in a car in the Methodist Hospital parking lot. Students have liked, but been less enthusiastic about *Deadly Objectives*, involving the theft of "Aunt Yuk," a gadget J.J.'s employer designed for the Defense Department. High school students don't find company espionage a very gripping subject. By contrast, Taylor's most recent book, *A Murder Waiting To Happen*, drew raves from the only student I had this year who was able to locate a copy. The student liked the setting, a Minneapolis Science Fiction Conference, and the off-beat collection of characters Taylor assembled. *Shed Light On Death*, although it is set in a small town outside Minneapolis, seems to have the same qualities students like in the other J.J. Jamison mysteries: humor, J.J. Jamison and his wife as major characters, an interesting supporting cast of characters, a UFO hoax, and a plausible murder mystery. The few students who I have had report on the non-Jamison mysteries, such as *Poetic Justice*, have usually disliked the books so I don't make much of an effort to encourage students to read them anymore.

Looking for a fast-paced spy novel with a Twin Cities setting? R. D. Zimmerman's *The Red Encounter*, in which Russian agents plot to steal computer secrets from an imaginary Minnesota computer company, fits the bill admirably. Loaded with the usual paraphernalia of the spy novel–chase sequences, assassins, double agents, and intricate plotting–this novel has the added bonus of using a Twin Cities' locale. In one chase sequence, the good guys escape during the traffic congestion created by a Minnesota Twins' baseball game, and later the good guys are trapped by a fire in the abandoned flour mills along the Mississippi River. As one student said, "It made the novel seem real because I've been some of the same places the characters in the novel were." Graphic violence, a minor concern with *The Red Encounter*, constitutes a major concern with *Blood Russian*, where the violence is not only more frequent but also more brutal. Although I like Zimmerman's use of Moscow as his locale for *Blood Russian* and although I like the way he uses the conventions of the American murder mystery with an all Russian cast, I have refrained from recommending the novel to students because of the brutality. The student response I've had to Zimmerman's other two novels, *The Cross and the Sickle* and *Mindscream* has been limited, the former book being difficult to locate since it is out of print and the latter one being a recent publication. The few students who have read *The Cross and the Sickle* have either called it "fascinating" or have claimed they "had a hard time getting into it" and that it "was difficult to follow." *Mindscream*, a medical thriller about the search for a treatment for Alzheimers Disease, received a positive review from the students I have had read it, but even though I also enjoyed the book, I am cautious about making any prediction about how well the novel will fare with a wider range of high school students.

Thomas Gifford's early novels, particularly *The Wind Chill Factor* and *The Glendower Legacy*, have been popular with many readers once they get started reading them. However, the length of the books has occasionally dissuaded some students from trying them. *The Wind Chill Factor* involves a secret Nazi plan to set up a Fourth Reich, a plot which was popular in the 1970s when this novel was written. One student this year noted it "was like other books I've read, only it was better." Set during the American Bicentennial, the *Glendower Legacy* opens with the discovery of a document which "proves" George Washington was a paid secret agent for the British government during the American Revolution. Is it a real document which could force a reassessment of our image of George Washington or it is a forgery created by the KGB to discredit a major American hero? As Harvard history professor Colin Chandler attempts to answer that question he becomes involved in a complex story involving the CIA, the KGB, and double agents which requires close reading or students will get lost in the plot's twists and turns. Close readers usually rave about the book, contending it was worth the attention it required. Gifford's other books don't fare as well with students. After a couple of years of negative reactions from students, I have quit recommending Gifford's other novels *(The Cavanaugh Quest, Hollywood Gothic, The Man From Lisbon)*. I have never recommended the books Gifford has written under the Thomas Maxwell pseudonym because I don't like the pseudo-1930s hard-boiled detective style he tries to imitate.

Frequently I have male students who are interested in reading a war novel, by which they usually mean a book about the Vietnam War. Two selections, very different in style and content, have proven popular. One student who assured me he was a poor reader who had never liked any book he read in school read Ron Glasser's *Another War, Another Peace* in two days and started his oral presentation by telling the class "I guess sometimes reading isn't too bad." Students respond strongly to the story of the veteran sergeant who has to "nursemaid" a greenhorn doctor so the doctor doesn't do something stupid and get himself killed before he learns the "realities" of war. As the story progresses, a bond develops between the poorly educated sergeant and the doctor who recognizes the man's basic intelligence and wants to help provide him with educational opportunities once the war is over. Readers should be cautioned about a graphic scene of death included in the novel, although Glasser avoids the explicit language which presents problems for classroom use of many Vietnam novels. Tim O'Brien's *If I Die In A Combat Zone* is the other book which fascinates readers interested in the Vietnam War, especially male students whose fathers served in the war. The autobiographical novel, detailing O'Brien's experiences from the time he received his draft notice until he completed his tour in Vietnam, seems to give students an idea of what they would have faced if they had been military age at the time of the war. Students often report that O'Brien presents questions without clear cut answers, thus giving them a better understanding of what their fathers faced. Four years ago the first student who reported on this book started his oral report by saying, "This is the best book I have read in school. I wish it had been assigned in place of some of the other stuff I had to force myself to read." Since then, I have heard many students echo that first student's sentiments.

Most people associate Judith Guest with *Ordinary People*, her first novel, but few of my students read the book because I either show the film or use a filmscript originally published in *Literary Cavalcade* with the full class. Students who have read the novel have usually enjoyed it and they have been able to use their oral report time for a comparison-contrast of the novel and the film, in which case the novel usually comes out ahead.

The response to *Second Heaven*, Guest's second novel, seems to depend upon the reading skills and the sophistication of the reader. All readers become engrossed in the story of Gale, the physically abused teenager, but less able readers often complain that the triple focus of the novel–some of the chapters are presented from Gale's point of view, some of them are told from the point of view of two of the other major characters–made the book hard to follow. What those readers want is a greater emphasis on Gale's story and his point of view, almost to the exclusion of the other two major characters. Better readers, however, praise the very quality of the book poor readers have criticized. They contend the triple focus of the novel gives greater depth to all of the characters in the novel. Although I think it lacks the depth of character development found in Guest's other books, teenage mystery buffs have liked *Killing Time In St. Cloud* (coauthored with Rebecca Hill) because they find it easy to follow, with a plausible ending and the added bonus of a St. Cloud locale.

Most students balk when I suggest they elect a play for their independent reading project, but two plays have worked well with students interested in drama. The first student I ever had read August Wilson's *Fences* read it because he saw a short cutting from the play in *Sports Illustrated* and because he had read the newspaper articles about Wilson winning the Pulitzer Prize. In his report to the class, the student compared *Fences* to *Death of A Salesman*, a play all 11th graders have read earlier in the year. Since that time, the few other students I have been able to interest in reading *Fences* have followed a similar plan in their oral report, with students usually contending that *Fences* made more sense and was more interesting than *Death Of A Salesman*. Also, those students have usually contended that the play would have been even better if they had read it orally, a judgment which has made me seriously consider attempting to get enough copies to use in that fashion. So far I have not been able to persuade any students to read Wilson's other plays. For students with an interest in both politics and drama, a combination I usually find in one or two of my classes each year, Lee Blessing's *A Walk In The Woods* has proven to be an excellent choice. This year one student contended "this is the best book I have ever read," high praise indeed since that particular student read a great deal. He justified his conclusion about the merit of the play by stating it "dealt with issues we really have to face, in a way that doesn't oversimplify them. I particularly liked the way the author avoided making the American and the Russian into a good guy and a bad guy, instead making them real people trying to cope with their own and the other side's political systems."

The books I've discussed aren't the only ones suitable for independent reading by high school students, but they provide a solid starting point for any teacher considering a similar project. Supplementing, and in some cases, supplanting my choices with extensive personal reading is the best way for any teacher to insure his/her students will find the independent reading both pleasurable and worthwhile. Also, students give better oral reports if they know their teacher has read the book they are reporting on and teachers are better able to evaluate the oral reports if they have really read the books their students are using for independent reading reports.

Granted, many of the books I have discussed aren't great literature, but is that really important? I think not. The old saw contends "you have to be able to walk, before you can run." In a like manner, students have to like to read and to see some value in reading before they will read and enjoy "great literature," assuming we could even agree on what books fit into that category. I like to use my own experience as a case in point. I read a great deal, not because some teacher convinced me I had to read, but rather because the early reading I did (largely unfocused) was pleasurable and in some cases informative. Sure I read some junk and I still read some books other readers might call junk, but I can't see that it has caused any permanent damage. The more I read and the more I enjoyed reading, the wider my range of reading interests became, eventually including many of the texts which were supposed to be good for me. If I had initially restricted my reading to only books other people thought were good for me, I probably wouldn't read as much and in the wide-ranging fashion I do today. I would like my students to be able to reach a similar conclusion some day.

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Stereotypes: Unquestioned Metaphors

by

Ann Redmond, CSJ

The woman's eyes are heavy with green eye shadow, the pupils brown; her hair is long and dark. The sultry seductress extends her snakeskin clothed arm to show a snake's head formed by the elongated meeting of her thumb and forefinger. As well as giving the impression of a snake's head, her hand holds a black bottle of perfume named, Poison. This ad is powerful and continues the stereotype of women as temptresses, a metaphor which began with Eve and the apple. Ads for the perfume, Obsession, for Calvin Klein jeans, for many brands of make-up, and a long list of products rely on this image of WOMAN AS TEMPTRESS

Metaphors such as this have the power to shape and reflect values and attitudes, which in turn can influence how we think and act. This metaphor, WOMAN AS TEMPTRESS, makes us concentrate on that narrow meaning to the exclusion of other qualities of women. We never see WOMAN AS TEMPTRESS printed in large letters in an ad. There is no need for that because all the visual clues are there through color, facial expression, and the one word Poison, or in other ads: a seductive pose, an exposed body.

In his books, *More Than Cool Reason* and *Metaphors We Live By*, with Mark Turner and Mark Johnson, George Lakoff writes of the power of conceptual metaphors. Because conceptual metaphors influence our thinking and underlie the verbal and nonverbal language we use, they are much more powerful than our spoken or written words. Lakoff and Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* call our attention to two other conceptual metaphors that influence attitudes toward women: RATIONAL IS UP AND EMOTION IS DOWN. A brief list of some expressions in our culture proves the existence of those two conceptual metaphors:

-The discussion fell to the emotional level, but he raised it to the rational level.
-She couldn't rise above her emotions.
-He stood there like a man and didn't break into tears.
-We put our feelings aside and had a rational discussion of the issue.

We have a habit of stereotyping women as emotional and men as rational without questioning that stereotype and without questioning the value of the rational over the emotional.

Constantly we are aware of problems for women caused by our culture's valuing the rational over the emotional. How often have women been kept out of important positions in the business world, in education, in politics, etc., because they might be too emotional to deal with important problems, which supposedly can be dealt with best on the rational level? Because we have been attuned through cultural tradition and through our own patterns of behavior to think of cool logic, divorced from any relational or emotional dimensions as the ultimate level of human abilities, we have learned to undervalue the relational and emotional.

The examples I've just given are conceptual metaphors. We don't often reflect upon these conceptual metaphors but accept them as perfectly valid ways of looking at the world and our personal reality. It is because they are so conventional and automatic that they are powerful.

It becomes clear that stereotypes develop from unquestioned metaphors, like those previously mentioned; and, although they refer to metaphors stereotyping women, we could do a similar analysis of underlying metaphors stereotyping men. Metaphors other than WOMAN IS TEMPTRESS that affect women directly and still persist despite years of refutation through the women's movement are such stereotypes as: WOMAN IS SEXUAL OBJECT. WOMAN IS HER BODY. WOMAN IS A VICTIM. Pornography and much of advertising promote these metaphors. Often the metaphors are subtle, even subliminal, more subtle in mainstream magazines, TV shows, and movies and more blatant in specialized forms of media.

A study showing the prevalence of language supporting the above metaphors appears in the book, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things*, in which George Lakoff reports a study of metaphors for anger done by him and Zoltan Kovecses, a researcher from Czechoslovakia. Their study shows the similarity of expressions and metaphors describing both lust and anger. The uses of language they record voice underlying attitudes and values that substantiate the existence of the conceptual metaphors WOMAN IS SEXUAL OBJECT. WOMAN IS HER BODY. WOMAN IS VICTIM. WOMAN IS TEMPTRESS.

Their research shows that anger and lust are clearly emotions for which our culture generates abundant language. The central and most generally accepted metaphor for our understanding of anger is ANGER S HEAT, and many expressions describing lust echo that conceptual metaphor.

n this metaphor the human body is compared to something like a pressure cooker, which will explode or the lid will blow off if the heat

increases too much thus building up more pressure than the pot can hold. The heat scale in the pressure cooker is mapped onto the anger scale within a person. Explosion is the loss of control. If a person gets angry beyond a certain point, she loses control. When too much anger builds up, he explodes.

The following examples illustrate Lakoff's theory that linguistic expressions illustrate the power of underlying conceptual metaphors. The linguistic expressions arise out of the attitudes and thoughts already present in the conceptual metaphors (capital letters).

Don't get hot under the collar. They were having a heated argument. You make my blood boil. He blew a gasket. ANGER IS HEAT.

She went into an insane rage. You're driving me nuts. He got so angry, he went out of his mind. She'll have a fit. ANGER IS INSANITY.

You need to subdue your anger. He lost control over his anger. She fought back her anger. ANGER IS AN OPPONENT.

He has a monstrous temper. She unleashed her anger. He has a fierce temper. ANGER IS A DANGEROUS ANIMAL (385-405).

Lakoff sees a connection between the language related to the emotion of anger and the high incidence of rape in our country. In some cultures, rape is virtually unknown, and he suggests that the way we conceptualize both lust and anger, together with our various folk theories of sexuality, may be a contributing factor to many instances of violence against women (409).

Lakoff reminds us that anger in America is understood in terms of heat, fire, wild animals, and insanity as well as a reaction to an external force. Just as one can have smoldering sexuality, one can have smoldering anger. One can be consumed with lust and consumed with anger. One can be insane with lust and insane with anger. Desire as well as anger can get out of control. Lakoff believes that the connection between our conception of lust and our conception of anger is by no means accidental, and that this connection has important social consequences (412). Note that many of the following metaphors and expressions are used by both men and women. First I will give common expressions and then list the conceptual metaphors that those expressions generate:

She's an old flame. She's burning with desire. He was consumed by desire. He's still carrying a torch for her. LUST IS HEAT. (ANGER IS HEAT.)

