UTOPIA: AN IDEA-CENTERED ACTIVITY FOR ACCELERATED
TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS

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By

Mary F. Hull, B. S., M. E.
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UTOPIA: AN IDEA-CENTERED ACTIVITY FOR ACCELERATED TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS

APPROVED:

E. C. Ballard
Major Professor

J. M. Turner
Minor Professor

E. S. Clifton
Director of the Department of English

Robert B. Toulloue
Dean of the Graduate School
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Through the ages dissatisfaction with his environment has provoked man to envision the ideal or "utopian" setting which would be more to his liking. The discontent of today's youth with the world it has inherited echoes the complaints of past generations and yet is of particular significance and relevance to the twelfth grade student soon to enter the college community where protests are becoming increasingly more articulate and effective. Established institutions and behavior codes are challenged with impunity although critics charge that such dissent is irresponsible and unsupported by positive, alternative proposals for improvement.

English teachers have long suspected that the unsatisfactory mastery of language skills may be partially attributed to the fact that students quite simply have nothing to say. Language is, after all, a vehicle for the communication of thought rarely stimulated by the well-worn topics presented futilely though faithfully to students year after year. If, however, keen interest in a subject is aroused, perhaps the
stimulated thought would result in refinements of skills previously acquired and would provide an added incentive for developing greater competency in the use of language. The purpose of this thesis is to illustrate the possibilities inherent in the utopian-dystopian theme for arousing interest, stimulating thought, "educating the imagination," and providing opportunities for oral and written expression of ideas on a subject of timely interest to the students themselves. A semester devoted to the consideration of positive, utopian proposals projected by writers of the past and present, including the negative or anti-utopian aspects of the works, should prove timely, provocative, and fruitful.

Although a variety of approaches might be applied to the theme, the first step would necessarily be a thorough discussion of the meaning of the word utopia, first used by Sir Thomas More in 1516 as the name of an imaginary ideal commonwealth. It would be explained that utopia comes from the Greek words meaning literally "no place," but the contemporary connotation is rather "good place." In his review of Chad Walsh's From Utopia to Nightmare, Granville Hicks credits Walsh with the coinage of the word dystopia meaning "anti-utopia," or "bad place."^{1}

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Next the class would be asked to consider the question or perfections and imperfections in our society and to list in separate columns both the positive and the negative aspects which occur to them. A composite list, eliminating duplications, could then be compiled for use throughout the term in comparisons with earlier societies. Current magazine and newspaper editorials dealing with the pressing problems of our society, with particular emphasis upon those of most concern to young people, would be collected and displayed on bulletin boards. In short, the first aim would be to become thoroughly familiar with contemporary problems and the philosophical trends evident today in seeking solutions; these, in turn, would lead to a consideration of earlier societies, their problems, and suggested solutions. Attention would extend to the philosophies and techniques of problem solving employed by the writers of utopian literature. Included in the discussions would be such topics as escapism, application of reason and intellect, application of violence and physical force, psychological manipulation, and behavior conditioning.

As the utopian concept has inherent within it its counterpart, the dystopia, it is logical to assume that students will be concerned throughout the study with "good place" versus "bad place," or utopia versus dystopia. The dystopia's purpose is to warn the reader of the hell on earth that could
result from exaggerated or unchecked societal trends; whereas, the utopian writer seeks to lift the reader’s vision to a conceivable heaven on earth if his proposed changes are adopted.

A semester's consideration of this theme could include study of one of the pure dystopias: Aldous Huxley's Brave New World or George Orwell's 1984. The current trend toward dystopian literature suggests, however, that idealistic visions of the "good place" are being neglected in favor of the more sensational "nightmares" produced by dystopian writers. Should the teacher elect to include the pure dystopia in the thematic unit, he perhaps could capitalize upon recent space accomplishments to motivate individual creative writing projects encouraging students to let their imaginations soar to the moon—or perhaps, beyond.

The major question raised by a utopian work has dystopian undertones: Would the recommended changes bring society nearer a "good place" (utopia) or a "bad place" (dystopia)? Related questions which follow are: Would it be "good" for man to have his economic burdens completely removed? Would he be weakened or strengthened thereby? Would it be "good" for women to be relieved of all their domestic responsibilities? Would it be "good" to be relieved of all the responsibilities normally associated with adulthood?
and parenthood? At some time each person must have experienced the satisfaction which follows the superior performance of a task. How much happiness would one forfeit if no further challenges confronted him? Is the man who inherits his fortune to be envied as much as the one who acquires a fortune after exercising all his wit and ability? Is habitual virtue an adequate substitute for character built from moral and spiritual inner struggles? Is the creative impulse stimulated by the increased leisure of the utopia, or is it thwarted by it? Is the sacrifice of occasional genius justified by the improved environment of the masses? Could dystopia be man's failure to discover his inner resources? Could utopia be, in effect, dystopia?

To present these and other similar questions to students, Sir Thomas More's Utopia, illustrating the classical utopian concept, was selected for detailed analysis, as More's work set the pattern followed by most of the utopian writers who succeeded him. It further provides opportunity for students to perceive the fact that societal concerns change very little through the ages: contemporary man continues to wrestle with problems of poverty, education, war, penal systems, political systems, economic systems, and moral and ethical questions. The "good place" described by More would be considered "dystopian" by the twentieth
century protestor of restraints upon his freedoms and individuality. Nevertheless, the goal of idealists of all ages has remained unchanged—to bring greater happiness to a greater number of people.

B. F. Skinner's Walden Two illustrates the utopian theme in a modern setting, and for this reason was selected as the second work for treatment in the proposed study. Its conspicuous dystopian aspects are emphasized through the near-fascist state envisioned as a result of the future expansion of Walden communities to include the nation, and through the behavioral conditioning of community members. Possibly dystopian also are the consequences of surrendered individual responsibility for character development, economic adequacy, child training within the family unit, and exercise of individual opinion through the voting process on national political issues.

A cooperative writing project employing organizational techniques described by Skinner in Walden Two and culminating in a class utopia is described as an evaluation device in Chapter IV. The project seeks to measure the value of cooperative effort as opposed to individual effort and the practicality of utopian concepts. Further evaluation of the cooperative undertaking is provided by student response to a questionnaire soliciting reactions to various aspects of the
project. The results of the evaluations should furnish the teacher invaluable aid in planning and modifying similar projects for future classes.

Northrup Frye suggests that man goes through successive stages in relation to his society: first, he seeks to interpret the demands of his environment and meet them to the best of his ability—to adjust; next, he feels the urge to contribute significantly to his society, to leave his imprint upon the world so that it will be better in some way for his having lived in it. The third stage in man's relation to his society is his use of his "educated imagination":

But as soon as that notion dawns in the mind, the world we live in and the world we want to live in become different worlds. One is around us, the other is a vision inside our minds, born and fostered by the imagination, yet real enough for us to try to make the world we see conform to its shape. This second world is the world we want to live in, but the word "want" is now appealing to something impersonal and unselfish in us.²

Such must be the motivation of the utopia writer, who sees in his imagination another world which is free of the problems besetting his actual environment. His constructive proposal for an improved environment is contained in his writing.

It would be idealistic indeed to suggest that students would be so moved by the study described herein that they

would cease all protesting and proceed with dedication to compose voluntary individual utopias. However, if the procedures described are followed, all will participate with ideas and effort in the writing of a class utopia. More realistically, it is hoped that the students will be "conditioned" to think along positive, constructive lines and to become more aware of the complexity and difficulty of their problems and those of their time while simultaneously polishing their communication skills of thinking, speaking, and writing.
CHAPTER II

SIR THOMAS MORE'S UTOPIA

In the early sixteenth century, Sir Thomas More, an English humanist, took a serious look at the society of his day and determined that "he was not in the best possible world."\(^1\) He proceeded, therefore, to envision a society which would perfect the imperfections of his renaissance age and adjust the inequities which were so apparent in his society. This imaginary ideal commonwealth he christened "Utopia," a coined word derived from Greek, literally meaning "no place." Written originally in Latin in 1516, More's Utopia was translated during the sixteenth century into all the major European languages and has since been republished somewhere on the continent at least once every few decades.\(^2\)

It is appropriate for a study of utopianism to begin with More, as his is the first popular modern example of the genre, and because it illustrates most of the

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\(^1\)Joyce Oramel Hertzler, The History of Utopian Thought (New York, 1926), p. 130.

characteristics of utopian literature which appeared later.\(^3\)

The three qualifications of utopian literature which distinguish it from other forms of speculative writing are considered by Glenn Negley and J. Max Patrick to be the following:

1. It is fictional.
2. It describes a particular state or community.
3. Its theme is the political structure of that fictional state or community.\(^4\)

Northrup Frye, on the other hand, associates two additional characteristics with utopian writing:

The procedure of constructing a utopia produces two literary qualities which are typical, almost invariable, in the genre. In the first place, the behavior of society is described ritually. A ritual is a significant social act, and the utopia-writer is concerned only with the typical actions which are significant of those social elements he is stressing. . . . In the second place, rituals are apparently irrational acts which become rational when their significance is explained.\(^5\)

The guide typically serves as "clarifier" of the ritual behavior observed by the narrator-traveler in utopia.


