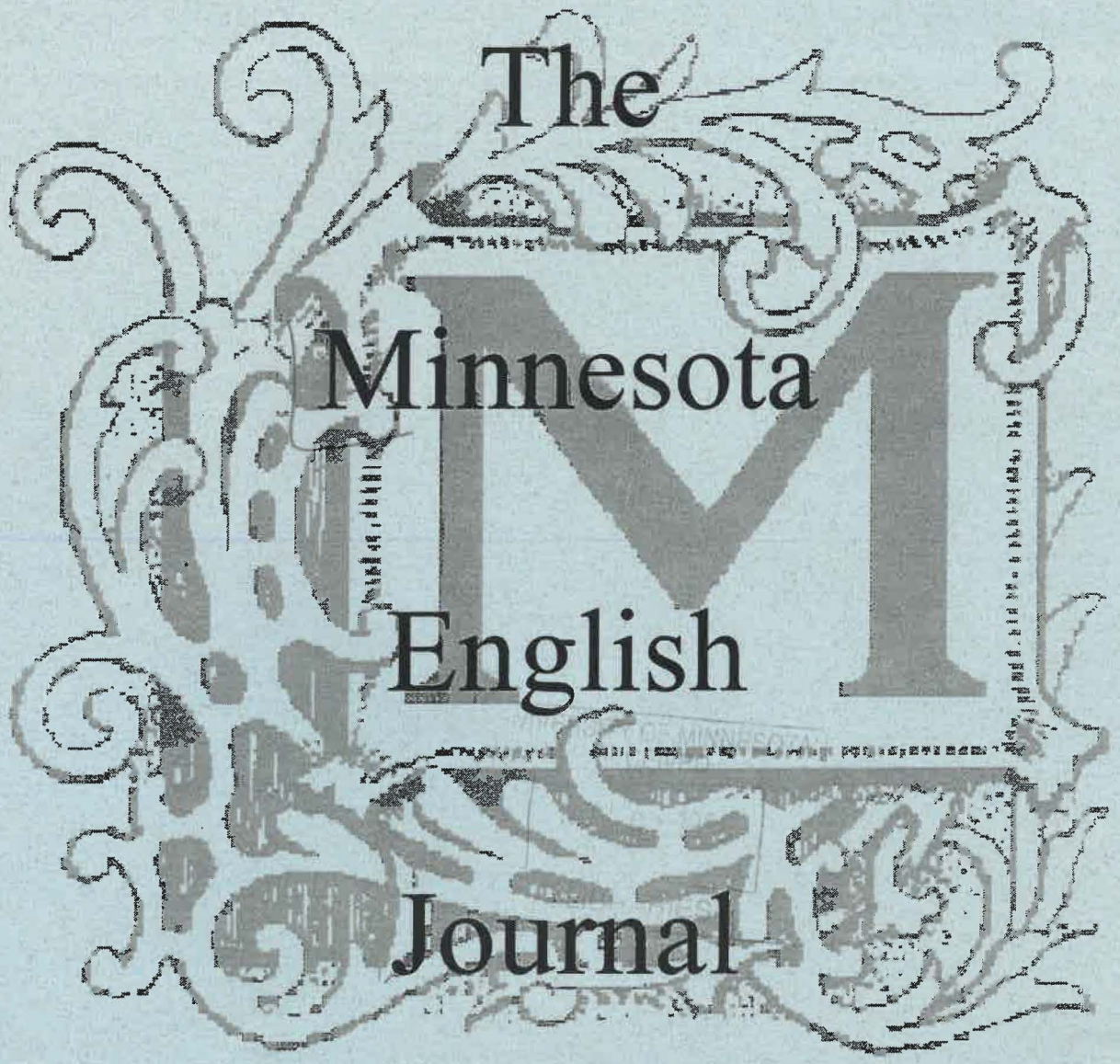

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John Banschbach and Gwen Griffin, MEJ
MSU 53
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Correspondence concerning MCTE should be sent to

Paul Carney
421 N. Broadway
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Marsha Besch
ISD 196
14445 Diamond Path
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From the Editors

"Patiently he awaited the end of winter and the coming of the little spiders. Life is always a rich and steady time when you are waiting for something to happen or to hatch. The winter ended at last." (Charlotte's Web)

One of the pleasures and the lessons of literature is the experience of patient expectation. The phrase "a rich and steady time" aptly describes the re-reading of a favorite story, as we anticipate the funeral of Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn, and Joe Harper, the return of Odysseus, the reconciliation of Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, the reconciliation of Miss Binney and Ramona Quimby, and, perhaps, even the start of the school year.

In this issue there is literature, composition, pedagogy, popular culture, drama, and landscapes. David Glaesemann argues that, despite Eliot's disclaimers, The Waste Land is very much a "generational" poem. Joseph Ng demonstrates the promise of case grammar for helping students respond to literary style. Sarah Coprich Johnson describes the challenges of cultural differences for the composition teacher. Paul Carney explains his success evaluating essays with audiocassettes. Lee Glaesemann surveys current research on collaborative learning in reading and writing, a teaching strategy that remains both popular and intricate. George Ashe suggests activities for introducing drama. And there are poems by Elmer Suderman and Galee Erickson, and a review of Landscape and Memory by Lee J. Woolman.

A special feature of this issue are essays by undergraduates on extending the literature curriculum. Robert St. Pierre "merges" Wordsworth and Thoreau. Kirsten Pettersen and Lisa Koehler suggest teaching activities for world literature, and Chris Radke for science fiction.

John Banschbach

Gwen Griffin

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Rejecting the Impulse: The Grail Quest in T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land

David Glaesmann

Malcolm Cowley, a renowned American social historian, has written brilliantly and insightfully about the Lost Generation's plight after World War One. Coming home to neither the idealistic world that Woodrow Wilson had promised them nor the old world they had known in their youths, this generation of disillusioned writers, he explains, found itself trapped in a numbing transitional time period in American history, where old traditions were slowly giving way to new ones, leaving them with the strange and desperate task of piecing together a meaningful life from the old and new fragments of their society:

> Its members were . . . seceding from the old and yet could adhere to nothing new; they groped their way toward another scheme of life, as yet undefined; in the midst of their doubts and uneasy gestures of defiance they felt homesick for the certainties of past. (592)

John W. Aldridge concluded that for many of the members of this post-war generation, like Ernest Hemingway, F.Scott Fitzgerald, and John Dos Passos, this new scheme of life would not be found by staying in society but through self-exile instead, leaving the artistically dead climate of the United States in favor of Europe, where it was hoped they might recapture in their writing some of the poetic passions that their native land had lost during the war (12).

And they made their lives passionate again, at least artificially. Now that society was no longer bound by an absolute code of right and wrong, they reasoned, this group of disillusioned poets, novelists, and intellectuals spent most of their days indulging in reckless love affairs, drinking heavily at parties, and writing extensively in their spare time. In many respects it was a life dictated by self-impulse, everything being done with the sole purpose of satisfying the artist's most immediate desires, needs, and wants.

It was this direct defiance of society's social conventions which informed the second part of their revolt against the modern world. Finding passion in only what they did for themselves, writers of the Lost Generation reoriented literary art in tune with Dada Surrealism, a philosophy which venerated radical individualism above social obligation, to serve the exclusive personal needs of the artist, instead of society. Adhering to this

literary philosophy, novelists, poets, and intellectuals created art with the intent of confusing and befuddling society; in effect, it was their way of thumbing their noses at a modern culture that was equally inexplicable.

Interestingly enough, T.S.Eliot, who is often included in this group of highly visible American writers, did not find any kinship with the lost generation's artistic cause. In personal interviews, he made clear that he was not a spokesman for "the lost generation," and did not lament the failure of Woodrow Wilson's idealism. He himself commented: "I dislike the word `generation.' When I wrote a poem called The Waste Land some of the more approving critics said that I had expressed the `disillusionment of a generation, which is nonsense. I may have expressed for them their own illusion of being disillusioned, but that did not form part of my intention" (Martin 8). Eliot's refusal to partake in the Lost Generation's antiquest in literature may suggest that his motives for writing The Waste Land extended far beyond an impressive experiment in modernist poetics.

To deny that Eliot lamented the dramatic fraying of American society's social fabric would be an inaccuracy. Unlike the members of The Lost Generation, however, he did not believe that the modern artist, despite the despairing conditions he lived in, should succumb to a popular impulse for social and literary self-exile. Regeneration of the artist, which he did consider a distinct possibility, would start when each writer was courageous enough to break his isolation from society and start a new grail quest for decency, poetic passion, and meaningful love in the world. It was only this quest, he implies in The Waste Land, that will help the post-war artist confront the emptiness in his life, and reunite once again his poetic experiences with humanity to bring order to the chaos of the contemporary world.

Literary analysis of the grail quest in The Waste Land falls into two broad categories: (1) autobiographical implications of the poem and (2) anthropological explanations. Christina Froula, among the several noteworthy Eliot critics, extracts an autobiographical reading of the grail quest using evidence from the original version of the poem, "He Do the Police in Different Voices," to argue that Eliot, the implied protagonist in the poem, is embroiled in a personal quest to overcome two contradictory forces controlling his life, sexual desire and social restraint. Froula's psychoanalytic/feminist interpretation bears considerable fruit for Eliot scholars, elucidating the importance of gender and sexual dysfunction that are rampant in the poem. However, Froula may be pursuing an impossible thesis--that being to divorce Eliot's community of readers from the poem, which seems to be an outright violation of the objective correlative, a concept which most recognize as informing the bulk of Eliot's poetic technique.

The anthropological elements of the poem, namely the seasonal imagery, the biblical allegory, and, of course, the Arthurian Romance Legend, illustrate that the grail quest in the poem is to be understood within the context of Eliot's conception of tradition, time, and history, not his personal turmoil, as distressing as it was. John Fowles, in an exploration of Celtic myth in the Ebony Tower and The Waste Land, lends

considerable credence to the idea, arguing that the grail quest in the poem is one that many questers have undertaken throughout time--to restore the fertility of a society by finding the legendary chapel perilous and asking the right questions about his/society's existence (Wilson 303). Uniting contemporary society with a timeless noble tradition not only appears to inform Eliot's poetic strategy but also his social outlook as well. Breaking with the past, Eliot contends in his literary criticism, will create a universe in which time itself spins chaotically out of control, leaving authors and individuals reeling for some form of certainty. While Fowles highlights a crucial element to Eliot's poem, he ignores the interesting array of personae we hear in each section, and its connection to Eliot's own generation.

We cannot, however, overlook the interpretative frame, Jessie L. Weston's From Ritual to Romance, that both Eliot and his critics used to unearth the significance of the grail quest in The Waste Land. In her anthropological work, Weston examines vegetation rituals and their connections to the waste land theme in the Grail legends of Celtic Romance. She traces the theme to a source in India's ancient Rig-Veda, where she found the story of Rishyacringa, a young man who is raised in the forest apart from women, and when the land falls into ruin, a temptress leads him into the city, where the King gives him his daughter in marriage, and as soon as the marriage is consummated, the curse is broken, and "the rain falls in abundance" (30-32).

In the Grail legends of Celtic Romance, Weston believes that the quester is a knight who searches for the Grail, Christ's cup of the last supper. In the Perceval version of the legend, the knight is raised apart from women in the forest, and faces, like Rishyacringa, the temptation of a woman on a luxurious barge (32). Upon entering the waste land, the knight discovers that the Fisher King is dead or excessively aged or suffering from a sexual wound, and to restore the King's youth and the fertility of the land, the knight must go to the Chapel Perilous and ask questions about the objects he sees there, which usually include a lance and a cup (178).

In The Waste Land, Eliot's Perceval knight appears to be an odd variant of the one in Grail romances. Neither dead nor alive, the artist hero in the poem has presumably withdrawn from his society for reasons similar to those articulated by the Lost Generation artist. Sexually sterile, socially fragmented, and emotionally dead inside, his adult world is a different place from the one he grew up in. Understandably, beaten down by his remorse for society's decay, he has built and spent the entire winter (whether winter means one season or a lifetime, we are never certain) living and functioning in a state of emotional hiberation. Yet, even within this self-imposed hermitage, he cannot suppress the two forces welling inside of him--his memory of a vital childhood and his desire to relive it. In the "Burial of the Dead," the first section of The Wasteland, Eliot's artist begrudgingly acknowledges these intense feelings, admitting that he is not completely dead, at least not yet:

> April is the cruellest month,
> breeding
> Lilacs out of the dead land,
> mixing
> Memory and desire, stirring
> Dull roots with spring rain.
> (1-4)

As Derek Traversi points out, the opening in Eliot's poem is a bleak contrast to the invocation of spring in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales: "The `sweet showers' of April have `pierced the root' the `draught of March'" (24). Spring, in Chaucer's work, is a time of renewal for people, its beauty compelling them to pursue life's activities again with a renewed sense of vigor and vitality.

In Eliot's poem, however, April, normally the month of rebirth, becomes the "cruellest month," whose showers mix the memories of a now deceased childhood with the protagonist's desire to relive them (Traversi 24). The incident from his childhood that torments his memory is the recollection of a sledding incident with his cousin, and the exhilaration, fear, and freedom that it gave him. Safe in his hibernation, he lets himself travel, sliding down into the most intimate regions of subconscious:

> And I was frightened. He
> said, Marie, Marie, hold on
> tight. And down we went.
> In the mountains, there you
> feel free. I read much of the
> night, and go south in the
> winter. (14-19)

It is not surprising that the protagonist now associates comfort and safety in the adult world with the winter season, explaining that "Winter kept us warm, covering/ Earth in forgetful snow, feeding a little life with dried tubers" (5-7). The association, of course, justifies Eliot's apparent inversion of these seasonal symbols, death coming from spring rain and life germinating from winter. Along with its power to annihilate life, winter, in terms of its psychological potency, has the power to preserve it as well. By keeping memories of a more vital past buried beneath the snow, he does not have to confront change, risks, or chances, elements which he fears will disrupt the certainty of his emotional deadness. April rain, represented here as "personal change," thus becomes cruel in the sense that it disrupts the empty routine that he has become accustomed to. With the snow melted, and his hibernation over, he is forced to contemplate the turmoil in his world and step out once again to find something worth living for.