I'm crazy about her. I'm madly in love with him. You're driving me insane. I'm wild over her. LUST IS INSANITY. (ANGER IS INSANITY.)

He's known for his conquests. Better put on my war paint. He fled from her advances. She surrendered to him. LUST IS WAR. (ANGER IS AN OPPONENT.) He's a wolf. He looks as if he's ready to pounce. He preys upon unsuspecting women. You bring out the beast in me. LUST OUT OF CONTROL IS AN ANIMAL. (ANGER IS A DANGEROUS ANIMAL.) (Lakoff, 1987, (409-411).

The previous expressions and the metaphorical concepts underlying them show the connections in our culture between lust and physical force, even war. Because of the great similarity in the language, it's easy to conclude that there must be links in our thinking between anger and lust.

Women's groups fighting pornography and exploitive language against women also see these connections. There are many examples in the language of advertising both verbal and nonverbal that show anger and violence toward women. Often it is subtle, but the messages are there, messages of women being passive, often passive victims to be preyed upon, of being sex objects, or being temptresses and thus deserving of punishment. We often don't take time to analyze ads that illustrate anger and violence against women, but when we are attuned to that kind of exploitive language, we don't have to look far to find them.

More and more women writers in their poetry, novels, research writing, and essays use their gifts with language to instill respect for the power and beauty of the female body and thus counteract the effects of exploitive language.

One such writer is Suzanne Kobasa, who in her doctoral research at the University of Chicago called us to reflect on a strong metaphor for today's woman: WOMAN IS HARDY. In her dissertation Kobasa describes differences between the person who sees herself as a victim and the person who possesses the characteristics of hardiness. The victim views herself as having no choices after a traumatic experience, sees herself as not mattering, and sees no sense in being creative while assuming a victim identity. On the other hand, the person who possesses hardiness has developed the following characteristics: she has a sense that she's in control of her life; changes in her life are seen as challenges and not threats; and she has a sense of commitment to herself. She believes she's worthwhile and can commit herself to actions that are valuable. The use of the word, "hardy," is interesting. It has the connotation of strength, good health, and ability to cope, but it never connotes the kind of strength that dominates another.

Karen Hilgers, CSJ, in her doctoral study on PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS AND THE RAPE VICTIM, shows - not surprisingly - that the victim of rape who possessed hardiness was much better able to cope with that psychological trauma.

Literature, too, often gives us a picture of characters triumphing over seemingly impossible odds. Much literature written by women of color, women who have been subjected throughout the history of our country to terrible violence and dehumanization, is permeated with a sense of triumph over adversity. One such example is Zora Neale Hurston's character, Janie, in *Their Eyes Were Watching God.* Despite relationships with two men who try to rob her of all sense of self, she triumphs and becomes a strong woman. It's not a book about the terrible things that men do to women - although that's present - but about stereotypes and how people live out those stereotypes. In Janie's third subsequent relationship, Hurston writes beautifully about the experience of mutual respectful love between a man and woman. In many ways Janie was a victim, but she clearly possessed that characteristic of hardiness - calling to the fore her own inner reserves despite the dehumanizing experiences to which she was submitted.

WOMAN IS A BUILDER OF NETWORKS is a metaphor underlying many of the endeavors engaging women's time and attention: creation of the aids quilt, Judy Chicago's art and her collaborators in THE BIRTH PROJECT, Women Against Military Madness, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and the many peace organizations in which women are a driving force.

Picturing a woman as a network builder is a better reflection of today's reality than images of women in advertising portraying her as unable to relate to others. Think of the shampoo ads in which a woman is saying, "Don't hate me because I'm beautiful." Of course, the implication is that women hate other women who are more attractive to men than they are. We also have the ads in which a particular cleaning product is a woman's best friend. Those types of ads discount one of a woman's greatest strengths, relational skills.

Janice Raymond in her book, *A Passion for Friends*, gives many examples to support the metaphor: WOMAN IS THOUGHTFULNESS. To think of a woman as embodying thoughtfulness certainly is nothing new. We expect women to be thoughtful; that's one of the roles they play. Raymond suggests there are two ways to explain that word: the ability to reason and the ability to be considerate and caring. She contends that this thoughtfulness should not be a compulsion or an indiscriminate giving to others that knows no limits. Women have been socialized to

react almost instinctively to the needs of others and not from self-directed thinking. This kind of thoughtfulness is actually the opposite of being full of thought (220).

According to Raymond, thoughtfulness informed by thinking is necessary to the sustaining of friendship. Thinking is essential for persons to know and to dialogue with themselves; and without that personal dialogue, they cannot communicate with others (218). The metaphor, WOMAN IS THOUGHTFULNESS, at its best brings together the two meanings of thoughtfulness described by Raymond and joins actions with thought.

It is possible for language-sensitive people to influence, through their writing, speaking, and visual arts metaphors that present positive images of women, such as: WOMAN IS CREATOR OF NETWORKS, WOMAN IS BUILDER OF RELATIONSHIPS, WOMAN IS A WHOLE PERSON - NOT JUST A BODY, WOMAN IS HARDY, WOMAN IS A FRIEND, WOMAN IS THOUGHTFULNESS.

There is hope, because women and men from a variety of lifestyles and professions are becoming attuned to the nuances of language and its unethical use, particularly in the media, and have set about using language that more clearly portrays their values. Tom Stoppard challenges us in *The Real Thing*. "Words are sacred. They deserve respect. If you get the right ones, in the right order, you can nudge the world a little."

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Managing for Quality Learning

by

Sharon L. Hexum

When William Glasser discussed his book, *Control Theory*, at a recent Outcomes Based Education workshop, he presented three roles of teachers. In **counseling** we give a student options on how to deal with his or her situation. In **teaching** we give a student instruction according to his or her agenda or needs. In **managing** we persuade a student according to his or her needs. Glasser added that we really get students to learn while **managing** (persuading), not while teaching (giving instruction). The reason for this is certainly clear to any veteran teacher: We CANNOT force a child to learn. He or she will truly learn only if there is some need for learning. We have become experts in coercion occasionally trying to get a child to learn. But have we really gotten students to learn? Our biggest job has been to get students to want to learn and to think.

With self-motivated students we sometimes feel the managing task is unnecessary. Yet are we challenging these very same students? This question is one I had to face again this year. One of my new assignments is an American literature and composition course. In twenty years of teaching I had never taught American literature. In addition to dealing with a new text, I had to incorporate multicultural, gender fair, handicap aware (or "fair") material by a district directive.

So my challenge was threefold: encourage students to truly learn, incorporate "fair" materials, and cover American literature. The students in the two classes were relatively self-motivated. I knew that the more they were involved, or the more active their learning process, the more they would achieve. Thus, I decided on a cooperative group plan whereby a group would read a novel and present the novel to the others. We would divide the class into four groups and cover four separate novels. I chose those whose author, setting, or characters fit the mc/gf/fa criteria. These titles are incidental but I list these just as examples: Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Edith Warton's *Ethan Frome*, Thorton Wilder's *Bridge Over San Luis Rey* and James Agee's *A Death In The Family*.

For determining group composition and selection of which novel would be read, each student chose a number. In that order the student came forward and chose a book. Six books were in each stack. This selection remained fairly random and "friends" did not all wind up in the same group.

When the groups met, they had to decide a number of things: (1) how many pages they would read by each date. (On the following example you will note a large gap of time. Week 1 started three days prior to winter break and Week 2 continued the week after the break. Week 3 was devoted to group presentations). (2) how they would present the book to the rest of the class and how each member would participate, and (3) which days they would want me to sit in on their discussions – the days they would receive discussion grades.

Next we had to choose criteria for assessing the project. The project would consist of three components – journal, discussion, presentation. Both individual and group work would be considered. The *journal* is a technique we have used all year. Students write their impressions of the author, the style, a summary, and any key comments they need to recall the piece. We used this format with the sections each group set as reading assignments. The *discussion* required the first person to summarize a first portion with comments, the next person to add or clarify, and yet others to ask any questions over that portion. This process was repeated with the next members of the group for discussing the other portions of that reading segment. Answers to questions or comments had to come from within the group. My only job was to validate or clarify some point. The students needed to organize the subsections, to practice cooperative group dynamics, and to be responsible to the group process. The *presentation* had to be complete and clear. This presentation, which the group previewed with me during the second week, had to include contributions of each group member.

PREPARING

On the second day of Week 1, the groups had to set their calendars (they decided what needed to be ready by what deadlines). During Week 2, they had to agree on a presentation plan and continued their daily discussions of the portion they had read. The order of presentation was, again, random. Each group selected a number which represented the order. Each would be allowed up to one half of a class period, 25 minutes.

To allow my sitting in on discussions, I chose alternate days for each group. I found it impossible to do more than 1 group per day. While I was in a discussion group, other groups met to plan, discuss, or prepare their presentation. Because my room is small, some groups met in the hall or stairwells near my room. This worked well for us, but a large area or conference rooms would work well or better. Perhaps because the students were in charge of their own learning and because they were very ACTIVELY involved in the process, I found the groups were most always

on task. The amount of time allowed for the project prohibited any "nonessential" behavior.

At the end of Week 2 and the first day of Week 3, I met with each group to hear their presentation plan

PRESENTING

During Week 3 groups gave their presentations. These were creative, insightful, and interesting: one group, *Native Son*, did a shortened court room scene where Bigger's attorney gives his closing argument; one *Bridge Over San Luis Rey* group built a bridge and placed a figure on the bridge as a student playing that character described his or her life; one of the groups who read *Ethan Frome* filmed a portion of the novel with students playing parts and did a Siskel and Ebert critique of the story; another did a "Meet the Press" show with the students being the experts on the story's meaning, themes, and symbolism. Class members were required to make evaluative comments about each presentation – its clarity, completeness, interest. After groups finished the presentations, the groups reconvened to read what others in class had written. No one was overly critical or overly kind since they each had experienced the same demands.

I found this project accomplished a great deal. Students became active learners. They used higher level thinking at both the application and critical levels. They discussed and shared cultural, gender, and handicap issues and learned a great deal about human nature. Discussions of authors' styles and themes floated between groups with no prompting from me. And in two and a half weeks (with a vacation in between), we had covered FOUR novels. What was exciting was the students' evaluative comments of each other's presentations. Many had decided to read another of the books. This reading spark alone would have been worth the project. Student comments and observations follow:

By participating in groups, we learned to work together as a team to get the project done. Having many different groups enabled the class to get a general idea about 3 or 4 other books through their peers' point of view.

When we did the book report I felt needed because the other students may have gotten along without me, but when they needed 5 people to do their skit, was one of the five. It was a very interesting thing that we did and we had a good time putting it together so I felt really good about it.

I feel that the project was a very good idea. In class if we read, discuss, answer the questions, etc., everyday, it gets very monotonous. With the project we had many areas to choose from, and we could discuss it in our groups. By having such a group we could ask more questions and feel more comfortable than asking it in front of 30 kids. Also the story was more meaningful. Every person had his or her own part. One could concentrate on theme, another on plot, etc. Obviously that gives us a better picture of the story, theme, plot, characters, etc. Finally, it was fun! After we got through the hard stuff, we got to make our own skit. That was the chance to be funny and creative but teach at the same time. I think it worked well. If anyone asked me about my book, I could overwhelm him with the knowledge I had on it. I could also tell the basic plot and theme of the others I heard.

--I felt that the project method of reading novels was a breath of fresh air compared to the drab, traditional method. I liked setting my own deadlines, choosing my own presentation, and so on. It made things easier to deal with.

--I found that the style of presentation was pretty good. Having several people working together lets ideas bounce around, but we have to make compromises. I wanted to throw some special effects on the bridge – blow it up – but that wasn't possible. I wouldn't be thrilled to do something like this again, though.

--I liked that we got to work in groups – setting our own dates, discussing certain parts, deciding on our presentation. (Note: Several students stated similar opinion.)

--The group activity allowed the class the opportunity to hear about other books without reading them. (Note: Three other comments were similar to this one.)

--It was fun working with other people brainstorming, compromising, solving what and how to present something enjoyable to the class.

--It helped me understand literature and how it applies to life.

The role of manager was very rewarding to me and, I believe, was rewarding to the students as well. Persuading students they could and would be in charge of their own learning gave them the responsibility to learn. Books with characters and situations which were not the norm allowed them to face the "fairness" issue and evaluate it. Finally, synthesizing what they had learned and applying it to a new situation by presenting it, provided them with high level thinking opportunities. Perhaps the greatest reward was, however, that with the students in

control, I really had the time to check for understanding during the preparation stage.

(This handout was given to class on first day.)

Name _____ Novel:

Names of those in group:

Plan for reading/discussion deadlines (pages, sections, etc):

12/21
12/22
1/8
1/9
1/10
1/11
1/12

Also present presentation plan:

1/15 Presentation update/questions
1/16 Groups 1 and 2
1/17 Groups 3 and 4
1/18 Groups meet to read evaluative comments
1/19 Whole class discussion of themes, common issues, comments, etc.

Assessment:

/50 pts Journals kept for each reading portion listed above.
/25 pts Discussion on dates listed above

Each person may read or discuss reactions to portions read, ask questions, ask for clarification, summarize, restate themes, symbolisms, etc. BUT EACH PERSON MUST CONTRIBUTE OR GRADE IS LOWERED.

/45 pts Presentation
Plan – incorporate entire group
Info – clarity and completeness of novel to group.
The class will write reactions.

The Invisible Sphere of Time: A Commentary on Katherine Mansfield's *Her First Ball*

by

Catherine McIntire

The phantom of mortality in the form of an old man, her partner in dance, astonishes Leila in the coming of age story by Katherine Mansfield, and Leila is brought face to face at *Her First Ball* with her own finite nature, her own incontrovertible destiny. But, on this brink of awareness, Leila in her youthful "waiting for the world and for herself" (de Beauvoir 375) chooses not to recognize the tyranny of time, the reality of the intruder into her illusion, but to revel in the dazzling moment, the gossamer fairyland of her present. Something like the honey-hungry grizzled bear in "October Light" which in front of James "materialized from invisibility and draped its shadow over him" (Gardner 433), the elemental force of time, the "Beast" of reality in man's life, intrudes on Leila's innocence and youth, intrudes on the "Beauty" of her illusion, a timeless and weightless euphoria. The old man is "life's gravity" (Gardner 11) – the pull from youth to old age, the pull of reality. The creature of nature, namely the aging of man, briefly invades her consciousness; her youth, however, demands that she return to time suspended, to her own personal experience of time, in the present.

