CUTTING AND ADAPTING PROSE AND POETRY
FOR ORAL INTERPRETATION

APPROVED:

[Signatures]

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CUTTING AND ADAPTING PROSE AND POETRY
FOR ORAL INTERPRETATION

THESIS

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1949, Wallace Bacon urged educators to widen the base of oral interpretation and stated, "The exact balance of fine scholarship and fine oral skill . . . is the goal toward which the work in interpretation ought to move." Today even a cursory glance at the more popular textbooks of the past two decades seems to indicate that Bacon's directive is being followed. The "exact balance of fine scholarship and fine oral skill" is being accomplished by an increased expansion of pedagogical methods and sources. Mary Margaret Robb finds within current textbooks three schools of thought regarding methods of instruction:

The first approach will be termed traditional; it is concerned primarily with training students to become effective readers. The communicative approach describes those textbooks which emphasize the experience of literature and its recreation for an audience. The third approach, the literary, emphasizes the literature and finds some of the theories of modern literary criticism applicable to oral interpretation. There is much overlapping between the three groups and the division is useful mainly to show the effect of other disciplines.2


2Mary Margaret Robb, Oral Interpretation of Literature in American Colleges and Universities (New York, 1968), p. 221.
Of these three philosophies, the most recent and seemingly the most influential developments are emerging from proponents of the literary approach. Evident in any survey of recent interpretation texts is the clearly discernible shift of emphasis toward an increased attention to the development of analytical skills that lead to full understanding of, and aesthetic appreciation for, good literature and away from mere refinement of presentational technique. This approach is especially stressed in Bacon's *The Art of Interpretation*, Charlotte Lee's *Oral Interpretation*, Don Geiger's *The Sound, Sense and Performance of Literature*, Jere Veilleux's *Oral Interpretation: The Recreation of Literature*, and Robert Beloof's *The Performing Voice in Literature*. These writers and other interpretation theorists who rely heavily upon principles of modern literary criticism have established a significant trend in today's teaching methods. This expansion within the discipline has prompted such new definitions of oral interpretation as Paul Marcoux's statement in a 1966 article in *The Speech Teacher* in which he views this course offering as "a literature-oriented study which utilizes speech methodology."\(^3\)

Such emphasis upon the literature itself has promoted extensive instructional guidelines for analysis and

understanding of the material. However, very little has been provided thus far in the way of directives for effective preparation of that material in terms of cutting and adapting the literature for oral presentation. A review of the textbooks reveals that many authors do not deal at all with the subject of editing. When the topic is considered, the procedures are stated in vague terms, applications are limited in scope, and/or the information is presented as a model without adequate explication. None of the three schools of thought are directly concerned with the process of cutting. The literary and communicative approaches have provided guidelines for exploration of, and responsiveness to, the literature; and the traditional approach has outlined steps of vocal and bodily training that enable the student to communicate that meaning. However, between analysis and performance, the student finds very little guidance from any of the schools in regard to cutting and adapting the material. The omission of so vital a step in the student's over-all development of proficiency can well prevent his attaining the objectives outlined by the spokesmen of any of the three approaches.

Regardless of the particular approach that is being employed by the instructor, cutting and adaptation of literature can provide the student a valuable educational experience. Therefore, the writer has not embraced any particular theory of methodology but has attempted to
reflect an eclectic approach drawn from the writings of all three schools. She has drawn, too, from her experiences as a high school teacher of oral interpretation, for it was in this position that an awareness of the need for this study first occurred.

Limitations

Because of the vast scope of literary materials available for the use of the oral interpreter and in view of the many varied forms of interpretive activity that are currently witnessed, certain necessary limitations were imposed upon this study. Directives suggesting cutting procedures applicable to prose and poetry are cited; however, the adaptation of dramatic literature has been excluded. This omission resulted from the writer's conviction that interpretive reading of dramatic literature, designed for performance with full theatrical accoutrements, is itself something of a distortion of the playwright's intention. Therefore, rather than include a form of writing that can more capably be handled within its own medium, this study is confined to that literature in which the creator's purpose can more easily be realized. Essays, journals, letters, diaries, and other special types of expository composition are not included in the chapter on prose cutting in order to focus on more imaginative writings. While these various forms have not been dealt with, both the principles and directives enumerated in this study are, in many cases, applicable.
A further limitation of the topic occurs in regard to the type of presentation for which the cuttings are designed. Because of the complex nature of group interpretation, the principles and guidelines are provided primarily for the cutting and adaptation of literature for presentation by a single reader. Methods of literary adaptation for Choric Interpretation, Readers Theatre, or Chamber Theatre calls for a separate comprehensive study, and a significant number of theses and dissertations are currently being produced on these topics. It is assumed, however, that competency at cutting material for solo performance better equips the student to handle the adaptation of literature for group presentation.

The review of literature was confined to an investigation of textbooks and articles written in the past twenty years. Popular usage of materials produced before 1949 is not likely, and the writer was primarily concerned with ascertaining the currently available coverage of the topic. Another significant factor in the choice of 1949 as a starting point was the discovery of Moiree Compere's *Living Literature*, a textbook published in that year in which the writer devoted significant attention to the topic of cutting and adaptation of material.

The most obvious limitation inherent in a study of this nature occurs because of the subjectivity of the process being investigated. The establishment of one set procedure
for cutting and adapting material is prohibited by the highly individualized nature of both the literature and the reader. In the preface of her text, Charlotte Lee offers this warning to all speech educators:

There is great danger in being too specific or too dogmatic. Every piece of literature presents its own challenges and must be approached with an open, albeit informed, mind. There is no magic "how-to-do-it" formula.

In no other instance is Lee's admonition more applicable than to a discussion of cutting and adapting the literature.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to devise a method of developing competency in the cutting and adaptation of prose and poetry for oral interpretation. This method is a pervasive element of the thesis and consists of (1) general principles derived from theories expressed by both interpretation and literary authorities and from observations made in the classroom, (2) suggested guidelines for cutting specific forms of literature, and (3) illustration of these directives by application to selected prose and poetry.

Before discussing the approach observed in the preparation of this thesis, three terms need to be defined. "Adaptation" refers to the modification of literature in order to heighten the readability of the material for oral presentation. The process of adaptation includes cutting

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and/or arrangement of the literature. Excerpts and abridgments are regarded in this thesis as overlapping procedures; however, in terminology, these two expressions possess meanings that are considered mutually exclusive. "Excerpts" refer to self-contained passages that are extracted from a longer work. "Abridgments" describe internal omissions made within the framework of the total literary unit.

Procedure

To devise a method of developing competency at cutting prose and poetry, the following agendum was observed. The first step was to review published literature in the form of speech textbooks, handbooks, and journal articles and unpublished manuscripts of theses and dissertations to determine the extent of coverage and the treatment of the topic over the past two decades. Because of the inadequacy of information available in the speech field, it was next necessary to turn to literature from closely related disciplines in an attempt to locate theories applicable to the editorial process. From this survey of literature, the writer established three general principles of a highly comprehensive nature that would serve as a basis for the cutting or adaptation of any form of literature. These principles are defined in Chapter II.

The major focus of this investigation was directed to the suggested procedures for excerpting or abridging material. By identifying and systematizing these
procedures, it was then possible to establish specific guidelines that could be utilized in a cutting assignment of a given form of writing. Further explication of these directives was accomplished by illustrating their application to selected passages. In Chapter III, fifteen specific directives for the abridgment of narrative prose are cited. These suggested forms of omission are both individually and collectively illustrated. This immediate application of the directive seems to possess greater merit as an instructional device than mere enumeration of the guidelines or sample cuttings without adequate rationale.

The cutting of poetry, discussed in Chapter IV, required a great deal of investigation into literature outside the speech field because the handling of this topic has virtually been ignored by interpretation theorists. The review of literature yielded only three educators who approached the subject of poetry abridgment, and in no instance are there cited both guidelines and illustrations for this procedure. Therefore, the suggestions presented in this chapter are largely representative of observations made in the classroom.

The last step was to order the above information into an arrangement of increasingly difficult adaptive procedures. The method of developing competency is thus based upon the assumption that the interpreter will progressively enhance his editorial abilities through experience. Consequently, excerpts are considered before abridgments; prose is handled
before poetry; and directives are arranged from the simplest and most obvious types of cutting to the more complicated and difficult editing practices.

The present study should illuminate a workable method of developing competency at cutting and adapting prose and poetry for oral interpretation. As such, it is one solution to the problem of current insufficiency of information on this topic. The procedures set forth in this study can aid the teacher or student who seeks principles and guidelines for preparing the material. If oral interpretation is to provide "the exact balance of fine scholarship and fine oral skill" as suggested by Bacon, the discipline must implement full developmental skills for its participants.
CHAPTER II

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR CUTTING
PROSE AND POETRY

The abridgment of material for oral presentation is a concern of the reader himself, and as such, is a predominantly subjective exercise. Each piece of literature will pose for the adaptor certain unique problems, and his solutions to these problems will be attained in terms of his own particular resources and attitudes. The highly individualized nature of the editorial task has prohibited the establishment of a set formula for the accomplishment of effective condensation. Educators have, in fact, exhibited an obvious hesitancy to offer specific directives in terms of the student's development of competency at adaptation. The moderation of writers of textbooks in regard to abridgment procedures is reflected in Gladys Lynch and Harold Crain's comment, "Making cuttings has been compared to making gravy. Almost everybody does it--some better than others--but almost nobody uses a recipe."

While uniformity cannot be accomplished in terms of set procedures, there does exist among oral interpretation

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authorities an invariable ethical basis that supports even the most casual references to cutting. No writer fails to remind the student that his responsibility to the author is undeniable: he does not possess license to distort willfully the essence of the literature. Consequently, judicious cutting, done only after the reader has accomplished a thorough understanding and appreciation of the material, is advised.

Principal Reasons for Cutting

Textual comments and observations made in the classroom indicate that there are three principal reasons for editing a manuscript. The interpreter may do so to meet time requirements. He may modify the literature to make it more suitable for audience consumption. He may delete elements that are troublesome in terms of his own abilities and tastes.

Of these, Virgil Holland and Jack Sessions report, "The primary reason for cutting literature for interpretation is to make it conform to time limits imposed by the audience or the occasion."\(^2\) Time restrictions are an omnipresent reality of every interpretive endeavor. In the classroom, large enrollment often necessitates rigid time limitations in order to allow sufficient coverage of subject-matter with adequate time for both individual

readings and subsequent evaluation. The student, then, immediately confronts the challenge of fitting his performance within the boundaries of a strict time requirement assigned by the instructor. Realizing that he must scrupulously adhere to this given time limit, he must make a decision either to cut a longer work so that it will conform to the restriction or to attempt to locate a selection that is exactly the right length for the assignment. Selection based on length of the material is undesirable because such a limitation automatically eliminates the bulk of the world's great literature and formulates for the student a superficial basis of judgment that defies the ultimate objectives of oral interpretation.

If the student engages in extracurricular interpretive reading contests, he must abide by tournament rules that "usually state a time limit." In Texas, for example, The Constitution and Contest Rules for the state-wide network of interscholastic competition in poetry interpretation and prose reading states that "the total time for presentation (including optional introduction) shall not exceed seven minutes." Failure to meet these requirements can result

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in the contestant's being substantially penalized or, perhaps, even disqualified from the competition.

Beyond the precise regulations inherent in classroom or contest situations, readers confront the equally obligatory restrictions of time in public presentations. The length of performance that has been requested of him will be a constant consideration of the interpreter who has been asked to give a performance of a given length before a group. An individual reading before a formal or informal gathering is seldom timed, but the planned format of the program chairman and the sustained interest of the audience will insure that time limitations, nonetheless, exist.

A second major reason for cutting material is to render the literature more suitable for oral presentation. Selections effective in written form often lose their impact if read aloud in their entirety because of certain obvious differences in the processes of silent and of oral reading. Therefore, the oral reader may need to reduce the material to a more concise nature to make it suitable for his particular art.

There can be little doubt that, with the possible exception of poetry, written composition is designed primarily for the silent reader. As self-evident as this principle may seem, its application may be easily overlooked by a beginning interpreter who fails to consider the basic differences in his role and that of the recipient for whom
the author designed his work. For example, the silent reader is not obligated to give equal review to each phrase or passage of the literature; he has trained his eye to scan the page for the more applicable or more interesting elements. Because the audience for an oral reading is not in a situation which allows him to engage readily in this kind of mental editing, it becomes the interpreter's right to provide some necessary abridgment. Chloe Armstrong and Paul Brandes feel that the oral reader possesses not only the license to perform this function but, in fact, the responsibility of doing so:

The interpreter's audience is ... a captive one. It has lost the customary avenues of escape of silent reading. Therefore, the interpreter has the responsibility to edit his selection as he feels his readers might, attempting to conform to his time limits and to eliminate unapplicable and "unreadable" passages without distorting the author's intent.5

Another significant difference between silent and oral reading is the opportunity of the silent reader to reperuse complexities of the literature that prove confusing. Because an interpreter's audience is afforded neither time for speculation nor a chance to return to a previous point for clarification, the reader may find it necessary to cut his material in order to enhance more immediate comprehension. Closely related to this type of editing is the handling of abstract concepts that require contemplation.

Armstrong and Brandes also comment on this aspect of editing:

The concentration with which Emerson attacks us in his essay "Self-Reliance," may not be so fatiguing in a silent reading where we may put the book down for a moment to get our breath. . . . But the audience for the oral reader must take all that comes its way, and fatigue from the intensity of the essay would be inevitable. 6

In accordance with the substantial differences in the natures of silent and oral reading, modifying the literature may be necessary in order to further the comprehension and pleasure of the listeners.

Intelligent cutting may actually enhance the quality of the literature. The printed page is not sacrosanct. Writers may exhibit verbosity or redundancy which can be eliminated by the oral reader, thus strengthening the work as a whole. The impact of the dramatic action may be substantially increased by underscoring the highlights of the story and eliminating the less relevant ingredients. Literature with obvious weakening components such as a high degree of sentimentality or the use of hackneyed expressions may become worthy material for oral presentation when these elements are drastically reduced.

In cutting the material to make it more suitable, the interpreter will be strongly influenced by what he wishes to accomplish in the reading. His particular objectives will guide his choice of what to retain or to delete in order to emphasize that portion which he considers most essential.

6 Ibid., p. 201.
For example, if he has uncovered a predominant theme in his initial analysis of the literature, his desire to preserve or to vivify this element may prompt him to retain certain otherwise non-essential passages that exemplify the thematic factor. If, on the other hand, he views his role as a performer to be one of a less conclusive nature, he may desire primarily to kindle interest in a particular work. Compere designates such an interpretive function as a major reason for cutting reading material: "An interpretive reader, using a shorter adaptation of a whole book, can often get to the mind and understanding of people so that they eventually read the whole for themselves with a greater grasp of its value." If the aim of the presentation is to entice the listener to read the total work for himself, the interpreter may choose to make a cutting of a skeletal nature that highlights the key situations of the story. This interpreter's view of what is suitable will likely differ drastically from that of the interpreter for whom vivification of the author's theme or style of writing is of paramount concern. Thus, two vastly different cuttings may emerge from the same work. In addition to widely differing personal objectives, another variable in terms of suitability is the interpreter's unique assessment of his audience. Most authorities urge the reader to give careful

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consideration to the abilities and tastes of his respective listeners while editing the material. For example, Paul Hunsinger suggests:

When we adjust the literature for our audience, we should begin with a study of what would be most meaningful for that particular audience and then take those portions which would enable us to communicate in the best possible way.8

Jeré Veilleux, too, advises the student who is preparing an excerpt from a longer work to consider the audience's familiarity with the total work.9 Ben Graf Henneke says to the student, "Keep your audience constantly in mind as you cut. Leave in the material that you think will most please them; omit the material that will interest them least."10 Lynch and Crain also recommend that the audience be given a careful scrutiny to determine the suitability of the material.11 Within these suggestions there lie implications of the existence of an identifiable plane of literary appreciation and of certain measurable elements of attitude. The interpreter's evaluation of these factors, however, is ultimately dependent upon his own intuitive resources.

There are not, and there cannot be, established inflexible

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11Lynch and Crain, p. 294.
formulas for audience analysis. Consequently, wide variance is inevitable in the almost totally subjective matter of suitability.

Closely related to the suitability of the material in terms of the thoughts and feelings of the audience is the desirability in terms of the judgment of the performer. The oral interpreter frequently finds within the context of his selection certain passages that prove troublesome in practice readings. Continued encounter of these difficulties may prompt him to make minor adjustments in the literature so that he can handle the material with greater proficiency. Pruning of this nature represents the third major reason for cutting.

When reading the material aloud, the reader may discover that, because of his own limitations of vocal range, it is not possible for him to convey all that is communicated on the printed page. Again he faces the differences in silent and oral reading. Joseph Smith and James Linn warn the reader to look for certain elements in the material as he considers the selection's adaptability to oral presentation:

Some selections which look promising in written form may prove disappointing when read aloud. For example, the oral reader has few visible or audible equivalents of spelling or typography: he probably cannot communicate those Elizabethan lyrics that are printed in the shape of a butterfly or a heart; and some of e. e. cummings' and even Dylan Thomas' typographical experiments may prove equally incapable of oral translation. Too, the oral reader cannot easily render homonyms (e.g., to, two, and too; vein, vain, and vane, etc.) and therefore must avoid
literature which exploits such ambiguities; certain passages in James Joyce's novels, and some contemporary poetry, must be seen to be appreciated.12

They further warn the reader to "be suspicious of any material that renders colloquial dialect" because the words may not sound as peculiar when read aloud as they appear on the page.13 These suggestions are made in regard to the choice of material. However, they may be applied to cutting when these particular elements are not pervasive throughout the literature but are occasionally discovered. The reader may also have difficulty projecting the tone of parenthetical thoughts or asides of the author. Armstrong and Brandes suggest that such editorial comments "are easily deleted and often can be sacrificed without unnecessary distortion of the selection."14 A frequently encountered difficulty arises in narrative selections that require suggested characterization. The oral reader may find it impossible to establish a clear vocal distinction between two characters or between a particular character and the narrator. Wilma Grimes and Alethea Mattingly feel that the interpreter should be especially cautious about attempting to suggest numerous characters:

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14 Armstrong and Brandes, p. 124.
He is also faced with the realities of his situation: he is one individual, but he must suggest the presence of several characters, and he must work without properties, usually without lighting effects, and certainly without theatrical make-up and costume. It is therefore often advantageous for him to omit minor characters.\(^5\)

Sessions and Holland reaffirm the legitimacy of such editing:

If you try to characterize too many people, you will confuse the audience. Choose two or three main characters and let the dialogue move through them. Other, less important people can be handled with your narrator's voice . . . and your reading will be much more effective. Also, it's often possible to put comments that are actually made by additional characters into the mouths of the two or three that you decide to characterize.\(^6\)

In short, the interpreter often chooses to eliminate words, passages, and characterizations that prove troublesome for him to read aloud.