The utopia writer also may satirize his own society through implication by contrasting it with the ideal society he envisions. "The basis for the satire is the unconsciousness or inconsistency in the social behavior he observes around him."  

More, as a Christian humanist, considered the significant elements of early sixteenth century society to be the natural virtues of justice, temperance, fortitude, prudence. "The Utopia itself, in its second or constructive book, shows what a society would be like in which the natural virtues were allowed to assume their natural forms."  

Since a paperback edition of Peter K. Marshall's translation of More's Utopia is available at nominal cost (Washington Square Press, 1965), it would be hoped that students would purchase individual copies of the work. There is also in this edition an introduction by John Anthony Scott which provides valuable biographical and background information which would contribute to a more complete understanding of Utopia. If, however, circumstances do not allow the purchase of individual copies of this particular edition, equivalent value may be achieved through teacher lectures,
and/or individual library research and subsequent oral reports on topics such as the following:

1. Biography of Sir Thomas More
2. Humanism and Its Chief Spokesmen
3. The Enclosure Act
4. Erasmus
5. Amerigo Vespucci and The Popularity of Travel Literature
6. The Protestant Reformation
7. The Sixteenth Century Penal Code
8. Henry VIII, Defender of the Faith
9. Earlier "Ideal Commonwealths" (with emphasis on Plato's Republic)
10. Education in the Early Sixteenth Century

Following the presentation of this background material, the class should be prepared to begin the study of More's Utopia. Cursory examination reveals that the selection is divided into two books, the first of which sets the stage for the second, introduces the character of Raphael Hythloday, who is to serve as narrator for our utopian excursion, and provides the opportunity for the author's satiric observations of his society.⁹

⁹Hertzler, p. 130.
Book One should require no more than three days for out-of-class reading, as it is short and in easily readable prose. The dialogue pattern of Book One could present some difficulty in the beginning, but this should be overcome as the student becomes familiar with the pattern. It might assist students in their understanding if the teacher would provide a brief outline of topics to be discussed at least one day prior to their consideration in class.

According to one writer, More's chief concerns in Book One are (1) whether or not a philosopher should accept the role of advisor to a king and thereby endeavor to help the commonwealth, and (2) the question of penal reform. The fictional Hythloday, Portuguese traveler and philosopher, urged by both More and his friend, Peter Gilles, to offer his advice to a king, counters each of their arguments with his irrefutable logic. High school classes will appreciate the philosopher's apt description of human nature and its reluctance to accept new thought originated by another and will draw parallels between the modern "establishment" and the king's counselors, described by Hythloday:

If all other means fail them, then they take refuge in saying, "These things pleased our forefathers. If only we could match their wisdom!" . . . So with these

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words they are quite content, as if they had brought the discussion to a brilliant conclusion. As if it would involve terrible dangers if anyone were found wiser than his forefathers in any matter at all! Yet all their wisest decisions we are quite happy to let go; but if anywhere they might have made more prudent decisions, we eagerly fasten onto them, and hold on with our teeth.¹¹

Resuming their consideration of this point toward the end of Book One, More interjects a contrary argument which should stimulate lively class discussion with respect to politics as a potential career for men of integrity. More contends,

If erroneous beliefs cannot be plucked out root and all, if you cannot heal long established evils to your satisfaction, you must not therefore desert the state and abandon the ship in a storm, because you cannot check the winds. . . . Nor should you force upon people strange and unaccustomed discourses which you know will have no weight with them in their opposite beliefs. But you should strive obliquely to settle everything as best you may, and what you cannot turn to good, you should make as little evil as possible. For it is not possible for everything to be good unless all men are good, and I do not expect that that will come about for many years.¹²

Tragically for More in real life, the oblique method failed miserably. As Lord Chancellor of England, he was unable to compromise his principles by acknowledging Henry VIII


as head of the Church following the king's divorce action, and was accordingly executed for high treason on July 6, 1535.\textsuperscript{13}

The question of the role of the idealist in society will evolve naturally from class discussion of the contrasting views of More and Hythloday. It can be expected that students will hold divergent views with respect to man's responsibility to become involved in controversial matters. Some, like Hythloday, will regard such involvement with disdain if ultimate success appears tenuous or unlikely. Others, like More, will hold the moral conviction that the successful outcome should be less important to the individual than his commitment to an ideal and his contribution toward its realization.

Equally relevant to the idealist in society is the question of compromise. Students will be asked to consider whether or not compromise may ever be defended on the basis of expediency and partial gain or ought rather to be consistently condemned as moral decadence.

Contemporary issues involving these ethical questions are notably the campus, racial, and anti-war demonstrations given detailed coverage by the press. These parallels

should emphasize, however, the moral dilemma that has con-
fronted idealistic man from the sixteenth century to the
present day and could motivate students in the preparation
of formal debates on the ethical responsibility of man in
the twentieth century. Although contemporary problems may
differ from those of the early sixteenth century, the in-
dividual must still determine the appropriate course of
action to pursue in reaction to his environment.

Fortunately, the inequities of justice observed by
Thomas More in Book One of Utopia have been corrected, at
least to the extent that today the degree of punishment is
more commensurate with the severity of the crime. Although
capital punishment is still practiced in a few states, to
the moral discomfiture of some, theft and murder do not now
require the same penalty. Our greater leniency toward the
criminal today, however, has given birth to other related
problems and has proved to be as ineffectual a deterrent to
crime as was the severity of the sixteenth century, as the
following tables show.

14 Bertrand de Jouvenal, "Utopia for Practical Purposes,"
Utopias and Utopian Thought (Boston, 1966), p. 232, citing
Indictable Crime 1957-63

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Per cent detected</th>
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<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>545,562</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>626,509</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>675,626</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>743,713</td>
<td>44.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>806,900</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>896,424</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>978,076</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
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These figures suggest that crime remains an unsolved problem of contemporary society, and its increase warrants the serious concern of modern man.

More attributes the frequency of theft to the necessity for survival imposed upon the masses by widespread poverty due to the Enclosure Act, the luxuries of the nobility, and the maiming of war veterans. Interesting classroom speculation would center on the possible causes of today's increased crime rate as compared to those cited by More.

Finally, students would be encouraged to regard Book One of More's *Utopia* as a concerned citizen's diagnosis of the ills of his suffering society, his hypothesis as to their causes, and his role in effecting their remedies. In like fashion the class would be encouraged to apply similar techniques of analysis to the ills of contemporary society, their

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15 Hertzler, p. 130.
possible causes, and the appropriate roles concerned individuals should assume in attempting solutions.

Book Two, presenting the author's concept of ideal society through the old mariner's description of Utopia, could be initially disappointing to students who have accepted More's indictments of social injustice presented in Book One. Twentieth century man would be unlikely to regard the highly regulated Utopian society described by Hythloday in Book Two as "ideal" in many respects.

Teaching procedure for Book Two, therefore, should provide for introductory teacher comments, advising students to withhold judgments on the basis of twentieth century criteria and suggesting rather that final judgment be determined by whether or not More's Utopia would have solved the problems cited in Book One.