> Was it–could it be true? It sounded terribly true. Was this first ball only the beginning of her last ball after all? At that the music seemed to change; it sounded sad, sad; it rose upon a great sigh. Oh, how quickly things changed! Why didn't happiness last for ever? For ever wasn't a bit too long. . . . . 'I want to stop' she said in a breathless voice.

Leila wants to live the instant. As de Beauvoir states in *The Coming of Age*, "As the years go by, it is always the present moment that appears natural to us." (365) Leila is in the "undamaged world" of childhood as described by Ionesco in that book (376) "upon which time has no hold." Mansfield's story shimmers with waiting, with expectation of the instant. "Exactly when the ball began Leila would have found it hard to say." Her self-awareness perhaps begins during the cab ride with her cousins on the way when Leila leaves home and safety to go to the dance. The cab moves the young people from their known homes, from gravity, into a timelessness, a world of white innocence.

Meg's tuberoses (white amaryllis jewelry) Jose's long loop of amber, Laura's little dark head, pushing above her white fur like a flower through snow. She would remember for ever.

Leila is so transported from her experience in this new beauty that she "felt that if there had been time...she would have cried because she was an only child and had missed the closeness of a brother. But, of course, there was no time." She is nostalgic for the future, now present, being "thrown away" before it even becomes the past and even though she is young, in the process of thinking, she grows older. In the cab, Leila's weightless innocence in the dark night (Providence?) directs her toward the dance of life, the deception, the illusion.

Dancing is like breathing–the movement which proves life; in death there is no movement. On his death bed, Ivan Ilyich in Tolstoy's novella asked himself: "What if my entire life, my entire conscious life, simply was not the real thing...(126) Everything you lived by and still live by is a lie, a deception that blinds you from the reality of life and death." (128) Leila's first ball may, for her, be "not the real thing;" when she is suddenly confronted with her own mortality at the end of the story, she prefers to deceive herself. Sally, in reflecting about her nephew, Richard, and his love, the Flynn girl, "swinging each other around and around in a kind of primaeval dance" observed "the natural exuberance of young people in love;" (Gardner 37) "But it was also a dance. An artifice. An illusion." (37)

In the cab, as her cousin throws away "the wisps of tissue paper" from "the fastenings of new gloves" ("Yet how much of life came down to that, really–mere dress-up, ridiculous make-believe!" thinks old Sally) (35), Leila "would like to have kept those wisps as a keepsake, as a remembrance." In de Beauvoir's words,

> "for human reality, existing means existing in time..." and in order to possess the past, "I must bind it to existence by a project; if this project consists of knowing it then I must make it present to myself by means of bringing it back to my memory. There is a kind of magic in recollection, a magic that one feels at every age." (361)

The instant, the wisps of time, are fragile and thrown away so easily by the others; Leila wants to keep them but the instant was already over. The moment can't be held. Only the memory can be held. The moment is to be lived. The future becomes the present which becomes the past.

"The road was bright with moving fan-like lights" like the life ahead of the young people seeming to "float through the air." The illusion is beautiful and it is not until the girls enter the ladies room "patting their hair, tying ribbons again, tucking handkerchiefs down the fronts of their bodices, smoothing marble-white gloves" that the contrasts of youth and old age begin and are subsequently dramatized throughout. "Two old women in white aprons ran up and down tossing fresh armfuls (of wraps)" and "everybody was pressing forward trying to get at...the mirror at the far end." The ethereal setting of the ball becomes a symbol for the deception, the illusion of life, in which human beings rush from youth to old age in order to "see" themselves. "We live the past in the present, a present rich in the future towards which it was hurrying..." (de Beauvoir 366) Leila, in the excitement and anticipation of youth, unknowingly enters the portal of her own self-awareness somewhat reminiscent of King Lear, in his anticipation of old age, entering the portal–the heath–albeit knowingly, of his self-awareness. The process never ends; as de Beauvoir explains Sartre's philosophy, human beings are wittingly or unwittingly always transcending themselves. During the ball many possible viewpoints of this transcendence are dealt with: Leila "sees" her peers; she "sees" the fat man (old age); the old man "sees" her (youth); and, the old man "sees" his peers. They do not seem to "see" themselves. The story moves as delicately as a waltz into this ethereal world.

The drill hall, the routine of life, is transformed for Leila into a fairyland because it is her first ball. For the others, the ball has already become a drill, a routine; she finds it "hard" to be "indifferent" like the others. The reader sees that Leila, tenderly vital and alert (as the old man, her dance partner also is) sees her peers as "strange faces"–smiling "sweetly, vaguely" with "strange voices"–girls who "didn't really see her," like the irony within the statement in the ladies' room "I can't see a single invisible hair pin." The pinnacle of time and experience she is in is just as invisible to her peers as the pinnacle of time and experience the old man is in, is as invisible to Leila.

Leila is alone the Cinderella at the ball. The "long white wand" of Miss Eccles, her dance instructor, her fairy godmother, has prepared her for this moment. "White often represents timelessness and ecstasy" and purity of emotion (Cirlot 58) and "black comes to symbolize time." (58) Mansfield's story moves from a predominance of references to white, through the pink and white, and red and gold of the ball, to a predominance of references to black. Laura in her pink velvet cloak, symbolic of the flesh color of youth and sensuality (54) is "lifted past the big golden lantern" and "carried along the passage." The chaperons, however, "the poor old dears" (as the old man later refers to them) were "in dark dresses, smiling rather foolishly" and "walked with little careful

steps over the polished floor towards the stage." The story is filled with images of movement and freedom, of weightlessness and flying–exuberant "fluttering" and "floating" beyond the gravitational pull of age and reality–like the "little satin shoes" which "chase each other like birds." The fateful threads of invisible time spin the reader into a magic swirl of pink and silver programmes, pink pencils and fluffy tassels, pink satin feet, golden lanterns, gilt chairs, the gleaming "golden floor," the red carpet, and the azaleas "which became pink and white flags streaming by." No wonder Leila exclaims breathlessly of her revel in such a fairyland: "How heavenly; how simply heavenly!" just like when Sally reads in her book, "the real world lost weight." (Gardner 21) In observing the airy world of the glistening ball the "rush of longing: for the safety of home" changed to a "rush of joy so sweet that it was hard to bear alone." Leila is as full of great expectations as Pip, waiting for the world and for herself; "quite suddenly" that world glides toward her.
Willa Cather observed about Katherine Mansfield that:

> It was usually her way to approach the major forces through comparatively trivial incidents. She chose a small reflector to throw a luminous streak out into the shadowy realm of personal relationships. I feel that the personal relationships, especially, the uncatalogued ones, the seeming unimportant ones, interested her the most. (Charters 739)

The "small reflector" in this story would seem to be the old man; he reflects like the "mirror at the far end" what she will become with the ravages of time; he throws a luminous streak out into Leila's night like when she looked through the dark windows at the stars, with "long beams like wings." Old age is often associated with night and youth with day, but one of several ironies in this story is that even though her golden moment is shattered by the shadow of death in the form of the old man, he is not just the "Beast" of time. Although reluctant to recognize time and her old age (as the reader sees by the end of the story), it is through the old man's perception of her that Leila crosses the threshold of time and looks into that "mirror at the far end." Light and dark dance contrapuntally in a double dimension throughout the story. The first mention of night is Leila's "rush of longing" to be in the country moonlight at home, in safety. The second mention is after a few dances when "she was only at the beginning of everything," when she was still feeling the thrill of her first ball; until this point in her own time, she "had never known what the night was like before...it had opened dazzling bright." The night of herself becomes day; she has moved from seeing herself as others see her to a self-reflection; the dark becomes light with the beginning of understanding available only through the passage of time.

The third mention of night (the stars through dark windows which had "long beams like wings") captures the idea of time, through the dark unknown future, equaling flight, equaling light.

Leila's thoughts float in and out of dark and light–the night midway through the story had opened "dazzling bright"–her passage to enlightenment became, anachronistically by the end of the story, a passage into the dark awareness of her own mortality. When the old man–"fat, with a big bald patch on his head–took her programme" the word *black* is used for the first time; this rotund partner, weighty with years of experience compares his programme "black with names" as though he is deliberately adding one more dance, one more memory, to his already "black" full life schedule. The contrast between youth and age is dramatized by the use of white, the absence of all color, and black, the presence of all color. Leila seeks to avoid him "Oh, please, don't bother," when "he was a long time comparing his programme with hers." In *Why Survive* Robert Butler observes in "Growing Old Absurd" that "negative attitudes toward the old range from pity and infantilization to avoidance or direct hostility." (402) She sees him as an unpleasant interruption and so offers denial; the young girl sees him as old but as de Beauvoir points out: "Old age is more apparent to others than to the subject himself." (284) The old man is busy being young, collecting new dances, new memories. The old man looks at Leila: "Do I remember this bright little face?" he said softly. "Is it known to me of yore?" The old man sees youth, (as she sees age) rather than the person, perhaps a mirror of his internal self when he looks at Leila; does he know the face of youth from years long past? Suddenly, this old man is "tossed away on a great wave of music that came flying over the gleaming floor, breaking the groups up into couples, scattering them, sending them spinning..." This symbol of Father Time (the old man) disappears in an atomic-like explosion, a turbulent ocean of life, disappears in spinning time itself. Butler says, "a unique contribution of the elderly includes models for,...and a sense of the entire life cycle." (406) This old bald, fat man is himself the ball of life tossed on the great wave of music (time); life and time synthesize into each other, the ball, which is he.

Like an ethereal fairy, Leila is transported by the music; even if her partner didn't come and "she had to listen to that marvelous music...she would die at least, or faint, or lift her arms and fly..." But, her partner does come; "she hadn't to die after all." The early partners are routine, mundane, commenting blasely about the floor while Leila's spirit dances and defies the gravity of space and time. De Beauvoir in "Time Activity and History" quotes Ionesco:

> Two days (travelling) in a new country are worth thirty lived in familiar surroundings, thirty days worn and shortened, spoiled and damaged by habit. Habit polishes time–you slip as you do on an overwaxed floor. A new world, a world always new, always young, an everlasting world–that is what Paradise means.(376)

While the habituees comment routinely about the floor, Leila's experience is fresh and not yet habit and she thinks the floor is "most beautifully slippery." (Perhaps it is Time that Leila gracefully slips into?) Surely the floor is slippery–habit does polish time–but Leila is still on the brink of waiting for herself and of discovering the slipperiness of the floor. All is yet new to her; she is still in her own Paradise. The ball symbolizes Leila's Paradise like the roundish pear tree in *Bliss* by Mansfield symbolizes Bertha's Eden, her own zenith of experience. Both young women are on the verge of perfection soon to be ruined with an intrusion of the truth they don't want to recognize. In *The Doll's House* by Mansfield, a prestigious family is given an elaborate doll house and two poor, outcast sisters are forbidden to see it; no one deigns to recognize their need to glimpse the beautiful pretense but Kezia, of the household. When she invites them in, they see for themselves the perfect "little lamp was real." The moment of seeing the lamp, the moment of perfection, is ruined when the outcast girls are literally cast out of the courtyard. In *Her First Ball*, the golden lanterns "throw a luminous streak" too, a light of perfection before the uncertainty provocated by *awareness* of life and time leads into the darkness of life's certainty, death. As Bertha's story ends, she asks, "Oh, what is going to happen now?" Leila is on this same verge of "what is going to happen now?" ("She was only at the beginning of everything.") Throughout the duration of the story, she is in and out of passages, through swinging doors, back and forth from dark to light, from memories of safe home to sensations of immediate rapture, from youth to age. She, like Bertha, is thirsty with the fire of desire for life ("her cheeks burned"), for the sweetness and perfection of life:

> She was fearfully thirsty. How sweet the ices looked on little glass plates, and how cold the frosted spoon was, iced too.

The glass and the ice echo Cinderella's glass slipper-perfection, frozen, the instant in time, frozen.

But, time can't be frozen. When "they came back to the hall there was the fat man waiting for her by the door." Youth "sees" old age; "it gave her quite a shock again to see how old he was; he ought to have been on the stage with the fathers and mothers." She devalues him as a person; she sees only his ungainly shabbiness, only his age, something as Pip

sees Magwitch as evil because he is old. (However, Pip is "converted" and at the end of *Great Expectations* there is a joining of young and old). She assumes the stereotypical response of youth to the elderly, that the old man should act his age, retire from the action, remove himself from dancing, from the movement of life, to become static like "the aged parent" in Dickens' novel. In *Leaving Cheyenne* by Larry McMurtry, a community Christmas dance in Texas, 1917, engenders a similar response between two young friends when Johnny, the cowboy, asks Gid:

> Why do you reckon all these old folks want to get out there and dance? It's just making a spectacle of themselves, if you ask me.

Gid thinks:"I thought so too. The whole town was there...Everybody that could move danced. Fat ones and skinny ones and ugly ones and pretty ones...I even seen a preacher dance one set, and..."