In practice sessions, the oral reader will become more and more concerned with proper pacing. Having cut the material initially in such a way that he has preserved the structural completeness of the literature, he must now make certain that continuity of thought is not broken and that the selection moves steadily forward to its climax. Final judgment of momentum cannot be made until the interpreter begins oral practice. At this point, he may discover that some of the dialogue seems repetitious when uttered aloud. He may decide that certain dialogue tags or directives


\(^6\)Sessions and Holland, p. 207.
are expendable. Descriptive passages may become burdensome for him. After listening carefully to his own performance, the interpreter will often do further editing of passages that impair the established movement of the sequence.

The personal judgment of the interpreter will greatly influence his adaption of the literature. Early in his preparation of the material, the reader may choose to leave out profanity or other offensive elements that he would feel uncomfortable reading aloud. He may want to omit passages that carry a high degree of emotionalism or sentimentality and require an oral translation that is melodramatic in nature. He may find that although the essence of the author's message is universal, the illustrations have become obsolete and should, therefore, be deleted. Terminology may occasionally be too technical or too commonplace for its inclusion in the oral reading. The writing may exhibit a point of view that is inappropriate for the oral reader. Louise Scrivner illustrates the successful transferal of point of view from a father's to a mother's voice without affecting the basic purpose of the writing in her Guide to Oral Interpretation. Finally, the interpreter may discover that there are portions of his chosen selection that are simply beyond his realm of experience and to which he can make no empathic response.

Because there are few, if any, selections that are totally satisfying to the interpreter, he can be expected to make minor adjustments in the literature according to the dictates of his own personal tastes and abilities.

Personal editing of troublesome elements is often considered by oral interpretation authorities as an inadvisable course of action. The beginning interpreter, especially, is discouraged from this type of abridgment. Hunsinger warns against indiscriminate cutting:

To cut a part you don't understand or to eliminate words and passages difficult to read aloud is irresponsible procedure. Personal censorship of words which you find too strong or offensive can destroy the whole literary integrity and distort the nature of the literature.¹⁸

Not all educators, however, agree with this viewpoint. Edna Gilbert recommends to participants of speech festivals that they "cut profanity or any comparable element which may offend your audience."¹⁹ Henneke exhibits considerable leniency in regard to editing:

An author writes for a particular audience, in a certain language, for a particular occasion. Audiences change, language changes, occasions differ. How absurd to read for an audience a part of a selection that no longer makes sense because of language shifts, or that is no longer appropriate because the occasion is different, just because we feel the author's words to be inviolate.²⁰

¹⁸Hunsinger, p. 92.

¹⁹Edna Gilbert, "Oral Interpretation at Speech Festivals," The Speech Teacher, V (March, 1956), 117-120.

²⁰Henneke, p. 61.
Certainly, the greatest caution must be exercised by the adaptor to avoid distortion of the author's theme, purpose, attitude, or style. However, the interpreter often feels that he has ample justification for making deletions that do not impair the essence of the literature. Consequently, this editorial practice appears to be rather widespread among experienced oral readers and, thus, must be recognized as a prevalent motivation for cutting.

Types of Cutting

Of the innumerable avenues for shortening material that are open to the interpreter, there seem to emerge two significant types of cutting. The adaptor may either choose to use an entire self-contained portion from a longer work, thus producing an excerpt; or he may choose to retain the essential unity of the complete work yet reduce the length by the omission of certain elements. Scrivner defines the former type of cutting:

You may literally "lift out" a section or scene from a story or novel. You select one chapter from a novel or the climactic portion of a short story that has special appeal for you (and your audience) and a structural completeness (beginning, middle, end). You may wish to introduce your reading with a summary of what preceded your scene, but often a scene will stand alone without reference to the whole story.21

Excerpts may be made from all types of literature. As Scrivner suggests, a common procedure is to extract a single chapter from a book. Armstrong and Brandes illustrate an

21Scrivner, p. 141.
excerpt of this nature by citing *A Tale of Two Cities* which, because it was first published in serial form, contains chapters that are complete in themselves.\(^2\) A single climactic incident, such as the segment in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* when Atticus Finch makes his final appeal to the jury, may be extracted from either a novel or a short story. Nonfiction prose is often made up of separate interrelated units. Literature of this nature, such as Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, can provide ready-made excerpts for the oral reader. Long narrative prosody, too, is often composed of smaller poetic units that make good excerpts for oral presentation. Consequently, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Stephen Vincent Benet's *John Brown's Body*, and Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology* are all valuable sources for excerpts.

If an interpreter chooses to concern himself with the entire work rather than with a single portion, he will engage in the more difficult type of cutting, that of making an abridgment. The adaptor's personal objectives, the time restrictions, and the length of the original manuscript will determine the extent of his omissions. The structure of the literature, the abilities and tastes of the adaptor, and the unique qualities of the occasion will influence the nature of his abridgment. Diverse forms of editing are found in available cuttings. Two or more episodes may be

\(^2\)Armstrong and Brandes, p. 125.
tied together with transitional bridges drawn from the literature or supplied in the reader's own words. An episodic cutting is found in Scrivner's illustration of an adaptation of Carl Ewald's *My Little Boy*. In shorter selections, abridgment may simply mean the elimination of minor elements. Brooks, Bahn, and Okey, Aggertt and Bowen, and Bertram all illustrate the process of shortening material by omitting extraneous details.

Excerpts and abridgments are not to be considered as bipolarized units of procedure which limit the adaptor to one method or the other. Indeed, the excerpt often requires further cutting, and an abridgment often involves utilizing large segments of the material. The two types of cutting are suggested to illustrate contrasting approaches to the procedure. The adaptor will be thinking primarily either in terms of "cutting in" an independent portion or of "cutting out" expendable matter.

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23Scrivner, pp. 154-156.


General Principles

1. No cutting should be done until the reader has made a close study of, and has realized a sensitive response to, the material.

After the reading material has been selected, the interpreter's first step in the preparation of that material is twofold: to gain as complete an understanding as possible of all its elements and to realize a complete response to the literature. It is extremely important that the reader experience both an intellectual response, which is "concerned with the receiving of information at an objective level," and an emotional response, which involves the "receiving of feelings and sensations at a subjective level." At this point in the interpreter's preparation, intellectual understanding is not enough; he needs an intimate experience with the literature. Lee views understanding itself as a process that "takes place on the intellectual and emotional levels simultaneously." This dual response is brought about by the nature of the content itself which Lee asserts has both intellectual and emotive aspects. Grimes and Mattingly refer to these two types of literary ingredients as "cognitive" and "emotive" elements.

27Brooks, Bahn, and Okey, pp. 44-45.
28Lynch and Crain, p. 16.
29Lee, p. 6.
30Grimes and Mattingly, p. 25.
The adaptor who attempts to cut his material before he has come to a full understanding of the content and a total appreciation for its emotional power risks mutilation of the total impact of the selection. It is this total effect of the literary work of art that constitutes the primary concern of the interpreter, and his paramount responsibility will be that of preserving and projecting the over-all impression that the literature conveys. Scrivner suggests that the interpreter begin his preparation with a response to the whole:

He should start here because the whole must always be kept in mind as he analyzes the parts; each part should be considered, not as an end in itself, but as a means of understanding the end result—the total experience.31

Following his initial impression of the total work, the interpreter attempts to amplify both his intellectual and emotional responses to the literature. Interpretation theorists, while recognizing the simultaneity of these reactions, often isolate each type of response in an effort to explicate its nature. Doing so suggests neither mutually exclusive experiences nor consecutive steps in preparation of the material.

Intellectual investigation of the material in pursuit of explicit meaning is generally termed "literary analysis." Because analysis has been granted increased attention by

31 Scrivner, p. 10.
educators in recent years, there seems little need for justifying its merit as a vital preparatory step for the interpreter. The reader must first experience a complete understanding of all the literary elements in order to convey to others the total effect of the composition. From the material itself and from biographical information and statements made about and by the author, the reader must ascertain, as nearly as possible, the precise meanings, both general and specific, which the writer intended. As a starting point, Grimes and Mattingly suggest that the interpreter begin with the material itself and its inherent situational components:

Any human utterance is a composite of these situational components: It is spoken by someone (Who?), to another (to Whom?), in a place (Where?), at a time (When?), for a reason (Why?), to communicate something (What?), and in a certain manner (How?). This framework gives us a basic approach to any piece of writing ...32

Beyond this skeletal framework, the reader must investigate the author's method of organizing his ideas both throughout the material and in each separate unit. Lee warns the adaptor:

If only a part of a long selection is to be used, locating the climax or climaxes within that unit is especially important if the audience is to feel that it has received a complete, unified experience which reached a point of fulfillment.33

33Lee, p. 20.
The author's method of organization is one of many clues to his attitude toward his subject. The interpreter must determine this attitude in analysis in order to preserve it in his subsequent editing of the material. He must also give careful attention in the literature to those elements often known as "intrinsic factors:" unity and harmony, variety and contrast, balance and proportion, and rhythm. Failure to regard the significance of these factors can result in a cutting in which orderliness of a satisfying whole has been destroyed. Closely related to the intrinsic factors is the author's style which has been defined as "the concrete, physical mode of written expression." The writer's style distinguishes him from other men of letters, and the adaptor must not delete so much of the material that the style becomes indiscernible. Essential, too, is a clear projection of the author's theme, an element which should become apparent to the interpreter as he makes a careful investigation of the interrelated parts of the literature. The theme reflects the author's purpose; it is a sound guideline for the adaptor. Finally, the reader must carefully scrutinize his own initial response in order to ascertain the aesthetic effect or experience that the artist intended. Lynch and Crain define the aesthetic experience as "the creation of a feeling, the revelation of a truth with emotional as well as intellectual dimensions,

34Ibid., p. 22.

the flash of an insight into something unique and fresh, an experience of what life or something in life feels like."\textsuperscript{36}

Considering the aesthetic effect of the literature brings the interpreter's attention back to the total literary object and completes his analytical endeavor. This final step is occasionally separated from analysis and referred to as "literary synthesis." In either case, Martin Cobin advises, "What has been taken apart must be reassembled. You must once again have the experience of responding to the whole."\textsuperscript{37}

Intellectual investigation of the literature is an undeniable prerequisite to effective cutting. If the interpreter postpones his analysis until after his editing, he cannot hope to gain full meaning of the material. Furthermore, if he presumes to cut before he fully comprehends, the reader is engaging in highly irresponsible procedure. Ultimately, a thorough dissection of the material "usually results in increased respect for and confidence in the author."\textsuperscript{38} This heightened respect for the writer, in turn, prompts the adaptor to approach his task in a far more judicious manner.

The reader's analysis is a necessary step toward adequate comprehension that will equip him to more accurately

\textsuperscript{36}Lynch and Crain, p. 20.

\textsuperscript{37}Martin Cobin, \textit{Theory and Technique of Interpretation} (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1959), pp. 61-62.

\textsuperscript{38}Lee, p. 32.
edit the material. However, intellectual examination alone may result in an overly objective approach to the task. Cobin registers another disadvantage of analysis alone:

An analysis of the author's work consisting of a detailed intellectual scrutiny of his technique, brings with it the danger of making technique seem disproportionately significant and the end for which the technique was a means disproportionately insignificant.³⁹

An imbalance of this nature can easily result in distortion of meaning if the adaptor cuts the material solely in terms of its rational components.

Meaning can be retained in an abridgment only if the adaptor gives consideration to both its logical and emotional dimensions. Aggertt and Bowen remind the reader:

Actually the simplest word is definable only in terms of some kind of experience. The words themselves are only symbols for experience. Without experiences, full appreciation . . . even simple understanding . . . is impossible. Understanding of all meaning centers in the experiences which have created the personality of the reader.⁴⁰

While the adaptor will not likely know all the personalities of his audience nor the sum of their experiences, he may surmise that a particular segment of the literature is not likely to appeal to many of his prospective listeners because it falls out of their realm of experience. On the basis of the above theory, the passage would not be meaningful and, therefore, might justifiably be eliminated. By the same

³⁹Cobin, p. 8.
⁴⁰Aggertt and Bowen, p. 74.
token, the personality of the oral reader, having been shaped by his own direct and vicarious experiences, will also dictate the extent to which he can discover and communicate the author's meaning. Furthermore, the multiplicity of his experiences may enable him to attach not one but several meanings to the literary object. Consequently, I. A. Richards' observation that "there are several kinds of meaning" is perhaps indeed "the all important fact for the study of literature." 

Some interpreters may find it helpful to utilize the psychologists' assessment of meaning as being a response to a stimulus. The stimulus is, of course, the literature itself which evokes a response when it represents life's experiences. A large number of the leading figures in both interpretation theory and literary criticism today are reflecting the view that literature involves the stimulus-response relationship. Meaning, then, is not solely a matter of denotation or connotation. Thomas Sloan says:

Meaning is what "happens" in the literature. The "happening" is typically a speaker responding to or within a situation . . . meaning emerges through words, movement, gesture, the character of the speaker, and the nature of his situation. 

This dramatic approach to literary study is founded on the theories of Kenneth Burke. It is employed by a significant


number of the current writers of textbooks. Among the proponents of this school are Wallace Bacon and Robert Breen, who identify all literature as dramatic:

It [literature] implies someone speaking and something spoken . . . there is always a conflict expressed or implied, and a prevailing emotional state. Such are the conditions of drama, and such are the conditions which give all literature the semblance of life.43

Dramatistic terms are being provided as guidelines to analysis in many of the current textbooks. Burke's conviction of the effectiveness of this terminology is reflected in the preface to A Grammar of Motives, "The terms are always there for us to reclaim, in their everyday simplicity, their almost miraculous easiness, thus enabling us constantly to begin afresh."44 Consequently, the concept of scene, role, and gesture may assist the interpreter to identify and define the symbolic action of the literature; the utilization of the aforementioned questions—Who is performing What action of thought or feeling or deed? Where, When, How, and Why performed may guide the interpreter to the discovery of situation-attitude relationships which comprise the "drama" of the literature. For the adaptor, this process, termed "dramatic analysis" by Don Geiger,45 may be an invaluable

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tool if he is to preserve in his cutting the deepest levels of meaning.

In-depth comprehension demands total responsiveness of the interpreter. He cannot hope to discover the attitudes and feelings within his selection without a willingness to go beyond intellectual investigation and to emotional participation. The I. A. Richards experiment, demonstrating to what a great extent students usually miss tonal subtlety of literature, points to the necessity of responsiveness in the acquisition of total meaning.46 The interpreter who aspires to this accomplishment often finds difficulty in experiencing an active emotional response. He has been trained in restraint; he has been reared in a societal structure that "tends to condition the individual to mask or reject his emotional drives."47 Consequently, his sensitivity to stimuli about him may have to be reactivated. Bacon calls for a living coalescence between inner poem and inner reader"48 [so that ultimately he and the poem come into] "organic congruence."49 The tensive relationship

46 Richards.


49 Ibid., p. 47.
that Bacon describes is a phenomenon which can only be realized if the reader is totally responsive.

Not only must the oral reader be responsive to the initial stimulus of the first reading, but he must also be willing to assimilate the material. Careful reflection in which the interpreter gives himself wholly to the literature allows him to see and feel images, respond to the emotions, and relive the experiences. Bacon suggests:

Our minds are teeming storehouses, filled with the memories . . . of our past. Literature recalls these memories, activates them anew by combining them with new images, and then lets them, in the shape of poems, settle back into the storehouse.50

It may well be necessary for the reader to employ his imagination to transfer a similar emotional response to a literary situation he has not previously experienced.51

Responding to the literature results in both comprehension and appreciation. In terms of cutting and adapting material, the latter effect is a vital one. The more a reader cares about the material he is preparing, the more cautious he is likely to be to preserve its essential meaning. Furthermore, by having first experienced a total response to the literature himself, the adaptor will be better qualified to anticipate probable audience response.

Geiger assigns to the student of oral interpretation an obligation "to make the intellectual effort required to

50 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
51 Brooks, Bahn, and Okey, p. 69.
understand the selection with which he is confronted and the imaginative effort to sympathize with its contents." Only after the reader has made both types of effort should he approach the difficult task of selecting a part of or of cutting the literature.

2. The adaptor should scrupulously avoid distortion of the writer's essential meaning.

When the interpreter has come to a full understanding of the literature and a sensitive appreciation of what the writer is attempting to achieve, he must then make every effort to respect the author's work. Compere warns:

The one rule to keep in mind always is that the material belongs to the author, his ability made it live. The job of the reader is to re-create that living; not to create something new and less good, but to make the idea alive and vital in the minds of the people who hear the author more authentically because he has a good interpreter.53

Other educators agree that this principle is unquestionably basic to the student's development of competency in cutting his reading material. Thompson and Fredricks caution, "You will share your own thoughts and feelings only as you have been able to recognize and reorder them in the author's imagined arrangement of experience." Bertram says, "One positive statement can be made: If the author's intent of

52Geiger, pp. 74-75.
53Compere, p. 13.
54Thompson and Fredricks, p. 1.
purpose has been distorted or destroyed, no cutting is good and no excerpt is satisfactory."

There is no formula for training students to be faithful to the original creation; it is a matter of ethics. However, respect for the author and appreciation for his achievement heightened by the reader's analysis and assimilation should now formulate a more substantial basis of judgment.

The author's main purpose must be respected in both abridgments and excerpts. This is no easy task when the adaptor confronts the definition of "purpose:"

The purpose is the objective the author wanted to accomplish with his reader or listener, the idea he wanted to put across, the topic he wanted to introduce and the impression or attitude he wanted to leave concerning it, the intellectual or emotional or esthetic experience he wanted to create within his reader or listener, or the meaning he wished to convey.

Excerpts, when lifted out of context, may be misrepresentative of the author's intent. A distortion of this nature occurs when a student earnestly expresses the moral precepts of Polonius as the words of a sincere and learned father. To avoid deleting or destroying the author's purpose, the adaptor must constantly examine his cutting to verify that his editing has not handicapped the author's effort to achieve a purpose.