Book Two is divided into nine chapters, each dealing with a particular phase of Utopian living. The first three chapters deal primarily with the structural organization of the envisioned society, comprising a natural and logical division for one day's class discussion. Questions for students to ponder in preparation for class discussion of the first three chapters could be similar to the following:

1. What advantage would a limit of fifty-four cities with controlled boundaries provide? Would this arrangement alleviate any of the problems of cities in the twentieth century?
2. What advantage was served by the rotation of manor occupants?

3. What advantage was served by the rotation of house occupancy in the cities?

4. Who were the authority figures in the country? In the cities?

5. What provisions were made for governing the people? What were the precautionary measures for prevention of tyranny?

Chapter Four, entitled "On the Occupations of the Utopians," though short, presents the student with a variety of the author's concepts: his attitude toward idleness, vanity in dress, mass education, and unnecessary occupations. Class discussion might be guided by the following questions:

1. What was the common occupation of all Utopians? What further occupational requirement was imposed? What groups were excused? Has automation imposed a similar requirement on contemporary man?

2. What occupations were considered by More as unworthy? Using his standards of measurement, what modern occupations would be eliminated?

3. What was the customary dress of the Utopians? Does More make a sardonic comment on sixteenth century vanity in this section? Speculate on his probable reaction to twentieth century vanity.

4. How were Utopians selected for scholarly pursuits? Were the selections ever rescinded? Under what circumstances? Could a similar plan be instituted today? What would be its advantages and/or disadvantages?

The questions listed above are meant merely to suggest possibilities to the teacher who will add his own to the list.
and, no doubt, find many more emanating from the students themselves in class or group discussions.

Chapter Four concludes with this statement:

. . . the institution of the republic has this one chief aim—that, as far as public necessity allows, all citizens should be given as much time as possible away from bodily service for the freedom and cultivation of the mind. For there, they think, lies happiness in life.16

Based on the above quotation, short student essays attacking, modifying, or defending the Utopian concept of happiness would provoke student thought, provide insights to the teacher, and, if read aloud to the class, reveal to the students themselves their uniqueness as human beings.

Interrelationships among the citizens are the focal points of Chapter Five, entitled "On Their Lives Together." As the content of this chapter reveals some rather striking contrasts between the societal attitudes of More's age and our own, it would be interesting for the teacher to limit his introductory comments to the minimum, thus allowing the students to discover for themselves the basic differences.

Hopefully, the students will notice two major contrasts between the attitudes of the two centuries: first, the sixteenth century chain of respect—wives for husbands, children

16 More, p. 57.

17 Ibid., p. 58.
for parents, and youth for age; second, the roles of the children in their respective societies. Today's children would find the sixteenth century strange indeed with no vitamin-enriched diets, periodic medical check-ups, ballet schools, music lessons, Little League baseball teams, Red Cross swimming lessons, summer camps, Boy Scouts, Camp-Fire Girls, and church youth groups. Similarly, the sixteenth century child, accustomed to standing in absolute silence in the communal dining hall, relying solely upon the generosity of the adult diners for his food, would find the twentieth century equally strange. It would seem that the earlier deference to age has been exchanged for a deference to youth.

Strict population control as described by More in Utopia would be unlikely to find acceptance in contemporary society, although the population explosion is a popular scapegoat for many of today's social problems. In relation to this topic, students might ponder the following questions:

1. What contemporary problems are intensified in overpopulated areas? (education, urban renewal, air pollution, delinquency, crime)

2. Is population control possible? Feasible? Advisable?

3. How does modern man attempt to cope with these problems? To what degree are his efforts successful or unsuccessful?

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18 Ibid., p. 61.
The teacher may anticipate interesting student reaction to the communal dining arrangements described by More as "utopian." On this phase of Utopian living, Grunwald observes:

All meals are taken in common vast dining halls, on the doubtful theory that no one would want to go to the bother of preparing his own meal at home when it is so easily available in a kind of super soup kitchen. All meals are begun "with some lecture of morality that is read to them," and for educational purposes the young are placed next to the old, so that old men may "take occasion to entertain those about them with some useful and pleasant enlargements." Whatever can be said for life in Utopia, one would scarcely want to dine there. Many students would be similarly unimpressed, although More adds that the younger members were encouraged by their elders to talk freely as people normally do at mealtime, in order that the older ones could be familiar with the trends of thought among the young. This point suggests the reverse trend in contemporary society: few meals shared regularly by all members of a family unit because of conflicting schedules and interests. T. V. trays have replaced the dining table, and only a very limited number of new homes include a traditional dining room. Students might weigh the relative values afforded by Utopian dining practices as opposed to

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19 Henry Anatole Grunwald, "From Eden to the Nightmare," Horizon, V (March, 1963), 75.
20 More, p. 62.
those of our own less rigid system. Could the generation gap be narrowed if our daily living provided more opportunities for us to listen to one another and share our views?

Utopian society permitted travel within its territorial boundaries but only under highly restricted conditions, outlined by More in Chapter Six. He justifies the tight control in a summary statement:

Now you can see how little freedom they have for being idle. There is no pretext for laziness, no wine taverns, no alehouses, no brothels, no occasion for vice, no lurking places, no secret meetings. Thus, under the watchful eyes of all, they must perform their usual work or enjoy honorable leisure.

The teacher could solicit student reaction to the quoted passage by posing related questions such as the following:

1. What purpose was served by these limitations?

2. What implied human appetites and weaknesses necessitated the strict control? Has man overcome his base nature, making such restriction unnecessary?


4. Does modern history record similar efforts to control man's activity? If so, were the efforts successful or unsuccessful? Have such attempts been abandoned or merely exchanged for more effective, subtle propaganda techniques?

The absence of private property ownership and the strict work regulations resulted in an abundance of products which

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21 Ibid., pp. 63-64.  
22 Ibid., p. 64.
the Utopians exported to neighboring countries, in exchange for imports of iron, gold, and silver. The comparative value of the minerals, according to Utopian standards of measurement, should furnish our twentieth century students amusement as well as support for their criticism of modern materialism.

The development of a scale of values in young Utopians is accomplished by the "oblique method," discussed by More in Book One. Informal instruction in these matters is effected by observation and attitude imitation. As precious jewels are playthings of children and gold and silver ornaments distinguishing marks of past criminal acts, Utopian adults regard these items as of no value. Children, in imitation of their elders, discard their babbles as they approach adulthood. Students interested in this particular point might be inspired to investigate further the psychological principles relating to the formation of attitudes and scales of values. They might ponder the question: Do modern advertisers, parents, educators, and ministers employ similar principles and techniques?

The subject of pleasure is given detailed analysis in Chapter Six and could present difficulties to students who

\[\text{\textsuperscript{23}}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 65.}\]
fail to grasp certain fundamental principles underlying the Utopian beliefs:

1. that pleasure is a natural outgrowth of their religion;

2. that no pleasure should be sought at the risk of pain to the individual;

3. that only good and honest pleasures result in true happiness;

4. that denial of individual pleasure for the benefit of others or the commonwealth is reasonable; and

5. that the highest form of pleasure is associated with cultivation of the mind.  

With teacher assistance in the clarification of the points listed above, students should have no difficulty in understanding this particular Utopian concept and in drawing modern parallels.

As Chapter Six contains an abundance of stimulating and provocative statements which could be used to spur student creativity, the teacher might choose at this point to require written reactions to one of the following statements quoted from this chapter:

Men could no more live without iron than without fire and water, though nature has given no use to gold and silver, which we might not easily go without, if man's folly had not put a price upon scarceness. Quite the reverse is truly the case: like a fond mother, nature

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24 Boring, p. 850.
has put all the best things in the open, like air, water and the earth itself, but has far removed empty and useless things.  

For they [the Utopians] are amazed that any man can be pleased with the feeble glow of a little gem or stone, when he can gaze at a star and the very sun itself; or that anyone is so crazy as to think himself more distinguished because of a thread of finer wool; for however fine a thread it may be, a sheep once wore it, and all the time it was nothing more than a sheep.  

For they [the Utopians] consider it sheer madness to pursue harsh and difficult virtue, and not merely to renounce a pleasant life but even willingly to endure pain, from which you might expect no profit. For what profit can there be if you gain nothing after death when you have passed the whole of this life unpleasantly, that is to say miserably.  