"Unnatural" is associated with the old (classnotes), and Leila sees the fat man as acting unnaturally. He is not part of her fantasy; his reality intrudes. He is life's gravity pulling on her. She sees not the person who is so like herself–tenderly vital and alert–she sees only *old*. If she has dismissed the old as being removed, "up" on the stage, away from the dance of life, she now has to confront a contradiction: the outward form of an old man "creased" (his waistcoat), "dusty" (his coat) "with a button off his glove" (used, old, counter-point to new gloves in the beginning of the story) with the inward vitality of a man still participating in the dance of life. In the "Discovery and Assumption of Old Age" de Beauvoir asserts:

> There is nothing that obliges us in our hearts to recognize ourselves in the frightening image that others provide us with. That is why it is possible to reject that image verbally and to refuse it by means of our behaviour, the refusal itself being a form of assumption. (294)

His perceptions and behavior are active, not passive; they belie what he says; he is propelled by the "Being Within" his "in-itself" de Beauvoir identifies. He seems to be as incredulous about the passage of his 30 years as Leila is: "It hardly bears thinking about, does it?" Regarding time, de Beauvoir acknowledges "We always have the whole of our life behind us, reduced to the same form and size at all ages: in perspective, 20 years are equal to 60...in spontaneous impression." (375) "The swing doors opened and shut" like the doors of awareness into time. For the old man, time contracts. "Old age is beyond his life, outside it," like de

Beauvoir says of hers, "something of which I cannot have any full inward experience." (291)

"At the threshold of adolescence the image-what we are through the vision that others have of us–falls to pieces: and we don't know what to replace it with...A similar hesitation and uncertainty appears at the threshold of old age." (291)

De Beauvoir quotes deSivigne (in 1687) regarding old age and time:

> But it is day by day that we go forward; today we are as we were yesterday and tomorrow we shall be like ourselves today. So we go on without being aware of it, and this is one of the miracles of that Providence which I so love.(287)

Both Leila and the old man are on a threshold of time; both are active and alert to life's moments. Both are participating in the dance. Even though the time–distance between Leila and the old man is truly diminished because of the threshold they share, only the reader can see this truism. De Beauvoir quotes Sartre regarding youth:

> One is in a state of waiting for the world and for oneself...one emerges transformed...It is a period at which one cannot seize and embrace time either by projects or by memory, since time tears one from oneself. (375)

The old man tears Leila from herself–why she becomes so alarmed. He carries the burden of being older, the burden to assess life, to tell all like Jim Burden, the narrator in *My Antonia* by Willa Cather. The weight of knowing that "all life...is a brief and hopeless struggle against the pull of the earth" (Gardner11) is too great to bear alone, one surmises, just like "Leila's "rush of joy" was "so sweet that it was hard to bear alone." As Butler maintains, "older people are apt to be reflective rather than impulsive." (408) "Age changes our relationship with time: as the years go by our future shortens, while our past grows heavier." (de Beauvoir 361) The reflections are forced because the future is foreshortened; the mirror is no longer "at the far end." The old man, like the old man in Ionesco's *The Chairs* is anxious: "I must tell it all." (484) The old become anxious about their health, their mortality, their own life story dying when they die much more than they exhibit. (de Beauvoir 301) "Old age is a heavy burden," says the old man in *The Chairs*. (488) In *Her First Ball*, the old man "pressed her a little closer" and using sarcasm (like Joe Allston as a weapon against the phantom of death) "chases" old age (and death) "like a cue ball chases the other balls on the pool table" with his

facetious comments about Leila soon to be "sitting up there on the stage, looking on." He "takes in external expectations and spits them out like Joe Allston." (classnotes) Just as Joe Allston (all stone? weight? burden of age?) in Stegner's *The Spectator Bird*, belies what he says by his own actions, the old man, a cue ball himself, ironically pokes and prods the stereotypes of old age-on the stage–while he dances. He is "reaching out" about old age like Norman did in *On Golden Pond* to get Leila to recognize her own temporality as well as to internalize how he is "supposed" to see himself. Inadvertently through his body language, he is not among those on the stage; he sees old age as outside of himself.

The resurgence of the color black casts a pall for Leila; he describes her in her future old age:

> In your nice black velvet and these pretty arms will have turned into little short fat ones, and you'll beat time with such a different kind of fan–a black bony one.

The ribs of the black fan foreshadow the ribs of the skeleton in death; the elemental force of time "drapes its shadow" invisibly over Leila. The fat man "seemed to shudder," for he is closer to his description than Leila, and he knows it. The fantasy of the ball turns into phantasmagoria as Leila in a flickering moment begins to see the phantoms of her own old age. In "the Being in the World" de Beauvoir quotes Goethe: "Age takes hold of us by surprise." (283) On the dance floor age has taken hold of Leila by surprise. She is catapulted into her own future by the old man's comments:

> And you'll smile away like the poor old dears up there and point to your daughter, and tell the elderly lady next to you how some dreadful man tried to kiss her at the club ball. And your heart will ache, ache,...because no one wants to kiss you now.

Instead of the floors being "beautifully slippery" as Leila observed when she "first floated away like a flower that is tossed in a pool" "these polished floors" will become in her old age unpleasant and dangerous, remarks the old man. "Habit polishes time" and slips and slides one closer to old age and death. He addresses her "softly" (for the second time): "Eh, Mademoiselle, Twinkletoes?" quietly acknowledging her Cinderella fairy status. Pertinent to the old man's wistful comment about the kiss, one can sense the longing in his voice whereas Leila is in a rush to grow up.

> The old person often desires to desire because he retains his longing for experiences that can never be replaced and because he is still attached to the erotic world he built up in his youth or maturity...we wish for eternal youth, and this youth implies the survival of the libido. (de Beauvoir 319)

Perhaps the old man is truly not only Father Time but also "Providence" leading her "kindly" and "gently" over the threshold of self-awareness. But, as in *The Coming of Age*, we humans are "astonished when the common fate becomes our own." (283) Leila thinks:

> Was it--could it all be true? It sounded terribly true. Was this first ball only the beginning of her last ball after all? At that the music seemed to change; it sounded sad, sad; it rose up a great sigh. Oh, how quickly things changed! Why didn't happiness last for ever? For ever wasn't a bit too long.

Leila must escape time; she must make it stand still: "I want to stop," she said in a breathless voice. Butler says that "our bodies are us and grief can easily be aroused over signs of the ultimate loss of one's self." (403) Leila becomes sad, if not grieving, for her old self sitting on the stage, removed from the ball of life. Leila has been jolted like the Baron in Giradoux's *The Madwoman of Chaillot* "You mean all those people are fighting to buy stock in a company that has no object?" Leila wants to stop so that she can suspend herself in time: "I won't go outside. I won't sit down. I'll just stand here, thank you."

The fairyland ball Leila was so swept up in becomes "not the real thing." (As Ivan Ilyich thinks about his life) Ilyich thinks that what he had done with his life has been a "deception that blinds from the reality of life and death." Leila, too, has been blinded by the deception, the artful beauty of the dance, the magic of the moment until now, her encounter with Time, with the old man, and with seeing herself.

At the end of Ivan Ilyich's life "the pain took a new turn: it began to grind and shoot and constrict his breathing." (Tolstoy 129) Similarly, Leila becomes breathless, a mini-death, an emotional constriction as she comes face to face with her own mortality. "Beauty," elusive youth, has faced the "Beast" of human reality, the existence of time. In *Her First Ball* and *Bliss* the balloon of euphoria, the exuberant, innocent weightlessness of spirit is pierced by an instant of awareness, an instant of reality which the protagonist does not want to see. Leila wants the moment of perfection, youth ("pinkness") to last for ever, perhaps as a keepsake to remind her of the fragility of her own self. When the perfection of the moment is ruined, she wants to throw "her pinafore over her head and

sob..." like Ilyich who after long suffering "wanted most of all to be pitied like a sick child. He wanted to be caressed, kissed, cried over, as sick children are caressed and comforted." (129) Leila asks: "Why had he spoiled it all?" The heavy realization thuds into her life; she has no choice but to wrest herself from the arms of time and to stand still, trying to recapture her breath, her life, her meaning. The sweets of life have been spilled, like Molly's molasses in *Leaving Cheyenne*, Book II, the fairyland spoiled. Her golden moment is shattered. The "passage" toward the big double doors at the drill hall" have led Leila to this metamorphosis, to when "the world first took on its face" for her. (de Beauvoir 362)

When Leila quits the dance in dismay because of what he has told her, the old man says "I say, you know, you mustn't take me seriously, little lady." The inner being of the old person "does not accept the label that has been stuck to him." (291) The inner being of Whitey, the grandfather in "Hey Sailor, What Ship?" by Tillie Olsen similarly does not accept the label "wino" his granddaughter dismisses him with. And when Helen, the mother, tells her young daughter "of course he belongs here, he's a part of us, like family...Jeannie, this is the only house in the world he can come into and be around people and places without having to pay...He knows more about people and places than almost anyone I've ever known. You can learn from him." Jeannie responds "He's just a Howard Street wino, that's all...just a wino." (34) In her youth, she can't "see" beyond the exterior shell either.

Even though Leila wants to throw her pinafore over her head and sob like a child she does not; like Ilyich, who assumed a "serious stern, profound expression" (104/105), Leila adopts a similar stern tactic of superciliousness: "As if I should!" in response to the old man's comment about not taking him seriously. She tosses "her small dark head" and sucks her underlip and dismisses the gloomy old man rather like Sonja, the opaque young wife in *Providence* dismisses the question about death with a blank look and "I don't think about it." Both refuse to see; both young women deny. Even Ethel in *On Golden Pond* denies her husband's old age until the crucial moment of his attack. Leila opens and shuts the doors of her mind like "the swing doors opened and shut." Leila "didn't want to dance any more;" she wanted "to be home," in a safe place. The "sudden alteration: in her awareness" destroyed her tranquillity (de Beauvoir 287) and she wanted to retreat to recapture where she had been, her past, before.

The new music began a "soft, melting, ravishing tune...and a young man with curly hair bowed before her." The present seduces her; the new moment in time captures her, so that like in life, the future becomes the present becomes the past and "in one minute, in one turn, her feet glided,

glided." Her youth tosses her into the beautiful flying wheel of life, the wheel of fortune, of lights, azaleas, dresses, pink faces, velvet chairs. The color and softness and immediacy overwhelm her. "In one minute" she defies life's gravity by getting caught up again in that fairyland world, her first ball. Cinderella refuses to allow the clock to strike midnight; Leila refuses to allow herself to recognize what the accrual of the golden moments lead to–old age–

> And when her next partner bumped into the fat man and he said 'Pardon,' she smiled at him more radiantly than ever. She didn't even recognize him.

as Sevigne was quoted, "So we go on without being aware of it..." The moments piled upon moments eventually lead to our human personal experience of time, our burden. Even though the old man serves as "life's gravity," the weight or burden of time, the pull from youth to old age, he simultaneously also defies gravity and old age by asserting his spirit in movement, in dancing. He is not "weighed down with grief" like Rockwell Gardner 424); he is buoyed up on "the great wave of music." This spherical character is like the pivotal axis on which human understanding of itself turns.

There is no joining of youth and age in this story. The old man is part of the human family, the ball, a "place in the world he can come into and be around people..." but like Jeannie, Leila does not want to learn from him. She wants to shut out old age. When she "didn't even recognize him again," old age has become invisible to her just as she was invisible to the girls who were supposed to "be nice to her." "But Leila felt the girls didn't really see her." They were looking elsewhere, like Leila at the end of the story, smiling "radiantly" (glassily?) preoccupied with her own life and the magic of the instant. Leila herself transforms the old man to an invisible state perhaps to arrest her own pendulum of time.

Joe Allston ruminates in *The Spectator Bird*:

> Who was ever in any doubt that the self-esteem of the elderly declines in this society which indicates in every possible way that it does not value the old in the slightest...and generally ignores them...? And which has a chilling capacity to look straight at them and never see them. (116)

He refers to modern American society, yet Mansfield reflects a different society before her death in 1923. It seems that Time is the real culprit, the "evil" ravisher. Human beings want to revel in the instant but they

can't because time intrudes; it "materializes from invisibility" and saps youth, so–thinks youth–to ignore Time, to not "see" it, is to control it. Our thirst and "wish for eternal youth" (de Beauvoir 319) sucks us into the vortex of the ball, the flying wheel. Only as Leila and the old man are both part of this flying wheel are they joined, but even then, all whirling in the ball of life, youth does not "see" age. De Beauvoir comments:

> We carry this ostracism so far that we even reach the point of turning it against ourselves: for in the old person that we must become, we refuse to recognize ourselves.(4)

At the end of the story, everyone is dancing to the new music; invisible Time and the globe move on. Life is a dance, a ball, a celebration. The bald, fat old man is the compounded roll, the fruition of life. It is Leila's loss that she does not "recognize" the Beauty within the Beast.

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Closing the Gap Between Literature and the Social Studies: An Introduction to Writers of the Non-Western World

by

Thomas J. Scott

The study of culture is an important component in the curriculum of secondary social studies classes such as Global Studies, World History, Anthropology, and Sociology. Studying culture is also an important component of classes in literature departments such as World Literature, American Studies, and the Humanities. Within this curricular context, teachers of both social studies and literature often have little knowledge of the development and transformation of cultures outside the Western world. As a result, non-Western culture is typically overlooked in the curriculum or given superficial treatment. Often it is presented in a manner which reinforces existing stereotypes of life in the developing world.

Reading and analyzing non-Western literature is one method of providing teachers and students with important insights into the cultural development and transformation of societies in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. I was able to gain deeper insights into the nature of life in the developing world through an Independent Study Grant provided by The Council for Basic Education in Washington, D.C. In my study I read 15 works of fiction written by novelists from Africa, Latin America, and Asia. From the reading of non-Western literature I attempted to fulfill several objectives: (1) to gain a deeper understanding of the human dimension of life in a developing society; (2) to synthesize literature and social sciences to gain a clearer perspective of the political, economic, social, and literary realities of developing societies; (3) to acquire a more broad understanding of the humanities and how it can be applied in the context of the non-Western world; (4) to gain more in-depth knowledge of non-Western culture; and (5) to enhance respect for multiculturalism and global awareness. In short, I undertook the study to overcome a Western bias which I feel is found in much of the curriculum of both the social studies and the humanities. I agree with the comments of Rick Simonsen and Scott Walker, editors of the book *Multicultural Literacy: Opening The American Mind*, who state: "Americans need to broaden their awareness and understanding of the cultures of the rest of the world. Other histories and cultures reveal ancestry and knowledge that has bearing on who we are and where we are going." (1) Literature

provides an unique and insightful way of fulfilling the old dictum that "through others we see ourselves."

In the discussion that follows I will present brief descriptions of the work of six novelists from the developing world: Ezekiel Mphahlele (South Africa), Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), Ba Jin (People's Republic of China), R.K. Narayan (India), Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombia), and Miguel Angel Asturias, (Guatemala). For each writer's work I will illustrate various economic, political, and social themes apparent in the novel, provide questions which are designed to help teachers gain a clearer perspective of non-Western culture, and suggest ways the novels can be utilized in a classroom setting.

I

Ezekiel Mphahlele writes in *Down Second Avenue* of the psychological torment associated with living under apartheid in South Africa. His experience is one of confronting oppression, facing the constant demonstration of racial superiority displayed by whites, and the continuous struggle to avoid the misery of poverty. Life for Mphahlele is one of a second class citizen who has little stake in the future of his country. His story is one of personal transformation, rebellion, and triumph over injustice and the power of a totalitarian state.