55 Bertram, p. 155.
56 Lynch and Crain, p. 73.
The adaptor faces, too, the responsibility of preserving the author's style of writing. The choice and arrangement of words express the writer's individuality, and it is in these elements that a great deal of his attitude is reflected. To alter or dilute the author's style is a distortion that often occurs when words, phrases, and/or sentences are removed in abridgment. For this reason, most authorities urge the adaptor to cut in large segments whenever possible.

The proficient adaptor must possess a sensitive appreciation for the structural composition of the literature. The organic unity must be maintained. The essential movement, or momentum, must not be destroyed. The total impact must be felt, and the essential thought preserved. In poetry, especially, where expression of the poet's emotion has been reduced to maximum condensation, the interpreter "has to be very careful not to violate the structural pattern on which the narrative poem depends."57 The poet's meaning may be conveyed, to a large extent, by the rhythm, rhyme, and meter he employs. Consequently, educators suggest that it is more desirable to cut poetry, if at all, only by large units or stanzas rather than by isolated lines or parts of lines.

57Lee, p. 362.
3. Every cut or adaptation must be executed with ample justification in terms of promoting clarity, interest, or effectiveness.

The interpreter will seek the comprehension, attention, and responsiveness of his listeners in varying combinations. His accomplishment of the desired audience reaction will be determined, in large part, by cutting that makes the material more intelligible, more interesting, and more emotionally powerful.

Understanding is the basic function of every communicative act. For the oral reader seeking to project the writer's meaning to his listeners, understanding becomes a matter of immediate intelligibility. His listeners must instantly comprehend his message; therefore, a careful assessment of the audience must be made before the reader begins cutting to promote clarity. Cobin suggests that this appraisal begin with consideration of the listeners' knowledge of the language symbols:

Once you have determined the language usage of the audience, you will be able to compare that usage with the usage in the literary selection you are considering. The closer these usages are, the more understandable the selection will be to the audience. ... The greater the complexity beyond the audience's normal level of usage, the less understandable the selection will be to the audience.\(^{58}\)

In addition to language usage, intelligibility rests in the clarity of the selection's organizational structure.

\(^{58}\)Cobin, p. 26.
The reader's audience will not find meaning in literary symbols alone; they will require an orderliness of arrangement that will allow them to see the relationship of one element to another. Lawrence Mouat, in establishing a criterion for selecting material, points to clarity of organization as the first guideline to pleasing form:

Regardless of the subject matter of a literary work, we want to be able to recognize its structure and to follow its development from beginning to end. In an essay or a speech we want to find the specific purpose and to note the sequence of leading ideas with their subdivisions as this purpose is accomplished. If there are digressions we want to recognize them so that we won't lose the train of thought. In a story or a play we expect to follow the development of plot and subplot. We are annoyed if characters appear out of and disappear into nowhere. In poetry we expect the poet to develop his thoughts according to the rules of conventional metered verse, and we expect equal satisfaction in following the original structure of free verse. Whether it is conventional or free verse, we tend to reject a poem whose organization is faulty or unclear.59

Language that is readily comprehensible and an easily recognizable structure that facilitates development of thought and mood are two key conditions that formulate a sound basis of judgment for the adaptor. He may begin to determine what to omit, what to retain, and what to say in addition to his selection in order to promote a higher degree of clarity.

Omission will be made of those elements that detract from the listeners' comprehension. Therefore, complexities of plot may be eliminated in order to clarify the sequence of events. Minor characters, too, may be omitted to avoid

confusing the audience with unnecessary names and relationships. Distracting elements, such as references to past events, an inappropriate point of view, irrelevant symbolism, or dialectical or parenthetical inclusions may need to be eliminated to enhance understanding. Finally, unclear meaning that results from generalization, vague philosophical abstractions, or unintentional ambiguity may be deleted. Lee warns the adaptor, however, not to omit an element simply because it has more than one possible meaning. Bacon, too, states, "Ambiguities in language are often functional. A literary piece may gain in effectiveness by the deliberate employment of vaguely defined views and sensations, provided always that the point being made is itself clear."

The promotion of clarity demands that the adaptor consider intelligibility as a basis not only for what he will omit but also for what he must retain. If his audience is to comprehend his excerpt, for example, they must be supplied with sufficient background information to allow them to place this segment in its proper context. Necessary explanations of setting, situation, identity, and relationship of characters must not be extracted from the literature. In expository prose, the adaptor should not eliminate all the illustrations in an effort to convey more statements of philosophy. The essayist includes these examples in order

\[60\text{Lee, p. 14.}\]

\[61\text{Bacon, The Art of Interpretation, p. 116.}\]
to allow his reader further explication and reflection; the oral reader should afford his listeners the same privileges. 62 Finally, the adaptor must retain all elements that are necessary to a later part of the story. Careless cutting away of interwoven portions of the text may cause his auditors to lose the train of thought.

Greater clarity of communication may occur if the reader speaks informally to his listeners either in an introduction or in a transition between major segments. Robert Beloof says:

"Certain problems of clarity can be solved in an introduction . . . a simple explanation of any unusual words or allusions, a suggestion as to the direction the work will take, if that is appropriate, a comment on any knotty relationships or incongruities in the work, and, if only a part of a work is read, a preparation of setting, incident and theme, are all ways in which a well-conceived introduction can assist in the achievement of clarity." 63

At any rate, the introduction should give "enough background so that those familiar with the work can recall the total context and those unfamiliar can at least place the selection in a relatively sound imaginative context." 64 In cutting out large segments, the interpreter often finds it necessary to provide transitional information. This interpolation enables the interpreter to bridge possible gaps in meaning.

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62 Armstrong and Brandes, p. 201.
64 Veilleux, p. 122.
He may either relate these omitted sequences in his own words\textsuperscript{65} or utilize the author's words and phrases from other parts of the story or book.\textsuperscript{66}

The adaptor who cuts his material in order to promote clarity is not assuming the task of simplifying difficult literature. He is, instead, supplying clarification by his cutting in an effort to insure audience comprehension of even the most challenging literary concepts. He is attempting to accomplish a part of the task that Sloan has assigned to him of "making the literature dramatically intelligible, to himself and to his audience."\textsuperscript{67}

Not only must the interpreter insure that his material is sufficiently understandable, he must also make certain that it will be interesting to his listeners. Cutting for interest at times may be equivalent to cutting for clarity because it is certain that the audience will not long give attention to a selection that is unintelligible. However, comprehension alone does not guarantee interest. The listeners may be just as easily bored by material that is below their comprehension level. Therefore, for purposes of distinguishing this basis for cutting from the one stated above, interest will be considered the accomplishment of sustained attention of intelligible material.

\textsuperscript{65}Mouat, p. 96.
\textsuperscript{66}Compere, p. 13
\textsuperscript{67}Sloan, p. 8.
Difficulty in holding the attention of an audience is due, at least in part, to the fact that the interpreter's listeners are capable of thinking at a far more rapid rate than he can speak. Realizing that his listeners possess an inherent tendency to allow their minds to wander, the adaptor must edit his material in such a way that progression of thought moves rapidly along and the attention of his audience is being frequently called to the material. Cobin reminds the interpreter that sustained attention is, in essence, repeated attention:

If you find an object interesting, it is not because some element in it holds your attention for a long time, but because your attention shifts from one element to another. Your attention to the object is sustained by virtue of the fact that the elements which claim your rapidly shifting attention all belong to the same object.

Therefore, the adaptor must investigate all of the possible factors within his literary work upon which the audience may focus its attention.

Once again, the reader may find it helpful to rely upon established psychological principles. The psychologists define as "factors of advantage" that control attention: change, strength, striking quality, and definiteness of form. The adaptor may consider these factors a valid basis of judgment in editing his material to promote interest.

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68 Grimes and Mattingly, p. 303.
69 Cobin, p. 21.
70 Grimes and Mattingly, p. 302.
Change as a source of attentiveness is a principle upon which much effective communication is based. It is a widely recognized precept that change draws attention to itself and that unchanging elements result in monotony. The principle may be applied to the cutting of material both in terms of eliminating and of retaining certain portions of the literature. For example, the adaptor may choose to omit parts of a long descriptive passage that becomes tiresome because of its unchanging nature. He may also wish to delete dialogue or other elements that are repetitive. On the other hand, if his material is predominantly narrative, the inclusion of descriptive passages will provide variety for the listeners. The interpreter may also decide to preserve repetition in order to call attention to something that has gone before. Lynch and Crain distinguish between repetition that is for emphasis and repetition designed for clarity or rhythm and assert that the former is the more significant type.\(^71\) The principle of change is closely related to variety and contrast; thus, the interpreter who has investigated the intrinsic factors in analysis will be guided by his findings in subsequent cutting.

Strength in literature involves the forcefulness of thought or emotional impact.\(^72\) Recurring elements appear here as an instrumental literary device to strengthen an

\(^{71}\)Lynch and Crain, p. 39.

\(^{72}\)Cobin, p. 23.
undercurrent of thought. For example, a character may gain literary stature through repeated appearances in the story, or repetitive language may portray strength of conviction. Brooks, Bahn, and Okey explain the usefulness of both the "echo" and pleonasm, and they discourage the interpreter from thoughtless deletion of repetitive ingredients by reminding the student that the redundant word or words may bring dignity, power, and emotional impact to an idea.73 Cobin suggests further that while repetition may be considered a significant means of achieving strength, vividness provides the most intense means of literary force: "Bold figures of speech, clear images, elemental emotions, deeply felt passions, all make for vividness and strength of impact."74

Striking quality results from concentrated stimuli that call attention to themselves because of their concise nature. The writer may lead his reader through abstract channels of thought and then quite unexpectedly project a statement of surprising concreteness. He may move from complexity to simplicity or from illusion to exactness without warning. The alert silent reader has learned to spot statements of compressed meaning, and the effective adaptor will also utilize conciseness of expression to focus audience attention upon his material. He may find that unusual ideas,

73Brooks, Bahn, and Okey, pp. 133-136.
74Cobin, p. 23.
familiar examples, or otherwise unique elements will possess striking quality.

Finally, definiteness of form has a special appeal to the reader's audience because of their innate desire for order. Cobin again provides a suggestion, "Elements arranged in a pattern attract our attention. Pattern reveals order and a sense of form which causes it to stand out against non-pattern, or chaos, or against a less discerning pattern."\(^7^5\)

For the adaptor, this principle has special relevance in material that is unusually complex in nature. It is possible that he can cut the material in such a way that a more obvious pattern of thought evolves. For example, carefully chosen omissions may illuminate a basic cause-effect relationship or vivify an orderly progression of sequences. Confusion in the minds of his audience greatly handicaps the interpreter's successful communication of meaning, and he must combat this distraction in cutting both for clarity and for interest.

Throughout efforts to control attention by utilizing the factors of advantage, the interpreter must give close attention to the establishment or preservation of a satisfying movement. Each of the four factors is necessary to the progression of the selection that will carry it steadily forward toward its climax. The gathering momentum of the literature is the interpreter's most effective means of capturing and holding the attention of his audience.

\(^7^5\)Ibid.
Frequently, interpreters are seeking an audience response that includes, yet goes beyond, comprehension and attention. Consequently, the adaptor may justifiably edit his material to make it more effective. This basis of cutting may take many forms, depending on the intent of the literature in terms of the reader's judgment, the natures of his audience and occasion, and the over-all effect the interpreter seeks to project.

Ultimately, the only reliable criterion by which the reader may judge the effectiveness of his selection will be audience response. If his listeners react to the literature in the way the interpreter desires, he may conclude that the communicative act has been effective. If the listeners fail to respond appropriately, Brooks, Bahn, and Okey suggest that "the fault rests with one or more of the following: ineffective listening, ineffective and/or insufficient cues from the reader, and literature inappropriate to either the listener, the reader, or to oral interpretation." Proper cutting of the material on the basis of clarity or interest may well promote more active listening and, thus, eliminate the first of these problems. Cutting may also assist the reader in providing more effective cues and in making the material appropriate.

76 Aggertt and Bowen, p. 150.

77 Brooks, Bahn, and Okey, pp. 35-36.
for a particular audience, for himself, and for his communicative art form.

A careful audience analysis will provide the adaptor certain guidelines by which he may predict their responsiveness to the various elements of his literature. Content that is psychologically or sociologically relevant will encourage the involvement of his listeners. Situations that are applicable in terms of their own experiences will carry greater meaning and more likely stimulate empathic response. Because his auditors will be influenced not only by the reader's response but also by the reactions of other members of the audience, cutting should promote literary appeal to the major portion of his audience and should delete elements that are relatively certain to prove ineffective or offensive to any segment of that group. Beloof asserts that the dynamics of the group "can move its members toward greater empathy." The adaptor who regards this process as a tool toward guiding the audience to a desired response must consider its possibilities even in the earliest stages of cutting.

More valid as a basis of judgment, perhaps, than the oral reader's predictions of audience reaction will be a careful investigation of his own responses to the literature. The elements that proved most stimulating to him may be

78 Cobin, pp. 24-25.
79 Beloof, p. 112.
expected to evoke a similar response in others. The components that were ineffective or distasteful in silent reading may become amplified as negative agents when presented orally. The portions that the reader cannot fully comprehend are likely to be projected orally in a tone of uncertainty that will defy audience involvement. Requirements of the literature that exceed the interpreter's abilities may produce embarrassment for both the reader and his listeners. In the cutting process, the adaptor will be expected to utilize every means available toward accuracy and effectiveness. The literature itself is supremely important; the audience, too, is a significant consideration. However, the reader may well find that his most easily attainable source of information is within his own responses.

The cutting of material demands literary proficiency and skill that can be totally accomplished only through experience. Indeed, so difficult is the editorial task that Smith and Linn state, "An extensive discussion of 'what and how to cut' belongs in an advanced course."80 However, any interpreter who formulates cutting procedures on the basis of a thorough comprehension of the literary text, a devotion to the author's purpose, and ample justification for each omission may be expected to produce acceptable excerpts and abridgments.

80Smith and Linn, p. 428.
CHAPTER III

SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES FOR CUTTING AND ADAPTING PROSE

The process of cutting must always be discussed in terms of suggested procedure. The uniqueness of each selection, each adaptor, and each occasion forbids absolutism. However, the establishment of principles is allowed. Hunsinger views principles as a necessary ingredient of oral interpretation:

Basic to and underlying every art are specific principles which are not meant to be regarded as rigid rules and regulations, but rather as strong suggestions which, if followed, will tend to produce the most satisfactory results.1

In distinguishing further between a principle and a rule, Hunsinger says, "Principles differ from rules in that principles are a beginning, a foundation, or an essential attribute of an art."2 On the basis, then, of the three principles that are established in the preceding chapter, it is now possible to formulate more specific guidelines. These directives, when considered all together, comprise a suggested method of developing competency at cutting prose.

1Hunsinger, p. 55.

2Ibid., p. 61.
For this reason, information in this chapter begins with the simplest and most obvious types of cutting and moves forward to complicated and difficult editing practices.

Prose cutting is offered in the thesis before poetry because it is the less difficult type of material to edit. Deletions of narrative prose are illustrated; however, many of the directives are applicable to the other forms of prose composition. In order to elucidate both types of cutting, the specific directives, and the final manuscript, the same selection is used throughout this section.

Criteria for Making Excerpts

The interpreter who is attempting to locate a section of a longer work that will be effective when removed from the whole literary piece and conveyed through oral interpretation should be aware of certain fundamental considerations. He will, first of all, be guided in his choice by the same basic criteria customarily employed in the selection of any material that is to be read aloud: factors of interest, appropriateness, literary merit, and other such considerations. Beyond these requirements, however, there are additional qualifications for an excerpt.

1. The material must constitute a self-contained literary unit that will stand alone without the information that precedes or follows it. Many inexperienced students fail to realize that the impact conveyed by a particular climactic incident does not occur solely because of the
section itself; it results from a careful build-up throughout the preceding pages of the story or novel. Since this is the case, the excerpt will require a lengthy and involved introductory explanation. Smith and Linn feel that too much preliminary explanation weakens the reader's initial impression because "by the time he has finished explaining unfamiliar terms of previous incidents in the plot, the audience has lost all sense of pleasant anticipation."  

2. The excerpt must possess a structural completeness. The organizational pattern that is most obviously apparent is simply a beginning, a middle, and an end. Henneke warns the adaptor to retain all of these factors when he states, "Do not leave just an introduction and a conclusion and omit the body. Do not have an introduction and body and no conclusion." The adaptor should be reminded that definiteness of form is a controlling factor of sustained attention. His choice of a section that possesses structural unity will facilitate his communicative task.

3. The excerpt should be an accurate reflection of the author's basic intent. It is quite possible to locate sections of longer narrative works that, when they are removed from the total content, project an entirely different meaning from what the writer conveys in the whole literary work. Removal of such a portion without placing it into

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3Smith and Linn, p. 16.
4Henneke, p. 60.
context so that the audience will be acquainted with its role in the over-all meaning constitutes unethical practice and should be avoided. It is equally undesirable to slight the author's theme or purpose by failing to explain how a section that is in keeping with his total meaning strengthens his purpose if this information is not evident in the selection itself.5

4. An excerpt must be carefully introduced. Distortion or destruction of the author's purpose can often be avoided by explaining the excerpt's position in the plot or role in the over-all meaning. It is often necessary to include information of what has happened up to the point of the excerpt. If the excerpt does not require reference to the whole story in terms of plot, it may, nonetheless, require explanation regarding meaning if the audience is to realize a complete literary experience.

The following chapter from John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath exemplifies a section of a longer work that may be successfully extracted from the whole. It is a self-contained literary unit that has little direct reference to the remainder of the novel. Its structural unity is apparent: the beginning consists of lengthy descriptions of places, characters, and attitudes that provide setting for the main incident; the middle depicts an incident involving a man's effort to buy bread for his family and is climaxed by an

5Bertram, p. 155.
unexpected benevolence on the part of the calloused waitress, Mae, that results in the acquiring of peppermint candy by the man's two small sons; the end states an account of the truck-stop's return to its normal business routine. This chapter, produced here in its entirety, is an accurate representation of Steinbeck's novel and of its compassionate portrayal of the conditions of life surrounding the dispossessed families forced into migration in the 1930's. An introduction for this selection would likely include a statement of this main theme of the novel and would perhaps mention that Highway 66 was the mother road of flight for the refugees who were crossing the country in search of the alleged work opportunities available in California.