Reflecting on his adult life, however, he decides that he can no longer remain emotionally dead. Although the memories that spring rain stirs frighten him, he desires relief from his empty existence. Early in this section, he perceives his adult life as "A heap of broken images, where the sun beats/ And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief/, And the dry stone no sound of water" (5-8). Traversi argues that the protagonist's impulse to take up the quest for a more vital life is evident in this early section. The rain which stirs `dull roots' and forces `branches to grow' suggests that memories may be able to revitalize his own dull spirit and force him to reach out to others who are in the same predicament (26). Moreover, he finds some relief from the waste land in the shadow of the red rock:

> (Come in under the shadow
> of this red rock),
> And I will show you
> something different from
> either your shadow at
> morning striding behind you
> or your shadow at evening
> rising to meet you. (26-29)

Traversi believes that the desire may be an illusion, but it is a strong intention to step out of the Waste Land, and share

again in a meaningful human relationship (26). Furthermore, the emphasis on the `shadow behind' and the `shadow rising' is one of the dominating ideas of the poem; in order to begin living again, the individual must confront his memories of the past and the uncertainty of the future (26).

Memory and water, elements each representing separate sides of the protagonist's divided consciousness, are personified further by separate male and female personae. Yet, Froula believes that the voices merge into a single consciousness, the feminine voice representing both the desire for and loss of meaningful sexual relationships and the masculine voice representing what she calls an internal police, which serves to represses the sexual self (237). The connection to the Perceval legend is particularly important here. Using sexual desire, as we recall, women in the Perceval legend were responsible for guiding the quester to an "intuitive" knowledge of his society's decay. Furthermore, with the women submitting to his sexual desires, the quester is moved to action and restores fertility back to the wasteland. Similar to the protagonist in "The Love Song of J. Edgar Prufock," the quester in The Waste Land remains paralyzed by these forces momentarily. Throughout the poem, action towards desire often results in raging self-doubt followed shortly by personal discovery, resulting in a weird and vicious cycle of self-entrapment.

Letting his desire rule for the moment, he recollects one of his love relationships. The flower of love, it appears, may have blossomed at one time for the quester, as he recalls a potentially passionate moment :

> `You gave me hyacinths first a
> year ago;
> They called me the hyacinth girl.
> --Yet when we came back, late,
> from the hyacinth garden,
> Your arms full, and your hair
> wet,
> I could not
> Speak, and my eyes failed,
> I was neither
> Living nor dead, and I knew
> nothing,
> Looking into the heart of
> light, the silence. (35-41)

As one can see, the passage carries massive loads of emotional freight, yet the memory and its impact on the protagonist remain ambiguous, since the episode does not indicate whether he found fulfillment in the experience or another disappointment (Traversi 27). The ambiguity of the passage, however, may illuminate something important here. Silence does not necessarily mean "deadness"; in the context of his quest, it may suggest deep reflection towards a new end, indicating that the protagonist, while emotionally frigid, has not yet abandoned his desires, just suspended them for the moment.

The question, of course, becomes one of connection, to find answers to a personal riddle that eludes the quester's understanding. Appropriately, the quester does not turn to scientific reason (suggesting, of course, a momentary rejection of masculine self-restraint), say a therapist or medical professional, to rediscover the vitality that he has lost. To find supernatural faith, he must find someone with supernatural abilities, someone who has the ability to look beyond the secular to the divine. Appropriately, Madame Sosostrsis' tarot fortune readings tie into the water imagery, since her expertise in the "occult world" baptizes the quester in the new knowledge of his society.

Furthermore, the drawn-out nature of the episode implies a type of sexual seduction, a foreplay leading to total sexual arousal when self and societal knowledge finally coalesce.

Betsey Creekmore believes that Madame Sosostris' Tarot fortune may be the most important episode in the poem, since it not only informs the protagonist of his fate in the Waste Land, but also identifies the major themes of the poem. Inevitably, the quester's baptism and seduction begin with water. The first card that the famous clairvoyant lays down is the Significator Card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor. Creekmore explains that the dead Phoenician sailor "represents the query of the protagonist, the death-in-life which is the condition of dwellers in the Waste Land, and the possibility of redeeming death" (911). To justify this connection, Creekmore explains that the Significator Card has the picture of a dead man lying by an ocean, and the image of death, symbolized by a partially hooded man, riding a white horse and carrying a banner with the picture of an emblazoned flower. Yet, Madame Sosostris directs the protagonist's attention to the center of the flower with an allusion to Ariel's song in Shakespeare's Tempest: "Those are pearls that were his eyes." Creekmore says that in the center of the flower are waxy, pearl-like balls which contain the poison of the flower. Furthermore, Ariel's song, which describes a rebirth through death, is linked to the symbolism of the Significator Card, for the card not only has death images on it but also "the sun of immortality," which shines between the pillars of immortality. Thus, Creekmore believes that one of the meanings of the card is that actual death is an instrument of progress or spiritual rebirth (911), a lesson that the modern quester must learn if he is to overcome his despair.

As in the Perceval legend, the protagonist becomes aware of the world's sexual impurity. The second card Madame Sosostris lays down is The Queen of Pentacles, described as Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks. Creekmore explains that this card suggests a dark woman who could have greatness of soul. She is pictured gazing at her symbol (the pentacle) and sits upon a throne carved of rock, so she is the lady of the rocks. The card is to be understood as a reversal of the fortune which appears in the poem, indicated by the word "Belladonna." The traditional meanings of the card are a dark woman, countrywoman, friendly, chaste, and honorable. But in the context of The Waste Land, the card illustrates that the protagonist's world is "characterized by evil, suspicion, suspense, and mistrust" (911). As Traversi believes, it is clearly related to woman's situations where lust "has come to be divorced from any redeeming or humanizing conception of love" (29).

The third card in the fortune raises a more tortuous issue for the protagonist and introduces the theme of meaningless love in the contemporary world. Madame Sosostris lays down the card with the Man with Three Staves, otherwise known as The Three of Wands. In Tarot packs, the man stands in green vegetation interspersed with rocks, and the three staves he holds are living boughs. As Creekmore point out, the color of water in this card is important because it looks like desert sand, while the water is blue in the other cards that are shown (912). The

importance of the card is its relation to enterprise, strength, trade, commerce, and discovery. All of these values are secular values, not spiritual ones, and prevent the protagonist from reaching a spiritual regeneration in the waste land. Indeed, as Creekmore explains, the card is linked to the Significator Card by the stylized ships, to the One-Eyed Merchant by its divine meanings, and to the Hanged Man by the living staves (915).

The readings have taught the protagonist several important virtues. Death, when offered as a sacrifice, is virtuous and will bring regeneration. Sexual impurity, represented by the perversion of the Queen of Pentacles, pervades the wasteland and must be vanquished. Finally, the third card shows him that he must not submit to his material desires, as these will leave him spiritually destitute. Realizing these values, however, is contingent on one thing--accepting chance. As we recall from the beginning of the section, chance disarms the protagonist, fearing that he may lose his certainty. When Madame Sosostrsis lays down The Wheel of Fortune Card, which crowns the Man with Three Staves, the quester learns that he may conquer all evils and achieve virtue if he accepts the challenge of risk. According to Creekmore, the wheel of fortune is a symbol of cause and effect, and if the protagonist denies chance, the card implies fatalism. However, the card also suggests that through a divine purpose, the protagonist can understand the causes of his fate, and seize control again of his situation--the theme of which becomes the quester's grail in the Waste Land.

Overcoming the world's evils will not be simple. As the next card demonstrates, the One-Eyed Merchant Card, known as The Six of Pentacles, links materialism and secular vices to personal frailty. On the picture of the card is a merchant weighing money on a pair of scales, demonstrating his good fortune. The card is represented in the poem by Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant, who is linked to the Phoenician and Syrian merchants who practiced the mystery cults (914).

If the world is to survive though, he must risk everything, even if that means his own life. The chance for renewing the land again appears to be good. Although Madame Sostorsis does not find "The Hanged Man Card," Creekmore believes that the Hanged Man has come from the back of the pack reversed, and represents not an upside-down hanged man, but the Fisher King, or Frazer's Hanged God who had died in order to cause rebirth. Furthermore, when the figure is reversed, its definite halo forms the shape of a cross and appears like it is leaning against living boughs (915).

In a more pronounced way, Eliot is outlining the process in which a quester can become a martyr. Through death, Eliot seems to reason, the quester ascends to a higher plain of virtue, a plain which should be lauded. Madame Sosostris says "I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring." According to Creekmore, the Tarot Card being referred to is The Last Judgment, where the "great angel is surrounded by clouds but blows his trumpet to which the banner of the cross is attached" (916). Below the angel is a circle of people standing in "their coffin-barges on a body of water, all of whom exhibit `wonder, adoration, and ecstasy" (916). The card depicts the last judgment but it also symbolizes the resurrection of the natural body and the purifying aspect of

love. It is the card which shows us the hero has undergone a spiritual transformation and will be reborn again for answering the call of a quest for a higher purpose.

Indications of renewal, however, give way to signs of despair. At the end of "The Burial of the Dead," the protagonist looks at the decay of London and laments: "Unreal City," where "Under the brown fog of winter dawn, A crowd flowed over London Bridge" (60-62). The brown fog image echoes Eliot's earlier poetry with the city of Preludes, of a Portrait of a Lady, and Prufrock (Traversi 30). But as William T. Moynihan asserts, the "Unreal City" in Eliot's poem is a symbolic hell (175), with references to Dante's Inferno ("I had not thought death had undone so many"), and Baudelaire's Ennui ("You! hypocrite lecteur!--mon semblable—mon frère!") (63,76). The despair, however, enunciates a change in the quester. Unlike the beginning of this section, the modern quester's laments may actually be psychological probes, a kind of tortuous self-examination of some hidden pain that he is trying to conceal. The self-probing manifests itself in lines 71-75, when the protagonist asks:

> That corpse you planted last year
> in your garden,
> Has it begun to sprout?
> Will it bloom this year?
> Or has the sudden frost disturbed
> its bed?
> O keep the Dog far hence, that's
> friend to men,
> Or with his nails he'll dig it up
> again! (71-76)

James H. Frazer explains that the passage comes from Webster's The White Devil, except Eliot has substituted "Dog" for "Wolf." In previous criticisms it has been explained that "Dog" is "God" spelled backward; thus, the dog digging up the corpse could symbolize the "uncovering of some type of buried truth" (186). The corpse in the buried garden, in Jungian terms, is "the corpse of the consciousness of the people of the waste land" (186). It is the lost consciousness of a generation, a consciousness that was lost in the Garden of Eden, when knowledge of good and evil was gained (186). More significantly, Dog endeavors to dig up the corpse with its "nails," a strange word choice considering Dogs dig with paws, not nails. The word choice unearths another interpretation of the passage. The dog will use his nails, and those nails stand metaphorically for the nails of the Cross; they represent the nails that were driven through Christ's hands. Therefore, the passage shows God in the person of Christ redeeming the "God-consciousness of humankind back to himself" (186).

Whether the protagonist is willing to accept God's redemption appears to be doubtful at this stage. The highly-charged moment of illumination decrescendos into another painful memory of the past. Although the protagonist learns from Madame Sosostrsis that death comes from life, it is hard for him to believe that fertility can still exist in the wasteland. Passionate romantic love is a relic, he observes, and has given way to the contemporary world's lascivious appetites. Eliot chooses to represent the strange manipulation of love in "A Game of Chess," a section marked totally by its sexual sterility, demonstrated by two meaningless sexual relationships. The first encounter recalls Rishyacringa's

encounter with the woman on the barge and the spiritual transformation that he experienced as a result of it. In the first episode the reader encounters a woman seated on a chair "like a burnished throne" (77). As the note says, the line is a reference to the famous description of Cleopatra on her barge in Shakespeare's Anthony and Cleopatra, but in the context of The Waste Land, Shakespearian romance is dead, and the woman's life is marked by artificiality and sterility (Wilson 309). Indeed, the physical descriptions of the scene, with its polished marble, glittering jewels, and its synthetic perfumes show us a material richness, but the woman's sex life is as synthetic as the perfume she drowns herself in.

In fact, the deadness of the scene gives way to an image of rape more sinister than Pope's Rape of the Lock (Traversi 32-3). The protagonist explains that among the elements of the Cupid decoration is a carving which represents the rape of the legendary Greek heroine and her subsequent transformation: "The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king/ So rudely forced" (99-106). Traversi believes that "Rudely" and "barbarous" "reflect the entry of a new and deliberate brutality into the poem" (33). Moreover, the legend illustrates that love and lust are now indistinguishable in the modern world, and is indicated by the change of tense. "And still she cried, and still the world pursues" (102). And yet, the rape of Philomela is played out in this section by the lover's approaching footsteps. According to Traversi, the footsteps "shuffle" with a muted suggestion of the sinister and the bestial, on the stair, as the woman waits with her "hair Spread out in fiery points," and her words become "savagely still" (108-110).

Beyond the petty lust and cold violation of the relationship, there is no meaningful connection between the two lovers. Instead, words, which should be the source of their intercourse, take on the form of anxiety and pronounce the personal disconnectedness between the two people (Traversi 34): "My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me. Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak" (111-112). Indeed, the relationship, arid in its foundation, reflects the sexual sterility of the Waste Land; the lover responds, "I think we are in rat's alley/ Where the dead men lost their bones" (115-116).

The sterile relationship seems to extend outward to the protagonist's society. The woman cries, "Is there nothing in your head? But O O O O that Shakespearian Rag--it's so intelligent So intelligent" (126-130). As Bruce R. McElderry points out the line is a reference to the hit tune "That Shakespearean Rag," which appeared in 1912. The song's lyrics "Bill Shakespeare," and "Brutus/ We'll play a rag today," are utterly tasteless, and with its mockery of Shakespeare, indicates the artistic decay of modern life, and thus merges this symbolism with the poem's dominant theme of the waste land (185-6).

Without life and sexual meaning, Eliot seems to contend here that the modern individual has nothing to look forward to but despair, desperation, and hopelessness. Ingeniously, Eliot conveys this outlook in the most searing expression of pain in the poem, as the woman expresses her fear of the future:

> What shall I do now?
> What shall I do?
> I shall rush out as I am, and
> walk the street
> With my hair down, so.