In *Things Fall Apart* Chinua Achebe describes the slow, steady encroachment of an alien religion, Christianity, and its impact upon centuries of tradition and spiritual development among the Ibo of West Africa. Through the use of Ibo proverbs and an exploration into traditional economic and political practices, Achebe portrays the Ibo as a rational, forgiving, fair, and at times, violent society. Decisions are based on consensus, historical precedent, spiritual forcefulness, and communal interests. With the introduction of Christianity, traditional Ibo practices and beliefs come under attack. In conjunction with the colonial military administration, missionaries establish an arbitrary legal system which discriminates against non-Christians. Communal laws and allegiances are undermined and the family structure is placed under severe strain. Ultimately, the Ibo fall under total foreign domination and the once proud culture is left weak and fragmented.

In the novel *Family* Ba Jin describes the gradual disintegration of the patriarchal family structure and Confucian ethics caused by an influx of Western values during the May 4th Movement of early twentieth century China. The destruction of the Kao family becomes a motif for the larger destruction of Chinese norms and values caused by the Western influences of humanism, feminism, and socialism. In this conflict

between cultural value systems, the Kao family splits along generational lines with the younger members embracing Western ideas and the older members clinging to the ways of the past.

R.K. Narayan writes a coming of age novel tracing the adolescent years of a young Indian living under British colonialism in *Swami and Friends* Narayan emphasizes several universal themes about growing up in his novel: the happiness of making friends and the despair of losing them; the conflict involved in understanding the older generation; the realization that politics often has a direct impact on people's lives; and the discovery of self. *Swami and Friends* portrays a picture of the British Raj as a colonial administration which denigrates Indian values and religious practices. In the face of this denigration the protagonist, Swami, turns to the teachings of the Hindu classics, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*, and the spiritual and ethical guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. In doing this, Swami creates a pure Indian identity which allows him to cope with the constant pressures to become more "English."

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is rich in metaphors and parody. The ill-fortunes of the Buendia family become synonymous with the rise and fall of Latin American social, economic, and political institutions. Garcia Marquez views Latin America as being stricken with mediocre leadership, economic exploitation, unchecked militarism, and a libertine, landowning aristocracy.

Miguel Angel Asturias analyzes the triad of redemption, identity, and the resurrection of the indigenous Indians of Central America in his novel *Men of Maize*. Asturias utilizes a writing style referred to as "magical realism" (2) in which the difference between animate and inanimate, the real and the imagined become blurred in a mystical array of images based on Indian oral tradition, myths, and legends. Although Asturias relies on symbolism and naturalistic metaphors, the novel contains a shocking realism which identifies the destitution, exploitation, and political violence experienced by Central America's indigenous peoples. Asturias cleverly masks the cultural genocide of traditional peoples through his imagery. *Men of Maize* identifies man's inherent desire for greed at the expense of an entire race and the environment that sustains them.

In each of the novels described above the writers have confronted the interplay between cultural tradition and the movement toward modernization, often reflected through Western values and philosophy. In the resulting conflict much is at stake. Not only are centuries of cultural development threatened but the search for self, often defined by cultural tradition, is thrown into flux. As such, each writer describes a struggle

of gigantic proportions. On the one hand, there exists the desire to prevent Western encroachment and to protect the self from being lost in some modernistic, Western void. On the other hand, "all things modern" and the values associated with modernism have a magnetic appeal. The extreme individualism and personal freedom found in Western culture becomes difficult to resist in a tradition bound society.

From the standpoint of the classroom these writers represent voices from the globe's "silent majority." An analysis of their works provides teachers and students alike with deeper insights into the human condition, at least from the perspective of those who have felt the pain of oppression, poverty, and the denial of human rights. Reading the works of these writers begs us to ask questions that should not be ignored in our daily classroom instruction. In the discussion that follows I will attempt to identify key conceptual questions which arise from the novels described above and the ways in which these questions can be applied in a classroom setting.

II

For Ezekiel Mphahlele Second Avenue was his "springboard of slum life." It was here he experienced first-hand the oppression associated with being black and living in the apartheid system. Mphahlele eloquently expresses the injustice of apartheid when he writes:

> Black man cleans the streets but mustn't work freely on the pavement; Black man must build homes for the white man but cannot live in them; black man cooks the white man's food but eats what is left over. (p. 17)

Excerpts such as this give students a vivid impression of life under apartheid. In *Down Second Avenue* students can gain a clearer perspective of what it means to be black in South Africa. After exploring the historical characteristics of apartheid in South Africa several important questions can become the focus of class discussions:

1. What is racism and for what reasons does it occur?
2. Based on Mphalele's personal account, what psychological effect does racism have upon the individual? Upon society?
3. Are there similarities between the racism which exists in South Africa and that which exists in the United States?
4. What strategies can be created to reduce racist ideas?

Classroom activities might involve discussion activities that explore the impact of racism upon the individual. Students might write a research paper comparing the black liberation movement in South Africa with the black civil rights movement in the United States. Debates could analyze whether non-violent civil disobedience or violent armed struggle is the best method for promoting black majority rule in South Africa.

In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* the deleterious impact of colonialism upon the peoples of West Africa is aptly described in the following discourse given by an Ibo elder during a village feast:

> ...I fear for you young people because you do not understand how strong is the bond of kinship. You do not know what it is to speak with one voice. And what is the result? An abominable religion has settled among you. A Man can now leave his father and brothers. He can curse the gods of his fathers and his ancestors, like a hunter's dog that suddenly goes mad and turns on his master. (p. 156-157)

Achebe's novel presents teachers with a unique method of introducing the history of European colonialism in Africa. Questions worthy of classroom attention might include the following:

1. What enabled Europeans to subject African people to colonial rule?
2. What was the social, economic, political, and cultural impact of colonialism upon traditional African societies?
3. According to Achebe, what relationship exists between religion and European success in creating colonial control in Africa?
4. What is the relationship between the era of European control in Africa and the current situation of under-development common to many African nations which experienced colonialism?

After reading *Things Fall Apart* students will acquire insights into traditional West African culture, the impact of colonialism upon West African societies, and the complexity of cross-cultural conflict. A variety of classroom activities would be appropriate. For example, students might engage in a comparative study of colonialism between a specific country in Africa and one in Asia or Latin America. Students might want to read selections from Franz Fanon's *Black Faces White Masks*, writing an essay analyzing the effect that colonialism had upon the African identity. Parallels with *Things Fall Apart* could be given. Groups could engage in role playing exercises in which they recreated the various positions of those involved in the colonial relationship. Students would then research the various attitudes toward colonial rule of European politi-

cians promoting an imperialist philosophy, European merchants wanting to establish trade networks abroad, missionaries, and African tribal leaders whose villages were effected by colonial rule.

Likewise, in R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* students can gain an adolescent's perspective of growing up under colonial rule. Teachers could design lessons comparing the approach that Narayan's protagonist, Swami took in coping with the colonial presence in his country with the very different approach used by Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart.*

In *Family,* Ba Jin's intergenerational conflict is best characterized by the attitude of the young protagonist, Chueh-hui, who looks at his grandfather and states:

> It seemed to him that the person lying in the cane reclining chair was not his grandfather but the representative of an entire generation. He knew that the old man and he - the representative of the grandson's generation - could never see eye to eye. (p. 67.)

From a reading of *Family* students gain an appreciation for the process of cultural change and how it effects traditional values, beliefs, and institutions such as the family. Lessons should provide background material on the impact of Confucius on the Chinese value system. Class discussions might revolve around the following questions:

1. What role do values play in society?
2. In the passing of one generation to another is conflict inevitable for society?
3. Why do Western values seem so attractive to many non-western cultures? From reading *Family* what do you think are the positive and negative aspects of the introduction of Western values into a society such as China?
4. Do you think the United States is undergoing a crisis of values similar to that which China experienced in the early twentieth century?

Classroom activities might include a comparative study of the May 4th Movement of 1919 and the student demonstrations in Tiananamen Square in June of 1989. Students could write essays analyzing Western and non-Western interpretations of the role of the family, educational practices, belief systems, and work. Finally, students could write a position paper analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of cultural change in society.

From a Latin American perspective, Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* also examines cultural contacts between modern and traditional societies. With regard to "invading gringos" Garcia writes:

> No one knew yet what they were after, or whether they were actually nothing but philanthropists, and they had already caused a colossal disturbance, much more than that of the old gypsies, but less transitory and understandable. Endowed with means that had been reserved for Divine Providence in former times, they changed the pattern of the rains, accelerated the cycle of harvest, and moved the river from where it had always been and put it with its white stones and icy currents on the other side of town, behind the cemetery. ...so many changes took place in such a short time that eight months after Mr. Herbert's visit the old inhabitants had a hard time recognizing their own town. (p. 214-215)

After reading *One Hundred Years of Solitude* teachers may want to analyze the history of American foreign relations with Latin America. Students can gain a clearer picture of how the military, church, and ruling oligarchies have effected Latin America's economic, political, and social development. Discussion questions might include the following:

1. Why has the United States maintained such an aggressive foreign policy with regard to Latin America?
2. Has United States policy toward Latin America aided or disrupted the region's political development?
3. Do you think Garcia Marquez's attitude toward U.S. involvement in Latin America is shared by most Latin Americans?
4. Garcia Marquez suggests that landownership, the Church, and the military are institutions which have had the greatest impact on Latin America's historical development. What role has the United States taken in supporting these institutions?

Lessons related to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* might include essays investigating the search for democracy in Latin America. Students could research the history of U.S. military intervention in the region, drawing conclusions as to whether the interventions were justified. Finally, students could write a creative piece which traces the life and times of a landless family in Latin America. How would their life story be different from the life of the Buendia Family?

In *Men of Maize* Miguel Angel Asturias explores man's exploitative nature. Both the natural environment and other men who are powerless

> The earth will become exhausted and the planter will take his little seeds off somewhere else, until he too begins to waste away like a discolored seed fallen in the midst of fertile lands ripe for planting, lands that could make him a rich man instead of a nobody who wanders around ruining the earth everywhere he goes, always poor, and finally losing all pleasure in good things he could have had: sugar cane on the hot low lying slopes, where the air grows thick over the banana groves and the cacao trees shoot up like rockets in the sky to explode silently in sprays of almond-colored berries, not to mention the coffee, in rich soils splattered with blood and the wheatfields a blaze beyond. (p. 6)

suffer. Asturias makes the following comments about the maize growers who plant purely for profit:

In *Men of Maize* students will explore concepts pertaining to cultural genocide, environmental destruction, and Mayan mysticism. Teachers can initiate discussions which investigate the causes of global environmental decay, the fate of indigenous peoples, and the nature of human rights abuse in Latin America. Discussion questions might include:

1. Is man, as Asturias suggests, inherently greedy?
2. What are the causes and consequences of global environmental destruction?
3. Should economic growth take precedent over protection of the natural environment?
4. What types of alternative strategies exist in which economic growth and respect for the environment occur simultaneously?

Asturias' novel is multidimensional in its analysis. Classroom activities might involve researching the causes and implications of destroying the world's rainforests. Students could debate whether economic growth and the creation of jobs is a priority over protection of the environment. Finally, students could create a "Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" after researching the ill-treatment of indigenous people around the world, including the treatment of Native Americans in the United States.

III

The six literary figures whose works have been discussed above analyze human nature from a variety of personal and cultural perspectives. They create universal themes in their literature which provide the reader with a better understanding of the human condition. Resurrection, redemption, the search for identity, the voices that cry out to stop exploitation and repression, and the struggle for personal and social liberation become common themes in their novels. These non-Western writers convey a unique experience based on a shared historical past characterized by European domination, economic exploitation, and disregard for their racial and cultural heritage. Controversial in nature, their literature seeks to address past wrongs, set the historical record straight, and resurrect a forgotten truth which has been ignored far too long in the West.

Notes

1. Rich Simonson and Scott Walker, (eds.) *Multicultural Literacy. Opening the American Mind*, Greywolf Press, St. Paul, 1988. For an excellent collection of short stories written by non-Western authors, see *The Greywolf Annual Six: Stories From The Rest Of The World*, edited by Scott Walker.
2. The literary style and philosophy of Miguel Angel Asturias is analyzed in an excellent introduction to *Men of Maize* by Gerald Martin.

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*Teachers should use discretion concerning classroom use of each novel. Some contain objectional material and may be more suitable for adult reading.

WOMAN WARRIOR'S CULTURAL SUITCASE: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

by

H.L. Bonner

The literature of the '90s must embrace voices that are not often heard in the classical canon – voices of minorities and of women. Though there is still unrest and grumbling about this, for the most part our discipline has cautiously accepted the responsibility. When we are dislodging excellent work to make way for the new, however, we want to choose the best of the new voices. Recently, we introduced Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* into our composition courses, a controversial decision.

There were some excellent reasons. For one, the book itself is excellent. The winner of national and international awards for nonfiction, Hong Kingston has taken autobiography and with fictional techniques, has woven an intensely fierce and disturbing story of growing up female and Chinese in California. As an autobiography, it is the voice of a real expert, you might say, on the subjects of race and gender.

Secondly, its style is distinctly feminine; nonlinear, intuitive, encompassing the whole rather than dividing it. Its portrayal of this woman's unique reality goes beyond the factual or objective autobiography as the author moves in and out of cultural myths and subjective realities the way we move in and out of dreams.

This text obviously broadens our understanding of what it means to be a woman in other countries or a minority woman in this country. But perhaps more important, it shows us how, even in America, a woman's voicelessness can be shaped by her culture. Even in America women can become self-enforcers of a code of silence.

In *The Woman Warrior* we have a young woman fighting to transform her silence into language and transform that language into the action of her own consciously chosen life. Her alternative is passivity, powerlessness and despair. It is not an easy fight, for her suitcase for the journey to maturity has been packed by a powerful mother who had been a doctor, a shaman, a slaveholder in pre-Communist China, a mother who fills her head with all the warnings, shamings, fears and superstitions that the Chinese culture used to control and dominate women.

That culturally enforced dominance is not unique to Chinese-American women. It is the experience of most women—all of us come from a cultural heritage of devalued women. All of us still deal with the devaluation of women's ways of speaking, their subjects and their voices. Research such as Dale Spender's *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them* shows how difficult it is to break through such self-enforced silence, how rare the woman who dares to interrupt the dominant male voice.

Confrontation, transformation, and release of culturally prescribed silence has long been a central concern of feminist writers. In her essay, "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," Audre Lorde says after becoming aware of her mortality, what she regretted most were her silences. Many women, and perhaps especially our polite Minnesota students, fear the breaking of this silence because the transformation of silence is an act of self-revelation, and that is always frightening at first. Lorde, in *Sister Outsider*, speaks to us all, professors and students alike, when she asks: "What are the words you do not yet have? What do you need to say? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence?"