"Two-a-Penny"

From The Grapes of Wrath

Along 66 the hamburger stands—Al & Susy's Place—Carl's Lunch—Joe & Minnie—Will's Eats. Board-and-bat shacks. Two gasoline pumps in front, a screen door, a long bar, stools, and a foot rail. Near the door three slot machines, showing through glass the wealth in nickels three bars will bring. And beside them, the nickel phonograph with records piled up like pies, ready to swing out to the turntable and play dance music, "Ti-pi-ti-pi-tin," "Thanks for the Memory," Bing Crosby, Benny Goodman. At the end of the counter a covered case; candy cough drops, caffeine sulphate called Sleepless, No-Doze; candy, cigarettes, razor blades, aspirin, Bromo-Seltzer, Alka-Seltzer. The walls decorated with posters, bathing girls, blondes with big breasts and slender hips and waxen faces, in white bathing suits, and holding a bottle of Coca-Cola and smiling—see what you get with a Coca-Cola. Long bar, and salts, peppers, mustard pots, and paper napkins. Beer taps behind the counter, and in back the coffee urns, shiny and steaming, with glass gauges showing the coffee level. And pies in wire cages and oranges in pyramids of four. And little piles of Post Toasties, corn flakes, stacked up in designs.
The signs on cards, picked out with shining mica:
Pie's Like Mother Used to Make. Credit Makes Enemies,
Let's Be Friends. Ladies May Smoke But Be Careful
Where You Lay Your Butts. Eat Here and Keep Your Wife
for a Pet. IITYWYBAD?

Down at one end of the cooking plates, pots of
stew, potatoes, pot roast, roast beef, gray roast pork
waiting to be sliced.

Minnie or Susy or Mae, middle-aging behind the
counter, hair curled and rouge and powder on a sweating
face. Taking orders in a soft low voice, calling
them to the cook with a screech like a peacock.
Mopping the counter with circular strokes, polishing
the big shining coffee urns. The cook is Joe or Carl
or Al, hot in a white coat and apron, beady sweat on
white forehead, below the white cook's cap; moody,
rarely speaking, looking up for a moment at each new
entry. Wiping the griddle, slapping down the hamburger.
He repeats Mae's orders gently, scrapes the griddle,
wipes it down with burlap. Moody and silent.

Mae is the contact, smiling, irritated, near to
outbreak; smiling while her eyes look on past--unless
for truck drivers. There's the backbone of the joint.
Where the trucks stop, that's where the customers come.
Can't fool truck drivers, they know. They bring the
custom. They know. Give 'em a stale cup a coffee an'
they're off the joint. Treat 'em right an' they come
back. Mae really smiles with all her might at truck
drivers. She bridles a little, fixes her back hair
so that her breasts will lift with her raised arms,
passes the time of day and indicates great things,
great times, great jokes. Al never speaks. He is no
contact. Sometimes he smiles a little at a joke, but
he never laughs. Sometimes he looks up at the vivaciousness in Mae's voice, and then he scrapes the griddle
with a spatula, scrapes the grease into an iron trough
around the plate. He presses down a hissing hamburger
with his spatula. He lays the split buns on the plate
to toast and heat. He gathers up stray onions from the
plate and heaps them on the meat and presses them in
with the spatula. He puts half the bun on top of the
meat, paints the other half with melted butter, with
thin pickle relish. Holding the bun on the meat, he
slips the spatula under the thin pad of meat, flips it
over, lays the buttered half on top, and drops the
hamburger on a small plate. Quarter of a dill pickle,
two black olives beside the sandwich. Al skims the
plate down the counter like a quoit. And he scrapes
his griddle with the spatula and looks moodily at the
stew kettle.

Cars whisking by on 66. License plates. Mass.,
Tenn., R.I., N.Y., Vt., Ohio. Going west. Fine cars,
cruising at sixty-five.
There goes one of them Cords. Looks like a coffin on wheels.

But, Jesus, how they travel!
See that La Salle? Me for that. I ain't a hog.
I go for a La Salle.

'F ya goin' big, what's a matter with a Cad'?
Jus' a little bigger, little faster.
I'd take a Zephyr myself. You ain't ridin' no fortune, but you got class an' speed. Give me a Zephyr.

Well, sir, you may get a laugh out this--I'll take a Buick-Puick. That's good enough.
But, hell, that costs in the Zephyr class an' it ain't got the sap.
I don' care. I don' want nothin' to do with nothing of Henry Ford's. I don' like 'im. Never did.
Got a brother worked in the plant. Oughta hear him tell.

Well, a Zephyr got sap.

The big cars on the highway. Languid, heat-raddled ladies, small nucleuses about whom revolve a thousand accouterments: creams, ointments to grease themselves, coloring matter in phials--black, pink, red, white, green, silver--to change the color of hair, eyes, lips, nails, brows, lashes, lids. Oils, seeds, and pills to make the bowels move. A bag of bottles, syringes, pills, powders, fluids, jellies to make their sexual intercourse safe, odorless, and un-productive. And this apart from clothes. What a hell of a nuisance!

Lines of weariness around the eyes, lines of discontent down from the mouth, breasts lying heavily in little hammocks, stomach and thighs straining against cases of rubber. And the mouths panting, the eyes sullen, disliking sun and wind and earth, resenting food and weariness, hating time that rarely makes them beautiful and always makes them old.

Beside them, little pot-bellied men in light suits and Panama hats; clean, pink men with puzzled, worried eyes, with restless eyes. Worried because formulas do not work out; hungry for security and yet sensing its disappearance from the earth. In their lapels the insignia of lodges and service clubs, places where they can go and, by a weight of numbers of little worried men, reassure themselves that business is noble and not the curious ritualized thievery they know it is; that business men are intelligent in spite of the records of their stupidity; that they are kind and charitable in spite of the principles of sound business; that their lives are rich instead of the thin tiresome routines they know; and that a time is coming when they will not be afraid any more.
And these two, going to California; going to sit in the lobby of the Beverly-Wilshire Hotel and watch people they envy go by, to look at mountains—mountains, mind you, and great trees—he with his worried eyes and she thinking how the sun will dry her skin. Going to look at the Pacific Ocean, and I'll bet a hundred thousand dollars to nothing at all, he will say, "It isn't as big as I thought it would be." And she will envy plump young bodies on the beach. Going to California really to go home again. To say, "So-and-So was at the table next to us at the Trocadero. She's really a mess, but she does wear nice clothes." And he, "I talked to good sound business men out there. They don't see a chance till we get rid of that fellow in the White House." And, "I got it from a man in the know—she has syphilis, you know. She was in that Warner picture. Man said she'd slept her way into pictures. Well, she got what she was looking for." But the worried eyes are never calm, and the pouting mouth is never glad. The big car cruising along at sixty.

I want a cold drink.
Well, there's something up ahead. Want to stop?
Do you think it would be clean?
Clean as you're going to find in this God-forsaken country.
Well, maybe the bottled soda will be all right.
The great car squeals and pulls to a stop. The fat worried man helps his wife out.
Mae looks at and past them as they enter. Al looks up from his griddle, and down again. Mae knows. They'll drink a five-cent soda and crab that it ain't cold enough. The woman will use six paper napkins and drop them on the floor. The man will choke and try to put the blame on Mae. The woman will sniff as though she smelled rotting meat and they will go out again and tell forever afterward that the people in the West are sullen. And Mae, when she is alone with Al, has a name for them. She calls them shitheels.

Truck drivers. That's the stuff.
Here's a big transport comin'. Hope they stop; take away the taste of them shitheels. When I worked in that hotel in Albuquerque, Al, the way they steal—ever' darn thing. An' the bigger the car they got, the more they steal—towels, silver, soap dishes. I can't figger it.

And Al, morosely, Where ya think they get them big cars and stuff? Born with 'em? You won't never have nothin'.
The transport truck, a driver and relief. How 'bout stoppin' for a cup a Java? I know this dump. How's the schedule?
Oh, we're ahead!
Pull up, then. They's a ol' war horse in here that's a kick. Good Java, too.
The truck pulls up. Two men in khaki riding trousers, boots, short jackets, and shiny-visored military caps. Screen door--slam.
H'ya, Mae?
Well, if it ain't Big Bill the Rat! When'd you get back on this run?
Week ago.
The other man puts a nickel in the phonograph, watches the disk slip free and the turntable rise up under it. Bing Crosby's voice--golden. "Thanks for the memory, of sunburn at the shore--You might have been a headache, but you never were a bore--" And the truck driver sings for Mae's ears, you might have been a haddock but you never was a whore--Mae laughs. Who's ya frien', Bill? New on this run, ain't he?
The other puts a nickel in the slot machine, wins four slugs, and puts them back. Walks to the counter. Well, what's it gonna be? Oh, cup a Java. Kinda pie you got? Banana cream, pineapple cream, chocolate cream--an' apple.
Make it apple. Wait--Kind is that big thick one? Mae lifts it out and sniffs it. Banana cream. Cut off a hunk; make it a big hunk. Man at the slot machine says, Two all around. Two it is. Seen any new etchin's lately, Bill? Well, here's one.
Now, you be careful front of a lady. Oh, this ain't bad. Little kid comes in late ta school. Teacher says, "Why ya late?" Kid says "Had a take a heifer down--get 'er bred." Teacher says, "Couldn't your ol' man do it?" Kid says, "Sure he could, but not as good as the bull."
Mae squeaks with laughter, harsh screeching laughter. Al, slicing onions carefully on a board, looks up and smiles, and then looks down again. Truck drivers, that's the 'stuff. Gonna leave a quarter each for Mae. Fifteen cents for pie an' coffee an' a dime for Mae. An' they ain't tryin' to make her, neither.
Sitting together on the stools, spoons sticking up out of the coffee mugs. Passing the time of day. And Al, rubbing down his griddle, listening but making no comment. Bing Crosby's voice stops. The turntable drops down and the record swings into its place in the pile. The purple light goes off. The nickel, which has caused all this mechanism to play--this nickel drops from between the contact points into the box where the profits go. This nickel, unlike most money,
has actually done a job of work, has been physically responsible for a reaction.

Steam spurs from the valve of the coffee urn. The compressor of the ice machine chugs softly for a time and then stops. The electric fan in the corner waves its head slowly back and forth, sweeping the room with a warm breeze. On the highway, on 66, the cars whiz by.

They was a Massachusetts car stopped a while ago, said Mae.

Big Bill grasped his cup around the top so that the spoon stuck up between his first and second fingers. He drew a snort of air with the coffee, to cool it. "You ought to be out on 66. Cars from all over the country. All headin' west. Never seen so many before. Sure some honeys on the road."

"We seen a wreck this mornin'," his companion said. "Big car. Big Cad', a special job and a honey, low, cream-color, special job. Hit a truck. Folded the radiator right back into the driver. Must a been doin' ninety. Steerin' wheel went right on through the guy an' lef' him a-wigglin' like a frog on a hook. Peach of a car. A honey. You can have her for peanuts now. Drivin' alone, the guy was."

Al looked up from his work. "Hurt the truck?"

"Oh, Jesus Christ! Wasn't a truck. One of them cut-down cars full a stoves an' pans an' mattresses an' kids an' chickens. Goin' west, you know. This guy come by us doin' ninety--r'ared up on two wheels just to pass us, an' a car's comin' so he cuts in an' whangs this here truck. Drove like he's blin' drunk. Jesus, the air was full a bed clothes an' chickens an' kids. Killed one kid. Never seen such a mess. We pulled up. Ol' man that's drivin' the truck, he jis' stan's there lookin' at that dead kid. Can't get a word out of 'im. Jus' rum-dumb. God Almighty, the road is full a them families goin' west. Never seen so many. Gets worse all a time. Wonder where the hell they all come from?"

"Wonder where they all go to," said Mae. "Come here for gas sometimes, but they don't hardly never buy nothin' else. People says they steal. We ain't got nothin' layin' around. They never stole nothin' from us."

Big Bill, munching his pie, looked up the road through the screened window. "Better tie your stuff down. I think you got some of 'em comin' now."

A 1926 Nash sedan pulled wearily off the highway. The back seat was piled nearly to the ceiling with sacks, with pots and pans, and on the very top, right up against the ceiling, two boys rode. On the top of the car, a mattress and a folded tent; tent poles
tied along the running board. The car pulled up to the gas pumps. A dark-haired, hatchet-faced man got slowly out. And the two boys slid down from the load and hit the ground.

Mae walked around the counter and stood in the door. The man was dressed in gray wool trousers and a blue shirt, dark blue with sweat on the back and under the arms. The boys in overalls and nothing else, ragged patched overalls. Their hair was light, and it stood up evenly all over their heads, for it had been roached. Their faces were streaked with dust. They went directly to the mud puddle under the hose and dug their toes into the mud.

The man asked, "Can we git some water, ma'am?"

A look of annoyance crossed Mae's face. "Sure, go ahead." She said softly over her shoulder, "I'll keep my eye on the hose." She watched while the man slowly unscrewed the radiator cap and ran the hose in.

A woman in the car, a flaxen-haired woman, said, "See if you can't git it here."

The man turned off the hose and screwed on the cap again. The little boys took the hose from him and they upended it and drank thirstily. The man took off his dark, stained hat and stood with a curious humility in front of the screen. "Could you see your way to sell us a loaf of bread, ma'am?"

Mae said, "This ain't a grocery store. We got bread to make san'widges."

"I know, ma'am." His humility was insistent. "We need bread and there ain't nothin' for quite a piece, they say."

"'F we sell bread we gonna run out." Mae's tone was faltering.

"We're hungry," the man said.

"Why'n't you buy a san'widge? We got nice san'widges, hamburgs."

"We'd sure admire to do that, ma'am. But we can't. We got to make a dime do all of us." And he said embarrassedly, "We ain't got but a little."

Mae said, "You can't get no loaf a bread for a dime. We only got fifteen-cent loafs."

From behind her Al growled, "God Almighty, Mae, give 'em bread."

"We'll run out 'fore the bread truck comes."

"Run out, then, goddamn it," said Al. And he looked sullenly down at the potato salad he was mixing.

Mae shrugged her plump shoulders and looked to the truck drivers to show them what she was up against.

She held the screen door open and the man came in, bringing a smell of sweat with him. The boys edged in behind him and they went immediately to the
candy case and stared in—not with craving or with hope or even with desire, but just with a kind of wonder that such things could be. They were alike in size and their faces were alike. One scratched his dusty ankle with the toe nails of his other foot. The other whispered some soft message and then they straightened their arms so that their clenched fists in the overall pockets showed through the thin blue cloth.

Mae opened a drawer and took out a long waxpaper-wraped loaf. "This here is a fifteen-cent loaf."

The man put his hat back on his head. He answered with inflexible humility, "Won't you--can't you see your way to cut off ten cents' worth?"

Al said snarlingly, "Goddamn it, Mae. Give 'em the loaf."

The man turned toward Al. "No, we want ta buy ten cents' worth of it. We got it figgered awful close, mister, to get to California."

Mae said resignedly, "You can have this for ten cents."

"That'd be robbin' you, ma'am."

"Go ahead--Al says to take it." She pushed the waxpapered loaf across the counter. The man took a deep leather pouch from his rear pocket, untied the strings, and spread it open. It was heavy with silver and with greasy bills.

"May soun' funny to be so tight," he apologized. "We got a thousan' miles to go, an' we don't know if we'll make it." He dug in the pouch with a forefinger, located a dime, and pinched in for it. When he put it down on the counter he had a penny with it. He was about to drop the penny back into the pouch when his eye fell on the boys frozen before the candy counter. He moved slowly down to them. He pointed in the case at big long sticks of striped peppermint. "Is them penny candy, ma'am?"

Mae moved down and looked in. "Which ones?"

"There, them stripy ones."

The little boys raised their eyes to her face and they stopped breathing; their mouths were partly opened, their half-naked bodies were rigid.

"Oh--them. Well, no--them's two for a penny."

"Well, gimme two then, ma'am." He placed the copper cent carefully on the counter. The boys expelled their held breath softly. Mae held the big sticks out.

"Take 'em," said the man.

They reached timidly, each took a stick, and they held them down at their sides and did not look at them. But they looked at each other, and their mouth corners smiled rigidly with embarrassment.
"Thank you, ma' am." The man picked up the bread and went out the door, and the little boys marched stiffly behind him, the red-striped sticks held tightly against their legs. They leaped like chipmunks over the front seat and onto the top of the load, and they burrowed back out of sight like chipmunks.

The man got in and started his car, and with a roaring motor and a cloud of blue oily smoke the ancient Nash climbed up on the highway and went on its way to the west.

From inside the restaurant the truck drivers and Mae and Al stared after them.

Big Bill wheeled back. "Them wasn't two-for-a-cent candy," he said.

"What's that to you?" Mae said fiercely.

"Them was nickel apiece candy," said Bill.

"We got to get goin'," said the other man. "We're droppin' time." They reached in their pockets. Bill put a coin on the counter and the other man looked at it and reached again and put down a coin. They swung around and walked to the door.

"So long," said Bill.

Mae called, "Hey! Wait a minute. You got change.

"You go to hell," said Bill, and the screen door slammed.

Mae watched them get into the great truck, watched it lumber off in low gear, and hear the shift up the whining gears to cruising ratio. "Al--" she said softly.

He looked up from the hamburger he was patting thin and stacking between waxed papers. "What ya want?"

"Look there." She pointed at the coins beside the cups--two half-dollars. Al walked near and looked, and then he went back to his work.

"Truck drivers," Mae said reverently, "an' after them shiteheels."

Flies struck the screen with little bumps and droned away. The compressor chugged for a time and then stopped. On 66 the traffic whizzed by, trucks and fine streamlined cars and jalopies; and they went by with a vicious whiz. Mae took down the plates and scraped the pie crusts into a bucket. She found her damp cloth and wiped the counter with circular sweeps. And her eyes were on the highway, where life whizzed by.

Al wiped his hands on his apron. He looked at a paper pinned to the wall over the griddle. Three lines of marks in columns on the paper. Al counted the longest line. He walked along the counter to the cash register, rang "No Sale," and took out a handful of nickels.

"What ya doin'? Mae asked.
"Number three's ready to pay off," said Al. He went to the third slot machine and played his nickels in, and on the fifth spin of the wheels the three bars came up and the jack pot dumped out into the cup. Al gathered up the big handful of coins and went back of the counter. He dropped them in the drawer and slammed the cash register. The he went back to his to his place and crossed out the line of dots. "Number three gets more play'n the others," he said. "Maybe I ought to shift 'em around." He lifted a lid and stirred the slowly simmering stew. 