What shall we do tomorrow?
What shall we ever do?
(131-4)

What the protagonist learns from his recollections is the necessity of consummating the past with the present in order to make his future a fruitful reality. Yet, Eliot suggests in the poem that the past may be on the verge of dying, making historical consummation an impossibility. These fraying elements of historical time appeared to be represented in the second relationship, a working-class couple, whose sexual dysfunction marks the disconnection inherent in present life. As the protagonist informs us, the woman's husband, Albert, has just been demobilized from the war, and has come back expecting a good time. Yet, the woman does not want a meaningless sexual encounter, but the woman's friend informs her "if you don't give it him, there's other will" (149). Eliot again shows the baseless quality of human relationships in the waste land, where sexual meaning is perverted for solely physical needs, and in the process, real human life is lost. Indeed, the wife makes reference to the "quack" medicine she takes that makes her look like an antique at age thirty-one. More importantly, the destruction of human life is symptomatic of the infertility of the waste land, whose post-war value systems finds itself in chaos and disruption. It is interesting that Eliot said that he was not a spokesman for his generation, insisting that his poem was to only order the chaos of contemporary life. Yet, here, as in the tarot section, Eliot captures, with realistic detail and emotion, the psychological landscape of an age whose passion is misdirected, gone, or confused.

Reflecting on his knowledge of sexual relationships, the protagonist grows into awareness that his condition is related to his society's decay. In "The Fire Sermon," the quester links the cause of the waste land's infertility to the crass materialism of modern consumerism. Indeed, he reflects on the past splendor of the Thames River, whose water is now polluted with empty bottles, sandwich papers, silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, and cigarette ends. Furthermore, the death of the Thames River coincides with the disappearance of the mythical nymphs, who were the spirit of the land, and who are now replaced with business directors of London who "loiter the city." The quester's understanding of his condition grows as he looks even deeper into the past, finding a connection between his own internal exile and the exiles that people experienced in the past. The protagonist compares his and his culture's condition to the Israelites' exile from the promised land to Babylon (Traversi 39): "By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept... Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,/ Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long" (182-84). While the passage appears to be riddled with morose overtones, his descent into the depths of despair produces his most important connection to the past. While fishing in the dull canal, the quester thinks of the fisher king and the restoration of his kingdom. Implicitly, the protagonist recognizes his quest. He must journey to his Chapel Perilous and interpret the objects he sees there.

Traversi believes, however, that the protagonist has made no such commitment to a personal quest,

choosing instead to remain spiritually cautious (Traversi 40). To be sure, the protagonist's self-probing works in a cyclical manner like the seasons, at once moved to regeneration like the spring, he then submits to his prohibitions, like the cold winters. However, the impasse appears to be less distinct, as the two voices merge for the moment into a single consciousness, represented by the figure Tiresias, who has lived as both man and woman. Tiresias's vision of love in the Waste Land exposes the overtly mechanical, routine violation that modern people subject themselves to. Set at the violet hour, Tiresias sees the clerk move with confidence on the typist, and he "endeavors to engage her in caresses" (237). The typist does not desire his advances, yet "his Exploring hands encounter no defence" (240). According to Traversi, the act is a violation, and neither person feels any responsibility for his or her actions (43). Indeed, after the act is over, the clerk blows the woman a patronizing kiss, while the woman thinks: "Well now that's done; and I'm glad it's over" (252). The episode is tactfully brilliant, as the woman's inability to feel her lover's erotic love corresponds to the empty and unsatisfying life that the protagonist feels. Yet, it is interesting to note in this section that the man and woman do join, suggesting that "meaningful" human connection still exists; it is modern love's method which fails to make it erotic.

Ostensibly, Tiresias's vision stirs a personal discovery in the protagonist. If he is to find life again, he must reconnect with the people in his world, but no longer mechanically. The transformation appears to manifest itself in his new outlook on the world. After Tiresias's vision, the protagonist returns to the city, and in an echo of the water music of The Tempest, the he cries:

> "This music crept by me upon the waters"
> And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.
> O City, city, I can sometimes hear
> Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,
> The pleasant whining of a mandoline
> And a clatter and a chatter from within
> Where fishermen lounge at noon: where the walls
> Of Magnus Martyr hold.
> Inexplicable splendor of Ionian white and gold. (257-65)

The new vision of London here is strikingly unlike that which appears in "The Burial of the Dead." It is beautiful in description and its human associations are both heartfelt and genuine. It is no longer a crowd of "dead" souls crossing the bridge in "the brown fog of a winter dawn," and the sound of the clock striking at St. Mary Woolnoth is replaced by the "splendor" on the walls of another of the city churches. Traversi believes that "The Fire Sermon" represents the ascetic tradition both in East and West, where Buddha and St. Augustine saw the fire symbol as both lustful desire and spiritual purification. It is for this reason that we see this section as a turning point in the poem, and the vision of the fire as one "which consumes and, when refined into prayer purifies" (46).

By the end of "The Fire Sermon," the poet looks to be on the verge of a spiritual transformation; however, in the last section of the poem, "What the Thunder Said," the reader is not sure whether this transformation occurs. Like

the opening in the "Burial of the Dead," this section contains a reference to spring; this time, the connotations no longer carry cruel overtones, demonstrated by the mention of thunder. The section also contains a reference to a death: "He who was living is now dead We who were living are now dying With a little patience" (329-330). The passage can be interpreted as Christ's death and eventual resurrection, but the "we" also refers to our death or the collective death of our civilization (Traversi 47).

Contrary to "The Burial of the Dead," the protagonist's desire for water is intense, and the drops of water become a powerful hallucination (Traversi 47):

> But sound of water over a rock
> where the hermit-thrush sings in
> the pine trees
> Drip drop drip drop drop drop
> drop
> But there is no water. (354-58)

And it is in this imaginary state that there appears a vision of "the third who walks always beside you"; in his notes, Eliot himself said that the appearance may be a risen Christ "as he appeared to his stricken followers on the road to Emmaus" (Traversi 48). However, Traversi also believes that this vision is another example of the protagonist's and his society's need to cling to illusion (48) Indeed, the poem swings to an apocalyptic image of the destruction of Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, and London, all linked by the word "Unreal." Some critics have interpreted the passage as a reaffirmation of western culture, believing that western cities regenerate themselves in new civilizations; however, I think a more probable interpretation is that the contemporary world is in danger of becoming nothing more than a mirage, an illusion.

More importantly, the Chapel Perilous, the object of the Grail quest, brings the seeker to an empty, deserted shrine, where only the wind finds a home. The empty Chapel reinforces the idea of a dried up western tradition, but also serves as the greatest test for the contemporary person--the test to face emptiness in his life. Raymond J. Wilson believes that it was Eliot's generation who was the first to face this test after the war, and may find the test neither tragic nor frightening, but merely pointless. Indeed, after finding the chapel, the protagonist remarks, "Dry bones can harm no one," indicating that the quest is neither frightening nor challenging, just senseless (314).

However, Traversi believes that Eliot leaves the reader with some hope at the end of the poem. Rain never comes to The Waste Land, but the black clouds gather in the far distance, suggesting that rain may come if contemporary society learns to control its own world. This hope is imbued in the three Sanskrit words, Datta, Dayadhvam, and Damayata ("give," "sympathize," "control"). In the context of the poem, "give" means to surrender to instinct, and accept the risk in trying to overcome the waste land. "Sympathize" means to break our isolation and share our experiences with humanity, which will give us a new moral order. Finally, "control" comes from accepting the challenge which life offers to us, which in turn, gives our existence meaning (Traversi 48-9). And indeed, the protagonist accepts the decay of modern life, but he has aspired to some measure of control over his world as he sits upon the shore fishing thinking, "Shall I at least set my lands in order" (426).

The Waste Land, undoubtedly, captures the disillusionment and confusion of an age uprooted by war and social change, and it is certainly within the context of this societal fragmentation that the Grail Quest in the poem is to be understood. Yet, unlike the writers of the Lost Generation, Eliot pleads with the modern artist to renounce his/her impulse to abandon society and search for poetic passion elsewhere. The sections of his poem, carrying us through this strenuous resistance, illustrate this point clearly. In "The Burial of the Dead," the protagonist resists his desire to overcome his aimless condition in the waste land, believing that a dead certainty is preferable to the risks he must take. However, in "A Game of Chess," Eliot demonstrates that the consequences of this safety are too severe to ignore. As the lovers demonstrate in the poem, it is a world marred by personal vulgarity, selfish desire, and human frailty. Yet, Eliot offers the reader a new challenge, the object for a renewed quest. As the words "give," "sympathize," and "control," suggest, each individual must confront the emptiness life serves us, and we must remove ourselves from isolation by sharing our experiences with humanity; it is only this quest which can help us regenerate ourselves.

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David Glaesemann recently completed his Master's degree in English at Mankato State University.

Role-Structure Analysis of the "Ant Episode" in Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms: A Pedagogical Suggestion for the Literature Classroom

Joseph Ng

The language of Hemingway's works has been widely noted for its deliberate simplicity and honesty. Like most great writers, Hemingway leaves his message implicit; unlike others, his prose consists of laconic statements and coordinating structures. Hemingway's artistic approach, critics agree, lies in the intense relationship between sentence structure and meaning. Such stylistic sophistication, however, is often overlooked by inexperienced readers as being casual and unpolished. How can we present this element of style? I would like to explain a linguistic approach, using a widely known Hemingway passage as an example.

A Case Grammar Approach

Over the decades, literary critics have explicated Hemingway's themes through analyzing the relationship of his characters. One way to better engage our students with Hemingway's highly stylized prose is to examine not just what his outlook of the world is, but also how he conveys it to the reader.

In Linguistics for Students of Literature, Elizabeth C. Traugott and Mary L. Pratt argue that case grammar (developed primarily by Charles Fillmore) suggests "exciting ways" of expounding the "world-view" of literary works through a systematic examination of the relationship between sentence structure and meaning (191). In case grammar, a sentence consists of two parts—the "Presentence" and the "Predication." The Presentence specifies the tense of the Predication, and indicates the different ways in which the Predication can be negated, questioned, or otherwise modified. The Predication consists of a verb and various arguments, which are noun phrases (NP) functioning in different ways. In addition, NPs are regarded as "roles" relative to the predicate. Consider this sentence as an example: "I finished my paper with a computer." Some of the frequent "role types" in language are AGENT as the doer (such as "I" in the example), INSTRUMENT as the means by which something is done ("with a computer"), and PATIENT as the thing being affected by the action or present in it ("my paper"). Traugott and Pratt suggest a total of less than 20 role types (191-97). In expressing a particular world view, writers (consciously or not) consistently choose particular kinds of role structures over others. When

teachers discuss style and theme in a literature class, the case grammar perspective can translate into an interesting springboard for ideas.

An Example from A Farewell to Arms

A Farewell to Arms tells the story of a tragic love affair of a wounded American lieutenant and his British nurse. He deserts the army and flees with his lover to Switzerland. The brief episode of the ill-fated couple ends when the woman dies in childbirth. One of the powerful scenes in the novel depicts an indifferent man watching ants swarming and dying in the fire. Critics have generally interpreted this passage as Hemingway's attempt to relate the futility of individual human experience to both nature and the protagonist himself. However, from a role structure analysis, the scene suggests a fatalistic perspective of the world, an even stronger message than the absurdity of life.

In the following textual examination, I will note all key role types, which explain how sentences (or holistically the episode as a composite of sentences) come to mean in certain ways. I will first label the key phrases as role types, sort out the results, and then account for their relationships. Although the role types identified include more than the AGENT, PATIENT, and INSTRUMENT, readers will quickly find that the many different types are self explanatory. The key phrases to be examined are underscored, with the role types labeled in capital letters:

LOCATION AGENT
Once in a camp I put
PATIENT GOAL
a log on top of the fire and
POSSESSOR PATIENT
it was full of ants. As
PATIENT/EXPERIENCER AGENT
it commenced to burn, the ants

swarmed out and went first
GOAL GOAL PATIENT
toward the centre where, the fire

was; then turned back and ran
GOAL
towards the end. When there were
LOCATION AGENT/PATIENT
enough on the end they fell
GOAL AGENT
off into the fire. Some got out,
PATIENT/EXPERIENCER
their bodies burnt and flattened, and
GOAL
went off not knowing where
AGENT AGENT
they were going. But, most of them
GOAL
went toward the fire and then back
GOAL
toward the end and then swarmed
LOCATION
on the cool end and finally fell off
GOAL AGENT
into the fire. I remember
PATIENT TIME
thinking at the time that it was
TIME
the end of the world and
TIME PATIENT
a splendid chance to be a messiah and
PATIENT PATH
lift the log off the fire and throw
PATIENT GOAL AGENT
it out where the ants
GOAL AGENT
could get off onto the ground. But I did
PATIENT
not do anything but throw
PATIENT GOAL
a tin cup of water on the log, so that
AGENT PATIENT/AGENT
I would have the cup empty to put

PATIENT AGENT PATIENT
whisky in before I added water
GOAL EXPERIENCER PATIENT
to it. I think the cup of water
LOCATION
on the burning log only steamed
PATIENT
the ants.

Data Analysis

In the 29 clauses (main, subordinate, and coordinate) cited in the excerpt, only "I" and "the ants" are possible AGENTS because they are animates which might function as doers of action. Since role analysis also explores relationships among AGENT, EXPERIENCER, and PATIENT, a summary of these roles and their frequencies of appearance should reflect the writer's choice of phrase structures and thus, according to case grammarians, a certain perspective of the world.

Number	Role Types
4	I as AGENT "I put a log" "I did not do anything," "I would have the cup empty" "I added water to it"
0	I as PATIENT
2	I as EXPERIENCER "I remember thinking" "I think the cup of water . . ."
6	The ants as AGENT "the ants swarmed out" "they fell off into the fire" "Some got out" ". . . they were going" "Most of them went toward the fire" "the ants could get off onto the ground"
4	The ants as PATIENT ". . . it was full of ants" ". . . they fell off into the fire" ". . . their bodies burnt and flattened" ". . . the cup of water only steamed the ants"
1	The ants as EXPERIENCER ". . . their bodies burnt and flattened"

Role Structure Patterns

We might draw interesting thematic relationships from the frequencies of types in the passage. First, the proportion between the number of the pure AGENT to the number of individual clauses supports the idea that Hemingway subjugates comment under action. As doers responsible for action, there are 13 AGENTS in the 29 clauses in the ants episode. Second, apropos AGENT-acting, the "I" character is a pure AGENT in all cases in which he acts according to his will. As for the ants, of the six AGENT-acting cases, one of them is also a PATIENT, and for the other five cases, the ants are disoriented. Their roles might be described as "Quasi-AGENT," because in all cases, if going anywhere, they are only hustling between the poles of death. They are not responsible for the external event, the inferno taking place. As AGENT, they advance as well as retreat. To pursue the point of victimization further, we might also note that the ants are PATIENT four time whereas "I" has never been once. Their relative semantic passivity makes quite a contrast here.