The young Maxine Hong is in danger of such a silent death. Her mental suitcase has been packed with stories of fear, punishment and inadequacy, stories designed to teach women caution, silence and restraint. "Before we can leave our parents, they stuff our heads like the suitcases they jampack with homemade underwear," she moans.

One of the myths packed in Maxine's suitcase mind is "White Tigers," an ancient myth from the old country in which a girl goes alone to the mountain, where she is trained by an old couple in the wisdom and use of silence, isolation, and meditation. She learns to endure silence, and to survive alone. She takes this learning back to her village, where the crimes against her people are literally carved upon her naked back.

The young Maxine, growing up in a Chinese-American home, has learned well the lessons of silence, of surviving alone on her own mental mountain top. Like the Woman Warrior of the fable, she too has the crimes against her predecessors carved on her back; stories of an aunt so powerless to the persecution of women that she submits to the sexual demands of a man even though she knows that she will be punished and ostracized. A suicide, she remains to haunt Maxine in the symbolic image of a ghost by the well. All her life Maxine hears stories of girls who were married off as servants or sold as slaves, girls valued so little their birth was treated as a sorrow and burden.

Maxine's own mother transfers centuries of acceptance of patriarchal dominance on to her daughter. A woman aggressively outspoken herself, Brave Orchid leaves little room for Maxine to form a separate self through the expression of her own views. In many situations, a woman has two choices, to act the outlaw, or to remain silent. Few mothers want their daughters to brave the consequences of being an outlaw. Maxine's mother teaches fear, submission and self immobilization to protect her daughter.

Maxine's silence is strangling her. She projects her anger and self-loathing out on another more silent girl, beating her up and humiliating her, then falls ill herself with the shame of it. If she does not face her silence and transform it into language, she will die. It is not easy for Maxine to face these twin dragons nesting in her suitcase; low self esteem from the cultural devaluation of women, and inability to speak for herself in the face of her mother's powerful and dominating presence.

But her mother's stories also teach courage. In them, her mother faces down fear in the form of ghosts and superstitions, to become a respected shaman and doctor, at a time when most women were little more than slaves. The mythical woman warrior defeated armies, even giving birth to a baby during battle.

As Maxine Hong unpacks her cultural suitcase, throws out the untrue, the confining, repacks it with her own limitless desires, wishes and strengths, she finds her way. Like many of us, she thinks others must accept everything she is before she can accept herself. Her mother, of course, does not. But Maxine must speak – right or wrong she must speak and hear herself speak, despite any reaction she might get. Eventually, Maxine's anger frees her tongue, and she speaks up for herself loudly. "A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe" is heard at last, both in the Chinese home, and with the publication of the splendid autobiography.

After using *The Woman Warrior* as the central focus of a Freshman Composition class, I discovered how freeing it was for the students, both men and women. Rather than alienate them as a "foreign" experience might, it gave them a way to examine an experience only seemingly foreign, and to find in it many reflections of their own invisible cultural shapings. In the safe avenues of literature, they could recognize how many of their own assumptions are formed by unspoken controlling myths behind the cultural milieu of the American midwest.

In *The Woman Warrior* our women students see the dangers, the self crippling, that comes from not speaking up. As they experience Maxine's

final exhilarating freedom, they begin to be aware of the ways they hold themselves back. Their papers become a bit less timid, making the connection between their unexamined cultural suitcases and their own silence. Some make students see the ways their unexamined attitudes toward women contribute to silencing them.

To return again to Audre Lorde's words: "Each of us is here now because in one way or another we share a commitment to language and to the power of language, and to the reclaiming of that language which has been made to work against us. In the transformation of silence into language and action, it is vitally necessary for each one of us to establish or examine her function in that transformation and to recognize her role as vital within that transformation."

Woman Warrior is an excellent place to pursue that commitment.

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To Be or Not to Be – In a Literary Network

(adapted from a speech given to the League of Minnesota Poets)

by

W. Scott Olsen

I have reason to be afraid of poets.

At the last Northlight Writers' Conference, during a banquet, I introduced Tamas Aczel, a Hungarian poet, essayist and novelist who happens to have been my thesis adviser while I was a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst. And during the introduction, I told a story of how Tamas once introduced me. I said there used to be a reading series at U-Mass; the graduate poetry series. Only graduate students enrolled in the poetry writing program were eligible to give a reading there, which was followed by a large wine and cheese reception.

Those of us who wrote fiction and nonfiction weren't much in favor of being excluded from that podium, so several students worked long and loudly, mostly loudly, to get it changed. They succeeded, and one night Jay Neugeboren introduced a graduate student essayist named Doug Whynott and Tamas Aczel introduced a graduate student story writer named Scott Olsen.

And, in the process of telling this introduction story to the almost one hundred writers at the Northlight banquet, I confessed I had absolutely no memory of the graduate student poet–or who introduced him or her.

The group's reaction should not have surprised me. It was good natured and I can now say I've been booed by some of the best writers in the upper Midwest. What did surprise me was when two weeks later I saw another poet friend of mine, who lives in California, at the Charleston Writers Conference in South Carolina. She walked up to me and said, "So, I hear you've been forgetting poets."

What surprised me even more was when, right about the time of the Charleston Conference, I was invited by a woman who attended the Northlight Conference to address the spring meeting of the League of Minnesota Poets.

Now, I know this essay's topic is supposed to be whether or not to belong to a literary network, and I will be talking about networking, in its various

forms, with its various problems and potentials, at some length. In fact, it's what I'm talking about already. But I thought I would begin by establishing some sense of context. Some sense of the networks I am a part of. Some sense of the networks that influence me.

There are three types of networks that concern all writers. The first is what in its ugliest form is called the ol' boys network. The second is the creative network of literate friends, most happily other writers, who read our drafts, our attempts at something, who offer us the honesty about our work we don't get from most people, who tell us when we've got it right or when we've got it wrong and just can't see it for ourselves. The third is the organizational network, organizations like The Loft, The Associated Writing Programs, Poets & Writers Inc., even The Northlight Writers' Association, that keep us somehow involved in the issues and concerns and joys of the national writing community.

And I would like to argue a contradiction. All three types of networks are essential for a writer's literary well-being. All three types of networks, however, can lead to literary suicide.

Let's begin with the ol' boys network. We'll need to go back for a minute to the Charleston Writers Conference, and even further back to when I was pulling together the very first Northlight Writers' Conference, to explain what I mean. I was part of the conference faculty in Charleston, but not really. The big names were writers like Syndy Lea and Rosellen Brown and Michael Harper. My friend from California and I were there to give short lectures on contemporary literature in the classroom.

Bret Lott is the director of the Charleston conference. Bret and Dorothy and I were classmates at Massachusetts. When I needed people for the first Northlight conference who were willing to travel to Moorhead, the town Buddy Holly never made it to, in February, for no pay beyond the cost of their hotel and airfare, I called Bret. When Bret needed people to lecture for no pay beyond the airfare and the obvious benefits of walking along the shore of the Atlantic Ocean on a bright warm afternoon, he called us.

During the conference, I had the opportunity to go on a short shopping trip with Mindy Werner, Senior Editor for Adult books at Viking Penguin. Mindy is Bret's editor. During our walk, she asked polite questions about my fiction. I told her what I was up to, and I told her that an agent had my story collection and was thinking about representing them. I told her that Tamas Aczel used the same agent, and that he had recommended my work to the agent. A short while after the conference, I got a letter from the agent, who decided he would in fact take on my stories, and in the letter he said that Mindy Werner had called and asked to see my work.

Now, I am not about to deny the often very ugly nature of ol' boy networks. Their exclusions are legion. People of real merit are often not asked or not allowed to the prom because a closed group of people has already decided who will dance with whom. Yet, I cannot deny the opportunity that can come from friends calling friends. Would I have spoken in Charleston if I'd never met Bret? No. Would Bret have taught at Northlight? No.

Would I have been invited to address the League of Minnesota Poets if Susan Stevens Chambers, an officer in the LMP, hadn't come to the Northlight conference? No.

Would I have an agent for my stories if Tamas Aczel hadn't recommended me and if Mindy Werner hadn't called and expressed an interest? Who knows.

At its best within the literary community, the ol' boy network serves the same function as the letters of recommendation professors write for graduating students. The benefits–the introductions and the evaluations of skill and merit–are the same. And the long term benefits are the same. The ol' boy network may get you in one door, but the doors after that are up to you.

I'll come back to this type of network, but let's move on to the second type–the creative network of literate friends.

It is a trite but true observation, to steal a phrase, that most of us want to be published. To get published, we need to come to some understanding of how our work is read and received by others. We need, in other words, feedback. We need feedback we can trust. We need feedback from people we can trust to understand that friendship has nothing to do with literature. We need feedback from someone who can tell us, if it's the truth, that the work we've been fighting with and making love to for the last so many years is garbage. And we need feedback from those people who will tell us our work is good only when it really is. Most basically, we need people to talk with seriously about what we write–and what it means to be a writer.

Let me give an example. A number of years ago, when I was a junior at

:he University of Missouri, I had the opportunity to spend a spring :vening in William Peden's living room. Bill was the professor for my :reative writing course. There was no special distinction that brought ne to his living room; I was one of several students in a class he invited :o a reception for Mary Lee Settle. She had come to campus for the usual 'eading/lecture, having recently won the national book award.

Geographically, I was lucky. I arrived at the home when a good chair was)pen between the two writers. The party floated throughout the house,)ut Bill and Mary Lee Settle stayed where they were. I stayed where I was.

will admit I felt out of place. The conversation about writers they liked, ıgents they knew, the politics of publishers and peers was a good bit)eyond me. The conversation convinced me my talent and experience vere wholly unsuitable for becoming a writer. And there was no way to eave that good chair without it seeming I was leaving the people it was mportant for me to hear. Yet, at some point in the evening, perhaps ıoticing my extended silence, Mary Lee Settle asked me what I was vorking on.

have no idea how I answered. I have no idea how the conversation :hanged from the circle of writers and concerns Peden and Settle shared, o the concerns of struggling, new voices. It isn't important. I do know, ınd this is important, that it was that night I felt as if a place in the :ommunity of writers opened for me. For the first time, I had a :onversation about writing, my own writing and the writing of others, hat was honest. Sure, we'd talked in class before, but back then grades vere important to me and my disagreements with professors were mostly ınspoken.

My writing was unremarkable (in fact, back then I was doing my best to)e a Donald Barthelme clone), yet there were people, I suddenly liscovered, people who knew what being a writer was all about, who were villing to take my desire to be a writer seriously. I credit that :onversation with keeping me going when I needed it.

Who are these people? How do we find them? Most often, we find our literary soulmates only through trial and error. We participate in a vorkshop and we find someone who seems to look at the world through ;omewhat the same pair of glasses. We attend a reading and hear a voice ır a reaction that we would swear was our own, despite the fact it didn't :ome from our own throat. Or we hear something so completely opposite)ur sensibility we cannot help but seek out its source. Perhaps we send vork to a journal editor and what comes back is more than the form 'ejection or the polite letter of acceptance.

For me, today, the most important members of my creative network are the other writers at Concordia college, members of Concordia's English department, and a handful of journal editors. These people are important because they can see my work in context. The Concordia writers and English faculty to who I show my work see my work in the context of my other work. They know me well enough to give honest feedback. The journal editors who are important to me are those editors who have, over the years, responded to my work in substantial ways. The editors see my work in the context of everything else they are sent. The opinions of all these people are important because they are not dedicated to maintaining my friendship. They are dedicated to informing my perception of how intimately my language has addressed them.

I would like to emphasize the importance of journal editors in a writer's creative network. Most literary journal editors are fine people. They receive more material in a year than they can use in a life-time, and they go through it seriously. They worry about the aesthetic and financial health of their journal. They do their best to treat authors well.

Some editors, of course, are rotten. They seem to be publishing to make themselves look more important, and they treat authors as some type of serf begging entrance at the castle gate.

And some editors seem protected. They mean well, but they are surrounded by an army of first readers or graduate students who sometimes miss the harbor, much less the boat. These journals publish good stuff, but the process of submitting a manuscript to them is about as human as sending in payment for an outstanding bill.

However, there are also a few great editors. Their journals are superb, and sending them a manuscript is similar to sending a story or poem to a literate friend. You know your work will be read by someone who knows something about contemporary literature, and you know that person also understands what it is to be a writer. Daniel Curley, editor of *Ascent* (published at the University of Illinois), was a great editor. Just over a year ago he was struck by a car and killed.

I never met Dan Curley, but I knew him for years. When I was an M.A. student at the University of Missouri, I noticed *Ascent* seemed to always turn up in Best American Short Stories and the O. Henry Awards. I hadn't seen the magazine, but, of course, I started sending him my work. My stories were nowhere near the quality of the work he published, but I was too young to believe that. And Dan wrote back to me.

His letter were never more than a page, and he never used stationery. More often than not, he didn't correct the typos he made. But the letters had a quality to them that let me know he took my work seriously. More than that, he took me seriously. I continued to send him material (I also became a subscriber) and he continued to send it back, and we also came to know each other. Even when months passed between submissions, he remembered me and his letters would ask questions about my life and progress. I answered him, and asked questions about his life and progress. He answered me. He usually wrote a sentence or two about my submission (sentences, I came to see, that hit right at the heart of a problem), and then a long paragraph about what was going on. Dan knew my work, its merits and its problems, and his encouragement, like the conversation with Bill Peden and Marley Lee Settle, kept me going.

In many ways, I felt I had a friend at *Ascent*. I know I am not alone in this feeling. Other writers I know have had their work accepted and rejected by *Ascent*, and all of them have said Dan Curley was special. Dan was more alive and involved with the authors who sent him work than any other editor I've dealt with. When he did take a story of mine, he apologized for not being able to construct my contributor's note from memory.

Dan was also a writer. His stories won the Flannery O'Conner prize. He'd been in the anthologies. He knew what it meant to work hard on a piece of writing, and he knew what it meant to get a cold rejection, or a stupid one.

We need great editors in this world, and Dan Curley was one of the very best. For me there are other editors now, but it is important to note that a creative network is developed–not found. A creative network is not an accident of time or place, as the ol' boys network often is. A creative network is a conversation–one of those conversations at 2 a.m. when everything matters.