"I wonder what they'll do in California?" said Mae. 

"Who?"
"Them folks that was just in."
"Christ knows," said Al. 
"S'pose they'll get work?"
"How the hell would I know?" said Al. She stared eastward along the highway. "Here comes a transport, double. Wonder if they stop? Hope they do." And as the huge truck came heavily down from the highway and parked, Mae seized her cloth and wiped the whole length of the counter. And she took a few swipes at the gleaming coffee urn too, and turned up the bottle-gas under the urn. Al brought out a handful of little turnips and started to peel them. Mae's face was gay when the door opened and the two uniformed truck drivers entered.

"Hi, sister!"
"I won't be a sister to no man," said Mae. They laughed and Mae laughed. "What'll it be, boys?"
"Oh, a cup a Java. What kinda pie ya got?"
"Pineapple cream an' banana cream an' chocolate cream an' apple."
"Give me apple. No, wait—what's that big thick one?"
Mae picked up the pie and smelled it. "Pineapple cream," she said. 
"Well, chop out a hunk a that."
The cars whizzed viciously by on 66.

Directives for Abridgment

The adaptor who chooses to shorten a selection by deleting nonessential words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs faces a difficult editing assignment. He must retain the essential structural unity and must avoid unnecessary distortion while cutting out the less important elements.
The inexperienced interpreter is usually advised to choose a selection that very nearly fits into the allotted time so that, until he has acquired proficiency at cutting, his adjustments will be minimal. It is also recommended that he cut in large segments, whenever possible, to avoid undue distortion of the author's style of writing. In deciding what to include, Klopf and Rives suggest:

(1) those passages which present the theme, plot, idea, message, or philosophy of the entire selection; (2) those scenes or parts which vivify the principal mood of the entire selection; (3) the passages of description, narration, or explanation which show the writer's way of delineating the personalities of his characters; (4) those parts which treat of conflicts between people or ideas; (5) the passages which involve the main climactic episode; and (6) the scenes which portray the writer's use of imagery.

The interpreter is reminded further of the effort that should be made to join smoothly the segments bordering the omission so that there is a continuous flow of thought. If this cannot be accomplished with the words of the author, the interpreter may need to paraphrase the transitional information. Aggertt and Bowen suggest that a generous pause may be employed when a sizable portion of the story has been removed that would indicate action or passage of time. Because action and dialogue command greater attention than description, the adaptor is usually advised to cut his

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6Henneke, p. 60.
7Sessions and Holland, p. 207.
8Klopf and Rives, p. 100.
9Aggertt and Bowen, p. 390.
material so that he can reach these evocative elements as quickly as possible.

Every piece of literature presents the adaptor with a unique situation. Therefore, it is dangerous to establish rules that dictate what should or should not be cut. It is possible, however, to illustrate by cuts that have proved effective for a given selection, certain directives that may be applicable to other literary works. The suggestions vary in degree of usefulness from one work to another; but, as a whole, this list of directives will furnish practicable guidelines for the beginning adaptor.

Cutting Dialogue Tags

The simplest form of cutting is omission of explanatory tags: portions of the text consisting of phrases and sentences that the author includes as a guide to characterization for his silent readers, such as identification of a speaker, depiction of the character's state of mind, or relation of a slight body action. These elements function in much the same way as stage directions, Compere observes; and, thus, she suggests, "Just as the actor does not include scene descriptions and direction for acting in his lines, so does the reader leave out material intended only for reading as the eye scans the page in silent reading."¹⁰ For this reason, then, each of the three types of "direction" may be cut.

¹⁰Compere, p. 12.
1. Once the audience has become acquainted with a character, the adaptor may eliminate most of the identifying tags.

The audience must be introduced to a new character in a way that will allow them to identify him easily throughout the context of the story. The adaptor may choose to employ the introduction supplied by the author. Many writers acquaint their readers with a new character by providing a rather thorough description:

Minnie or Susy or Mae, middle-aging behind the counter, hair curled and rouge and powder on a sweating face. Taking orders in a soft low voice, calling them to the cook with a screech like a peacock . . . smiling, irritated, near to outbreak; smiling while her eyes look past—unless for truck drivers . . . Mae really smiles with all her might at truck drivers. She bridles a little, fixes her back hair so that her breasts will lift with her raised arms, passes the time of day and indicates great things, great times, great jokes.

A character's name itself, such as "Big Bill the Rat," may provide clues to his personality. If it does not do this, it may simply be an essential identifier and should, therefore, usually be mentioned the first time the character speaks. If the character is not named but simply referred to as "the man" or "the little boys," the author may either be suggesting a minor role in the story that is too inconsequential to merit a name, or he may be attempting to project through lack of identity an element of mystery or an attitude of the other characters toward the one who is unnamed.

11Gilbert, p. 119.
Once the character's identity has been established by whatever method of introduction the author uses, the interpreter may delete "he said" and other identifying tags, as in the following example:

Big Bill wheeled back. "Them wasn't two-for-a-cent candy," he said. "What's that to you?" Mae said fiercely. "Them was nickel apiece candy," said Bill.

Deletion of these tags necessitates the reader's finding an effective means of making it clear which character is speaking. Lee says that he does this "by suggesting the personality of the character through skillful use of his body and voice and appropriate mental attitude."\(^{12}\)

There are certain instances in which leaving out these portions of the text will result in confusing the listeners. Compere states, "Sometimes for purposes of identification in scenes where there are several people, or when one character appears shortly, it is wisest and simplest to include such a direction for the sake of clarity."\(^{13}\) Thus, because either Mae or Al could say the line, "Wonder where they all go to," it is best to retain the directive tag in the following passage:

(Truck driver) "Never seen so many. Gets worse all a time. Wonder where the hell they all come from?" "Wonder where they all go to," said Mae. "Come here for gas sometimes, but they don't hardly never buy nothin' else."

\(^{12}\)Lee, p. 213.

\(^{13}\)Compere, p. 12.
Also, because both Al and Big Bill's relief driver are such minor figures, retaining the identifying tags of their dialogue seems advisable. Confusion may also arise from a passage in which the line preceding the dialogue concerns another character's action, and the line itself is one that could be attributed to either character:

Mae held the big sticks out.
"Take 'em," said the man.

In this case, "said the man" is essential to the identification of the speaker since either he or Mae could logically say the dialogue.

Omission of the dialogue tags sometimes results in choppiness or abruptness when the material is read aloud. The interpreter who discovers that omission of the identifiers interrupts smooth delivery often chooses to retain them for transitional devices. Occasionally, the adaptor may want to transpose the identifier so that it comes before the quoted statement in order to insure immediate clarity. He may also elect to include the name of a character at any point in the abridgment at which this identity is not evident.

2. The interpreter may delete explanations of the character's state of mind or manner of speaking if he can successfully convey this information by his presentation.

The interpreter may also employ body and vocal suggestion to reflect the mood of a character. Most writers guide their silent readers to a better understanding of their character's state of mind by such directives as "he
apologized" or "His humility was insistent." The adaptor may omit these expressions if he can orally convey the emotion indicated by the writer. He should consider doing so especially if the directive refers to the character's manner of speaking:

Mae's tone was faltering.

Al said snarlingly.

Obviously, the faltering tone or the snarl should be reflected in the character's speech; there is seldom need to repeat this information.

3. The oral reader may physically suggest certain exterior movements of a character and eliminate the necessity for describing the action.

Certain descriptions of action can also be implied by the interpreter's voice and visible movement. For example, there are slight movements in the following passage that can be suggested in interpretation:

The man asked, "Can we git some water, ma'am?"
A look of annoyance crossed Mae's face. "Sure, go ahead." She said softly over her shoulder, "I'll keep my eye on the hose."

"A look of annoyance crossed Mae's face" can be omitted when the interpreter suggests this action in an appropriate facial response. The reader must be cautious, however, to portray action of this nature subtly. One would not, for example, enact the line "she said softly over her shoulder" but would, instead, suggest by a slight bodily shift that the line following is not being directed to the man outside
and by vocal tone and volume that the message is one of confidential sarcasm directed to characters that are in closer proximity.

Cutting Extraneous Narrative Elements

Narrative writing is marked by certain elements that are in essence departures from the mainstream of thought. Although it may be painful to dispense with these ingredients, doing so is often necessary to meet time requirements and still retain the essential meaning of the selection. Therefore, the adaptor may view descriptions, subplots, minor characters, parenthetical elements, and extraneous incidents or conversations as areas probably subject to elimination.

4. The adaptor may often eliminate or condense description that is not an essential part of the story.

Most narrative literature contains description that does not contribute directly to the basic idea of the story. These passages are often so well written and so filled with imagery that the adaptor has difficulty in deciding to leave them out. However, such description is provided for silent reading and moves slowly in oral presentation. Consequently, the time restrictions and attention of his listeners often force the adaptor to sacrifice these valuable inclusions for other elements of a more

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The following descriptive statement may be omitted because it simply lists items that could be found in any restaurant:

Long bar, and salts, peppers, mustard pots, and paper napkins.

This passage, too, does not have significant impact:

Down at one end the cooking plates, pots of stew, potatoes, pot roast, roast beef, gray pork waiting to be sliced.

Although the following passage contains sharp images, it too is, nonetheless, expendable because it is far from the mainstream of thought:

Steam spurts from the valve of the coffee urn. The compressor of the ice machine chugs softly for a time and then stops. The electric fan in the corner waves its head slowly back and forth, sweeping the room with a warm breeze. On the highway, on 66, the cars whiz by.

The interpreter must not assume, however, that all description is unessential. Most writers employ descriptive elements to give variety and contrast to the literature and to insure vividness, clarity, and emotional impact. Furthermore, Lee reminds the student that description which implements narrative prose performs certain specific functions:

It usually introduces character or setting, or both, and may establish the relationship between character and setting. It may create a mood or stir the reader's sympathy for a character's situation . . . advance the

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15 Armstrong and Brandes, p. 125.
action or stop it momentarily . . . create suspense or relax the reader's tension for the sake of greater emphasis when the action is resumed.\(^\text{16}\)

Therefore, a careful evaluation should be made of descriptive matter so that the adaptor does not unconsciously distort the total effect intended by the author. Sessions and Holland provide a practical recommendation:

A general rule for cutting descriptive prose is that you can cut down but not out. Decide first what descriptive elements are most important in giving the audience a clear and vivid picture, then look for those elements which are least important and cut them down in length. Perhaps you will discover that some segments can be eliminated entirely. If so, cut them out. But preserve full those important elements of the description that give the audience the author's focus and style.\(^\text{17}\)

To "cut down but not out" is a suggestion most applicable to lengthy descriptions. Long descriptive segments often contain repetitive elements that may be deleted without harm to the setting or mood. In the following descriptive passage, such elements have been extracted:

Along 66 the hamburger stands—Al & Susy's Place—Carl's lunch—Joe & Minnie—Will's Eats. Board-and-bat shacks. Two gasoline pumps in front, a screen door, a long bar, stools, and a foot rail. Near the door three slot machines, showing through glass the wealth in nickels three bars will bring. And beside them, the nickel phonograph with records piled up like pies, ready to swing out to the turntable and play dance music, "Ti pi ti pi tin," "Thanks for the Memory," Bing Crosby, Benny Goodman. At one end of the counter a covered case; candy cough drops, caffeine sulphate called Sleepless, No-doze; candy, cigarettes, razor blades, aspirin, Bromo-Seltzer, Alka-Seltzer. The walls decorated with posters, bathing girls, blondes with big breasts and slender hips and waxen faces, in

\(^{16}\)Lee, p. 181.

\(^{17}\)Sessions and Holland, p. 179.
white bathing suits, and holding a bottle of Coca-Cola and smiling—see what you get with a Coca-Cola. Long bar, and salts, peppers, mustard pots and paper napkins. Beer taps behind the counter, and in back the coffee urns, shiny and steaming, with glass gauges showing the coffee level. And pies in wire cages and oranges in pyramids of four. And little piles of Post-Toasties, corn flakes, stacked up in designs.

Some descriptive elements are simply less vital or not so interesting to the reader as other portions of the passage:

The boys edged in behind him and went immediately to the candy case and stared in—not with craving or with hope or even with desire, but just with a kind of wonder that such things could be. They were alike in size and their faces were alike. One scratched his dusty ankle with the toe nails of his other foot. The other whispered some soft message and then they straightened their arms so that their clenched fists in the overall pockets showed through the thin blue cloth.

5. The interpreter may keep attention focused on the main idea of his narrative by eliminating subplots.

In longer stories and novels, the adaptor often finds it possible to delete large sections of the literature by omitting minor plots. Armstrong and Brandes suggest that this subsidiary information is easily removed because "such additions to the mainstream of thought are not only eliminated without disturbing the momentum of the selection, but their exclusion may help clarify the sequence of events . . . "

In Steinbeck's "Two-a-Penny," there is at least one minor plot in evidence. A cutting focusing on the candy
incident in the hamburger stand would not necessarily include the portion about the "fine cars" and their occupants. Such information gives the reader a better insight into the plight of the Joad family by contrasting their means of transportation and their attitude to those of the affluent travelers, but it is not an essential element to the understanding of the incident.

Of course, in some cases, the subplot will be inextricably interwoven into the major plot and must, therefore, be retained. It is frequently possible to reduce vital minor-plot information to a few comments. These comments may be incorporated into the dialogue of a character, or may be provided by the interpreter in his introduction or in a transition.

6. The adaptor may cut minor characters that do not contribute to the forward movement of the selection.

Literature depicting numerous characters presents problems both to the audience, who is attempting to distinguish between the various speakers, and to the interpreter, who is responsible for clarifying vocally and bodily the identity of each character. Consequently, the elimination of minor characters not only reduces the complexity of the literature but also heightens the readability of the material in terms of the interpreter's skills. A minor character is defined by Brooks, Bahn, and Okey as a literary figure who exercises little influence in terms of advancing the plot or making a strong impact upon the characters or on
the audience. Such a definition prohibits the malpractice of omitting characters solely because they make a brief appearance or speak few lines. The woman in the Nash is heard from only once, but her role is significant: she suggests that this body of travelers is a family unit, and her one line promotes the action of the following scene. The adaptor who is producing an excerpt will measure a character's significance in the portion that is to be read rather than in the work's entirety. It is quite possible for a principal character in the complete text to occupy a subordinate position in the excerpt.

If the information provided by the minor character is vital, the idea may be retained but assigned to another character or to the narrator. In many cases, minor characters are key figures in subplots, and the decision to exclude the subordinate plot automatically eliminates the need for the characters. For example, the omission of the passage describing the "fine cars" and their occupants includes deletion of the man and woman who stop briefly at the hamburger stand for a "bottled soda."

7. The reader may omit parenthetical elements in the literature.

Any editorial comment that is an interruption of the immediate thought may be considered a parenthetical element.

19Brooks, Bahn, and Okey, p. 323.
In regard to the extraction of these remarks, Armstrong and Brandes say, "Although the asides of the author and his footnotes are often among the more interesting of his comments, they are easily deleted and often can be sacrificed without unnecessary distortion of the selection." Parenthetical thoughts may be only simple asides, as in the following two examples:

The walls decorated with posters, bathing girls, blondes with big breasts and slender hips and waxen faces, in white bathing suits, and holding a bottle of Coca-Cola and smiling—see what you get with a Coca-Cola.

The nickel, which has caused all this mechanism to work, has caused Crosby to sing and an orchestra to play—this nickel drops from between the contact points into the box where the profits go. This nickel, unlike most money, has actually done a job of work, has been physically responsible for a reaction.

Parenthetical thoughts may, on the other hand, become lengthy philosophizing:

Beside them, little pot-bellied men in light suits and panama hats; clean, pink men with puzzled, worried eyes, with restless eyes. Worried because formulas do not work out; hungry for security and yet sensing its disappearance from the earth. In their lapels the insignia of lodges and service clubs, places where they can go and, by a weight of numbers of little worried men, reassure themselves that business is noble and not the curious ritualized thievery they know it is; that business men are intelligent in spite of the principles of sound business; that their lives are rich instead of the thin tiresome routines they know; and that a time is coming when they will not be afraid any more.

Parenthetical thoughts reveal the writer's attitude and should be carefully considered in the interpreter's analysis.

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20 Armstrong and Brandes, p. 124.
of the literature. However, because such inclusions are often not essential to the main idea of the story, the tone of the writer as it is reflected in these portions may be transferred to more essential elements with the thought itself omitted.

8. The interpreter may extract whole incidents or conversations between characters when these units are not directly related to the essential plot development of the cutting.

Extraneous incidents or conversations provide another opportunity for the adaptor to delete large segments of the literature. An incident may be valuable in the structure of the entire work and not be essential in the portion that is being read aloud. Conversations that function in a subordinate manner as aids to characterization rather than instruments of plot development also may be extracted. The conversations between Mae and the truck drivers, between Mae and Al, and between the two truck drivers all supply the reader with additional information about attitudes. However, this discourse may be eliminated, or at least curtailed, because these conversations are not necessary for an understanding of the main idea of the story.

Often the adaptor finds in the context of his selection references to incidents of the past that may be omitted. For instance, Mae's mention of her job in Albuquerque does not have a direct significance in the main plot, nor does
the account of the car and truck accident. Although the latter incident is further development of the contrast between the two types of families going to California and provides immediate foreshadowing for the appearance of the man and his family, it is not an indispensable unit of plot structure.

**Cutting Repetitious Elements**

Repetition has been recognized as a literary instrument of both clarity and strength. Obviously, then, one would not omit repetitious elements without giving close scrutiny to their function. However, repetition that handicaps the reader's efforts to sustain attention does occur. The adaptor may wish to promote the action of the story by omitting unnecessary repetition that occurs either in the dialogue or narration of his selection.

9. **The adaptor may cut dialogue of a repetitious nature that impedes the movement of the selection.**

Unless the reinforcement provides a vital point of emphasis, the oral reader usually discovers that repetitive dialogue hinders dramatic action. For example, in the following scene, the discourse between Mae and Al may be drastically reduced:

Mae said, "You can't get no loaf a bread for a dime. We only got fifteen-cent loafs."

From behind her Al growled, "God Almighty, Mae, give 'em bread."

"Well, run out 'fore the bread truck comes."

"Run out, then, goddamn it," said Al.
Mae opened a drawer and took out a long waxpaper-wrapped loaf. "This here is a fifteen-cent loaf."