But is it not part of the same ignorance to enjoy empty and useless honors? For what natural and true pleasure is brought by another’s bared head or bent knees? Will this heal the pain in your own knees, or the frenzy in your own head?  

The list of quotations could be limited or lengthened in accordance with varying teacher-student interests. The listing above is meant merely to suggest or illustrate the rich source of inspiration for student writing projects.  

Almost inconceivable to our "enlightened society," More's Utopia included the concept of slavery. This discarded institution, however, in the sixteenth century Utopia was used as a

\[25\] More, p. 66.  
\[26\] Ibid.,pp. 69-70.  
\[27\] Ibid., p. 73.  
\[28\] Ibid., p. 76.
means of punishment for crime against society and as a labor force for disagreeable tasks. Contrasting the institution envisioned by More with penal practices in our own country would make interesting group projects for interested students.

In addition to the slavery issue, More discusses in Chapter Seven certain moral issues that continue to plague contemporary society: endorsement of mercy-killing or suicide in the event of painful and terminal illness, mate selection, sexual promiscuity before and after marriage, divorce regulations, and consequent penalties for violations of the established codes. Comparisons and contrasts may be drawn by students between moral attitudes of the past on these issues and those of contemporary society. They will be quick to notice some practices of the Utopians that would find no ready acceptance today.

The Utopian concept of warfare, discussed by More in Chapter Eight, is of particular relevance to the modern student whose future plans are necessarily influenced by the compulsory military service requirement looming just ahead for the male twelfth grade students. Female students, exempt from the military obligation, are not exempt, however, from this problem. Class discussion may tend to become unwieldy on this timely though controversial topic, and as communities
vary in their degrees of concern, the teacher can use his discretion in permitting or limiting debate in accordance with his knowledge of community attitudes and the potential risk involved. Interesting questions for consideration are the following:

1. How did Utopian military training differ from that practiced today? What are the relative merits of each plan?

2. What conditions moved the Utopians to a state of war? Would our presence in Vietnam today have been sanctioned by the Utopians? Why, or why not?

3. What conditions in Utopian living accounted for their reluctance to wage war over money matters involving only their own country?

4. What alternate combat techniques did the Utopians employ before waging war? In their opinion, wherein lay the greater victory? Why?

5. If war were inevitable, what procedure was followed in amassing a combat force?

6. What was the Utopian woman's role in warfare? Could a similar practice be instituted today?

7. What weapons of war were used by the Utopians?

8. What treatment could the vanquished expect at the hands of the Utopians?

The juxtaposition of war and religion is an interesting feature of More's Utopia which might be called to the attention of students. Although a staunch Catholic himself, More provided for religious tolerance in his ideal society, where free expression is permitted to all—even the
non-believer, "whose madness," they hope, "will eventually yield to reason." Students will detect More's implied criticism of sixteenth century priests in comments such as, "They have priests who are very saintly and hence very few." As "to bear this office it is not enough to have average goodness," the priests are immune to secular justice and are "left merely to God and themselves."

Religious practices of the Utopians most likely to interest students include their acceptance of a few women as priests, male-female segregated seating arrangements in church services, and the ritual of confession practiced in the individual homes before attending particular church services.

Raphael Hythloday thus brings to a close his description of life in Utopia, which he claims is the only republic "that can rightfully claim the name of republic. For elsewhere men talk of public good, but look after their private good. In Utopia, where nothing is private, they really do public business." Public ownership versus private ownership provides wealth for all, insists Hythloday, for,

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29Ibid., p. 112. 30Ibid., p. 115.
31Ibid., p. 117. 32Ibid., p. 116.
33Ibid., p. 122.
What greater riches can there be than a life in happiness and peace, with all cares removed, without being worried about one's own food, or being harassed by one's wife's complaints and demands, or being afraid of poverty for one's son or anxious about a daughter's dowry?  

Students could identify the modern political philosophies inherent in the preceding quotation and if sufficiently interested, conduct group research on More's influence on socialist and communist doctrines.

Attention of the students should be directed to the concluding pages of *Utopia* in which the dialogue pattern, begun in Book One, is resumed as Hythloday skillfully redirects his listeners' attention to their present society still suffering from problems unknown in Utopia.

For who does not realize that fraud, theft, plunder, quarrels, brawls, discord, sedition, murder, treachery, poisoning—all these are avenged by daily punishment, not checked; but if money is killed, they will die with it? Also fear, worry, care, toil and sleepless nights will also perish at the same moment as money. Yes, poverty itself, which alone seemed to lack money, would immediately decrease if money were absolutely abolished everywhere.

Hythloday contends further that the Utopian way of life would find general acceptance,

if that single beast—the chief and parent of all plagues—pride did not fight against it. Pride measures her prosperity not by her own advantages, but by others' disadvantages. She would not even wish to become a goddess if there were no wretches left over whom she

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34 Ibid.  
could rule and exult, by comparison with whose wretched-
ness her own felicity might shine, whose need she might
torture and inflame by displaying her own riches. This
serpent of hell creeping over the breasts of men drags
them back and stops them from seeking a better way of
life. 36

More, in the role of listener, expresses interest in
Hythloday's account and also his desire to discuss certain
aspects further at a future date. He admits that "in the
republic of Utopia there are very many things that I would
pray might come to our cities rather than hope they might
ever be established." 37

In final assessment of More's Utopia, the teacher might
emphasize the fact that whether or not the idealized common-
wealth described has appeal to contemporary man, it at least
reflects the social conscience of an individual, sensitive
to the problems of his society and his proposal for their
solutions. More's age, like our own, must have had its
apathetic citizens who were unconcerned about social prob-
lems not directly affecting their individual lives. It must
have had also among its citizenry those who were aware but
only made loud noises of protest and offered no positive pro-
posals. In this connection students might ponder this final
question: Is it not the individual who observes a social
problem, reflects upon it, and responds with a positive

36 Ibid., p. 125. 37 Ibid., p. 127.
proposal for its solution who makes a significant contribution to any society?
CHAPTER III

THE UTOPIA OF B. F. SKINNER

 Skipping more than four centuries, a study of utopianism might be stimulated and class interest sustained by the examination of a modern utopia—B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two*. ¹ Professor of psychology at Harvard University and "the world's leading exponent of pure behaviorism,"² Skinner sketches the results of behavioral engineering on an imaginary community composed of one thousand persons.

 Students will notice striking similarities between the major concerns of More and Skinner despite the lapse of time between their writings. The contrasts in the views of the two writers on education, government, punishment, labor, and moral and ethical concepts will provide the students opportunity to weigh their relative merits on the basis of contemporary needs.

 The mood of today's youth, illustrated in their increasing clamor for more voice in decision-making relative to

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their affairs, their refusal to accept the dictum of "the establishment," their intense distaste for the glib answer in response to vital questions, their defiance of tradition, and their willingness to experiment, suggest that *Walden Two* would be well received by them. Skinner, speaking through the character of Frazier, denounces unproved theory as meaningless and approves "a constantly experimental attitude toward everything." In addition, student interest may be further intensified upon learning that Skinner has hopes of actualizing his utopian dreams and has continued to develop the ideas outlined in his novel. The writer is also the inventor of the teaching machine as well as the founder of the programmed instruction technique currently employed in many school systems.

The approach to this novel may vary in accordance with the interest of participating students and the desires of the teacher. As the format consists of the reactions of six persons to a utopian community during a five-day visit, one method would be to arrange the class discussions to coincide with a single day's observations by the visitors. It should be understood, however, that more than a single class period

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3Skinner, p. 30.

4Klaw, p. 50.
will be required to adequately discuss the observations, activities, and reactions to a fictional day in Walden Two. An alternate arrangement would be to consider broad topics as they are sequentially presented in the text. It is the latter method which will be followed in this presentation.

Background information supplied by the teacher as suggested above plus discussion of the first eighteen pages of the book would make a suitable beginning and reveal the framework for the presentation of the author's ideas. In these pages the author introduces the characters through whose eyes we are to learn of the various phases of community life at Walden Two. We also meet Frazier, founder of the community and a former graduate school associate of Professor Burris, who teaches psychology at a university and is the first-person narrator of the novel.