The third type of network is the organizational network. The League of Minnesota Poets is an organizational network. The Loft, The Associated Writing Programs, Poets & Writers Inc., and the Northlight Writers' Association at Concordia are all organizational networks. Their purposes are straightforward. Organizational networks want to bring news and opportunity to the writers they serve; they want to foster the development of creative networks; they publish newsletters filled with opinion and news of places to publish; they sponsor classes and readings and workshops and services writers often need at various times in their careers; they want to be available for the exercise of power that comes from the gathering of any group.

Isolated as we all are in our individual writing rooms, isolated as we all are as individual readers, organizational networks provide the sense of connection, the sense of community, we all desire. Musicians and dancers and theatre people have performances for sharing their art with an audience and among themselves. Sculptors and painters have museums and galleries for shared participation. Literature is the only art that requires a solitary psychology for its comprehension and appreciation, which gives rise to the tremendous loneliness organizational networks fight against.

Until recently, in Fargo/Moorhead, a small city with two universities and a college, the only show in town for writers was the Tom McGrath reading series at Moorhead State University (that reading series, but the way, is really very good). The best bookstore in town was B. Dalton. We've got a better bookstore now, and we've got the Northlight Writers' Association. Northlight, now in its fourth year at Concordia, sponsors an annual writers' conference, a database of area writers, an occasional drama contest (winning manuscripts are produced by the college's theater department), a regional small press that publishes the annual conference anthology, a journal and in the near future titles by single authors, and occasional one or two day workshops. All these activities are designed to fight the artistic loneliness of writers in our area.

However, these organizational networks also have power. Political power. It is this power that's important for all of us right now, because the organizational networks are at war. They are not at war with each other. They are at war for the noble cause.

Everyone in the arts knows what's been going on with Jesse Helms and the National Endowment for the Arts. Helms has been upset by the NEA's funding of what he considers obscene material–the most common reference we hear is to the photography of Robert Mapplethorpe. He's proposed a morality check on art to be produced with grant money.

Clearly, this is absurd. NEA money is not awarded for a proposed project. NEA applications ask for a demonstration of past talent and success–the NEA simply wants to support artists, writers among them, who have done well in the past so they can continue to do well in the future. Never has there been any type of rider attached, asking the artists to produce only a certain type of art while working under the grant. The NEA, under pressure from the political right, has now included a drug-free pledge form which must be signed by artists who

receive money and, if things go the way Helms wants, a form asking artists to promise to produce only art with white middle-class values will soon find its way into NEA envelopes. In addition, the NEA will soon have a good deal less money to give to those artists the government decides are clean enough.

Organizational networks are fighting this. In fact, organizations have formed a network of their own. Called the Coalition of Writers' Organizations, it's made up of more than forty writers groups; among them the PEN Center USA west, The Loft, Poets & Writers, the PEN American Center, the Associated Writing Programs, the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses, the Authors Guild, the North Carolina Network, the Before Columbus Foundation, and Northlight.

Writers need this type of power. The political right has a great deal of money and access to things like mailing lists. Letters to Congress about the NEA issue, during the early and mid stages of the debate, were somewhere in the range of 20 or 40 to 1 against the NEA. We have been asked, by those who lead the organizational networks we belong to, to write letters to congress and we're not doing a very good job. It would seem the country's writers aren't writing. Organizational networks are often proactive, and this is an issue we cannot ignore.

So. We have three basic types of networks. The ol' boy network, the creative network, and the organizational network. All three, individually or in concert, can keep a writer alive. People in every profession give a shot at writing nonfiction, poetry, fiction, etc. Some find a lot of success or personal fulfillment. Some, without sympathetic readers or peers, without a door opened by a friend, without a network, find despair or give up. Networks are particularly useful to foster, encourage, and support writers. Networks can offer new and diverse perspectives.

And, now the contradiction. If you don't have any real reason for becoming involved with a network, you should run like hell.

Let me admit here to a few very strong though not very original biases. Literature, by which I mean fiction, poetry, theater and the essay, is important. Literature is sacred. Literature, including the process of writing it and the process of reading it, makes us a part of a much larger community, a community that began with the very first story-teller, a community that enables us to share the loves and despairs of the human condition more fully and deeply and in ways beyond the physical experience capability of any individual human life. Literature is a

sharing between races, continents, centuries, people who live a long way away and much differently than we do, and us. Literature, along with the other arts, is the benchmark of civilization.

On the other hand, networks are a convenience. They are nice and helpful, but in the long run not very important. Networks may help us understand the workings of Literature, but they are not Literature itself. While I may find a new argument against Jesse Helms insightful and personally educational, it certainly does not touch the soul in the way the novel does. Networks may make me a more efficient manuscript submitter, they may make me a more informed reader, and they may show me pathways that lead to a richer understanding of my place in a literary community, but they are not the destination of that path.

For the sake of argument here, imagine a neighborhood. Imagine Literature as a house on one side of the street. Imagine small presses and journals as a house on the other side of the street. Imagine commercial publishing as the resort hotel down the block. Somewhere in the neighborhood, though no one is really sure where, is the home for literary critics and theorists. In the middle of the street, under tremendous assemblages of scaffolding, are the networks.

The bus pulls up to the corner and drops off the new people in town. Let's call them new writers. They look at the Literature house. The Literature house is old and worn looking. The residents are talking about what they've always talked about: Love, Passion, Despair, Loneliness, Angst, the subtleties of personal and social interaction. It's got an easy door on the first floor; just about anyone can get in. But the Literature house is taller than the new writers were told, and they hear that getting off the first floor is hard.

The new writers then look at the Small Press and Journal House. This house looks warm and cozy and small and inviting; but this house doesn't have any doors, so the new writers run down the block to the Commercial publishing hotel, where they find lots of doors, but they're all marked "Cookbooks," or "Political memoir" or "Agents only."

In the middle of the street, the networks are welcoming. The assemblage of scaffolding is beginning to look like a house itself. It's large and new and smells nice. They've put on new siding, and they've added extra rooms. They've got their own print shop now, and it's turning out thousands of newsletters. People are being published in these newsletters. The smell of fresh paint is everywhere. The people there speak a seductive new language. It's exciting, rather like breaking a code. And it's a lot of fun to listen to them. When the new writers get the hang of

he new language, they discover the scaffolding that looks like a house s really a siege tower. An assault on the seventh floor of one of the other ıouses is being planned.

Vhat's wrong with this? For a lot of people, nothing at all. And before ou start to think I'm attacking networks unfairly, keep in mind that I ot only use networks myself, I started and run one. It is particularly om my position as the Northlight director that I see the danger.

et's leave the image. When I was a graduate student, I took a course ı Reader Response and Psychological Criticism. Other than my work-hops, it was perhaps the most important course I took because it gave ıe a way to understand what was going on when I was reading or writing, nd it gave me a way to talk about it. It made me both a better reader nd a better writer. The next semester I took a course on Jacques Lacan. lore specifically, I took a seminar devoted entirely to Lacan's seminar ı Poe's "Purloined Letter." In this course I was taught how to read anslations of Lacan and Derrida. I was engaged in trying to understand ow these men used language to illustrate what they were saying. It was prestigious course and in many ways a fine part of my education. But, the course of the semester, we also read a number of critics who had opped crossing the street. We read critics who were running up and own the stairs, carrying information from the senior theorists on the top or to the unenlightened theorists on the first floor. It seemed as if the uses on the other side of the street had ceased to be important. In ıort, I came to realize that the least important thing in Lacan's seminar ı Poe's "Purloined Letter," in Derrida's response to Lacan, in Barbara hnson's and Shoshanna Feldman's explication of Lacan and Derrida's bate, was Poe's "Purloined Letter." At the end of the semester I knew good bit about Lacan, but I do not know if I learned anything about my perience reading Poe. The same type of what I believe is misdirected erest, I believe is coming out of some networks.

itself, this would not bother me. But I get the mail most other English ofessor's get. I see the announcements of new fiction, nonfiction, and etry from the commercial and small presses get mostly tossed into the sh. I see the catalogues from university presses containing the work solid poets and writers get lost.

ear writers overjoyed when they place a 300 word article in the AWP ronicle or the Poets and Writers newsletter. I read impassioned point d counter-point about the merits of writing groups in A View From The t. I hear, as I did last March in Denver, writers argue over whether Associated Writing Programs should change their name. I hear tters talk about organizational membership as if it held some type of

social distinction. And I see networks casting language to fit their own institutional goal. The Helms debate, for example, is repeatedly fought in terms of censorship, an emotional term in the history of letters, when as I see it the real questions concern patronage. In what terms will we accept government support?

In other words, I see the fine distinctions of the human condition, the focus of all good writers, becoming lost. I see the organizational network becoming the subject itself. This is fine for those people who must run an organizational network. It can be a trap for those the organizational network serves.

The ol' boy network and the creative network have their own problems. I know writers who are putting more effort into developing their personal connections than developing their writing, and I know writers who have stopped trying to bring their words to any audience larger than a group of friends who gather to talk about writing. I see the ol' boy network and the creative network becoming destinations instead of sometimes useful, often questionable paths. And to me, this is a trend growing toward narcissism, growing toward incest. To me, this is a sin.

Literature, and the process of its creation, has value. It enables us to look at the world and the history of human passions with a larger and more sympathetic heart. A poor story or poem or essay is one that stops within its own topography. A good story or poem or essay is one that invites us to make connections between the story and our own history and understanding. It should challenge and enlarge our perception of being human and all the problems, joys, and responsibilities that involves.

Do networks have value? Yes. They show ways of looking at the process and politics of literature, and the community of writers, more clearly–or through paths that are not yet a part of our experience. Networks enable a community discourse. Networks, at their best, offer professional opportunity, aesthetic insight, artistic community and a vehicle for political change.

But we must remember that our real purpose is not to be a member of any network. Our purpose is to find language for the ineffable.

Learning Disabilities and Reading

by

Jerry Johns and Sandy Krickeberg

ıcused Access to Selected Topics No. 45 a *FAST Bib* by the earinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (See p. 70 for ɔre information about FAST Bib.)

ucators who teach reading to students with learning disabilities face ask that requires skill in a specialized area. This *FAST Bib* describes veral resources that provide information on teaching reading to rning disabled (LD) students. The references listed here were ɔduced through a search of the ERIC database from 1987 to 1989.

e citations are arranged in two categories: an overview of reading and ɛarch on learning disabilities, and strategies for teaching reading to students.

o types of citations are included in this bibliography—citations to IC documents and citations to journal articles. The distinction ween the two is important only if you are interested in obtaining the text of any of these items. To obtain the full text of ERIC documents, ı will need the ED number given in square brackets following the ıtion. For approximately 98% of the ERIC documents, the full text can found in the ERIC microfiche collection. This collection is available ver 800 libraries across the country. Alternatively, you may prefer to er your own copy of the document from the ERIC Document Reduction Service (EDRS). You can contact EDRS by writing to 3900 eeler Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22304, or by telephoning them at 0) 227-3742 or (703) 823-0500.

l text copies of journal articles are not available in the ERIC rofiche collection or through EDRS. Articles can be acquired most nomically from library collections or through interlibrary loan. cles from some journals are also available through University rofilms International at (800) 732-0616 or through the Original cle Tearsheet Service of the Institute for Scientific Information at 0) 523-1850.

OVERVIEW AND RESEARCH

Algozzine, Bob; and others. "Reading and Writing Competencies of Adolescents with Learning Disabilities," *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, v21 n3 p154-60 Mar 1988.

Analyzes communication performance of tenth-grade LD students on the Florida State Student Assessment Test-II (a minimum competency test). Supports employers' belief in the importance of these skills for job performance.

Das, J.P. "Intelligence and Learning Disability: A Unified Approach," *The Mental Retardation Learning Disability Bulletin*, v15 n2 p103-13 1987.

Describes learning disability or reading disability in terms of deficiencies in processing information. Offers an integrated view of intelligence as cognitive processing followed by a demonstration of how tests of information processing have successfully revealed strengths and weaknesses of cognitive processes relating to reading.

Dyck, Norma; Sundbye, Nita. "The Effects of Text Explicitness on Story Understanding and Recall by Learning Disabled Children," *Learning Disabilities Research*, v3 n2 p68-77 Sum 1988.

Compares the effects of two ways of making text more explicit for LD children: by adding supportive information or asking inference questions at the ends of episodes. Demonstrates that adding elaborative content enhanced story understanding while asking inference questions was not more effective than the explicit version of the text alone.

Flaro, Lloyd. "The Development and Evaluation of a Reading Comprehension Strategy with Learning Disabled Students," *Reading Improvement*, v24 n4 p222-29 Win 1987.

Discusses a learning strategy, employing imaginal processes and verbal mediation procedures, designed to improve reading comprehension in 24 LD students. Indicates significant gains and improvement in reading comprehension over a 15-week treatment period.

Rhodes, Lynn, K.; Dudley-Marling, Curt. "Readers and Writers with a Difference: A Holistic Approach to Teaching Learning Disabled and Remedial Students." 1988. 329p. [ED 293 117]

Presents a holistic perspective on reading and writing instruction, focusing on meaningful, purposeful literacy applications. Discusses LD and remedial students, and introduces readers to a holistic theory of reading and writing development.

wyer, Walter E. "Attention Deficit Disorder: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing...Again," *Reading Teacher*, v42 n4 p310-12 Jan 1989.

Examines the trend of using Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), commonly known as hyperactivity, to classify students as LD. Notes that ADD characteristics are frequently observed in children with reading problems, and argues that misclassifying students as LD denies them appropriate reading instruction.

idenberg, Pearl L. "Cognitive and Academic Instructional Intervention for Learning Disabled Adolescents," *Topics in Language Disorders*, v8 n3 p56-71 June 1988.

Notes that research on LD secondary school students' academic deficits, response to classroom environment, and response to instructional interventions are integrated with research on metacognition in text learning. Recommends a metacognitive orientation for instructional intervention programs, which should address general comprehension strategies, specific study strategies, and factors related to learner characteristics.

nith, Sally L. "Typical Academic Problems of Learning-Disabled Children," *Pointer*, v32 n3 p8-10 Spr 1988.

Presents a list of 70 typical academic problems of learning-disabled children that special educators must be able to diagnose and remedy. Categorizes the problems as follows: reading, language, spelling, handwriting, arithmetic, thinking and school task and behavior problems.

ıart, Fern; and others. "Reading Disabled Children with Above Average IQ: A Comparative Examination of Cognitive Processing," *Journal of Special Education*," v22 n3 p344-57 Fall 1988.