The man put his hat back on his head. He answered with inflexible humility, "Won't you--can't you see your way to cut off ten cents' worth?

Al said snarlingly, "Goddamn it, Mae, Give 'em the loaf."

The man turned toward Al. No, we want to buy ten cents' worth of it. We got it figured awful close, mister, to get to California.

Mae said resignedly, "You can have this for ten cents.

"That'd be robbin' you, ma'am."

"Go ahead--Al says to take it." She pushed the waxpapered loaf across the counter.

Later in this scene, action may be promoted by deleting this repetitious dialogue:

"Is them penny candy, ma'am?"
Mae moved down and looked in. "Which ones?"
"There, them stripy ones."

10. Repetitious elements within the narration or description may not be essential.

It is often possible for the interpreter to provide vocal emphasis to the portion that the author reiterates and to eliminate the necessity of repeating the information. The following passages contain description of the cook and exemplify repetition that might become tiresome to an audience:

The cook is Joe or Carl or Al, hot in a white coat and apron, beady sweat on white forehead, below the white cook's cap; moody, rarely speaking, looking up for a moment at each new entry. Wiping the griddle, slapping down the hamburger. He repeats Mae's orders gently, scrapes the griddle, wipes it down with burlap. Moody and silent . . . Al never speaks. He is no contact. Sometimes he smiles a little at a joke, but he never laughs. Sometimes he looks up at the vivaciousness in Mae's voice, and then scrapes the griddle with a spatula, scrapes the grease into an iron through around the plate . . . Al skims the plate down the counter like a quoit. And he scrapes his griddle with the spatula and looks moodily at the stew-kettle.
Many repetitious elements are of a minor nature:

Can't fool truck drivers, they know. They bring the custom. They knew.

A woman in the car, a flaxen-haired woman, said, "See if you can't git it here."

11. When more than one reference to an event appears or when two highly similar incidents occur, the adaptor may edit the material in order to avoid an unnecessary repetition.

Omission of repetitious incidents demands considerable literary skill in order to avoid tampering unduly with the organizational structure designed by the author. Compere recognizes a possible need for rearrangement of the events, and states, "It is necessary, sometimes, to change the order of incidents to make them fit the shorter plot." Such procedure demands, of course, a constant vigilance against distortion of the author's purpose.

In the excerpt from *The Grapes of Wrath*, the scene depicting the opening dialogue of Big Bill and his relief driver and the subsequent action in the hamburger stand constitutes an excellent example of a passage that contains unnecessary repetition. The "other man" plays both the slot machine and the phonograph. There seems little justification for including both actions in an oral reading. Neither is essential to the main idea, but retaining one of them will provide a source of variety to the existent dialogue.

^Compere, p. 13^
The passage relating his playing the phonograph allows the reader to establish an approximate date of the story by mentioning Bing Crosby's "Thanks for the Memory." Therefore, with a slight rearrangement in the order of incidents, the scene may be rewritten eliminating the repetition and advancing the movement of the sequence:

"Hi'ya, Mae?"
"Well, if it ain't Big Bill the Rat! Who's ya frien? New on this run, ain't he?"
The other man puts a nickel in the phonograph, watches the disk slip free and the turntable rise up under it. Bing Crosby's voice—golden. "Thanks for the Memory."
"Well, what's it gonna be?"
"Oh, cup a Java. Kinda pie ya got?

The excerpt also contains highly similar incidents involving the arrival of two different pairs of truck drivers. The dialogue in these scenes is almost identical. By combining the two incidents, it is possible to omit the last part of the chapter.

Cutting Other Expendable or Distracting Elements

Minor deletions are frequently made to eliminate troublesome spots in the manuscript. The adaptor may execute such cuts in order to enhance clarity or to heighten audience interest or to encourage response. The omission of these difficult or distracting elements may occur early in the interpreter's preparation or as late as the final practice readings.
12. The interpreter may choose to extract profanity or other offensive elements of the material.

Deletion of objectionable elements may occur either on the basis of the reader's own personal taste or in terms of the suitability of these literary components for audience consumption. The interpreter who does not endorse strong language usage, for example, will feel uncomfortable exploiting these terms in an oral presentation. His decision to omit these elements may also be a precaution against affronting his listeners. Because his audience will be in a captive situation, he has an ethical responsibility to acknowledge their concept of propriety. Shocking the audience with minor elements may distract their attention from more significant meaning and prevent their appropriate response to the total work. The interpreter might advisedly be reminded of the principle of group dynamics as he evaluates his material in terms of projected audience response. References to particular ethnic groups or given situations may prove disrespectful to particular members of his audience and ultimately affect the reaction of the entire group. Thus, the interpreter's desired audience response may be withheld and the author's purpose negated because of inadequate editing of the material.

Personal censorship of offensive language and subject matter can, as Hunsinger has suggested, distort the nature
of the literature if carried to extreme measures. Substitution of euphemisms for the offensive language constitutes a distortion because the tone of the writing has been changed. Writers reflect attitude, style, and character development through their word choice. If this usage is marked by strong language, distortion results from excessive pruning. For example, to eliminate the profanity from Catcher in the Rye is to sacrifice Salinger's most effective source of humor and of character development for Holden Caufield. The interpreter would be well advised to choose a selection that is for the most part acceptable and then rely upon minor adjustments to accomplish suitability.

The cutting of "Two-a-Penny" which follows reflects certain omissions that are made on the basis of the possible offensive nature of the content. It could be argued that deletion of these elements somewhat distorts Steinbeck's original intent. If the nature of the audience is such that the material can be retained, then it should be included. On the other hand, if the interpreter feels that the nature of the audience requires such editing, he should feel free to do so. At any rate, the omissions are executed in the following script solely for the purpose of illustrating this directive. Even a slight omission requires that attitude and tone evident in the omitted passage be projected into the retained literature. For example, deletion of the truck

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22 Hunsinger, p. 92.
drivers' jokes obligates the reader to evaluate the attitudes of the characters that become apparent in these speeches and to transfer the tone of these attitudes into the remaining dialogue.

13. Foreign or unfamiliar words not essential to a basic understanding of the meaning may be omitted to promote clarity.

Because language usage has been established as a major factor determining the intelligibility of literature, deletion of unfamiliar terminology may be made to promote comprehension. Foreign words, references to people and places that are not well known, technical language, and obsolete references are all subject to elimination if the adaptor feels that doing so will enhance clarity and if the expression is not vital to understanding the author's main idea. Abuse of this editorial privilege occurs, of course, when an interpreter negligently cuts any word or reference that he does not understand. The following sentences exemplify unfamiliar references:

Al skims the plate down the counter like a quoit.
The signs on cards, picked out with shining mice . . .

14. Typography or spelling that cannot be conveyed orally is usually deleted.

While silent reading is seldom as stimulating as experiencing the literature through the re-creative efforts of a proficient oral interpreter, the silent reader does have one channel of communication that is not available to
the oral reader's audience: the visual medium. Consequently, when a writer conveys a message in the form of illustrations, unconventional spelling, or typographical designs that must be seen to be understood, the interpreter faces the decision of either employing multi-media or of choosing another selection that is more conducive to oral presentation. Concrete poetry exemplifies literature of a nature that cannot be effectively transmitted by oral discourse alone. Its three-fold nature has prompted the identifying slogan, "verbivocovisual," to remind readers that "concrete poetry is language heard and seen."23

In a similar manner, adaptors often find within the context of narrative prose, passages that are not translatable to oral verbalization. For example, the sign "IITYWYBAD?" when read aloud will not convey the gimmickery of the typography but will sound more like unintelligible jibberish. Therefore, because the passage is not essential to the basic idea, the interpreter may justifiably omit it. Typographical design is also a significant factor in the description of the license plates reflecting "Mass., Tenn., R. I., N. Y., Vt., Ohio." Because Steinbeck provides these names in their abbreviated forms, he is visually suggesting the impression of reading license plates. The names of the states are less important than this symbolic reference.

Therefore, because the interpreter cannot convey this impression orally, he may choose to delete the passage.

Dialectical inclusions and homonyms are further sources of difficulty for the oral reader. The spelling of words written in a colloquial dialect is not standardized; the dialogue is intended primarily to give the silent reader a visual impression of the character's manner of speech. When presented orally, the author's unconventional spelling seldom produces a dialectical speech that sounds as authentic as it appears on the page. For this reason, except in material such as the Steinbeck selection in which dialect is a necessary ingredient in the literature, interpreters often omit passages that require an accent or dialect. Homonyms are a source of confusion only when the material is read aloud since spelling distinguishes the specific referent for the silent reader. In rare instances, confusion results for the listener when a homonym produces unintentional ambiguity to the total thought. The adaptor who detects this probability may either cut the material in such a way that the meaning is obvious or may substitute a carefully chosen synonym.

15. The interpreter may eliminate details that interrupt continuity or impede the momentum of his selection.

In an effort to sustain the attention of his listeners, the interpreter will attempt to establish a movement in his selection, based on its natural organizational structure,
that will carry the plot development steadily forward to its climax. Proper pacing and momentum are key agents in the acquisition of listener interest and response. Therefore, the oral reader often deletes minor elements that interfere with a rapid progression of thought. The following omissions are made to allow the story to proceed without interruption:

Mae walked around the counter and stood in the door. The man was dressed in gray wool trousers and a blue shirt, dark blue with sweat on the back and under the arms. The boy in overalls and nothing else, ragged-patched overalls. Their hair was light, and it stood up evenly all over their heads, for it had been roached. Their faces were streaked with dust. They went directly to the mud puddle under the hose and dug their toes into the mud.

The man asked, "Can we git some water, ma'am?

Mae opened a drawer and took out a long waxpaper-wrapped loaf. "This here is a fifteen-cent loaf."

The man put his hat back on his head. He answered with inflexible humility, "Won't you--can't you see your way to cut off ten cents' worth?"

The following narration seems to halt momentarily the action of the story. In the total excerpt, this segment is an effective contrast; however, the shortened material demands that the interpreter reach the dialogue more quickly. Therefore, he may choose to omit this information:

Sitting together on the stools, spoons sticking up out of the coffee mugs. Passing the time of day. And Al, rubbing down his griddle, listening but making no comment. Bing Crosby's voice stops. The turntable drops down and the record swings into its place in the pile. The purple light goes off.

Presuming that all of the foregoing omissions are made, "Two-e-Penny" becomes less than half as long as it was in its entirety. The reading time, without an introduction, is now approximately ten minutes. It is sometimes advocated
that the interpreter read from the complete manuscript with the omitted passages marked through but still legible so that the oral reader is constantly reminded of what he is leaving out. As long as the changes or omissions are very minor in nature, this practice is a good one. However, presuming that the adaptor has engaged in a thorough analysis and assimilation of the material so that his knowledge of the selection is extensive, this procedure may be changed when cutting has been profuse or when the order of events has been changed. A shortened manuscript will doubtlessly be much easier to handle, and a copy showing the exact content of what is to be read aloud will be less confusing to follow. In retyping his manuscript, the interpreter should allow wide margins for notations and double spacing for visual clarity. If all the above suggested omissions are made, the reader's copy of the final abridgment of "Two-a-Penny" will look like this:

"Two-a-Penny"

From John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath

Along 66 the hamburger stands--Al & Susy's Place--Carl's Lunch--Will's Eats. Board-and-bat shacks. Two gasoline pumps in front, a screen door, a long bar, stools, and a foot rail. Near the door, the nickel phonograph with records piled up like pies, ready to swing out to the turntable and play dance music. At one end of the counter

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24 Hunsinger, p. 92.
a covered case; candy cough drops, caffeine sulphate called No-Doze; candy, cigarettes, razor blades, aspirin. The walls decorated with posters, girls in white bathing suits, and holding a bottle of Coca-Cola and smiling. Beer taps behind the counter, and in back the coffee urns, shiny and steaming, with glass gauges showing the coffee level. And pies in wire cages, and little piles of corn flakes stacked up in designs.


Minnie or Susy or Mae, middle-aging behind the counter, hair curled and rouge and powder on a sweating face. Taking orders in a soft voice, calling them to the cook with a screech like a peacock. Mopping the counter with circular strokes, polishing the big shining coffee urns. The cook is Joe or Carl or Al, hot in a white coat and apron, beady sweat on white forehead, below the white cook's cap; moody, rarely speaking, looking up for a moment at each new entry.

Mae is the contact, smiling, irritated, near to outbreak; smiling while her eyes look on past—unless for truck drivers. There's the backbone of the joint. Where the trucks stop, that's where the customers come. Can't fool truck drivers, they know. Give 'em a stale cup a coffee an' they're off the joint. Treat 'em right an' they come back. Mae really smiles with all her might at truck drivers. She bridles a little, fixes her back hair so that
her breasts will lift with her raised arms, passes the time of day and indicates great things, great times, great jokes. Al never speaks. He is no contact. Sometimes he smiles a little at a joke, but he never laughs. He presses down a hissing hamburger with his spatula. He lays the split buns on the plate to toast and heat. He gathers up stray onions from the plate and heaps them on the meat and presses them in with the spatula. He puts half the bun on top of the meat, paints the other half with melted butter, with thin pickle relish. Holding the bun on the meat, he slips the spatula under the thin pad of meat, flips it over, lays the buttered half on top, and drops the hamburger on a small plate. Quarter of a dill pickle, two black olives beside the sandwich. Al skims the plate down the counter, and scrapes his griddle with the spatula.

Mae stared eastward along the highway. "Here comes a transport, double. Wonder if they stop? Hope they do." And as the huge truck came heavily down from the highway and parked, she seized her cloth and wiped the whole length of the counter. And she took a few swipes at the gleaming coffee urn too, and turned up the bottle-gas under the urn. Al brought out a handful of little turnips and started to peel them. Mae's face was gay when the door opened and the two truck drivers entered.

H'ya Mae?

Well, if it ain't Big Bill the Rat! Who's ya frien'? New on this run, ain't he?
The other man puts a nickel in the phonograph, watches the disk slip free and the turntable rise up under it. Bing Crosby's voice—golden. "Thanks for the memory . . ."

Well, what's it gonna be, boys?
Oh, cup a Java. Kinda pie ya got?
Banana cream, pineapple cream, chocolate cream—
Make it apple. Wait—Kind is that big thick one?
Mae lifts it out and sniffs it. Banana cream.
Cut off a hunk; make it a big hunk.
Man at the jukebox says, Two all around.
Two it is.

(PAUSE)

Big Bill grasped his cup around the top so that the spoon stuck up between his first and second fingers. He drew in a snort of air with the coffee, to cool it. "You ought to be out on 66. Cars from all over the country. All headin' west. Never seen so many. Gets worse all a time. Wonder where the hell they all come from?"

"Wonder where they go to," said Mae. "Come here for gas sometimes, but they don't hardly never buy nothin' else. People says they steal."

Big Bill, munching his pie, looked up the road through the screened window. "Better tie your stuff down. I think you got some of 'em comin' now."

A 1926 Nash sedan pulled wearily off the highway. The back seat was piled nearly to the ceiling with sacks, with
pots and pans, and on the very top, right up against the ceiling, two boys rode. On the top of the car, a mattress and a folded tent; tent poles tied along the running board. The car pulled up to the gas pumps. A dark-haired, hatchet-faced man got slowly out. And the two boys slid down from the load and hit the ground.

Mae walked around the counter and stood in the door. The man asked, "Can we git some water, ma'am?"

"Sure, go ahead." ("I'll keep my eye on the hose.") She watched while the man slowly unscrewed the radiator cap and ran the hose in.

A woman in the car said, "See if you can't git it here."

The man turned off the hose and screwed on the cap again. The little boys took the hose from him and they upended it and drank thirstily. The man took off his dark, stained hat and stood with a curious humility in front of the screen. "Could you see your way to sell us a loaf of bread, ma'am?"

"This ain't a grocery store. We got bread to make san'widges."

"I know, ma'am. We need bread and there ain't nothin' for quite a piece, they say."

"'F we sell bread we gonna run out."

"We're hungry, ma'am."

"Whyn't you buy a san'widge? We got nice san'widges, hamburgs."
"We'd sure admire to do that, ma'am. But we can't. We got to make a dime do all of us. We ain't got but a little."

"You can't get no loaf a bread for a dime. We only got fifteen-cent loafs."

From behind her Al growled, "God Almighty, Mae, give 'em bread."

Mae shrugged her plump shoulders and looked to the truck drivers to show them what she was up against.

She held the screen door open and the man came in, bringing a smell of sweat with him. The boys edged in behind him and they went immediately to the candy case and stared in—not with craving or with hope or even with desire, but just with a kind of wonder that such things could be. One scratched his dusty ankle with the toe nails of his other foot. The other whispered some soft message.

Mae opened a drawer and took out a long waxpaper-wrapped loaf. "This here is a fifteen-cent loaf."

"Won't you--can't you see your way to cut off ten cents' worth? We got it figured awful close to get to California."

"You can have this for ten cents. Al says to." She pushed the loaf across the counter. The man took a deep leather pouch from his rear pocket, untied the strings, and spread it open. It was heavy with silver and with greasy bills.

"May sound funny to be so tight. We got a thousand miles to go, an' we don' know if we'll make it." He dug in the
pouch with a forefinger, located a dime, and pinched in for it. When he put it down on the counter he had a penny with it. He was about to drop the penny back into the pouch when his eye fell on the boys frozen before the candy counter. He moved slowly down to them. He pointed in the case at big long sticks of striped peppermint. "Is them penny candy, ma'am?"

The little boys raised their eyes to her face and they stopped breathing; their mouths were partly opened, their half-naked bodies were rigid.

"Oh—them. Well, no—them's two for a penny."

"Well, gimme two then, ma'am." He placed the copper cent carefully on the counter. The boys expelled their held breath softly. Mae held the big sticks out.

"Take 'em." said the man.

They reached timidly, each took a stick, and they held them down at their sides and did not look at them. But they looked at each other, and their mouth corners smiled rigidly with embarrassment.

"Thank you, ma'am." The man picked up the bread and went out the door, and the little boys marched stiffly behind him, the red-striped sticks held tightly against their legs. They leaped like chipmunks over the front seat and onto the top of the load, and they burrowed back out of sight like chipmunks.
The man got in and started his car, and with a roaring motor and a cloud of blue oily smoke the ancient Nash climbed up on the highway and went on its way to the west.

From inside the restaurant the truck drivers and Mae and Al stared after them.