Rogers, a former student of Burris', appears one day in the professor's office accompanied by his former war buddy, Steve Jamnik. Having been recently discharged from the army following World War II, the two men explain their reluctance to return to their pre-war plans and modes of living. Rogers' recollection of the professor's discussion of utopias during class lectures some years before prompts the two men to call upon Burris on the chance that he may furnish them with additional information about an experiment in utopian living
briefly outlined in a magazine article, which pricked their curiosity and offered a possible alternative to the normal civilian life. Burris, with half-hearted enthusiasm, agrees to make appropriate inquiries about the existence of such an experimental community and is shocked to receive an immediate response to his letter requesting information. The reply, signed by Frazier, whom Burris remembers as a rather strange, self-assured fellow, confirms the fact that such a community does indeed exist. Frazier's letter also includes an invitation to Burris and his friends to visit Walden Two.

Students will tend to associate the name Walden with Henry David Thoreau's account of his experiment in "deliberate" living. The teacher may point out, however, that while some similarities do exist, Walden Two concerns a group experiment rather than an individual one such as Thoreau described in his Walden.

Rogers and Jamnik, delighted at the prospect of firsthand observation of an experimental community, invite their fiancées to join the inspection party, while Burris, a bachelor, extends a similar invitation to his colleague from the Philosophy Department, Augustine Castle. Arrangements are made for the group to depart on Wednesday for Walden Two, where they will remain until the following Monday. As scheduled, the visitors are met at the bus by Frazier, who,
after warm greetings and introductions, drives them to Walden Two and deposits them at the building where they are to stay during their visit. Plans are made to meet for an initial tour of the facilities following a brief rest in their respective quarters.

With this introduction of characters, Skinner prepares his readers for a vicarious exploration of a modern utopia. The community will be judged by each of the six fictional visitors in accordance with varying backgrounds, future hopes and aspirations, tastes, talents, capabilities, temperaments, and personalities. Students, like the characters themselves, will differ in their responses to Walden Two, but it is hoped that all will be made "furiously to think."  

Questions for class consideration concerning the introductory pages might include the following:

1. What motive would each of the six characters have for visiting Walden Two?

2. What humorous insights into the foibles of teachers does Skinner provide the reader?

3. What connection do their recent war experiences have with the desires of the young men to discover a new mode of living?

4. How would you characterize Frazier on the basis of Burris' recollection of his graduate school personality? What evidence supports your analysis?

5Skinner, p. 305.
5. Is there evidence that Frazier has retained some of his early character traits?

Reassembled following their rest period, the visitors are conducted by Frazier, their host, on a leisurely tour. Particularly interesting to the guests are the ways of controlling the sheep flock, the cooperative housing arrangements offering devotees protection from inclement weather without sacrifice of scheduled activities, architectural and furniture design, clothing and grooming practices of female members, and the staggered scheduling permitting the near constant use of equipment, entertainment, and dining facilities. These features would be appropriate for one class discussion period.

Related questions to stimulate student participation are:

1. Comment on Walden Two's substitute for traditional fencing. Do you detect irony or implied criticism in Frazier's comment, "The lambs acquire it [knowledge of the boundary] from their elders, whose judgment they never question"? Is there further implication in the name of the sheep dog?

2. What is "the Ladder" in Walden Two? How did it acquire its name?

3. Describe the outgrowths of the Walden class in domestic practices. What general attitude prevailing in the community should be credited with the improvements?

4. How would Walden Two's fashions be received by contemporary women? By men? By the clothing industry? What is the virtue in "dressing up," according to Frazier? What distinction is drawn here between Thoreau's Walden and Walden Two? What are two possible causes of poor grooming? What attitudes could result in carelessness?
5. What is the Walden theory of "crowds"? Would young adults tend to agree or disagree with this viewpoint? How are crowds avoided at Walden Two?

6. What are the advantages of staggered scheduling? Are there disadvantages?

7. What is meant by "industrialized housewifery"?

The economic set-up of the community is next explained by Frazier to the visitors, who learn that goods and services are obtained by the members in exchange for labor-credits, which each contributes at the rate of twelve hundred credits per year. The value of labor-credits is manipulated from time to time in relation to the difficulty or desirability of a given task and the willingness of the members to perform it. Members may exercise their preferences in the selection of tasks. Professional training is provided at community expense for aspiring students when vacancies appear imminent on the respective professional staffs.

The Walden system of community government, also explained in this section, consists of a Board of Planners, who bear the responsibility for the successful functioning of the entire community. Working directly under the Planners are the Managers, carefully trained specialists in the many fields of endeavor operating within the community. It is required that each Planner, Manager, and Scientist work out some of his labor-credits in menial tasks. "This," explains Frazier, "is
our constitutional guarantee that the problems of the big-muscle user won't be forgotten." The visitors learn that through elimination of many unnecessary occupations and the utilization of woman-power, traditionally reserved for "housewifery tasks," the typical Walden work day averages about four hours. The visitors are somewhat shocked to learn that they too are expected to contribute two labor-credits per day during their stay at Walden Two.

Money earned by community members is considered property of the community. These funds assist the foreign-exchange system required in negotiations with the outside world for tax-paying, goods, and services.

Modern technological discoveries and processes are used at Walden Two, for, as Frazier explains,

What we ask is that a man's work shall not tax his strength or threaten his happiness. Our energies can then be turned toward art, science, play, the exercise of skills, the satisfaction of curiosities, the conquest of nature, the conquest of man—the conquest of man himself, but never of other men. We have created leisure without slavery, a society which neither sponges nor makes war.7

With leisure provided by the short work day at Walden Two, members are free to participate in a wide variety of activities scheduled and announced on the bulletin board in a manner resembling the broadcast schedule found in a daily

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6 Ibid., p. 59.  
7 Ibid., p. 76.
newspaper. Frasier refers to this simple bulletin board as their "Great White Way," maintaining that the dazzling brilliance, color, and impressive size of modern advertising displays are unnecessary to generate excitement in the members of Walden Two. He insists that excitement is a conditioned reflex based on previous associations and experiences.

Community members with their increased leisure have another opportunity lacking in the outside world--time for the patronage and the cultivation of the arts. Frasier contends that art is encouraged by a culture, an opportunity for expression, and an audience for appreciation more than by the prizes and scholarships used as incentive drives in traditional society. He comments on our insufficiencies:

A Golden Age, whether of art or music or science or peace or plenty, is out of reach of our economic and governmental techniques . . . At this very moment enormous numbers of intelligent men and women of good will are trying to build a better world. But problems are born faster than they can be solved. Our civilization is running away like a frightened horse, her flanks flashing with sweat, her nostrils breathing a frothy mist; and as she runs, her speed and her panic increase together. As for your politicians, your professors, your writers--let them wave their arms and shout wildly as they will. They can't bring the frantic beast under control.  

Instruction is provided for interested members in all the performing and applied arts; and as the perfect environment exists, art flourishes at Walden Two.

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8Ibid.  
9Ibid., p. 89.
From art, attention is directed to perhaps the most controversial section of the book: that dealing with infant care, child-training, and education. First, the visitors are admitted to the nursery, which houses infants ranging in age from birth to one year. Parents, they are told, are permitted to visit as often as they wish, provided they are in good health, as every effort is made to protect infants from infection during the first year of life. Each baby, clothed only in a diaper, occupies his own sound-proof, air-filtered cubicle equipped with a large glass window. This arrangement permits temperature adjustment in accordance with the requirements of the individual baby. There is no bedding other than the moisture-proof plastic cloth, which serves as a sheet, and no clothing to restrict the comfort and free movement of the infant. Laundry duties are greatly reduced in consequence of this simplified procedure, and the system apparently operates quite smoothly.

At the age of one year, a child is moved to the upper nursery, the quarters for children from one to three years of age. This section, furnished with diminutive furniture, has sleeping rooms resembling the cubicles of the lower nursery with the same provisions for controlled temperatures and minimum laundry requirements, as bedding is unnecessary and children are clothed, if at all, in diapers or training pants.
When Burris and his party observe some of the children hastily
dressing themselves for a picnic while others are apparently
not included in the outing, they ask about the problem of
jealousy among the children. They are told that negative
emotions, such as jealousy, are nonexistent at Walden Two, as
they simply are not needed. The group of visitors is, of
course, eager to learn just how such a feat is accomplished.
Frazier replies that it is the result of a process known as
"behavioral engineering" and proceeds to elaborate upon the
techniques involved, following the urging of his guests.