The lines in the chart on the next page are examples of GOAL-related actions:

Goals	Roles of I or Ants
". . . went first toward the centre where the fire was"	Ants as AGENTS
". . . not knowing where they were going"	Ants as AGENTS
"Most of them went toward the fire"	Ants as AGENTS
". . . fell off into the fire"	Ants as AGENTS

First, despite the fact that GOAL and SOURCE are related to each other in daily discourse, no SOURCE appears in the passage. Of the 12 GOALS, four involve the fire. Not unlike human existence, the AGENTs are ignorant of their SOURCE and proceed always to the unknown. Second, it is surprisingly apparent that for all the actions involving dangerous, fiery GOALs, ants are the AGENTs which, instead of running away from the fire, rush toward it. While their original will is to get away from it, their physical bodies urge them to their deaths.

The "I" character has been twice an EXPERIENCER, and the ants once. The protagonist's cool, calm thinking strongly contrasts with the burning and flattening disaster experienced by the ants. Still, in terms of action, the protagonist is only watching, occasionally moving the log and the cup, constituting a picture of burning the desperate, living mass.

The World View

Hemingway's world view as explicated from the ant incident is fatalistic; there is an absence of ethical concerns regarding actions and the presence of an "impersonal" force causing the catastrophe. As for the action of burning, the protagonist is the AGENT who goes camping and builds a fire which brings about the disaster for the ants. As for the action of watching, the protagonist is an indifferent AGENT who lets the log burn in its place. As for the whimsical thought of being a messiah, the protagonist has the potential to do good; he then would have saved the mass if he had tried. Nevertheless, all these are independent of an ethical cause. To the ants, however, the fire is caused by an impersonal force, which has no intention of causing a disaster. The absurdity of facing choices is somehow rendered by the on-going events, which can be explained by the explicit coordination clauses. In the 29 clauses, there are 11 "ands." The sequence of events, leading to the emptying action of the cup, only stops the attempt of being a messiah and kills the ants by steaming them all. As a understatement of the fatalistic decree, the events in the incident of burning ants are inevitable.

While role-structure analysis may first seem confusing, such a linguistic skill will mature through experience with different texts and through constant practice. This method seems to work especially well in small group work in my literature course. Through trial and error, students participate enthusiastically in role-structure conversation probing authors' world views, which leads to discussion of style and theme. I usually begin with an example of a short explication (such as the example above), without worrying too much about the theory of case grammar and role relations. Gradually, students learn to not only justify their own perceptions, but also appreciate the stylistic sophistication of an author.

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Joseph Ng teaches English and is Acting Chair of the Department at Inver Hills Community College. His doctorate in rhetoric and composition is from Illinois State University.

Sunrise on Lake Superior

Leafless trees in November snow
beyond which barely rippling
waters of Lake Superior.
At the pastel pink of eastern horizon
and above that deep blue sky,
a long span of cloud
stretches across morning's horizon.
Nothing's going on.

Elmer Suderman has published poems, short stories, and scholarly articles from New York to California and Minnesota to Texas. Past President of MCTE, he is Professor Emeritus at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN.

Fast Influencings

Lee J. Woolman

Review of Landscape and Memory. Simon Schama. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995. 578 pp. $40.00 ISBN 0-679-40255-1

However rich your sense of literary landscapes—the rolling park Elizabeth Bennett gets muddy crossing or the forest that darkens Young Goodman Brown's life or the mountain that Wharton's Charity Royall must climb to find her mother or the rivers that Langston Hughes conjures—Simon Schama's new multidisciplinary study Landscape and Memory will deepen it grandly. A humanities professor at Columbia, Schama explores what forests, waters, and mountains have meant to western culture (there is also a short account of Chinese mountain art). While Schama focuses on myth and culture, he acknowledges at the start that his study of nature exists in a current cultural setting aswarm with environmental issues. "At the heart of this book is the stubborn belief that this [the potential mindless race toward a machine-driven universe] is not, in fact, the whole story . . . Instead of assuming the mutually exclusive character of Western culture and nature, I want to suggest the strength of links that have bound them together" (14).

And links abound in this lavishly illustrated text, framed by the same quotation from Thoreau:

> It is vain to dream of a wildness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog in our brains and bowels, the primitive vigor of Nature in us . . . (578)

Through hundreds of references to artists, traveloguists, rulers, poets, historians, and entrepreneurs—some well known, some quirkily obscure—Schama examines landscapes that have defined national identities (the Bialowieza woods in Poland), literary/aesthetic movements (the Romantics' obsession with the Alps), and transcultural religious beliefs (the similarities in water rituals in Christian and pagan systems, from the Nile to the Thames). In each the symbiosis between natural "fact" and mythic "construction" reinforces what teachers of literature have always assumed, how natural entities, such as the Mississippi River in Huckleberry Finn or the tree in "The White Heron," for example, are both good characters and symbols. Schama, too, like the good teacher in a discussion, frets "whether it is possible to take myth seriously on its own terms, and to respect its coherence and complexity, without becoming morally blinded by its poetic power" (134). He judges individuals so "blinded" (is any of us exempt?) with bemusement (the London dockman become impressario, John Taylor), admiration (the revolutionary artist J. M. W. Turner or the gifted fountain sculptor Bernini), or disgust (the fascist-fascinated Gutzon Borglum of Mount Rushmore fame). In addition to this range of judgements personalizing what is essentially a "fat history book," Schama includes vignettes from his own history—visiting the Polish woods where his Jewish ancestors brokered timber sales or recalling his immigrant father's love of the Thames whitebait feasts or his daughters' fears of the dragon-like experience of the redwoods north of Mendocino. His experiences of landscape reflect ours in many ways.

Even though explicit literary-landscape connections familiar to most English teachers are few (Schama does discuss Byron and Shelley in the Alps, the Transcendentalists, the Brothers Grimm, among others), Schama's book nevertheless provides a loamy base for transplanting our own favorite imaginary landscapes. He makes us see the power of the mythic scape that informs all people's encounters with nature. When Schama chronicles the Nazis' desperate hunt for a medieval copy of Tacitus' Germania: or, On the Origin and Situation of the Germans (A. D. 98), he reveals a chilling example of nature myth's power to seduce and to unhinge. Borglum's monomania about mountain symbolism resembles Goring's about the magic woods of Bialoweiza. (The section on Borglum includes the story of Rose Powell, a 1930's ur-feminist who labored tirelessly to have Susan B. Anthony's head included on Mount Rushmore.) On a cheerier note, Schama explains fully the greenwood myths attaching England's forests that produced both the real Magna Carta and the fictional Robin Hood.

Venturing beyond the educational or literary text is salubrious for English teachers; in Simon Schama we find a bracing blend of crisp prose intellectual relish, and enthralling esoteria to delight a long journey's reading. After his detailed account of the importance of English hard woods, notably the oak, for the spiritual and naval survival of British folk, I am much more appreciative of my children's childhood books The Oak Tree and The Giving Tree or the inheritance problems in Sense and Sensibility. On a more practical level, Schama's use of art will inspire me to incorporate more pictorial myth into my literature assignments. (For example, I want to explore images of the middle passage or the Ohio river to enhance my students' encounter with Beloved.) Between Schama's book and last year's study by Professor David Nye, American Technological Sublime, teachers can much more fully understand the sets, natural or manmade, which affect authors and their characters.

Lee J. Woolman teaches English and writing at The Blake School in Minneapolis. He has a B.A. in English from the University of the South and an M.A. in American Studies from the University of Minnesota.

Ask a Teacher of English

Often, in dealing with current issues in education, news media reporters, editors, legislators, and state and local education officials need to know the current thinking of specialists closest to a given topic. If that topic involves an aspect of the teaching of English and the language arts—reading, writing, speaking, literature, language usage, and listening—the Public Information Office at the headquarters of the NCTE can help you get information and comments. Call the NCTE Public Information Office for further details: (217) 328-3870.

Teacher Inquiry: Spelling Matters

The Elementary Section of the National Council of Teachers of English and the Whole Language Umbrella invite those who wish to investigate the role of spelling in the curriculum to form local study groups and become part of a national conversation.

Who should be involved?

Teachers, administrators, parents, interested citizens: anyone wishing to engage in an extended conversation about the topic of spelling.

What will each study group do?

1. Identify important questions about spelling.
2. Draw on a variety of resources to investigate their questions.
3. Communicate with other interested educators around the country who share similar questions and concerns.
4. Summarize their investigation at year's end.

What resources are available?

Each study group can choose from a variety of resources including:

- **guidelines** for forming and conducting a study group
- relevant **articles** from NCTE publications
- copies of ***School Talk*** and ***Primary Voices K–6*** that focus on spelling
- Lester Laminack and Katie Wood's **new book** on spelling, due out in November
- **bibliographies** on teacher research and spelling
- access to a **listserv** dedicated to this topic
- two **video conferences** which will feature teacher educators, classroom teachers, and video clips from classrooms (see opposite page)

If you are interested in forming a study group, contact NCTE to receive information:

1-800-369-6283, ext. 271

Why We Need Cross-Cultural Differences in the Writing Class

Sarah Coprich Johnson

How did Billy pass EH 101?

This question was scrawled on a short note that I found in my mailbox one afternoon as I rushed to class. I looked at the note for some time. I was surprised and troubled by it.

Although Billy's 102 teacher stated that she only asked a question about Billy's performance in 101 because she was concerned about how she should instruct him in her class, I found the whole matter upsetting. Did this teacher consider a passing 101 grade for Billy inappropriate, inaccurate or unfair?

Comments that followed when she poked her head into my office one afternoon after she submitted the note were even more disturbing. "People like Billy usually know not to enroll in my class. They know that I have very high standards," she said. "Billy is sort of like a foreigner without a passport. He won't pass my course."

Billy was just an ordinary student in terms of the students that I teach each term. He was the son of working class parents, a member of the university soccer team, and a friendly young man who seemed committed to succeeding at the university on and off the soccer field.

Writing, however, did not come very naturally or very easily for Billy. He seemed happy, however, to be at the university and he evidenced a great motivation in my class to overcome his writing problems.

Determined to succeed in EH 101, Billy revised several drafts and regularly received assistance at the departmental Writing Center. After much personal effort and much instruction Billy's writing improved and he earned the grade of "C."

To me there was nothing particularly significant about Billy or the grade that he earned. I had taught several such students.

Billy's 102 teacher, however, was determined to make a point to me as well as to Billy about how she felt about his inability to function within her class. She met with Billy early in the term and let him know that she did not feel that he would pass the course. She also made it clear that she had very high standards and he simply did not fit.

Discouraged and confused, Billy dropped by my office one afternoon to let me know that he was not doing very well in 102 and that he had withdrawn and enrolled in another 102 class. At the end of the term he returned to report that he had passed the course.

The dilemma was over for Billy, but not for me. I was still puzzled. Why did I see so much potential in Billy in the

101 class when his 102 teacher saw absolutely no hope for him in "her" class? Why did this happen? What did it all mean?

Kurt Spellmeyer defines this sort of dilemma as a cultural rather than an individual one. He argues that some freshman writing teachers are committed to a kind of radical cultural politics that too often serves to transform them into "therapeutic critics" who serve rather "harsh medicine" (qtd. in Trimbur 115). Rather than inviting students to enter the conversation of professional and academic discourse as recommended by some composition researchers, Spellmeyer suggests that writing teachers should "reimagine" the conversation in the classroom as an encounter between the two cultures and "life-worlds" that populate writing classes, those of specialized practitioners ("us" the teachers) and ordinary people ("them" the students).

Spellmeyer helps me see more clearly what happened between Billy and his first 102 teacher. Two unlike life-worlds and cultures collided in the writing class when Billy and the 102 teacher encountered each other. The teacher immediately recognized the division and "unlikeness" of the worlds as indicative of the fact that Billy would not be able to easily "enter the conversation." This situation created tension. How would such a student be taught? Who placed her in this uncomfortable position? What strategy could she use to move Billy from what Spellmeyer calls "general citizenship" to the commmunity of the "academically" competent? (qtd. in Trimbur 113).

Recognizing that the writing class is often a site where two cultures collide and where seemingly incommensurable discourses encounter each other, Spellmeyer says that the task of teaching writing is often difficult and painful. He likens the process to that of childbirth, but boldly asserts that as a teacher he wants to "assist at delivery," and that he is "not afraid of hard labor" (Trimbur 115).

David Bartolomae describes the cross-cultural conflict that often occurs between teachers and students in writing classes as "inventing the university." Explaining the struggle that students experience, he says:

> Every time a students sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion—invent the university, that is, or a branch of it . . . to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community. . . . They must learn to speak our language. Or they must dare to speak it, or to carry off the bluff, since speaking and writing will most certainly be required long before the skill is "learned." And this, understandably, causes problems. (273)

Patricia Bizzel says that there is a need for the academic discourse community to broaden its boundaries so that more people will be able to benefit from becoming participants in its conversations. To reinforce her idea she criticizes E. D. Hirsch's notion of cultural literacy by suggesting that any "unitary national discourse" will limit the group of people who will have access to it in terms of race, sex, and social class (663).

I strongly believe that we must give all of our students an opportunity to learn from us, and we must also give ourselves an opportunity to learn from all of our students. When we spend time deploring the great number of students who come to writing classes with social experiences and linguistic habits that are unlike our own, and engage in wringing our hands in self-righteous anguish about how little students know and fit into our modes of understanding with regard to language and writing, we deny ourselves the opportunity to experiment and to learn more about how to teach writing to such students, and we deny ourselves the opportunity to learn more about students, ourselves and the world around us.

I am encouraged as a teacher by such writers as Shirley Brice Heath, Donald Murray, and Paulo Freire who challenge me to learn from students who represent social and cultural worlds unknown to me and to work toward empowering such students to reach beyond the boundaries of their discourse communities to join a larger one. Heath, writing about the value of cultural and linguistic experiences, for example, encourages me to explore and create conditions within the classroom that help students use their experiences as springboards for writing. Murray, in sharing his writing stories, challenges me to think of ways to use student stories and lived experiences as vehicles for building on what Mikhail Bakhtin and others recognize as the social nature of learning. And Freire, in emphasizing the power of the oppressed and marginalized, causes me to think of how I can move students--who in many ways represent the margins in terms of their familiarity and use of academic discourse--closer to the center, using student voices and student ways of seeing and knowing as useful tools for learning.

As a teacher and as a writer I recognize that sometimes writing does not come naturally or very easily. I want all of my students--weak and strong, different and familiar--to recognize, however, that it is really possible to make it through the swamps of pain and struggle as beginning writers to the clearing--the place and the time when writing becomes meaningful and more joy than pain, so I grapple constantly for ways to avoid negative devices which cripple student interest and initiative.