Big Bill wheeled back. "Them wasn't two-for-a-cent candy."

"What's that to you?"

"Them was nickel apiece candy."

"We got to get goin'" said the other man. "We're drop-pinin' time." They reached in their pockets. Bill put a coin on the counter and the other man looked at it and reached again and put down a coin. They swung around and walked to the door.

"So long," said Bill.

"Hey! Wait a minute. You got change."

The screen door slammed.

Mae watched them get into the great truck, watched it lumber off in low gear, and heard the shift up the whining gears to cruising ratio. "Al--"

"Look there." She pointed at the coins beside the cups—two half-dollars. Al walked near and looked, and then he went back to his work.

"Truck drivers," Mae said reverently.

Flies struck the screen with little bumps and droned away. The compressor chugged for a time and then stopped.
On 66 the traffic whizzed by, trucks and fine streamlined cars and jalopies, and they went by with a vicious whiz. Mae took down the plates and scraped the pie crusts into a bucket. She found her damp cloth and wiped the counter with circular sweeps. And her eyes were on the highway, where life whizzed by.

Steps in Making Full Abridgment

When the student of oral interpretation has gained experience by cutting shorter narrative works such as the story or chapter, he is then better prepared to approach the most difficult form of prose abridgment, cutting an entire novel. This editorial task is founded on the same three principles as other types of cutting are, and most of the suggestions above are applicable. However, because the process of reducing an entire novel to no more than an hour's presentation is such a formidable undertaking, educators have offered additional guidelines that should prove valuable to the adaptor who faces this assignment. Hunsinger suggests, "Start with the climax, then go back through the material and pick out passages which lead directly to the climax. This often gives you the plot outline to serve as a skeleton for your cutting."25 Lee amplifies this idea and outlines a process for abridging the total work:

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25Hunsinger, p. 92.
If the interpreter wishes to use an abridgment of the entire novel, he will first of all find the focal point without which the narrative would not achieve its purpose. He will then analyze and treat the climactic episode in the same way as any other narrative. Any details not relevant to that climactic unit should be cut. The next step is to time the unit carefully. Returning to a consideration of the total effect desired by the author, the interpreter will then decide what scenes or background material and which key situations must precede the climactic incident. They may be condensed, if necessary, and should then be timed by reading aloud, with particular attention to balance and proportion. The same procedure holds for the preparation of the concluding units. Finally, the story must again be considered as a whole and a decision made as to which transitions must be included to keep the introduction, climax and conclusion logically and emotionally related.

Lynch and Crain furnish a step-by-step method of abridgment:

After about the third reading of the play or novel, close the book and write down the sections or scenes that are most vivid, interesting, and climactic to you. From these, select from one to five, depending on the length of reading time at your disposal. Now return to the script and put marks around the scenes you have selected. Depending on the reading time at your disposal, cut each scene to not less than five minutes. Then, if possible, find bridging parts between scenes. If this is not possible, narrate the connecting bits quite frankly and openly. Lastly, lay the background for your first scene, in the words of the author if possible. If not, describe the opening events in your own words.

26 Lee, p. 218.

27 Lynch and Crain, p. 306.
CHAPTER IV

CUTTING POETRY

No greater challenge confronts a student of oral interpretation than the task of cutting poetry. The topic of poetry abridgment is so controversial, however, that most textbook writers avoid a discussion of it or, at best, give it only cursory treatment. Many articles that provide an otherwise thorough discourse regarding the student's preparation of material neglect any mention whatsoever of what he should do in the event his poem requires more reading time than he has been allowed. Authors of textbooks may imply that a need does not exist for guidelines in regard to cutting poetry, but the classroom teacher or coach of interpretive reading events cannot so easily ignore this perplexing issue. Faced with the realities of the situation, the instructor must provide a solution for the student who is eager to interpret a particular poem which has literary merit but which will not fit into the time restrictions that have been imposed. To disregard the possibility that the material can be cut to the proper length will deny the student the opportunity to share with others a poem that he himself enjoys. Furthermore, such a policy will not only significantly restrict the student's choice of material by
omitting a large percentage of available poetry but may also lead to his giving primary consideration to the poem's length when he is attempting to locate material for performance. Therefore, rather than deny the student an opportunity to shorten poetic material, the instructor is better advised to handle the topic carefully and to allow this type of editing only when time restrictions make it necessary. He should insist that the student approach cutting poetry with full realization of the difficulties and complexities that are inherent in this form of literature.

Poetry tends to defy the modification that necessarily results when literature is shortened. Its vivid language and special sound devices form a union of sense and sound that has been carefully planned by the poet. The flow of rhythm has been meticulously designed to balance sound and silence into an aesthetically satisfying experience. Metrical systems and rhyme patterns constitute a highly structured literary form that, if tampered with unduly, collapses entirely. Meaning is carried by each of these elements, and the ultimate poetic expression is accomplished by the simultaneous influence of them all. The simultaneity of poetry has prompted John Ciardi to describe a poem as "a formal structure in which many elements operate at the same time."\(^1\) Obviously, a careless omission that disturbs the balance or destroys the effectiveness of any one of the unique elements

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can ultimately alter the communicative impact of the poem.

Poetry is characterized, too, by imaginative and emotional content that has been highly concentrated through carefully chosen figures of speech. This compact medium allows little room for nonessential items. Brooks, Purser, and Warren observe the condensation of poetry and remark, "A poem can ... provide an appropriate emotional response in the reader in much fewer words than can usually a story or a play." The conciseness of expression has been accomplished by the poet; there may be little additional editing possible without risk of distorting his achievement.

Poetic meaning, then, is emotive rather than factual, marked by intensification and concentration, and conveyed through illusive channels that work together for total perception. These factors distinguish poetry from prose and prohibit the establishment of guidelines for cutting that will readily apply to either literary form. For example, the three basic principles offered in Chapter II tend to be more applicable to prose abridgment than to the cutting of poetry. The first two principles are relevant to all forms of abridgment: intellectual and emotional responsiveness is a necessary requisite to additional preparation of the material, and fidelity to the writer's

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purpose is the ethical responsibility of every adaptor. However, the validity of justification varies from prose to poetry so that while clarity, interest, and effectiveness are still factors to be considered by the adaptor, the only sound justification for altering poetry is the necessity of doing so in order to meet time requirements.

Oral interpretation textbooks advance one governing principle for cutting poetry: cut in complete sections but not lines or parts of lines. This practice reduces the possibility of destroying the rhyme, meter, or rhythm of the selection.

Excerpting Obvious Subdivisions

The student may utilize this directive in either type of cutting. There seems to be less risk of distortion when a single portion of a long poem is excerpted and read in its entirety than when the adaptor retains the contextual framework but deletes large segments. Therefore, the simplest method of cutting poetry is to "lift out" a segment that can stand alone. Many longer poetic works are subdivided into smaller, self-contained units that can be effectively presented without the benefit of the remaining parts. The student who approaches the cutting of poetry for the first time might be directed to these works for an initial assignment of producing an excerpt: Stephen Vincent

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3 See Lee, Oral Interpretation, and Armstrong and Brandes, The Oral Interpretation of Literature.

An example of poetry that contains separate but interrelated units is T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. It is subdivided into five smaller literary segments. The following excerpt, "A Game of Chess," is the second section of the poem. It is cited here in its entirety to illustrate its structural unity and completeness.

II. "A Game of Chess"

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion;
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid--troubled, confused
And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air
That freshened from the window, these ascended
In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,
Flung their smoke into the laquearia,
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.
Huge sea-wood fed with copper
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,
In which sad light a carved dolphin swam.
Above the antique mantel was displayed
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
"Jug Jug" to dirty ears.
And other withered stumps of time
Were told upon the walls; staring forms
Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.
Footsteps shuffled on the stair.
Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair
Spread out in fiery points
Glowed into words, then would be savagely still.

"My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.
What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
I never know what you are thinking. Think."

I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones.

"What is that noise?"
The wind under the door.
"What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?"
Nothing again nothing.

"You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
"Nothing?"

I remember
Those are pearls that were his eyes.
"Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?"

But

0 0 0 0 that Shakespeherian Rag--
It's so elegant
So intelligent
"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 to-morrow?
"What shall we ever do?"
The hot water at ten.
And if it rains, a closed car at four.
And we shall play a game of chess,
Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said--
I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Now Albert's coming back, make youself a bit smart. He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there. You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set, He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you. And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert, He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time, And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said. Oh is there, she said. Something o' that, I said. Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look.

HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
If you don't like it you can get on with it, I said. Others can pick and choose if you can't. But if Albert makes off, it won't be for lack of telling. You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique. (And her only thirty-one.) I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face, It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said. (She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.) The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.

You are a proper fool, I said. Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said, What you get married for if you don't want children? HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon, And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot-- HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME
HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME

Excerpting Other Self-Contained Units

When the student has become accustomed to extracting the more obvious units, he may begin locating excerpts within material that has not been subdivided by the poet. These excerpts may be large thought units, key incidents, or simply the latter portion of a poem. Located in every type of poetry, excerpts of this nature are characterized simply by the quality of being self-contained; they are presented intact without inner abridgment.
Alfred, Lord Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* is, of course, a subdivided work. However, even the smaller units are too lengthy for most reading assignments; the adaptor must employ further editing procedures if he is to limit his selection to a seven- or eight-minute time requirement.

His first consideration might be the possibility of extracting a self-contained portion from within a particular idyll. The following excerpt, taken from the section entitled "Guinevere," illustrates an intrinsic passage that has been "lifted out" of the content of a larger literary unit. This excerpt contains no inner abridgment; the passage is presented in its entirety. The speech cited here is less than one-tenth of the total idyll; yet because of popular knowledge of the Arthurian legend, the adaptor may assume that this small portion will sufficiently stand alone.

**From "Guinevere"**

'Gone--my lord!
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
Farewell? I should have answer'd his farewell.
His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,
My own true lord! how dare I call him mine?
The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution: he, the King,
Call'd me polluted: shall I kill myself?
What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,
If soul be soul; nor can I kill my shame;
No, nor by living can I live it down.
The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,
The months will add themselves and make the years,
The years will roll into the centuries,
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
Let the world be; that is but of the world.
What else? what hope? I think there was a hope,
Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope;
His hope he call'd it; but he never mocks,  
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.  
And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven  
My wickedness to him, and left me hope  
That in mine own heart I can live down sin  
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
Before high God. Ah great and gentle lord,  
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint  
Among his warring senses, to thy knights--  
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took  
Full easily all impressions from below,  
Would not look up, or half-despised the height  
To which I would not or I could not climb--  
I thought I could not breathe in that fine air  
That pure severity of perfect light--  
I yearn'd for warmth and colour which I found  
In Lancelot--now I see thee what thou art,  
Thou art the highest and most human too,  
Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none  
Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?  
Now--ere he goes to the great Battle? none:  
Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
But now it were too daring. Ah my God,  
What might I not have made of thy fair world,  
Had I but loved thy highest creature here?  
It was my duty to have loved the highest:  
It surely was my profit had I known:  
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.  
We needs must love the highest when we see it,  
Not Lancelot, nor another.'

"Cutting in" and "Cutting out" Smaller Units

When the student has mastered the process of making poetry excerpts, he may approach the more difficult task of adaptation. Returning again to material with obvious subdivisions, he may now think in terms of deleting some of these units while retaining others that seem more significant or are more harmonious. This procedure is especially useful when the units within the larger work are too short to singly fulfill minimal time requirements. As the adaptor both "cuts in" and "cuts out" from the material, he should
develop a greater sensitivity to those elements that are vital to the poet's meaning. The following collection by Kenneth Rexroth may be reduced in length by preserving one long segment and two shorter ones and by omitting the remaining four units.

"The Lights in the Sky Are Stars"

I

Halley's Comet

When in your middle years
The great comet comes again
Remember me, a child,
Awake in the summer night,
Standing in my crib and
Watching that long-haired star
So many years ago.
Go out in the dark and see
Its plume over water
Dribbling on the liquid night,
And think that life and glory
Flickered on the rushing
Bloodstream for me once, and for
All who have gone before me,
Vessels of the billion-year-long
River that flows now in your veins.

II

The Great Nebula of Andromeda

We get into camp after
Dark, high on an open ridge
Looking out over five thousand
Feet of mountains and mile
Beyond mile of valley and sea.
In the star-filled dark we cook
Our macaroni and eat
By lantern light. Stars cluster
Around our table like fireflies.
After supper we go straight
To bed. The night is windy
And clear. The moon is three days
Short of full. We lie in bed
And watch the stars and the turning
Moon through our little telescope.
Late at night the horses stumble
Around camp and I awake.
I lie on my elbow watching
Your beautiful sleeping face
Like a jewel in the moonlight.
If you are lucky and the
Nations let you, you will live
Far into the twenty-first
Century. I pick up the glass
And watch the Great Nebula
Of Andromeda swim like
A phosphorescent amoeba
Slowly around the Pole. Far
Away in distant cities
Fat-hearted men are planning
To murder you while you sleep.

III
The Heart of Herakles

Lying under the stars,
In the summer night,
Late, while the autumn
Constellations climb the sky,
As the cluster of Hercules
Falls down the west
I put the telescope by
And watch Deneb
Move towards the zenith.
My body is asleep. Only
My eyes and brain are awake.
The stars stand around me
Like gold eyes. I can no longer
Tell where I begin and leave off.
The faint breeze in the dark pines,
And the invisible grass,
The tipping earth, the swarming stars
Have an eye that sees itself.

IV
A Maze of Sparks of Gold

Spring—the rain goes by, the stars
Shine pale beside the Easter
Moon. Scudding clouds, tossing leaves,
Whirl overhead. Blossoms fall
In the dark from the fragrant
Madrone trees. You lie beside
Me, luminous and still in sleep.
Overhead bees sleep in their
Tree. Beyond them the bees in
The Beehive in the Crab drift
Slowly past, a maze of points
Of fire. I've had ten times your
Years. Time holds us both fixed fast
Under the bright wasting stars.
A Sword in a Cloud of Light

Your hand in mine, we walk out
To watch the Christmas Eve crowds
On Fillmore Street, the Negro
District. The night is thick with
Frost. The people hurry, wreathed
In their smoky breaths. Before
The shop windows the children
Jump up and down with spangled
Eyes. Santa Clauses ring bells.
Cars stall and honk. Street cars clang.
Loud speakers on the lampposts
Sing carols, on juke boxes
In the bars Louis Armstrong
Plays White Christmas. In the joints
The girls strip and grind and bump
To Jingle Bells. Overhead
The neon signs scribble and
Erase and scribble again
Messages of avarice,
Joy, fear, hygiene, and the proud
Names of the middle classes,
The moon beams like a pudding.
We stop at the main corner
And look up, diagonally
Across, at the rising moon,
And the solemn, orderly
Vast winter constellations.
You say, "There's Orion!"
The most beautiful object
Either of us will ever
Know in the world or in life
Stands in the moonlit empty
Heavens, over the swarming
Men, women, and children, black
And white, joyous and greedy,
Evil and good, buyer and
Seller, master and victim,
Like some immense theorem,
Which, if once solved would forever
Solve the mystery and pain
Under the bells and spangles.
There he is, the man of the
Night before Christmas, spread out
On the sky like a true god
In whom it would only be
 Necessary to believe
A little. I am fifty
And you are five. It would do
No good to say this and it
May do no good to write it.  
Believe in Orion. Believe
In the night, the moon, the crowded
Earth. Believe in Christmas and
Birthdays and Easter rabbits.
Believe in all those fugitive
Compounds of nature, all doomed
To waste away and go out.
Always be true to these things.
They are all there is. Never
Give up this savage religion
For the blood-drenched civilized
Abstractions of the rascals
Who live by killing you and me.

VI
Protoplasm of Light

How long ago
Frances and I took the subway
To Van Cortlandt Park. The people
All excited, small boys and
Cripples selling dark glasses.
We rushed to the open hills
North of the station as though
We'd be late, and stood there
Hand in hand, waiting. Under
The trees the sun made little
Lunes of light through the bare branches
On the snow. The sky turned gray
And very empty. One by
One the stars came out. At last
The sun was only a thin
Crescent in our glasses with the
Bright planets nearby like watchers.
Then the great cold amoeba
Of crystal light sprang out
On the sky. The wind passed like
A silent crowd. The crowd sobbed
Like a passing wind. All the dogs
Howled. The silent protoplasm
Of light stood still in the black sky,
In its bowels, ringed with ruby
Fire, its stone-black nucleus.
Mercury, cold and dark like a
Fleck of iron, stood silent by it.
That was long ago.
Mary and I stand on the
Seashore and watch the sun sink
In the windy ocean. Layers
Of air break up the disc. It looks
Like a vast copper pagoda.
Spume blows past our faces, jellyfish
Pulse in the standing water,
Sprawl on the wet sand at our feet.
Twilight comes and all of the
Visible planets come out.
Venus first, and then Jupiter,
Mars and Saturn and finally
Mercury once more. Seals bark
On the rocks. I tell Mary
How Kepler never saw Mercury,
How, as he lay dying it shone
In his window, too late for him
To see. The mysterious
Cone of light leans up from the
Horizon into the pale sky.
I say, "Nobody knows what
It is or even where it is.
Maybe it is the great cloud
Of gas around the sun which
You will see some day if you
Are lucky. It stands out only
During an eclipse. I saw it
Long ago."

VII
Blood on a Dead World

A blowing night in late fall,
The moon rises with a nick
In it. All day Mary has
Been talking about the eclipse.
Every once in a while I
Go out and report on the
Progress of the earth's shadow.
When it is passing the half,
Marthe and Mary come out
And we stand on the corner
In the first wisps of chilling
Fog and watch the light go out.
Streamers of fog reach the moon,
But never quite cover it.
We have explained with an orange,
A grapefruit, and a lamp, not
That we expect a four
Year old child to understand—
Just as a sort of ritual
Duty. But we are surprised.
"The earth's shadow is like blood,"
She says. I tell her the Indians
Called an eclipse blood on the moon.
"Is it all the blood on the earth
Makes the shadow that color?"
She asks. I do not answer.
Abridging the Total Poem

The divided consideration of what to retain and what to omit prepares the student for the final step in poetry abridgment which is the deletion of large sections that are interwoven into the contextual fabric of the literature. If the poem contains a stanzaic pattern, the adaptor's task may be facilitated by the guidance provided by the poem's natural design. Also, if the poem is basically narrative, the adaptor may utilize some of the suggestions provided for cutting narrative prose. Even so, he must carefully evaluate the function of each element to make certain that he is not deleting a vital ingredient of the poet's expression.