Small annoyances and frustrations, explains Frazier, are
gradually introduced to small children at Walden Two for the
purpose of assisting them in the development of selfcontrol.
One practice used quite early in this phase of training is
that of the lollipop dipped in powdered sugar and offered
to the children early in the morning. The children are told
that they may eat their lollipops after several hours pro-
vided the powdered sugar does not reveal at that time a single
lick of the tongue.

Children are always encouraged to consider these experi-
ences as exercises in problem solving, which involves recog-
nition of the desired goal, possible methods for its
realization, and a choice of response which requires the least
discomfort. The technique is taught deliberately by
encouraging the children to examine their feelings, first while looking at the lollipops, and then again after the lollipops are put out of sight. The purpose of this self-examination is to allow the children to discover the decrease in tension when temptation is removed from sight. Next, a distraction is provided, such as a new and exciting game or activity, after which the children are again reminded of the lollipops. This procedure suggests the value of distraction, even to the very young child, when he encounters frustration. The process is repeated periodically until "in a later experiment the children wear the lollipops like crucifixes for a few hours."\footnote{Ibid., p. 108.}

This exercise is followed by more complicated and difficult ones until finally, usually by the age of six, the children have gained mastery over inner frustration and possess the self-control so essential for happiness and peace of mind. Those responsible for this type of instruction observe extreme caution, as individual children respond differently and achieve mastery at different rates. Some require less time than others in the realization of complete success, but Frazier contends that there are no failures.\footnote{Ibid., p. 114.}
Loud protests and accusations of sadism arising from Castle, the philosophy professor, prompt Frazier's justification of the process:

What they get is escape from the petty emotions which eat the heart out of the unprepared. They get the satisfaction of pleasant and profitable social relations on a scale almost undreamed of in the world at large. They get immeasurably increased efficiency, because they can stick to a job without suffering the aches and pains which soon beset most of us. They get new horizons, for they are spared the emotions characteristic of frustration and failure.¹²

The suggestion offered by Castle that such training might prompt an attitude of superiority in the individual is countered by Frazier's contention that personal success, when it is coupled with another's failure, is carefully avoided at Walden Two. "Triumph over nature and over oneself, yes. But over others, never,"¹³ says Frazier. Whereas traditional societies produce a few brave individuals, ethical training at Walden Two "controls adversity to build strength,"¹⁴ and makes "every man a brave man."¹⁵

Student response to the ethical training procedures may be conflicting, but as understanding of this section is basic to the understanding of the author's particular contribution to the utopian concept, it is worth any additional time required to clarify vague or mistaken impressions. The teacher

¹²Ibid., p. 112.
¹³Ibid.
¹⁴Ibid., p. 114.
¹⁵Ibid.
may measure student understanding by posing questions similar to the following:

1. Would you agree that self-control is essential in each individual's experience?

2. Support or attack the methods of ethical training described. What are the advantages of the Walden Two methods? What are the disadvantages?

3. Could this technique be mastered better in a group situation or in an individual situation? Why?

4. Do you feel that "ethical training" is introduced too early at Walden Two? What alternative, if any, would you propose?

5. Explain Frazier's objection to personal triumph.

6. Could ethical training procedures be implemented by the institutions of traditional society? By which ones?

7. Is the cultivation of self-control stressed or de-emphasized in contemporary youth culture?

The visitors discover that older children at Walden Two are grouped by ages with progressive removal of controls and withdrawal of supervision until, at the age of thirteen, children are completely independent, free of restriction, and allowed to choose their dining hours and adult housing quarters. Frazier explains the progressive stages involved in the process as natural transfers from supervisory control to group control to self-control.

Passing from emotional to intellectual considerations, the group is next permitted to observe the educational
system employed at Walden Two. They notice little similarity between traditional classroom instruction and the activities considered "educational" at Walden Two. Frazier explains, "We don't attach an economic or honorific value to education. It has its own value or none at all."¹⁶ At Walden Two there is no formal secondary education as it is traditionally conceived, no grades, and no diploma. Based upon the belief that children are naturally curious and inquisitive, no subjects are taught--only the techniques of learning and thinking. The same principle extends into the area of higher education. The community offers its excellent library facilities, its laboratories, and its assistance in the mastery of techniques. Although professional training must be obtained outside the community, Frazier forsees the probability of providing for it within Walden Two in the near future.

The educational process is continuous at Walden Two, with no specified time or age limitations. A member at any age may acquire a new skill whenever he realizes his need for it.

In response to the visitors' expressed doubt of educational success in the absence of standard motives, Frazier replies that it has been their aim to preserve the natural curiosity of the infant and to fortify the child against

¹⁶Ibid., p. 119.
discouragement. He contends that "the motives in education . . . are the motives in all human behavior. Education should be only life itself. We don't need to create motives." He admits to varying degrees of talent among the members, but as individuals are seldom compared and rarely set goals beyond their capacities for achievement, few problems result.

Teacher guidance of class discussion of Walden Two's educational system will probably be unnecessary, as the aspects involved are immediate and major concerns of the students. However, points to be emphasized should include the following:

1. According to Frazier, the teachers in traditional society spend a great deal of time compensating for inadequacies in students' early training. Explain why this is unnecessary at Walden Two.

2. Contrast the standard motives for learning with those of Walden Two.

3. Do contemporary educational practices reflect any of the attitudes expressed by Frazier?

4. Would such a system work to the advantage of the gifted student? The artistically talented student? The slow student?

Other interesting aspects of the utopian educational procedures should spark spontaneous classroom response and stimulate discussion.

Courtship and early marriage, encouraged at Walden Two, will find enthusiastic support among twelfth grade students.

17Ibid., p. 124.
Frazier presents a sound case for its desirability despite the traditional contrary arguments expressed by Barbara Macklin, the young lady engaged to marry Rogers. Students should bear in mind, however, the unique conditions at Walden Two which contribute to their high rate of success—the similar backgrounds of the members, their cultural training, and their assurance of future economic adequacy. In today's traditional culture the early marriage has many obstacles to hurdle, which often include the accompanying sacrifice of further education and future economic prospects, and early parenthood with the consequent burden of child care which thwarts the young mother's self-development, as well as her ability to contribute to the family funds. Young parenthood at Walden Two, unhampered by such obstacles, is thus encouraged. Frequently a young woman at the age of twenty-two has given birth to as many as four children and is then free to resume her individual quest for self-fulfillment.

Frazier embarks upon an explanation of the family institution within his utopian community with his characteristic zeal:

The significant history of our times is the story of the growing weakness of the family. The decline of the home as a medium for perpetuating a culture, the struggle for equality for women, including their right to select
professions other than housewife or nursemaid, the extraordinary consequences of birth control and the practical separation of sex and parenthood, the social recognition of divorce, the critical issue of blood relationship or race—all these are parts of the same field.\textsuperscript{18}

He denies the charge that such circumstances would encourage sexual promiscuity, maintaining that encouraged affection between the sexes at Walden Two includes the principle of "Seduction not expected."\textsuperscript{19} Divorces occasionally occur even in utopia, but they are not the shattering experiences of the traditional society. Community resources prevent the negative emotions normally attending divorce, such as wounded pride, anger, and jealousy. Children of divorced parents, normally the chief victims of the tragedy, are spared the suffering through the normal, community child-care arrangement of Walden Two.

Customarily, children do not use the terms "Mother" and "Father" but instead call all adult members by their given names. The normal parent-child relationship may exist between any adult-child combination without respect to biological parenthood. The child often becomes attached to the particular adult whose skill in a given area is of particular interest to him. This arrangement benefits also the childless

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 138. \textsuperscript{19}Ibid.
couples, who may satisfy their natural longings toward the community children exactly as the natural parents are permitted to do.

It is anticipated that these somewhat revolutionary concepts will be accepted and/or rejected with varying degrees of vehemence among the class members, who should be given opportunity to discuss questions, such as

1. Is there a current trend toward greater acceptance of early marriage in our culture? If so, what conditions have prompted the change in attitude?

2. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of early marriage in our society.