What does all of this mean in terms of the conflict that occurred between Billy and his 102 teacher? How does this conflict inform our teaching and thinking concerning cross-cultural differences and the teaching of writing?

Based upon my own experiences as a writing teacher in confronting a wide variety of students, and based upon the information that we now have from composition researchers and theorists regarding the value of cross cultural differences in helping teachers learn more about students and about ways to develop accommodating pedagogical practices, I am more convinced than ever before that we need cross cultural differences in our classes. Contrary to the belief of some, differences do not have to serve as barriers within our classes or as signals that foreigners are about to invade our classroom settings. Cross-cultural differences can serve to broaden teacher and student knowledge, as both teachers and students learn more about each other. They can provide a wide experience base from which class discussions can grow and develop. And they can serve to assist students in developing interesting topics for papers based upon social and cultural experiences, and provide a wealth of information regarding which pedagogical strategies will best help us achieve our goal of producing a rich harvest of clear

and meaningful student writing.

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Sarah Coprich Johnson is an assistant professor of English at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She has published articles in TETYC, the Journal of Basic Writing, and the Oklahoma English Journal. She co-authored "Bridging Cross Cultural Differences Through Writing" in Expanded Vision: English Teaching in Today's Classrooms, published by NCTE.

New Titles Available for Book Reviews

The editors of MEJ would like to have reviews of the following books now available from NCTE:

Electronic Literacies in the Workplace: Technologies of Writing edited by Patricia Sullivan and Jennie Dauterman. Published by NCTE, this book of essays focuses on building bridges between classroom and workplace notions about computers, writing, and literacy. While education has largely kept pace with demands for technological know-how, workplace literacy programs continue to focus on function literacy.

Those Who Do, Can: Teachers Writing, Writers Teaching: A Sourcebook by Robert L. Root, Jr., and Michael Steinberg. Based upon the Traverse Bay Writing Workshops for Teachers, this NCTE book captures the energy of teachers growing as writers during one-week summer workshops in Traverse Bay, Michigan, and offers a variety of strategies for teaching and responding to writing.

Teaching the Short Story: A Guide to Using Stories from Around the World edited by Bonnie H. Neumann and Helen M. McDonnell. The editors of this anthology have compiled brief author biographies, story synopses, and thematic comparisons for 175 short stories, from such countries as South Africa, Japan, Russia, France, Turkey, and Cuba

If you would like to write a 500-750 word review of one of these books, notify the editors. You'll receive a complimentary review copy of the book and the thanks of your readers!

Is It the Teacher or Is It Memorex?: Responding to Student Essays Using Audio Cassettes

Paul Carney

During the 1994-95 academic year, I examined the use of audio cassettes as an alternative method for responding to student writing. While the primary focus was on writing assessment and student receptivity to instructional feedback, I also gained further insight into my evaluation tendencies. Ultimately, I sought to answer the question: To what extent does audio response to compositions enhance student receptivity to evaluation and thus improve writing skills? I conducted this classroom research project in five sections of freshman composition, with a total of 115 students participating in the project.

After responding to student writing with the traditional pen for fifteen years, I decided to use audio cassettes to record and convey my responses to students. I anticipated that this method of responding to compositions would be more efficient as well as more effective than written feedback.

Classroom Assessment Strategy

At mid-quarter and at quarter's end, students completed self-analysis surveys which assessed their satisfaction level with audio cassette responses to their writing. In order to compare the effectiveness of the audio response method to the traditional written feedback, I responded to the first batch of essays in writing. Subsequent essays were evaluated using audio cassettes to convey my comments and suggestions.

Using Audio Cassettes: Some Procedural Issues

Prior to submitting their essays, students were asked to place numbers before each sentence so that I could more efficiently and more clearly identify the location of my focal attention (Note: the numbers should appear directly before each sentence, not each line). I also asked students to highlight each number for quicker identification of sentences. The highlighted numbers also served as visual indicators of the writer's sentence pattern habits. Upon submitting their numerically highlighted essays, students also provided a standard size audio cassette with their names and the course number on the label. I then stored the cassettes in a cassette case.

To increase the efficiency of the actual response process, I used a small voice-activated cassette recorder to register my comments. The voice activation feature freed me from having to

fumble with stop/record buttons while reading and "talking through" the essay. The initial sound of my voice triggered the recording device, and when I reached a pause period to gather my thoughts, the recorder deactivated. After sharing my auditory comments, questions, and suggestions with the writer, I ejected the cassette and returned it to the storage case. Once these support procedures (numbered sentences, properly labeled cassettes, storage case, voice-activated recorder) are followed and become routine, the process flows quite smoothly.

Assessment Data

Data collected from three quarters of assessment suggest that students prefer and positively respond to audio responses to their writing. A compilation of year-long classroom assessment surveys revealed that most students (96/115) found the audio evaluation method very helpful in aiding them to recognize the strengths and weaknesses in their writing. Further, most students (87/115) indicated the method was very helpful in providing guidance to improving their writing.

Given the choice between audio or written evaluation of their work, 96 of 115 students preferred the cassette to the pen. In fact, on assignment due dates, a number of forgetful students who the preferred the audio feedback drove home between classes to retrieve their cassettes.

Finally, students were asked to share their perception of and reaction to the process of reviewing their paper with the cassette rolling. The following comments represent typical responses from the students.

Representative Student Attitudes

"It worked well in that hearing the instructor's voice and his comments about the paper made it more personal than reading an evaluation. I think it's a good idea to verbalize the comments."

"I could understand what you were saying. It was more interesting. With the audio you have to look at your paper again because the comments are on tape instead of on paper."

"When I can hear my mistakes, like when you read my errors, I can clearly detect my mistakes. When a teacher writes down the mistake beside it, I sometimes have a hard time finding it. But when you read it out loud it was easy for me to detect it."

"Using the audio evaluation, the instructor is able to elaborate more when pointing out errors and suggesting ways to make the writing better."

"I think it was easier to notice the strengths and weaknesses in the audio evaluation. I got a better explanation of what I was doing wrong and you gave examples and told me how to improve it."

"You have to look over your paper again. The message comes across clearly. To me, when teachers write on my papers, they seem to be yelling through their writing."

"It worked well just to sit with paper, pen, and cassette listening and revising at the same time, as if in the tutorial session with an instructor."

"The audio works better for me because this way I had to write on my own paper about what was wrong by listening to the audio. I understand things better when I actually write it."

Analysis

After compiling the data of the assessment survey, I shared the findings with the students. Perhaps the most significant side effect of the audio response method was that it preserved the visual integrity of the student's paper. According to classroom consensus, written comments, typically in the most efficient abbreviated form, can be confusing, discouraging, even humiliating. Many students expressed the revulsion and defeatism they felt upon receiving essays which appear to be "vandalized" by the instructor's grade-justifying graffiti. The cassette fostered a "kinder, gentler" demeanor as I was able to express more meaningfully complete insights and ideas.

The passage below represents an introductory paragraph which I evaluated with pen in hand. Beneath the passage is a partial transcript from the audio response which addresses the same paragraph. Note the explanatory limitations of the abbreviations as well as the curt tone which they establish. Notice also the shift from written **scrutiny** to spoken **suggestion**. ("d" signifies diction)

Excerpt of Written Response

1. In Stephen Dunn's poem "Hard Work," the speaker reveals the effects that a job releases into the human soul. 2. The speaker, after accepting a job in a bottling plant, soon realizes what he may become is he continues; a nobody in the work force an his home. Unable to allow this

adj. d? awk- good intro what? d?

he quits his job and retreats back to the life that he enjoys.

Transcript of Audio Response

"Cathy, your introduction has a sharp focus. In Sentence 1, modify `effects' for clarity. . . I don't know that we **`release into'**. . ..release suggests departure, going out. In Sentence 2 I like how you insert `after accepting the job in the bottling plant' between the subject and the verb. That's sophisticated writing. After `continues' you may want to omit the semi-colon and use a comma or a dash. Nice dependent clause pattern in Sentence 3. . . check for clutter words.

Changes in Strategy

I foresee two basic changes in strategy emerging from this project. First, I would ask students either to write a reflective journal or to provide an annotated copy of their paper which registers interpretation of my verbal comments. This exercise would require students to revisit their work as part of the revision process. In addition, these brief connecting pieces would provide me with visible evidence of how or if my comments are reaching the writer. Second, I would periodically rewind and carefully listen to my taped responses. After soliciting feedback from students, I learned that I need to listen carefully to not only what I say but **how** I say it. Evidently, tone and mood are clearly conveyed when students listen to recorded comments.

Reflections

As I voiced my comments into the cassette recorder, I tracked my awareness of several significant changes in my approach to responding to student

writing. First, and perhaps most important, I found myself **talking to the student** rather than grading the paper. Frequently, I visualized the student's face as I recorded my responses. The cassette, unlike the written response, formed a triangular exchange between the teacher, the paper, and the student, thus creating an inclusive dynamic during the transaction. This graphic comparison illustrates the contrast in the interaction between the student, the essay, and the instructor.

Second, I noticed that I was offering more comments and suggestions than criticisms and corrections. With the pen stripped from my hand, I became more of a helpful reader and less of an eagle-eye editor.

Third, global issues suddenly emerged as the focus of my attention, which diminished the score-keeping interference of grammar penalties. Perhaps for the first time in my teaching career, I was both willing and able to discuss with the writer the complex nature of "awk" as well as the slippery cognitive intricacies associated with logic, originality, and imagination. Though non-interactive, the cassette provided me a dynamic similar to a conference with the student. I credit the comment-filled cassette for the apparent improvement in revisions and in subsequent essays.

Further, the cassette method alerted me to counter-productive tendencies inherent in my written evaluations of student compositions. Unexpectedly though refreshingly, the use of audio cassettes has had a profound influence on how I conduct my written evaluations, for its has tamed the predator in my pen.

Finally, the cassette comments are slightly more efficient than the written reactions. I particularly appreciated the cassette's efficiency during my summary comments and suggestions. Perhaps the greatest time-saving contributions occurred when I noticed the absence of clarification questions following the return of a paper. As the cassette offered the students greater depth and volume, it virtually eliminated the necessity for post-class hallway clarification conferences.

While I celebrate and will continue to use audio cassettes as an alternative to the pen, there are several conditional drawbacks. First, one must find and secure the appropriate space and solitude, preferably a place insulated from noise and interruptions. An island would be ideal. Because the method limits portability, one can no longer respond to essays during eternal committee meetings or while waiting in the doctor's office. Second, the initial gathering, storage, and distribution of the cassettes can be cumbersome; however, these hurdles can be cleared, or at least lowered, by following the aforementioned procedures. Finally, though I have been known to chomp on a pretzel or nibble on a Twizzler while recording my comments, the cassette approach complicates that familiar duet between eating and evaluating.

Just as the students attentively listened to the comments on the cassettes, I must listen to the data in this study. Quite literally, students want to **hear** what I have to say about their writing, and they want to hear **how** I say it.

Paul Carney has taught composition, literature, and creative writing at Fergus Falls Community Colllege since 1988. He completed his graduate work in English and Sociology at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Amber

Butterscotch in transparent circles
Like pieces of amber
Is always nearby
Rests in a beveled bowl by
My favorite chair at home
Between the bills and coupons
At the bottom of my purse
At the rear of the
Upper right hand corner
Of my school desk

The doctors suggest
Strongly no
Smoking (I don't)
Caffeine
Chocolate

Now

My oral pleasures
Include water-processed
Decaffeinated coffee
Sugar by the drop
And self-
Righteousness

Galene Erickson teaches all aspects of 8th and 9th grade language arts at Valley View Middle School in Edina, MN. She is currently on the NCTE committee on the teaching about intolerance and genocide.

Developing Successful Group Work in the Classroom: A Bibliographic Guide to Collaborative Learning

Lee Glaesemann

Fifteen to twenty years ago, three of the most recognized composition theorists, Peter Elbow, Kenneth Bruffee, and Harvey Weiner, advanced a new learning theory in composition and rhetoric called collaborative learning. While collaborative learning has its cynics, most composition studies indicate that, when teachers implement group work correctly, student writing and critical thinking improve consistently over time.

Since most scholars acknowledge that collaborative learning has value in composition classrooms, many of us as teachers become frustrated when this theory does not translate automatically into successful practice. Often we either misinterpret the purpose of collaborative learning, or we do not understand how to implement it. My goal is to insure that English composition teaching assistants and secondary English instructors understand how to apply collaborative learning to the classroom. I will explore the two most common situations facing teachers: using small groups for reading assignments, and developing small groups for revising student essays.

Before English teachers make collaborative learning a staple in their classrooms, they need an accurate definition of its theory and practice. Harvey Weiner states that collaborative learning begins when a teacher assigns a specific task where groups must use their intellectual skills to arrive at a formal consensus (54-55). Kenneth Bruffee contends that those who apply collaborative learning accept a social-constructionist viewpoint that students improve their knowledge when they interact with their peers. In other words, knowledge does not develop individually or competitively or in relation to inanimate objects; rather, it flourishes when it is shared ("Art" 152).

Collaborative learning is different from other learning theories which use group work. Muriel Harris argues that people mistake collaborative writing for collaborative learning. Collaborative writing involves two or more people who co-author an essay or writing assignment. Collaborative learning, on the other hand, is the active discourse between the writer and group members in order to develop the writing skills of the writer (369-70). Collaborative learning also differs from cooperative learning in terms of teacher authority, the latter assuming that a teacher must be an active member in each group who leads students through

the process of writing, the former asserting that students must arrive at their own conclusions (Bruffee, "Sharing" 17). David Johnson, Roger Johnson, and Karl Smith add that the real purpose of collaborative learning is to insure that students will learn the basic skills necessary to read and write effectively independent of a teacher's help (174).

Synthesizing all of the experts' definitions, we can devise a thorough yet useful definition of collaborative learning. Collaborative learning involves teachers creating partly autonomous peer groups which actively engage in discourse on a chosen topic, so that they can arrive at a consensus at the end of each meeting. If teachers understand that this learning model alters the outlook of their classroom, then collaborative learning will move from theory to actual practice.