The following cuttings are offered as illustrations of possible omissions; they are not intended as examples of what should be done to limit these particular poetic selections. No unanimity is possible in terms of this type of cutting, and authorities may be expected to disagree on which portions, if any, are expendable. However, the primary concern of every adaptor is fidelity to the writer's purpose, and the cuts were executed on the basis of a rationale formulated through careful analysis of the author's work and identified specifically following each abridgment. The poems were cut in a cooperative effort by the teacher and student to meet a seven-minute time requirement for interscholastic competition.
"The Bull"

Ralph Hodgson

See an old unhappy bull,
Sick in soul and body both,
Slouching in the undergrowth
Of the forest beautiful,
Banished from the herd he led,
Bulls and cows a thousand head.

Cranes and gaudy parrots go
Up and down the burning sky;
Tree-top cats purr drowsily
In the dim-day green below;
And troops of monkeys, nutting some,
All disputing, go and come;
And things abominable sit
Picking offal buck or swine,
On the mess and over it
Burnished flies and beetles shine,
And spiders big as bladders lie
Under hemlocks ten foot high;

And a dotted serpent curled
Round and round and round a tree,
Yellowing its greenery,
Keeps a watch on all the world,
All the world and this old bull
In the forest beautiful.

Bravely by his fall he came:
One he led, a bull of blood
Newly come to lustihood,
Fought and put his prince to shame,
Snuffed and pawed the prostrate head
Tameless even while it bled.

There they left him, every one,
Left him there without a lick,
Left him for the birds to pick,
Left him for the carrion,
Vilely from their bosom cast
Wisdom, worth and love at last.
When the lion left his lair
And roared his beauty through the hills,
And the vultures pecked their quills
And flew into the middle air,
Then this prince no more to reign
Came to life and lived again.
He snuffed the herd in far retreat,
He saw the blood upon the ground,
And sniffed the burning airs around
Still with beevish odors sweet,
While the blood ran down his head
And his mouth ran slaver red.
Pity him, this fallen chief,
All his splendor, all his strength
All his beauty's breadth and length
Dwindled down with shame and grief,
Half the bull he was before,
Bones and leather, nothing more.

See him standing dewlap-deep
In the rushes at the lake,
Surly, stupid, half asleep,
Waiting for his hear to break
And the birds to join the flies
Feasting at his boddeshot eyes,—
Standing with his head hung down
In a stupor, dreaming things:
Green savannas, jungles brown,
Battlefields and bellowings,
Bulls undone and lions dead
And vultures flapping overhead.
Dreaming things: of days he spent
With his mother gaunt and lean
In the valley warm and green,
Full of baby wonderment,
Blinking out of silly eyes
At a hundred mysteries;
Dreaming over once again
How he wandered with a throng
Of bulls and cows a thousand strong,
Wandered on from plain to plain,
Up the hill and down the dale,
Always at his mother's tail;
How he lagged behind the herd,
Lagged and tottered, weak of limb,
And she turned and ran to him
Blaring at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming maybe of a day,
When her drained and drying naps
Turned him to the sweets and saps,
Richer fountains by the way,
And she left the bull she bore
And he looked to her no more;
And his little frame grew stout,
And his little legs grew strong,
And the way was not so long;
And his little horns came out,
And he played at butting trees
And bowlder-stones and tortoises,
Joined a game of knobby skulls
With the youngsters of his year,
All the other little bulls,
Learning both to bruise and bear,
Learning how to stand a shock
Like a little bull of rock.

Dreaming of a day less dim,
Dreaming of a time less far,
When the faint but certain star
Of destiny burned clear for him,
And a fierce and wild unrest
Broke the quiet of his breast,
And the gristles of his youth
Hardened in his comely pow,
And he came to fighting growth,
Beat his bull and won his cow,
And flew his tail and trampled off
Past the tallest, vain enough.
And curved about in splendor full
And curved again and snuffed the airs
As who should say, Come out who dares!
And all beheld a bull, a Bull,
And knew that here was surely one
That backed for no bull, fearing none.
And the leader of the herd
Looked and saw, and beat the ground,
And shook the forest with his sound,
Bellowed at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming, this old bull forlorn,
Surely dreaming of the hour
When he came to sultan power,
And they owned him master-horn,
Chiefest bull of all among
Bulls and cows a thousand strong,
And in all the trampling herd
Not a bull that barred his way,
Not a cow that said him nay,
Not a bull or cow that erred
In the furnace of his look
Dared a second, worse rebuke;
Not in all the forest wide,
Jungle, thicket, pasture, fen,
Not another dared him then,
Dared him and again defied;
Not a sovereign buck or boar
Came a second time for more.
Not a serpent that survived
Once the terrors of his hoof,
Risked a second time reproof,
Came a second time and lived,
Not a serpent in its skin
Came again for discipline;
Not a leopard bright as flame,
Flashing fingerhooks of steel,
That a wooden tree might feel,
Met his fury once and came
For a second reprimand,
Not a leopard in the land,
Not a lion of them all,
Not a lion of the hills,
Hero of a thousand kills,
Dared a second fight and fall,
Dared that ram terrific twice,
Paid a second time the price...

Pity him, this dupe of dream,
Leader of the herd again
Only in his daft old brain,
Once again the bull supreme
And bull enough to bear the part
Only in his tameless heart.

Pity him that he must wake.
Even now the swarm of flies
Blackening his bloodshot eyes
Bursts and blusters around the lake,
Scattered from the feast half-fed,
By great shadows overhead,
And the dreamer turns away
From his visionary herds
And his splendid yesterday,
Turns to meet the loathly birds
Flocking round him from the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Hodgson's sympathy with animal life is reflected throughout his poetry. In the above poem his compassion extends beyond the bull himself and embraces the vanquished leader in the moments immediately following defeat. The cutting has been designed to preserve Hodgson's attitude, and, if possible, to heighten the emotional impact by eliminating portions that appear less compelling. The rhyme of the poetry has been preserved, and, when possible, whole stanzas have been deleted. Only large segments were removed.
No more of the poem was omitted than was necessary in order to meet time restrictions. The following rationale for the above cuts further explains the motivation for each of the omissions:

**Cut 1:** The gracefulness of this description makes its deletion a painful choice; however, it seems less vital in the total expression of the poem, and it is a bit of a digression from Hodgson's main theme of humanitarianism. Elimination of these two stanzas seems also to promote the action by bringing the reader more rapidly to the circumstances of the bull's defeat.

**Cut 2:** Omission of a part of a stanza is seldom advised. However, in this instance the lengthiness of the stanzas prevents scrupulous adherence to the governing principle. If the entire stanza is cut, the adaptor will omit more than is necessary. If it is retained, the selection will require a reading time of more than seven minutes. Therefore, this omission has been made on the basis of thought units rather than because of stanzal design. The two sentences that have been deleted provide valuable information and should be included if a longer reading is allowed; however, the action described within these lines seems less vital in terms of Hodgson's purpose than others.

**Cut 3:** The repetitious nature of these passages make them subject to deletion. The chieftainship and mightiness of the bull may be established by vocal emphasis to references of these qualities in the remaining passages.
When the student has become accustomed to editing narrative poetry that contains a stanzaic pattern, he may next approach the most difficult type of poetry abridgment: the omission of interwoven elements from a selection that is strongly lyrical in nature and that possesses neither a stanzaic design nor obvious thought divisions. Cutting this type of poetry demands scrupulous attention to the original work and utmost caution against butchery; the difficulty and complexity of this editorial task calls for a high degree of proficiency and considerable experience at cutting other types of poetic material.

Some literary authorities might well contend that cutting such compact poetry inevitably results in distortion. Of the authorities who would allow such cutting, further disagreement can be anticipated in terms of the specific portions that are to be omitted. These differences of opinion occur especially if the poem being cut is one that is familiar or that is considered a literary masterpiece. However, while the aesthetics of literature are a concern of the instructor of oral interpretation, his primary consideration is the development of his students' interpretive skills. The study of a literary masterpiece will undoubtedly prove worthwhile for the student, and the process of cutting the work will be a valuable educational experience. Therefore, in view of the educational benefits derived from an involvement with all types of poetic materials, the writer suggests
that compact lyrical poetry not be disregarded on the basis of lengthiness; that it be allowed when the student has gained experience from cutting less complex poems; and that initial attempts at cutting be a cooperative effort of teacher and student.4

The following cutting of "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church" resulted from such a joint effort while the writer was engaged in teaching high school oral interpretation. The student encountered the Browning monologue in his English course and was eager to prepare the work for contests. The final cutting emerged only after the student and the writer had given careful review to every aspect of the poem. The omissions were made on the basis of the rationale that appears following the abridgment.

Numerous other possibilities are recognized as valid inclusions or exclusions in a cutting of this poem. It is an exceptionally complex work because of the chaotic nature of the bishop's thoughts. Piety and worldliness, conspiracy and confidence, aesthetic pleasure and sensual delight are all in juxtaposition as the poet reveals the confused wanderings of the bishop's mind as he approaches death. It therefore becomes a matter of the adaptors' choice of emphasis as to which elements must be retained. This particular cutting has been designed to show the dying

4This information is based upon a conversation with Arthur M. Sampley, Distinguished Professor of English, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, on February 23, 1970.
ecclesiastic's corruption by stressing his thievery of church property. The full-dimensional figure will not be as clearly defined in any cutting as is evident in Browning's total work. However, vital illumination of the bishop's corruption and the further implication that he is representative of the Renaissance Church have been preserved. The poet's essential message has, therefore, been maintained.

"The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church"

Robert Browning

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well—
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know: 
[—Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
 Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk;]
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
[—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True-peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!
Draw close: That conflagration of my church]
--What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find... [Ah God, I know not, I!...
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
and corded up in a tight olive-frail,]
Some lump, ah God, of lapis lazuli,
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast...
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Fascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's glove on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years:
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black--
'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
[Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,]
And Moses with the tables... but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve.
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world--
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
--That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line--
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
[And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's work:
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
—Aha, Elucescebat quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.]
All lapis, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes,[and add a vizor and a term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down.] To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—
And no more lapis to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row: and, going, turn your backs
—Ay, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was!

The following rationale was utilized in executing the above
omissions:

Cut 1: The first three lines of this omission further
reveal the bishop's attitude about his colleague Gandolf.
Seymour Chatman suggests that these lines may be interpreted
to reveal that the bishop does not necessarily harbor a
bitter hatred for Gandolf; he has simply been cursing him for so many years that he does so now out of habit rather than out of feeling. \(^5\) Because it is possible to convey this attitude in tone of voice, the oral reader seems justified in omitting the lines. The next five lines of the omission report the bishop's cheerful digression about the favorable location of his niche and seem somewhat extraneous.

Cut 2: This omission of the lines describing the wrappings that are around the precious stone is executed because this information is not vital to an understanding of the passage as a whole. The deletion of a part of the first line can be accomplished only because the line itself possesses a broken rhythm due to the parenthetical element.

Cut 3: The deletion of this passage sacrifices a dimension of the bishop's character and is, therefore, a regrettable loss. If a longer reading is allowed, the retaining of these lines is advised because the passage not only reveals the bishop's lustfulness, it also allows the reader an opportunity for vocal variety by projecting the vacillating tones of gleeful bawdiness and reverent piety. However, in a shorter reading, the bishop's lengthy description of the sacred and profane figures that he is requesting for his tomb is a major unit of thought that is not essential to an understanding of his worldliness.

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Cut 4: As the bishop dramatizes his dying, he envisions his own stone statue atop the tomb. This idea may be projected in the two preceding lines, and the additional description of the tableau may be omitted. As his thoughts begin to whirl, most of what he refers to has already been mentioned; therefore, the adaptor may delete this repetition on the basis that doing so extracts no new information from the text and elimination of this passage removes a portion that does not contribute significantly to the total impact of the selection.

Cut 5: The bishop's sudden return from his reverie and the accompanying threat to give the Pope his villas is followed by the realization that his sons will not likely obey any of these instructions. His prophecy of how they will likely ruin his tomb is essential except for the mention of the tripod and thyrsus which have been previously deleted from the text. The omission of a partial line again seems justified in view of the smoothness in rhythm of the passages remaining: "and fill my vase with grapes ... to comfort me on my entablature."

Summary

From the above illustrations and guidelines, certain specific directives may be established:

1. If at all possible, the student should attempt to locate poetry that will fit into established time requirements.
2. If cutting is necessary, it should be done with careful reflection and only for purposes of shortening reading time.

3. Poetry should be cut primarily in large segments rather than removing isolated lines or parts of lines.

4. Narrative poetry is more subject to abridgment than other types.

5. Difficult cutting assignments may best be executed by the combined efforts of student and teacher.

6. Competency at poetry abridgment may be developed by progressing through increasingly difficult material to cut. The following steps are recommended:

   a. Excerpts from longer poetic works with obvious, smaller literary units.

   b. Excerpts from longer works that do not contain obvious subdivisions.

   c. Abridgment of longer works with self-contained units by retaining some, omitting others.

   d. Complete abridgment of material in which the extracted material is interwoven into the fabric of the literature.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The stated objective for this thesis was to propose a suggested method of developing competency in the cutting and adaptation of prose and poetry for oral interpretation. To accomplish this purpose, this thesis has established general principles basic to all editing procedures and has channeled these principles into more specific guidelines for preparing the material. Each guideline has been further explained by an immediate application to a literary passage. The instructional method proposed in this study relies upon the order in which the information is presented; each portion is arranged to reflect procedures in an order of increasing difficulty.

There are three principal reasons for limiting or adapting material: (1) to meet time restrictions, (2) to render the literature more suitable for oral presentation, and (3) to delete troublesome passages. In shortening the material, the adaptor may choose either to produce an excerpt or to abridge the material by making internal omissions of the context. In either method, cutting procedures are based on certain underlying principles. (1) No cutting should be done until the reader has made a close study of,
and has realized a sensitive response to, the material.
(2) The adaptor should scrupulously avoid distortion of
the writer's essential meaning. (3) Every cut or adaptation
must be executed with ample justification in terms of
promoting clarity, interest, or effectiveness.

On the basis of these principles, certain specific
guidelines may be formulated for excerpting and abridging
prose literature. Excerpts must be self-contained literary
units possessing structural completeness and reflecting the
author's total meaning. This type of cutting requires a
careful introduction. Abridgments are neither easily defined
nor executed. The internal deletions are often made by
omitting dialogue tags, extraneous narration, unnecessary
repetition and/or other expendable or distracting elements.
The oral interpreter should gain experience editing or
adapting shorter narrative prose material before attempting
the more difficult task of abridging an entire novel.

The nature of poetry demands that cutting or adaptation
procedures be based on a respect for the complexity of this
form of literature. Because the poet's artistic achievement
can easily be butchered by careless editing or rearrangement,
adaptors should approach poetry only when proficiency in the
adjustment of other literary forms has been realized.
Poetry should be cut only for the purpose of meeting time
limits, and deletions should be made solely to the extent
necessary in order to conform to this restriction. The
practice of cutting large segments rather than isolated
lines or passages encourages less distortion of the rhyme, meter, or rhythm of the poem. Narrative poetry is more easily abridged than the highly emotive lyric or dramatic forms. The following steps are recommended for the development of competency in poetry abridgment: (1) excerpts from longer poetic works with smaller, self-contained literary units, (2) excerpts from longer works that do not contain obvious subdivisions, (3) abridgment of longer works with self-contained units by the process of retaining some, omitting others, and (4) complete abridgment of material in which the extracted passage is interwoven into the fabric of the literature.

From the above summary, certain conclusions are evident. Beyond the more obvious findings, however, additional observations have occurred in the process of the investigation. First, there are numerous tutorial opportunities inherent in the procedures of cutting and adapting material. Such instruction, of course, equips the student with skills for a vital step in his preparation of the material. In addition to this advantage, however, are the benefits of working closely with the literature and of locating less vital segments that are subject to elimination. The editorial process demands of the interpreter a thorough intellectual understanding of, and an emotional responsiveness to, the literature. At the same time, procedures involved in the
cutting and adapting of the material afford a further exploration of the literary forces at work in the selection. Thus, oversight of this exercise may deny the student an increased dimension of understanding.

A second observation in terms of the current treatment of the topic of cutting in textbooks, handbooks, and journal articles is that there seems little justification for its omission. Dismissal of the subject is usually stated with reference to the high degree of subjectivity involved in the cutting exercise. However, because this same subjectivity marks the processes of selection of material and analysis, two preparatory steps that have received extensive treatment by educators, the writer would question the basis for neglect of this topic as stated by today's educators. The approach to this or to any other aspect of interpretive endeavor is best made in terms of suggestion rather than absolute rules; however, to fail to provide adequate guidelines for cutting and adapting material leaves the student untrained for an essential step in his preparation of the literature.

Such a void in instructional matter ultimately affects the discipline as a whole. Keith Brooks, in viewing the dynamic nature of the interpretive act, says:

Today's academic area of oral interpretation places equal emphasis on literature, reader, and listener, with a clear recognition that each is dependent on the other. This equality and interdependence of divisions is receiving renewed attention from theorists and researchers. As a result, academicians have come to realize, with the swinging of the pendulum, that there can be no weak link in this
triangular emphasis, if the oral approach to the study and communication of literature is to be thoughtfully pursued.\(^1\)

Cutting and adapting the material is a significant factor in regard to successful interactions between the literature and the listener because, in many instances, this process involves adjustment of the literature to heighten audience response. This study concludes that omission of this basic developmental skill constitutes an inherent weakness in the professional literature and, as such, may well be a form of "weak link" against which Brooks warns.

The final conclusion of this investigation is an observation that additional studies of this nature are warranted by the absence of information in current literature. Martin Cobin points the way to meaningful research by stating:

> If research in oral interpretation is to be justified as more than an intellectual exercise, it must grow out of the needs of students and teachers of oral interpretation. . . . best motivation is an actual desire for information growing out of day-to-day needs.\(^2\)

From classroom situations in which the need for guidelines for cutting and adapting material arise, the need for this study became apparent. Follow-up studies utilizing findings


of this thesis are recommended. Additional principles and
guidelines in regard to other types of prose composition and
of dramatic literature should be established. Further
research is especially needed in the identification of
additional procedures of poetry abridgment. Finally, the
need for similar studies in regard to the development of
competency in the programming and arrangement of literature
is indicated by this investigation.
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