3. Would you agree or disagree with Frazier that the family is a weakening institution? What evidence supports your view?

4. Compare the gains and losses of young women in Walden Two with those of young women in our society.

5. Discuss the "community parenthood" concept of Walden Two. What are its advantages and disadvantages?

From these considerations, Frazier next directs the visitors' attention to the question of ethics, expressed at Walden Two in the Walden Code. Frazier explains that the Code, subject to revision as need requires, stems from deliberate and experimental efforts to incorporate the essentials of "The Good Life" into their mode of living. It was agreed that the Good Life includes the following conditions: health, a minimum of unpleasant labor, opportunity to exercise
talent and ability, intimate and satisfying personal contacts, and finally, rest and relaxation. The Walden Code of behavior through which these aspects of the Good Life may be realized include Do's and Don'ts, such as

1. Don't talk to outsiders about the affairs of the community.

2. Do explain your work to any member who is interested.

3. Don't gossip about the personal relations of members.

4. Don't bother with personal introductions unless they are necessary for the communication of information.

5. Don't permit another member to bore you with repeated stories or discussion of topics uninteresting to you.

6. Don't verbally express gratitude for services. Gratitude should be demonstrated by the member's own contribution of service to community welfare.

Personal competition, except in activities demanding the exercise of skill, is discouraged at Walden Two, as it contributes nothing to the welfare of the group.

Class comment on each of the aspects of the Good Life and Walden Code should be solicited by the teacher if spontaneous reaction is not forthcoming. Students should be required to support their views with logical reasoning. The customary procedure of citing likenesses and differences between our culture and Walden Two's should furnish an

\[20\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 159-161.}\]
abundance of motivation, particularly in the respective attitudes toward competition and gratitude.

The rather weak plot is advanced at this point when Steve Jamnik and Mary Grove, his fiancee, decide to apply for permanent membership, marry, and enjoy the benefits which they think community living affords and unattainable to them in traditional society. Complication arises through the conflicting views of the other couple. Rogers, tremendously impressed with Walden Two, is unable to convince Barbara, his betrothed since pre-war days, that the life they could enjoy here would be more desirable than the orthodox pattern of living she has anticipated for such a long time.

The physical examinations required of Steve and Mary do provide, however, the opportunity for touring the health facilities of the community. The group discovers that their emphasis upon preventive medicine has resulted in an excellent health status for the community at large.

Next to be considered is the community's relation to government and politics. Frazier equates the term government with the power to compel obedience, a notion which he considers incompatible with human happiness. He declares, "You can't force a man to be happy. He isn't even likely to be happy if he's forced to follow a supposedly happy
Frazier objects further to the techniques employed by liberals and radicals who, he contends, seek political positions of authority in order to enforce their wills upon the governed.

Your liberals and radicals all want to govern. They want to try it their way—to show that people will be happier if the power is wielded in a different way or for different purposes . . . Why don't they build a world to their liking without trying to seize power?"

As for the responsibilities of citizenship, Frazier contends that the members of Walden Two fulfill their obligations by complying with military service requirements, voting the straight Walden Ticket (drawn up by the Political Manager advised by the Planners), paying taxes, and living in peace and harmony with one another in the midst of chaos in the outside world. When needled by Castle as to the community's contribution to world peace, Frazier counters, "But let me ask you to compare what I am doing for world peace with what you are doing as a 'good citizen.' What are your techniques? What progress are you making toward a peaceful life?"23 No immediate response was forthcoming from the garrulous one.

To the question of competition from the outside world in its allure and attraction of young people through the

21Ibid., p. 194. 22Ibid., p. 195. 23Ibid., p. 204.
glamor presented in magazines and motion pictures, ostentatious homes, and other symbols of wealth, Frazier responds that they make no effort to hold their young people through any form of propaganda. In contrast with other societies, the only aim at Walden Two is to make sure the whole truth is presented. Frazier explains,

What we are trying to achieve through our cultural experiments in Walden Two is a way of life that will be satisfying without propaganda and for which, therefore, we won't have to pay the price of personal stultification. Happiness is our first goal, but an alert and active drive toward the future is our second. . . . It's no mean achievement to build satisfaction in any way whatsoever; but we want the real thing. Walden Two must be naturally satisfying.24

Independent investigations of community facilities and random interviews of its members satisfy Professor Burris that an accurate representation of the facts has been presented to the visitors. Previously the suspicion lurked deep within him that they were perhaps viewing a carefully-staged and well-rehearsed theatrical production dramatizing the positive aspects of life at Walden Two.

The arrival of a truckload of young people from Walden Six to spend Sunday affords Frazier the opportunity to explain the plans for their future expansion. These new arrivals, he explains, are building quarters for a new

24Ibid., p. 209.
community, Walden Six, to be occupied by selected groups from Walden Two plus new converts who recognize the advantages of community living and accept the "Code." The selection of Walden Two members for transfer to the new community will be made on a vertical basis; that is, the new group will consist of representatives from all age and task groups. The plans allow for the establishment of additional Waldens as future demands require expansion. Frazier hastily adds, however, that scrupulous care is taken to prevent their too-rapid growth, as Planners and Managers must be highly trained if a weakened structure is to be avoided.

Premature publicity is considered highly undesirable, as all aspects involved in expansion must be subjected to experimental testing before their permanent acceptance. It becomes clear, however, that within thirty years, it would be entirely possible, through the process of subdivision, for the entire country to be absorbed. Frazier comments, "We're using the only technique of conquest which has ever given permanent results: we set an example. We offer a full and happy life to all who go and do likewise." 25

As Waldens multiply in the future, it necessarily follows that the power of their subscribers will increase

25 Ibid., p. 228.
proportionately. Ultimately, according to Frazier's dreams, competitive society will comprise the minority group, while members of Walden societies will be the majority exerting pressures and filling political offices. In consequence, rationalizes Frazier, the general public will benefit from tax reduction and equal shares in the common wealth of the country.

To the suggestion that the successful community operation may be attributed to the personal magnetism of its founder and thus will die with him, Frazier explains,

A dominant figure in Walden Two is quite unthinkable. . . . Personal favoritism, like personal gratitude, has been destroyed by our cultural engineers. . . . We discourage any sense of history. The founding of Walden Two is never recalled publicly by anyone who took part in it.26

Hero-worship is discouraged at Walden Two because, according to Frazier, it usually indicates an unwise choice of goals.

What we give our young people in Walden Two is a grasp of the current forces which a culture must deal with . . . simply the Now! The present is the thing . . . The last step in the long evolution of government is to employ unselfish motives where personal domination has always seemed ideally suited even if always fatal.27

Frazier admits Burris, the more sympathetic of the two professors, to his untidy, disheveled living quarters and

26 Ibid., p. 235.  
27 Ibid., pp. 239-240.
confesses that while he has been able to make "other men likable and happy and productive," his personal self-conquest has been incomplete. He attributes his failure to the fact that he is not a product of Walden Two:

But there's never a complete rebirth. There's never total conversion. The final structure we're working toward must wait for those who have had a full Walden Two heritage.  

While admitting his personal failure, Frazier nevertheless claims complete success for his creation--Walden Two.

The question confronting the fictional visitors, as well as the readers, at this point is whether Walden Two is the utopia worth any sacrifice to attain, or the creation of a Fascist despot, whose plan could challenge or perhaps even destroy our democratic form of government. Ample evidence may be found to support either viewpoint, and as the remainder of the book deals with various aspects of this question, the ideal conditions for classroom debate are thus established.

Frazier presents to his skeptical listeners the following question: "What would you do if you found yourself in possession of an effective science of behavior?" The techniques of behavioral engineering, maintains Frazier, are currently understood and practiced by the demagogues, cheats, bullies, educators, and priests, and could be used by the

28 Ibid., p. 249.
29 Ibid., p. 250.
30 Ibid., p. 250.
government to the benefit of mankind if they were employed to that end. He explains the conditions necessary for the control of behavior as follows: "If it's in our power to create any of the situations which a person likes or to remove any situation he doesn't like, we can control his behavior." The use of "positive reinforcement" to establish desirable behavior patterns is, according to Frazier, much more effective than the use of punishment following undesirable behavior. The misunderstanding of these two principles explains the failures of past cultures which operated under the punishment theory. At Walden Two, continues Frazier, "By a careful cultural design, we control not the final behavior, but the inclination to behave—the motives, the desires, the wishes."