Before establishing the procedures of collaborative learning, we need to acknowledge that some educators disagree with this pedagogy. Critics indicate two serious problems with poorly developed peer groups: 1) that careless teacher organization of group work hinders student performance; 2) and that teacher failure to model appropriate peer interaction produces no significant improvement in writing performance. Martin Nystrand, Adam Gamoran, and Mary Jo Heck, who support collaborative learning, state that teachers who do not provide groups with lesson plans, include too few or too many discussion questions, or fail to encourage student discourse, usually hinder their students' performance. They also add that problems arise when teachers are authoritarian and require groups to fashion discussion around rigid check lists and inflexible style sheets (20-21). Diana George comments that students do not improve their reading and writing skills when they are not given accurate instruction on group interaction. For example, a common problem associated with poor or absent modeling is that group members will offer surface-level suggestions—i.e. improving syntax, changing punctuation and capitalization errors—without addressing the schematics of the paper. It is also common that group members will address problems without understanding why it needs to be and should be changed (322-32).

While critics point out some serious problems with unorganized peer groups, teachers who implement this approach correctly will still be successful. One of the most common applications of collaborative learning is reading assignments. In order to engage students in the writing process, we require them to read books, essays, or fiction that relate to their communities. Since many linguists emphasize that reading development occurs when students interact with an audience, reading groups in classrooms become an ideal and practical avenue for achieving this end. James Reither and Douglas Vipond state that reading is a socio-linguistic act that helps students understand their relationship to the outside world. Reading, in other words, is like listening to a conversation—we understand our community when listening and responding to people in our environment (860-61). Ideally, small groups function in "knowledge making," a harmonious relationship between the reader and community.

Developing small groups for reading assignments requires extensive planning prior to actual group work. The first major step is to organize

students to achieve a mix of abilities and personal backgrounds. Ven Jules argues that creating a homogenous group based on similar ability and ethnicity and gender negates the purpose of collaboration because it does not encourage students to think outside their own intellectual and cultural assumptions. She defines an ideal reading group as a heterogeneous group of four students, two males and two females, ascending from high to middle to low reading skills, originating from different racial and ethnic backgrounds (192). Her organization of a heterogeneous reading group supports Reither and Vipond's notion of "knowledge making"—that discourse outside regular spheres of knowledge leads to new thoughts and ideas.

After creating heterogeneous reading groups in a composition classroom, our next step is to create lesson plans which reflect the groups' needs and interests. Nystrand, Gamoran, and Heck emphasize that teachers should create for each group a lesson plan that identifies the goals of collaboration, and assert that clear goals improve peer group interaction and foster common direction. They also mention that there should be limits to the number of goals and tasks. At most, reading groups should accomplish three goals in one group meeting, since more than three will confuse and overburden group performance (17-19).

One of the goals of any reading assignment is to improve comprehension, a task normally accomplished through discussion questions. Nancy Grimm maintains that good discussion questions ask for more than facts and details. Each group should receive one or two questions that require the members not to just solve a questions but to draw conclusions about the reading assignment. Poor questions can be answered without a group's complete participation (92).

If collaborative learning involves autonomous reading groups working toward a common conclusion, then we must refrain from intervention. Christi Fenton argues that students recognize the importance of group knowledge when a teacher does not impose by answering assigned discussion questions. In simple terms, we must accept that this time belongs, for the most part, to our students (209). We should remember that students will accept group work as a viable method if they understand that a teacher will not give them the answers.

Carolyn Knox-Quinn reinforces Fenton's perspective by explaining that the teacher's role is to facilitate student collaboration. While teachers are not responsible for giving answers to discussion questions, we can explain the purpose of each question and can help redirect students when they get stuck on a particular task. When teachers facilitate learning, we help students think about problems and questions in different ways (309-10).

The final step to collaborative learning for reading groups involves everyone gathering as a class to discuss their results. Depending on the focus and difficulty of a reading assignment, Harvey Wiener asserts that reading groups should be given 15 to 20 minutes to explore assigned discussion questions (54-55). Next, the teacher asks the recorder from each group to summarize the group's ideas and accomplishments, and to detail any problems with the assignment. While the recorders report back to the class, the teacher writes their

responses on a chalkboard or an overhead projector, so that all groups can provide additional insight, suggestions, or agree with what has been said. During this process, Wiener warns that we should not judge their comments but demonstrate how they compare and contrast with the author and their peers (58-59). We should expect that completing all of the steps will take 20 to 40 minutes of a class period.

Using collaborative learning for reading assignments enriches a student's comprehension of a written text; it is also excellent preparation for groups beginning work on student essays. Collaborative learning for essay assignments essentially works in three broad stages: 1) using peer groups to generate ideas; 2) preparing mock conferences for peer groups; 3) and maintaining group work. While some of the steps for a writing group may sound similar to the steps for a reading group, we must realize that the above steps require more structure and often develop unforeseen complications. In other words, we need to be patient while students grasp the process of writing groups.

Writing groups first need to generate topics for an assigned essay. According to Sharon Tsujimoto, collaborative learning enables students to discover new ideas and topics and to test them out on an audience. Collaboration to generate ideas begins when a teacher finishes discussing the framework of the writing assignment, providing students with a broad list of possible topics. Under each broad topic, students add to their teacher's list by filling in additional possible topics, giving them more specific ideas to bring to their groups. When they enter their groups, each member listens and writes down all pertinent ideas form each member's list, allowing them to focus on a particular topic or idea and to expand it for their rough drafts (Bryant 86-87). Using collaboration for brainstorming exercises is an excellent way to help students who routinely develop "writer's block" when beginning a new paper; it also reinforces the notion that the writing process starts with a writer's ideas and not a study of "correct" grammar.

Once students have written down all the topics that interest them, they need to choose one that has the best chance of becoming a polished essay. Margaret Fleming states that once students have selected a topic from their lists, they need to free write for at least ten minutes, including thoughts and details which distinguish their topics. After free writing on a single topic, students enter their groups and read to their peers what they have written, while one records the major ideas. When each member finishes, the others interact with the writer by discussing the recorder's information, helping the writer explore new ways to present his or her ideas in the paper (Bryant 79). The combination of Tsujimoto's and Fleming's procedures will take at least one class period.

After students have chosen a topic and generated ideas, they need to organize their thoughts. Felicia Mitchell contends that students can learn how to organize their papers in collaborative groups. Using the notes from the teacher's lecture on the framework of the essay, group members should assist each member with organizing the elements of the essay, such as the particular topic, intended audience, purpose, ideas explored, and writing style (395-96). Although Mitchell's plan appears

advanced for most group work, her insistence that collaborative learning benefits organization problems makes sense, since each student learns to organize for the writer and an audience.

Collaborative learning is one of the best methods for revising student rough drafts, arguably the most important step in writing any essay. We need to model the attitudes and behaviors necessary to complete this task. Depending on teacher preference and the difficulty of the writing assignment, the manner in which we model the steps and the amount of time spent during each step may differ, yet students will ultimately have to master these five behaviors: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, social skills, and group processing.

Modeling positive interdependence is the first step in assuring successful revision groups. Before they begin their revisions, groups must understand that relying on each member is not only acceptable but necessary if they want to improve their papers. Positive interdependence, therefore, means that everyone in the group must participate. In order to reinforce this behavior, additional points should be given to each writer's grade if every member of a group also improves his or her writing. For example, if all group members achieve a mark of 90 points out of 100, they should each receive an additional five points for their group effort (Mitchell 177). A point system based on external rewards appears to undercut self-improvement, but many students learn to internalize their accomplishments when they benefit others.

While some may question the necessity of teaching face-to-face interaction, it is not uncommon to see students distance themselves during group discussions. Fenton argues that successful interaction involves discussion, exploratory solution skills, and student assistance. When groups become silent midway through a writing assignment or choose to be uninvolved, it usually indicates that they are unskilled in the art of personal interaction, and that more needs to be done than just bringing their desks closer together. Even when their desks are in a circle, students may not be facing each other or may even refuse to look at other students' faces. Teachers should remedy this problem by moving their desks so that everyone can look at and talk to each other (207-08).

Although we emphasize that collaborative learning is a group process, one concern, of course, is individual accountability. Fenton stresses that holding each student accountable prevents those who try to shift the burden of responsibility to other group members. In order to maintain accountability, teachers must explain to students that everyone will be responsible for finishing an assignment, that every student is integral in creating a writing group. One way to model this attitude is to have each group rotate responsibilities. When students hand in their responses to the writing assignments, teachers know what each individual accomplished (207). Her rotation system works because students can not relax and allow others to complete a group meeting; their peers will pressure them to perform, since groups can only succeed through interdependence.

Proper social skills for collaborative learning involve more than teaching students how to be courteous to each one another. Jules points out that social skills include two broad components: speaking and listening. Listening involves "hearing, filtering, focusing, interpreting, applying, discerning, and selecting" (193). Speaking, on the other hand, is the ability to "communicate, take turns, have respect for each other and others' points of view, and encourage discussion" (193). We can demonstrate these skills by praising group members when they incorporate proper speaking and listening into their discussions. Some may question the necessity of rewarding student interaction, but one of the major problems in many classes is that students leave never having said anything.

The type and quality of questions raised during collaboration are important elements of social skill. Mara Holt provides a complex yet tenable method for helping teachers demonstrate the questions to be asked and answered during student revisions. Combining Elbow/Belanoff's discussion exercises with Bruffee's "paper five" sequence, she states that the first step is to have the writer ask one group member to "sayback" a passage that he or she enjoyed. When the member finishes reading a passage, the writer selects another student to summarize it (388). Next, the writer asks all of the group members to discuss the meaning of a particular passage. The group members tell the writer their understanding of the passage, including statements on what thoughts did not occur to them after reading the passage. If group members discuss the writer' passages in this manner, the writer understands where clarity and meaning need to be improved (388-89).

The final behavior teachers need to model is group processing skills. David Johnson and Roger Johnson state that group processing requires students to discuss their successes working together and the problems they had finishing all of the assignments. This method encourages inquiry into student behaviors and attitudes that improve or impede group performance. Effective group processing skills grow when students have enough time to use them, when teachers provide specific instructions for them to accomplish, and when students show a genuine interest in improving their writing groups. This step permits group members to evaluate their overall performance, and allows them to confront members who refuse to contribute. An additional note to remember is to have someone record the group processing discussion.

Practicing all of the behaviors necessary to advance revision groups can not guarantee that problems will not develop. The first truth teachers need to accept is that groups need time and diligent practice when evaluating and revising student papers. In other words, we should not feel frustrated if students do not automatically grasp the point to collaborative learning. What we can do, however, is measure the progress of revision groups by evaluating four key elements: student responsibility, teacher's role during group work, dealing with group types, and evaluating group performance.

Student responsibilities during group revision go beyond sitting, speaking, responding, and listening—students will have changing roles during group revisions, four of them being elaborator, gate keeper, reader, and detailer. When a group discusses a writer's paper, the elaborator extends

any interesting ideas and problems in the writer's paper; the gate keeper intervenes after the elaborator finishes and asks group members how they felt about each point. Next, the reader explains how the ideas impacted the audience's perception of the paper, and the detailer provides specific ways the writer can improve the content of the paper. The recorder records all their comments and returns them to the writer (Grimm 93-94).

Student responsibility also means that students spend enough time reading and commenting. Harris and Mitchell both claim that students should spend two 50-minute sessions discussing and revising student essays. Each group member should read his or her paper aloud while others listen and make mental notes. When the writer finishes reading, each group should spend 15 minutes discussing the writer's paper using assigned roles (Harris 372; Mitchell 399). Mitchell maintains that the simple process of listening to others read their papers reinforces the notion that writing is a recursive process (399). Although Harris's and Mitchell's views are accurate, teachers should ask group members to make copies of their rough drafts for their group members so that they can critique them prior to group activity, since most students need additional time for reading and evaluation.

As with collaborative reading groups, we must refrain from intervening in collaborative writing groups. Teachers should not disrupt student discussion because it sends a contradictory message that a teacher does not care about small group activity. Wiener states that many teachers become too involved in the collaborative process. A common scenario is a teacher who roams from group to group answering countless questions, giving endless advice, and guiding responses. According to Wiener, this form of teacher-student interaction undermines the mission of collaborative learning: that students maintain autonomy over their writing groups (57-58). In other words, we should be present to answer questions occasionally, but our goal is not to become a group member.

One role we still maintain is that of the classroom manager. Wiener mentions that we should pay close attention to group activities, asking ourselves the following questions: do the students listen to each other, do they move their chairs so they can see each other, do they need more time to finish a writing assignment, and do they work together to reach a common consensus? All of these question reveal whether they learned from teacher demonstrations, and what course of action should occur to correct group problems (57). Although these methods seem too complex for most classrooms, and at times we need to be more involved in group learning that he permits, they still encourage group members to take control of their writing process.

As observant teachers, we discover that groups develop their own personalities. Basing her views on teaching experience and empirical research, Diana George defines three common group types: task-oriented, leaderless, and dysfunctional. Some of the characteristics of a task-oriented group include unified group discussion, excellent speaking and listening skills, and limited teacher involvement. The leaderless group differs from task-oriented in that they have problems engaging an assigned task, rely heavily

on teacher advice and assistance, and allow one group member to dominate discussions. The dysfunctional group, however, refuses to be a group. They do not form a circle, refuse to engage in discussion, question the purpose of collaborative learning, and make no effort to achieve the assigned tasks (323).

George provides some thorough yet understandable solutions for leaderless and dysfunctional groups. Dysfunctional groups resist the authority of teacher-driven exercises; therefore, a good method for expanding discussion is to have them create their own questions before class and later read them to their group members. The benefit is that they learn that they own their own process, and it obligates other members to answer individual concerns. Leaderless groups can benefit from the recapitulation method, since group members can not move to the next paper without answering the writer's questions. Before or after reading a paper, the writer summarizes his or her paper, stating problems with the assignment (324). In addition to these detailed solutions, Jacqueline Thousand, Richard Vila, and Ann Nevin stress that teachers can improve troubled groups if they embrace three broad rules: 1) empower the students to work for the benefit of others; 2) create a classroom environment where students belong to a community; 3) and reinforce positive behavior in a school environment (379). Teachers can't expect that leaderless and dysfunctional groups will interact at the same level as a task-oriented group; the real way to measure success is if a troubled group gradually improves its collaborative skills.

Whether it is in two class days or in a two-hour session, group members eventually finish discussing student papers. All groups will gather as a class again and report their results, a recorder from each group summarizing both their successes and problems. The value of this step is that students and teachers receive an evaluation of their use of collaborative learning. Johnson and Johnson assert that teachers learn more about their strengths and weaknesses when groups reveal consistent problems with a writing assignment. Together, the teacher and groups should clarify any problems with the assignment, the teacher, if necessary, revising lesson plans, remodeling group exercises, or emphasizing more repetition during the writing process (178).