Studies the cognitive processing in high IQ and average IQ elementary grade LD and non-LD children. Finds that LD students were poorer in sequential processing and planning compared to non-LD students; high IQ LD students lost their IQ advantage to low IQ LDs in sequential scores.

eisberg, Renee. "1980s: A Change in Focus of Reading Comprehension Research: A Review of Reading/Learning Disabilities Research Based on an Interactive Model of Reading," *Learning Disability Quarterly*, v11 n2 p149-59 Spr 1988.

Contains a review of reading comprehension research since 1980, based on an interactive model of reading, with a focus on reading disabilities/learning disabilities. Includes studies which have investigated the influence of readers' prior knowledge of a topic, the influences of text structure and task demands, and metacognitive strategies.

Weltner-Brunton, Susan L.; and others. "Is Earlier Better? Reading Achievement and WISC-R Stability in Earlier vs. Later Identified Students with Learning Disabilities," *Learning Disability Quarterly*, v11 n1 p71-79 Win 1988.

Compares earlier identified (grades 2-4) to later identified (grades 5-8) LD students' test scores (Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests and Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children) upon identification and over time in special education. Finds no significant between-group differences at identification and that over time (two years), verbal ability decreased, though reading achievement increased for both groups.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Dudley-Marling, Curt. "Assessing the Reading and Writing Development of Learning Disabled Students: An Holistic Approach," *B.C. Journal of Special Education*, v12 n1 p41-51 1988.

Contrasts traditional practices in reading and writing assessment which focus on fragmented, isolated skills to a holistic approach to assessment, which is recommended. Examines children's reading and writing as communicative behaviors that are effectively evaluated through systematic observations as they occur in natural settings.

Hittleman, Daniel R. "Using Literature to Develop Daily Living Literacy: Strategies for Students with Learning Difficulties," *Journal of Reading, Writing, and Learning Disabilities International*, v4 n1 p1-12 1988-89.

Describes how students with learning difficulties can develop their literacy for daily living by using daily living literature, which provides knowledge and skills for accomplishing some societal task.

Hollingsworth, Paul M.; Reutzel, D. Ray. "Whole Language with LD Children," *Academic Therapy*, v23 n5 p477-88 May 1988.

Examines how the use of the whole language theory can improve the reading and writing of the language LD. Describes resource room characteristics necessary to create a whole language learning environment and outlines instructional practices consistent with whole language theory, such as reading aloud, language experience approach, and predictable story books.

Knupp, Richard. "Improving Oral Reading Skills of Educationally Handicapped Elementary School Aged Students through Repeated Readings." 1988. 80p. [ED 297 275]

Examines the efficacy of the repeated readings method in improving the ral reading rate, decreasing the number of oral reading errors, and improving he oral reading comprehension accuracy of educationally handicapped tudents. Finds that poor readers learned to develop reading speed and uency with repeated practice and that subjects improved their reading speed nd comprehension and decreased the number of word errors.

ia, Katherine. "A New Look at Comprehension Instruction for)isabled Readers," Annals of Dyslexia, v37 p264-78 1987.

Describes three holistic approaches to reading comprehension instruc- on for LD children: text-based instruction, explicit comprehension instruction, nd a combined model. Discusses each model's strengths, weaknesses, and eaching techniques. Recommends the combined model.

stropieri, Margo A.; and others. "Learning Disabled Students' Memory for Expository Prose: Mnemonic versus Non-mnemonic ictures," *American Educational Research Journal*, v24 n4 p505-19 Vin 1987.

Examines whether mnemonic or non-mnemonic pictures aid LD stu- ents in grades seven, eight, and nine when reading expository passages bout the extinction of dinosaurs. Determines that both types of pictures ided students' free recall, while only mnemonic pictures facilitated recall of he plausibility order of the passages.

nda, Lisa E.; and others. "Use the News: Newspapers and LD tudents," *Journal of Reading*, v31 n7 p678-79 Apr 1988.

Offers suggestions for using the newspaper to help LD students improve heir reading, language arts, and mathematics skills.

hea, Lawrence J.; and others. "The Effects of Repeated Readings and ttentional Cues on the Reading Fluency and Comprehension of earning Disabled Readers," *Learning Disabilities Research*, v2 n2 103-09 Sum 1987.

Analyzes the effects of LD elementary grade students reading passages rally one, three, or seven times with instructions to work for either fluency r comprehension. Finds that both fluency and comprehension improved ith the number of readings with the greatest improvement being between ne and three readings. Attentional cues operated in the expected directions.

y, Darlene; McCoy, Kathleen M. "Effects of Corrective Feedback on Vork Accuracy and Reading Comprehension of Readers with Learning)isabilities," *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, v21 n9 p546-50 Nov 988.

Uses a repeated measures design where third grade students with learning disabilities read under three treatment conditions: corrective feedback on every oral reading error, corrections on meaning change errors only, and no feedback regardless of error. Finds that corrective feedback on oral reading errors improved both word recognition accuracy and reading comprehension.

Schworm, Ronald W. "Look in the Middle of the Word," *Teaching Exceptional Children*, v20 n3 p13-17 Spr 1988.

Discusses how the use of visual phonics can help beginning readers or reading-disabled students overcome difficulties in word learning. States that the technique enhances the ability to identify grapheme-phoneme correspondences (usually appearing in the middle of words and useful for decoding) and prompts the learner to generalize these correspondences from one word to another.

Somerville, David E.; Leach, David J. "Direct or Indirect Instruction?: An Evaluation of Three Types of Intervention Programmes for Assisting Students with Specific Reading Difficulties," *Educational Research*, v30 n1 p46-53 Feb 1988.

Describes intervention programs (psychomotor, self-esteem enhancement, and direct instruction) with children who had reading difficulties. Finds that the direct instruction program had the greatest gains and that post-intervention questionnaires completed by subjects, parents, and teachers indicated that perceived success differed significantly from measured success.

Torgesen, Joseph K.; and others. "Using Verbatim Text Recordings to Enhance Reading Comprehension in Learning Disabled Adolescents," *Learning Disabilities Focus*, v3 n1 p30-38 Fall 1987.

Evaluates the effectiveness of using verbatim text recordings to increase LD high school students' reading comprehension and learning ability. Finds that the use of the recordings did produce performance gains, especially when used in conjunction with completion of a related worksheet.

Torgesen, Joseph K.; and others. "Improving Sight Word Recognition Skills in LD Children: An Evaluation of Three Computer Program Variations," *Learning Disability Quarterly*, v11 n2 p125-32 Spr 1988.

Evaluates the relative effectiveness of three variations of a computer program designed to increase the sight-word reading vocabulary of 17 learning-disabled children in grades 1, 2, and 3. Reports no differences among the visual only, the visual™auditory, or auditory only presentation modes.

lkinson, Ian; and others. "Silent Reading Reconsidered: Reinterpreting Reading Instruction and Its Effects," *American Educational Research Journal*, v25 n1 p127-44 Spr 1988.

Reanalyzes data from a study on silent classroom reading with 105 LD students (aged 6-12 years) using linear structural equation modeling. Concludes that when entry-level abilities are controlled, silent reading does not have a significant effect on post-test reading performance.

lliams, Joanna P. "Identifying Main Ideas: A Basic Aspect of Reading Comprehension," *Topics in Language Disorders*, v8 n3 p1-13 Jun 1988.

Asserts that identifying the main points of a communication is fundamental to successful reading comprehension. Discusses difficulties in defining main idea, text structure variables in determining important information, textual hierarchy and the theory of macrostructure, text features signalling important information, summary writing, learning-disabled readers' insensitivity to text importance, and instructional methods.

IC/RCS FASTBibs are no-cost annotated bibliographies that provide ween 20 to 30 current citations focused on selected topics of interest. ›ics include Word Processing and Writing Instruction, Poetry-Writing truction, Writing Apprehension, and Critical Reading and Thinking ategies. More that 30 additional topics are available in the areas of ater arts, journalism, communication and many other topics in the as of reading, writing, and communication skills. For our complete ›lications brochure, write to: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and nmunication Skills, 2805 East Tenth Street, Smith Research Center, te 150, Bloomington IN 47408-2698.

From Our Past

At the Third Annual Spring Conference held on the campus of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, on May 4-5, 1962, concerns and needs of teachers were addressed: censorship, discussed by David Berninghauser, Director of the Library School, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; articulation; English for the retarded student; a multisensory approach to the teaching of reading; phonics in teaching reading; teaching of literature in ungrouped classes; teaching of writing and theater arts. Key speakers at the banquet and luncheon were Brom Weber, Professor of English at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, who spoke on "American Humor" and Donald K. Smith, Chair of the Speech and Theater Arts Department, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, who spoke on "Teaching the English Language."

During 1962 the *Minnesota English Newsletter* informed teachers of important developments in education. In September the *Newsletter* announced the establishment by the Office of Education of four Project English Centers, a federal program to improve the teaching of English. The University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, was selected as one of the centers with Dr. (Stanley) Kegler as director and Dr. (Harold) Allen and Dr. (Donald) Smith as associate directors. In other issues the *Newsletter* alerted teachers to censorship problems and the help available through two publications – NCTE's *The Students' Right to Read* and the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*. In addition, it reported on recommendations of the State Language Arts Advisory Committee, explained new certification requirements and copyright laws, and recognized state winners of the NCTE Achievement Awards Program. The *Newsletter* also editorialized on the need for school districts to release teachers to attend educational conferences and to subsidize travel expenses for teachers attending conferences.

On April 26-27, 1963, at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, the Fourth Annual Spring Conference focused on the implications of Project English in evaluating high school curriculum. Three resolutions were adopted:

1. MCTE expressed support of the recommendations of the State Language Arts Advisory Committee regarding standards and certification.
2. MCTE supported the recommendations of the Committee on Fifth Year Programs.
3. MCTE supported NCTE's publication, *The Students' Right to Read* and the philosophy upon which it was based.

ring the presidency of Anna Lee Stensland in 1963-1964, MCTE ched out for more members, expanded its activities to serve teachers l exerted more influence on the profession. Dr. Stensland urged local l area organizations and affiliates to fill a number of needs of English/ guage arts teachers by disseminating information about new subject ter and new approaches to learning; by learning of interesting and uable programs neighboring schools were working on; by reducing ching loads; and by fighting censorship.

January, 1964, two helpful reports appeared – a directory of MCTE nbers published in the *Minnesota English Newsletter* and results of urvey by the Articulation Committee of college freshman English grams.

action of an aggressive council was shown at the Fifth Annual Spring ference held at St. Cloud on April 17-18, 1964. MCTE passed a olution supporting the work of the State Language Arts Advisory mittee to upgrade the profession by requiring those teaching in their ors to earn a major in seven years. The State Advisory Committee on cher Education earlier had rejected this proposal. Other resolutions ght means to improve articulation between elementary and secondary between secondary and college teachers and explore ways of blishing closer unity between MCTE and its affiliates. MCTE gnized five high schools for their excellent English programs – bault, Hopkins, Northfield, North St. Paul, and the University of nesota, Minneapolis.

erpt from:] *A History of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English: First Twenty-Five Years* by Edna C. Downing.

An Invitation

The College of St. Scholastica, Duluth, Minnesota, will again offer in 1991 *Growing Up American*, a summer institute in the humanities for elementary school teachers from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. The institute is funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. For more infomation write Leo Hertzel and John Schifsky, College of St. Scholastica, 1200 Kenwood Avenue, Duluth, Minnesota 55811.

Call for Papers

The Southeastern Writing Center Association celebrates its first decade of service during its 11th annual meeting, April 11-13, 1991, in Birmingham, Alabama. The Conference theme is :"Writing beyond the Curriculum: Approaching the 21st Century." The keynote speaker will be Elaine Maimon, Dean of Experimental Programs. Queens College, CUNY.

Proposals should address how the writing center of the 1980's has prepared writers for success in approaching the 21st century; how the experiences of writing center tutors and their clients have affected their lives after graduation; how writing center directors can serve the community as consultants to business, industry, and the health professions; or how the focus of the writing center during the 1990's will expand beyond the curriculum of the 1970's (remediation pedagogies) and the 1980's (process pedagogies). Papers on related topics will be considered. Send proposals to: Dr. David W.Chapman, Associate Professor of English and Director, Writing across the Curriculum, Samford University, Box 2207, Birmingham, AL 35229. Deadline for submissions: January 15, 1991.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Barron is a language arts teacher at Richfield High School in chfield, Minnesota and is the current president of The Minnesota)uncil of Teachers of English.

Redmond, CSJ, teaches in the English Department at the College St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota.

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ıerine McIntire teaches in the English Department at North Hennepin)mmunity College in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota.

nas Scott teaches Social Studies at Rosemount High School,)semount, Minnesota.

Bonner teaches in the English Department at Bemidji State ıiversity in Bemidji, Minnesota.

cott Olsen teaches in the English Department at Concordia College ıd is the director of Northlight Writers Association.

Minnesota English Journal Award for Best Articles

Two cash prizes of $75.00 each will be awarded for the two best articles for 1990-91. These awards will be presented at the annual spring conference. Authors should follow the standard *Minnesota English Journal* submission rules. All articles published in *MEJ* will be considered eligible, although the Publications Board reserves the right not to grant an award if, in its judgment, none of the published articles meets the Board's criteria or its standard of excellence.

EDITORIAL POLICY:
MINNESOTA ENGLISH JOURNAL

The *Minnesota English Journal* is an official organ of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English. It ordinarily appears twice a year, Fall and Winter/Spring. The *Minnesota English Journal* publishes articles and poetry of general interest to its membership, teachers K through college.

Manuscripts from Minnesota teachers are preferred. The *MEJ* is distributed free of charge to the membership. Individual issues can be ordered for $3.50 a copy. Manuscripts should be submitted to the editors. If possible, also send your text on an IBM compatible 5 1/4" floppy diskette in Word Perfect 4.2 or 5.1 format. Please use an approved style sheet, either APA or MLA. Internal documentation and a works cited list are preferred. Manuscripts should be 5 - 18 pages, typed double-spaced.

Please consult the call for papers that appear in each issue. At times, special issue will focus on specific themes announced in the *MEJ* and posted at the *Minnesota English Journal* booth during the annual MCTE spring convention.

The editors will make every effort to acknowledge receipt of a manuscript within two weeks and to inform the contributor of its acceptance or rejection within 60 days. Include with the manuscript a stamped, self-addressed envelope.The editors reserve the right to accept or reject a manuscript.

The editors may return a manuscript to request its revision, and the editors may make minor changes in the manuscript without consulting the contributor.