Democracy as it is now practiced is attacked by Frazier as fraudulent, in that it does not express the will of the people. The election process he denounces as "a device for blaming conditions on the people. The people aren't rulers, they're scapegoats." Frazier maintains that elected officials are untrained and unskilled in the performance of their respective tasks, which should be undertaken by highly-trained

31 Ibid., p. 269.  
32 Ibid., p. 262.  
33 Ibid., p. 266.
specialists. The people, contends Frazier, should be consulted only as to their content or discontent with a current state of affairs, but never on the selection of specialists, whose comparative capabilities they could not accurately judge. Frazier continues, "The government of Walden Two has the virtues of democracy, but none of the defects. It's much closer to the theory or intent of democracy than the actual practice in America today." Conceding the superiority of American democracy over its despotic enemies of two world wars, Frazier presses his point:

But the triumph of democracy doesn't mean it's the best government. It was merely the better in a contest with a conspicuously bad one. Let's not stop with democracy. It isn't, and can't be, the best form of government, because it's based on a scientifically invalid conception of man. It fails to take account of the fact that in the long run man is determined by the state. A laissez-faire philosophy which trusts to the inherent goodness and wisdom of the common man is incompatible with the observed fact that men are made good or bad and wise or foolish by the environment in which they grow.

Class debate may be extended at this point by adding the question of whether or not democratic government, as we know it, might be improved by adopting the Walden Two methods of community government or modifications of those methods.

The novel reaches its conclusion with three of the six visitors converted to the Walden Code and two of the

34 Ibid., p. 269.  
remaining three happily returned to traditional society. Burris leaves Walden Two with Castle, Rogers, and Barbara; but unable to dismiss the profound effects of his five-day visit, he returns to Walden Two to join forces with Frazier and the other participants in this group experiment. Castle, like many of us, mentally attaches negative characteristics to unfamiliar ideas and philosophies beyond his comprehension. His departure stirs no inner conflicts as he joyfully anticipates resuming his customary pattern of living—lecturing, theorizing, and marking papers at the university. Rogers, unable to arouse Barbara's enthusiasm for the project, submerges his true desire to remain at Walden Two but will no doubt always remember a bit wistfully the happiness he observed during his visit.

Judged by the usual criteria for evaluating novels, Skinner's *Walden Two* has obvious deficiencies: there is a great deal of talk and little action; the characters (with the exception of Frazier and perhaps Burris) do not live for the reader; the plot at times comes to a dead stop while matters philosophical and theoretical are examined in ponderous detail. Yet, its value for stimulating the thinking, speaking, and subsequent writing of accelerated twelfth grade students appears to adequately compensate for its literary deficiencies.
Although the teacher has daily opportunities for evaluation of student thinking, speaking, and writing during the study of the utopias of More and Skinner, a culminating activity which might serve to clarify impressions and sharpen student perceptions of the positive utopia is described below.

Students will first be reminded by the teacher that the positive utopia is a fictional, idealized remedy for the ills which beset a particular society. They will then be asked to envision a society which is flawless, perfect, and free of the problems which plague contemporary man, for this class will have the opportunity of responding to the adult criticism that Youth protests but fails to propose. Our task will be to compose through cooperative effort a description of an up-to-date utopian community.

Our procedure will be first to identify the areas of concern to us with particular emphasis upon our youth culture. Accordingly, each student should submit a list of the areas which he thinks should be treated in our description.
A composite listing of concerns will necessarily include the following areas:

1. A description of the ideal government.
2. A description of the economic set-up.
3. A description of the educational practices.
4. A description of the courtship and marriage practices.
5. A description of the customary ethical conduct expected of community members.

These considerations will be supplemented by student suggestions of additional areas of concern. The goals listed below in order of their importance were compiled by *This Week Magazine* from reader response to their question: What goals do you feel would build a better America? The listings might aid the students in formulating ideas of their own.

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<th>1959</th>
<th>1969</th>
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<td>2. Raise human standards</td>
<td>2. Combat crime</td>
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<td>3. Reduce crime and labor racketeering</td>
<td>3. Control inflation and cut cost of living</td>
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<td>4. Improve international relations</td>
<td>4. Reduce pollution of air and water</td>
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<td>5. Reduce taxes</td>
<td>5. Reduce taxes</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Provide stronger national defense</td>
<td>6. Conserve our natural resources</td>
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<td>7. Improve interfaith and interracial relations</td>
<td>7. Improve racial relations</td>
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8. Provide college education 8. Fight narcotics
for all gifted students


10. Conserve our natural re- 10. Combat decline in
sources morality

Following the Walden Two procedure, a board of six Planners, composed of three boys and three girls, would be appointed by the teacher-founder. The Planners would, in turn, carefully select a Manager for each area of concern. Effort should be made to match selected Managers with their particular skills and talents. Each member of our utopia would function in each interest-area to the extent that he would submit his written views on each subject to the respective Managers, who with their assistants, would refine and synthesize the contributions.

The Planners would be responsible for the success or failure of the entire experiment in cooperative effort. They would devise a fictional scheme for presentation of the class utopia and choose an appropriate name for it. They would work closely with the Manager of Economics and his assistants to discover ways of distributing the work-load involved in the project.

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1This Week Magazine, June 29, 1969, p. 11.
A labor-credit system, similar to that employed in Walden Two, should be devised, setting the minimum number of labor-credits required of each participant. Each community member should be allowed to choose his tasks in accordance with his interests, talents, and capabilities. Possibly a scale of values for labor-credits should be created which would encourage members to undertake the difficult or unpopular tasks. Further, periodic revision of labor values in accordance with the labor supply and demand factor would insure the adequate treatment of all areas of our utopia.

Planners will be required to contribute a reduced number of labor-credits, as the final synthesis and coordination of group effort will be their responsibility. Some menial tasks should be required of them, however, so that they will not overlook the problems of "the big muscle users."

Our aims will be to contribute concrete ideas and suggestions for the remedy of ills which plague our society, to test the value of cooperative effort as opposed to individual effort, to circulate our ideas by means of a cooperatively prepared novelette, and to experience the delight of stimulating creative endeavor, so planned as to avoid the drudgery usually associated with "projects."

Fruits of the labor could include the grades selected by the participants themselves, that is, minimum labor-credit
could be valued as a C, with an ascending and descending scale of values devised by the Economic Manager and his helpers. Hopefully, all members would elect to participate enthusiastically in our utopian experiment.

Students as members of an experimental community should be given an opportunity to express content or discontent with a current state of affairs. The teacher, therefore, should poll the citizenry to ascertain their positive and negative response to the project. The results of the poll will provide justification for similar endeavors with a later class or a return to traditional methods.

A questionnaire might be distributed to the class citizens with the request that their answers be written in truthful prose, giving full and detailed information on the specified topics. Questions to guide their responses might be similar to the following:

1. Explain your reasons for liking or disliking the subject of utopia.

2. Did you personally benefit from this experiment? In what way or ways did you gain?

3. Compared with your past experiences with activities requiring independent effort, did the cooperative experiment involve less labor? Were you aware of increased stimulation of ideas through interchange with your associates?
4. Was this true cooperative labor with each citizen contributing his share, or did some retard the process by half-hearted effort? In your interest-areas how were such matters handled? Explain.

5. Would you have preferred that Planners and Managers be selected through the election process? Explain your decision on this point.

6. In your opinion did the teacher-founder assume too much authority? Not enough? Cite specific instances in framing your reply to the question.

7. What modifications of procedures would you propose for future undertakings of this kind?

8. Did our finished novelette give you a sense of personal or group pride?

9. Would you enjoy participating in additional cooperative projects on different subjects?

As teachers occasionally confuse their own enthusiasm for new topics and activities with student growth and enrichment, this evaluation would be an invaluable aid for use in future planning. The results could lead to modified procedural techniques, enthusiastic planning for similar projects on different topics, or a return to the familiar and well-tested classroom procedures. In any event, an experimental attitude will have prevailed for a time in a twelfth grade classroom of accelerated students.
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