Elbow, Bruffee, and Wiener, along with other composition theorists, professors, and teachers, have advanced the study of English composition with their development of collaborative learning. While critics accurately detail the serious disadvantages to unorganized peer groups, they assume these problems are an outgrowth of its theory and not its implementation. Their unwillingness to accept this learning theory ultimately resides in a traditional teaching philosophy which assumes that most students become competent writers on their own, in competition with others, or through long lectures on grammar. The perception of language, according to this approach, is that it is somehow stationary, rigid, and unchanging. While most instructors acknowledge that they use an eclectic approach for teaching composition, and agree that group work can not solve every writing problem, many substantiate that the key to advancing writing lies in a writer's awareness of the other ways to express and organize thoughts on paper. Collaborative learning, therefore, seems

to best answer this truth with its insistence on student interaction and shared knowledge and its belief that writing skills constantly change as a student interacts with an audience.

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Lee Glaesemann recently completed his Master's degree in English at Mankato State University.

Best Strategies
Life is Drama: Helping Adolescents Find "Self"

George Ashe

As adolescents struggle to find personal identity, we, as educators, must ask ourselves, "What are we doing to help them?" As we try on articles of clothing in a store, so the adolescent tries on different roles or identities in search of that "best fit." Often students find it profitable to engage in vicarious activity through literature or television because they identify with certain characters who face the same dilemmas. Drama also can be used to help students in their search for self, especially because it allows students to investigate themselves first, before trying on someone else's psyche.

Why Use Drama?

Research shows that developing drama skills in high school has a positive effect on social maturity. In a study by J. Beales and B. Zemel, drama students were matched against a control group of art students to determine changes in social maturity. The results indicated that significant improvements were made by drama students in areas of social presence, tolerance, achievement, and independence (49-50).

Psychologists F. Rogers and H. Sharapan (1993) investigated a different realm of drama related to children's play. They suggest that through dramatic play children learn how each person's real self, not an imaginary super self, does the important things in life. Rogers argues that dramatic play is a problem-solving technique:

> Play can continue to be an important tool for creative problem solving throughout our lives if we have been encouraged to develop our creative capacities when we were young. These capacities are the ones that are most helpful in bringing us unexpected and satisfying answers to the great puzzle of who we are becoming as we grow. (9)

Rogers maintains that dramatic play should remain an integral tool for coping with life and where we fit into society.

The greatest evidence in support of classroom drama comes from the experience of students in a Roanake, Virginia public school. After several students committed suicide, other students produced a drama in order to deal with their grief. Not only did they gain national acclaim, but also they dealt with some serious personal feelings and

helped save the lives of countless other adolescents (Feinour 29).

Suggestions for Implementation

You're now asking yourself, "How can I use drama in my class? I have no theatrical training, and it would use up so much class time." Brian Way suggests that dramatic implementation is both quick and easy. In order to create the road map for students' self discovery, we must begin with the body and its personality—but students must first fine tune skills in concentration. Way suggests that activities involving the senses should be followed by questions providing exploration of thought:

Activity: Sight—notice all the visible colors in the room.
Questions: How many colors do you see? What do particular colors say to you?
Activity: Touch—make a tight fist. Now begin to release pressure one finger at a time.
Questions: How does the tension feel? How does your hand work? muscles, bone, skin?
Activity: Hearing—close your eyes and listen. Focus on a specific sound.
Questions: What sounds do you hear? Where did the particular sound originate? Was it natural or man-made?

This is only a sample of many techniques Way offers. His criteria are simple:

1) Keep it short (30-120 seconds) leading into a lesson
2) Keep it simple—start with the basics and build as students gain focus
3) Allow students to express their feelings
4) Try to avoid audience (have students close eyes often)

Way suggests that under these conditions all students can be successful with drama (3, 10-27).

More responsibilities are placed upon teachers daily which often cloud our perceptions of our mission. However, through the use of drama we can help students know themselves, tune their senses, and explore their world.

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George Ashe is a Master's of Education candidate at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. He is currently in his intern year as a secondary English teacher.

Special Feature: Undergraduate Views on Extending the Literature Curriculum

Merging English and American Literature: Wordsworth and Thoreau

Bob St. Pierre

Traditional literature courses separate English and American literature, an approach that removes a valuable opportunity for students to draw parallels between the two cultures and styles of writing. One excellent site of comparison is Romanticism. Romanticism was a movement that spanned most of Europe and crossed the Atlantic to North America. American writers read the work of their European counterparts and vice versa. William Wordsworth and Henry David Thoreau are a case in point. Before Wordsworth, the trend was to view the poet as a mirror held up to Nature. In contrast, Wordsworth saw the poet as a lamp shining out, sparked by Nature. Four years after his death, his American counterpart, Thoreau, published *Walden*. Thoreau's *Walden* built on Wordsworth's ideas and offered an American twist of optimism. Read separately, each has a unique interpretation of the relationship a person has with Nature. However, reading Wordsworth's poetry next to Thoreau's *Walden* provides insight into each piece not attainable when studied apart.

Both Wordsworth and Thoreau are remarkably similar in their belief that the relationship to Nature goes through stages during life. Wordsworth's stages are most clearly laid out in "Tintern Abbey." According to Wordsworth, humans are born with an immediate closeness to Nature. As children, our animal nature is alive and we are the closest we ever get to being a part of Nature. In the "Ode: Intimations on Immortality," he describes his youthful experience with Nature as "The glory and the freshness of a dream" (5). At this stage, Wordsworth's mission of marrying the mind of man to Nature is most possible. In the "Prospectus to the Recluse," Wordsworth says that paradise is attainable through this marriage, and *The Recluse* will be his attempt to perform the service. For Wordsworth, his entire life is a journey to get back to this heavenly, youthful state.

Thoreau views this initial stage of life as the one closest to Nature. In *Walden*, Thoreau sees this first stage, the morning stage, as a baptism into Nature:

> Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say

innocence, with Nature herself
. . . I got up early and bathed in
the pond; that was a religious
exercise. (2033)

This morning bath ritual is a religious experience; however, Thoreau does not believe we are all immersed into Nature at birth as Wordsworth suggests. Instead, most people go through life as "sleepers," railroad ties. These are the people who have never awakened to Nature through baptism; instead, they sleep through the monotony of their own lives. "Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie that railroad? Each one is a man . . . the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you" (2035). This passage suggests that most people are already dead and being pushed deeper in the ground by the constant railroad of life.

At the second stage of the human relationship to Nature, Wordsworth sees the adolescent's treatment of Nature as that of a lover. At this phase, people are not as close to Nature as they were in youth, but they are still able to see the glory of Nature. This is the stage Wordsworth was in when he last visited Tintern Abbey. "The sounding cataract / Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock, / The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood, / Their colors and their forms, were then to me / an appetite; a feeling and a love" (76-80). The very words of these lines jump out at the reader eliciting passion for the beauty of the scene. Although one can see the glory of Nature, this stage seems to be the most troubling one for Wordsworth. In adolescence, he doesn't have the animal oneness and immediacy of response existent in his youth. Nor does he recognize memory as a savior as he will in the third stage. It is my theory that this period of his life was so troubling that the "Lucy Poems" are its result. Perhaps, Lucy was in fact a feminine symbol of this love Wordsworth had for Nature in adolescence, as described in the last stanza of "Three Years She Grew":

Thus Nature spake - the work
was done -
How soon my Lucy's race was
run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet
scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.
(37-42)

If Lucy symbolizes this adolescent love of Nature, she seems to fit Wordsworth's second phase quite nicely. Regardless, Wordsworth's passionate love for Nature characterizes the second phase.

Similarly, Thoreau's second phase begins the movement away from Nature. This phase is marked by the hunting experience. Thoreau calls it "the embryo man . . . hunting stage of development" (2041). Hunting, through Thoreau's eyes, is a person's attempt to return to Nature.

I caught a glimpse of a
woodchuck stealing across my
path, and I felt a strange thrill of
savage delight, and was
strongly tempted to seize and
devour him raw; not that I was
hungry then, except for that
wildness which he represented.
(2039)

In other words, hunting is a person's attempt to regain the wildness of Nature

that he experienced when he was one with Nature. By killing the woodchuck, Thoreau symbolically believed that he could transfer the animal into him. Unlike Wordsworth, who says we all progress away from Nature, Thoreau sees three distinct pathways possible from this point.

Two of the paths make up the third stage, but another possible path would lead a person to remain in the second stage as a hunter his entire life: "In some countries a hunting parson is no uncommon sight" (2041). To Thoreau, this allowed a person to be close to Nature physically, but mentally he was still separate. Although, one could remain this close to Nature, Thoreau didn't see this as an adequate path for life. He devalues this path on the same grounds Wordsworth's second stage is so troubling--lack of memory. One can't appreciate the closeness. Thus, being close is meaningless.

Wordsworth's third, and final, stage of the human relationship to Nature is the maturation of the mind. Here, the love affair relationship to Nature disappears. This loss is not missed because man has gained a growing sense of the glory of Nature. He can finally understand that God is in Nature and that Nature is "The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul / of all my moral being" (Tintern Abbey 110-111). Wordsworth now believes that the eye half creates and half perceives Nature. This new sight is possible because of memory. Without memory, Nature wouldn't be appreciated because there would be nothing to compare to the present. "These beauteous forms, / Through a long absence, have not been to me / As is a landscape to a blind man's eye" (22-24). In other words, a blind man sees only the outline, the silhouette, of Nature; but through memory, Nature appears in the mind as it once was. This is the point at which most of Wordsworth's poetry is written. His poetry is the result of memories sparked by Nature. As the "Ode: Intimations on Immortality" suggests,

Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of
glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our
infancy! (63-66)

As he ages, he naturally grows farther away from Nature, but he recognizes memory as the key to salvation. He realizes that when he was a child he was in heaven. Memory provides the power to "see into the life of things" (Tintern Abbey 49).

However, it seems ironic that the only way Wordsworth knows that childhood is the closest time to Nature is through memory, which is only attainable upon maturity of the mind. Perhaps, this irony creates the bitter tone in "Ode: Intimations on Immortality." The concluding two lines of this poem seem to indicate that the realization of this irony is beyond sorrow:

To me the meanest flower that
blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too
deep for tears
(202-203).

In other words, by the time you see the beauty of the pansy (the flower talked about earlier in the poem), it has long since died. Is Wordsworth indicating to the reader that he has discovered a fourth stage in the nine years since "Tintern Abbey"? Looking at his growing conservatism in later life, one might call

this stage acceptance of loss. However, there is little evidence of this in his poetry. Perhaps, *The Recluse* would have enlightened us on his thoughts if it were finished. Maybe its incompleteness is evidence in itself.

As stated earlier, Thoreau's third stage can follow two different. The path that most people take brings them farthest from Nature. Here, Thoreau recognizes that people are consumed by life to the point of dreading each morning. Wordsworth's poem "The World Is Too Much With Us" provides an excellent title for Thoreau's stage. In this poem, the speaker proclaims that people don't even notice Nature, let alone its beauty, and that he'd rather believe in falsities, like Greek gods, than be ignorant of Nature. This poem provides considerable clarity to the direction of this stage's first path.

This path results in people's lives following the monotony of day-to-day labor. The people in this stage are the walking "sleepers":

> The millions are awake enough for physical labor; but only one in a million is awake enough for effective intellectual exertion, only one in a hundred millions to a poetic or divine life. To be awake is to be alive. (2034)

These are the very same people Wordsworth tries to awaken. Thoreau understands this pathway. He's been down it. This is apparent in his words, "**Our** life is frittered away by detail" (2035), and "**My** head is hands and feet" (2039). Both suggest Thoreau, too, has the memory Wordsworth finds so important. Memory is the gate keeper to the last path of Thoreau's stages.

The path Thoreau recommends is to go from a hunter and fisher, to a hunter and fisher of men. In order to be a hunter or a fisher of men, one has to have a memory of all the other stages. The morning, for Thoreau, is the most important and memorable time. "To him whose elastic and vigorous thoughts keep pace with the sun, the day is perpetual morning" (2034). If one can live as a poet or a naturalist in the present with memory of the morning, then Thoreau would consider them truly alive and awake. Like Wordsworth, this is the stage Thoreau is in. This is the stage when memory sparks writing.

Through memory, one can see that God is at work in Nature. Thoreau's transcendentalist views are apparent in this choice of paths as well. "In a pleasant Spring morning all men's sins are forgiven." (2053). Nature has the power to forgive, just as it has the power to punish. Thoreau sees the impossibility in trying to awaken everyone to Nature, "I love to see that Nature is so rife with life that myriads can be afforded to be sacrificed" (2055); therefore he accepts the power of Nature, and the beauty of that power.

Thoreau suggests that those who are most alive in the morning shall become the poets and naturalists. These people's mission is to awaken others who are sleepers, those who never made it out of the other stages. "Most have not delved six feet beneath the surface, nor leaped as many above it. We know not where we are. Beside, we are sound asleep" (2062). Thoreau thought himself asleep to Nature. That's why he went to live on Walden Pond. This is where Wordsworth and Thoreau most markedly differ.

Although they both see a way to get back to the first stage, Thoreau sees the possibility as a daily occurrence. The American optimist, Thoreau views every dawn as an opportunity to go back to Nature. However, Wordsworth says this is impossible unless you can marry the mind of man to Nature. Perhaps, the discrepancy stems from the historical setting of their writing. For example, Wordsworth wrote "Tintern Abbey" as France was heading for the Reign of Terror. To Wordsworth, all hopes of a new world forming after the French Revolution were now being crushed. In contrast, Thoreau is in America, where the American Revolution hadn't soured as its French counterpart had. This colonial environment may have promoted Thoreau's optimism in the salvation of the relationship with Nature.

Also, Thoreau says "Nature is hard to be overcome, but she must be overcome" (2045). Without a doubt, Wordsworth would also refute this claim. In Wordsworth's eyes Nature is all-powerful, and you can't overcome God. Regardless, Thoreau says he went to the woods to learn what it had to teach, so when he came to die, he wouldn't discover that he had not lived (2034). For Thoreau, overcoming Nature meant being alive to life. By the end of *Walden*, it appears that Thoreau did succeed in waking himself up to Nature.

This example of the human response to Nature is only one way in which English and American literature can be brought together in the classroom. When students are given the opportunity to experience Wordsworth and Thoreau together, the experience is enriched. Not only does each work become easier to understand, but they see many different legitimate angles on the same topic. Thoreau found out that the world was too much with us when he was at Walden Pond. Shouldn't students be given the same opportunity?

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Robert St. Pierre is an undergraduate at St. Cloud State University. He is double-majoring in advertising and English education, while minoring in creative writing. He would like to teach English in college or high school, but his dream is to write novels.

Promoting World Literature in the Classroom

Kirsten Pettersen and Lisa Koehler

After introducing her eleventh grade class to Alan Paton's Cry, the Beloved Country, Mrs. Anderson was approached by student Amy Griffith who said, "I never knew they wrote books in Africa." Unfortunately, Amy's remark did not take Mrs. Anderson by surprise for this sentiment was commonly echoed among her students.

While literature reflects a changing society, the literature taught in schools does not generally manifest this change. According to Arthur Applebee, out of the 43 most frequently taught books, all but five are written by white males from England and America.

Kathleen Bartlett declares, "The mania which demands that students be exposed to every classical work leaves little time for exploration of emerging writers whose works are perhaps more appropriate for the needs of students who must prepare for a rapidly changing society" (39).

Students need to see the multicultural nature of this country and the world in the literature they are asked to read. "They should be able to see members of different ethnic and racial groups as leading characters in what they read, so that as readers they have opportunities to identify with all types of humans, male and female" (Stotsky 605). But, in the midst of full schedules and ever-expanding curriculums, is there a place in the English classroom for world literature? We have attempted, through research and interviews, to call attention to the importance of introducing students to literature of the world.

Most teachers we spoke to expressed a belief in the importance of world literature. Even if they do not use it often, teachers like Doreen Tast, English teacher at McGregor High School, McGregor, MN, felt that "Teachers have a responsibility to let students know that literature is a worldwide experience filled with universal ideas."

Lois T.Strover and Rita Karr state that most language-arts teachers felt it was important to have a program involved in "developing appreciation and tolerance for diverse cultural perspectives" (47). Mark Rossina, English teacher at McGregor High School, McGregor, MN, states: "Without a glimpse of what authors around the world are producing, our students develop a warped view that the only literature of value comes from Britain and America."

Jacquelyn Ninefeldt, eleventh and twelfth grade English teacher at Moose Lake High School, Moose Lake, MN, has taught such things as Russian literature, Greek myths, and Hispanic poetry. Ninefeldt said, "Because students are a part of a global community they need to recognize that all people are contributors, and studying world literature can be both an opportunity to validate differences and celebrate similarities in cultures." Ken Donelson and Alleen Nilsen assert that "good literature written for and about adolescents is an especially valuable tool to use when seeking to help adolescents connect with the larger world of human experience" (Stover 48). As America becomes more culturally diverse, students can profit from studying world literature "because it enables people to recognize similarities and differences between their own cultures and the many cultures they will encounter during their lives" (Lucas 58).

Teachers expressed a variety of ways they might choose which country's literature to present to their classes. Kristine Lyons, ninth and tenth grade English teacher at Moose Lake High School, Moose Lake, MN, said she would begin with literature from students' own background. The McGregor teachers, Rossina and Tast, felt their decisions would be affected by what materials were available, what level students they were teaching, and/or what they could discover through research that they believed would be appealing to students. Ninefeldt expressed a desire to use literature that connected with current world issues,

such as unrest in Bosnia and South Africa.

We discovered examples of adolescent literature that would be applicable to this approach: Elizabeth Laird's Kiss the Dust tells of a Kurdish family hiding in the mountains of northern Iraq after their world is torn apart by war. Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo chronicles the destruction of war in Bosnia through the eyes of a child and could possibly be used in classrooms just as The Diary of Anne Frank, a novel about a young Jewish girl trapped in Nazi Germany during World War II, has been a popular choice among teachers and students for years.

The appeal of these novels is in their first person narratives of adolescent voices. These young people speak to our students about what it is like to be growing up in another country. The characters endear themselves to the reader, and an emotional connection is made linking two cultures together.

Ninefeldt also thought it important that literature connect with our own country's social problems. For example, she said, "Clashes between races and classes can be explored through literature for cultural connections which help in understanding and acceptance among races." Kurt Lucas points out that "writers from Africa, India, as well as the Caribbean and Pacific Islands are generating some of the world's most evocative literature, springing from the culture conflicts between . . . peoples" (54).

Maru, written by Bessie Head, tells the struggle of Margaret Cadmore, an orphaned Masarwa girl whose presence in a remote Botswana village divides the people. Students reading this book can connect their own feelings over race and class struggle with the characters' experiences and contemplate their position on such issues.

Merle Hodge's For the Life of Laetitia shows the class struggle that a young Caribbean village girl must face in order to attend secondary school. Laetitia struggles to be accepted into a culture that she doesn't understand, and through tragedy, she comes to understand who she is. Students arriving in the United States from foreign countries and attending our schools need to find literature like this that makes them feel less alone in their struggles to adapt. Elizabeth D. Nelms points out, "If learning does not help students make sense of their own lives and understand the world they live in, of what lasting value is [it] . . . ?" (60).

There are numerous implications for teaching world literature, but Bonnie M. Davis in "A Cultural Safari" warns to avoid the following: "trivializing anyone's culture or cultural experiences; using a show-and-tell approach; and generalizing about all of Africa [or any country] from a few literary selections" (24). Davis's world literature class involves some of the following components: students choosing non-western novels, and the country of the novel's author to study; oral reports which include "autobiographical sketches of their authors; . . . plot synopses; . . . 'reader responses' to the novels; and [comparisons of] the 'dream' of the novelist to the American Dream" (26). Davis's class also became involved in many cultural and community affairs outside the classroom.

Rose C. Reissman in her article, "Leaving Out to Pull In," shows that by leaving out clues to the origins of a novel while reading a passage from it, students can relate the literature to their

own experience without bringing assumptions about other countries to the text. This technique can be a great tool for engaging and motivating students to look deeper at the cultural backgrounds of the authors whose works they are studying and for students to "pull in" their own cultural experiences. "Such interactive reading will not only enhance literacy but also promote empathy and intergroup respect" (Reissman 23).

The teachers interviewed for this project generally preferred adding selections of world literature to already established curriculums as opposed to devoting an entire unit to the exclusive study of world literature. Some found that myths, short stories, and poems seemed more accessible and easy to incorporate in their classrooms. The McGregor, MN teacher, Mark Rossina, made the following observation: "While nearly all reading series being produced today include ethnic literature, world literature will usually only be found in a level 13 series." Rossina went on to explain, "For teachers with limited resources, this means that only their advanced placement students might have exposure to world literature."

Accessibility is very important if we want to bring world literature to students. Most school libraries include world literature, and this is one way teachers may introduce it into their classrooms. However, because the world literature is spread throughout the shelves, rather than grouped together, teachers must search for it. Erin Streblow, practicing teacher at Hermantown High School, Hermantown, MN says, "If I knew what was out there, it would be easier to bring it into the classroom. With the busy schedules of teachers, it is hard to do all the research on one's own." Annotated bibliographies of world literature owned by the school library distributed by librarians to teachers would be helpful. Listings of videos and books related to the countries of the novels studied would also aid in research of cultural background to help students and teachers gain better understanding.

Instructing students to access information on computers is another way to bring world literature into schools. Janet Pettersen, veteran teacher in Ohio, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, points out: "Many of these ideas can't be implemented because of lack of funds appropriated to the library." Pettersen suggests getting different businesses or groups in the community interested in the project and having them help raise funds to bring world literature closer to the students. Pettersen also says, "Inservice workshops held to promote teaching world literature and offering ideas for teaching is another good way to bring available materials to teachers."

Literature needs to relate to students' lives. In this culturally diverse country students need to be aware of the wide world around them. Relating world literature to students' lives is not as difficult as it may seem. It is important that we, as English teachers, bring them knowledge of other cultures besides their own. Despite what we may assume, students do want to learn about others. Basil Johnston stresses this point in his book Ojibway Heritage:

> [Kids] want to know what other children of other races do and what they are required to learn; they want to know what other races think about matters more important than dwellings; they want further to know how other races feel in order to enrich their own understandings and broaden their outlooks. (3)

Literature is a valuable tool for students to learn about the world they live in. As English teachers, we have the unique opportunity to bring different parts of the world to our students, thereby helping them understand their own culture by understanding that of others. It's time we show the Amy Griffiths in our class that all across the globe, people just like us are expressing the same concerns and emotions we feel.

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Additional Teacher Resources:
For an extensive list of literature from other countries with annotations see Against Borders: Promoting Books for a Multicultural World, by Hazel Rochman. Chicago: American Library Association, 1993.

For a partial list of videos to use in conjunction with the study of world literature see "Navajo Students and 'Postcolonial' Literature" by Kurt Lucas in English Journal 79:8 (1990): 54-58.

Lisa Koehler, a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota, Duluth, lives in McGregor, Mn. She is currently working as a substitute teacher. Kirsten Pettersen is a student at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, majoring in English Education.

Teaching Valuable Lessons with Science Fiction

Chris Radke

In some schools, at any mention of a reading assignment, students begin to cringe. One way to get students hooked on reading is through science fiction.

What Constitutes Science Fiction?

Professor Tom Bacig, who teaches Science Fiction at the University of Minnesota—Duluth, arranges this genre along a continuum. At one end resides fantasy, which includes dragons, knights with swords, imprisoned heroines, and adventuresome tales situated in foreign worlds. These stories would include The Hobbitt or the Star Wars trilogy. At the other end of the continuum lies realism with a basis in factual human knowledge and experience. These works examine issues of history, sociology, psychology, scientific advancement, and, in general, the human condition. Examples include Fahrenheit 451 and Stranger in a Strange Land.

The teaching of science fiction could be placed at either end of this spectrum, or among any of a multitude of ways to categorize this genre. Duluth librarian Judy Sheriff wishes she had multiple copies of some science fiction books so that she "could put one in each category which the book could be classified in."

Thinking about Science Fiction

"Myth teaches meaning . . . by imagination and metaphor, entering the back door of the mind through the imagination" (Prothero 33). The myths within science fiction tales are exactly what can turn students on to reading this genre. These stories are not just fanciful tales to be read by students as bedtime stories. Or . . . maybe that is exactly how we should regard them! As children we read or were read tales like The Three Little Pigs or Hansel and Gretel which taught life lessons about the value of hard work and not trusting strangers.

A Canticle for Liebowitz by Walter Miller, Jr. warns of lessons not learned by the human race in the aftermath of a nuclear war. The unforeseen dangers of acquiring genetic engineering knowledge are foretold by Michael Crichton in Jurassic Park. Science fiction empowers students to think critically about the issues of technological advancement with respect to human nature's inclinations. If we engaged in a nuclear encounter, would we learn from its consequences after the first time, the second, or even the third, as Miller supposes? Has our knowledge and capability of human genetics increased at the same rate as our maturity and respect for such power within the human race? These are just a few of the questions readers of science fiction begin to grapple with when they read these "fairy tales." Students who read science fiction can get the best of both worlds—reading stories that spark and provoke the creative imagination while simultaneously coming to understand the circumstances and possibilities of the world around them.

What's the Difference?

Myths within science fiction ultimately "function to teach cultural values, defining and reaffirming the beliefs and conventions of a particular society" (Beach 411). Thus, science fiction can also be used to teach values of multicultural literacy. For example, students could read The Eye, the Ear, and the Arm. The author, Nancy Farmer, depicts familial love in Zimbabwe, Africa, when parents and children are separated by outside forces in the year 2194. The Man in the High Castle, by Philip K. Dick, tells the story of how Americans must learn to adapt to the customs of their new conquerors, the Japanese. Meanwhile, Nazi armies advance across the eastern United States enacting their policies of genocide along the way.

Another novel by Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep, deals with the enslavement of sentient life forms called "replicants." Though created by humans, the replicants were given the ability for independent thinking, emotional responses, and dreaming. They act and appear just like humans, but are sent off to an uninhabitable "off world" colony as slave laborers. Each of these stories is ideal for teaching about people with differences and the issues facing a diverse society.

Science fiction can also be used to acknowledge feminine perspectives. The Man in the High Castle depicts one of the main characters, Julianna, as an important, independent woman whose demeanor lends to the ending's unpredictable ending. Both Robert O'Brien's Z for Zachariah and Madeline L'Engle's A Wrinkle in Time portray women in positive, assertive positions of control. In addition to portraying female characters in positions of power, stories like these present role models for young, female readers as well as "a mode of arousing interest in science, through literature, that is traditionally more congenial to female students" (Donawerth 40).

Weaving the Disciplines

Teaching science fiction can be taken one step further within an educational setting. Not only does this genre stimulate students to think critically, but also it can be used "to make connections across the disciplines" (Cox 35). Our educational system has perpetuated the idea that each subject is a separate and independent identity. How many times has a science teacher heard "This isn't math class." Or when the social studies teacher assigns an essay, the student response is "This ain't no English class." Students need to understand that the world is not so neatly segregated into academic departments. Mathematicians need to know how to write articulately, just as English teachers need to understand the implications when a new "genetic breakthrough" is headlined in the newspapers. Science fiction literature can help overcome these barriers.

It seems the strongest barrier is between the sciences and the humanities. "A large part of the tension between the

humanities and the sciences is due to the elusiveness of achieving a clear, comprehensive, and mutual understanding of what each *is*" (Goldbert 71). When teachers from both areas make the effort to explore and understand each other's classrooms and subjects, students can realize a connection between the two and, hopefully, spark an interest in learning about both of them.

As English teachers, it is not too difficult to incorporate these books into the curriculum. For example, Stranger in a Strange Land could be read in conjunction with Shakespeare's Henry V. Mike and Hal both must mature and assume roles in the adult world, and while the two characters reside in two different environments and settings, both face the same overall maturation dilemma. After reading the two works, students could discuss how both genres present the situation, and how each character deals with the challenges of maturation.

Reading Dandelion Wine by Ray Bradbury could be the impetus for a creative writing assignment. This book assembles the many short stories found in each chapter into a coherent picture of one twelve-year-old boy's magical summer in a small, rural Illinois town. Students could read the entire book or a few chapters and then descriptively write about a time or experience they recall from their childhood.

Likewise, it is not difficult for a science or history teacher to include science fiction into one or more units. One method to diminish the boundaries would be to use Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep in conjunction with a physics unit covering robotics, or as an offshoot to a biology unit on genetics. Despite their physical and mental advantages over humans, Dick's replicants soon realize that they are just as fallible as humans because of their built-in three-year life span.

There are many other books that could be used in the these courses and others. It is important to start considering options for integrating science fiction works into and across the curriculum. Supplementing textbooks with an occasional "extra-ordinary" tale will enliven the teaching and learning experience. The possibilities are only limited by our creativity.

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Chris Radke is currently a student at the University of Minnesota, Duluth.

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